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Warden & Odlum: Positional Vs. Personal Leadership Power in the Officers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918

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Introduction: The Journal of Lt. Col John Weightmann Warden, 102nd Battalion

> *Jan 1st, 1918; "Made application for my transfer from Canadian Corp. G.O.C.[1] would not forward it on to Corp Comdt, as he would have to ask for an investigation, & he was not anxious to have one. He (Odlum (Brig Gen)) finally asked me if I would let him withhold it & he would give me leave to England & extend it until I secured a situation myself… this I agreed to, this kept him at my H.Q. talking from 8 am till 1.30 pm, he also apologised (sic) very sincerely for the disagreeable way he had acted toward me & my Batt. & tried to dissuad (sic) me from leaving…"*
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> *Jan 8th, 1918: "…Corp Comdr consented to my leaving & issued an order for me to be seconded to Imperials… I could not stand my Brigadier Gen. Victor Odlum any longer nor Mjr Gen. David Watson Div Comdr. Both very mercenary men & political... who*

[1] General Officer Commanding.

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used their Comds to make to gain Public notice & repute. Odlum was the most clever schemer of the two. He was working for Watson's job… Odlum is a most averisious (sic) decoration hunter, as are most of the staff."[2]

The above journal entries come from Lt. Colonel John Weightmann Warden, the competent and efficient leader of the 102nd Battalion who served beneath Brigadier General Victor Wentworth Odlum within the 11th Brigade, 4th Division. What is very clear from this journal entry is that he can "no longer stand" his commanding officers. What is less clear is why he, after building up his *Warden's Warriors* since December of 1915, uncharacteristically left his unit in January 1918 to fight the Turks in Persia as part of Dunsterforce. Although he does not specifically state what caused his frustrations with Odlum, viewing this change may be more understandable within the context of the CEF's leadership theory.

As explained by the Canadian Armed Force's *Conceptual Foundations*, there are two major classes of social leadership power: *position power*, which reflects attributes regarding appointment or rank within a larger social structure of authority and power; and *personal power*, which reflects the socially valued or useful qualities of an individual.[3] Though the CEF's successes were impressive, the initial years of the Western Front taught several harsh lessons to the relative amateurs of the Canadian Militia regiments. While the popular image of Canadian shock troops was created by the latter half of the First World War, the first half was fraught with inefficiencies as the CEF transitioned from an amateur to a professional fighting force. While many are familiar with the commanding figures who transitioned the CEF's leadership, like Arthur Currie and Julian Byng, few are familiar with the battalion and brigade commanders who were similarly involved with the conflict between positional and personal authority. Two of these men were Brigadier General Victor Wentworth Odlum and Lt. Colonel John Weightmann Warden, who share the unique distinction of having professional relationships at both the battalion and brigade levels throughout the war.

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[2] I.C.D. Moffat, "January 1918-1919: The Diary of Lieutenant Colonel John Weightman Warden," *Public Archives of Canada*. MG30 E192 LT. Col J.W. Warden File Diary 1918-1919. Transcription by I.C.D. Moffat., pp. 1-2.

[3] Canada National Defence, "Leadership in the Canadian Forces, Conceptual Foundations," *Canadian Forces Leadership Institute*, 2005, pp. 58-59.

This paper examines where the positional and personal power and conflict intersect between these two men's professional relationships and the command structure in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. As such, these two men's professional relationships exposed the fluid conflict Canadian officers experienced between positional and personal power during their professional development from 1914 to 1918. What the journal entries also do not reveal is Warden and Odlum had at least known of each other during their pre-World War militia service in 1906, and their relationship was built up around this unsolidified structure of pre-war leadership. In order to properly analyse both men properly, it is important to give a short summary of their pre-war biographies in order to explain their relationship's place within the overall argument.

Pre-WW1 Biography Pt. 1, Victor Wentworth Odlum

Victor Wentworth Odlum, CB, CMG, DSO, was born in Cobourg, Ontario on 21 October 1880, to Professor Edward Faraday Odlum and Mary Elvira Powell. The family moved to Japan then Vancouver by 1889.[4] His father's wealth and standing as a noted Vancouver scholar and politician, allowed V.W. Odlum to grow up with economic and political privilege. He was studying journalism at University when he signed up to fight in the Second Boer War, where according to his military record,[5] he served as a private in the Royal Canadian Regiment. He was then promoted to Lieutenant in the 3rd Canadian Mounted Rifles, likely due to his personal connections, education and soldiering ability. There, he was wounded from a broken jaw in 1902 (noted in his medical records in his attestation as a casualty), before returning to Canada. Back home, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the 48th Highlanders in Toronto before being transferred to the 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles (DCOR) in Vancouver. He was a member of F Company under command of Captain William Hart-McHarg,[6] a respected soldier, notable marksman, and a good friend of Odlum who would later play an important role in his political and combat career on the Western Front.

[4] Col (ret) Keith D. Maxwell, OMM, CD., *The Duke Special Edition: Victor Wentworth Odlum, CB, CMG, DSO; Soldier, Diplomat, Journalist, Businessman, a Remarkable Canadian*, 2, Issue 3 (2015): p. 2.
[5] Item Number 546187, CEF Archives.
[6] Herbert H. Lyons, *6th Regiment, the Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles* (Vancouver B.C.: Evans & Hastings Printers, 1907), p. 6.

Marrying Eugenia Tressa Rogerson in 1904, he worked as a reporter for the Vancouver World before joining L.D. Taylor in purchasing the newspaper and becoming its editor-in-chief in 1905.[7] An interesting side note is that L.D. Taylor himself stated that Odlum did not follow through on his end of the deal. He forced Odlum to leave the World in 1907 with severance pay of $35 a week for three years,[8] while almost simultaneously being invited to resign his officer commission in the 6th DCOR that same year which "incensed him a great deal."[9] Odlum left Vancouver for Winnipeg in 1908, working in insurance while rebuilding his military reputation as a Captain in the Winnipeg Grenadiers. He moved back to Vancouver in 1913, working at the same firm as he had in Winnipeg, and was offered a promotion to senior Captain of the 11th Irish Fusiliers Regiment of Canada.[10] This position, as well as his other connections, would be pivotal in the formation of the 7th Battalion CEF, where he plays a surprisingly large role.

Pre-WW1 Biography: Pt. 2, "Honest John" Weightman Warden

In contrast to Odlum, *Honest John* Weightman Warden, D.S.O., O.B.E., E.D., was born on November 8th, 1871 in Bayswater, Kings County New Brunswick, in relative obscurity. His last name was originally Worden, though e *e* was changed to an *a* due to a clerical error before he went overseas.[11] He enlisted on 1 January 1901, disembarked Halifax 8 March 1901,[12] and arrived in South Africa during the later stages of the Second Boer War. Despite the relative lack of action, he stayed and served in the South African Constabulary (SAC) for five years before being later transferred to Vancouver. There, he joined the 6th DCOR in 1906/1907 as a private and had a civilian career as a representative of the Montellius Piano Company before going into real estate brokering.

Although not an officer yet, Warden still had a very colourful career ahead of him. Fellow 6th DCOR soldier and contemporary Vancouver historian, J.S. Matthews

[7] Col (ret)Keith D. Maxwell, *The Duke,* p. 3.
[8] Major J.S. Matthews V.D., *Early Vancouver* 5, 2011 Edition, 1945, p. 212.
[9] Major J.S Matthews V.D., *Early Vancouver* 2, 2011 Edition, 1932, p. 372.
[10] Charles Whately Parker and Barnet M. Greene, *Who's who in Canada: An Illustrated Biographical Record of Men and Women of the Time*, Volumes 6-7. (Toronto, Ontario: International Press Ltd., 1914), p. 975.
[11] *The Daily Province*, 25 April 1942, p. 46.
[12] Matthews, *Early Vancouver,* 1932, p. 373.

related that he was just a private when they were going to the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Convention of 1909.[13] He was quite active in the unit, especially in the regimental Rifle Team (where he won the St. George's Shield at Bisley in 1911 and being on the same team as Hart-McHarg when he won the Kaiser Cup in 1913).[14] Eventually, he was given a commission as an officer in the unit, where he was nicknamed "Honest John" Warden for the "almost child-like simplicity" that contrasted his incredible soldiering qualities.[15] He was, in many ways, a soldier's soldier, and despite being very well received by both enlisted men and officers alike, this may have stymied his chances to advance to a higher level of command.

These two men's short pre-war biographies demonstrate that while both men exude expert power (i.e. needed knowledge such as tactics or weapons handling) by being veterans of the Second Boer War, Odlum's personal power is emphasized in tandem with connection power (i.e. social connections with officers), whereas Warden's relied more upon referent power (i.e. follower's approval, through-the-ranks promotion, rifle shooting).[16] Although competent officers, what makes their leadership qualities more impressive is it was defined during a time when professionalism in the Canadian military was considered sub-par.

Pre-War Conditions and the 1st Division CEF

By the early 1900s, political interference like favouritism and nepotism was detracting from the Canadian military's professionalism and effectiveness. To provide context, though the aftermath of the Second Boer War ended in victory, there were numerous criticisms of the Canadian soldiers and their officers. Reports of defective weapons, equipment, and uniforms went hand in hand with British complaints of Canadian officers that were politically well-connected, but inexperienced, incompetent, and ineffective front-line officers. A surprisingly prominent example of this would be the future Minister of Militia Sam Hughes, who at the rank of Colonel in the Boer War regarded himself above taking orders and above more experienced or higher-ranking

[13] Ibid., p. 372.
[14] Ibid., p. 374.
[15] Major M.H. Donohue, *With the Persian Expedition* (Edward Arnold Press, 1919), p. 5.
[16] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 60.

British officers. (Although he painted his own combat service in a very positive light, he conveniently overlooked how he was often criticized for near insubordinate behaviour).[17]

Although changes were made in the conflict's aftermath to innovate the military's quality, with the Militia Act of 1904 removing the Governor General and politicians from direct military influence and the implementation of several Corps to improve self-sufficiency,[18] this did not halt the issues plaguing the Canadian structure going into the First World War. Jingoistic officials such as Sam Hughes, although emphasizing how Canadian soldiers should be armed and clothed by Canadian manufacturers and led by Canadian officers to prove self-sufficiency,[19] made the British command to be skeptical, not hopeful, of the quality of Canadian officers when the war began in 1914. This would prove prophetic, for, despite The Minister of War Sam Hughes' efforts to ensure that Canada could be viewed as a professional military force on par with the British, the early stages of Canada's recruitment and reorganization into the 1st Division CEF was a logistical nightmare. Hughes and his Ministry were ill-equipped to handle the immediate surge of 35,000 volunteers (10,000 more men than he promised the British Government, or expected), as well as convert and integrate the various militia units into CEF Battalions.

Over a stressful six-week period in August 1914, Hughes had to develop various infrastructures from scratch: developing a military base at the isolated town of Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier (which had little in the way of modern infrastructure), and ordered brand new equipment, such as 48,000 locally produced boots, several shipments of the locally produced Ross Rifle and the MacAdam Shield Shovel. These had various draw backs: the boots hardly lasted "two weeks" in Belgian conditions, and the Ross Rifle, though accurate, was so delicate and poor in the muddy trenches that one officer laconically noted that it was "murder to send men into battle with that gun."[20] Twenty-five thousand of the infamously useless Hughes' Shovel were neither effective at shovelling nor stopping bullets. Hughes was also generous with his

[17] Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1999), pp. 117-118.
[18] For Example: The Canadian Army Service Corps, 1901, The Canadian Military Engineers, Canadian Army Medical Corps, Canadian Ordnance Corps, Canadian Signalling Corps in 1903.
[19] Morton, *A Military History of Canada,* p. 137.
[20] Paul Grescoe and Audrey Grescoe, *The Book of War Letters: 100 Years of Private Canadian Correspondence* (Vancouver B.C.: McClelland & Stewart Illustrated Edition, 19 April 2005), pp. 70-71.

spending of federal income for he purchased these shovels at a cost of $33,750 while only salvaging roughly $1,400 of the failed shovels (unsurprising, as he had great personal stock in both the shovel and the Ross Rifle).[21]

These equipment logistics demonstrate that Sam Hughes' self-interested Ministry did not know how to properly train, equip or prepare these units to the standard required of the Western Front. When the British General Sir Edwin Alderson was presented the 1st Division CEF to command, he was disappointed to find that contrary to being battle-ready as Sam Hughes stated, the troops were in serious need of re-training. Worst of all, the issues regarding politically connected officers in the Boer War repeated itself, and as such several commissioned officers appointed by Hughes needed to be dismissed by Alderson.[22] In reaction to this criticism, as well as many other criticisms surrounding the Hughes' Shovel and the Ross Rifle, Sam Hughes attacked Alderson's character and poisoned his image in Canada. Ironically, Hughes' products, after an investigation by the House of Commons, were removed from service anyway and replaced by superior British-produced equipment.[23]

The 7th Battalion (*1st British Columbians*) and the Second Battle of Ypres

This early history of the formation of the 1st Division demonstrates that, due to the amateurism of the higherups, the actual formation of battalions, although in theory a delegated process done by amateurs, was in practice done under a *Laissez-Faire* leadership model with little interference by superior officers.[24] This limited oversight allowed for soldiers to form their own units based on prior service and geographical location. As such, the recently promoted Major V.W. Odlum and Captain J.W. Warden and their 7th Battalion CEF was largely made up of British Columbia elements from 6th DCOR, the 11th Irish Fusiliers, 102nd Rocky Mountain Rangers, and the 104th Fusiliers.[25] Despite Ottawa's complete delegation of battalion formations, there was a minor

[21] Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited, 1993), p. 33.
[22] Ralph Allen, *Ordeal by Fire* (New York: Doubleday & Company Press, 1961), p. 69.
[23] Ronald G. Haycock, *Sam Hughes: the public career of a controversial Canadian, 1885-1916* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), pp. 250–251.
[24] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 67.
[25] Harker, *The Dukes*, p. 56.

conflict of positional power when Ottawa wanted the Battalion to be led by a Colonel from Eastern Canada who was unfamiliar with the BC Units. Major V.W. Odlum used his position to convince Captain Gardner of the 6th DCOR and Captain Haines of the 104th Fusiliers to have this unit be led by a Western officer (specifically his 6th DCOR friend, Major Hart-McHarg).[26]

Although relatively mundane, this maneuvering does demonstrate how Victor Odlum used his personal connections to directly influence ecological positional power by controlling the Battalion's social environment.[27] This demonstrates Odlum's persuasive influence behaviours,[28] for the choice of Hart-McHarg was a convincing choice: he served in both South Africa and the 6th DCOR for many years, was a champion shootist at Bisley (ironically, being presented the Kaiser Cup trophy from Kaiser Wilhelm II himself in 1913),[29] and overall had a positive and established reputation within the British Columbian units. Although it was probably done to ensure that the 7th Battalion would be a more effective force, Odlum directly profited off this exchange by becoming second-in-command of the 1,000-man group.[30] J.W. Warden himself was not involved, though he was made the second in command of the No.1 Company of the 7th Battalion beneath Major Guy Moberly due to his effectiveness.[31] This well-crafted power dynamic allowed for the battalion to be called the *1st British Columbians*, and this minor triumph may have saved the 7th Battalion at the chaotic Second Battle of Ypres.

hThe Second Battle of Ypres: Warden's & Odlum's Accounts

The 1st Division CEF was sent to reinforce a British and French Colonial (i.e., *Turcos*: Moroccans and Algerians) defensive line near the town of Ypres on 22 April 22 1915. Although infamous for being the CEF's baptism by fire, it was also the first time that chlorine gas was used in an offensive move during the First World War. Within the

[26] Ibid., p. 58.
[27] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 59.
[28] Ibid., p. 66.
[29] James A. Wood, "Social Club or Martial Pursuit? The BC Militia before the First World War," *BC Studies*, no. 173 (Spring 2012): p. 60.
[30] Harker, *The Dukes*, p. 64.
[31] Ibid., p. 51.

first 48 hours of battle, the Canadians took 6,000 casualties, with a further 2,600 at Festubert hardly a few weeks later.[32] These traumatically sudden and high casualty rates were especially felt by the officers of the 7th Battalion, though V.W. Odlum and J.W. Warden had very different roles. Acting within the 2nd Brigade under the command of Brigadier General Arthur Currie, Warden's company was detached and sent to the 8th Battalion CEF to establish lines of communication with Colonel Lipsett. When a gas attack hit the supporting French *Turcos* connecting the line, the French pulled out en-masse due to intense casualties. Their frenzied retreat isolated Warden's company virtually isolated for days, which was compounded by how General Richard Turner and Colonel Garnet Hughes (Sam Hughes' son) pulled out the 3rd Brigade protecting the 2nd Brigade's flank: exposing a 4,000-yard gap.[33] In effect, Warden's company was completely surrounded by Germans or, at least, they were supposed to be. Aside from gas, concentrated rifle, machine gun, and artillery shell fire, Warden also claimed in his report that he saw "Germans dressed in British Uniforms" advancing towards their isolated position.[34] He panicked, and ordered his men to fire upon them, even when "some Major" ordered him not to do so.[35]

This is controversial: He admits that he was willing to supersede a superior officer's orders in order to protect his unit but was prepared to fire upon potentially friendly units and admit it in an official report. Although Warden took their running away instead of standing and fighting as proof that they were indeed Germans, there are very few (if any) instances of enemy soldiers advancing while wearing the opposing side's uniform found on the Western Front. As such, it is more than likely he fired on allied units. Whether due to the high-stress nature of his situation, a wartime need for veteran officers, or lack of time, no investigation or court-martial was pursued. He was severely wounded in the shoulder at the battle, and when his men were finally relieved a few days later he was sent home on convalescence leave for six months.[36] In terms of speculation, him being sent home to Canada for so long, and later being given

[32] Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-1918*, vol. 2 (Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Publishing, 2009), pp. 5-6.
[33] George H. Cassar, *Hell in Flanders Fields* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), pp. 180-181.
[34] Harker, *The Dukes*, p. 80.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, 1932, p. 374.

commission to build and command the 102nd Battalion, may have been a way to keep J.W. Warden away from his former unit due to his impulsive actions under fire.

Major V.W. Odlum had a very different role in the fighting. He was with the bulk of the 7th Battalion when they were fighting around the frontlines in St. Julien when Lt. Col. William F.R. Hart-McHarg was mortally wounded. Although Odlum took over command of the Battalion admirably and was able to withdraw his men with minimal casualties,[37] the strain of the battle took a toll on his mental well-being. His commanding officer and friend Hart-McHarg died two days after being wounded, and Odlum noted in a letter to the fallen's mother "It almost broke my heart to lose him. We have got along so well together, and he was such a splendid type that I have learned to love him. His loss almost totally unnerved me…".[38] If his good friend's death did not unnerve him, then the death of his younger brother, Corporal J.W. Odlum, must have. He served in the 7th Battalion as a corporal and was "blown to pieces by a shell" while resupplying ammunition to units directly in front of Victor.[39] Despite the extreme stress, he somehow was able to successfully pull the men out of the position.

In essence, both men were changed by their experiences on the Western Front, particularly this battle. Although it was not clear at this time, their relationship dynamic changed permanently after the Second Battle of Ypres. They would not meet again in a professional capacity until the Battle of the Somme in July of 1916, and under very different circumstances. In that time, both men would use their experiences to strengthen their leadership qualities in their future units.

Before The Somme: Odlum

Between 1915 and 1916, Odlum had become an efficient and ingenious (if not authoritarian) officer who demanded unquestionable obedience and utilized aggressive pressure tactics.[40] Although it was already official policy of the BEF and CEF, he personally reiterated to his men that "anybody in his Battalion who deserted would be

[37] Cassar, *Hell in Flanders Fields*, pp. 134–135.
[38] Harker, *The Dukes*, p. 54.
[39] Ibid., p. 79.
[40] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 65.

shot."[41] Despite his authoritarian attitudes, Odlum defined what it meant to be a battalion commander, and later a Brigadier General, in the CEF. He provided means for soldiers beneath him to direct their frustrations in a manageable way with softer actions like founding the trench-newspaper, *The Listening Post*. To the average soldier in the trenches, expressing their annoyances in clever, satirical ways was a boon to their morale. This extended to criticizing superior officers in a satirical way, including Odlum. In September 1915, he was welcomed back from "an enforced medical visit" to England, "bucking medical boards" to get back to the front.[42] Although being made fun of may be considered counterintuitive to being a sign of effective officer leadership, Odlum didn't need to be self-conscious of his effectiveness: he actively proved it, being wounded at least six times alongside his men.[43] This charismatic leadership allowed him to be an influential leader by wielding positional power and personal power simultaneously,[44] and it payed off with him being promoted from Lt. Colonel to Brigadier General on 7 July 1916.

Before the Somme: Warden

Meanwhile, Captain Warden returned to Vancouver on medical leave where he was approached, surprisingly, to command a battalion of his own. The Conservative MP for the Comox-Atlin riding, Herbert Sylvester Clements, wished to build a battalion from his barren constituency. According to the Daily Province's 10 November 1915 issue,[45] after Sam Hughes approved and authorized that Captain J.W. Warden was to take the rank of Lt. Colonel, there was immediate interest. To the loggers, miners and trade's men of the Pacific North West, he was a very relatable figure with absolutely "no swank" about him. He went from Private to Lt. Colonel solely based on his own merit, and he gave off an impression that not only was he the "embodied image" of the

[41] Cook, *Shock Troops,* p. 246.
[42] *Listening Post* (Trench Newspaper), 8th Edition, September 1915, p. 30.
[43] According to his personal medical records from the Library and Archives Canada. Item Number: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 7421 – 2.
[44] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," pp. 64-65.
[45] *The Daily Province*, Vancouver BC, 10 November 1915, p. 17.

Canadian Citizen Soldier,[46] but also exuded the charisma to be a visionary leader for these isolated British Columbian communities.[47]

Despite these initial perceptions of Warden, he did attract several former 7th Battalion officers and veterans to the unit, including Captains H.B. Scharschmidt, F. Lister and J.S. Matthews,[48] to ensure that the men would have a reliable corps of officers under his command. Warden himself was normally not present when the men were being trained as he was publicly and privately advocating on the unit's behalf. Despite misconceptions that this 102nd Battalion, "Warden's Warriors" were training at a "beach resort,"[49] in reality there were very few developed amenities at all in Comox, Vancouver Island. In fact, when they arrived to begin their training 22 December 1915 at their base on Goose Spit, they were forced to survive one of the harshest winters the small community had ever experienced: with only a few pubs, buildings, people, rifles, or sources of clean drinking water available.[50] Miraculously, these "Men of the Spit" banded together with the community, and together no soldier or civilian died from the harsh conditions.[51] Events such as these, as well as the "dreariness" of life in Comox, tied the "Warden's Warriors" together to form a unique identity that these men readily embraced, though J.W. Warden was not always a part of.[52,53] Although J.W. Warden was not always accessible to his men, the indirect influence which he provided for the Men on the Spit to train and drill had allowed for the men to become a fine unit of fighting men when the 102nd Battalion cast off for France in 1916.

The 102nd Battalion arrived in Liverpool on 28 June 1916, after a long and cramped voyage aboard the Empress of Britain along with the 65th and 84th Battalions. Numbering a total of some 4,000 troops, it was an extremely cramped, "intolerable" experience; with "atrocious" food and men being forced to sleep on the deck of the

[46] James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver B.C.: UBC Press, 2010), p. 7.
[47] Ibid., p. 68.
[48] Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, 1932, p. 372.
[49] Courtney Review Newspaper, 16 March 1916.
[50] Gould, *BC to Baiseux*, Chapter 1.
[51] Ibid., Chapter 1.
[52] Ibid.
[53] See Appendix A.

ship.[54] The men, who at Comox had hardly a dozen Ross Rifles between them, were all trained and drilled with SMLE's, Lewis Machine Guns, Mills Bombs, and bayonet drill in order to be combat effective on the western front. However, while in England, there was a general sense of unease during their six weeks of training at Broxted House. Both the 65th and the 84th Battalions that came with them were broken up to be used as reinforcements in pre-existing units on the front. Despite the worries of the men of the 102nd that their battalion would be broken up as well, they were surprisingly allowed to keep their designation as the junior battalion of the 11th Brigade, under the now Brigadier General, V.W. Odlum, and were transferred to Bramshott.

In many ways, this is surprising, even welcome, when considering that these men would not just fight on the front line but retain their battalion designation! Although it is not completely certain why the 102nd was not broken up, it is understandable why it was placed under V.W. Odlum's command. There were several officers that knew and previously worked with Odlum before, and Lt. Colonel Warden was just as results orientated as Odlum. In the end, their aggressive tactics garnered results in the capture of Regina Trench in November 1916: heralded in the Vancouver World Newspaper of 4 August 1917, "Warden's Warriors Make History" for creating such an effective group of fighting men in record time.[55]

Despite their hard work and success, it is more likely that the CEF's expanded professionalism had as much to do with the success of the "Warden's Warriors" as the men themselves.

CEF's Expansion & Shock Troops

The CEF's situation in France in Summer 1916 was far different than the high casualties of Spring 1915. The CEF's size quadrupled into four Divisions by April 1916 under the eye of General Byng and Arthur Currie, and inefficient ministers (i.e., War Minister Sam Hughes), were forced to resign.[56] It was in the aftermath of the Somme, nearly two years after the war began, that the reputation of the CEF's leadership and

[54] Gould, *BC to Baiseux*, Chapter 2.
[55] *Vancouver Daily World*, 4 August 1917, p. 16.
[56] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 42.

their shock troop divisions were starting to take shape. Arthur Currie learned directly from Byng regarding the enforcement of professionalism and transferring of leadership skills to successors and is emulated in the CAF today (especially regarding a "strong commitment to the responsibilities… and personal identification with the values of the Canadian military ethos.)"[57]

Learning from French and British failures at the Somme and Verdun, the CEF called for "self-reliant, self-sufficient and flexible" troops,[58] emphasizing well-planned battles and aggressive tactics in scenarios that *could* be won.[59] These manageable and planned goals were tempered between November 1916 and March 1917, with small-scale yet brutal trench raids. Varying in size from just dozens of men to hundreds, the units accomplished roughly sixty raids in a four-month period,[60] the most famous of these was the Calonne raid of January 1917. Within 45 minutes, three German ammunition dumps and forty dugouts were destroyed, and at least 100 prisoners captured, and scores more killed at a cost of forty dead, 135 wounded.[61] In line with his character, V.W. Odlum and his 11th Brigade were pioneers of these "Boche Killing" tactics,[62] which were designed to be fast, brutal, and cause as much damage as possible. As evidenced by the Calonne raid, retreating Germans were mowed down by Lewis guns, and Germans who refused to come out of the dugouts to surrender were buried alive by demolition teams. It seemed that at this point, Lt. Col J.W. Warden was enthusiastic of Odlum's influences as evidenced by how the 102nd Battalion had already successfully completed two of the initial raiding operations in November 1916. Warden's Warriors were "already establishing a record to live up to," with Warden and his officers directly commended by Odlum in despatches.[63] Both men were working well together with Odlum directly innovating the CEF's tactics, and Warden being a prime example of "emergent" leadership for creating positive results within Odlum's 11th Brigade.[64] At first glance, these results seem to emulate another Byng-Currie

[57] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 62.
[58] Cook, *Shock Troops,* p. 22.
[59] Ibid., p. 7.
[60] Ibid., p. 57,
[61] Ibid., p. 59.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Gould, *BC to Baiseux*, Chapter 4.
[64] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 8.

relationship, however, their leadership styles would begin to clash more notably as the operations became larger in scale.

Leadership Differences in the 11th Brigade & Mounting Pressure

Despite Odlum's and Warden's effective soldiering capabilities and cooperation, the men of the 11th Brigade were just men who voiced their concerns like any other. One of these men, Tom Johnson of the 102nd noted that, "despite maybe having his head blown off tomorrow… I am not worrying about that nearly so much as whether I shall have a good dinner... The particular jam I shall have is of more consequence to me than the numbers of German prisoners taken."[65] While this, in many ways, seemed like a reasonable request, for Odlum it was irrelevant when it came to the subject of alcohol consumption. Odlum, a strict Methodist teetotaller, sought to solve *The Issue of Rum* by replacing it with rations of hot pea soup or lime juice to substitute alcohol rations. Although certain soldiers may have agreed with this sentiment (Tom Johnson, mentioned above, was one of those men), it was predictably a very divisive issue, with him earning the nicknames of "Peasoup" Odlum, and "Old Lime Juice."[66] In this way, Odlum represented a sense of transformational leadership by attempting to moralize his troops,[67] however, it also was authoritarian as he made consuming alcohol a punishable offense when it was already a socially accepted, and encouraged, custom of trench culture.[68]

This policy was predictably unpopular, but it also came at a time when the surprise raids were not surprising the Germans anymore. Larger scale raids were encouraged in all rungs of the CEF, but the larger they were, the more it detracted from the original purpose of the "surprise raiding,"[69] creating a culture of more complicated attacks for seemingly little purpose. The 4th Division's commander, David Watson felt compelled to impress Arthur Currie the same way that Warden impressed Odlum with

[65] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 12.
[66] Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, 1945, p. 146.
[67] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 68.
[68] Interestingly enough, his teetotaller policies were echoed by the prohibition era in both Canada and the USA.
[69] Ibid., p. 61.

his raiding tactics.[70] This led to an exceptionally ill-conceived and overcomplicated plan in March 1917, where a 1,700-man raid would occur at Hill 145: the well-defended location of Vimy Ridge.

Even Odlum, a pioneer in these tactics, was concerned about this operation, especially when two of his four Battalion Commanders, Lt. Col. S.G. Beckett of the 75th Mississauga's and Lt. Col. A.G.H. Kemball of the 54th Kootenay's, objected to the plan. Odlum brought their concerns to Watson's second-in-command, Edmund Ironside, who, in practice, was *de facto* in command of the 4th Division due to Watson's incompetence (often noting in his personal memoirs how he was often given authority to sign orders in Watson's name).[71] Despite Odlum's protests, Ironside rejected the concerns of Odlum, largely due to how they could no longer delay their attack after months of preparation. Predictably, the raid was a disaster: the gas they intended to use to cover the advance had saturated the 11th Brigade's lines[72] and achieved nothing but 687 casualties (a 43 percent casualty rate) prophetically including the two battalion commanders who voiced their concerns.[73]

Odlum used everything within the confines that his position allowed for, but he was overruled by Watson's rank despite his *Laissez-Faire* leadership (or lack of any strong personal leadership).[74] This conflict between personal and positional power is a noted risk in the Canadian Armed Forces today due to how "(the armed forces) grants substantial formal authority to novice leaders whose expertise and other forms of personal power are, in most cases, either rudimentary or not fully developed."[75] While this confers legitimate authority to get "difficult things done,"[76] it is clear that incompetency from superior officers such as Watson was difficult to challenge, especially if their positions were maintained via personal power outside military command. For Odlum, this meant challenging Watson's authority, or other superior officers' authority, with similar personal means.

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[70] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 64.
[71] Edmund Ironside, *High Road to Command: The Diaries of Major-Gen. Sir Edmund Ironside 1920–1922*. (London, United Kingdom: Leo Cooper, 1972), p. 72.
[72] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 67.
[73] Ibid., p. 70.
[74] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 63.
[75] Ibid., p. 63.
[76] Ibid., p. 64.

The Positional versus Personal Power of Odlum: Vimy Ridge Onwards

Despite the horrific casualty numbers and the damage done to General Watson's prestige, the failed raid of March 1917 did prove to the Canadians that Vimy Ridge needed to be taken seriously. As the Canadian Division's prepared for the Second Battle of Arras, some 300,000 German, French, and British soldiers had been killed or wounded at Vimy Ridge up until that point.[77] Although the Canadian Corps' objective for the Second Battle of Arras had a daunting reputation, they prepared as much as they could. All battalions were replenished to full strength (at least 1,000 men), meaning, of the 100,000 men in the CEF, 56,500 of them would storm Vimy Ridge, with another 11,500 British soldiers in support.[78]

Once the battle commenced on 9 April, it was a stunning success. Covered by intense artillery fire and aided by large underground mines that destroyed several defenses, the first three divisions achieved their objectives in a matter of hours. In contrast to the other divisions, the 4th Division's attack faltered almost immediately. Despite their objectives being the steepest (and therefore, most challenging to achieve surprise from), they also received the least amount of planning. This was exacerbated by Watson, whose orders were so contradictory and confusing that Edmund Ironside needed to take command once again in order to continue the assault.[79] Odlum was given the toughest part of Vimy Ridge to tackle, Hill 145, and its four rows of defensive lines. In hindsight, it was too challenging for one single Brigade to attack and, as a consequence, the Germans massacred the 11th Brigade's battalions.[80] Lt. Col. J.W. Warden's command grimly stated in dispatches that "things were not going well,"[81] and according to the 102nd war diary, they alone suffered 122 killed, 189 wounded, and 27 missing. Similar casualty numbers were occurring all across Odlum's 11th Brigade, for the attack was in complete shambles and could only continue with aid from the 10th Brigade.[82] Reflective of this poor planning, the casualties of the 4th Division were the

[77] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 77.
[78] Ibid., p. 83.
[79] Ironside, *High Road to Command*, p. 75.
[80] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 127.
[81] Ibid., p. 127.
[82] Ibid., pp. 133-134.

highest of all divisions (with the overall CEF casualties numbering a total of 3,598 dead, 7,004 wounded).[83]

Although Vimy Ridge was considered a stunning success, it was also a time of very heavy losses that challenged the leadership capabilities within the CEF. The casualty count of Warden's 102nd was so great that they needed to change their designation to another population pool to have enough recruits. Odlum, again witnessing Watson's incompetence, was solidified in his belief that he needed to ensure the Canadian professional standard was not compromised by politically appointed individuals. An opportunity for Odlum to capitalize on this was with the Canadian Corps Commander himself, Arthur Currie. In June 1917, Lt. General Arthur Currie was knighted by King George V and succeeded Julian Byng. However, this promotion had a hidden problem: Sam Hughes. In the early years of the war, Sam Hughes' son Garnet Hughes was deemed unfit to lead soldiers into combat due to his failures back in 1915.[84] However, due to his political connections, he could not just be "sent packing", so Garnet was given command of the 5th Division of the CEF (a non-combat role) in February 1917. However, when Ottawa politicians wished to make Garnet Hughes commander of the active-duty 1st Division, Currie refused and threatened to resign.[85] Apparently, this led to a three-hour-long argument with Garnet Hughes vowing to ruin Currie, stating "I will get you before I am finished."[86] This seems to have rung true. Back in 1913, Currie embezzled $11,000 CAD (equivalent to $250,000 today) from his militia unit to pay off his extensive social debts,[87] and now it was conveniently being made public after Garnet was denied a job. Currie needed damage control, and he needed to pay back the substantial amount of money that he embezzled. Victor Wentworth Odlum, sensing an opportunity, convinced the 4th Division Commander David Watson to help him bail out Currie.

While the generosity of this cannot be denied, , it did come at an opportune time for Odlum. Even though it may have been a chance for Watson to get back into Currie's

[83] Heather Moran, "The Canadian Army Medical Corps at Vimy Ridge," in *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment*, eds., Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci and Mike Bechthold (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), p. 139.
[84] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 18.
[85] Ibid., p. 261.
[86] Ibid., p. 261.
[87] Wood, "Social Club," p. 46.

good graces after his poor command (Watson himself cut ties with the Hughes family despite their role in him receiving 4th Division job),[88] it also gave Odlum a chance to influence and maintain his personal position. Although Currie's reputation would never recover thanks to the Hughes family's efforts,[89] V.W. Odlum had successfully protected Currie's career and secured his own authority in the process by having personal power that far outpaced his positional rank of Brigadier General. The reason why this is so important to note is that Warden wrote that he officially went to Arthur Currie to complain about actions regarding Odlum's command,[90] but now that Currie was in Odlum's debt, the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Corps had his legitimate power be superseded by the social capital of a lower-ranking officer.

Although it is not exactly stated why Warden was dissatisfied with Odlum's authority or command, it does not necessarily matter. Although the Canadian Armed Forces of today notes how achieving the right balance of position and personal power is extremely important in order to solidify and legitimize authority (which in many ways, is "the cornerstone" of military leadership),[91] in practice it is fluid yet conflicting relationship that does not completely define how effective one's leadership ability is. Although J.W. Warden was an efficient combat leader, and up until a certain point someone happy to be under Odlum's command, it is understandable if he was disatisfied with it, or felt his voice was not heard. Regardless of whether it was a single event or several events over a long period, V.W. Odlum was now in a position where nobody could do anything against him. In a way, he controlled the 4th Division more than David Watson did, especially after he was given Ironsides' *de facto* job when he left in January 1918.[92] Though Odlum could not stop Watson from making poor decisions in March or April of 1917, he could do so in January 1918. In short, Odlum, by using both positional and personal power, was able to influence the lowest and highest end of the CEF's pecking order. When J.W. Warden stated that Odlum was gunning for Watson's job,[93] it is a believable statement as Odlum effectively already did have Watson's job.

[88] Cook, *Shock Troops*, p. 62.
[89] Ibid., p. 262.
[90] Moffat, "January 1918-1919," p. 1.
[91] "Leadership in the Canadian Forces," p. 63.
[92] *The London Gazette (Supplement)*. No. 30526, 12 February 1918, p. 2050.
[93] Moffat, "January 1918-1919," p. 1.

Indeed, Watson may have been reassigned to another role if the war did not end in November 1918.

Conclusion

This review demonstrates the conflicts between personal and positional power in the CEF during the First World War between the two officers, Victor Wentworth Odlum and John Weightmann Warden, and where they intersected within the CEF's overarching command structure. Despite Lt. Colonel J.W. Warden's voluntarily resigning his commission as the Commanding Officer of the 102nd Battalion, it is challenging to say when he had had enough of Odlum between June 1917 to January 1918, for there is just not enough specific data to tell for certain. However, the exact circumstances of his departure are not as relevant as examining the conditions that made him feel compelled to leave. He wrote that having to "sever his connection with the 102nd Battalion" in a written public announcement on 11 January 1918 was, he wrote in his diary, "the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life."[94,95] Names like *Honest John* or *Warden's Warriors* are a by-product of this positive reputation surrounding his personal connection with his men. However, he became dissatisfied with his position. Despite there being speculative evidence of him seeking a Brigadier's rank, and having the combat ability to achieve it, his personal impulsive actions may have stymied his ability to properly influence achieving higher positional power. Episodes such as shooting at "Germans dressed as British Soldiers," or "un-officer-ly" conduct like pulling a pistol on an *imaan* in Iran for chanting too loudly as he tried to sleep,[96] are conducive evidence for this. Eventually, it all became too much for Warden. Yet, although he left, he was still very respected by the 102nd. His successor, Lt. Colonel Lister, ensured the unit's prestige continued, and after Warden's time in Persia and Russia, he was invited to several reunions where he unveiled cenotaphs and other memorials. Despite his impulses, Warden's leadership impact gave *The Men of the Spit* a chance to achieve a sense of greater identity, and it is still an identity treasured by the isolated communities and the descendants of veterans to this day.

[94] Ibid., p. 3.
[95] Gould, *BC to Baiseux*.
[96] Ibid., p. 94.

In comparison, *Pea Soup* Odlum had an active track record of being involved in various scenarios that intersected his personal and positional power by fluidly stacking his positional authority to influence his personal authority, and vice versa. His advanced rank was a result of his military competency as well as personal influence, for he held official sway over his brigade and unofficial sway over the highest-ranking officers of the CEF's command. For Odlum, his impact was that he challenged the status quo of command with coercive personal power that challenged the CEF's legitimate power. Although he was a far more effective commander than Hughes or Watson, it nonetheless maintained a dangerous precedent in how positional authority could be irrelevant when compared to the connections of certain officers.

The conflict between personal and positional authority in the officers of the CEF was an important historical aspect in the context of the institution's professional development as demonstrated by the events recounted above. The intersection of personal and positional authority, though not an uncommon conflict in military hierarchies, is a perspective not often considered when considering the popular Canadian experience during the First World War, for the soldiers or their officers. Therefore, the relationship between Brigadier General Victor Wentworth Odlum and Lt. Colonel John Weightman Warden demonstrates how this conflict was a fluid one that applied to all officers of the CEF and applied to the organization at not just at the divisional, but at the brigade and battalion levels as well. Overall, this was a fundamental step in the development of professionalism in Canada's military history with its legacy being that the lessons of leadership theory of the First World War are still being taught, more than a century later, in the military today.

Appendix A

"We're Warden's weary warriors a'drilling on the sand,
And paying out a buck a day to help the bloomin' band.
But what they do with all the cash, we don't quite understand,
As we go marching on.

The Colonel forms us up in line ands hands us lots of bull:
"You are the finest bunch of men that trigger e'er did pull."
On beef and beans and bread and Jam we keep our bellies full,
As we go marching on.

The sand gets in our blankets, and the wind blows chill and drear.
If life was dull at Comox, it's a damned sight duller here,
You have to go a mile or so to get a glass of beer,
As we go marching on.

Chorus:
"We are Warden's weary warriors,
We are Warden's weary warriors,
We are Warden's weary warriors,
The Gallant-One-0-Two"

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