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SCATTERING CHAFF: Canadian Air Power and Censorship during the Kosovo War

by Bob Bergen

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Canada Missed a Good News Story

Ironically, in late May during the last days of the bombing campaign, it was Brig. Gen. David Jurkowski, who had becoming highly skilled at giving journalists ambiguous information, who spoke real news about the success of the Cold Lake and Bagotville pilots at one of the technical briefings. He talked about Canadian pilots leading half of the missions they had flown on and, of the successful strikes, sorties and missions, Canada had accomplished 10 per cent of them. Also, ironically, the information came from an American, not a Canadian, source. Jurkowski commented on it after the fact in a *Toronto Star* article on an advance team of 139 soldiers arriving in Skopje, Macedonia, to prepare for the arrival of a Canadian contingent sent to join NATO ground forces. In that story, a US embassy source told the *Star*'s reporter that the CF-18s were doing 10 per cent of the strike missions. Jurkowski said that on any given day, Canada comprised from 5 to 25 per cent of the strike force dropping weapons. He said: "We've been far more successful than the average Canadian is aware."[1]

The *Toronto Star* was the only news outlet in Canada to carry that story on that day. Two Canadian news outlets ran similar and more detailed stories on the air force's successes, the *Daily News* (Halifax) on June 17 and the *Ottawa Citizen* on June 21.[2] On June 26 just two newspapers carried stories with some detail about the success of the CF-18s, after the bombing campaign ended. Both the *Toronto Star* and the *Calgary Herald* ran the same Canadian Press wire story, buried in the back pages of their front sections.[3]

Had the journalists been given broader access, some of the pilots and ground crews would have been willing to talk to them. Bagotville pilot Maj. Alain Pelletier explained:

> I actually like to talk to the media because this way I could actually pass on my message and attempt to let the folks in Canada know how people are feeling, that behind this whole issue of the conflict there were actually people involved and that people have feelings. We're not war machines; we're trained professionals there to do a job that the government has decided that we would get on with. I think it would have been important for the aircrews to be able to pass on their experiences and their feelings.[4]

Even people like Pelletier were careful about what they said to the journalists in Aviano, because, like all military personnel, he followed orders.

> At one point, it was decided by the commander in charge of the whole force in Italy [Brig. Gen. Dwight Davies] that, for security reasons, we would not divulge the name of the pilots who would be actually talking to the media and that their face would not appear on the camera. Eventually—for a part of the time also in order to avoid compromising the security of the operations—pilots would not talk at all. All of the dealings with the media would be carried out by the public affairs officer that was in theatre at the time.[5]

Cpl. Patrick Savoie, responsible for the weapons inventory, said the order not to talk to the media was superfluous because he wouldn't talk to the media anyway. He didn't feel comfortable in the presence of journalists because, in the first instance, his work was all classified and, in the second, he just didn't like them hanging around.

> I did not want to talk to journalists. I don't want to take the risk of saying something that's going to get me in trouble. I did not want to have the question: "How many weapons

> do we have here?" It looks so good to be able to report that you have X number of guided weapons. Our politicians were telling people: "We're over there because we have the latest in guided bombs and the latest in guided air-to-ground missiles." Well, they got told we had the latest, so they would come and go: "Can I see them?" and "How many do we have?" Well I can't tell you. And if you want a drink, have a few beers and relax, shoot the shit, you don't want to do it with a journalist around. You don't want to tattletale when you're having fun.[6]

CF-18 pilot "Chimp" wouldn't talk to the news media for an entirely different reason. He made no distinction between news outlets and generally thinks all journalists are the same: sloppy with their facts and biased in their reporting. He explained:

> I avoid interviews. Anytime I read something that I know about, the reporting is full of inaccuracies and there's so many things that you read about in the papers that you're not an expert on. I also see a lot of bias. I see a country that's being fed many unflattering things about its military by its media.[7]

What irritates him most are news outlets that write stories at Christmas time about privates receiving food hampers from charities because they are destitute but ignore the motivations of soldiers working shoulder-to-shoulder with civilians working on disaster relief.

> A couple of years ago when the Red River flooded, and the ice storms, where we had a corporal working next to a Hydro Ontario guy making triple time and the corporal's making his normal corporal's pay plus twelve bucks field allowance for the day. But he's doing this gladly because he's helping the Canadian public. We had forest fires that summer in Ontario and on and on and on. Then come Christmas time the media's into the privates getting their

> Christmas food hampers because they didn't have enough money. That's shameful.[8]

Still other pilots would have been reluctant to talk to the media because they were concerned about reprisals against themselves from Serbs in Europe and against their families in Canada. Many pilots had heard the story about body bags thrown on the lawns of pilots in the Persian Gulf in 1991 to intimidate their families. Among them was Lt. Col. "Billie" Flynn, commander of 441 Tactical Fighter Squadron. Flynn explained:

> The press's [lack of] access to us was sold to us as being an element of self-protection. They were worried about Serb reprisals. Intelligence overseas said that we would be targeted. The other part is that our families might be targeted because there was a pretty strong aggressive Serb community. Remember all the demonstrations in Toronto and Ottawa? They didn't want the Serb community to come at our families and threaten them. That might be a gross overstatement of the threat, but that was the logic that was used. And that's why the press was not let near us. Remember from Gulf War One? They picked a couple of names from the cadre and the press followed them around and followed their wives and families. They were day-to-day press in Canada. During Gulf War One, people threw body bags on the lawns of Canadian airmen that were serving overseas. They didn't want body bags thrown on our front yards and terrorizing our families.[9]

In fact, just the opposite was true about the selected spouse. Marion Kendall, wife of Cold Lake pilot Maj. Dave Kendall, who was chosen by the Forces to be followed by the news media, suffered no incidents of harassment in 1991. Still, the myth about the body bags being thrown on pilots' lawns had grown to the point where it had taken on a life of its own. The deputy chief of defence staff during the Kosovo air war, Lt. Gen. Henault, later explained that he was not aware of any pilot harassment in 1991.

> I'm not personally aware of specific incidents and certainly I haven't seen any documentation either. Quite frankly, I was not involved in the Gulf War that directly because I was at the time the commander of Canadian Forces based in Portage La Prairie out in Manitoba and involved specifically in training people as opposed to providing combat forces. Any of that would have been the product of those who were directly involved in those campaigns or that campaign at the time.[10]

Meanwhile, Lt. (Navy) Larsen used every tool in his public affairs officer's kit to raise the profile of the air force in Aviano. He and his staff worked tirelessly against the clock meeting the internal communications needs of the Canadian Forces and generating material for the television outlets back in Canada.

> Everybody in the Canadian contingent put in extremely long hours. From my personal perspective it was made probably even more difficult because of the time change. As we're going to bed there, the news cycle for the evening news is just starting to ramp up in Canada because we're eight hours ahead. So, it's midnight in Aviano and it's four o'clock in Canada. Everyone's getting ready for the six o'clock news. Then they're getting ready to confirm new information for the ten o'clock news with [the CBC's Peter] Mansbridge. Then I would normally have my alarm set so that I would be able to take calls at around 5:30 [a.m.] so an eighteen-hour day would be average.[11]

Larsen and a colleague routinely filmed the Canadians' activities in Aviano and transmitted the images to Canadian television networks by satellite. In effect, he was producing secondary B-roll film in the hope it would be used by the networks.

> There were times when they'd say there was nothing on here that's really useful for them. They'd say what would work

> for them is if they could get an interview, you know a double-ender with the commanding officer. A double-ender is where you record somebody, you get their face on camera and they're asked questions through a phone. You can satellite that entire recording back to Toronto and they can play it and Peter Mansbridge will ask the exact same questions and it will look as if it's a live feed. It's the same questions, it's the same response. It's totally ethical, the only difference is the time dimension and that you're not paying for a satellite truck to come right here and beam up at that exact time.
>
> We'd set the CO up, put a headset on him and on the phone in his headset would be a producer from CBC. It would be four o'clock in the afternoon on our end it would be 8 o'clock in the morning in Toronto. We'd tape the stuff and we'd put some other images with that tape that we already had ready. We'd edit it together in two or three hours, we'd walk over and we'd have a pre-purchased satellite uplink time which ran at $1,000 a minute, right, and so we'd have a ten-minute up-feed time and up it would go. $10,000 later it would all be sent to Canada.[12]

Larsen used exactly the same technique if a television network wanted to do a story on escape and evasion for the pilots.

> They would say: "I want to do a specific story on what kind of escape and evasion gear you wear when you fly. I want to do a story on that so I need visuals that support that." We'd say: "OK, we'll show you what we can. Maybe we can't show you this piece of gear or that piece of gear because it's secret, but we can show you all the other stuff." So, we would shoot that. We'd do an interview with the pilot, they would talk about it. Again, there was some parameters on what we could show and what we couldn't so, we'd show the back of the pilot and it would go up and it would be a story. In fact, it was a story on the national news.[13]

The television networks may have received stories they liked thanks to Larsen's skill, but the fact was that the military controlled the news media in this fashion and provided spoon-fed and sanitized stories. The issue is what the Canadian public was not being told, for example, that the CF-18 pilots' search-and-rescue radios were incompatible with their NATO allies' radios and that new systems were bought on the fly using Jurkowski's military credit card. Canadians were not told that the pilots had to put the newly acquired radios in their flight suit's pants pocket because of inadequate combat vests or that, if a pilot had to eject, in all probability his radio would be blown away and lost. One can only imagine the Canadian public's response had they been told the truth. Larsen said he never lied to the news media—there were just things he could and could not say.

> I don't pretend to know every single detail of flight operations but you'd have to be relatively thick to work in that environment and not pick up on some of these things. When I do media-relations training, I use Aviano as an example. I often get the question: "What if you know something and you've been told not to tell?" In a corporate setting, it's a little more difficult, but I often rely on Aviano as the perfect example of where media would say: "Well, John do you know this?" "Yes, I do." "Will you tell me?" "Well, no I won't." So, I say I never lie to the media, in that sense, because there are a great many things that you can't say for operational security. You just have to justify why you can't say it.[14]

In Ottawa, a Canadian Press reporter attended the daily press briefings at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). He said it was nearly impossible to write anything meaningful about the air war based on the information that was being provided.

> It got kind of difficult because there was very little information—very little meaningful information was being passed on. It was bare bones stuff. It was limited to: "OK, we launched X number of aircraft and they attacked targets and the targets were very vaguely specified—radio rebroad-

> casting things, military barracks"—but there was no bomb damage assessment. There was no real assessment of what we'd done and there was very, very little available on any kind of hazards they might have encountered.[15]

The Ottawa reporters continued to push for greater access to the pilots, for more information and detail, but were consistently stymied by security considerations. "We kept pushing and we would constantly get: 'Well, for security reasons we can't give you that.'"[16] He had a long-standing interest in the Canadian Forces that spanned thirty-two years with the Canadian Press in Ottawa, Toronto, London, Edmonton, and New York City. He joined the parliamentary press gallery in 1988, was a member of the gallery during the 1991 Gulf War, and had been to Aviano in 1997.

He said that lack of information the military was providing was doubly frustrating for the half-dozen reporters like him in the national press gallery who were interested in the Canadian Forces and who went out of their way to become well informed about them. But only a half dozen journalists knowledgeable about the military aren't many when the size of the parliamentary press gallery is considered. The 1998–1999 *Canadian Parliamentary Guide* listed 359 journalists with Canadian news organizations or agencies.[17]

Apart from himself and the few reporters who were knowledgeable about the Forces, other journalists had just a passing interest.

> One of the problems with a lot of reporters is that they may be interested in the military, but they really don't know what's going on. I mean half of them can't even read rank insignia and couldn't tell you the difference between a master-corporal and a Polish admiral. Of course, when they start nosing around military stories, that drives the military nuts because the military has to start from scratch to explain what's happening.[18]

It is widely thought that 22 May 1999 marked a turning point in the war, not only for the bombing campaign's tactical success but for its axiological effects—Slobodan Milosevic's ability to control public opinion.[19] The

effects of axiological air operation were predicted by air war scholars Peter Wijninga and Richard Szafranski in 1991 and confirmed by Paul Rexton Kan in 2004.[20] On that day, NATO's warplanes moved beyond the utility targeting of military assets and bombed the Serbian power grid, bringing the war home to the Serbian population.[21] It showed the Serbian population that Milosevic could no longer protect them or provide their basic needs. In Brussels, the May 22 press briefing for international journalists followed the same format as most other days, with NATO spokesman Jamie Shea leading off with the refugee situation in Albania and diplomatic initiatives, followed by a military update. Shea was deeply moved by reports that in Macedonia, 741 children were looking for parents, and 1,382 parents were looking for children.[22]

Militarily, Shea reported that NATO jets had flown 245 strike sorties and nine combat air patrol sorties. Some twelve Serb tanks were hit, along with eighteen armoured and other vehicles, nine artillery and mortar positions, and a Yugoslav barracks facility in Estok. The journalists were also told NATO warplanes had struck electrical power transformers and petroleum facilities at Drahovo and Smederovo, and that there was evidence the Serb military was extending minefields along the Albanian border to maintain its hold on Kosovo and prevent supplies from reaching armed ethnic Albanians.

During the follow-up questioning, *New York Times* journalist Michael Gordon asked for elaboration on the bombing of the Estok barracks facility, an allegedly unused prison that was hit nearby, and the potential for collateral damage, not about that evening's bombing success. The Serbs had released video of bodies and casualties from the prison bombing. Gordon wanted to know whether they were collateral damage. Before other reporters switched the line of questioning, Gordon was told the information NATO had was that the prison was unused and that the bodies were placed there by the Serbs and no one knew why.[23]

In Ottawa, turning point or not, the events of May 22 were marked by one of the briefest technical briefings held during the entire bombing campaign. The journalists were told the NATO planes had struck television and radio stations, radio relay stations, and electrical power stations. Two Canadian CF-18s had struck unidentified petroleum sites in Serbia and one mission was unsuccessfully engaged by anti-aircraft fire and missiles.

No mention was made of the strategic importance of the electrical station sites, and the press corps asked only three questions. The first called for speculation about a ceasefire; the second and third questions sought information about an advance reconnaissance party of Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) from CFB Edmonton going to Macedonia and how many there might be.[24]

Just what could and couldn't be released to the news media in the name of operational security is difficult to glean from the Canadian Forces public statements at the time. For example, by the end of May, the technical briefings had degenerated into meetings that few members of the news media bothered to attend and even fewer bothered to report on. The June 1 briefing indicates how the "operational security" reasons cited by the Canadian Press's Ward came into play. That day, one journalist tried to get a sense of what Canadians were doing in the bombing campaign by learning about the number of bombs dropped. He was stonewalled by Jurkowski on the grounds of security. The reporter wanted to know the cost of the weapons dropped to date and Jurkowski replied: "That could lead one to think about the number of weapons and by way of policy and security, we don't talk about the number of weapons employed."[25] The journalist pressed, wanting to know why the number of bombs was a security issue and arguing that Canadians had a right to know the cash value of munitions dropped. Jurkowski replied: "I don't have those numbers for you right now and for security reasons, I'm not going to address it any further."[26]

That line of questioning was dropped until the next day, when Henault was asked about the cost of bombs. Henault went on the offensive, saying: "We have been, I think, fairly open. In fact, very open throughout this whole process now at seventy-one days of giving you briefings daily so I think our process has been very open and transparent, probably in a way unprecedented in the past."[27] Having said that, Henault contradicted Jurkowski's argument about security by divulging that $20 million had been spent on Operation Echo and about 45 per cent of that was on bombs.[28] The journalists did not question the inconsistency—why that information was withheld for security reasons one day but was not a security issue the next.

What can also be noted is that whether the bombs' cost was a security issue or not, Henault's revelation was not big news. The cost figures that Henault revealed found their way into just one sentence of an opinion

piece in the *Toronto Star* out of a total of three articles involving the CF-18s that ran in two Canadian newspapers the next day. The other two articles, variations of the same Canadian Press story that was carried by the *Toronto Star* and the *Gazette* (Montreal), focused on an engine maintenance error that could cost millions to repair. Just one sentence in both stories addressed the CF-18s' role in the campaign. One read: "Canada has contributed eighteen of its operational fleet of 100 CF-18s to NATO's Yugoslavia bombing campaign."[29] The other read: "There has been no special blade maintenance for the 18 CF-18s now based at Aviano, Italy, to participate in the NATO bombing of Kosovo."[30]

As the bombing campaign wore on, the technical briefings became shorter and shorter, providing less and less information about the CF-18s' operations. They had settled into a routine format that generally opened virtually the same way: "Welcome on Day 73 of the NATO air campaign."[31] On that day, June 4, Henault boiled down the previous night's combat air patrol and bombing missions to just three sentences in English, and two in French. The more detailed English version was: "In respect to our own Canadian air operations, Task Force Aviano flew ten of its assigned sixteen sorties yesterday including two combat air patrol tasks. Precision-guided munitions were used by our CF-18s to attack a petroleum storage site, a military radio relay station and a military airfield. The two combat air patrol missions were also flown without incident."[32] The nation's news media used nothing from the technical briefings that day or for the next week.

When the bombing campaign ceased on June 10, the war ended with massive media indifference. Television ignored the Canadian air force's role, as did all but one major English-speaking newspaper. The *Toronto Star* devoted a story to the appropriateness of Canada's participation in the bombing campaign and stated that the CF-18s had flown 682 sorties, 60 per cent of which were on bombing missions, and dropped more than $9 million worth of bombs.[33] Not until five days later on June 16, six days after the campaign ended, did stories appear that expressed the pilots' relief that the bombing campaign was over. The stories were identical, written from Ottawa by the Canadian Press's John Ward and published in three newspapers—the *Hamilton Spectator*, the *Daily News* (Halifax) and the *Times Colonist* (Victoria). Ward didn't actually talk to any pilots. Notwithstanding Public Affairs Officer Larsen's central tenet that if he was

truly successful in his job he would never be quoted, it was he who talked to Ward by telephone from Aviano, saying that everyone in Aviano was grateful for the positive development. The Canadian public still had no details about the bombing campaign giving any sense of the dangers the pilots faced, the hardship the ground crew endured, or the challenges both overcame through innovation and inspiration. Ward could just recycle the only information he had: one unnamed pilot describing the blackness in front of him light up as a "Dutch fighter steered a missile into a Yugoslav MiG," taken from the story in the April 15 *Maple Leaf* about Lt. Col. Faucher's first mission.[34]

On June 16, the last technical briefing for the news media was held at NDHQ in Ottawa. Henault provided a comprehensive scorecard of what the Canadian air force had contributed to the bombing campaign. He augmented his address with slides and a welter of statistics showing the missions Canadians had flown. The Canadian pilots had performed superbly, he said, flying on 10 per cent of all NATO strike missions, leading half of those. He parsed their performance, showing that they had flown 2,547 hours over 678 sorties on 224 missions, and that 558 of the sorties had taken place on 167 air-to-ground bombing missions during which 361 precision-guided munitions were dropped. Even with Henault's statistics available on transcripts, it is difficult to follow his confusing narrative. CP's Ward was able to sift through Henault's numbers and discerned that about 25 per cent of the laser-guided bombs the Canadians dropped had missed their targets. Henault assured Ward that a 75 to 80 per cent rate of accuracy was consistent with that of NATO allies.[35]

It didn't matter much. Only one newspaper, the *Daily News* (Halifax) carried a brief story by Ward, who wrote of the Canadians' success.[36] In it, he pointed out that the Canadians had dropped 361 laser-guided bombs and 171 gravity bombs which hit 158 targets. The air force had not released assessments of the bomb strikes for security reasons. There was much else that could have been told but wasn't. Among some of the most egregious omissions were that CF-18 pilots had long pushed for night-vision goggles in the 1990s but were never provided them. As a result, the pilots had to fly in single-file formations at different altitudes at night to avoid crashing into each other, which also exposed the last jets in the formation to

anti-aircraft fire and missiles. They also had to train their radars on their own jets in front of them, rather than enemy threats, to avoid collisions.[37]

The June 16 technical briefing was the last because, by then, NATO forces and the international news media, including Canadians, were on the ground in Kosovo providing the most up to date information on daily events. One of them, the CBC's Paul Workman, couldn't believe the difference in the access he was provided by members of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), who were providing reconnaissance support to the Canadian infantry battle group in the NATO peacekeeping force. Workman, working alone with his own television camera, was in Macedonia on the Kosovo border. He was trying to figure out how he was going to get into Kosovo when a convoy of seven of the Strathcona's Coyotes appeared out of nowhere and invited him to ride along with them. Workman explained:

> I'd been dealing with the public relations people for the infantry, and I had been asking them and asking them and asking them for permission to be able to travel into Kosovo with the forces. I had been given sort of an equivocal answer: "Maybe. We'll try to see what we can do. I doubt it. It's pretty difficult. We have to get permission from a lot of levels." The day that the NATO forces moved into Kosovo, the reconnaissance unit commanding officer, who I knew at that point, let me climb aboard. It was his personal decision to let me climb on board with my gear and travel into Kosovo and to let me spend, off and on, the next couple of weeks with them. It wasn't a problem at all to talk to them and identify them by name, rank, and regiment.[38]

That decision was made by Maj. Paul Fleury, who later became Lt Col. Fleury, commanding officer of the Strathcona's. Fleury met Workman by pure chance at the Frankfurt airport in late May. They flew together to Skopje, where they parted ways. From Skopje, Fleury went to train his reconnaissance squadron for integration with the British army's Fourth Armored Brigade preparing to enter Kosovo if the bombing campaign ended. As that cessation neared, Workman hired a local driver to take

him to the Kosovo border. The driver refused to go any farther. It was pure serendipity that the Strathcona's arrived at the border on June 12 where Workman was trying to negotiate his way into Kosovo. Fleury invited Workman to climb aboard his Coyote armoured vehicle.

Thereafter, none of Workman's reports had anything to do with the air force in Aviano. In fact, only two interviews were conducted with pilots. On June 29, Capt. Jordan Kyrbyson was interviewed by host Valerie Pringle on CTV's Canada AM and identified on camera. Kyrbyson talked primarily about his thoughts on the bombing campaign, military lawyers vetting targets to avoid civilian casualties, and mission planning. He alluded to the primary job being strike missions in Serbia but gave no details of what that meant.[39] The CBC, meanwhile, obtained CF-18 cockpit video from the Department of National Defence for the first time. The tapes showed two bombs hitting a bridge, which collapsed. After the video was shown, reporter Eric Sorensen added that the Canadian Forces had admitted earlier to bombs missing targets 25 to 30 per cent of the time but did not take part in NATOs most infamous bombing mistakes that killed civilians. CF-18 pilot Lee Vogan was shown on camera, adding little to the report: "A lot of work went into reducing the collateral damage. There were a lot of weapons that weren't dropped because there was a risk of that."[40] There were no comparable newspaper articles.

Operation Echo's lessons-learned report did not analyze the success or failure of the Canadian Forces public affairs policy and practices during the Kosovo air campaign, unlike that of the 1991 Gulf War. The only evaluation of the military's public affairs policies during Operation Echo appeared in a 9 March 2000 NDHQ document. The Kosovo air campaign was addressed specifically for the ethical dilemmas it presented when considering the media and public's right to know versus operational security and care of personnel. Its language is cryptic; however, it avoids specifics and paints a self-serving picture of its public affairs practices.

> The subject of military security vs embarrassing information vs the public right to know will become a routine dilemma in future operations. The Kosovo campaign example of providing constant media briefings and the strategy reflecting candor, truth and disclosure to the extent possible

> would appear to represent a strategy that fulfills our obligations of public disclosure and should serve to build public trust and confidence. Decisions to fully and promptly report any incident similar to the Chinese embassy bombing in Serbia are seen as consistent with defence ethical values. The questions of "What to report?" will always require a balancing of values, security issues and the ethic of care (morale) of our people.[41]

The balance the Canadian Forces struck between Canadians' right to know and security considerations meant that Jurkowski was right when he said that Canadian pilots were far more successful than Canadians knew. What Canadians could have known about the campaign was only what the news media could hear from the military brass. In Jurkowski's own words, that wasn't much. In retrospect, Jurkowski admitted that he never had any factual basis for telling the news media that body bags were found on pilots' lawns during the Gulf War. Jurkowski even considered it hearsay but used the myth nonetheless as reason for restricting the information provided to Canadians about the Kosovo air war. In Jurkowski's words:

> You know what? That was told to me, but I kept on asking: "Is that for sure?" My communications guys would say: "Yeah, that happened. I know." I was nervous about that, but I did deploy it publicly, so. In my mind, I had it as on an air force base and I often thought it was Cold Lake. I was trying to be really careful and make goddamn sure I said the right things in public. But I was pretty sure that I was told that it was in Cold Lake, that occurring.[42]

One of the most vigorous defenders of the Canadian Forces' media policies during the Kosovo air campaign was John Larsen who was promoted to Lt.-Commander and who received a commendation for his work. He actively tried to enhance the air force's image from Aviano. He rejects the suggestion that the air force's story was not told.

I can't accept the line, as a public affairs officer, that their story was never told—that's inaccurate. I've got videos, photos of our twelve planes flying back when it was over. That's part of a larger story we worked on. There are probably several newspaper clippings. We did interviews. Joy Malbon came down twice. She did interviews with the pilots about what they were doing, what their feelings were. As a media specialist I agree, that it was probably not told with the frequency and intensity that we wanted it told and that the story was certainly not told the way the vast majority of the media wanted it told; but the story was told.[43]