

The Canadian Armed Forces "YouTube War": A Cross-Border Military-Social Media Complex

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Abstract:

The goal of this paper is to conceptualize, contextualize, and critically analyze the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) use of YouTube to promote itself, recruit soldiers, and frame its role in the post-9/11 U.S.-led NATO war in Afghanistan. The first section of this paper engages with scholarship on war and the media, the military-industrial-communications complex (MICC), and YouTube War to conceptualize YouTube as a tool and contested battle-space of 21st century new media wars. The second section contextualizes the rise of the CAF's YouTube channels—Canadian Forces and Canadian Army—with regard to post-9/11 Canadian foreign policy, the growth of the Canadian military publicity state, the creeping militarization of culture, and the CAF's "social media policy". The third section conceptualizes the CAF's two YouTube channels as tools and spaces of its publicity front; then, through a synoptic critical overview of numerous CAF-generated YouTube videos, it shows how the CAF uses YouTube to recruit personnel and frame its role in the war in Afghanistan. The conclusion discusses the characteristics of this cross-border military-social media complex and its contradictions, namely, the spread of pacifist and veteran-generated videos that contest the war in Afghanistan. Overall, the paper offers an initial political-economy of communication of the CAF's foray into the global battle-space of the Internet and its use of YouTube for publicity.

Keywords: Canada; Interactive Publicity State; Internet War; Military-Industrial-Communications Complex; YouTube War

Résumé:

Le but de cet article est de conceptualiser, de contextualiser et d'analyser de façon critique l'utilisation de YouTube par les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) afin de faire de la promotion, de recruter des soldats et d'encadrer leur rôle dans la guerre post 11 septembre 2001 de l'OTAN menée par les États-Unis en Afghanistan. La première section de cet article présente la bourse académique sur la guerre et les médias, le complexe militaro-industriel-communications (CMIC) et de la guerre YouTube, conceptualisant ainsi YouTube comme un outil ainsi qu'un espace de combat pour les nouvelles guerres médiatiques du 21^{ème} siècle. La deuxième section contextualise la montée des chaînes YouTube canadiens de la FAC—Forces canadiennes et de l'Armée—concernant les politiques étrangères canadienne post 11 septembre, la croissance des publicités étatique promouvant les forces militaires canadienne, la montée de la culture militaire et des politiques médiatiques concernant les réseaux sociaux de la FAC. La troisième section conceptualise deux chaînes YouTube que la FAC utilise comme outils et comme espaces publicitaire de front; puis, à travers un aperçu critique synoptique de nombreuses vidéos YouTube FAC—générés, l'article démontre comment la FAC utilise YouTube pour recruter du personnel et pour cadrer son rôle dans la guerre en Afghanistan. Pour finir, en conclusion l'article présente les caractéristiques de la complexité transfrontalière des médias militaires-sociaux et de ses contradictions, principalement, la propagation de vidéo pacifiste produit par des vétérans contestant la guerre en Afghanistan. Dans l'ensemble, l'article explore des aspects de l'économie politique liées aux communications de la FAC dans l'espace de bataille mondiale qu'est Internet ainsi que de l'utilisation de YouTube par la FAC pour fin publicitaire.

Mots-clés: Canada; Complexe militaro-industriel-communications; Guerre de l'Internet; La guerre de YouTube; Publicité interactive étatique

Introduction: YouTube Goes to Google, Then Goes to War

With more than three hundred hours of user-generated videos uploaded to its archive every minute, its enabling of the flow of videos into the computer and mobile screens of at least one billion people spread across 75 countries, and a list of over one million advertising firms as its partners and clients, the California-based YouTube is the world's most popular and profitable video-sharing company (YouTube, 2015, January 1). Taken over by Google in 2006, YouTube is celebrated by techno-optimists as part of Web 2.0's "convergence culture" of prosumer-empowering creativity (Jenkins, 2008), scrutinized by neo-Marxists for its exploitation of the digital labour of its users (Fuchs, 2014), and shown by political communication scholars to be a new tool for military publicity (e.g., Anden-Papadopoulos, 2009; Cohen, 2010, May 23; Christensen, 2008, 2009; Dauber, 2009). In March 2007, the U.S. military launched Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNFIRAQ), a YouTube channel full of soldier-generated videos that

convey a “sanitized version of the U.S. invasion” (Christensen, 2008: 163). One year later, the Canadian Forces (CAF) seemed to be following DOD’s lead into what journalists, scholars, and NATO strategists conceptualize as a “YouTube War” by launching its own YouTube channels (e.g., Cox, 2006, July 19; Christensen, 2008; Dauber, 2009).

The goal of this paper is to conceptualize, contextualize, and critically analyze the CAF’s use of YouTube to promote itself, recruit soldiers, and frame its role in the post-9/11 U.S.-led NATO war in Afghanistan using a political economy of communication approach. The first section of this paper engages with scholarship on war and the media and the military-industrial-communications-complex (MICC) to conceptualize YouTube as a tool and contested battle-space of 21st century new mediatized wars. The second section contextualizes the rise of the CAF’s YouTube channels—Canadian Forces and Canadian Army—with regard to post-9/11 Canadian foreign policy, the growth of the Canadian military publicity state, the creeping militarization of culture, and the CAF’s “social media policy”. The third section conceptualizes the CAF’s two YouTube channels as tools and spaces of its publicity front and new media war; then, through a synoptic critical overview of numerous CAF-generated YouTube videos, it shows how the CAF uses YouTube to recruit personnel and frame its role in the war in Afghanistan. The conclusion discusses the characteristics of this cross-border CAF-YouTube complex and its contradictions, namely, the spread of pacifist and veteran-generated videos that contest the war in Afghanistan.

Theorizing YouTube War

The U.S. military and CAF’s launch of their own YouTube channels addresses the longstanding significance of the media to states at war. When states go to war, they wage both a real war and a war through the media (e.g., Cottle, 2009; Taylor, 1997). Although the former requires the latter, these wars happen on different sites. The real war refers to the people who fight, kill, and die in them, the geographies upon which fighting and killing takes place, the technology used to fight and kill, and the rituals of perseverance through which people survive, cope with, and resist war. For more than a century, North Americans have never experienced a real war in the territory they reside, never had to seek refuge from falling bombs, or ever had to take up arms against an invading military on their own soil. Real war is something that is fought at a distance in some place “foreign” or “over there”. Yet, the media has the effect of bringing battles happening “over there” closer to the public “over here” via a myriad of media devices, a torrent of stories, images, videos, sound-bites, and scripted fictions of violent conflict. The mediatized war (Cottle, 2009) gives its civilian spectators the impression of war’s reality, but fundamentally belies its actual embodied and experiential human trauma. A mediated war transforms war into something that civilians consume at a safe distance from its actual horror and harm. It is read about in the news, seen in photos, listened to on the radio, watched on TV, and virtually played as a game, but the lived experience of risk or danger that real war-fighting entails is avoided.

Political economists of communication analyze relationships between national security-seeking states and profit-seeking media firms to illuminate the “power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources” (Mosco, 2009: 24). In the late 1960s, Herbert Schiller conceptualized the political and economic organizational *source* of the mediatized wars which marched lockstep with the United States real wars as a “military-industrial-communications-complex” (MICC) (Schiller, 1992). Schiller’s MICC concept points to an “institutional edifice” of communication and cultural industries that link military and corporate media power (Maxwell, 2003: 32). While liberal

theory posits a conflicted relationship between militaries and media corporations, the MICC points to enduring ties between militaries and media firms. Furthermore, the concept of the MICC helps to explain the existence of mediatized wars with regard to the interests, resources, and actions of the militaries and media companies that control the means of producing, distributing, and exhibiting the products that constitute it. Schiller (1992) gave empirical weight to the concept by documenting how U.S. military “mind managers” sourced the private news media with packaged propaganda designed to influence public perceptions of war, and contracted out war publicity jobs to public relations corporations. At the turn of the millennium, Der Derian (2000) forwarded the MICC-related concept of the “military-industrial-media-entertainment network” (MIME-NET) to highlight the U.S. military’s incorporation of popular culture into its arsenal of publicity. And in the first decade of the 21st century, critical media studies scholars further examined the complex’s roll out of “militainment” products, or, media and cultural forms that mix military propaganda and entertainment formats (e.g., Andersen, 2006; Andersen & Mirrlees, 2014; Martin & Steuter, 2008; Stahl, 2006; 2010).

Throughout the recent history of wars, then, the mediatized wars that accompany them have been produced by a combination of powerful political and economic actors: militaries and media corporations. Militaries have routinely employed a mix of persuasion and censorship strategies and tactics to shape the conduct and content of public and private communication. Media corporations are thereby influenced to manage the way informational and media products represent war policies, personnel, and practices with the goal of controlling the way publics perceive war (e.g., Andersen, 2006; Carruthers, 2000; Freedman & Thussu, 2012; Knightley, 1975; Taylor, 1997; 2003). All too often, media corporations and the products they assemble and sell—newspapers, radio broadcasts, and popular forms like motion pictures, TV shows, and even video games—support large-scale military campaigns to manufacture public consent to war (e.g., Boggs & Pollard, 2007; Freedman & Thussu, 2012; Martin & Steuter, 2008; Stahl, 2010). Media images of and messages about wars do not emerge out of thin air, but are often produced by military public affairs officers in conjunction with the cultural workers of media corporations. These representations of war are scripted, stage-managed, packaged, and sold to publics through media products that justify and legitimize the state’s monopoly on violence.

The wars of the 21st century continue to be accompanied and supported by large-scale MICC-generated mediatized representations of wars (e.g., Cottle, 2009; Snow & Taylor, 2006), yet, these big media wars are frequently challenged by smaller ones. Researchers have highlighted how new information and communication technologies (ICTs)—the Internet, personal computers, and smartphones—are frequently used by individuals and groups to contest the power that military and corporate actors have long wielded over the meaning of war within and beyond their territories (e.g., Gillan, Pickerill & Webster, 2008; Taylor, 2003). A plurality of individuals and groups are using new media hardware and software to produce and circulate their own messages and images about war across borders and in effect, the global information environment has become a “battle-space” in which many state and non-state actors produce and “deliver critical and influential content in order to shape perceptions, influence opinions, and control behavior” (Armistead, 2004: xvii).

The 21st century global “information environment” is best conceived as a space of asymmetrical “symbolic struggles” between various large and small agencies that compete for time, for news agendas, and for interpretations of events”, and all of these actors struggle “vigorously in the mediated spheres in which public opinion is formed and where crucial battles for hearts and minds take place” (Gillan, Pickerill & Webster, 2008: 1840). Connected to the

Internet, equipped with cell phones, digital camcorders, and personal computers, this includes terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda that wage their own media wars against the U.S. empire across the World Wide Web, as well as metropolitan anti-war activists that publish alternative news stories contesting military sources via social media, and U.S. soldiers who themselves produce blogs, photos, and videos to document their up-close and personal experience of war from the battlefield, spreading their digital content directly into the PCs, mobile devices, and tablets of civilians on the home-front, sometimes bypassing military-media filters (e.g., Anden-Papadopoulos, 2009; Dauber, 2009; Gillan, Pickerill & Webster, 2008).

The Internet and social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have enabled people whose opinions and views were hitherto excluded from (and often defeated by) the MICC's media war to interactively intervene in and contest it. Through the use of cell phones, the Internet, and World Wide Web, people all over the world can generate and disseminate original content for and against the wars of a state or coalitions of states, contesting and affirming MICC media war agendas, and tweeting for and against frames of militarism. The Internet and websites are at once tools of and spaces for 21st century mediatized wars, both big and small, and battle entrants include the cyber-warriors of large-scale militaries, the cultural workers of media corporations, as well as the citizen-journalists of non-aligned groups. The multiplying state and non-state actors fighting over the meaning of war in the global battle-space of the Inter-Web would seem to indicate that the MICC's power to command and control the media war, and by extension, public perceptions of war, has been weakened:

For all the military talk about taking "command and control" of the battle space, when the battle space is the global mediasphere in which an individual with a cell-phone camera can access a global audience on the worldwide web, "full spectrum dominance" is nigh impossible.

(Taylor, 2008: 122)

Yet, militaries are still trying to wage and win new media wars. The U.S. Department of Defense, for example, announced in 2003 a bold new "information operations" doctrine that highlights its "heavy reliance on the Internet and other public communication networks" as well as a concentrated effort to retool the 21st century Internet to "meet national security, surveillance, propaganda and cyber-warfare needs" (Winseck, 2008: 419). In *Blogs and Information Strategy*, Kinniburgh and Denning (2006) propose military strategies and tactics for achieving "full spectrum dominance" over the Internet's "global infosphere". In *Bullets and Bloggers: New Media and the Warfighter*, Collings and Rohozinski add social media websites to the military mind management mix, noting that "Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and blogs have become as important to the strategic outcome of military operations as bullets, troops and air power" (2008: ix).

Over the past decade, YouTube has emerged as an important military tool and operational front in the global battle-space of new media and information wars (e.g., Christensen, 2008; Cohen & Kupcu, 2007; Cox, 2006, July 19; Dauber, 2009; Kaufman, 2006, July 20; Naim, 2006, December 27). Highlighting how YouTube enables a plurality of state and non-state actors to upload and disseminate videos about geopolitical events, Naim says "YouTube includes videos posted by terrorists, human rights groups, and U.S. soldiers", and some of these "videos reveal truths" while others "spread disinformation, propaganda, and outright lies" (2006, December 27). YouTube has become a massive digital jukebox of conflicting user-generated videos about the

ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond; some are made by soldiers and others by civilians, but all add to what journalists, scholars, and military strategists call a “YouTube War”.

The concept of “YouTube War” was coined by Cox (2006, July 19) in a short *Time* magazine article about U.S. soldiers who make and share digital videos about their experience of war. “Just as Vietnam had been America’s first ‘living room war’, spilling carnage in dinnertime news broadcasts” says Cox (2006, July 19), “the Iraq conflict [is] emerging as the first YouTube War” because of all the “videos uploaded to the Internet by soldiers” and downloaded by civilians (Ibid). Soon after this story’s publication, MTV, the Viacom-owned global satellite TV channel, launched a documentary called *Iraq Uploaded*, which focuses on how the development of YouTube, combined with the diffusion of low-cost digital cameras and laptop computers within the U.S. military, the desire of U.S. soldiers to film, share, and make public their personal experience of war to people on the home front, and the efforts of civilian-consumers to peel back the veneer of the media war and get somewhat closer to the real thing, all feed the production, circulation, and consumption of digital war videos that in the TV age would have likely been censored (Kaufman, 2006, July 20). On YouTube, U.S. soldier-generated videos about the Iraq war range from disgusting (“[Apache Kills in Iraq](#)“ shows a U.S. gunship firing high powered munitions at Iraqis and exploding their bodies) to dehumanizing (“[Iraqi Kids Run for Water](#)“ depicts emaciated and thirsty Iraqi children chasing a U.S. armoured truck full of U.S. soldiers who tease the kids by dangling a bottle of water) to debased (“[Soldiers Making Fun of Iraqi Kids, Dev Sucks](#)“ features U.S. soldiers asking non-English speaking Iraqi children “Do you Fuck Donkeys?” while laughing). Controversial as they are disgusting, these soldier-generated YouTube videos counter the MICC’s “myths of national glory, macho heroism and clinical warfare manufactured by military and media elites” and “offer the public uncensored insights into the mundane, violent, and even depraved faces of warfare” (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2009: 25).

“YouTube War” is a term also used by the researchers of U.S. strategic think-tanks, military colleges and journalists to describe how opponents of the U.S. military use YouTube to spread videos in support of their own cause. Writing for The New America Foundation’s *World Policy Journal*, Cohen and Kupcu (2007) describe al-Qaeda as an “enemy that uses communication technology, public opinion, and the global 24-hour news cycle to wage its battles” in “the first “YouTube War” of the twenty-first century”. They discuss how terrorists sometimes attack U.S. forces to generate new videos, remix them with partial and selective interpretations of the Koran to justify violence, and then upload them to YouTube. They advise that “[w]hen fighting an enemy as media savvy as al Qaeda, Washington needs to take far more seriously the crucial importance of public perception in the YouTube era”. From Iraq, anti-US forces use YouTube to circulate disturbing videos like “[Juba the Baghdad Sniper](#)“ (a collage of images of U.S. soldiers killed by this hero-ized Iraqi sniper). Videos like this intend to make the U.S. military look weaker than it is and the oppositional forces stronger than they are, to recruit followers and galvanize the insurgency (e.g., Sandoval, 2006; Wyatt, 2006, October 6). In a U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute-supported monograph entitled *YouTube War: Fighting in a World of Cameras in Every Cell Phone and Photoshop on Every Computer*, Dauber (2009) says these types of videos herald “the age of the YouTube War”. In this “age”, the United States opponents “no longer depend upon the professional media to communicate with their own constituents and no longer depend upon the professional media to communicate with the outside world” but rather, mobilize the digital age’s new tools to create “media events” that “attract the attention of the media” (Ibid: v-vi). These videos then get uploaded to YouTube and downloaded

all over the world by people who watch them for any number of subjective reasons (Wyatt, 2006, October 6).

The "YouTube War" concept points to the importance of social media as tools and spaces of battle, and possibly, the MICC's diminishing power to command and control the mediatized wars that flow alongside actual deployments and battles.

[In] an era of instantaneous global online distribution systems and cheap, simple media production, the dominance of traditional, centralized and hierarchical [military-media] modes of information dissemination, public diplomacy and propaganda can no longer be taken for granted.

(Christensen, 2008: 157)

Consequently, militaries have responded to the destabilizing effects of YouTube by trying to re-establish their power to command and control new mediatized wars. In fact, some are partnering with YouTube to remove user-generated videos that subvert their publicity campaigns and to circulate military-sanctioned soldier-generated videos that support it. U.S. military public affairs officer Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, for example, explains the importance of YouTube: "we understand that it is a battle space in which we have not been active, and this is a media we can use to get our story told" (cited in Zavis, 2007, April 1). To push its official war stories via YouTube and buttress its image, the U.S. military uses censorship and publicity strategies.

A notable example of censorship occurred in May 2007, when the U.S. military restricted the circulation of soldier-generated war videos on YouTube by blocking its Iraq-stationed soldiers' access to YouTube, and compelling all soldiers to submit their videos, images, and texts to their supervisors for review prior to publishing them on the Web (Spencer, 2007, May 21). The U.S. military cited bandwidth limitations and operational security risks to justify its censorship of YouTube. Even prior to this, YouTube was removing user-generated videos that showed U.S. military personnel being killed in response to the flack it was getting from users who were flagging them as "inappropriate content", and in an effort to abide by its own "user guidelines", which prohibit users from posting graphically violent videos (Wyatt, 2006, October 6). Julie Supan, YouTube's then marketing director, said that YouTube removes videos that "display graphic depictions of violence in addition to any war footage (US or other) displayed with intent to shock or disgust, or graphic war footage with implied death (of U.S. troops or otherwise)" (Ibid). The U.S. military's prohibition of videos that put its occupation of Iraq in a negative light was coupled with efforts to load YouTube with videos that made its personnel, policy, and practices look good.

On March 7, 2007, the U.S. military launched its own YouTube publicity channel: Multi-National Force Iraq (MNFIRAQ) (e.g., Chinni, 2007, May 11; Christensen, 2008; Spencer, 2007, May 21; Zavis, 2007, April 1). Developed and administered by Brent Walker and Erick Barnes (ex-Marines turned military-contracted social media service providers), MNFIRAQ is an archive of digital videos, mostly produced by military public affairs officers, but some by soldiers in the field. The MNFIRAQ YouTube channel website claims to "give viewers around the world a 'boots on the ground' perspective of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* from those who are fighting it", but an empirical study of 29 of this channel's videos concluded that it represents an entirely sanitized version of the U.S. occupation of Iraq that serves military publicity goals (Christensen, 2008). Videos display gun battles in Iraqi streets sans death, acts of "surgical warfare", and the "good deeds" of U.S. soldiers who aid or help Iraqi civilians. In this regard, MNFIRAQ serves

“to counterbalance the avalanche of video clips uploaded to YouTube . . . depicting anti-social—and sometimes illegal—activities engaged in by U.S. and coalition military forces in Iraq” (Ibid: 156). And to be certain no negative videos flow, the MNFIRAQ administrators hold the power to remove videos that include “profanity; sexual content; overly graphic, disturbing or offensive material” and “footage that mocks Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces or the citizens of Iraq” (Spencer, 2007, May 21). In its first month, MNFIRAQ was viewed more than 120,000 times, accumulated more than 1,900 subscribers and had its videos carried by TV news networks such as CNN and FOX amplified by the MICC (Zavis, 2007, April 1).

Although the emerging links and connections between the U.S. military and YouTube have been documented (e.g., Anden-Papadopoulos, 2009; Christensen, 2008), there is a dearth of research on how the militaries of other nation-states are partnering up with YouTube to upload, push, and promote positive videos of their own personnel, policies, and practices. The following sections contextualize and examine the CAF’s role in the YouTube War.

Terms and Condition of the Interactive Military Publicity State

The CAF’s foray into YouTube War occurred in a post-9/11 context of deep integration between the U.S. and Canadian security states included the launching of a Canadian military publicity campaign that militarized Canadian culture, and aimed to build public consent to the war in Afghanistan. This was extended by the DND/CAF’s rollout of a militarizing social media policy.

Following 9/11, the United States launched a Global War on Terror (GWOT). The first battlefield in the GWOT was Afghanistan, which the United States and its allies started bombing on October 7, 2001 and then invaded and occupied soon after. This “Operation Enduring Freedom” aimed at removing the Taliban from power and was supported by the states of Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Although Canada was not attacked on 9/11, the Canadian state supported the U.S.’s GWOT, and war in Afghanistan (e.g., Klassen & Albo, 2012; Laxer, 2007; McQuaig, 2007). In this context, the Canadian state ramped up publicity efforts to sell the war, framing it as a means of securing Canada’s liberal capitalist democracy from threats at home and spreading this “way of life” abroad (e.g., Laxer, 2007; McCready, 2013; McKay & Swift, 2012).

The CAF’s Public Affairs (PA) office played an important role in this governmental publicity campaign. The Department of National Defence’s (DND)¹ Public Affairs Policy (1998) says the goal of PA “is to promote understanding and awareness among Canadians of the role, mandate and activities of the CAF and DND, and of the contributions that the CAF and DND make to Canadian society and the international community”. The policy says that by promoting understanding and awareness of “how the CAF and DND make a difference at home and abroad”, “public support for the CAF and DND” can develop. Furthermore, “public confidence . . . is enhanced by ability of the CAF and DND to achieve its mandate in a manner that is open, transparent, and consistent with Canadian values and expectations”. “In short, public support and confidence follow from the ability of the CAF and DND to both deliver and inform”.

The DND’s framing of PA as a means of informing the public as opposed to persuading is contrary to its recent proclamation that PA should shape Canadian values as opposed to be informed by them (Meyer, 2011, November 23). The DND’s 2010-2011 performance report, for example, outlines a PA program called “Canadian identity” that aims to ensure that “Canadians are aware of, understand, and appreciate the history, proficiency, and values of the Canadian military as part of Canada’s identity” (Ibid). In this regard, I take the CAF’s PA office to be a

significant part of the overall post-9/11 “publicity state” in Canada. According to Kozolanka, this growing publicity state promotes and legitimizes the “interests of the state and capital” through a variety of “publicity strategies and tactics” that are derived from the PR, marketing, and advertising industries, but routinely used to sell state power, politicians, and official policy (2014: 4).

In the post-9/11 period, the Canadian publicity state embraced militarism (funding and supporting ongoing armed conflict) and pushed the militarization of Canadian culture (weaving militaristic values into society) (McCready, 2013). At the same time the CAF’s PA office and private media firms became significant agents of these militarizing publicity practices, as well as a source of media images of the war in Afghanistan. Kozolanka (2015), McCready (2013), and McKay and Swift (2012), for example, offer important studies of the Canadian state’s publicity campaign to militarize Canadian national identity, and highlight how a range of private companies have supported this initiative. They shed light on the Canadian military publicity state’s militarization of history (by framing the war in Afghanistan as an extension the War of 1812, WWI, WWII, and the Korean War); consumer culture (by launching cross-promotional branding campaigns with Tim Hortons and other companies); private property (by encouraging people to affix Yellow Ribbon “Support our Troops” stickers to houses and automobiles); transportation infrastructure (by renaming Ontario’s Highway 401 the “Highway of Heroes”); sporting events (by dispatching soldiers to mingle with crowds at hockey, baseball and football games); entertainment (by supporting the CBC radio-show *Afghanada*, and the WWI flick, *Passchendaele*); and the ad holes of magazines and TV schedules (by paying to place CAF print and video recruitment ads). Pushed by an emerging Canadian MICC which weaves together the publicity goals of the CAF’s PA office with the business interests of various public and private organizations, these practices embed militarism in Canadian culture via a number of places, platforms, and spaces—the most recent being social media.

In advancing its communication strategy, the DND and CAF are publicizing their personal, policy, and practices through the platforms, networks, and digital spaces owned and operated by U.S.-based and U.S.-owned social media conglomerates such as [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Linkedin](#), and [Flickr](#), marking out its territory in the Web 2.0 environment. The DND/CAF’s (2015, February 2) Internet “Terms and Conditions” outlines a military policy toward social media platforms, that govern this new territory in its “Section 8: Social Media Notice”.

The DND/CAF (2015, February 2) describes a range of conditions governing public interaction on its social media platforms”. As Section 8.1 “Content and Frequency” explains: “[w]e use our social media accounts as an alternative method of sharing the content posted on our website and interacting with our stakeholders”. Furthermore: “By following our social media accounts (by “following”, “liking”, or “subscribing”), you can expect to see information about DND/CAF operations, programs and initiatives”. This “alternative method” indicates a shift away from a transmission model of publicity to an interactive model wherein the DND/CAF leverages the social media to attract and engage users so as to better influence them.

In addition to enabling the uploading and platforming militarizing digital content through U.S.-owned and operated social media websites, the DND/CAF’s (2015, February 2) social media policy stipulates these organizations’ power to prohibit, limit, and remove content they deem “inappropriate” from websites. If we understand censorship as “the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, [corporate] groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous” (Definitions of censorship, 2013), then the DND/CAF exercises

its censorship powers over the content that users, followers, visitors, and subscribers to these websites generate. If this policy does not go far enough, Section 8.4 “Comments and Interaction”, for example, indicates that DND/CAF personnel will “read comments and participate in discussions when appropriate”, but stipulates that user “comments be relevant and respectful”, and then asserts “the right to delete comments that violate this notice”, and also, to “block” the user and report them to “authorities” to “prevent further inappropriate comments”.

The meaning of “inappropriate” user comment is quite broad, as the DND/CAF (2015, February 2) reserves “the right to edit or remove comments” that:

- Contain personal information
- Are contrary to the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Express racist, hateful, sexist, homophobic, slanderous, insulting, or life-threatening messages
- Put forward serious, unproven or inaccurate accusations against individuals or organizations
- Are aggressive, coarse, violent, obscene, or pornographic
- Are offensive, rude, or abusive to an individual or an organization
- Are not sent by the author or are put forward for advertising purposes
- Encourage illegal activity
- Contain announcements from labour or political organizations
- Are written in a language other than English or French
- Are unintelligible or irrelevant
- Are repetitive or spam
- Do not, in our opinion, add to the normal flow of the discussion.

Furthermore, Section 8.4 qualifies that “Comments used for political party purposes will not be published” and further warns that the DND/CAF “will take seriously and report to the proper authorities any threats to the DND/CAF, their employees, agents, other users or the federal government” (2015, February 2). By enabling the DND/CAF to upload, distribute, circulate, block, deny, and/or take down *any* user-generated content on the above U.S.-corporate owned social media sites, the DND/CAF social media policy stretches the communications and media sovereignty of the Canadian state from its traditional physical or territorial place of jurisdiction (“Canada”) to the virtual and de-territorialized spaces of the Internet and Web.

Yet, Section 1.1 “Privacy: Third-Party Use of Social Media” highlights how even though the DND/CAF’s “use of social media serves as an extension of its presence on the Web”, because its social media accounts are not “hosted on Government of Canada servers”, the users “who choose to interact with us via social media should read the terms of service and privacy policies of these third-party service providers and those of any applications you use to access them” (2015, February 2). Basically, the DND/CAF’s social media policy asserts its power to use U.S. social media websites to push content and pull down content as it likes while enabling these corporate websites to retain their power to aggregate data from the users that visit them (as per the privacy/data collection policies of every social media firm). To be clear, the military gets to use social media websites to promote itself while the dataveillance depot of these sites gets access to the users that the military attracts, engages, and interacts with to aggregate user data, commodify it, and sell it. In turn, the CAF’s two YouTube channels can be used to generate its own content and by-pass the traditional media filters.

The Canadian Armed Force’s YouTube Channels

In 2008, the CAF launched two YouTube channels: [Canadian Armed Forces](#) (2014, May 1) and [Canadian Army](#) (2014, May 1). What follow are a brief description of each channel’s role and a critique of the video content they circulate.

The first channel, Canadian Armed Forces, is basically a recruitment platform. The “About” page describes it as “the official Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment YouTube Channel”. It tells viewers that “[t]here is no career more challenging or rewarding than serving in the Forces”, and encourages them to imagine themselves as members: “[y]ou will have the privilege of defending our country, being part of history-making events, and helping those in need—both in Canada and around the world”. The channel boasts 4,181 subscribers and has 14 videos. 13 videos describe different CAF jobs (i.e., Cook, Dental Officer, Infantry Officer, Public Affairs Officer, and Artillery Officer). The other, “How to Apply to the Canadian Armed Forces”, outlines the enlistment process. If users are inclined to do so, they can click a hyperlink to the DND’s job search engine and submit an application for a position. Almost all videos focus on the “jobs” that CAF personnel do and represent “work” for the CAF as secure, well-paying, and self-actualizing. In a period in which youth unemployment is high and job insecurity seems permanent, these CAF videos seek to attract new recruits by depicting work in the military as safe and stable employment. None of these videos represent military service as possibly life-threatening, with requirements to kill or be killed; they deflect the embodied consequences of war.

The few CAF videos that do represent combat situations represent soldiers as super-human protagonists who cannot be injured. The video for “Armoured Soldier”, for example, represents soldiers racing around an empty field in battle tanks, pivoting their giant cannons and firing. A voice-over announces:

When a mission calls for overwhelming show of force, the terror of the tank is where the action is. Armoured soldiers serve in the army’s most modern and menacing military machines. This is the high-tech high speed world of the armoured soldier. The adrenaline rush racing to find and defeat the enemy.

The video represents the work of being an armoured soldier as promising an “adrenaline rush” comparable to an action-packed video game experience (as in eXtreme sports), but sanitizes the work of war by emptying it of death while making CAF members seem to be part of a high-tech and invincible army.

The second CAF YouTube channel, Canadian Army, is a public affairs platform for the Canadian Army. The channel’s “About” page builds on the military prestige message: “The Canadian Army is known around the globe for its soldiers’ loyalty, courage, integrity, and discipline. Their professional skills and advanced training allow them to successfully perform a wide range of missions at home and abroad”. The channel has 13,460 subscribers and is an archive of hundreds of videos covering many Canadian Army-related topics. The videos can be roughly clustered and categorized thematically, as follows.

Canadian Army training, action and technology: videos of soldiers practicing for combat in live and simulated exercises and joint training operations with the United States, Brazil, Denmark, and other allies; videos of soldiers fighting, sniping, operating weapons, driving tanks, and piloting planes; videos that glamorize Leopard Tanks, Griffon helicopters, F-35 Lightning II

aircraft, C130-J Hercules, 360-degree machine gun surveillance cameras, and other new war machines sold by U.S. and Canadian corporations to the DND at the annual CANSEC trade show.

Canadian Army-civil society relations: videos of retired and active duty soldiers being congratulated, kissed, honoured, fed, awarded, serenaded, hugged, and venerated by politicians, royalty, celebrities, and civilians at Red Fridays, homecoming events, Christmas time parades, hockey games, marathons, Grand Prix races, Iron Man competitions, and Remembrance day ceremonies; videos of Tim Hortons, Ducks Unlimited, and the Royal Bank of Canada sponsoring Army fund raising/PR events as part of their branding campaigns.

Canadian Army war history: videos that are digitized versions of Canadian Army Newsreel clips from World War II and the Korean War and descriptions of the war of 1812 and the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Canadian Army veterans affairs: videos that show injured vets getting the help they need and living happy lives despite war's physical and psychological trauma; videos in which select active-duty and retired soldiers speak about their experiences of the Army and war fighting.

Canadian Army commemoration: videos that depict civilians honouring soldiers killed in war as national heroes through public rituals at cemeteries, tombs, sporting events, and highways and with cultural products such as poems, murals, plays, customized bikes, films, rock songs, and quilts.

Canadian Army missions: videos that represent soldiers conducting "humanitarian interventions", helping Haitian and Afghan civilians to develop build and build infrastructure that was destroyed; videos of military installations, movements, and activities in the Arctic to "secure the North"; videos of the CAF's role in the U.S.-led NATO-war in Afghanistan.

The "Afghanistan Playlist"

The CAF's two YouTube channels are clearly instruments of CAF publicity that link with and aim to serve its recruitment and promotional goals. This section focuses in on how the Canadian Army YouTube channel's "[Afghanistan Playlist](#)" (a set of 61 CAF-generated videos viewed on May 1st, 2014) publicize to promote the CAF's controversial role in the war in Afghanistan. To conduct this portion of the study, I perused each of the 61 videos twice, to interpret the ways the videos "frame" (Entman, 1993) the CAF and to identify if (and how) they put the CAF's role in the war in Afghanistan in a positive light. "Appendix A: Frames of the CAF and its war in Afghanistan" is a heuristic device that organizes my findings. The findings indicate how the frames of the CAF's YouTube "Afghanistan Playlist" work to normalize, legitimize, sanitize, and glorify the CAF's role in the U.S.-led NATO-supported war in Afghanistan.

First, the video frame of the CAF takes its presence in Afghanistan as a part of the normal operations of an advanced liberal democratic state (and coalition of such states) in order to help it to secure a modern state accordingly. This focus on developing infrastructure and kick-starting economic development makes the CAF's presence in Afghanistan seem benign. Such a frame legitimizes the CAF's role in the war by making it seem as though its motive is inherently benevolent; that the CAF is not part of a military mission, but part of a civilizing mission led by the United States and other advanced states and nations that genuinely wish to help an underdeveloped state and nation grow and prosper under capitalism. This frame does not show the realpolitik of the U.S. Empire or the Canadian states' own self-interest in co-occupying

Afghanistan (Klassen & Albo, 2012). Furthermore, the framing of the CAF as effectively "helping" Afghanistan belies how the coalition failed to substantively do so.

In contrast to these YouTube video representations, John Sopko, head of the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), reminds us that Afghanistan "remains under assault by insurgents and is short of domestic revenue, plagued by corruption, afflicted by criminal elements involved in opium and smuggling, and struggling to execute basic functions of government" (cited in Rashid, 2014, September 15). The Afghanistan government (constructed according to a Western model and currently led by Hamid Karzai) is affected by cronyism and is more than \$537 million in debt; the coalition-trained Afghan forces are not able to secure the country, and the quality of life of ordinary civilians has not drastically improved (e.g., Habib, 2014, May 26; Rashid, 2014, September 15; Rosen, 2013, October 25). While in the videos, the representation of the relationship between the CAF and Afghani civilians as harmonious, it detracts from the fact that many Afghans have protested against and resisted NATO's presence in their country since the war began (Ahmed, 2014, February 12).

Second, the video frame of "CAF Battle Deployments and Reports" shows CAF personnel training to fight and win battles in Afghanistan, and then personally recounting the battles they fought after they occurred. The frame conveys an image of the CAF as exceptionally well trained, equipped to fight battles with sophisticated weapons technology, and quite efficient in winning battles. But between these pre- and post-battle clips is a large blank space: the actual war. The video frame takes the essence of war out by not showing the actuality of and experiences of people killing people; training to fight and fighting happens, but we do not see the physical and psychological trauma wrought upon real people. The frame instead gives the impression of the war in Afghanistan as an inherently "clean war", one that "maximizes viewer alienation from the fact of death in order to maximize the war's capacity to be consumed" (Stahl, 2009: 40).

Meant for recruitment and public consumption, the frame does not show us the tens of thousands of Afghan civilians killed by NATO forces since 2002 (Rogers & Chalabi, 2013, April 12). Nor does it remind of the 158 Canadians killed in battle and the almost 2,000 wounded since the war in Afghanistan began (Canada's casualties . . . , 2014, May). One soldier maimed in battle appears in one video, but he is not deterred from re-deploying for a second tour, even with only one leg. Overall, the frame sanitizes war by obscuring the effects of the battles it entails: dead civilians and soldiers, and those alive whose future life is plagued by trauma. This sanitizing frame of the CAF in the war in Afghanistan works to assuage civilian trepidations about its human toll as complemented by the "CAF Division of Labour and Duties" frame which makes warfighting seem like a normal job, not a deadly risk.

Third, the video frame of "CAF Personnel Homecomings and Departures" further takes the violence out of the war by showing soldiers in transit, arriving from and going to war in Afghanistan at various airports. The human consequences of war are again displaced by happy reunifications, mostly of the traditional "nuclear family" of military men (husbands and fathers) with their female civilian wives and children (mothers and daughters). Moreover, this video frame reproduces a longstanding patriarchal notion of war's division of labour. As Kelly explains: "[t]he conventional (patriarchal) definition of war involves associations with activity, heroism and masculinity" while peace is "often understood as the absence of war, but in more developed formulations it is also linked to the quiet, mundane, feminine" (2000: 48).

The homecoming frame likewise conveys the idea that the war in Afghanistan as something fought by heroic Canadian men "over there" on foreign battlefronts in order to

maintain the peace for Canadian women and children “over here”, further justifying the actions of the liberal democratic state. It also perpetuates constructed differences between men and women based upon stereotypical masculine and feminine war-time roles: men are soldiers, who with their comrades, get paid to do dirty and dangerous war work abroad; women are domestics who solitarily and temporarily do the unpaid work of heading and cleaning the house while caring for the kids. This frame displaces the fact that women worked in about 8.3% of combat positions in the war in Afghanistan (Bell, 2011, October 25), and hides from view how the Canadian home front is not so peaceful, especially after Daddy returns from war. Plenty of CAF personnel who survive war come home with post-traumatic stress disorder (Grant, 2014, August 11), and then are violent with their families. In fact, there was a five-fold jump in reported cases of domestic violence by CAF personnel after their return from Afghanistan in 2007 (Domestic violence . . . , 2011, March 21).

Fourth, the video frame of “CAF-Civilian War in Afghanistan Commemoration Acts” glorifies and normalizes the CAF’s role in the war in Afghanistan by making war-fighting, and even dying, seem admirable. When asked “What Remembrance Day Means to Them”, CAF personnel and Canadian civilians basically repeat the same sentence: that it is a day to reflect upon the family, friends, and comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy our freedoms in Canada. Furthermore, the videos of soldier and civilian-organized rituals and cultural artifacts of commemoration communicate one-dimensional “support for the troops” and give the impression that Canada is totally unified in its position on the war, when in fact, many Canadians routinely protested against the war from the get-go (Clark, 2011, October 7).

The “support the troops” rhetoric forwarded by these videos problematically equates support for the CAF with consent for the state’s use of war as a political and economic tool. While Canadian citizens should engage in robust debate regarding the state’s uses of the CAF and it is normal to be concerned for the well-being of its personnel, the “support the troops” rhetoric invites citizens to passively support whatever the state’s use of the CAF may be, and thus abnegate their democratic responsibility to deliberate about matters of war and peace. “Support the troops” fosters an ethos where supporting the troops means supporting the reigning government and whatever situation it puts the CAF in.

In sum, the CAF’s YouTube “Afghanistan Playlist” videos frame the CAF’s role in the U.S.-led NATO war in Afghanistan as a benevolent, clean, patriarchal, and glorious enterprise while downplaying its complex motivations, human consequences and public opposition.

Conclusion: Resisting the Political Economy of YouTube War

The Internet and social media websites have established a global information battle-space in which a plurality of different state and non-state actors engage, intervene, and participate in the making of new media wars. And in this age of YouTube War, a number of these actors engage in symbolic struggles over the meaning of wars by uploading and sharing videos that may affirm or contest them. While it would be tempting to suggest that the Internet and social media have changed everything and made the MICC a moot concept, this paper’s study of the links and connections between the U.S. DOD and YouTube and the CAF and YouTube suggest that the MICC concept is still valid. The partnership between the U.S. DOD and YouTube supports the classic MICC concept (a nexus of the U.S. DOD and a U.S.-based media corporation) while the CAF and YouTube conjunction points to a cross-border MICC (a nexus of the Canadian military and a U.S.-based media corporation). Both of these YouTube channels express a symbiotic

relationship between militaries and media corporations, with the former pursuing publicity and the latter, profit.

The U.S. and Canadian militaries both use YouTube to upload and circulate videos that promote and put their personnel and practices in controversial 21st century wars in a positive light. By spreading officially sanctioned soldier-generated content through this U.S.-based yet globalizing video-sharing website that intersects with the daily lives of about one billion people, these militaries can bypass the gatekeeping powers of news media organizations and communicate directly with the public. YouTube enables military publicity machines to turn the manufacture of consent into a direct military-to-public affair by diminishing the longstanding intermediary role of the news media and professional journalists. Also, by using social media platforms that they do not own or pay to use but which are some of the most visited and trafficked in the world, militaries can reduce costs associated with propaganda and publicity distribution/exhibition while potentially increasing their reach.

So while the techno-optimists of Silicon Valley corporations and the digerati PR industry cheer the new media for putting communicative power in the hands of the people *at the expense* of big news organizations, the U.S. and Canadian military YouTube channels highlight how the persuasive powers of even bigger organizations like militaries may be buttressed by the social media. YouTube does not escape or necessarily undermine the sovereign power of states, but rather, is subject to their power, as well as interactive publicity campaigns that aim to influence digital content flows within and outside of their territorial borders.

Furthermore, while military actors like the DOD and the CAF can use YouTube for publicity purposes, the Google-owned YouTube can use their soldier-generated videos to serve its bottom-line. The goal of all U.S.-based social media corporations is profit-maximization on behalf of shareholders; these companies make revenue by aggregating and selling user data and delivering user attention to customized ads placed in and around the content that users view, read, post to, click through, comment on, like, and so on (Fuchs 2014). The DOD and the CAF support the business interests of social media companies by generating the video content they can use to attract users to their sites, and by doing so, help these firms attract the advertising clients that pay to expose these sites' users to ads. In this respect, the PR goals of militaries and the profit-model of social media capitalism converge.

The military enhancement and entrenchment of resources and capacities to fight wars through the corporate social media indicates that states and their private partners continue to exert substantial power over the means of producing, distributing, and exhibiting mediatized representations of war as compared to the plurality of individuals and groups using the social media to contest them. Symbolic struggles over war are happening in the 21st century, but they are waged on an inherently uneven playing field; one that is asymmetrical and occupied by dominant actors with the resources and capacities requisite to pursuing and achieving their strategic goals. Digital PA activities are but one small part of growing militarized information operations spearhead by the United States and followed by Canada. And these info-ops activities can help big social media firms get bigger by bringing more users to their websites and increasing their delivery of user attention to advertisements.

Yet, there are contradictions in the political economy of the military-social media complex. All over the world, anti-war and peace activists have created and uploaded videos to YouTube that contest the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. From the Canadian scene, anti-war and pacifist groups have uploaded videos like "[Myths for Profit: Canada's Role in Industries](#)

[of War and Peace](#)“, [“Inconvenient Truths: Canada’s War in Afghanistan 2007”](#)“, [“Afghanistan: Ten Years of War and Resistance”](#)“, and [“Occupy Bay Street, Not Afghanistan”](#)“.

Furthermore, Canadian veterans of the war in Afghanistan are using YouTube to draw public attention to their hardship. On March 18, 2014, Marc Perreault, a 45-year old war veteran who spent more than half of his life in the CAF, uploaded [“Let’s stop it”](#)“. In this video, Perreault expresses grief about the Canadian soldiers who committed suicide soon after returning home from the war in Afghanistan. Tears welling up in his eyes, Perreault pleads to current and former soldiers who may be suffering post-traumatic stress disorder to get help. Perhaps recognizing that the Conservative Government cuts to the Veterans Affairs budget have reduced government-provisioned help for war veterans, Perreault offers to talk on the phone with any soldier who needs to share their experience of war but is unable to find someone willing to listen. Other veterans like Kevin Berry use YouTube to publicize their privately felt experiences of war and the hardships of its aftermath. In a video entitled [“Kevin Berry: Flag Bearer”](#)“, Berry talks about his struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder, his attempt to sue the Canadian Government for its new Veterans Charter and his commitment to fight for the material interests of his fellow comrades.

Although the burgeoning pacifist and veteran-generated YouTube videos may support YouTube’s business model, they also convey significant counterpoints to the DOD and CAF’s publicity fronts. They are reminders that the meaning of the war in Afghanistan is not stable or agreed upon, but a site of struggle within the United States, Canada, and the Internet’s global battlespace.

Notes

- 1 In this paper, I use the traditional acronym of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF), instead of the usually accepted acronym of National Defence (ND), because this is prevalent in the department’s public affairs policy, social media policy and related websites.

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Appendix A**Frames of the CAF and its War in Afghanistan**

<i>CAF Frame</i>	<i>Video Titles</i>	<i>Representations of the CAF</i>
CAF developing and securing Afghanistan (13 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ANA Commander grateful for CF’s hard work ▪ ANA police, CF mentors collaborate on shooting range; ▪ Canadian Forces hand over Panjwayi to U.S. troops ▪ CF expertise boosts ANSF professionalism ▪ CF shift focus to training Afghan National Army ▪ CF works with locals on joint development projects ▪ Female Afghan pilots train at Thunder Lab ▪ MGen discusses FC contribution to NATO training mission ▪ Soldiers train Afghan National Police ▪ Troops act as advisers on construction projects ▪ Troops conduct civil-military operations in Afghanistan ▪ Troops discuss solutions, opportunities at shuras ▪ Troops provide service to Kabul area camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CAF builds the Afghan National Police and Army ➤ The CAF trains Afghan security/military forces ➤ The CAF helps Afghan security/military forces to secure regions/districts of Afghanistan against Taliban attacks ➤ The CAF trains Afghani civilians to develop public infrastructure. ➤ The CAF delivers services to Afghani civilians ➤ The CAF has a positive rapport with Afghanis military/security forces and civilians

CAF training to fight and win battles in Afghanistan (11 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Firing Exercises Prepare CF for Afghanistan ▪ Badges change, skills stay ▪ Troops prepare for last rotation in Afghanistan ▪ Soldiers learn advanced first aid ▪ Combined arms teams prepare for Afghanistan ▪ Pre-deployment training focuses on “real” scenarios ▪ Journalist observes training for Afghanistan ▪ Realistic training replicates Afghan conditions ▪ Preparing for last rotation in Afghanistan ▪ CF troops train on mounted remote weapon system ▪ U.S. desert ideal for Afghanistan preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CAF trains to fight and battle in Afghanistan ➤ The CAF trains to fight and battle in simulated Afghanistan combat environments on bases in Canada, in the United States, and in Afghanistan ➤ The CAF trains to fight and battle using weapons technology like heavy artillery, tanks, and helicopters
CAF Division of Labour and Duties (12 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front-line medical unit saves lives ▪ Medical officer writes, talks about deployments ▪ Warrant officer describes second in command role ▪ Chief of Air Staff discusses joint operations ▪ NSE supplies Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan ▪ Heavy-duty equipment digs in at patrol base ▪ Technicians provide vital warfare support ▪ Regular artillery training helps keep troops safe ▪ Door gunners secure helicopters, convoys ▪ Chaplain performs multiple roles in battle group ▪ Troops offer look into daily life at combat outpost ▪ Life of deployed soldiers to be caught on camera 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CAF personnel describe their role, duties, tasks and experiences in Afghanistan ➤ The CAF personnel describe their jobs and what they have done or are doing in Afghanistan ➤ The CAF personnel describe how their jobs help support the goals of the CAF in Afghanistan ➤ The CAF personnel discuss their daily work routines on CAF bases in Afghanistan, the jobs they complete and how they do them, and some work-related challenges
CAF Battle Deployments and Reports (8 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last Canadian troops deploy for OP ATHENA ▪ R22eR BG begins its tour overseas ▪ Canadian soldiers defend patrol base ▪ CF close last phase of OP ATHENA ▪ Soldier overcomes physical limits to deploy ▪ 145 soldiers leave for Afghanistan ▪ Troops counter insurgency threat in Afghan village ▪ RCR conducts counter-insurgency operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CAF deploy to OP ATHENA ➤ THE CAF conclude OP ATHENA ➤ The CAF personnel defend base and positions against attacks from the Taliban ➤ The CAF personnel defend Afghan village against insurgent attacks ➤ Soldiers depart Canada to Afghanistan ➤ The CAF personnel support the Afghan National Army and Police to counter Taliban attacks ➤ After losing a leg in battle on previous deployment, a soldier deploys for the second time to Afghanistan

CAF Personnel Homecomings and Departures (4 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daddy is Coming Home! ▪ Military deployment affects the whole family ▪ Members of Joint Task Force 3-10 return home ▪ Deployed Soldiers arrive home safe for holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CAF personnel are welcomed at airport up arrival from Afghanistan by family, friends and community members ➤ CAF personnel (men) are welcomed home by wife and children and interact with family members at home ➤ A wife of a CAF soldier talks about some of the domestic challenges she endures while her husband is away in Afghanistan
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CAF-Civilian War in Afghanistan Commemoration Acts (13 videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Honouring Soldiers Who Died in Afghanistan” ▪ “What Remembrance Day Means to them (part 1) ▪ What Remembrance Day Means to them (part 2) ▪ Community honours local fallen soldier ▪ Lebanese restaurant opens for fallen soldier ▪ Silent walk pays tribute to fallen soldiers ▪ “Portraits of Honour” mural tours Canada” ▪ R22eR celebrates 100 years of history ▪ Combat engineers author new book, relive Kandahar—Part 1 ▪ Combat engineers author new book, relive Kandahar—Part 2 ▪ Local fallen soldier prompts community monument ▪ Military families record DVD for deployed troops ▪ Best of 2011: Team Canada visits troops in Afghanistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CAF personnel killed in combat while in Afghanistan are listed (names and photographs). ➤ The CAF personnel deployed in Afghanistan talk about what “Remembrance Day” means to them. ➤ Communities, businesses and creative workers on the “homefront” develop cultural products (murals, sculptures and documentary films) and rituals (silent walks, tree planting and food consumption) to honour, pay tribute to and show support for active duty and killed CAF personnel in the battlefield of Afghanistan. ➤ The CAF personnel produce cultural productions (books) that represent their “experience” of the war in Afghanistan and commemorate the history and contribution of the CAF at war ➤ Professional Canadian athletes visit CAF in Afghanistan to show their support. ➤ Family members of CAF personnel deployed in Afghanistan make DVD recordings of themselves wishing the CAF happy holidays.
