
“Too Sweet and Innocent for War”?

Dutch Peacekeepers and the Use of Violence

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Based on anthropological fieldwork, this article studies the experience of two Dutch peacekeeping units: the “Grizzly” artillery battery that was deployed to Kosovo in 1999 (KFOR2) and the “Bulldog” infantry company that was deployed to Bosnia in 2000 (SFOR8). By examining the units’ experience from training through deployment, this article argues that the Dutch army is a threatened organization that suffers from a relatively low status in society. The army gains support mainly by performing peace missions, which soldiers perceive as “feminine” and therefore inappropriate. This article examines how Dutch soldiers train for peacekeeping missions and demonstrates that this training takes the shape of infantry combat exercises, a characteristic that negatively influences the soldiers’ level of satisfaction during deployments.

Keywords: *peacekeeping; the Netherlands; Balkans; Srebrenica*

What are the consequences if a society—but not its army—supports peacekeeping operations? How does a war machine train for peacekeeping? Does unit proximity to combat core expertise influence its ability to perform peace missions? This article answers these questions by focusing on two peacekeeping units: the “Grizzly” artillery battery that was deployed to Kosovo in 1999 (KFOR2) and the “Bulldog” infantry company that was deployed to Bosnia in 2000 (SFOR8). By examining these units’ experience from training through deployment, this article argues that the Dutch army is a threatened organization that suffers from a relatively low status in society, especially as a consequence of the fall of Srebrenica in 1995, which turned out to be the most important landmark in the relationship between military and society in

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the Netherlands. The army gains support mainly by performing peace mission, which its soldiers perceive as “feminine” and therefore inappropriate. This perception reflects the fact that Dutch soldiers train for peace missions by simulating combat. Such training generates false expectations that lead soldiers to become dissatisfied with the less violent nature of peacekeeping missions.

Although focused on preparation for armed conflict, Western militaries have gradually begun to take part in peacekeeping operations in which their mission is mostly a constabulary one. The American and British militaries are both good examples of this tendency. As such, most of the existing research focuses on how the American and British militaries combine both kinds of missions. In contrast, most European militaries focus mainly on peace missions and are generally no longer involved in combat. Therefore, their identity as predominantly peacekeeping organizations offers a good case study of the relationship between the military, society, and peacekeeping.

Violence has long been monopolized by the state. Wars, claims Giddens, do not exist as such in stateless societies.¹ Weber, who saw violence and war as an inescapable part of the human condition, was the first to focus on the state as a warlike entity.² Then, in 1960, Morris Janowitz refined Weber’s ideas about the relationship between violence and the military by proposing his constabulary model, whereby soldiers might handle those political crises that could be solved with armed intervention but would not require all-out war. Janowitz’s students, especially Moskos³ and Segal,⁴ have continued his research. Yet none of their work examines the relationship between soldiers’ training and their competence as peacekeepers—or lack of it.

The bulk of research does not capture the full depth of how training affects peacekeeping for two reasons. First, it focuses on military organizations that still have a primary interest in preparing for armed conflict. Second, it is quantitative in nature or concerned with limited aspects of research. Therefore, it cannot uncover the internal tensions inherent to the transformation from a war-fighting to a peacekeeping military. In particular, it cannot answer the question of how peacekeeping is perceived and performed by soldiers. Moreover, we still do not have a full and coherent picture of non-American peacekeeping forces.

The study of military and peacekeeping is largely neglected in cultural anthropology.⁵ This is because anthropological research usually focuses on the victims of violent acts rather than on the perpetrators. Therefore, the aim of this article is to bring violence back into cultural anthropology and military studies by discussing its meaning and implications in the context of peacekeeping missions.

This article argues that the Dutch army is a threatened organization because it suffers from a relatively low status in Dutch society, especially after the massacre in Srebrenica in 1995. Then, the article underscores how Dutch soldiers perceive the army as a weak and feminine organization while viewing themselves as masculine and fit for combat. The third section focuses on training for peace missions and how it mimics combat exercises. The last section focuses on soldiers’ attitudes toward peacekeeping missions and argues that such attitudes determine the soldiers’ level of satisfaction with their mission.

Dutch Society and the Army

The Dutch army, like other Western European armies nowadays, must justify its existence to the public more than ever because the public perceives a decline in the intensity of direct and current threats to the national territory. Instead, the public relies on the military to perform the nobler, but probably less dangerous or demanding, tasks involved in humanitarian missions.⁶ In general, national security policy is increasingly being defined by public opinion, domestic politics, and economic constraints.⁷

If the probability of war defines the relationship between armed forces and their host society,⁸ then Dutch society can be best described as a “warless society.” Moskos argues that warless societies may be what the armed forces of Western Europe and the North Atlantic are moving toward: a transition from a large standing force to a small cadre backed by reserve forces. Along these lines, Haltiner argues that the shift away from mass armed forces is most likely under three conditions: first, when a country can enjoy the security benefits to be had from membership in a defensive alliance (such as NATO); second, when the country concerned is relatively distant from a clear and present military danger to its national sovereign territory; and third, when the country frequently participates in international peace-support operations.⁹

Despite its imperial past, Dutch society matches this profile, and as Olivier and Teitler argue, the Netherlands has lived contentedly for centuries under Anglo-Saxon protection.¹⁰ Priding itself on a neutral stance in international matters, the Netherlands knew that neither Britain nor the United States could afford to lose control of the Low Countries to an opposing great power. In accordance with such a perspective, the Dutch perceived the development of their armed forces as less of a priority than economic and social matters. This feeling became stronger with the collapse of the communist regimes in both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. Thereafter, Western nations no longer deployed their armed forces to deter a known adversary but rather to maintain or enforce peace in regions where their interests were in jeopardy or where human rights were being abused.¹¹

As a result, the armed forces in the Netherlands and the Dutch population in general seem to have assumed a self-image of “nonmartial”¹² or “unheroic behavior.”¹³ In addition, the Dutch are known for their pacifist attitudes and limited trust in military institutions.¹⁴ As such, the status of the Dutch military and the level of Dutch public’s trust in the armed forces are definitely lower than they are in the United Kingdom, in France, or in the United States.

On September 1, 1996, the Dutch military became an all-volunteer force focusing mainly on peacekeeping missions. Over the past thirty years, the Dutch armed forces have become involved in nearly thirty peace-support, humanitarian, and disaster-relief operations. Support operations and peacekeeping missions enjoy widespread support in the Netherlands, even after the abysmal results of the Srebrenica operation in 1995.¹⁵

The Dutch armed forces were deeply influenced by the tragic and traumatic events that took place at Srebrenica when the UNPROFOR Dutchbat airmobile brigade assigned to protect the Muslim enclave failed to do so. As a result, over seven thousand

Muslim men were imprisoned and killed by Bosnian Serbian military units. It took the Serbs a week to conquer and ethnically cleanse the safe area. They met little resistance from the four thousand Muslim soldiers in the enclave, from the four hundred Dutch peacekeepers deployed there, or from UNPROFOR as a whole.¹⁶

The massacre provoked an eruption of public anger in the Netherlands. Both the press and members of the parliament began to ask embarrassing questions and attacked what they perceived to be the “passivity” or even “cowardliness” of the Dutch UN soldiers.¹⁷ On August 4, 1995, the headline of the weekly newspaper *HP/De Tijd* declared that Dutch soldiers were “too sweet and innocent for war.” In numerous articles, the fall of the Srebrenica enclave was listed among a string of Dutch military defeats ranging from the German invasion of May 1940, to the colonial wars in the former Dutch East Indies and Dutch New Guinea, up to and including peace missions such as those in the Balkans. From the perspective of the media, the Dutch armed forces were nothing but losers.¹⁸

The events of Srebrenica turned out to be the most important landmark in the relationship between military and society in the Netherlands and diminished the status of the military even further. In the following years, there were several investigations of the massacre, the last and most extensive of which was conducted by the Dutch Institute for War Documentation in Amsterdam (NIOD). When NIOD published its final report on April 10, 2002, the government resigned. The report stated that the Dutch soldiers in Srebrenica did their best given the situation.¹⁹

Method

From the fall of 1999 to the summer of 2000, anthropological fieldwork was conducted with the cooperation of the Dutch army. The research was conducted with two Dutch peacekeeping units: the Grizzly artillery battery, which was deployed in Kosovo (KFOR2), and the Bulldog infantry company, which was deployed in Bosnia (SFOR8). While conducting research, there was full access to the soldiers. In general, the army allowed observing almost everything without having a military escort. As part of the fieldwork, the units were accompanied from the first stages of their training with the Dutch brigade at Seedorf, Germany, through their combat and peacekeeping training in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The research was conducted by living with the soldiers and participating in their activities, such as day and night marches, theoretical and practical military studies, and off-duty activities such as eating and socializing in the camp’s bar and club, watching TV, and so on. Moreover, several periods of time were spent with the soldiers during their deployment in Kosovo and Bosnia, where they were joined on operational activities such as patrols, manning checkpoints and guard missions, and off-duty activities such as a guided tour of Sarajevo. Seventy soldiers and commanders were interviewed during training and deployment. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Also, soldiers’ peacekeeping classes and training sessions were recorded, as well as various other lectures. The interviews, as well as fieldwork, were conducted in the Dutch language.

Table 1
Similarities between the Units: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Soldiers

Sociodemographic Characteristics	Infantry (Bulldog)	Artillery (Grizzly)
Soldiers' ages	18-21	22-24
Noncommissioned Officers' ages	24-26	27-35
Blue-collar background	yes	yes
Low education	yes	yes
Place of residency	Mostly villages and small towns	Mostly villages and small towns

The problem of obtaining access to data looms large in ethnography. Nowhere is this problem more acute than in institutionalized organizations—such as the military—where access depends completely on the goodwill of gatekeepers. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are few civilians who study the military and that most of the research is done by scholars who are affiliated with military academies, serve in the military,²⁰ have relations in the military organization,²¹ or have special access through government agencies.²²

In contrast to such scholars, this research studies soldiers with a different language and culture than that of the researcher. Only rarely have scholars studied a foreign military, and this kind of research is mainly focused on interviews not on participant observation.²³ The unique position as a foreign (Israeli) participant observer who speaks Dutch enables me to portray Dutch soldiers and present an extensive analysis of the Dutch military from an “outsider’s perspective.”

The Soldiers in Infantry and Artillery Units

Most of the soldiers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) in Grizzly and Bulldog were in their early twenties, yet the infantry soldiers were slightly younger than the artillerymen. As we can see in Table 1, the typical age in the infantry was eighteen to twenty-one, while in the artillery, it was twenty-two to twenty-four. NCOs were older: twenty-four to twenty-six in the infantry and twenty-seven to thirty-five in the artillery. One infantry soldier, several artillery soldiers, and the infantry’s company commander were married with children, but most of the soldiers, NCOs, and officers lived together with a girlfriend without being officially married.

About a third of the soldiers came from families where fathers, uncles, or brothers served in the military, usually as NCOs. The fathers of other soldiers included farmers, factory workers or foremen, a Protestant clergyman, small-business owners, a garbage collector, the headwaiter in a restaurant, a road-construction worker, a policeman, and some unemployed. Their mothers were largely housewives, but some worked as nursemaids, catering workers, cleaners, religious instructors, and factory workers. Some were unemployed.

The soldiers considered their salaries (deployment allowances included) to be quite high in comparison with blue-collar incomes in the Dutch market. The soldiers

claimed to have better work conditions than their parents and to earn more. Since most of them did not have a high school diploma, they saw their army service as a good career choice, at least for several years while saving up money. The army provides these soldiers with a steady salary and other opportunities such as free driving lessons and low-level vocational studies such as security and hotel hygiene. It also gives them a rather diverse and challenging working environment that does not demand extensive qualifications.

Artillery NCO: If you are a young guy of eighteen years old and you look for a job in the civil society, you get a minimum salary. The guys who serve here are paid well. And there are people here who serve for the money.

Infantry soldier: After all, and this is one of the most important reasons, it pays pretty well. That was the main reason.

The soldiers are passionate about sports and physical activity. They love to be outdoors and to do “something with their hands,” as many say. One infantry soldier said, “I don’t like doing nothing. I cannot sit still and cannot go to an office everyday. No, I cannot do it. I must stay busy.” Most of the soldiers prefer physical work to office work. As a twenty-three-year-old infantry soldier said, “I would like to sit in an office when I’m getting old, at the age of thirty but not before.” Even during conversations, the soldiers could not sit or stand still. Thus, they gave off a rather hyperactive impression.

About 70 percent of the soldiers and officers in Grizzly and Bulldog come from villages or small towns. It is not common to find people from big cities such as Rotterdam and Den Haag in the economic center (or *Randstad*) of the Netherlands. It is even rarer to find initials from Amsterdam, which the soldiers perceive as having a different mentality. Amsterdam is a city where, as several soldiers explained, “we are not liked.” Table 1 summarizes the similarities between the units.

However, despite being combat units, artillery and infantry units have a different culture and a different mentality as a result of their different missions.²⁴ Artillery soldiers usually work behind the lines where they are not directly exposed to the enemy, while infantry soldiers aim to contact the enemy and to fight him face to face. The operational modes of infantry and artillery units and especially their relative proximity to the enemy influence the social structure and self-image of the units because service in combat units is directly related to status. Criteria of service establish certain kinds of power relations among men, and as a result, the operational modes of infantry and artillery influence the social structure and self-image of the units. Infantry soldiers have a more prestigious and masculine self-image than do artillery soldiers, whose self-image is shaped in the shadow of the infantry as second best:

Artillery soldier: It was my third choice, the artillery . . . after commandos and infantry.

Artillery NCO: I wanted to join the infantry. That was my first choice. Choice number two was cavalry and choice number three was artillery.

Infantry soldiers, on the other hand, have a professional pride and higher self-esteem. Most chose the infantry and are satisfied with their decision. They perceive the infantry as the only “real” military—real in the sense of doing a physical and dirty job that involves direct confrontation with the enemy and, therefore, with danger:

Infantry NCO: To me, infantry is still the only real military . . . camouflage on your face and getting into the mud, this is great.

Infantry soldier: For me, infantry is . . . fighting.

Infantry officer: Personally, I look for action and this is why I volunteered.

Soldiers' Self-Images

An important part of soldiers' self-image is masculinity. Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and carried out, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct. Despite far-reaching political, social, and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity and obtains the masculine hegemonic image.²⁵

However, sociological and anthropological studies of the link between military and masculinities have tended to focus almost overwhelmingly on infantry and airborne soldiers.²⁶ Neither has much been written on masculinity in European militaries, especially peacekeeping among soldiers, whose self-image faces different challenges than that of combat soldiers. Therefore, it is fascinating to find that the images of masculinity among Grizzly and especially Bulldog (names that themselves are symbols of power and masculinity) match those of combat soldiers in the American, British, and Israeli militaries.²⁷ For example, an infantry group commander said,

Infantry is the “Tour of Duty,” it is walking in the woods with real men, camouflaged, with full gear and . . . your weapon is ready, loaded. You enjoy walking in the woods and if you see the enemy you attack . . . weather or no weather, rain or no rain, it doesn't matter, you must function. This is the infantry, sleeping outside, having a tough time, hardly eating, hardly sleeping, and only fight.

This group commander is experiencing his army service in terms of masculine adventure, of “walking in the woods with real men” in every sort of climate condition and weather. The experience that he describes is not very realistic; his chances of participating in a real fight are miniscule. However, it is the image that is important here, an image of physical and mental hardships in the company of other “real men.” This concept is also salient in the words of an artillery soldier, although the artillerymen's masculine self-image is usually more subtle and relaxed than that of the infantry.

Artillery soldier: This is a job for real men. . . . A real man is someone who is sturdy, who doesn't get scared quickly, and is ready for action . . . if a clerk will try to do our work, then he'll be done for in a week. You must be a person who likes living outdoors and doing stuff.

Table 2
Differences between Infantry and Artillery: Operational Mode and Self-Image

Martial Characteristics	Infantry (Bulldog)	Artillery (Grizzly)
Operational mode	Aim to fight enemy face to face	Work behind the lines
Professional pride and self-esteem	High	In the shadow of infantry
Masculine self-image	Combat-oriented masculine image	Lower self-image

Soldiers' image of the army as a masculine adventure resembles what Kimmel and Kaufman term "weekend warriors": men who join workshops, retreats, and seminars in the United States and Canada to retrieve the "warrior within," or the "Wildman."²⁸ These movements reenact experiences from nonindustrial cultures such as initiation rites and other ceremonies to connect to nature and the wilderness. Kimmel and Kaufman explain these rituals in the context of both the increasing crisis of masculinity in past decades and the increasingly widespread confusion over the meaning of manhood. Traditional definitions of masculinity rested on economic autonomy: control over one's labor and self-reliance in the workplace. The public arena, the space in which men habitually demonstrated and proved their manhood, was racially and sexually homogenous, a homosocial world in which straight, white men could be themselves, without fear of the Other. Economic autonomy, coupled with public patriarchy, gave men a secure sense of themselves as men. The soldiers in Grizzly and Bulldog share the same fantasy of a man's society that grants no access to either women or gay men.²⁹ It should be emphasized that infantry soldiers have a stronger masculine self-image than artillerymen. Table 2 summarizes the differences between the units.

Soldiers' Image of the Army

The Dutch military is in a terrible situation. There is no money, the morale is bad and the drama of Srebrenica doesn't go away.

—General Major Van Vuren³⁰

As we saw, the Dutch army suffers from a relatively low image in society, but at the same time, Grizzly and Bulldog soldiers maintain a strong combat-oriented masculine image. The soldiers cope with this paradox by criticizing the army for its lack of fighting attitude and for insufficient combat-training experience. They separate between what they perceive as their higher qualities as fighters and the army's generally reduced capacity to fight, and they complain that the army has become too feminine. A feminine army or a nonaggressive army is an army that "if [it] will have to fight another country, will hundred percent sure lose"—the result of "too many politicians" and a "tolerant society" whose "mentality suits peace more than combat." Soldiers envy other, more aggressive militaries.

Infantry officer: I think that [the army] is soft. I know for sure that in any case the Dutch infantry will never be in a situation that will endanger soldiers' lives, the Netherlands won't accept it.

Many soldiers, especially from the infantry, feel discouraged about their miniscule prospects of seeing combat. During their deployment to Bosnia, infantry soldiers even asked me to pass a message to the high command in The Hague, expressing their wish to fight.

How can soldiers who serve in an army that has not seen combat since 1948 develop such belligerent feelings and maintain a masculine self-image? In the next sections, we shall see that the army partially resolves this paradox by transforming peacekeeping training into combat exercises and by viewing peace missions as oriented toward infantry-type combat. The unintended effect of this combatlike training is to enhance soldiers' disappointment in actual peace missions, during which combat is extremely rare.

Peacekeeping Training

This military thinks about war, prepares for war, and simulates war, but does not wage war.

—J. S. van der Meulen³¹

About two months before deployment, the Bulldog and Grizzly soldiers started their peacekeeping training. Although this training is fairly standard worldwide, not much has been written on it, and none of the existing research was done in a participant-observation manner.³² Yet the training process has special dynamics that can be better understood through participant observation, which succeeds also in unfolding the contradictory and paradoxical nature of the training.

The most striking thing about this training is not its rather short length but the level to which it emphasizes infantry combat core expertise. Most of the training, which is similar for infantry and artillery soldiers, is engaged with shooting, assaulting, and marching exercises. Even when the trainees are artillery soldiers, the main model and the core expertise are those of the infantry. Only the last two and a half weeks are actually devoted to peacekeeping training, but even then, the drills sometimes take the shape of combat exercise.

Peacekeeping training starts with a week of combat exercise in Bergen, Germany. During that week, the soldiers are mainly engaged in shooting exercises, first using moving targets and eventually participating in a live fire squad and company exercise.³³ Although this training is defined as peacekeeping, it is actually infantry combat training. For example, during the exercise briefing, the commander explains to the soldiers how to move about in the area and when to stop and hide. He emphasizes that these instructions are also good for war situations when the soldiers have to be aware of the enemy. He repeats the word *war* over and over again. When asked why they train for combat, another commander explains, "To be a good policeman one must be a good soldier. A soldier can become a policeman but a policeman cannot become a soldier."

The next exercise was a social-patrol maneuver, one of the basic concepts of peacekeeping in which soldiers learn how to march in daylight, "showing the flag" or, in

other words, showing their presence to the local population in the goal of keeping law and order. This exercise also transformed into combat training. Instead of marching during the day, the final social-patrol exercise took place late at night and alters into combat marching, which ended with a shooting exercise in the morning.

The only training that focused entirely on peacekeeping skills took place as five days of classes in the MGO (*Missie Gerichte Opleiding*), Mission Related Training Center for peacekeeping training in the Netherlands. The classes, each lasting an hour and half, given mainly by army instructors but also by psychologists, deal with issues such as hygiene, safety, mine awareness, psychological preparation, preparing home and family for the deployment, foreign weapons, and first contact with the locals.

The highlight of the preparations for deployment and the main peacekeeping exercise is the *eindoefening* (final exercise), which is a role-playing in Vogelsang, Belgium. For nine days, soldiers, mainly from infantry and reconnaissance with peacekeeping experience, reenacted Kosovo by role-playing as Albanians and Serbs. Female soldiers played their wives. Professional actors played the local population, dressed up in local clothes and with professional makeup, and held plastic babies. The army even rented civilian cars for the “Albanians” and “Serbs” to use. The soldiers built “local villages,” cutting wood for fire or taking care of chickens, which were wandering around.

Most of the exercises and simulations during final training were aimed at teaching the soldiers how to handle hostile and even dangerous locals. In such simulations, “locals” kidnapped soldiers, offered the soldiers prostitutes, sexually harassed a female soldier, told soldiers “mussels from Brussels go home,” and called soldiers “homo.”

The simulation drills are dramatic and exciting. They are mostly aimed at “worst-case scenarios” in which the soldiers had to confront dangerous locals. The restless soldiers who played the role of the locals enjoyed irritating the soldiers to create some drama and fun. Sometimes, the instructor would remind the soldiers that most of the locals are innocent and poor and that only a small minority is guilty of war crimes. Yet, in most of the simulations, locals are portrayed as a bunch of annoying teenagers. This was a problem because during deployment, the soldiers faced low hostility.

The application of infantry combat skills to peacekeeping missions is common during training. The instructors made it clear that peacekeeping skills are similar to skills required for combat. For example, a peacekeeping instructor says that

a good peacekeeper is first of all a good combat soldier because sometimes peacekeepers have to fight, for example, in Bosnia and Somalia. A good combat soldier is a good peacekeeper because it is like writing a book. If you are a good writer, you write a long book in the same methods you write a short book. The difference is in the technique, not in the quality.

When infantry soldiers were asked what is the difference between combat and peacekeeping training, they say that there is no difference. Combat training can also be useful to peacekeeping. Cohesion, mutual trust, and command are ancillary skills or even

byproducts of combat training. Yet the focus on combat is sweeping: “Peacekeeping is pure infantry,” said one soldier. “The only difference is that in peacekeeping, as opposed to regular patrols, we are allowed to talk and make noise because the aim is to show our presence,” said another.

There are three explanations as to why peacekeeping training is largely combat oriented. The first possible explanation is the reluctance of the army to accept its new role and to shift its focus from combat to peace preparations. A senior Dutch officer described a split within the army; the head of the military is still in the traditional mindset of combat preparations, while the body deals with peacekeeping.³⁴ As a masculine institution, the military is traditionally eager to fight and avoid humanitarian or social work, which is perceived as feminine. According to Janowitz, heroic leaders tend to resist the constabulary concept because of their desire to maintain conventional army doctrine and their reluctance to evaluate the political consequences of limited army actions that do not produce “victory.”³⁵ This can also be seen in the infantry soldiers’ reaction to the humanitarian aspects of the mission and their dissatisfaction, as we shall see in the next section.

A second possible explanation for the emphasis on combat training is the fuzzy environment in which the army functions. Peacekeeping operations take place in a structurally different environment from the one in which soldiers traditionally operate. Faced with an environment that changed from monovalent to a multivalent, blurred, “fuzzy” logic of friend/foe/nonfoe, the army needs to use new lenses to read a reality in which the simplicity of the peace-war dichotomy is replaced by a complexity of variables.³⁶

One way for the army to deal with the confusion that is created by the fuzzy environment is to train soldiers for the worst-case scenario—a complete deterioration of security in the deployment area—and therefore to train them for combat. In comparison with other possible peacekeeping circumstances, the worst-case scenario is the clearest. It makes a strong distinction between good and bad, black and white. Training for a worst-case scenario is also very similar to combat training, a type of training that the commanders and soldiers know very well and are able to perform and measure. Measuring the success of combat training is much easier than measuring that of humanitarian training.

Another major factor is the possibility that a worst-case scenario will become reality. The army is haunted by the painful events in Srebrenica where Dutch soldiers failed to deal with a worst-case scenario. These feelings were especially strong in the infantry unit that some of the commanders experienced as soldiers in the fall of Srebrenica in 1995. Extensive combat training was design to prevent the recurrence of such a case.³⁷

Three interrelated issues (the fuzzy environment, black-and-white training, and combat core expertise) contribute to a feeling shared by many soldiers that training is insufficient. Each unit, however, had a different opinion on what was missing. Artillery soldiers who during peacekeeping training learned infantry drills for the first time complained that they did not get enough infantry training, which could help them if a worst-case scenario would arise. An artillery deputy battery commander said,

No, [we did not have enough training] because we started the training too late, really in the last moment, and you can see how it influenced the soldiers. . . . Especially infantry training—I wish we had more time . . . but we are well prepared for the humanitarian mission.

As the artillery deputy battery commander said, the soldiers felt more comfortable with the humanitarian aspects of the mission than with combat tasks. On the other hand, infantry soldiers did very well on the training that they called the “Eighty Years’ War in one week,” referring to a major seventeenth-century war with Spain. Naming peace training after a heroic war reveals the soldiers’ attitude toward the mission. This attitude was enhanced by the experience of some of the commanders in Srebrenica in 1995. These commanders were especially cautious and emphasized combat readiness. Yet the training did not prepare the soldiers to perform effectively the humanitarian aspects of the mission. According to one infantry platoon commander,

We had eight weeks to work with the groups. . . . It was really too little but it went very well. . . . We always say that the final exercise is the Eighty Years’ War in one week. We know from the experience of the unit that currently deployed in Bosnia that it is rather quiet there. There is very little work to do . . . in the very short training, people tried to enact as many events as possible . . . and then it became unrealistic.

Despite having a quite similar training, Grizzly and Bulldog perceive and perform peacekeeping missions in different ways. Artillery soldiers’ confidence has suffered because their training emphasizes infantry skills. They question their ability to successfully perform the mission. But their lower self-confidence as combatants has caused them to be more challenged by the mission and therefore more satisfied in performing it. Second, it also caused them to perceive the mission in a more humanitarian way. Infantry soldiers, on the other hand, have been proud of their performances during training and feel ready for deployment. They rejected the mission’s humanitarian aspects in Bosnia because it was not as exciting as their training, and they felt frustrated and dissatisfied. The next section will focus on three attitudes that describe the soldiers’ perceptions of the mission and, as a consequence, their satisfaction.

Deployment in Bosnia and Kosovo

Here [in Bosnia] I see that . . . a lot of the things they told me weren’t true . . . for example, they tell you that every day, people come to the camp gates and scream or fight and curse you. But it doesn’t happen. Many people do come to the gates to ask for help, not to scream and curse you. . . . In the training, they said, “There is a lot for you to do there.” Look! [*in a cynical voice*] if there are no patrols, we have nothing to do here!

—Infantry soldier in Bosnia

Infantry and artillery units were divided about mission determination. While most of the infantry soldiers defined the mission as combat, artillerymen defined it as humanitarian. The different attitudes shaped different levels of satisfaction for the

mission. Infantry soldiers who defined the mission as combat were less satisfied than were artillery soldiers who experienced the mission the same way, because they felt unchallenged. Moreover, infantry soldiers who experienced the mission as combat were also less satisfied than were soldiers (mostly artillery) who viewed the mission as humanitarian. In other words, the proximity of the soldiers to infantry combat expertise determined their satisfaction.

To examine how soldiers from the infantry and artillery experience their peace missions, a set of three attitudes that describe the soldiers' perceptions of the mission will be used: (1) the "warrior-strategy" attitude, (2) the "humanitarian-strategy" attitude, and (3) peacekeeping as a civilian (or feminine) job. The first attitude was the most common among soldiers of both units. The second attitude was common among artillery soldiers, and the third attitude was supported by some infantry soldiers.

Warrior Strategy

Peacekeeping is not a soldier's job but only a soldier can do it.

—UN official

For most soldiers, peacekeeping is considered to be a regular infantry mission or part of what Miller and Moskos define as "warrior strategy."³⁸ As such, the mission is viewed as potentially dangerous, and the locals are viewed as potential enemies. Therefore, soldiers view the mission as demanding combat skills such as a tactical way of thinking, very good physical ability, knowledge of the landscape, and handling of mines.

For artillery soldiers, the mission in Kosovo was a unique opportunity to adopt the warrior strategy, to experience infantry skills, and to prove their ability to perform those skills. Therefore, the peace mission was perceived as a great army challenge: it was the artillerymen's first deployment experience (compared with the infantry unit, which had been deployed many times before) and their first infantry experience.

Although both infantry and artillery soldiers viewed peacekeeping as infantry work, more infantry soldiers adopted this attitude than artillerymen. This supports the finding of Miller and Moskos that intensively trained combat soldiers are more likely to adopt the warrior strategy than the humanitarian attitude. Research by Winslow³⁹ about the Canadian airborne in Somalia and by Segal⁴⁰ of the U.S. National Guard in the Sinai also backs this finding.

Infantry officer: This is another form of infantry work. It uses fewer tactics. But the particular way of thinking that we have during training exists here as well.

Because infantry soldiers are taught to patrol at night, under cover, with their weapons ready to engage, and to avoid contact with the locals, many felt confused when patrolling in daylight, in a straight line, and with their weapons slung down.⁴¹ The infantry platoon commander described it as a "culture shock":

Now you walk in a way that everyone can see you. . . . In green [combat training], you can be dirty and nobody sees. Now you must show your colors . . . the guys need to get used to it because we became very visible, and in Bosnia, the locals look at us. The soldiers must realize that their presence is visible, and it is a culture shock.

The combat training helped infantry soldiers feel confident if a worst-case scenario occurred, but at the same time, it raised their expectations to a level with which the reality in Bosnia could not compete. The mission in Bosnia was too simple and monotonous and much less challenging than the soldiers had expected.

Infantry officer: Yes, it is very hard! And I speak from my own experience: You go from one extreme to the other. And the gap is getting bigger every time because every year it becomes more peaceful here. When I look at my UN time, it was very thrilling and so different from today . . . you miss some excitement here because you have experienced the combat training.⁴²

Therefore, the main problem in the deployment area was how to keep the soldiers busy and alert during their everyday activities. The Bulldog company commander said that the real challenge was not the mission itself but how not to get too bored:

For an infantry soldier, [the mission] is more difficult . . . this work is too simple . . . but not exciting. Infantry exercises are always exciting you always encounter an enemy. . . . Therefore, when [soldiers] perform a peace mission, they are not attentive enough, because it is not exciting for them. It is not like the soldier is going to encounter an enemy and will have to eliminate this enemy. . . . He must patrol around houses, and this is harder for him.

Boredom, suggest Harris and Segal, is one of the major problems experienced by those engaged in peacekeeping missions.⁴³ According to their research, boredom was a dominant theme among MFO (Multinational Force and Observers) soldiers in Sinai. In his analyses of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Moskos suggests that boredom might be most problematic for professional combat-oriented soldiers.⁴⁴ Boredom is dangerous not only because the soldiers need to stay alert in case of an emergency situation but because it carries the risk that the bored soldiers will employ the warrior strategy by provoking situations to create some excitement. An infantry group commander said,

We are not people with high diplomas, and many people are what I call "from the street," including me. They love being outdoors, they look happily for every opportunity to have some excitement, and therefore, we as their commanders must give them adventures because otherwise they will look for it themselves! If there is no thrill in this area, they will go on their own to look for excitement because you need excitement in order to stay alert, but it does not exist here.

The higher command in the camp did not know how to handle soldiers and lower-ranking officers who were looking for more excitement and wanted to fight. The liaison

officer in the camp said that the soldiers did not understand that they were the only ones in the area with constant water and electricity:

If they won't do the best they can for the locals, they will go back home at the end of the deployment and will ask themselves why they spent half a year here. What we are doing here is the other side of infantry work, although it is not easy for the soldiers to come into contact with people who always say "give me, give me" . . . yet it is so quiet here that I'm happy that my first deployment was to Angola, a more dangerous place.

Yet even this liaison officer, who was convinced of the importance of the mission and saw it as a suitable mission for infantry soldiers, said that he is happy that he had experienced a more combatlike situation in Angola before. Indeed, soldiers and commanders who had been deployed on dangerous missions enjoyed a higher status as a result.

To alleviate the boredom and frustration, the soldiers escaped by overdoing exercise and engaging in war simulation and war games. The camp's doctor said,

They [the soldiers] want to do something and have nothing to do and then they spend most of the day in the gym. They do sports all day and then you get people with muscle pain and I ask them . . . maybe you should do less sport. "Yes, but what should I do then?" . . . They want to be physically busy . . . to release their energy.

The bulletin board of the military camp was covered with photos that had been taken during a big military exercise near Sarajevo. In the exercise, Dutch and Italian soldiers had participated in a simulation of escalation in the peace mission. Both units took turns playing the rioters and the soldiers who stop them. This exercise was the only real action that most of the soldiers actually experienced in Bosnia.

In summary, although both infantry and artillery soldiers viewed peacekeeping as infantry combat work, more infantry soldiers adopted this attitude. Furthermore, artillerymen who perceived the mission as combat were more satisfied than infantry soldiers because they view it as a challenge. In other words, the further soldiers are from core combat expertise, the more likely they will be satisfied with the peacekeeping mission.

Humanitarian Strategy

We have nonmilitary missions that the majority of us don't really want to do.

—The infantry company commander in a briefing to his staff

As we have seen, humanitarian missions differ from combat missions in one important aspect: the intervening forces must cooperate with the local population. While war is a black-and-white situation, "us" versus "them" and "good" versus "evil," peace operations are much more elaborate and therefore demand a different and more complex attitude. Therefore, the humanitarian-strategy attitude requires the soldier to employ more elaborate skills than a combat situation does.

Soldiers who maintained a humanitarian attitude believe that a peacekeeper should think in a broader and more complex way. He or she should not just obey orders but also take initiative and have more understanding of complex situations and be more “human” when handling the locals. This attitude was less common among soldiers than was the warrior strategy.

Infantry soldier: You must be more human and think in a broader way. . . . If for example you must set up a roadblock and not let people pass but you know that three of the people actually live in the houses there, then you know that you can let these three pass. In this kind of situation, you have to think more.

Infantry soldier: A good peacekeeping soldier is someone who can understand the situation here. . . . He must commit himself to make it better for the people here.

However, artillerymen more than infantrymen tend to view the mission as humanitarian. Artillery soldiers who had the humanitarian attitude also viewed their mission as a commitment to act on behalf of the local population by doing their best to deal with the fuzzy environment.

Artillery group commander: It is . . . harder because you must think further, understand more. As artilleryman, if you have to stop a bomb or a grenade with the cannon, it really doesn't matter what you think at that moment. But the moment that you let a hand grenade through the deployment area, then you must think twice before you do anything.

Artillery battery commander: The soldiers must be independent . . . and self-motivated. If a car comes to the checkpoint and it looks suspicious, then you should stop it, warn the others to take shelter, and they must act immediately. Therefore, the soldiers . . . must know how to make a quick decision. . . . And you cannot train them for all the situations, and therefore, they must know how to think independently.

Since the soldier does not have a clear enemy and has to deal with a civilian population, the mission is more complicated and demands a different set of skills than combat training. Therefore, all the combat scenarios for which the soldier was educated and trained are no longer relevant, and he or she is forced to improvise.⁴⁵ While many infantrymen felt threatened and confused in performing the humanitarian aspects of the mission, more artillerymen viewed it in humanitarian, nonmilitary terms. This result resembles Miller and Moskos's finding that women and black men were more likely to adopt humanitarian strategies than warrior attitudes.⁴⁶ In other words, the further soldiers are from core combat expertise, the more likely they will adopt a humanitarian attitude. Artillery soldiers who did not have core infantry expertise viewed the mission in more humanitarian terms and therefore were more satisfied and motivated in their mission.

Peacekeeping as a Civilian or Even Feminine Job

Even female soldiers can do peacekeeping missions.

—Infantry soldier

Some infantry soldiers even went a step further by declaring that the mission was not masculine enough and did not fit combat soldiers. For them, the mission demanded social skills typical of civilians, such as “chatting in a pub” or “being a journalist,” and also verbal (and possibly feminine) skills that they lacked, in contrast to the physical and practical nature of infantry work. An infantry soldier said,

A good peacekeeper is someone who can speak good English! [*laughs*] who can communicate well with the interpreter and who is very social . . . who can get along with the interpreter, and with the local people. Therefore, a peace mission demands more social skills than [infantry] work . . . it is actually the same as going out on the weekends! In the weekends, you speak with your friends about what you did this week and what you are about to do. After all, you talk with your girlfriend about everything, it is just that here you do it with foreign people and you actually ask the same questions!

If peacekeeping demands qualities such as chatting in the pub or speaking with a girlfriend, it is not a job for a combat soldier or even for a man—because a woman, according to this soldier, could chat better. This attitude reflects the soldiers’ helplessness in the deployment where they are not sure what the rules of the game are. An infantry NCO expressed this confusion:

We are now more like a journalist with a weapon on his back. Usually, we are infantry soldiers, we have weapons in our hands, and we shoot. But now we have it on our back . . . not more than that.

Infantry soldiers also felt physically exposed since they were not well armed. They could not carry their rifles in front like infantrymen normally do, and they felt that they did not have proper weapons. As one infantry soldier said, “The English have 25mm and cannons, they have antitanks [weapons] and tanks and we [only] have APCs!”⁴⁷ Hence, some of the infantry soldiers felt their equipment would be insufficient in the case of escalation.

The bulk of literature in military sociology, starting with Janowitz and continuing with his students Moskos and Segal, describes the peace mission in terms of a combat versus constabulary role. Yet none of the soldiers in Grizzly and Bulldog used this image. Instead, they chose an even less combatlike image (in their eyes): that of a journalist or social worker who is as remote as possible from combat situations. These images explain better than anything else to what extent this mission did not appear appropriate for combat soldiers, especially infantry.

This section (summarized in Table 3) has shown how artillery soldiers were generally more satisfied with the peace mission than were infantry soldiers. Artillerymen, who are remote from infantry combat core expertise, saw the mission either as a challenging combat experience or as a satisfying humanitarian mission. Infantrymen, who are trained for combat, experienced the mission as a disappointing combat experience or as a civilian or feminine job.

Table 3
Soldiers' Attitudes toward the Mission and Consequential Level of Satisfaction

	Perception of the Mission		
	Combat	Humanitarian	Civilian or Feminine Job
Infantry (Bulldog)	Dissatisfied	NA ^a	Dissatisfied
Artillery (Grizzly)	Satisfied	Satisfied	NA

a. Only a few infantry soldiers perceived the mission as humanitarian.

Conclusions

This article argues that the Dutch army focuses its activity on peacekeeping, while using a traditional rhetoric of violence and war making. Consequently, there has developed within army culture an inherent tension between what is perceived by soldiers as the real army, which performs combat roles, and the nonaggressive and even feminine army, which performs peacekeeping operations. The army, which is still traumatized by the tragedy of Srebrenica, clings to its combat-oriented self-image by fostering masculine behavior among soldiers and by focusing on combat training and rhetoric. Even training explicitly designed for peacekeeping missions takes the shape of combat exercises and does not prepare soldiers for deployment in postconflict situations. This training leads soldiers to believe that peacekeeping duty will consist of exciting combat missions rather than the boring day-to-day routine that they encounter once deployed. Not encountering what they expected, infantry soldiers feel dissatisfied and even bitter about their mission. Artillerymen, on the other hand, whose traditional roles focus less on direct confrontation and interaction with the enemy (or even with civilians, friendly or hostile), and whose self-image is less vigorously masculine and combatlike, are more satisfied with peacekeeping missions.

Conformity to Dutch society's peace perceptions can conflict with the army's actual activity and its institutional image, which contains two major elements: a masculine image and a culture of violence. Combat units find it difficult and even undesirable to make the necessary transformation to peace missions and to abandon a combat-oriented self-image. Although peace missions are almost the only option left for the army, soldiers still follow the combat model. For them, combat not peacekeeping is what makes the army relevant and legitimate.

Studying how peacekeepers are trained for combat contributes to the recent record of peacekeeping deployments, which has been fraught with conflict, human rights violations, and mission failure—that is, the Belgians in Rwanda and the Italians, Americans, and Canadians in Somalia. Understanding the culture and organization of peacekeeping forces will help to change training methods and to better suit them to their role.

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