
Public Forum Event: A Panel Discussion on Public Perceptions of the Canadian Forces

Wednesday 8 July 2009 6.00- 8.00pm
Toronto Downtown Marriott Hotel, Eaton Centre

How have the public perceptions of the military in general and the Canadian Forces (CF) in particular changed since 9/11 and what role does the media and popular culture play in the production of changing perceptions? This important and timely panel will investigate the relationship between the media and the military.

The discussion will be chaired by Martin Shadwick, course director in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies at York University. The panel includes:

Jeff Sallot. *The Road to Kandahar.* In 1993 members of the Canadian Forces tortured and killed a local teenager, Shidane Arone, during a deployment in Somalia. The murder led to a full-blown public commission of inquiry into what is one of the greatest scandals in the history of the Canadian military. Their image rehabilitated, members of the Canadian Forces are now serving proudly on a dangerous mission in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. Jeff Sallot is currently an instructor at the School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University and was previously The Globe and Mail bureau chief in Moscow, Ottawa and Edmonton and has reported from every corner of Canada, and from more than 30 foreign countries.

Greg Nelson. *Afghanada: The challenges of presenting the Canadian Military at War.* The CBC radio drama series 'Afghanada' has run for over 50 episodes, and continues this fall. Greg Nelson will talk about the challenges of presenting military characters and stories to the public - how the creators strove to step away from the public policy debate, and grapple instead with what the reality is for Canadian soldiers on the ground in Kandahar Province. Greg Nelson is the co-creator and head writer for 'Afghanada' He is currently a writer and producer for the CBC television series The Border.

Steve Lukits. *"Their's but to do and die": Victorian Origins of Public Sympathy for the Combat Soldier in the News and Popular Culture.* The disastrous charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War, the journalistic commentary and report of the event, and Poet Laureate Alfred Tennyson's poetic response combine in a paradigmatic manner to define news coverage and mass media representation of the military. Steve Lukits is the Head of the English Department at the Royal Military College of Canada. He also teaches courses in war literature and the news media and the military.

Wendy Cukier, Associate Dean of the Ted Rogers School of Management. Wendy is an internationally recognized expert in armed violence and is coauthor of *The Global Gun Epidemic* (2006). She has served on a number of national and international advisory committees and most recently was a member of Canada's Commission on Small Arms. In 2000, the University of Toronto named Wendy as one of the "100 Alumni who shaped the century".

LCdr John Williston, Senior Advisor, Strategic Planning, to the Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs, Department of National Defence

Christopher Dornan. *Unknown Soldiers: The Relative Absence of the Military in Canadian Popular Culture.* In contrast to the US, where the armed forces are a prominent subject for prime-time television and feature films, Canadian popular culture all but ignores the military as a dramatic trope. Why should this be so? What does it tell us about the place of the armed forces in the Canadian imagination? What consequences might ensue? Christopher Dornan teaches at Carleton University, where he is Associate Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs, Director of the Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs, and an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication.