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REINTERPRETING COMBAT MASCULINITY

Dutch peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo

Van oudsher geldt het leger als de organisatie bij uitstek waarin traditionele mannelijke waarden als moed en hardheid worden gecultiveerd. In hoeverre doen deze nog opgeld in het huidige Nederlandse leger, en wat blijkt daarvan in de praktijk? Liora Sion heeft dit onderzocht door middel van intensieve participerende observatie in twee legereenheden die vredesmissies verrichten. Zij stelt vast dat er voor de militairen een spanning bestaat tussen gekoesterde mannelijkheidsidealen van moed, heldhaftigheid en strijdbaarheid, en een veel minder heroïsche werkelijkheid waarin weinig of geen geweld mag worden gebruikt. Het artikel beschrijft hoe de militairen met deze spanning omgaan.

Infantry NCO (Non Commissioned Officer) in Bosnia: 'Infantry is the "Tour of Duty", it is walking in the woods with real men, camouflaged, with gear and with...your weapon ready...if you see the enemy you...attack him...rain or no rain it doesn't matter, you must do it. This is infantry, sleeping outside, having a tough time, hardly eating, hardly sleeping and only fight. Yes, fighting – this is the infantry.'

Artillery soldier: 'This is a job for real men... someone who is sturdy, who doesn't get scared quickly, and who is ready for action...a clerk can also be a real man... But if he'll try to do our work then he'll be done for in a week.'

This article explores the construction of masculinity in two Dutch NATO peacekeeping units. By masculinity I refer to the main ideals of approved ways of being a male in a given society. These ideals are not a set of psychological traits that specific individuals may or may not possess, but rather a group of historically and culturally available, recognized and legitimate themes, which are more or less identified with certain aspects of being a man in a certain society (Gilmore 1990: 1).

Historically, there have been close links between masculinity and the military. To begin with, the overwhelming majority of service personnel are men and therefore it is not surprising that the military is a male-dominated environment. Moreover, in many societies the military is still widely considered to be

the bastion of male identity and the place where 'boys' are turned into 'men' through the construction of military service as a rite of passage into manhood (Arkin and Dubrofsky 1978; Ben-Ari 2001; Enloe 1988: 15; Sion 1997). Within this rite recruits are required to express attributes identified with combat roles such as emotional control, composure, risk-taking, endurance and fortitude in the face of difficulties. Therefore, it is participation in combat that is considered by soldiers to be the main test through which military masculinity is achieved (Badinter 1995; Enloe 1988; Morgan 1994; Sion 1997).

The soldiers cited above express this idea vividly when they say that military service is all about 'real men' who are engaged in fighting in harsh conditions. Yet, it is not likely that these soldiers, who are mainly engaged in peace missions, will ever face battle. Despite the recent military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Dutch army in the last two decades is mainly engaged in non-violent peace missions and has a non-heroic image in the Dutch public eye (Dudink 2002; Teitler 1977: 69-83).

How do these soldiers construct their masculine self-image and cope with internal contradictions between ideology and practice, between soldiers' heroic self-image, which is based on the danger and excitement of combat activities, and the mundane reality of peace missions? I argue that soldiers conform to combat hegemonic masculinity by stressing its aspects such as physical and emotional control. Yet, because they are not involved in combat, they reinterpret these aspects and therefore stretch the hegemonic masculinity model to some extent. The problem is that the closer they get to combat core expertise and the adoption of military hegemonic masculinity, the more they become frustrated by, and ambivalent toward, peace missions.

Not much has been written on masculinity in European militaries (Hockey 2002); especially concerning peacekeeping soldiers (Cockburn and Zarkov 2002), whose self-image faces challenges different from that of combat soldiers. This article focuses on images of masculinity among peacekeepers based on a fieldwork I conducted in 1999-2000 with two Dutch NATO peacekeeping units: 'Bulldog' artillery battery which was deployed in Kosovo (KFOR2), and 'Grizzly' infantry company which was deployed in Bosnia (SFOR8).

The paper is composed of three parts. The first part presents the soldiers and the Dutch military and its involvement in peace missions. The second part analyzes how the military enhance masculine combat images through rhetoric (commercials) and practice (peacekeeping training); and how it influences soldiers' satisfaction in Bosnia and Kosovo. The third part explores the construction of soldiers' masculine identity. But first I start with the methodology.

Methodology

From the fall of 1999 to the summer of 2000, I conducted anthropological fieldwork with the cooperation of the Dutch army. While conducting research, I had full access to the soldiers. In general, the army allowed observing almost everything without having a military escort. As part of the fieldwork, I accompanied the units 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 also off-duty activities such as eating and socializing in the camp's bar and club, watching tv, etc. Moreover, I spent several periods of time with the soldiers during their deployment in Kosovo and Bosnia, where I joined them on their operational activities such as patrols, manning checkpoints and guard missions, as well as off-duty activities such as a guided tour of Sarajevo. I interviewed seventy soldiers and commanders during training and deployment. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The interviews, as well as fieldwork, were conducted in the Dutch language.

Gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliations can set limits and pose problems in fieldwork. In my case, being a Jewish Israeli woman sometimes played as a disadvantage because I was not only perceived as a foreigner but as having lower status since I was the opposite to everything that was "right": not a man, not European and not Christian. Nevertheless, I also possessed other attributes such as being an ex-soldier in the Israeli military, which many soldiers admired. My nationality was a burden because I had to prove constantly that I was not an Israeli intelligence agent, but it also gave me military authority. After all, to the soldiers I represented one of the strongest armies in the world. Therefore, soldiers perceived me as peripheral and high status at the same time.

As a woman, there were occasions when I was not welcomed, such as private parties where soldiers watched porn, discussed women or drank together, talking obscenities. I was also not welcomed when they left the camp to look for local girls or just to have fun. However, as Anne Simons (1997: xii) also observed, soon enough soldiers started to ignore my presence and act 'naturally'. I usually tried to de-emphasize the fact that I was a woman by wearing uniforms too large for me, gathering my hair and not using makeup.

The Dutch military and peace missions

The Dutch are known for their pacifist attitudes and limited trust in military institutions; an image which is confirmed by research (Koch 1984; Soeters 2000, 2001). 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 UK, France or the United States. The armed forces in the Netherlands seem to have assumed an image of 'non-martial' (Teitler 1977: 69-83) or 'unheroic' (Dudink 2002). Military failures, especially the Srebrenica massacre, contributed to this image.

The Dutch army, which became an all-volunteer force in September 1996, focuses mainly on peacekeeping missions, humanitarian, and disaster-relief operations. These missions enjoy widespread support in the Netherlands, even after the abysmal results of the Srebrenica operation in 1995 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.

The massacre provoked an eruption of public anger in the Netherlands and strengthened the army's image as 'passive' and even 'cowardly' (Klep 1998: 59-68). One magazine declared that Dutch soldiers were 'Too Sweet and Innocent for War' (*HP/De Tijd*, August 4, 1995). From this perspective, the Dutch armed forces were nothing but losers (van der Meulen 1998: 38; Schoeman 2003). The events of Srebrenica diminished the status of the army in spite of the NIOD report that cleared the soldiers in 2002.

Like many other European armies nowadays, the Dutch military 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 masculine tasks involved in peace missions (Boene 2003: 167-186).

Peacekeeping is a military third-party intervention to assist the transition from violent conflict to stable peace. It evolved from neutral monitoring missions to complex multitask endeavors. With the years the missions have expanded, becoming increasingly complex and now accounting for the larger share of the UN's expenditures. Since the 1990s peacekeeping has become a vague label for a wide variety of international operations, including heavily armed NATO-led missions some of which waged war to enforce peace treaties imposed on warring parties. Such examples are the Stabilization Force in Bosnia (SFOR) and the peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR), which started as peace enforcement missions. However, when this research was conducted in 1999-2000, SFOR8 and KFOR2 mostly performed light infantry missions and were mainly involved in the humanitarian and peace-building aspects of the mission.

The soldiers

Most of the soldiers in Grizzly and Bulldog were in their early twenties and single or living together with a girlfriend. About a third of the soldiers came from

families where fathers, uncles or brothers served in the military, usually as NCOs. The other fathers were mostly blue-collar workers and the mothers were often housewives. About seventy per cent of the soldiers and officers came from villages or small towns outside the Randstad.

Despite the fact that both units were combat-oriented, artillery and infantry units obtain different cultures as a result of their different training and mission (Shalit 1988; Von Zugbach 1988). Artillery soldiers usually work behind the lines where they are not directly exposed to the enemy, while in theory 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 self-image of the units because service in combat units is directly related to status. Infantry soldiers have a more prestigious and masculine self-image than artillery, whose self-image is shaped in the shadow of the infantry as second best:

Artillery soldier: 'Artillery was my third choice...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 have a stronger professional pride and a higher self-esteem. Most of them chose the infantry and were satisfied with their decision. They perceive the infantry as the only 'real' military service, 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 NCO: 'We have...people who don't hesitate to crawl in the mud and to work outdoors in bad weather. The people who come here are tough and are more the rude type.'

Despite the fact that infantry soldiers are closer than artillerists to combat core expertise, both units face a tension between their self-image and their ideals of masculinity. Most of the soldiers criticized the army for its lack of fighting spirit and insufficient combat training, and complained that the army is neither tough nor aggressive enough as a result of 'too many politicians' and a 'tolerant society' whose 'mentality suits peace more than combat.' They envied other, more aggressive militaries.

Artillery soldier: 'The military...doesn't train enough, too much theory...too little practice... It is too easy...we completely have no experience. If we will have to fight I'm a hundred percent sure that we will lose. So other countries shouldn't surprise us, because they will invade here, no problem! (Laughs)... The Dutch military...is worth nothing.'

Artillery NCO: 'It is a special military because the Dutch are generally very tolerant and against violence. It is not really an aggressive military... For example, the Dutch military uses violence only as the last option... In other countries they are not so patient... but the Netherlands always tries to talk, too many politicians.'
 Operations officer: 'I think that our society and mentality suits peace more than combat.'

The army is portrayed as soft, not tough enough, and not aggressive, the opposite of combat hegemonic masculinity, an army that 'will surely lose if it will try to fight'.

Infantry officer: 'The military is soft... the Dutch infantry will never be in a situation that will endanger soldiers' lives... the Netherlands won't accept it. It has to do with the broad social basis that the military must have before deploying people... I don't like it because personally I look for action and this is why I volunteered for the military.'

NCOs and officers were especially discouraged about their miniscule chances to fight. Many soldiers, especially infantrymen during their deployment to Bosnia were frustrated and expressed their wish to fight. They asked me to pass this message on to the high command in The Hague. Apparently, participation in combat is highly valued by soldiers who consider it to be the main test through which military masculinity is achieved; the opposite to what they describe as the soft, non-aggressive army. This may be one of the reasons why peacekeeping training takes the shape of heavy combat training, as we shall see in the next section.

Images of masculinity in the Dutch army

The army is a masculinized organization, in which masculinity is highly valued and which disproportionately benefits male soldiers. The army's organizational logic assumes that soldiers are male, even if this is not explicitly stated. Therefore, skills that are perceived as unique to men are more valued than those that are identified with women, and this value is reflected in the higher status and material rewards that accrue to male soldiers (Acker 1990; Britton 1997; Connell 1987; West and Zimmerman 1987). This is because the army has a kind of working-class culture demanding manual labor and physical ability, sometimes carried out under dangerous conditions reinforcing rugged masculinity (Maynard 1989).

This does not mean that men are essentially made for war and women for peace, as some scholars argue (De Groot 2001; Salla 2001). Rather, that the military as a masculinized organization highly values combat traits which are perceived as masculine. Hence, despite far-reaching political, social, and tech-

nological changes, the warrior still is a key symbol of masculinity and remains the masculine hegemonic image in the military (Cameron 1994; Morgan 1994).

How does a military that mainly performs peace missions face the hegemonic combat image? And how does it motivate its soldiers? Through analyzing military commercials, peacekeeping training, and missions, I will show how at the same time that the army turns into what can be termed as a less glorified and masculine job and opens its doors to more women (at least as policy is concerned), it also exaggerates excitement and adventure in the most conspicuous and distinct way.

Commercials

Most of the army's television commercials and newspaper advertisements in 1998-2002 addressed men by showing soldiers' audacious onslaught in a jungle, suggesting that army life is an adventurous and exciting experience. Other advertisements for the army addressing the commandos and air-mobile brigade are even more adventurous and masculine-like. Despite the fact that the commando and air-mobile brigade are relatively small and exclusive units, they get large advertisements, so disproportional to their size as to make one wonder whether their aim is to help general recruitment into the army rather than for these specific units.

Advertising for the cavalry and for infantry were mostly the same: A picture of a tank moving quickly in the desert among clouds of sand and a paragraph saying:

Do you find 50 CC enough?

Imagine you are a driver of tracked vehicle in the Royal Army. You don't have a small nine-to-five job. You work for example in the cavalry that can perform an international peace mission. Also fighting disasters and assistance are part of the mission. It is also true for your colleagues from the other combat units: artillery, infantry and engineer corps. In performing your duties you will operate within a team. Comradeship, physical ability, and discipline are demanded. As a professional soldier you will be competent in not only your specialty but also the military profession.

Advertising for the air-mobile brigade showed soldiers running out of a helicopter with full gear and weapons ready. A paragraph says:

Or do you prefer to stay in the traffic-jam

In the air-mobile brigade you never know what the day will bring. One moment you sit in the camp, the next you are on your way to a crisis area, maybe in a helicopter. It is a spectacular sight; often advanced Apache combat helicopters transport you. But you are not misled by the 'luxurious' transportation. At your destination you will need a lot of energy. For example, a long march in an inhospitable

pitable area with a 50 kg of gear. You and your colleagues must have top physical ability.

These advertisements portray the army service as exciting, dangerous and physically challenging, themes that are closely associated with the construction of masculinity (Barrett 1996; Morgan 1992: 87). It is exciting because 'you never know what a day will bring'. It is also dangerous because you may have to cope with 'a long march in an inhospitable area with a 50kg of gear'. The advertising usually does not approach women or portray female soldiers in any way, despite the military's official policy to encourage women's recruitment.

According to these commercials, the important factors that differentiate a military career from other occupations are work diversity, adventure, and job mobility inside the military, as well as travel to other countries. The commercials promise that 'you don't have a small nine-to-five job'. Indeed, the soldiers I interviewed proudly emphasized that unlike people in civilian jobs, they do not work from nine to five and enjoy diversity (Sion 2004).

The theme of danger combined with themes of hardship and dirt is also part of the construction of the quintessentially masculine work (Cornwell 1984: 138-139). Army work is unique because it may give individuals the license to do dangerous things. Things that might be prohibited or severely controlled outside of recognized work situations (Morgan 1992: 87).

Blue-collar work, as portrayed in these commercials, is generally thought to be more masculine than white-collar, and blue-collar jobs requiring strength and violent force, are perceived as more masculine than those that do not (McElhinny 1994: 160). Martin (1980: 89) argues that for blue-collar men whose jobs often do not provide high income or great social prestige, other aspects of the work, including certain 'manly' features, take on enormous importance as a means through which they confirm their sex-role identity. Similarly, working in an 'all male' environment, such as the army, reinforces the notion that they are doing 'men's work' and is a highly prized fringe benefit of the job.

Peacekeeping training

The motifs of excitement, work diversity and danger are also conspicuous in peacekeeping training, which takes the shape of combat exercise and emphasizes infantry combat core expertise. Most of the training was engaged with shooting, assaulting and marching exercises and mainly focused on combat (Sion 2006). This is not unique to the Dutch army. Winslow (1997) concluded that the training conditions in the Canadian Airborne Regiment deployed to Somalia led to a 'hyper-investment' in the warrior identity.

Peacekeeping training started with a week of combat exercise in Bergen, Germany. During that week the soldiers were mainly engaged in shooting ex-

ercises, first using moving targets and eventually participating in a life fire squad and company exercise. Although this training is defined as meant for peacekeeping, it is actually infantry combat training. For example, during the exercise briefing the commander explained to the soldiers how to move about in the area and when to stop and hide. He emphasized that these instructions are also good for war situations when the soldiers have to be aware of the enemy. He repeated the word 'war' over and over again.

The next exercise was social patrol maneuver, one of the basic concepts of peacekeeping in which soldiers learn how to march in daylight, 'showing the flag'. In other words, showing their presence to the local population for the purpose of keeping law and order. This exercise was also transformed into combat training. Instead of marching during the day, the final social patrol exercise took place late at night and altered into combat marching, which ended with a shooting exercise in the morning.

Only the last two weeks and half are actually devoted to peacekeeping training, yet even then the drills may take the form of combat exercise. Women had only a minor role in this training since they do not function as combatants or in command roles. Most of the peacekeeping final training took the shape of simulations aimed at teaching the soldiers how to handle locals and international media. Soldiers from other units and even some professional actresses participated in this role-playing. Many of the roles that women took during these simulations were of local mothers who demand food for their babies, or local wives. Training videos and simulations warned soldiers against having affairs with local married women, explaining that it may upset their husbands, and also against visiting local prostitutes. In other simulations 'locals' (played by soldiers) offered the soldiers prostitutes. Therefore, although some women participated in the training as peacekeepers, most of them played the Other – local wives, mothers and prostitutes.

Peace missions in Bosnia and Kosovo

While peacekeeping training was violent and exciting, the missions in Bosnia and Kosovo were peaceful and humanitarian-oriented. The disappointed soldiers, especially infantry, who are in greater proximity to combat core expertise, perceived the mission in feminine terms. Infantry soldiers said that 'everybody can do a peace mission', and that 'peace missions are too easy and the demands are too low' to the stage that 'even women can perform peace missions, because nothing happens'. An infantry officer said:

'I think that the demands are too low, it is too easy and it is because we are talking about a peace mission... There is an argument that women can serve, based on the assumption that in peace missions nothing happens.'

An infantry soldier said:

'A good peacekeeper is someone who can...communicate well with the interpreter and who is very social... with the local people. Therefore, a peace mission demands more social skills...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 but actually ask the same questions.'

If peacekeeping demands qualities such as 'chatting in the pub' or 'speaking with a girlfriend', it may fit women better, since according to this soldier, they can chat better.

In order to resolve their confusion and enhance their self-esteem, many of the infantry soldiers defined the mission as combat. Yet, the discrepancy between the mission reality and their expectations contributed to their confusion and dissatisfaction (Sion 2006). Because danger goes hand in hand with excitement, as Vogelaar, Soeters and Born (1997) argue in a study of Dutch *IFOR* soldiers in Bosnia, soldiers who view their work as more dangerous are likely to see their work as more interesting. An infantry soldier in Bosnia expressed his disappointment in the mission, as compared with the exciting and stimulating training:

'A lot of the things they told me weren't true...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!'

Soldiers' eagerness for action was channeled to war films, books and computer games through which they could experience their enthusiasm to participate in a 'real' war. In Kosovo and Bosnia the soldiers found interest in war remains, foreign weaponry and mines, and the killing that had taken place in the area. Whenever I joined soldiers on patrols, they would point out locations where fights had taken place and of military posts. One infantry soldier explained his attraction to serve in Bosnia:

'It is interesting to give the war a close look. Usually you see it in the news... and therefore you are not involved but here you can see everything for yourself. You can see the destroyed houses and everything, people who live there and so on.'

Because the war was over and the mission was mainly humanitarian, soldiers were quite disappointed, especially infantrymen, and the main problem was how to keep them busy and alert during their everyday activities. The infantry company commander explained how boring the mission was compared to the excitement of combat training:

'It is easy but not exciting. For infantry soldiers exercises are always exciting, you always encounter an enemy; do this or that... but a peace mission... is not

exciting. It is not like the soldier is going to encounter an enemy... He must patrol around houses and this is harder for them.'

Infantry officer said:

'It is hard... every year it becomes more peaceful here. When I look at my UN-time, it was thrilling and so different from today. Today I can go swimming; take a day off to Sarajevo. This is relaxing. But you miss some excitement (*spanning*).'

Boredom is dangerous not only because the soldiers need to keep alert in case of an emergency situation, but it also entails the risk that bored soldiers will provoke the situation in order to create some excitement. As an infantry NCO put it:

'Soldiers look happily for adventures and therefore we as their commanders must give them adventures because otherwise they will look for it somewhere else. If there is no thrill in this area, they will go look for excitement on their own.'

In order to alleviate the boredom and frustration the soldiers escaped into over-doing sports to the level of injuring themselves. The camp's doctor said:

'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... they want to be physically busy... to take out their energy.'

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

Masculine self-perception: variations on hegemonic masculinity

Soldiers' frustration about the mission created an ambivalent image of what kind of masculinity their peacekeeping activities represented. Although soldiers' self-identity was largely based on combat masculinity, the mundane reality of deployment was far from these heroic and exciting images. I argue that soldiers' coping strategy was to adopt combat masculinity but reinterpret it according to their own abilities. Creating variations on hegemonic masculinity helped soldiers to maintain their masculine self-image, yet it also underlined the discrepancies between desires and reality and did not take away confusion and frustration among many soldiers.

Literature on soldiering argues that combat masculinity is constructed mainly through discipline and obedience to military hierarchy, which demands a high level of self-control, both physical and mental (Ben Ari 1998; Sasson Levi 2002; Sion 1997). In this section I analyze how Grizzly and Bulldog soldiers constructed their masculinity images vis-à-vis hegemonic combat masculinity by reinterpreting it.

Emotional control

In many cultures there is a strong identification between masculinity and emotional control (Gilmore 1990; Haste 1993; Whitson 1990). At least since the Reformation masculinity has been identified with notions of 'self-control' (Seidler 1994: 45-46). It was particularly in this period that the modern conception of masculinity was formed. This link is intensified by the social contexts of the military in which men must display control and mastery within public arenas of small, relatively cohesive, groups and (often) close relations with commanders. Therefore, it is the group that is the bearer of masculinity, which, as Connell (1995: 107) argues, always has a strong collective dimension. Individual practice is required, but apart from his group a man's words and actions mean little.

Much of the literature on the military points out the importance of mastering emotions in combat situations. Performing well in battle and showing endurance, self-control, perseverance and composure become an indicator, a mark that one has successfully become a man (Sion 1997; Ben-Ari 1998). Very little has been written, however, on soldiers who perform other roles than combat (Sasson-Levi 2002).

Soldiers' masculinity in Grizzly and Bulldog is based on mastering emotions. Yet, since their main challenge is not combat but rather performing monotonous and boring jobs in harsh conditions, their main challenges are handling boredom, bad weather and lack of sleep without complaining. Infantry soldier said:

'If you are busy, like working for two days with no sleep and then eventually you can sleep for eight hours but after four hours they wake you up and tell you: "you must do this and that", then you shouldn't say shit and be completely down, no, you should be cool, get up and do it.'

No matter how hard the conditions were, the expectations from soldiers in Grizzly and Bulldog were that they should not openly complain. They often used the word *overdrijven* to describe soldiers who 'overreact' or 'exaggerate' emotionally. An infantry platoon commander said:

'A good soldier should not complain (*zeuren*) or nag (*zeiken*)...you shouldn't exaggerate (*overdrijven*). It has to do with a professional attitude.'

What this officer actually says is that it is perfectly normal to feel bad when you have to work in the rain, but you have to control this feeling and not 'exaggerate' it. In Katz's (1990) study of US Army drill sergeants she found that for these men the primary danger of emotionality is lack of control leading to uncontrolled behavior, which would prove to be an obstacle to military performance. Yet, it is important to note that private complaining to friends and colleagues was acceptable. It was the public sphere in which the soldier had to practice self-control:

Infantry soldier: 'It is easy to say that everything stinks...but you must hold things inside.'

Infantry NCO: 'My deputy is an example for me, he never complains and he performs my orders even if he doesn't agree with me.'

Restraining feelings is an important part of soldiers' socialization. It is often done through group pressure that socializes its members by enforcing informal sanctions. A soldier who does not obey the rules and overtly complains is mocked and taunted by his colleagues for being too 'soft' until he stops. For example, during a basketball game among infantry soldiers, I witnessed a soldier who loudly complained about the conditions of the playground. Within minutes other soldiers started to mock and imitate his voice and he immediately stopped.

Physical endurance

Mastering emotions goes hand in hand with mastering the body. The construction of the ideal male body today, suggests Bordo (1993, 1997), is a body that is hard as a rock, without looseness or flaccidity anywhere. Men use the surface of their bodies to code superior will power, control over desire, and the ability to manage and shape their own lives and those of others. Examining the body of the soldier shows us a thin and muscular man whose body is shaped in almost daily workout in the gym (this is especially true for infantry soldiers). Muscles are perceived as so important to the soldiers that they do not only work out hard in order to achieve them, but also discuss, compare and show them off. By mastering their body they master their mind and reshape their character.

Because the formal military activities in Grizzly and Bulldog were not physically difficult and challenging enough to be used as a test for soldiers' manhood (even I could cope with training and marches), the 'real' physical tests were informal. Infantry soldiers used to go voluntarily on long and hard morning runs, much harder than formal military exercises, and they constantly challenged and teased me for my inability to join them. Another common informal test was to show the immunity of the body to extreme weather. Soldiers frequently had no coats on and often wore only short-sleeved shirts during

training in the cold north German winter. Often after night marches soldiers had to wait still in the cold for a couple of hours until morning exercises and they usually did so without coats. Since I wore a coat and gloves yet still got constantly sick being outdoors with them, soldiers used to boast how, unlike me, they were not influenced by the cold weather. As the infantry commander said: 'A good soldier... shouldn't complain that *ach*, it is raining.' In another occasion on a cold morning, an artillery officer was leaving the warm coffee room and asked for his coat. The Brigade general answered him, 'Are you a real soldier?' They both laughed and left without their coats.

Conclusions

This article explores how peacekeepers construct their masculine self-image and cope with internal contradictions between their heroic self-image, which is based on the danger and excitement of combat activities, and the mundane reality of peacekeeping activities.

If we understand that there is a continuum of roles and tasks in greater or lesser proximity to the core of combat, then the gender model of military service becomes more complex. Each position and image has different prestige and power, but all are defined by their relation to the warrior. Therefore, the peacekeeping model of masculinity, as it may be called, is not a form of new masculinity but a subtle variation on the hegemonic combat image. The soldiers refer to this model by reinterpreting physical and emotional control. Yet, as soldiers adopt the warrior model they are frustrated by, and ambivalent toward, the non-heroic peace missions.

Dutch soldiers cling to ideals of combat masculinity that are quite similar to armies of other nations, for example, the British, American and Israeli armies (Barrett 1996; Ben Ari 1998; Hockey 2002; Sasson Levi 2002; Sion 1997). What is unique to the Netherlands is that these ideals are in conflict with Dutch national cultural traditions and self-images of the Dutch as being non-heroic and nonviolent (Dudink 2002; Soeters 2001; Teitler 1977). This discrepancy contributes to the vulnerability of the army in two contradictory ways: soldiers tend to be perceived as too militaristic and combative, but also, in certain situations (like Srebrenica), as too passive and non-combative.

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