

Table of Contents

<u>U.S. needs 'authentic leadership,' Tillman's widow tells students.....</u>	1
<u>Hwy 401 renaming would honour Canada's soldiers.....</u>	2
<u>Quebec journalists injured in bombing.....</u>	3
<u>Slain soldier comes home.....</u>	4
<u>VAN DOOS LOSE TWO MORE; Large blast kills 2, injures three.....</u>	6
<u>School supplies donated locally go to kids in Iraq, Afghanistan.....</u>	8
<u>Young soldier helps carry fallen brother; Benoit Longtin, who just recently completed basic training, among pallbearers for brother killed in Afghanistan.....</u>	10
<u>Afghan bomb blast kills 2 Cdn. soldiers; Afghan interpreter killed, three others injured as armoured vehicle hits roadside bomb.....</u>	11
<u>Body of slain soldier returns to Canada.....</u>	12
<u>Two more Canadians killed in action; Reporters injured Radio Canada says cameraman hurt and reporter in shock.....</u>	14
<u>'Your sons did not die in vain'.....</u>	16
<u>Mourners gather for return of fallen soldier; Pte. Simon Longtin was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan on Sunday.....</u>	18
<u>Commander says he won't forget fallen comrades.....</u>	20
<u>Two Canadian soldiers killed; Attack claims life of Afghan interpreter, injures two journalists, soldier.....</u>	21
<u>Premier to consider 401 name change.....</u>	23
<u>Your job: Delivering the worst possible news.....</u>	24
<u>Outgoing commander: Soldiers' loss not in vain; Regiment leader in Afghanistan to hand over control on Friday.....</u>	26
<u>Fallen Quebec soldier arrives home; Brother who just completed basic training takes spot as pallbearer.....</u>	28
<u>Bomb kills two Canadians; Interpreter dies, Radio-Canada journalists hurt in Afghan blast.....</u>	30
<u>Premier ponders renaming highway for soldiers.....</u>	32

Table of Contents

<u>Blast kills two Canadian soldiers, hurts three others near Kandahar; Members of Quebec regiment perish after vehicle hits explosive device.....</u>	33
<u>Slain Quebec soldier returns to home; Longtin's body touches down in Ontario.....</u>	35
<u>Bomb kills Canadian soldiers.....</u>	36
<u>Warning phone call is never good news for families.....</u>	37
<u>Bomb kills two Canadian soldiers, Afghan interpreter; Two journalists and another soldier injured...</u>	39
<u>Fallen Quebec soldier's brother serves as military pallbearer at repatriation.....</u>	41
<u>bc-CCN-ON-GOV-OBT.....</u>	43
<u>Fallen Quebec soldier's brother serves as military pallbearer at repatriation.....</u>	44
<u>Widow of Pat Tillman calls for 'authentic leadership' in 1st public comments.....</u>	46
<u>Warning phone call is never good news for military families.....</u>	47
<u>Bomb kills 2 Canadians, interpreter, wounds 3 after big battle in Afghanistan.....</u>	50
<u>2 soldiers, interpreter killed, 3 others injured in Afghanistan: NATO.....</u>	52
<u>Commander of Canadian regiment says he'll always remember fallen comrades.....</u>	53
<u>Cameraman seriously injured in attack killing two Cdn. soldiers knew risks.....</u>	54
<u>INDEX:Defence, International.....</u>	56
<u>Afghan-Cda-PRT-Attack.....</u>	57
<u>INDEX:Defence, Politics, Transport.....</u>	58
<u>3 soldiers killed, 3 others injured in Afghanistan, NATO says.....</u>	59
<u>INDEX:Defence, International.....</u>	60
<u>INDEX:Defence.....</u>	61
<u>INDEX:Defence, International, Media.....</u>	62
<u>Two more Van Doos die; Bomb near Kandahar also injures another soldier and two Radio-Canada journalists.....</u>	63

Table of Contents

<u>A Firefighters' Salute honours fallen soldier's return from a war zone.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>Soldiers' deaths could hurt Conservatives in Quebec; Party's worst fear is that rising opposition to mission could threaten its electoral hopes.....</u>	<u>67</u>
<u>2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar.....</u>	<u>69</u>
<u>2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar.....</u>	<u>72</u>
<u>2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar.....</u>	<u>75</u>
<u>Journalists' injuries shake up colleagues.....</u>	<u>78</u>
<u>Roadside bomb claims lives of two more Canadian soldiers; Interpreter killed; 2 journalists hurt in joint operation.....</u>	<u>80</u>
<u>War an 'ideological struggle': Bush.....</u>	<u>82</u>
<u>Soldier's body returned to Canada.....</u>	<u>84</u>
<u>War claims two more soldiers.....</u>	<u>86</u>
<u>Two Canucks killed Roadside bomb kills Van Doos in Afghanistan.....</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	<u>89</u>
<u>A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	<u>91</u>
<u>A startling publicity campaign in Toronto is provoking outrage about the use of child soldiers around the world.....</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>Two more soldiers have been killed and the city still refuses to place support decals on its cars -- What gives?.....</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>Soldiers and 'some surprises' at troops event.....</u>	<u>98</u>
<u>Teary procession for Quebec private Hearse travels along 'Highway of Heroes'.....</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>2 more Van Doos killed Deaths occur only hours after regiment's first fatality arrived back in Canada.....</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>FRONTPAGE 2 MORE KILLED As Pte. Longtin's body is saluted on Highway of Heroes</u>	<u>103</u>

Table of Contents

<u>A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	104
<u>Van Doos killed in Afghan blast.....</u>	106
<u>Brother carries slain Quebec soldier's casket.....</u>	108
<u>As school starts, need rises A London store is gathering school supplies for needy children worldwide.....</u>	109
<u>A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	111
<u>Two soldiers die in roadside blast.....</u>	113
<u>Blast kills two Canucks Second and third casualties for Van Doos.....</u>	115
<u>A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	117
<u>Bomb kills two Canuck soldiers Armoured vehicle hits explosive device, killing two soldiers and wounding journalists.....</u>	119
<u>Slain hero's brother a pallbearer.....</u>	121
<u>Van Doo loses two more soldiers; Afghan interpreter also killed, two Canadian journalists wounded when armoured vehicle hits roadside bomb.....</u>	122
<u>Two more soldiers killed in Afghanistan; Journalists also injured in attack.....</u>	124
<u>TWO CANADIANS KILLED ON PATROL; Interpreter Also Slain; Roadside Bomb In Afghanistan Injures Journalists.....</u>	126
<u>Our tax dollars are saving Afghan lives.....</u>	129
<u>WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW?.....</u>	130
<u>Reader beware opinion polls by interest groups; The questions and how they are asked can predetermine the outcome.....</u>	132
<u>Radio-Canada staff 'very emotional'; Is it worth the risk, network questions after two journalists injured.....</u>	134
<u>Tears flow as brother honours fallen soldier; Pte. Longtin. Sibling, also in the military, carries coffin to hearse.....</u>	136
<u>Afghan governor survives attack.....</u>	138
<u>Two soldiers killed in Taliban raid on base.....</u>	139

Table of Contents

<u>War hits close to home; 2 Van Doos killed.....</u>	140
<u>When a soldier dies; Military teams form support system, helping family cope with the aftermath.....</u>	143
<u>Shock and disbelief; Hours after a tearful goodbye to their first comrade-in-arms killed in Afghanistan by a roadside bomb, the Van Doos lose two more soldiers in an attack that also killed an interpreter and wounded another soldier and two journalists.....</u>	146
<u>Taliban bombs kill 3 in 4 days; Two Van Doos die as body of 3rd comes home.....</u>	147
<u>Taliban bombs kill 3 in 4 days; Two Van Doos die as body of 3rd comes home.....</u>	149
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: STORIED ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT SUFFERS ITS THIRD CASUALTY IN AS MANY WEEKS Quebec grieves as two more are slain Roadside blast kills interpreter and injures two Radio-Canada journalists while body of Vandoo who died Saturday is returned to Canada.....</u>	152
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: REACTION Wounded cameraman 'marvellous,' colleague says Charles Dubois never shies from dangerous assignments, including journeys to Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.....</u>	155
<u>JOB SECURITY Don't let reservists down.....</u>	158
<u>'SUPPORT OUR TROOPS' DECALS Calgary's principled stand.....</u>	160
<u>IRAQ: DRAWING COMPARISONS WITH VIETNAM Quitting Iraq would have dire results, Bush warns Retired general says President is 'cherry-picking' history to support his case for staying the course.....</u>	162
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: PUBLIC SUPPORT: RAPID-FIRE REMINDERS OF MISSION'S RISK Province reels, skepticism mounts.....</u>	164
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION To honour the soldiers.....</u>	166
<u>2 Van Doos dead after IED attack Quebec now has 3 fallen soldiers.....</u>	167
<u>2 soldiers killed near Kandahar; 6 casualties in bombing.....</u>	169
<u>Soldiers welcome Yule cheer.....</u>	172
<u>Senseless.....</u>	173
<u>Soldier's body flown back to Canada; Private died Sunday after convoy struck roadside bomb.....</u>	174
<u>Roadside bomb kills two Quebec soldiers; Fellow soldier, two Canadian journalists hurt.....</u>	176

Table of Contents

<u>Roadside bomb kills two Quebec soldiers; Fellow soldier, two Canadian journalists hurt.....</u>	<u>179</u>
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U.S. needs 'authentic leadership,' Tillman's widow tells students

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The wife of NFL athlete-turned-army Ranger Pat Tillman, in her first public comments since her husband's death by friendly fire, says the United States needs authentic leadership.

Saying that talking about her best friend is difficult, Marie Tillman told an audience at the University of Arkansas about the many good qualities of the NFL athlete and army Ranger.

Pat Tillman was cut down April 22, 2004, by bullets fired by his fellow soldiers in Afghanistan, not by enemy fire, as the military initially claimed.

The military say officers knew within hours Tillman's death was from friendly fire but didn't tell his family or the public for five weeks.

Tillman's death attracted worldwide attention because he had walked away from a huge contract with the Arizona Cardinals to enlist after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

During a congressional hearing Aug. 1, former U.S. defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and three former generals expressed regret with the Pentagon's delay in telling the truth.

They took no blame for the violation.

Marie Tillman and her brother-in-law Alex Garwood avoided discussion about the controversy around Tillman's death, saying they want to focus on honouring his memory through the work of the Tillman Foundation.

Yesterday, Marie Tillman said her husband was dynamic and action-oriented, something needed in private and public life.

"We are in need of authentic leadership on many levels," she said.

"Pat was a man with enormous talent. His athletic ability was matched by a deep and complex moral and intellectual side."

"He always tried to do the right thing and he was the first to admit when he didn't."

Hwy 401 renaming would honour Canada's soldiers

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Ontario's premier says he'll consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers.

Dalton McGuinty says he'll listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes.

The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

An online petition has been started asking the province's Transportation Ministry to make the name change.

The flag-draped coffin of one of the latest soldiers to be killed in the war-torn country, Pte. Simon Longtin, was returned to CFB Trenton yesterday and was to be transported to Toronto for autopsy.

McGuinty was previously involved in changing the name of an Ottawa highway to Veterans Memorial Highway.

He says the province needs to look for opportunities to lend support to Canada's soldiers and thank them for their sacrifices.

Quebec journalists injured in bombing

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A Radio–Canada television camera technician was seriously injured and a fellow journalist suffered shock in the same roadside bomb attack that killed two Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

Radio–Canada identified the two as Charles Dubois, 29, who received a serious leg injury, and reporter Patrice Roy, 44.

The military did not identify the Canadian soldiers killed in the attack, which also killed an Afghan interpreter. The armoured vehicle they were travelling in hit an improvised explosive device.

Both Dubois and Roy volunteered for the assignment, were well–trained, and arrived in Afghanistan earlier in the month, said Sylvain Lafrance, the French–language network's vice–president.

Lafrance said the network was inundated with calls from journalists as rumours swirled about the two injured journalists.

"Today the emotion was very palpable in all Radio–Canada newsrooms across the country, particularly in Montreal and Ottawa," Lafrance said.

But journalists have a very important role to play despite the risk, he said.

"It's the role of the CBC (English and French) to cover those international conflicts, especially when Canada is a part of the conflict," Lafrance said.

"So it's our role to be there and we will continue to be there."

Roy was providing reports to Radio–Canada for its website, television, radio and a blog.

He said Roy will decide in the next day or so whether he will stay in Afghanistan on assignment.

Both Roy, who is the French–language network's Ottawa bureau chief, and Dubois, are based in Ottawa.

The journalists and the network know that there is a certain amount of risk involved in travelling to Afghanistan, but news of the injuries, which initially came from the Canadian military, left many in the newsroom in shock.

Slain soldier comes home

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / Family members of Pte. Simon Longtin from Quebec's Van Doos regiment, pay their respects as the casket containing his remains arrives in Canada during a repatriation ceremony yesterday at CFB Trenton. Longtin was killed after his armoured vehicle struck a roadside bomb on Sunday near Kandahar. Two of his comrades were killed in a similar incident yesterday. ;

DATELINE: TRENTON

SOURCE: Canadian Press

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Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit -- who recently completed basic training -- joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment -- a province where support for the Canadian mission is low.

Gov. Gen. Michel Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment -- known as the Van Doos -- arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos-Bedard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the windswept tarmac.

Pallbearers stepped slowly to the mournful notes of Amazing Grace. Longtin's stepmother Manon Daoust, as well as his aunt, uncle and several cousins, also attended.

Family members carrying red or white roses gently laid the blooms on top of the casket, some wiping away tears before walking away. His head bent forward and arm outstretched towards his dead son, Maurice Longtin said his silent goodbyes then backed away slowly, sorrow etched across his face.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

Yesterday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Galetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Dozens more onlookers, including a number of bikers, gathered outside the razor-wire fence, carrying flags and standing in solemn tribute to the fallen soldier.

Longtin's family maintained their request for privacy yesterday, asking that journalists refrain from taking close-up photos of grieving family members. However, in a recent statement, they echoed the comments of Longtin's fellow Van Doos, painting a picture of a soldier who embraced military life and the Afghan mission.

Some of Longtin's fellow soldiers in the Van Doos 3rd Battalion have appealed to Quebecers to be "better informed" about the objectives of the mission before passing judgment, adding that they believe in it and want to carry on the work.

VAN DOOS LOSE TWO MORE; Large blast kills 2, injures three

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A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

One of the dead soldiers was identified last night as Master Corporal Christian Duchesne, based out of Valcartier, Que. The other soldier, also a Van Doo, was not identified.

The regiment has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan. The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday by a roadside bomb.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" as the unit was taking high ground in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, according to Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield that the three wounded Canadians had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its camera technician Charles Dubois has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day. Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thundering rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-metre-tall fireball could be seen as the device was detonated.

But it was another improvised explosive device, or IED, that caused the casualties later as the day was drawing to a close.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families, friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured in the incident," Laroche said.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in."

With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada has about 2,300 soldiers in Afghanistan serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force, with a mandate to support the Afghan government in Kabul and help it establish authority in areas controlled by Taliban insurgents.

The Canadians operate mainly in Kandahar province, reputedly the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

School supplies donated locally go to kids in Iraq, Afghanistan

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It's time again for back-to-school shopping — an ideal time to share the excitement of learning with children who can only dream of new school supplies.

While most Canadian students start the school year with new supplies, it is a luxury that youth in developing countries go without.

Staff and volunteers at Ten Thousand Villages believe students in these countries deserve better than that. In the months to come, they will be collecting school kits for classrooms in need.

"Readily available school supplies let students and teachers focus on what's really important: learning," says Linda Bunnett, manager of Ten Thousand Villages in Petitcodiac. "We hope that people learn more about this project and decide to take part. In just a couple of hours, they can make a real difference to classroom of young learners."

School kits contain spiral notebooks, unsharpened pencils, coloured pencils, an eraser and a ruler. Contents are placed in colourful drawstring bags sewn by volunteers.

This year, thousands of school kits will be sent to students in Iraq and Afghanistan whose families are unable to afford basic school supplies due to years of sanctions and war. Additional kits will be sent to other places where conflict and famine persist, such as Jordan, Ukraine, Burundi, Liberia, Haiti and El Salvador.

"Besides adding some normalcy to disrupted lives of students and teachers around the world, MCC school kits provide valuable supplies for youth who might otherwise have only one notebook for all their year's lessons," says Linda Bunnett.

When families in Petitcodiac and surrounding area do their back-to-school shopping this month, they can help by picking up some extra items.

For students here in Canada, the simple act of collecting supplies for school kits is particularly meaningful. "Some youth have been moved to collect supplies for school kits instead of gifts at their birthday parties," says Linda Bunnett. "They can't imagine being so poor that they have no paper."

Interested individuals and groups are asked to visit Ten Thousand Villages at 55 Main Street in Petitcodiac, to pick up drawstring bags and return them with the requested supplies. Kits will then be forwarded to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Ten Thousand Villages' parent organization, for distribution.

Every year, MCC sends nearly 120,000 school kits to disadvantaged youth in poor areas of the world. With each contribution, one more child will have the materials to learn and grow this year.

Young soldier helps carry fallen brother; Benoit Longtin, who just recently completed basic training, among pallbearers for brother killed in Afghanistan

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Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit -- who recently completed basic training -- joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment -- a province where support for the Canadian mission is low.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment -- known as the Van Doos -- arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos-Bédard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the wind-swept tarmac.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

Yesterday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Gagetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Afghan bomb blast kills 2 Cdn. soldiers; Afghan interpreter killed, three others injured as armoured vehicle hits roadside bomb

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A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. Afghan time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock.

The military has not identified the soldiers killed, but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy — these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be deadly weapons.

Body of slain soldier returns to Canada

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Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan on Wednesday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit — who recently completed basic training — joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment — a province where support for the Canadian mission is low.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries.

They stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment — known as the Van Doos — arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos-Bedard, watched

tearfully as the casket was carried across the wind-swept tarmac.

Pallbearers stepped slowly to the mournful notes of "Amazing Grace." Longtin's stepmother Manon Daoust, as well as his aunt, uncle and several cousins, were also in attendance.

Family members carrying red or white roses gently laid the blooms on top of the casket, some wiping away tears before walking away. His head bent forward and arm outstretched towards his dead son, Maurice Longtin said his silent goodbyes then backed away slowly, sorrow etched across his face.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

On Wednesday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Gagetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Dozens more onlookers, including a number of bikers, gathered outside the razor-wire fence, carrying flags and standing in solemn tribute to the fallen soldier.

Two more Canadians killed in action; Reporters injured | Radio Canada says cameraman hurt and reporter in shock

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A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

The military hasn't identified the soldiers killed or injured, but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy -- these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

The latest explosion happened after the 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye Fierce on Wednesday morning and intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away.

Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain."

"From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said.

"The mission was a success ... The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation."

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-meter-tall fireball could be seen as it was detonated.

But it was another IED that caused proved so deadly later as the day was drawing to a close.

'Your sons did not die in vain'

IDNUMBER 200708230062
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.08.23
SECTION: News;News
PAGE: A1
BYLINE: MICHAEL STAPLES staples.michael@dailygleaner.com
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WORD COUNT: 326

The outgoing commander of The Second Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (2RCR), said Wednesday that he will always carry the memories of the soldiers who lost their lives in Afghanistan with him.

Lt.-Col. Rob Walker, who hands control of the regiment over to Lt.-Col. Geoff Parker on Friday, said the soldiers will always be remembered.

"Canada's mission in Afghanistan is a noble one and we are achieving, day by day, the tasks and the goal the government has given those of us in uniform," Walker said in an interview.

He said he wants the families of the fallen soldiers to know that their loved ones helped make the world safer.

"Your sons did not die in vain. We are making a difference in Afghanistan — a tangible difference in the eyes of the people. By extension, we have reduced the threat to Canada as a result of terrorist activities by our presence in Afghanistan. We will honour their memory every year."

Walker, who commanded the 1,150-strong 2RCR battle group in Afghanistan, returned home from the war-torn country Saturday.

He said the soldiers who knew the victims will think about them for the rest of their lives.

They used their memories as an inspiration while in Afghanistan, he said.

"You could tell there was a faith in the mission and what we were doing was worth it," Walker said.

Eighteen soldiers from the battle group, including five from the battalion stationed at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, died during the six-month tour.

Walker acknowledged that his people, who have now mostly returned from Afghanistan, have dealt with many adversities over the last six months, and everything is being done to help the soldiers and their families get used to life in Canada.

"I think the best thing we can do for people is to inform them of what is available," he said. "We need to have soldiers that are both physically and mentally fit for duty."

Walker, who will be moving to the military's staff college at Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Ont., said the last six months were both personally and professionally rewarding.

"It was certainly a humbling experience commanding Canadian soldiers on operations. When you go into these operations, you are not sure what to expect . . . In every case that I can think of, the guys did their job as

expected."

Mourners gather for return of fallen soldier; Pte. Simon Longtin was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan on Sunday

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)
DATE: 2007.08.23
SECTION: National/World
PAGE: B5
SOURCE: CP
BYLINE: Maria Babbage
DATELINE: TRENTON
ILLUSTRATION: LONGTIN: Member of the Van Doos.
WORD COUNT: 519

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief–stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag–draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit – who recently completed basic training – joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec–based regiment – a province where support is low the Canadian mission.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay, Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier and former chief of defence staff, retired general Maurice Baril, were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23–year–old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment – known as the Van Doos – arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father, Maurice Longtin, his mother, Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend, Debbie Duclos–Bedard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the wind–swept tarmac.

Pallbearers stepping slowly to the mournful notes of Amazing Grace. Longtin's stepmother, Manon Daoust, as well as his aunt, uncle and several cousins were also in attendance.

Family members carrying red or white roses gently laid the blooms on top of the casket, some wiping away tears before walking away. His head bent forward and arm outstretched towards his dead son, Maurice Longtin said his silent goodbyes then backed away slowly, sorrow etched across his face.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light–armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

Mourners gather for return of fallen soldier; Pte. Simon Longtin was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan

Yesterday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Gagetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Dozens more onlookers, including a number of bikers, gathered outside the razor-wire fence, carrying flags and standing in solemn tribute to the fallen soldier.

Longtin's family maintained their request for privacy yesterday, asking that journalists refrain from taking close-up photos of grieving family members.

However in a recent statement, they echoed the comments of Longtin's fellow Van Doos, painting a picture a soldier who embraced military life and his mission in Afghanistan.

Some of Longtin's fellow soldiers in the Van Doos 3rd Battalion have appealed to Quebecers to be "better informed" about the objectives of the mission before passing judgment, adding that they believe in it and want to carry on the work.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment.

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002, including some from Quebec.

Commander says he won't forget fallen comrades

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B5

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: GAGETOWN, N.B.

WORD COUNT: 289

The outgoing commander of Second Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment said yesterday he will always carry the memories of the soldiers who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan.

Lt.–Col. Rob Walker, who hands control of the regiment over to Lt.–Col. Geoff Parker tomorrow, said the soldiers will always be remembered.

"Canada's mission in Afghanistan is a noble one and we are achieving, day by day, the tasks and the goal the government has given those of us in uniform," Walker said in an interview.

He said he wants the families of the fallen soldiers to know that their loved ones helped make the world safer.

"Your sons did not die in vain. We are making a difference in Afghanistan, a tangible difference in the eyes of the people. By extension, we have reduced the threat to Canada as a result of terrorist activities by our presence in Afghanistan. We will honour their memory every year."

Walker, who commanded the 1,150–strong 2RCR battle group in Afghanistan, returned home Saturday.

He said the soldiers who knew the victims will think about them for the rest of their lives.

They used their memories as an inspiration while in Afghanistan, he said.

"You could tell there was a faith in the mission and what we were doing was worth it," Walker said.

Eighteen soldiers from the battle group, including five from the battalion stationed at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown died during the six–month tour.

Walker acknowledged that his people, who have now mostly returned from Afghanistan, have dealt with many adversities over the last six months, and everything is being done to help the soldiers and their families get used to life in Canada.

Walker, who will be moving to the military's staff college at Canadian Forces Base Kingston said the last six months were both personally and professionally rewarding.

"It was certainly a humbling experience commanding Canadian soldiers on operations. When you go into these operations, you are not sure what to expect ... In every case that I can think of, the guys did their job as expected."

Two Canadian soldiers killed; Attack claims life of Afghan interpreter, injures two journalists, soldier

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B1

SOURCE: CP

BYLINE: Martin Ouellet

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 369

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec–based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadian had non–life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio–Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

The military has not identified the two soldiers killed but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

The regiment, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday by a roadside bomb. His body arrived back in Canada yesterday.

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day. Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thundering rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket–propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20–meter–tall fireball could be seen as the device was detonated.

But it was another improvised explosive device, or IED, that caused the casualties later as the day was drawing to a close.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche said.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in."

With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada has about 2,300 soldiers in Afghanistan serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force, with a mandate to support the Afghan government in Kabul and help it establish authority in areas controlled by Taliban insurgents.

The Canadians operate mainly in Kandahar province, reputedly the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

Premier to consider 401 name change

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Local news

PAGE: 3

COLUMN: In brief

WORD COUNT: 134

Ontario's premier says he'll consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers. Dalton McGuinty says he'll listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes.

The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

An online petition has been started asking the Transportation Ministry to make the name change.

The flag-draped coffin of one of the latest soldiers to be killed in the war-torn country, Pte. Simon Longtin, was returned to CFB Trenton yesterday and was to be transported to Toronto for autopsy. McGuinty says the province needs to look for opportunities to lend support to Canada's soldiers and thank them for their sacrifices.

Your job: Delivering the worst possible news

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.08.23
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: Bob Weber
WORD COUNT: 568

EDMONTON – The first warning is a phone call. It is never good.

It alerts an unlucky spouse, partner or parent that within the next few minutes they can expect a visit from a team of sombre military officers. Even before the dreaded knock on the door, the family knows something bad has happened.

Practice makes perfect in tragedy as in everything else, and military officials acknowledge that 18 months of fighting in southern Afghanistan has made them much better at delivering word of death or injury – and supporting those affected by it.

"Unfortunately, we've gotten very good at it," said Capt. Rod De Roij, a casualty repatriation liaison officer, one of six officers who recently sat down to talk about what happens when a soldier dies.

On Wednesday, two Canadian soldiers from a Quebec–based regiment died when a roadside bomb went off west of Kandahar.

The Canadian military says an Afghan interpreter was also killed and two Canadian journalists and another soldier were injured in the incident.

Delivering bad news, especially in an age when the Internet makes details and events almost immediately available, has come a long way from previous conflicts. During the Second World War, families were sometimes notified by telegrams delivered by railway service agents. Today, casualty reports reach Canada almost as soon as they are radioed in from the battlefield, said Capt. Larry Cashman of the operations centre at Land Force Western Area headquarters in Edmonton.

Duty officers in Kandahar type whatever information they have into a secure Internet connection, a sort of chat room constantly monitored by officers from all units in the theatre of operations.

Still, first reports are always sketchy.

"They tell us how many have been hurt," said Cashman. "It takes a while from the theatre before they can tell who the people are."

Word starts to spread – from Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier's office to the unit involved. That unit scrambles its notification team: the commanding officer, the regimental sergeant–major and a padre.

When identities are confirmed, the team heads out the door, usually within six hours of the tragic bomb or bullet. They make the phone call when they're about five minutes away, or, sometimes, while sitting in the driveway.

"It's an opportunity for (the next-of-kin) to throw on a housecoat," said Maj. John Bruce, a personnel manager. "They probably have an indication that something not good has happened."

Although it takes place far from the front, what comes next is one of the toughest jobs in the military.

"I've had all the reactions," said Capt. Dennis Newhook, an Anglican padre who has broken tragic news five times. "Shock. Disbelief. Anger."

One man took a swing at him. Once, a woman turned and ran out the front door. Most just listen, stunned.

"The first thing to do is explain what happened and, as best we can, how," said Bruce. "Beyond that, they really don't hear much else."

If there is no one to stay with a person who has just lost a loved one, someone from the notification team remains behind. Nobody is left alone.

Each family is then assigned an assisting officer, whose responsibility it is to ensure they get whatever help they need: counselling, financial advice, assistance with a move, sometimes just being there. It's an all-consuming job.

"All my waking hours, pretty much," said De Roij, thinking back to when he served in that capacity. "For the first two weeks, you live to do what you're doing for this family."

"It was also one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had."

The relationship between the assisting officer and the affected family can last for months. The officer joins them as they travel at military expense to Trenton, Ont., where returning bodies arrive.

"It's draining," said Newhook. "You become embedded in their family. You're so personally tied to them you're experiencing the grief, the anguish, the happy times. It's hard to pull out on that."

'The first thing to do is explain what happened and, as best we can, how. Beyond that, they really don't hear much else.'

Outgoing commander: Soldiers' loss not in vain; Regiment leader in Afghanistan to hand over control on Friday

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

ILLUSTRATION: Lt.–Col. Sherinshaw Khobandi, left, of the Afghan National Army, presents an honorary plaque to Lt.–Col. Rob Walker at a change of command ceremony at Kandahar Airfield on Aug 11. (Martin Ouellet / CP)

WORD COUNT: 321

GAGETOWN, N.B. – The outgoing commander of Second Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment said Wednesday he will always carry the memories of the soldiers who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan.

Lt.–Col. Rob Walker, who hands control of the regiment over to Lt.–Col. Geoff Parker on Friday, said the soldiers will always be remembered.

"Canada's mission in Afghanistan is a noble one and we are achieving, day by day, the tasks and the goal the government has given those of us in uniform," Walker said in an interview.

He said he wants the families of the fallen soldiers to know that their loved ones helped make the world safer.

"Your sons did not die in vain. We are making a difference in Afghanistan, a tangible difference in the eyes of the people. By extension, we have reduced the threat to Canada as a result of terrorist activities by our presence in Afghanistan. We will honour their memory every year."

Walker, who commanded the 1,150–strong 2RCR battle group in Afghanistan, returned home Saturday.

He said the soldiers who knew the victims will think about them for the rest of their lives.

They used their memories as an inspiration while in Afghanistan, he said.

"You could tell there was a faith in the mission and what we were doing was worth it," Walker said.

Eighteen soldiers from the battle group, including five from the battalion stationed at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown died during the six–month tour.

Walker acknowledged that his people, who have now mostly returned from Afghanistan, have dealt with many adversities over the last six months, and everything is being done to help the soldiers and their families get used to life in Canada.

"I think the best thing we can do for people is to inform them of what is available," he said. "We need to have soldiers that are both physically and mentally fit for duty."

Walker, who will be moving to the military's staff college at Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Ont., said the last six months were both personally and professionally rewarding.

"It was certainly a humbling experience commanding Canadian soldiers on operations. When you go into these operations, you are not sure what to expect ... In every case that I can think of, the guys did their job as expected."

Fallen Quebec soldier arrives home; Brother who just completed basic training takes spot as pallbearer

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Pte. Simon Longtin's stepmother Manon Daoust, father Maurice and brother Pte. Benoit Longtin make their way to the hearse during the repatriation ceremony for the Quebec soldier at CFB Trenton, Ont., on Wednesday. (ADRIAN WYLD / CP); Pte. Simon Longtin's step–mother Manon Daoust, father Maurice and brother Pte. Benoit Longtin make their way to the hearse during the repatriation ceremony for the Quebec soldier at CFB Trenton, Ont., on Wednesday. (ADRIAN WYLD / CP)

WORD COUNT: 723

TRENTON, Ont. – Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief–stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan on Wednesday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag–draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit – who recently completed basic training – joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec–based regiment – a province where support for the Canadian mission is low. The ceremony took place hours before two more Canadian soldiers were killed in southern Afghanistan. NATO said the incident also claimed the life of an interpreter and injured two journalists.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23–year–old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment – known as the Van Doos – arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos–Bedard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the wind–swept tarmac.

Pallbearers stepped slowly to the mournful notes of Amazing Grace. Longtin's stepmother Manon Daoust, as well as his aunt, uncle and several cousins, were also in attendance.

Family members carrying red or white roses gently laid the blooms on top of the casket, some wiping away tears before walking away. His head bent forward and arm outstretched towards his dead son, Maurice Longtin said his silent goodbyes then backed away slowly, sorrow etched across his face.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

On Wednesday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Gagetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Dozens more onlookers, including a number of bikers, gathered outside the razor-wire fence, carrying flags and standing in solemn tribute to the fallen soldier.

Longtin's family maintained their request for privacy Wednesday, asking that journalists refrain from taking close-up photos of grieving family members. However, in a recent statement, they echoed the comments of Longtin's fellow Van Doos, painting a picture of a soldier who embraced military life and his mission in Afghanistan.

Some of Longtin's fellow soldiers in the Van Doos 3rd Battalion have appealed to Quebecers to be "better informed" about the objectives of the mission before passing judgment, adding that they believe in it and want to carry on the work.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from the Van Doos.

Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin told reporters Wednesday that two more deaths in their soldier family has not shaken their resolve.

"Unfortunately, once again, the military community at Valcartier is saddened by the death of two of our own."

Gosselin offered his condolences to the families of the slain soldiers, members of the 3rd battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment, based in Valcartier, Que.

"For us, the best way to honour our comrades is to go right to the end of the mission for which they are prepared to take the greatest risks," he said.

Gosselin offered his condolences to the families of the two soldiers from CFB Valcartier who died when the Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

"I can assure you that we are going to go all the way. . . we will continue."

Gosselin added that the Van Doos "understand the risks" of the Afghanistan mission.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper extended his sympathies to the family and friends of the soldiers and the Afghan interpreter, whose names were withheld on Wednesday.

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices," Harper said in a statement.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion said in a statement that "the members of the Canadian Armed Forces must confront serious risks in Afghanistan everyday that they serve their country and the Afghan people by bringing hope and stability to this region."

Fallen Quebec soldier arrives home; Brother who just completed basic training takes spot as pallbearer

Bomb kills two Canadians; Interpreter dies, Radio-Canada journalists hurt in Afghan blast

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

ILLUSTRATION: Radio-Canada cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries in Wednesday's explosion near Kandahar. (CP)

WORD COUNT: 525

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

The Defence Department identified one of the dead soldiers as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, based out of Valcartier, Que.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light-armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

The military has not identified the soldiers killed, but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy – these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper called it "a very sad day."

"These soldiers gave their life helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan," Harper said in a statement. "We will always remember them."

The latest explosion happened after soldiers from 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye jointly with Afghan security forces Wednesday morning. Intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain."

"From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said.

"The mission was a success . . . The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation."

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-metre-tall fireball could be seen as it was detonated.

But it was another IED that proved so deadly later as the day was drawing to a close.

The military called it "a suspected mine." A military officer suggested it could have been an anti-tank mine, but it has not been confirmed.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families, friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche said.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in."

With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada has about 2,300 soldiers in Afghanistan serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force. The multinational force has a mandate to support the Afghan government in Kabul and help it establish authority in areas controlled by Taliban insurgents.

The Canadians operate mainly in Kandahar province, reputedly the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

Premier ponders renaming highway for soldiers

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A9

COLUMN: Across the country

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: PICTON, Ont.

ILLUSTRATION: McGuinty

WORD COUNT: 61

Ontario's premier says he'll consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers.

Dalton McGuinty says he'll listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes.

The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

Blast kills two Canadian soldiers, hurts three others near Kandahar; Members of Quebec regiment perish after vehicle hits explosive device

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

ILLUSTRATION: Radio-Canada reporter Patrice Roy is shown in this undated handout photo. A roadside bomb has claimed the lives of two more Canadian soldiers from a Quebec-based regiment. Two Canadian journalists, including Roy, and another soldier were injured in the incident. Canadian Press photo

WORD COUNT: 274

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadian had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

The military has not identified the two soldiers killed but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

The regiment, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday by a roadside bomb. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day. Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thundering rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-meter-tall fireball could be seen as the device was detonated.

But it was another improvised explosive device, or IED, that caused the casualties later as the day was drawing to a close.

Slain Quebec soldier returns to home; Longtin's body touches down in Ontario

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A8

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: TRENTON, Ont.

ILLUSTRATION: Family members of Private Simon Longtin, from Quebec's 'VanDoos' regiment pay their respects as the casket containing his remains arrives in Canada during a repatriation ceremony Wednesday at CFB Trenton, Ont. Canadian Press photo

WORD COUNT: 216

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan on Wednesday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit – who recently completed basic training – joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment – a province where support is low the Canadian mission.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay, Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier and former chief of defence staff, retired general Maurice Baril, were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment – known as the Van Doos – arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

Bomb kills Canadian soldiers

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 58

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Warning phone call is never good news for families

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Bob Weber

DATELINE: Edmonton

ILLUSTRATION: Canadian Col. Christian Juneau, deputy commander of the Canadian Joint Task Force (Afghanistan), announces the death of Pte. Simon Longtin in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Aug. 19. When a Canadian soldier is killed the first warning is a phone call to the family. – Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 621

The first warning is a phone call. It is never good. It alerts an unlucky spouse, partner or parent that within the next few minutes they can expect a visit from a team of sombre military officers. Even before the dreaded knock on the door, the family knows something bad has happened.

Practice makes perfect in tragedy as in everything else, and military officials acknowledge that 18 months of fighting in southern Afghanistan has made them much better at delivering word of death or injury – and supporting those affected by it.

"Unfortunately, we've gotten very good at it," said Capt. Rod De Roij, a casualty repatriation liaison officer, one of six officers who recently sat down to talk about what happens when a soldier dies.

On Wednesday, two Canadian soldiers from a Quebec-based regiment died when a roadside bomb went off west of Kandahar.

The Canadian military says an Afghan interpreter was also killed and two Canadian journalists and another soldier were injured in the incident.

Delivering bad news, especially in an age when the Internet makes details and events almost immediately available, has come a long way from previous conflicts. During the Second World War, families were sometimes notified by telegrams delivered by railway service agents. Today, casualty reports reach Canada almost as soon as they are radioed in from the battlefield, said Capt. Larry Cashman of the operations centre at Land Force Western Area headquarters in Edmonton.

Duty officers in Kandahar type whatever information they have into a secure Internet connection, a sort of chat room constantly monitored by officers from all units in the theatre of operations.

Still, first reports are always sketchy.

"They tell us how many have been hurt," said Cashman. "It takes a while from the theatre before they can tell who the people are."

Word starts to spread – from Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier's office to the unit involved. That unit scrambles its notification team: the commanding officer, the regimental sergeant-major and a padre.

When identities are confirmed, the team heads out the door, usually within six hours of the tragic bomb or bullet. They make the phone call when they're about five minutes away, or, sometimes, while sitting in the driveway.

"It's an opportunity for (the next-of-kin) to throw on a housecoat," said Maj. John Bruce, a personnel manager. "They probably have an indication that something not good has happened."

Although it takes place far from the front, what comes next is one of the toughest jobs in the military.

"I've had all the reactions," said Capt. Dennis Newhook, an Anglican padre who has broken tragic news five times. "Shock. Disbelief. Anger."

One man took a swing at him. Once, a woman turned and ran out the front door. Most just listen, stunned.

"The first thing to do is explain what happened and, as best we can, how," said Bruce. "Beyond that, they really don't hear much else."

If there is no one to stay with a person who has just lost a loved one, someone from the notification team remains behind. Nobody is left alone.

Each family is then assigned an assisting officer, whose responsibility it is to ensure they get whatever help they need: counselling, financial advice, assistance with a move, sometimes just being there. It's an all-consuming job.

Eventually, hopefully, families of the dead heal and move on. Usually, someone from the unit keeps in touch, checking in on special days that can be tough, such as birthdays.

The seriously wounded are eventually returned from the military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, and go for rehabilitation at the nearest suitable facility to their home. Decisions on whether wounded soldiers can remain in the Forces are made on an individual basis by Hillier.

And so the military carries on, getting better and better at a job it would rather not have to do. Current practices are now being reviewed and consolidated into a formal set of guidelines, said Bruce.

"There's always been policies to support soldiers. Some have been around for decades," he said.

"The Canadian Forces is dusting off those policies and trying to articulate them in a coherent manner. It's certainly not finished. And it won't be finished for a while."

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan.

Canada's troops are not scheduled to pull out of the wartorn country until February 2009.

Bomb kills two Canadian soldiers, Afghan interpreter; Two journalists and another soldier injured

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.08.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Martin Ouellet

DATELINE: Kandahar, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 413

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock, but otherwise fine.

The military has not identified the soldiers killed, but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy – these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper called it "a very sad day."

"These soldiers gave their life helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan," Harper said in a statement.

"We will always remember them."

The latest explosion happened after soldiers from 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye jointly with Afghan security forces Wednesday morning. Intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain."

"From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said. "The mission was a success ... The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation."

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Related story, page A9

Fallen Quebec soldier's brother serves as military pallbearer at repatriation

DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 561

TRENTON, Ont. (CP) _ Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan on Wednesday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit _ who recently completed basic training _ joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment _ a province where support for the Canadian mission is low.

The ceremony took place hours before two more Canadian soldiers were killed in southern Afghanistan. Nato said the incident also claimed the life of an interpreter and injured two journalists.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment _ known as the Van Doos _ arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

At one point during the repatriation ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

The group, which included Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos-Bédard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the wind-swept tarmac.

Pallbearers stepped slowly to the mournful notes of "Amazing Grace." Longtin's stepmother Manon Daoust, as well as his aunt, uncle and several cousins, were also in attendance.

Family members carrying red or white roses gently laid the blooms on top of the casket, some wiping away tears before walking away. His head bent forward and arm outstretched towards his dead son, Maurice Longtin said his silent goodbyes then backed away slowly, sorrow etched across his face.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. More than 1,000 soldiers from 37 countries paid tribute to Longtin at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar Airfield on Monday.

On Wednesday, dozens of Canadian soldiers, who military officials said were bound for CFB Gagetown and travelled on the same military aircraft that carried Longtin's remains, poured out of the plane and stood in formation as the casket was lowered to the ground.

Dozens more onlookers, including a number of bikers, gathered outside the razor-wire fence, carrying flags and standing in solemn tribute to the fallen soldier.

Longtin's family maintained their request for privacy Wednesday, asking that journalists refrain from taking close-up photos of grieving family members. However, in a recent statement, they echoed the comments of Longtin's fellow Van Doos, painting a picture of a soldier who embraced military life and his mission in Afghanistan.

Some of Longtin's fellow soldiers in the Van Doos 3rd Battalion have appealed to Quebecers to be "better informed" about the objectives of the mission before passing judgment, adding that they believe in it and want to carry on the work.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from the Van Doos.

Sixty-seven Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002, including some from Quebec.

bc-CCN-ON-GOV-OBT

DATE: 2007.08.22

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 87

^DND: Name of Canadian Soldier Killed in Afghanistan Released@<

August 22, 2007

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire – Aug. 22, 2007) – The identity of one of the two Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan today is as follows:

– Master Corporal Christian Duchesne, 5e Ambulance de campagne, based out of Valcartier, Quebec.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Photograph of the fallen soldier will be forthcoming shortly on the Combat Camera Website
<http://www.combatcamera.forces.gc.ca/>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Information: 613-996-2353/54

After hours: 613-792-2973

www.forces.gc.ca

INDUSTRY: Government – International, Government – Local,
Government – National, Government – Security (law enforcement,
homeland etc), Government – State

SUBJECT: OBT

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

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DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 532

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Sixty-seven Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002, including some from Quebec.

Widow of Pat Tillman calls for 'authentic leadership' in 1st public comments

DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE SPORTS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 226

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AP) _ The wife of N-F-L athlete-turned-army Ranger Pat Tillman, in her first public comments since her husband's death by friendly fire, says the United States needs authentic leadership.

Saying talking about her best friend is difficult, Marie Tillman told an audience at the University of Arkansas about the many good qualities of the NFL athlete and army Ranger.

Pat Tillman was cut down April 22, 2004, by bullets fired by his fellow soldiers in Afghanistan, not by enemy fire, as the military initially claimed.

The military say officers knew within hours Tillman's death was from friendly fire but didn't tell his family or the public for five weeks.

Tillman's death attracted worldwide attention because he had walked away from a huge contract with the Arizona Cardinals to enlist after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

During a congressional hearing August 1, former U-S defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld and three former generals expressed regret with the Pentagon's delay in telling the truth.

They took no blame for the violation.

Marie Tillman and her brother-in-law Alex Garwood avoided discussion about the controversy around Tillman's death, saying they want to focus on honouring his memory through the work of the Tillman Foundation.

On Wednesday, Marie Tillman said her husband was dynamic and action-oriented, something needed in private and public life.

"We are in need of authentic leadership on many levels," she said.

"Pat was a man with enormous talent. His athletic ability was matched by a deep and complex moral and intellectual side."

"He always tried to do the right thing and he was the first to admit when he didn't."

Warning phone call is never good news for military families

DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 791

EDMONTON (CP) _ The first warning is a phone call. It is never good.

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Practice makes perfect in tragedy as in everything else, and military officials acknowledge that 18 months of fighting in southern Afghanistan has made them much better at delivering word of death or injury _ and supporting those affected by it.

“Unfortunately, we've gotten very good at it,” said Capt. Rod De Roij, a casualty repatriation liaison officer, one of six officers who recently sat down to talk about what happens when a soldier dies.

On Wednesday, two Canadian soldiers from a Quebec-based regiment died when a roadside bomb went off west of Kandahar.

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Today, casualty reports reach Canada almost as soon as they are radioed in from the battlefield, said Capt. Larry Cashman of the operations centre at Land Force Western Area headquarters in Edmonton.

Duty officers in Kandahar type whatever information they have into a secure Internet connection, a sort of chat room constantly monitored by officers from all units in the theatre of operations.

Still, first reports are always sketchy.

“They tell us how many have been hurt,” said Cashman. “It takes a while from the theatre before they can tell who the people are.”

Word starts to spread _ from Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier's office to the unit involved. That unit scrambles its notification team: the commanding officer, the regimental sergeant-major and a padre.

When identities are confirmed, the team heads out the door, usually within six hours of the tragic bomb or bullet. They make the phone call when they're about five minutes away, or, sometimes, while sitting in the driveway.

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Although it takes place far from the front, what comes next is one of the toughest jobs in the military.

“I've had all the reactions,” said Capt. Dennis Newhook, an Anglican padre who has broken tragic news five times. “Shock. Disbelief. Anger.”

One man took a swing at him. Once, a woman turned and ran out the front door. Most just listen, stunned.

“The first thing to do is explain what happened and, as best we can, how,” said Bruce. “Beyond that, they really don't hear much else.”

If there is no one to stay with a person who has just lost a loved one, someone from the notification team remains behind. Nobody is left alone.

Each family is then assigned an assisting officer, whose responsibility it is to ensure they get whatever help they need: counselling, financial advice, assistance with a move, sometimes just being there. It's an all-consuming job.

“All my waking hours, pretty much,” said De Roij, thinking back to when he served in that capacity. “For the first two weeks, you live to do what you're doing for this family.

“It was also one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had.”

The relationship between the assisting officer and the affected family can last for months. The officer joins them as they travel at military expense to Trenton, Ont., where returning bodies arrive.

“It's draining,” said Newhook. “You become embedded in their family. You're so personally tied to them you're experiencing the grief, the anguish, the happy times. It's hard to pull out on that.”

The job is so demanding the military recently held a retreat in the Rocky Mountains for assisting officers.

Public affairs officers also become part of the protective cluster around the family, helping them deal with media demands. Sometimes telling reporters about their loved one can help mourners deal with the tragedy, said Capt. Lena Angell.

“They realize putting their names in print does honour (the deceased),” she said. “They do use it as a way to connect with Canadians and it can be part of the healing process.”

Eventually, hopefully, families of the dead heal and move on. Usually, someone from the unit keeps in touch, checking in on special days that can be tough, such as birthdays.

The seriously wounded are eventually returned from the military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, and go for rehabilitation at the nearest suitable facility to their home. Decisions on whether wounded soldiers can remain in the Forces are made on an individual basis by Hillier.

And so the military carries on, getting better and better at a job it would rather not have to do. Current practices are now being reviewed and consolidated into a formal set of guidelines, said Bruce.

“There's always been policies to support soldiers. Some have been around for decades,” he said.

“The Canadian Forces is dusting off those policies and trying to articulate them in a coherent manner. It's certainly not finished.

“And it won't be finished for a while.”

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan. Canada's troops are not scheduled to pull out of the war-torn country until February 2009.

Bomb kills 2 Canadians, interpreter, wounds 3 after big battle in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 542

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) _ A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doos regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

One of the dead soldiers was identified by the Defence Department as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Field Ambulance unit, based in Valcartier, Que.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld, the department said.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy _ these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper called it "a very sad day."

"These soldiers gave their life helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan," Harper said in a statement. "We will always remember them."

The latest explosion happened after soldiers from 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye jointly with Afghan security forces Wednesday morning. Intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain."

"From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said.

"The mission was a success ... The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation."

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-meter-tall fireball could be seen as it was detonated.

But it was another IED that proved so deadly later as the day was drawing to a close.

The military called it "a suspected mine." A military officer suggested it could have been an anti-tank mine, but it has not been confirmed.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche said.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in."

With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada has about 2,300 soldiers in Afghanistan serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force. The multinational force has a mandate to support the Afghan government in Kabul and help it establish authority in areas controlled by Taliban insurgents.

The Canadians operate mainly in Kandahar province, reputedly the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

2 soldiers, interpreter killed, 3 others injured in Afghanistan: NATO

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 136

KABUL (CP) _ NATO says two of its soldiers and an interpreter have been killed in Afghanistan during a patrol.

Another soldier and two journalists were injured in the same incident in southern Afghanistan.

The journalists involved are reported to be Canadians.

Radio-Canada said its cameraman Charles Dubois is seriously injured but reporter Partice Roy is doing fine after the incident.

The news release from NATO's International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, gave no identities or nationalities.

The release did not give an exact location for the incident.

Lt. Col. Bridget Rose, a spokeswoman for ISAF's Regional Command South, said the incident ``puts into context the very real dangers, difficulties and life threatening situations our ISAF troops, media and the interpreters who accompany them, encounter on a daily basis."

``Our thoughts are with the friends and families of those who have died or been injured in this incident."

The news release said that in accordance with policy, ISAF does not release the nationality of the casualties prior to the relevant national authority doing so.

Commander of Canadian regiment says he'll always remember fallen comrades

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 327

GAGETOWN, N.B. (CP) _ The outgoing commander of Second Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment said Wednesday he will always carry the memories of the soldiers who lost their lives while serving in Afghanistan.

Lt.-Col. Rob Walker, who hands control of the regiment over to Lt.-Col. Geoff Parker on Friday, said the soldiers will always be remembered.

“Canada's mission in Afghanistan is a noble one and we are achieving, day by day, the tasks and the goal the government has given those of us in uniform,” Walker said in an interview.

He said he wants the families of the fallen soldiers to know that their loved ones helped make the world safer.

“Your sons did not die in vain. We are making a difference in Afghanistan, a tangible difference in the eyes of the people. By extension, we have reduced the threat to Canada as a result of terrorist activities by our presence in Afghanistan. We will honour their memory every year.”

Walker, who commanded the 1,150-strong 2RCR battle group in Afghanistan, returned home Saturday.

He said the soldiers who knew the victims will think about them for the rest of their lives.

They used their memories as an inspiration while in Afghanistan, he said.

“You could tell there was a faith in the mission and what we were doing was worth it,” Walker said.

Eighteen soldiers from the battle group, including five from the battalion stationed at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown died during the six-month tour.

Walker acknowledged that his people, who have now mostly returned from Afghanistan, have dealt with many adversities over the last six months, and everything is being done to help the soldiers and their families get used to life in Canada.

“I think the best thing we can do for people is to inform them of what is available,” he said. “We need to have soldiers that are both physically and mentally fit for duty.”

Walker, who will be moving to the military's staff college at Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Ont., said the last six months were both personally and professionally rewarding.

“It was certainly a humbling experience commanding Canadian soldiers on operations. When you go into these operations, you are not sure what to expect ... In every case that I can think of, the guys did their job as expected.”

(Fredericton Gleaner)

Cameraman seriously injured in attack killing two Cdn. soldiers knew risks

DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 426

MONTREAL (CP) _ Covering a war-torn region comes with risk and a Radio-Canada cameraman injured in a roadside bomb that killed two Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan knew that when he volunteered for the mission.

Charles Dubois, a 29-year-old cameraman with time served previously in Afghanistan and Iraq, knew the terrain well. He suffered a serious leg injury and was in stable condition and was transferred to a military hospital in Germany.

His colleague, Patrice Roy, 44, a senior reporter, was treated for shock.

The armoured vehicle they were travelling in was hit with an improvised explosive device.

Dubois and Roy were just two-weeks into a six-week stint in Afghanistan, where they were covering the Valcartier, Que., based Royal 22nd Regiment as they take over Canadian military operations in Afghanistan.

Both Dubois and Roy, who are based in Ottawa for the network, volunteered for the assignment, and were well-trained, said Sylvain Lafrance, the French-language network's vice-president.

Lafrance said the network was inundated with calls from journalists as rumours swirled about the two injured journalists.

"Today the emotion was very palpable in all Radio-Canada newsrooms across the country, particularly in Montreal and Ottawa," Lafrance said.

Reporters who have covered Afghanistan say there have been numerous close calls as journalists have travelled in convoys hit by bombs, rocket attacks or with troops as they come under enemy fire.

Former Toronto Star journalist Kathleen Kenna was seriously injured in Afghanistan in March 2002 when the car she was riding in with her husband and photographer Bernard Weil was hit by a grenade. Despite the risks involved, journalists have an important role to play in Afghanistan, Lafrance said.

"It's the role of the CBC (English and French) to cover those international conflicts, especially when Canada is a part of the conflict," Lafrance said.

"So it's our role to be there and we will continue to be there."

Roy was providing reports to Radio-Canada for its website, television, radio and a blog. Lafrance says Roy will decide in the next day or so whether he will stay in Afghanistan on assignment.

Radio-Canada is also trying to determine whether to send popular anchorman Bernard Derome to Afghanistan on Thursday, where he is scheduled to broadcast live in September.

“We'll talk about it as a team and come to a decision,” said Alain Saulnier, general manager of information at Radio-Canada.

“We tell people if ever they have doubts or they want to pull out at the last minute, we'll respect that decision. We'll take the same approach this time.”

Saulnier says the decision to embed troops with soldiers is made on a case-by-case basis and Lafrance added it's possible the network will change its approach to reporting in Afghanistan.

“We took a decision at one point to no longer send teams to Iraq when we had people there at the beginning of the war,” said Lafrance. “In each case, we take that decision with an understanding of the situation and we'll re-evaluate when necessary.”

INDEX:Defence, International

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 128

MONTREAL – The soldiers at Quebec's Valcartier military base still support Canada's mission in Afghanistan even though they've lost two more of their own.

That was the message tonight from Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City, home to the Van Doo regiment.

Gosselin is offering his condolences to the families of the two soldiers from CFB Valcartier who died when the Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

He says the best way to honour the dead soldiers is to carry on the difficult and dangerous mission right to the end.

The deaths come on the same day that Pte. Simon Longtin's body was brought back to Canada after the Van Doo member was killed in a roadside bomb attack on the weekend.

Gosselin also noted the courage of the two Radio-Canada journalists, one of them seriously injured, who were with the Quebec regiment.

(BN)

Afghan-Cda-PRT-Attack

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 103

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Taliban insurgents attacked a camp housing Canada's reconstruction team twice last week.

Both attacks were followed by exchanges of gunfire.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Chamberlain, commander of Camp Nathan Smith, says no Canadians were injured.

Chamberlain says it's the first time the base for much of Canada's reconstruction and humanitarian work in Kandahar has been attacked with rocket-propelled grenades.

He says the attacks, and other recent roadside assaults that have injured seven Canadian troops and killed Private Simon Longtin, don't indicate a new offensive by the Taliban.

He says it's just "part of the cost of doing business" in a "high-threat environment."

Meanwhile, Longtin's body will arrive today at C-F-B Trenton in eastern Ontario.

The 23-year-old, from Longueuil, Quebec, died when his light armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb on Sunday.

(CP)

bjk

INDEX:Defence, Politics, Transport

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE POLITICS TRANSPORT
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 112

PICTON, Ont. – Ontario's premier says he'll consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers.

Dalton McGuinty says he'll listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes.

The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

An online petition has been started asking the province's Transportation Ministry to make the name change.

The flag-draped coffin of the latest soldier to be killed in the war-torn country, Pte. Simon Longtin, was returned to CFB Trenton on Wednesday and was to be transported to Toronto for autopsy.

McGuinty was previously involved in changing the name of an Ottawa highway to Veterans Memorial Highway.

(BN)

3 soldiers killed, 3 others injured in Afghanistan, NATO says

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 53

KABUL – NATO says two of its soldiers and an interpreter have been killed in Afghanistan during a patrol.

NATO also says another soldier and two journalists were injured in the same incident in southern Afghanistan.

No identities or nationalities were released.

The information was issued by NATO's International Security Assistance Force in a news release sent to reporters.

The release did not give an exact location for the incident.

(BN)

INDEX:Defence, International

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 95

KABUL – NATO says two of its soldiers and an interpreter have been killed in Afghanistan during a patrol.

NATO also says another soldier and two journalists were injured in the same incident in southern Afghanistan.

No identities or nationalities were released.

The information was issued by NATO's International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, in a news release sent to reporters.

The release did not give an exact location for the incident.

Lt. Col. Bridget Rose, a spokeswoman for ISAF's Regional Command South, said the incident 'puts into context the very real dangers, difficulties and life threatening situations our ISAF troops, media and the interpreters who accompany them, encounter on a daily basis.'

(BN)

INDEX:Defence

DATE: 2007.08.22

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 137

EDMONTON — It's a sombre duty with which the Canadian military is becoming all too familiar.

Defence officials say 18 months of fighting in Afghanistan has made them much better at delivering word of death or injury to loved ones.

The first warning is a phone call.

It alerts families that within the next few minutes they can expect a visit from sombre military officers.

Captain Dennis Newhook, an Anglican padre, says what comes next is one of the toughest jobs in the military.

He's had all reactions when delivering bad news — from shock and disbelief to anger.

One man even took a swing at him.

Captain Larry Cashman at Land Force Western Area in Edmonton says modern technology means news is usually relayed to families within six hours of the tragic bomb or bullet.

An assisting officer then helps families get counselling, financial advice or assistance with a move.

The bombing death on Sunday of Private Simon Longtin from the Quebec-based Van Doos means those chosen to stand guard for his family's welfare are already in action.

(BN)

sfs

INDEX:Defence, International, Media

DATE: 2007.08.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 126

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Prime Minister Stephen Harper calls it ``a very sad day."

Harper issued a statement tonight after word a roadside bomb has claimed the lives of two more Canadian soldiers from a Quebec-based regiment.

The Canadian military says an Afghan interpreter was also killed in the blast west of Kandahar today.

Two Canadian journalists and another soldier were injured in the incident.

Brigadier-General Guy Laroche says the three are being treat for non-life threatening injuries.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois is seriously injured and being flown to a German military hospital, while reporter Patrice Roy is suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

Laroche says their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in the troubled Zhari district, about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar.

All three opposition leaders have also expressed their condolences.

Earlier today, the body of Private Simon Longtin arrived at C-F-B Trenton, also killed in a roadside attack this week.

(BN)

Two more Van Doos die; Bomb near Kandahar also injures another soldier and two Radio-Canada journalists

IDNUMBER 200708230186
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A01
ILLUSTRATION: Adrian Wyld cp Maurice Longtin, centre, father of slain soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, and another son, Pte. Benoit Longtin, are seen yesterday after Simon's body was flown from Afghanistan to Canadian Forces Base Trenton. ;
BYLINE: Bruce campion-smith
SOURCE: in Toronto
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 681

Two Quebec-based soldiers and their Afghan interpreter have been killed by a roadside bomb that also injured another soldier and two Canadian journalists.

Their light armoured vehicle was struck by a "suspected mine" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres, the Defence Department said.

One of the dead soldiers was identified last night as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Field Ambulance unit, based in Valcartier, Que.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the other slain soldier's name is being temporarily withheld.

Radio-Canada, the French service of the CBC, confirmed two of its journalists were injured in the blast. All were riding in a LAV III armoured vehicle.

Camera operator Charles Dubois suffered a serious leg wound and underwent surgery yesterday, network officials said, for injuries not considered life-threatening. Patrice Roy, a veteran reporter, was reported to be suffering from shock.

While other journalists have suffered close calls while embedded with Canadian troops, it's believed yesterday's incident marks the first time one has suffered a serious injury.

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers, and one diplomat, Glyn Berry, have been killed in Kandahar since the mission began in 2002.

The deadly attack comes just days after Longtin, 23, of Longueuil, Que., was killed in another bomb blast. And the latest attack prompted an admission last night from a senior commander that the roadside bombs planted by insurgents are proving deadly, effective and difficult to foil.

"Unfortunately, there are many of them and it's very difficult to counter that type of threat to avoid it," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commander of the Canadian task group in Afghanistan.

"That's why we're still seeing casualties because it's totally unpredictable. "

He said the casualties had nothing to do with the experience of the troops, who arrived on the front lines just a few weeks ago.

"It's not a question of experience ... It wasn't because of a lack of caution was involved. That's simply the reality of Afghanistan," Laroche told reporters at a briefing at the main Canadian base at Kandahar airfield.

"It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday but we are always facing potential threats or risks," Laroche said.

The journalists and injured soldier were flown to a multinational hospital at Kandahar airfield.

Radio-Canada's general manager of news, Alain Saulnier, said the journalists had received war zone training, and were well-equipped for their six-week rotation.

"In theory, journalism is a hazardous occupation, and today we saw that unfortunately it can be in practice as well," he said, adding: "It's difficult to work in a war zone, and we had the demonstration of that today. It's sad, but at the same time, that's why we're there."

Radio-Canada vice-president Sylvain Lafrance said the incident will not affect the network's commitment to covering Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, even as he allowed that the incident was rippling through the organization.

"The emotion was palpable in every newsroom in the country, and particularly in Montreal and Ottawa," he said, adding Radio-Canada is "like a big family."

Dubois had been to Afghanistan three times before and, during a January visit to Kandahar, met up with his brother, Cpl. Martin Dubois, who was part of the Canadian military contingent on the base.

"He's my younger brother. I keep an eye on him," the journalist Dubois told the Toronto Star in an interview at the time.

Yesterday's attack happened during Operation "Eagle Eye," as Canadians backed Afghan security forces trying to secure the volatile Zhari region, where insurgents have been active in recent weeks.

The members of the storied Van Doos were advancing to capture high ground to observe and control activity in the area.

"The mission was a success ... the casualties today came about at the end of the operation," Laroche said.

"We had reached the target, carried out the mission and they were consolidating on the target and that is when the incident occurred," he told reporters in Kandahar.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in."

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day.

Two more Van Doos die; Bomb near Kandahar also injures another soldier and two Radio-Canada journalists

Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, approximately 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away.

Insurgents fought back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

The Canadians also discovered and safely detonated a massive roadside bomb.

Still, despite those successes, these latest deaths are certain to stir even further debate over the Afghan mission in Quebec, where citizens are deeply divided.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said the two soldiers died helping bring security and stability to Afghanistan.

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices," Harper said in a statement, adding his hopes for a quick recovery for the soldier and two journalists.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said he was "deeply saddened" to learn of the latest deaths.

A Firefighters' Salute honours fallen soldier's return from a war zone

IDNUMBER 200708230185

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Met

SECTION: News

PAGE: A01

ILLUSTRATION: Tory Zimmerman Toronto star Toronto firefighters salute the casket of Pte. Simon Longtin yesterday near the Ontario chief coroner's office in downtown Toronto. Longtin was killed in Afghanistan on Sunday. ;

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 38

Tory Zimmerman Toronto star Toronto firefighters salute the casket of Pte. Simon Longtin yesterday near the Ontario chief coroner's office in downtown Toronto. Longtin was killed in Afghanistan on Sunday.

Soldiers' deaths could hurt Conservatives in Quebec; Party's worst fear is that rising opposition to mission could threaten its electoral hopes

IDNUMBER 200708230143

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Met

SECTION: News

PAGE: A15

ILLUSTRATION: Charla Jones Toronto Star file photo Cameraman Charles Dubois, left, is shown with brother Cpl. Martin Dubois in Kandahar in December 2006. ;

BYLINE: Sean Gordon

SOURCE: Toronto Star

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 420

The remains of CFB Valcartier's first Afghanistan casualty victim had barely reached Canadian shores when news swept over the base that two more of their fellows had fallen in combat.

"Once again, the military community of Valcartier is crushed at the loss of two of our members and the injuries to a third," Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin, interim commander of Valcartier's 5th Mechanized Brigade, told reporters last night. "We're doing everything to support their families ... it's an extremely difficult time."

Beyond the human dimension of tragedy and loss, the battle for public opinion roils on in Quebec – where foes of the Afghan mission are clearly in the ascendancy.

The darkest fear for Quebec-based Conservatives is that opposition to the conflict could scotch their electoral hopes there.

That sensitivity was in evidence this week when Defence Minister Peter MacKay was dispatched to Valcartier to speak to a group of soldiers departing for Afghanistan.

The newest fatalities will further sharpen the focus on what is already an unpopular mission.

"I would expect to see an amplification of opposition initially ... (the latest attack) will increase the degree of attention on what's happening in Afghanistan," said Universite de Montreal professor Pierre Martin, an expert on Quebec politics.

Earlier this week open-line radio shows were deluged with calls about the death of Pte. Simon Longtin after he became the first soldier based at Valcartier – northwest of Quebec City – to perish in Afghanistan.

Several influential columnists have struck a decidedly critical tone while provincial reporters have focused more on the Afghan conflict – a media spotlight that will only intensify with the injuries yesterday to a pair of Radio-Canada journalists.

Reporters who have covered Afghanistan say there have been numerous close calls as journalists have travelled in convoys hit by bombs, rocket attacks or with troops as they come under enemy fire.

Soldiers' deaths could hurt Conservatives in Quebec; Party's worst fear is that rising opposition to mission could threaten its electoral hopes

Former Toronto Star journalist Kathleen Kenna was seriously injured in Afghanistan in March 2002 when the car she was riding in with her husband and photographer Bernard Weil was hit by a grenade.

Also yesterday, a poll conducted by the CROP polling firm found that the number of people who support the mission dropped markedly after news of Longtin's death.

Martin said those results are largely consistent with the types of fluctuations observed during periods of heavy losses at previous points in the Afghan conflict.

Indeed, opposition to the war in Quebec – statistically the staunchest in the country – has wavered little in recent months.

Martin said the more significant trend is a shift in the broader perception of the Afghan campaign.

"What counts is whether this mission has chances of succeeding, can we win?" he said.

Though it's impossible to predict the long-term political impact of the loss of Quebec-based soldiers, it seems clear "... people have stiffened with the announcement of (Longtin's) death," CROP vice-president Claude Gauthier told La Presse.

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar

IDNUMBER 200708230005
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda, with files from Marianne White
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 954

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light-armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City yesterday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later yesterday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Brig.-Gen. Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, in a solemn military ceremony yesterday.

Pte. Longtin, also a member of the Van Doos, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Simon's brother, Pte. Benoît Longtin, served as an honour guard with seven other soldiers. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoît's lips quivered and tears streamed down

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near

his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Pte. Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Pte. Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Galetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries including Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay, also attended the arrival ceremony.

An autopsy will be performed in Toronto before Pte. Longtin's body is sent back to Quebec for a funeral, expected this weekend.

At CFB Valcartier, Que., everyone was shocked by the deaths of two more soldiers. The news was on everyone's lips with no one left indifferent.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Everyday I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Levesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion said in a statement that he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan yesterday.

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

Earlier yesterday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud, who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Brig.-Gen. Laroche later described the mission as a success, adding that the deaths came at the end of it.

"It's always risky," he said. "It's not a lack of care; it's the reality of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doos' Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near

Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian Forces were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED, which had been planted along Foster Road.

The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers arrived on scene to detonate the bomb, which unleashed a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high.

It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form in Afghanistan.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Capt. Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the Afghan army soldiers who discovered the bomb near a small bridge. His convoy had rolled over the IED before it was discovered.

There are about 2,500 Canadian soldiers currently fighting in Afghanistan. Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

War in Afghanistan

For the latest report on Canadians in Afghanistan, visit www.ottawacitizen.com

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar

IDNUMBER 200708230003

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Pte. Benoit Longtin, centre, part of an honour guard, helps carry the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at CFB Trenton yesterday. Pte. Simon Longtin, attached to the Van Doo regiment based in Valcartier, Que., was killed on Aug. 19 in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb detonated under his armoured vehicle during a supply convoy. Pte. Simon Longtin was the first member of the Van Doos to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The regiment took command of Canada's operations there on Aug. 1. ;

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda, with files from Marianne White

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 950

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light-armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City yesterday evening.

One of the soldiers was identified late last night as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army called Operation Eagle Eye.

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The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED, which had been planted along Foster Road.

The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers arrived on scene to detonate the bomb, which unleashed a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high.

It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form in Afghanistan.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Capt. Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the Afghan army soldiers who discovered the bomb near a small bridge. His convoy had rolled over the IED before it was discovered.

There are about 2,500 Canadian soldiers currently fighting in Afghanistan. Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

War in Afghanistan

For the latest report on Canadians in Afghanistan, visit ottawacitizen.com

ottawacitizen.com

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near Kandahar

IDNUMBER 200708230002

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Pte. Benoit Longtin, centre, part of an honour guard, helps carry the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at CFB Trenton yesterday. Pte. Simon Longtin, attached to the Van Doo regiment based in Valcartier, Que., was killed on Aug. 19 in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb detonated under his armoured vehicle during a supply convoy. Pte. Simon Longtin was the first member of the Van Doos to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The regiment took command of Canada's operations there on Aug. 1. ;

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda, with files from Marianne White

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 946

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light-armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City yesterday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later yesterday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche.

"Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Brig.-Gen. Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb on Sunday, arrived back at CFB Trenton, in a solemn military ceremony yesterday.

Pte. Longtin, also a member of the Van Doos, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Simon's brother, Pte. Benoît Longtin, served as an honour guard with seven other soldiers. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoît's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Pte. Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Pte. Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Gagetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries including Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay, also attended the arrival ceremony.

An autopsy will be performed in Toronto before Pte. Longtin's body is sent back to Quebec for a funeral, expected this weekend.

At CFB Valcartier, Que., everyone was shocked by the deaths of two more soldiers. The news was on everyone's lips with no one left indifferent.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Everyday I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Levesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion said in a statement that he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan yesterday.

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

Earlier yesterday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

2 soldiers killed by Afghan bomb; 2 reporters hurt; Interpreter also dead after attack on Van Doos patrol near

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud, who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Brig.-Gen. Laroche later described the mission as a success, adding that the deaths came at the end of it.

"It's always risky," he said. "It's not a lack of care; it's the reality of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doos' Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian Forces were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED, which had been planted along Foster Road.

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Journalists' injuries shake up colleagues

IDNUMBER 200708230007

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Cpl. Dan Pop, Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team/ Master Cpl. Sébastien Dussault, commander of the Light Armored Vehicle 3 crew, keeps a watchful eye on the members of the Force Protection Company who conducted a dismounted patrol in Kandahar City yesterday. ; Photo: Charles Dubois: Cameraman seriously hurt. ; Photo: Patrice Roy: Reporter suffers from shock. ;

DATELINE: MONTREAL

BYLINE: Jason Magder

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 251

MONTREAL — Emotions ran high at Radio–Canada yesterday when news came of the explosion in Afghanistan that wounded two journalists and killed two Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter.

"Everyone was very emotional in all of our newsrooms today," said Sylvain Lafrance, vice–president of Radio–Canada's French operations. "We heard from the Canadian army at 12:30 that (the reporters) were in an explosion. We did not hear until later in the afternoon what their condition was."

Veteran Radio–Canada reporter Patrice Roy, 44, and his cameraman, Charles Dubois, 29, were injured in the explosion. Both work in Radio–Canada's Ottawa bureau.

Dubois was seriously injured in a leg and was airlifted to a hospital in Kandahar. He is expected to survive. Roy, who joined Radio–Canada 17 years ago, suffered from shock, but had no physical injuries, TV network executives said.

It was the first time journalists for Radio–Canada have been injured while covering a war, said news director Alain Saulnier.

Saulnier said the journalists knew the dangers of what they were doing. He said both had worked in several war zones in the past. They had been in Afghanistan for two weeks and were expected to stay another four weeks.

Dubois will be sent home after he is released from the hospital. Roy will decide today whether he will return home.

"I spoke to Patrice," Saulnier said. "It's clear he is in a state of shock."

"For now, he's going to rest. We'll re–evaluate things when we speak to him (today)."

Saulnier said the television network will re–examine whether it's worth the risk of sending reporters to the region. Another team was scheduled to leave for Afghanistan today.

"This kind of coverage is part of our mission, but we have to ask ourselves: Should we change our methods?" Saulnier said.

Roadside bomb claims lives of two more Canadian soldiers; Interpreter killed; 2 journalists hurt in joint operation

IDNUMBER 200708230006
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR,
Afghanistan
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
NOTE: Soldier's body returns to
Canada, A7
WORD COUNT: 374

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan — Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City yesterday.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada cameraman Charles Dubois and reporter Patrice Roy were both injured in the blast.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

One of the slain soldiers was identified last night as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Ambulance company, based out of Valcartier, Que.

At the request of the family of the second soldier, his name was not released last night.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony yesterday.

Roadside bomb claims lives of two more Canadian soldiers; Interpreter killed; 2 journalists hurt in joint operation

At CFB Valcartier, everyone was shocked by the deaths of two more soldiers. The news was on everyone's lips with no one left indifferent.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Everyday I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Lévesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

Earlier yesterday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Van Doos took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw [Taliban insurgents] out and see what their combat fire was — and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Laroche said the deaths came at the end of the mission.

War an 'ideological struggle': Bush

IDNUMBER 200708230052
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B10
DATELINE: KANSAS CITY, Mo.
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 425

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (Reuters) — President Bush Wednesday argued for perseverance in Iraq by placing the unpopular war in the historical context of U.S. experiences in Japan, South Korea and Vietnam, but critics said he missed the mark.

Speaking to thousands of veterans, many of whom served in Asia, Bush laid the groundwork for a key mid-September report on Iraq that is expected to show some progress on the security front but little in the way of political reconciliation.

Bush said it was in U.S. interests to continue to work to stabilize Iraq and held out the modern democracies in Japan and South Korea as potential models.

He also raised the example of the emergence of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and violence in Vietnam after U.S. troops pulled out to warn of the consequences of leaving Iraq.

"Despite the mistakes that have been made, despite the problems we have encountered, seeing the Iraqis through as they build their democracy is critical to keeping the American people safe from the terrorists who want to attack us," Bush said.

The comparison Bush drew to Vietnam was risky and one his administration has tended to avoid.

Many Democrats have likened Iraq to Vietnam, calling the war a quagmire that has exacted a toll in American lives and money without furthering U.S. interests.

Bush also used his speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to reiterate his support for Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, despite comments he made a day earlier highlighting frustration with the Iraqi leader's inability to reconcile warring factions.

The speech was the first in Bush's new campaign to build a case for staying in Iraq in the face of defections among his Republican Party colleagues and a disillusioned American public.

He will talk about Iraq in the context of wider U.S. strategy in the Middle East next Tuesday when he addresses the American Legion, another veterans' group, in Reno, Nev.

Bush said that like the Second World War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the war in Iraq was an "ideological struggle" as he again depicted the conflict as part of the broader U.S. "war on terror."

"The militarists of Japan and the communists in Korea and Vietnam were driven by a merciless vision for the

proper ordering of humanity," Bush said.

"Like our enemies in the past, the terrorists who wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places seek to spread a political vision of their own: a harsh plan for life that crushes freedom, tolerance and dissent," he added.

Pressure is building on Bush over Iraq ahead of a report to Congress due by Sept. 15 from U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker and the top U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus.

It will evaluate the progress of the troop buildup Bush ordered early this year aimed at reducing the violence there and comes as the Democratic-led Congress tries to bring about a withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Soldier's body returned to Canada

IDNUMBER 200708230051
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B10
DATELINE: CFB TRENTON, Ont.
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 478

CFB TRENTON, Ont. — Fighting back tears the whole time, Pte. Benoit Longtin served as an honour guard on Wednesday for his brother's body as it arrived back from Afghanistan Wednesday.

Pte. Simon Longtin was killed in action in Afghanistan last Sunday, only three weeks after he had arrived as part of a Van Doo contingent.

In an emotionally charged ceremony, Benoit, who wore a dark green military dress uniform and white gloves, was one of eight soldiers to serve as his brother's honour guard. While the other soldiers faces largely remained stoic, Benoit's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played "Amazing Grace" while his flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

The family wept only as it placed the roses on Simon's coffin before the hearse was driven off toward Toronto where an autopsy will be performed before the body is sent back to Quebec for a funeral, which is expected for this weekend. Details for Longtin's funeral have not yet been released.

At one point during the CFB Trenton ceremony, a distraught Benoit and his father walked hand in hand.

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Gagetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries including Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay were also in attendance.

Along the drive from CFB Trenton to Toronto, people lined Highway 401 to watch the hearse pass by and to pay respects to Simon. Residents, firemen and veterans stood atop a bridge crossing Highway 401 near Cobourg, Ont. as the hearse passed by.

Simon, 23, was in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it struck the bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City last Sunday.

Longtin was the first member of the Van Doo to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The Royal 22nd Regiment, as it is officially known, took command of Canada's operations in Afghanistan on Aug. 1.

A native of Longueuil, Que., he had been living with his girlfriend in Quebec City before shipping out to Afghanistan Aug. 1. The Van Doo is based at CFB Valcartier, which is just outside of Quebec City.

In a statement released after he died, his family said they are devastated by the death.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," the message said. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

Longtin's fellow soldiers said he was the joker of the platoon, but when it came to his duty and the mission in Afghanistan, he showed an unyielding conviction.

His death was a shock to his comrades.

"Everybody's morale is really low right now," said one soldier.

The death pushed the Canadian military toll in Afghanistan to 67. One diplomat has also died.

The Canadian Forces contribution in Afghanistan consists of about 2,500 soldiers. Troops are rotated every six to nine months.

Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he will seek a consensus from Parliament before extending the mission.

War claims two more soldiers

IDNUMBER 200708230002
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda, With files from Marianne White
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 650

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan — Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Ambulance company, based out of Valcartier, Que., was named as one of the soldiers killed by the Department of National Defence late Wednesday night.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1.

They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

At CFB Valcartier, military officials held a brief news conference Wednesday night.

"The Valcartier community is deeply touched by the loss of two of our members and a third one being wounded," said Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin. "We are a very tight community here and we all share the same emotions. We are going to get even closer and deal with that and go through that."

He offered his condolences to family and friends of the fallen soldiers. "It's a tragedy and a very difficult time for them," he added.

Gosselin said the soldiers are aware of the risk of their mission and that the recent events will not alter their determination. "The best way to pay respect to them is to keep on with the mission until we succeed," he added.

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday.

"I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government of Canada, our sympathies to the family and friends of these brave soldiers and the Afghan interpreter," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper in a statement.

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices.

"I also wish a quick recovery to the Canadian soldier and two journalists injured in this incident. These soldiers gave their lives helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan. We will always remember them."

At CFB Valcartier, Que., everyone was shocked by the deaths of two more soldiers.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Every day I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Levesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

Earlier Wednesday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases to the southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

There are about 2,500 Canadian soldiers currently fighting in Afghanistan. Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

Two Canucks killed Roadside bomb kills Van Doos in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG: 0708230392

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Thronhill, Reuters Benoit Longtin, helps carry the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at CFB Trenton.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 146

A roadside bomb has claimed the lives of two more Canadian soldiers from a Quebec-based regiment.

The Canadian military says an Afghan interpreter was also killed in the blast west of Kandahar today.

Two Canadian journalists and another soldier were injured in the incident.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche says the three are being treated for non-life threatening injuries.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois is seriously injured, and reporter Patrice Roy is suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

Laroche says their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in the troubled Zhari district, about 50 km west of Kandahar.

The two Canadian fatalities are from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos. Their names have not yet been released.

The Van Doos suffered its first loss of a soldier on Sunday when Pte. Simon Longtin, of Longueuil, Que., was killed — also by a roadside bomb.

His body arrived in Canada today.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in." **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0708230390
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 552

It was shortly after George Bush had arrived at this week's Montebello summit, and the first scheduled order of business was a bilateral meeting between the U.S. president and Stephen Harper, each accompanied by the usual entourage of about a dozen high-ranking government officials.

But as the diplomats and other officials arrived at the designated conference room, they were in for a little surprise: The prime minister and the American president were already there, alone, having started the meeting with no one else to hear.

The two leaders had apparently slipped into the room ahead of the scheduled meetings — almost certainly at Harper's instigation — to discuss the Afghanistan conflict and the possible end to Canada's combat role there in 2009.

It wasn't enough that the public was shut out of the 24-hour confab among the two leaders and Mexican president Felipe Calderon on literally dozens of issues affecting the three countries.

Now we learn that discussions between Harper and the U.S. president on Canada's future role in Afghanistan were for their ears only, evidently too hot to share even with the various ministers, diplomats and their U.S. counterparts accompanying the leaders.

In case there were any doubt, U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins said yesterday the subject of Afghanistan was not raised at any of the other meetings he attended during the summit.

POST-SUMMIT LUNCH

The forever engaging and usually candid diplomat generously invited about 18 senior Canadian journalists to his magnificent Ottawa mansion yesterday for a little post-summit chit-chat over a sumptuous lamb lunch.

It is worth noting that Wilkins probably provided more enlightenment on Canada-U.S. relations over the three-course lunch than Harper's crew have offered in the past three months.

The one exception, the one issue about which Wilkins was clearly uncomfortable speaking, was Afghanistan.

Since he obviously was not in the room for the Harper-Bush private chat, Wilkins said he could not comment on what they discussed, other than that it was about Afghanistan.

The PM's communications director, Sandra Buckler, admitted the same, claiming the sum of the two leaders' conversation was Harper telling Bush that Canada's combat role will come to an end in 2009 unless there is parliamentary approval to extend it.

But the prime minister has said the same thing publicly dozens of times in recent months, and it is ludicrous to imagine Bush was not thoroughly briefed on Canada's official position long before his helicopter landed on the manicured lawns of the Chateau Montebello.

So what's the big secret that Harper and Bush didn't want to share with anyone, not even their own officials?

Maybe it's just another of the crazy conspiracy theories surrounding the secret summit, but it's likely Harper politely told Bush that a hugely unpopular president's cheerleading Canada on to an extended combat role in Afghanistan would not be helpful to his pal, Steve.

By all means American praise for the work and sacrifice of our troops would be welcome by the Harper government and indeed all Canadians.

Otherwise, the last thing Harper needs politically on the home front is any indication Canada is being pressured by the U.S. to remain in the Afghan killing fields past 2009 — any hint that Steve is doing George's bidding.

KOOKY THEORY

Of course, as we said, it could all be just another kooky conspiracy theory. For all anyone else knows, the two leaders went off on their own to talk baseball.

As the plates were being cleared from the ambassador's table, Wilkins served up some simple common sense that the Harper administration might want to heed.

"Perhaps we all need to do a better job of getting the facts out because when you have a vacuum it's filled with innuendo and myths and that sort of thing, Wilkins said. "I think probably one of the reasons we have all these conspiracy theories is maybe we all need to communicate better."

Amen and thanks for the lunch.

A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0708230846
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 21
BYLINE: GREG WESTON, NATIONAL AFFAIRS
WORD COUNT: 552

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So what's the big secret that Harper and Bush didn't want to share with anyone, not even their own officials?

Maybe it's just another of the crazy conspiracy theories surrounding the secret summit, but it's likely Harper politely told Bush that a hugely unpopular president's cheerleading Canada on to an extended combat role in Afghanistan would not be helpful to his pal, Steve.

By all means American praise for the work and sacrifice of our troops would be welcome by the Harper government and indeed all Canadians.

Otherwise, the last thing Harper needs politically on the home front is any indication Canada is being pressured by the U.S. to remain in the Afghan killing fields past 2009 — any hint that Steve is doing George's bidding.

KOOKY THEORY

Of course, as we said, it could all be just another kooky conspiracy theory. For all anyone else knows, the two leaders went off on their own to talk baseball.

As the plates were being cleared from the ambassador's table, Wilkins served up some simple common sense that the Harper administration might want to heed.

"Perhaps we all need to do a better job of getting the facts out because when you have a vacuum it's filled with innuendo and myths and that sort of thing, Wilkins said. "I think probably one of the reasons we have all these conspiracy theories is maybe we all need to communicate better."

Amen and thanks for the lunch.

A startling publicity campaign in Toronto is provoking outrage about the use of child soldiers around the world

SOURCETAG: 0708230824

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 6

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Earnest Doroszuk, Sun Media Dr. Samantha Nutt has launched a campaign to save some of the world's 300,000 boy soldiers like Luther Htoo, a 12-year-old boy from Myanmar who's showing off his rifle.

BYLINE: MIKE STROBEL

WORD COUNT: 339

Kids home from camp yet?

I bet they bust with tales to tell you.

Of trout and canoes and bonfires and swinging on old tires. Of sunburns and singalongs, freckles and raccoons and bugs and burnt marshmallows.

AK-47s? Land mines? Rocket propelled grenades?

Oh, baby, back-to-school can be a real bitch in Kabul. Or the Congo. Or Uganda. Or Sudan.

Far away. But maybe you have seen the poster for Camp Okutta going up around town.

An Adventure Camp for Kids, it says. Grenade throwing. Shoot real AK-47s. Minefield Training. Ages 8 to 12.

Camp Kitchigami it ain't.

What the ...? you splutter. Already there are reports of outraged passersby tearing down posters.

Check the website. Campokutta.com.

Sure enough, there are clips of kids learning to kill.

BOSSES ASSAULT KIDS

The site map shows cabins where camp bosses assault kids, the mess hall where they feed them scraps. The infirmary doles out obedience-inducing drugs. All this at Kennedy Rd. and Hwy. 7.

The kids, though, are actors, thank heaven. The splat of bullets on targets is the work of off-camera paintballers.

A startling publicity campaign in Toronto is provoking outrage about the use of child soldiers around the world

I can't blame the lady who stormed up Queen St. ripping down posters.

"It just brought up so much anger in me," Sarah Heywood told the CBC.

Good, Sarah. You should be upset. Forcing children into war is infinitely awful. The worst. But they're not our kids.

Now, picture the City of Windsor. Throw in Chatham. Make it an even 250,000.

That's how many kids bear arms around the world. And I don't mean waterguns.

The unsettling poster is the handiwork of a charity, War Child Canada. (See warchild.ca.)

I find its co-founder, Dr. Samantha "Sam" Nutt, at headquarters in an old tin factory at Richmond and Spadina.

Kids peer from every wall. A dozen people work the phones. Darfur is the cesspool du jour. War Child has folks there, training kids to do jobs other than war.

Nutt, 37, a physician, does not look like she has trod bloody trails in Liberia, Burundi, Somalia, The Congo, Iraq, Uganda and Afghanistan.

"The armpits of the world," she smiles.

In the Congo, she met Bonaventure, a soldier in the rebel Mayi Mayi militia. Bonaventure was 6-years-old.

It was his job to sprinkle magic water on fellow fighters, many of whom were not yet teens.

"The little guy's family was killed," Sam says, "and he was abducted from his village.

"He went into battle with all the other child soldiers and made them believe they were invincible."

They weren't.

The world's monsters love children. Kids follow orders. They don't eat much. They're reckless. They learn fast. (Loading a rocket launcher can be tricky.)

GUNS ANSWER FOR SOME

As for a traumatized kid, well, life is simple. A gun lets him do anything. He loots. He rapes. He robs. Charles Taylor knew this when Liberia was in his tender care.

"You talked to those kids," says Sam. "You looked into their eyes and you knew they were dead inside." Half of Joseph Kony's insurgents in Uganda are children.

Mean Joe's army marched straight from hell.

"They go into villages, force kids to shoot their own parents, which is how they indoctrinate them, then they take boys, girls, even babies."

The girls become porters or childbrides for generals. The babies? Well, they grow up to be soldiers.

A startling publicity campaign in Toronto is provoking outrage about the use of child soldiers around the world.

And you know bloody well the Taliban uses kids against our troops in Afghanistan.

All of which is sickening beyond my ken as a dad.

Sam has a 2-year-old boy with husband Dr. Eric Hoskins, 46, War Child Canada's co-founder.

Another boy once told her, "If you come here again without any money, I will burn you alive."

That was in the Congo. But it could have been in any of 30 hellholes around the world where kids are forced to kill.

Thank your stars Camp Okutta is a charity stunt.

Elsewhere, 250,000 kids with dead eyes are not so lucky. KEYWORDS=WORLD

A startling publicity campaign in Toronto is provoking outrage about the use of child soldiers around the world.

Two more soldiers have been killed and the city still refuses to place support decals on its cars -- What gives?

SOURCETAG: 0708230823

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 5

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. file photo by Veronica Henri, Sun Media Toronto Police Association President Dave Wilson holds a Support Our Troops ribbon in June. Wilson is upset the ribbons still can't be seen on police cars around the city. 2. photo of ALOK MUKHERJEE Out of town

BYLINE: JOE WARMINGTON

WORD COUNT: 708

Upset the city has not yet placed Support Our Troops decals on police cars, the Toronto Police Association has gone ahead and purchased the ribbons and sent them along with a stern letter of protest to the Police Services Board chair, the Sun has learned.

With two more deaths in Afghanistan yesterday, 15 soldiers have died since the day Toronto city council passed a resolution calling for support decals to be placed on all emergency vehicles, including police cars.

And yet the yellow ribbons are still not on the police cars. What gives? That's what a livid police union boss Dave Wilson would like to know.

In a letter to Police Services Board Chairman Alok Mukherjee, obtained by the Sun through sources, Wilson has demanded immediate action.

"As you know, we have made repeated attempts to address this important initiative with you and Chief (Bill) Blair and for reasons unknown to us, our efforts to work with you on this meaningful project have so far been ignored," wrote Wilson. "Our members have expressed concern that they are being denied an opportunity to show respect and appreciation to the men and women who also risk their lives to help protect others."

Many police officers, on duty and off, will be at a giant Red Friday rally at the CNE at 2 p.m. tomorrow to show that support. But Wilson wants city council to honour what it said it would do by placing those decals on the cars immediately.

STILL WAITING

On June 20, reacting to pressure from the public who were outraged over a decision to remove support decals from fire trucks and ambulances, the council ended up unanimously supporting the idea and also included they be added to the police vehicles.

It has been caught up in bureaucracy ever since. Wilson claims he has not even been able to get a dialogue going.

Two more soldiers have been killed and the city still refuses to place support decals on its cars -- What gives?

"It is most unfortunate that to date, the Police Services Board and the Chief have not seen fit to work with us on this worthy project," he wrote. "Four weeks have now passed since our last correspondence and still we have received no response."

A spokesman for Mukherjee said "we did receive the letter" but that the chairman is out of town and would not be able to address it until Monday. A call was put in to Blair and his spokesman, Const. Wendy Drummond, said the service's position is that "we support the forces in many other ways but it will not be on the vehicles."

SOMETHING SMELLS HERE

It's strange since it is very clear in the council's resolution that it would include the vehicles. It is also strange since few have been more supportive of the troops than Blair. In fact when we organized the pro-troops rally last September both Blair and Wilson were the reason it ever happened. Both offered manpower and assistance and both gave passionate speeches from the podium.

Even Mayor David Miller, who is also out of town this week, has been supportive of the pro-troops initiative and spoke at that same rally.

So if Blair is not behind blocking this and neither is Miller, who is?

Could it be the power of vote abstainers led by councillors Pam McConnell, Janet Davis, Gord Perks and Adam Giambrone who seem to think a ribbon promotes a political or pro-war message?

Surely they don't have the kind of power to overrule the unanimously passed resolution, the mayor and the police chief? Something smells here. It's awful. The families of the war dead must be sick to their stomachs.

Wilson was tired of waiting and just went ahead and ordered the decals. He sent them in a box to Mukherjee yesterday. "Enclosed you will find Support Our Troops decals purchased by the Toronto Police Association for the purpose of displaying them in marked police vehicles as per City Council's resolution in June 2007," he wrote. "We have purchased enough decals to place on each marked Toronto police vehicle and would be pleased to forward additional decals to you should they be required. Our hope is by supplying you with these decals you will reassess your position and put an end to any further delay."

Wilson would love it if the decals could be placed in the windows of the squad cars for tomorrow's pro-troops rally at the CNE. "It is our hope that since the decals are now available for distribution, you will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that our members are able to proudly demonstrate their support for the men and women serving abroad," he wrote.

You think this embattled city council, which has had a bad summer, could get this one right.

Here's some advice from one voter. Just put the yellow decals on the police cars as you decided to do in your resolution.

And please stop embarrassing us. KEYWORDS=TORONTO AND GTA

Two more soldiers have been killed and the city still refuses to place support decals on its cars —~~97~~What gives

Soldiers and 'some surprises' at troops event

SOURCETAG 0708230822
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 5
ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo of DENVER WILLIAMS Wounded 2. photo of JODY MITIC Will be there
BYLINE: JOE WARMINGTON
WORD COUNT: 198

Some surprise guests have been confirmed for tomorrow's Red Friday rally at the CNE and a Sun columnist has been announced as the master of ceremonies.

"We have some calls out to some big names and have some surprises for people who come," Capt. Wayne Johnston said yesterday. "You will not want to miss it."

Among the many confirmed to be there are wounded soldiers Cpl. Denver Williams, Sapper Mike McTeague and Master Cpl. Jody Mitic.

Canadian rockers The Kings have confirmed they'll play their hit song This Beat Goes On/Switchin' To Glide.

Organizers were working overtime last night putting together what they hope will be the biggest pro-troops rally ever. The event begins at 2 p.m., at the Canadian Forces display near the Automotive Building near the Princes' Gates.

SUN HOST

"We are also pleased to announce the Sun's Joe Warmington will host the event, which we hope will set records."

Johnston hopes with 70,000 expected at the Ex tomorrow, they should be able to break the record of 10,000 people wearing red, which was set last September in Ottawa at Parliament Hill.

A photograph will be taken from a helicopter and sent immediately to the troops.

It's Toronto's second pro-troops rally. The first, Sept. 29, 2006, drew 3,000 at Yonge-Dundas Square.

"All of it is to let the troops know people are behind them 100% at home," said Johnston.

"It's going to be a special day and I know the men and women serving us so well in the war zone will see and hear the crowd all the way over in Afghanistan," Warmington said.

"I know Toronto will respond big time on Friday." **KEYWORDS=TORONTO AND GTA**

Teary procession for Quebec private Hearse travels along 'Highway of Heroes'

SOURCETAG: 0708230821

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: 3 photos 1. photo by Pete Fisher, Sun Media A Port Hope police cruiser leads the procession along Hwy. 401 through Port Hope yesterday. 2. photo by Fred Thornhill, Reuters Benoit Longtin walks with his father Maurice Longtin after carrying the casket of his brother Pte. Simon Longtin to a hearse at Canadian Forces Base Trenton. 3. photo of BENOIT LONGTIN Killed Sunday

BYLINE: PETE FISHER, CP

DATELINE: TRENTON

WORD COUNT: 285

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit -- who recently completed basic training -- joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment -- a province where support is low for the Canadian mission.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, Defence Minister Peter MacKay, Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier and former chief of defence staff, retired general Maurice Baril, were among the dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment -- the Van Doos -- arrived at this eastern Ontario military base.

Longtin, from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

The soldier's coffin was transported along Hwy. 401 to Toronto for autopsy. The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the bodies of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

Premier Dalton McGuinty said he'll listen to recommendations that the stretch of 401 from Trenton to Toronto be renamed the Highway of Heroes. An online petition can be viewed at petitiononline.com/401Hero.

Those who turned out yesterday said it had nothing to do with Longtin's Quebec origins.

Ken Carroll, in Port Hope, said the most emotional part was seeing the arms of family members of Longtin

waving from inside the limousine.

"I can hardly talk about it. He's fighting for our country -- it's the same flag," said Carroll. "We owe him that." KEYWORDS=CANADA

2 more Van Doos killed Deaths occur only hours after regiment's first fatality arrived back in Canada

SOURCETAG 0708230820
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 4
BYLINE: CP AND AP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 332

Two more soldiers from the Quebec-based Van Doos regiment were killed by a roadside bomb while on patrol in southern Afghanistan yesterday only hours after the body of a fellow soldier from the Royal 22nd Regiment arrived back in Canada.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the blast west of Kandahar and two Canadian journalists and another soldier were hurt.

One of the dead soldiers was identified by the Defence Department as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Field Ambulance unit, based in Valcartier, Que.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld, the department said.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said the three wounded were being treated for non-life threatening injuries.

Radio-Canada said its cameraman, Charles Dubois, 29, received a serious leg injury and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

FIRST VICTIM

The Van Doos suffered its first loss of a soldier on Sunday when Pte. Simon Longtin, of Longueuil, Que., was killed — also by a roadside bomb. His body arrived back in Canada yesterday.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield.

Earlier yesterday, Taliban militants wearing Afghan army uniforms attacked a remote NATO base in eastern Afghanistan, killing two Afghan soldiers and wounding 11 alliance soldiers.

A suicide bomber, meanwhile, attacked a provincial governor elsewhere in the east, killing four people and wounding eight others. The governor was unharmed.

IN DISGUISES

The militants in Afghan army uniforms approached the NATO forward operating base in mountainous Nuristan province before launching the attack, the alliance said. The attack left two Afghan soldiers dead and

2 more Van Doos killed Deaths occur only hours after regiment's first fatality arrived back in Canada

11 NATO troops wounded.

In Khost province, a suicide bomber attacked the six-vehicle convoy carrying Khost Gov. Arsallah Jamal, interior ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary said. "It was an attack on me," Jamal said. Two of the dead were his bodyguards.

The attack happened hours after gunmen in southern Afghanistan abducted the mayor of Gereshk, a town in the opium-growing province of Helmand. Dur Ali Shah was travelling with two sons to the capital of Lashkar Gah, Khan said. Only Shah was taken, Khan said. KEYWORDS=CANADA

FRONTPAGE 2 MORE KILLED As Pte. Longtin's body is saluted on Highway of Heroes ...

SOURCETAG 0708230814

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 1

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Pete Fisher, Sun Media Van Doos, interpreter die in roadside explosion in Afghanistan; 2 journalists wounded 2. photo 'I am mad at the guys who killed my parents'

WORD COUNT: 0

A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0708230325
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 552

It was shortly after George Bush had arrived at this week's Montebello summit, and the first scheduled order of business was a bilateral meeting between the U.S. president and Stephen Harper, each accompanied by the usual entourage of about a dozen high-ranking government officials.

But as the diplomats and other officials arrived at the designated conference room, they were in for a little surprise: The prime minister and the American president were already there, alone, having started the meeting with no one else to hear.

The two leaders had apparently slipped into the room ahead of the scheduled meetings — almost certainly at Harper's instigation — to discuss the Afghanistan conflict and the possible end to Canada's combat role there in 2009.

It wasn't enough that the public was shut out of the 24-hour confab among the two leaders and Mexican president Felipe Calderon on literally dozens of issues affecting the three countries.

Now we learn that discussions between Harper and the U.S. president on Canada's future role in Afghanistan were for their ears only, evidently too hot to share even with the various ministers, diplomats and their U.S. counterparts accompanying the leaders.

In case there were any doubt, U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins said yesterday the subject of Afghanistan was not raised at any of the other meetings he attended during the summit.

POST-SUMMIT LUNCH

The forever engaging and usually candid diplomat generously invited about 18 senior Canadian journalists to his magnificent Ottawa mansion yesterday for a little post-summit chit-chat over a sumptuous lamb lunch.

It is worth noting that Wilkins probably provided more enlightenment on Canada-U.S. relations over the three-course lunch than Harper's crew have offered in the past three months.

The one exception, the one issue about which Wilkins was clearly uncomfortable speaking, was Afghanistan.

Since he obviously was not in the room for the Harper-Bush private chat, Wilkins said he could not comment on what they discussed, other than that it was about Afghanistan.

The PM's communications director, Sandra Buckler, admitted the same, claiming the sum of the two leaders' conversation was Harper telling Bush that Canada's combat role will come to an end in 2009 unless there is parliamentary approval to extend it.

But the prime minister has said the same thing publicly dozens of times in recent months, and it is ludicrous to imagine Bush was not thoroughly briefed on Canada's official position long before his helicopter landed on the manicured lawns of the Chateau Montebello.

So what's the big secret that Harper and Bush didn't want to share with anyone, not even their own officials?

Maybe it's just another of the crazy conspiracy theories surrounding the secret summit, but it's likely Harper politely told Bush that a hugely unpopular president's cheerleading Canada on to an extended combat role in Afghanistan would not be helpful to his pal, Steve.

By all means American praise for the work and sacrifice of our troops would be welcome by the Harper government and indeed all Canadians.

Otherwise, the last thing Harper needs politically on the home front is any indication Canada is being pressured by the U.S. to remain in the Afghan killing fields past 2009 — any hint that Steve is doing George's bidding.

KOOKY THEORY

Of course, as we said, it could all be just another kooky conspiracy theory. For all anyone else knows, the two leaders went off on their own to talk baseball.

As the plates were being cleared from the ambassador's table, Wilkins served up some simple common sense that the Harper administration might want to heed.

"Perhaps we all need to do a better job of getting the facts out because when you have a vacuum it's filled with innuendo and myths and that sort of thing, Wilkins said. "I think probably one of the reasons we have all these conspiracy theories is maybe we all need to communicate better."

Amen and thanks for the lunch.

Van Doos killed in Afghan blast

SOURCETAG 0708230313

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 6

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo of PATRICE ROY In shock 2. photo of CHARLES DUBOIS Leg injuries

BYLINE: MARTIN OUELLET, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORD COUNT: 292

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 km west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters the three injured Canadians had non-life-threatening wounds and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman, Charles Dubois, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

The military has not identified the two soldiers killed but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

The regiment, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday by a roadside bomb. His body arrived in Canada earlier yesterday.

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day. Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 km west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thundering rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-metre-tall fireball could be seen as the device was detonated. But it was another improvised explosive device that caused the casualties

later as the day was drawing to a close.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families, friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured in the incident," Laroche said.

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Brother carries slain Quebec soldier's casket

SOURCETAG 0708230312

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 6

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Thornhill, Reuters Benoit Longtin walks with his father Maurice Longtin after carrying the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at CFB Trenton yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: TRENTON

WORD COUNT: 86

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit -- who recently completed basic training -- joined his father at the head of the group.

Longtin was a 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

Longtin, a soldier from Longueuil, Que., died Sunday after his light-armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

As school starts, need rises A London store is gathering school supplies for needy children worldwide.

SOURCETAG: 0708230508

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: City & Region

PAGE: C2

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Susan Bradnam, Sun Media IN SHORT SUPPLY: Stephen St. Christian, manager of Ten Thousand Villages in London, is collecting school supplies for students in Third World countries. The public is asked either to create their own kit or donate the supplies and the store's staff will assemble it. Cash donations, used to then buy supplies, are also accepted.

BYLINE: AMANDA ROBINSON, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 224

As parents and children stock up on nifty new school supplies, Ten Thousand Villages wants Londoners to spare a thought for those who long only for the basics.

"We are incredibly privileged in this country . . . things like coloured pencils and notebooks are seriously needed in places like Iraq and Afghanistan," said Stephen St. Christian of Ten Thousand Villages, a non-profit store on Richmond Street.

The London store, which sells fair-trade goods, is gearing up for its annual school kit drive, which will run throughout September.

The campaign was organized by its parent group, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) aid agency, which has been sending school supplies and medical kits overseas for more than 10 years.

Each year, about 120,000 kits are sent to pupils and students in developing countries.

Spiral notebooks, unsharpened plain and colored pencils, an eraser and ruler will all be packed into a hand-sewn drawstring bag -- which can also be used as a schoolbag--for children in developing countries, said St. Christian.

The collected supplies will be delivered by MCC staff mostly to children in refugee camps in Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Ukraine, Burundi, Liberia, Haiti, and El Salvador, said MCC spokesperson Anne Brubacher.

Last year, the London store collected nearly 1,000 kits, said St. Christian.

"It was overwhelming," he said. "It's a small thing but it makes a huge difference in the lives of the kids."

So far, only a dozen kits have been collected by the London store this year.

St. Christian also stressed people should send in only the school supplies listed so that distribution among the children is equitable.

As school starts, need rises A London store is gathering school supplies for needy children worldwide.

HOW TO DONATE

- Pick up a drawstring bag at Ten Thousand Villages at 630 Richmond St. and return the bag with the school supplies inside
- Bring supplies to the store
- Visit www.mcc.org/kits for directions on making the school kits. KEYWORDS=LOCAL

A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan.

SOURCETAG 0708230475
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A11
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 548

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As the plates were being cleared from the ambassador's table, Wilkins served up some simple common sense that the Harper administration might want to heed.

"Perhaps we all need to do a better job of getting the facts out because when you have a vacuum it's filled with innuendo and myths and that sort of thing, Wilkins said. "I think probably one of the reasons we have all these conspiracy theories is maybe we all need to communicate better."

Amen and thanks for the lunch.

Two soldiers die in roadside blast

SOURCETAG 0708230460

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos by CP AU REVOIR: Pte. Simon Longtin's father Maurice Longtin and brother Private Benoit Longtin make their way to the hearse with Manon Daoust after the casket of Simon Longtin arrived in a repatriation ceremony yesterday at CFB Trenton. Longtin was killed after his armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device last Sunday approximately 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City, Afghanistan. Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's family and loved ones to receive the remains of the young soldier, whose death was the first in Afghanistan for his Quebec-based regiment — a province where support for the Canadian mission is low. Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean, newly minted Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier were among the many dignitaries who stood alongside Longtin's family as the body of the 23-year-old member of the Royal 22nd Regiment — known as the Van Doos — arrived at the eastern Ontario military base. At one point during the ceremony, Jean put her arm around one of the mourners, offering some comfort as the woman, clad in black, wiped away tears.

BYLINE: MARTIN OUELLET, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR

WORD COUNT: 355

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doos regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadian had non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its camera operator, Charles Dubois, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise doing fine.

One of the dead soldiers was identified by the Defence Department as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Field Ambulance unit, based in Valcartier, Que.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld, the department said.

Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

The regiment, known as the Van Doos, lost its first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday by a roadside bomb. His body arrived back in Canada earlier yesterday.

The latest explosion happened after the Van Doos had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan earlier in the day.

Fierce fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thundering rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up.

NEW NAME FOR 401?

Ontario's premier says he'll consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers. Dalton McGuinty says he'll listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes. The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan. An online petition has been started asking the province's Transportation Ministry to make the name change. The flag-draped coffin of the latest soldier to be killed in the war-torn country, Pte. Simon Longtin, was returned to CFB Trenton yesterday. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Blast kills two Canucks Second and third casualties for Van Doos

SOURCETAG: 0708230724

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Thornhill, Reuters Benoit Longtin, part of an honour guard, helps carry the casket of his brother Pte. Simon Longtin to a hearse yesterday at the Canadian Forces Base Trenton in Ontario. Pte. Longtin was killed on Sunday in Afghanistan.

BYLINE: MARTIN OUELLET, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 461

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada on a day when the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the early evening blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 km west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

The military has identified one of the dead soldiers as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne. He and the other soldier belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy – these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," he said, referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission. The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier yesterday.

The latest explosion happened after the 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye yesterday and intense fighting was reported between the troops and

Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 km west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain."

"From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said.

"The mission was a success ... The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation." The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-metre-tall fireball could be seen as it was detonated.

But it was another IED that caused proved so deadly later as the day was drawing to a close. The military called it "a suspected mine."

A military officer suggested it could have been an anti-tank mine, but it has not been confirmed.

With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Meanwhile, in Trenton, Ont., Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it towards a waiting hearse.

As the mourners approached the car, a visibly upset Benoit – who recently completed basic training – joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

KEYWORDS=CANADA

A little alone time Harper and Bush slip away to discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0708230650
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 552

It was shortly after George Bush had arrived at this week's Montebello summit, and the first scheduled order of business was a bilateral meeting between the U.S. president and Stephen Harper, each accompanied by the usual entourage of about a dozen high-ranking government officials.

But as the diplomats and other officials arrived at the designated conference room, they were in for a little surprise: The prime minister and the American president were already there, alone, having started the meeting with no one else to hear.

The two leaders had apparently slipped into the room ahead of the scheduled meetings — almost certainly at Harper's instigation — to discuss the Afghanistan conflict and the possible end to Canada's combat role there in 2009.

It wasn't enough that the public was shut out of the 24-hour confab among the two leaders and Mexican president Felipe Calderon on literally dozens of issues affecting the three countries.

Now we learn that discussions between Harper and the U.S. president on Canada's future role in Afghanistan were for their ears only, evidently too hot to share even with the various ministers, diplomats and their U.S. counterparts accompanying the leaders.

In case there were any doubt, U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins said yesterday the subject of Afghanistan was not raised at any of the other meetings he attended during the summit.

POST-SUMMIT LUNCH

The forever engaging and usually candid diplomat generously invited about 18 senior Canadian journalists to his magnificent Ottawa mansion yesterday for a little post-summit chit-chat over a sumptuous lamb lunch.

It is worth noting that Wilkins probably provided more enlightenment on Canada-U.S. relations over the three-course lunch than Harper's crew have offered in the past three months.

The one exception, the one issue about which Wilkins was clearly uncomfortable speaking, was Afghanistan.

Since he obviously was not in the room for the Harper-Bush private chat, Wilkins said he could not comment on what they discussed, other than that it was about Afghanistan.

The PM's communications director, Sandra Buckler, admitted the same, claiming the sum of the two leaders' conversation was Harper telling Bush that Canada's combat role will come to an end in 2009 unless there is parliamentary approval to extend it.

But the prime minister has said the same thing publicly dozens of times in recent months, and it is ludicrous to imagine Bush was not thoroughly briefed on Canada's official position long before his helicopter landed on the manicured lawns of the Chateau Montebello.

So what's the big secret that Harper and Bush didn't want to share with anyone, not even their own officials?

Maybe it's just another of the crazy conspiracy theories surrounding the secret summit, but it's likely Harper politely told Bush that a hugely unpopular president's cheerleading Canada on to an extended combat role in Afghanistan would not be helpful to his pal, Steve.

By all means American praise for the work and sacrifice of our troops would be welcome by the Harper government and indeed all Canadians.

Otherwise, the last thing Harper needs politically on the home front is any indication Canada is being pressured by the U.S. to remain in the Afghan killing fields past 2009 — any hint that Steve is doing George's bidding.

KOOKY THEORY

Of course, as we said, it could all be just another kooky conspiracy theory. For all anyone else knows, the two leaders went off on their own to talk baseball.

As the plates were being cleared from the ambassador's table, Wilkins served up some simple common sense that the Harper administration might want to heed.

"Perhaps we all need to do a better job of getting the facts out because when you have a vacuum it's filled with innuendo and myths and that sort of thing, Wilkins said. "I think probably one of the reasons we have all these conspiracy theories is maybe we all need to communicate better."

Amen and thanks for the lunch.

Bomb kills two Canuck soldiers Armoured vehicle hits explosive device, killing two soldiers and wounding journalists

SOURCETAG: 0708230632
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 4
ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo of PATRICE ROY Suffers shock 2. photo of CHARLES DUBOIS Serious injuries
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 260

A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle yesterday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doos regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 km west of Kandahar city, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life-threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

One of the dead soldiers was identified by the Defence Department as Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Field Ambulance unit, based in Valcartier, Que.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified.

At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld, the department said.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops.

"At the level of tactics being used by the enemy — these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to improvised explosive devices or IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

Bomb kills two Canuck soldiers Armoured vehicle hits explosive device, killing two soldiers and wounding jo

Prime Minister Stephen Harper called it "a very sad day ... These soldiers gave their life helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan," Harper said in a statement.

"We will always remember them."

The latest explosion happened after soldiers from 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye jointly with Afghan security forces yesterday morning.

Intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 km west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away.

Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Bomb kills two Canuck soldiers Armoured vehicle hits explosive device, killing two soldiers and wounding jo 120

Slain hero's brother a pallbearer

SOURCETAG 0708230631

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Thonhill, Reuters Benoit Longtin, with his father Maurice Longtin, walk hand in hand after carrying the casket of his brother Pte. Simon Longtin to a hearse at CFB Trenton yesterday. Benoit was killed in Afghanistan.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: TRENTON, Ont.

WORD COUNT: 112

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Pte. Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday.

Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it toward a waiting hearse.

As mourners approached the car, Benoit -- who recently completed basic training -- joined his dad, gripping his hand as the tears were allowed to fall.

The ceremony took place hours before two more Canadian soldiers were killed in southern Afghanistan.

Longtin's father Maurice Longtin, his mother Johanne Larente, and his girlfriend Debbie Duclos-Bedard, watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the tarmac. Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Van Doo loses two more soldiers; Afghan interpreter also killed, two Canadian journalists wounded when armoured vehicle hits roadside bomb

IDNUMBER 200708230010

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Dave Sidaway, Canwest News Service / Radio-Canadavice-president Sylvain Lafrance (left) and information director Alain Saulnier update media about a cameraman and reporter who were wounded in Afghanistan on Wednesday. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 621

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan — Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 km west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doo, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday. In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

Meanwhile, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday.

Fighting back tears, Pte. Benoit Longtin was one of eight soldiers to serve as an honour guard for his brother's body. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoit's lips quivered and tears streamed down

his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family members wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Galetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries including Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay, also attended the arrival ceremony.

Earlier Wednesday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled out before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases to the southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud who led the Arghandab thrust.

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doo's Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants some more than two metres tall, looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the area to capitalize on the impending harvest.

The group discovered a massive IED planted along a road, which Canadian engineers detonated, unleashing a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high. It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form in Afghanistan.

Two more soldiers killed in Afghanistan; Journalists also injured in attack

IDNUMBER 200708230098
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: C10
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 754

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan — Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Ambulance company, based out of Valcartier, Que., was named as one of the soldiers killed by the Department of National Defence late Wednesday night.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doo, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

At CFB Valcartier, military officials held a brief news conference Wednesday night. "The Valcartier community is deeply touched by the loss of two of our members and a third one being wounded," said Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin. "We are a very tight community here and we all share the same emotions. We are going to get even closer and deal with that and go through that."

He offered his condolences to family and friends of the fallen soldiers. "It's a tragedy and a very difficult time for them," he added.

Gosselin said the soldiers are aware of the risk of their mission and that the recent events will not alter their determination. "The best way to pay respect to them is to keep on with the mission until we succeed," he added.

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday.

Longtin, also a member of the Van Doo, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Simon's brother Pte. Benoit Longtin served as an honour guard with seven other soldiers. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoit's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

"I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government of Canada, our sympathies to the family and friends of these brave soldiers and the Afghan interpreter," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper in a statement.

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices.

"I also wish a quick recovery to the Canadian soldier and two journalists injured in this incident. These soldiers gave their lives helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan. We will always remember them."

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said in a statement that he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan today.

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

At CFB Valcartier, Que., everyone was shocked by the deaths of two more soldiers.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Every day I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Levesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

TWO CANADIANS KILLED ON PATROL; Interpreter Also Slain; Roadside Bomb In Afghanistan Injures Journalists

IDNUMBER 200708230136
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: National
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
NOTE: Father de Souza, Page A15
WORD COUNT: 794

MASUM GHAR, AFGHANISTAN – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed during a patrol in Afghanistan yesterday.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident at Gundy Ghar in the district of Panjwaii in southern Afghanistan.

Radio–Canada reported that Ottawa–based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later yesterday.

The deaths occurred when a light–armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos.

The incident "puts into context the very real dangers, difficulties and life–threatening situations our ISAF troops, media and the interpreters who accompany them, encounter on a daily basis," said Lieutenant–Colonel Bridget Rose, a spokeswoman for the International Security Assistance Force's Regional Command South.

"Our thoughts are with the friends and families of those who have died or been injured in this incident."

Yesterday's bombing brings to 69 the number of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2002; one diplomat has also been killed.

By coincidence, the body of Private Simon Longtin, 23, who was killed by a roadside bomb on Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton in a solemn military ceremony yesterday. Pte. Longtin, a member of the Van Doos who had been in Afghanistan just three weeks, had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Private Benoit Longtin was one of eight soldiers to serve as an honour guard for his brother's body.

While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Pte. Longtin's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon Longtin's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Pte. Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Pte. Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Galetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries including Governor-General Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay, also attended the arrival ceremony.

An autopsy will be performed in Toronto before Pte. Longtin's body is sent back to Quebec for a funeral, expected this weekend.

Pte. Longtin was the first member of the Van Doos to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The regiment took command of Canada's operations in Afghanistan on Aug. 1.

Earlier yesterday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Van Doos took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases to the southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Major Patrick Robichaud, who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doos' Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

No Canadians were injured in the action, and the number of Taliban casualties could not be confirmed.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian Forces were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the

impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive improvised explosive device (IED), which had been planted along Foster Road. The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers arrived on scene to detonate the bomb, which unleashed a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high.

It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form in Afghanistan.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Captain Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the Afghan army soldiers who discovered the bomb near a small bridge. His convoy had rolled over the IED before it was discovered.

There are about 2,500 Canadian soldiers currently fighting in Afghanistan. Canada's military commitment ends in February, 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

Our tax dollars are saving Afghan lives

IDNUMBER 200708230093

PUBLICATION: National Post

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: National

SECTION: Editorials

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: Beverley J. Oda

SOURCE: National Post

WORD COUNT: 289

Re: Canada's Missed Opportunity In Afghanistan, Keith Martin, Aug. 21.

Liberal MP Keith Martin suggests that Canada has "neglected" health care in Afghanistan — this could not be further from the truth. We are among the world's leading donors to the country and we continue to work with trusted partners, such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF, who are helping improve the health of the most vulnerable Afghans.

The number of Afghan mothers who benefit from the aid of a skilled childbirth worker has almost quadrupled since 2002. There has been a marked decrease in the infant death rate since 2001, with 40,000 fewer infant deaths per year. Today, 83% of the Afghan population has access to medical facilities, compared to a mere 9% in 2004.

In Kandahar, hundreds of thousands of children are receiving vaccinations. Since December, 2006, CIDA's lead support to the World Food Program has resulted in assistance to over 200,000 needy Kandaharis. In addition, Canada is a strong supporter of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is playing a lead role in improving public health care delivery at Mirwais Hospital. Canada's most recent contribution to the ICRC totalled \$3-million. With Canadian assistance, UNICEF is also helping establish a Maternal Waiting Home at the hospital; once it is once fully operational, it is estimated that the facility will benefit more than 1,000 female patients each year.

We recognize that many challenges remain, and that rebuilding Afghanistan will take time, but we are seeing concrete results and we are resolute in our commitment to help the Afghan people emerge from decades of conflict, oppression and poverty.

Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Co-operation, Ottawa.

KEYWORDS: 0

WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW?

IDNUMBER 200708230090
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: National
SECTION: Issues & Ideas
PAGE: A15
COLUMN: Father Raymond J. De Souza
Black & White Photo: Master Corporal Ken Fenner / Canadiansoldiers stand at attention
ILLUSTRATION: as the casket bearing Private Simon Longtin is loaded on to a plane in Kandahar, Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: KINGSTON, ONT.
BYLINE: Father Raymond J. De Souza
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 786

KINGSTON, ONT. —Prime Minister Stephen Harper clearly indicated at Montebello this week that our Afghanistan mission will end in February, 2009, as there is not support in the country, and derivatively in Parliament, for it to continue. And could anyone expect it to be otherwise, given what we know about what is going on in Afghanistan? Or to put the question more accurately: Given what we don't know about what is going on in Afghanistan?

The death this week of Private Simon Longtin of the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment — the "Van Doos" — was understandably big news in Quebec and across the country. Earlier this summer, Captain Matthew Dawe, a local Kingston man, was killed along with five other soldiers in Afghanistan. I had the high honour of conducting his funeral in July at the Royal Military College here in Kingston. For the 10 days between his death and his funeral, the news dominated our local newspaper, often on the front page. I am sure it will be the same in Longueuil, Que., for Pte. Longtin.

In the six weeks since Capt. Dawe was killed in action, I have become acutely aware that what we principally know about what is happening in Afghanistan is the casualty figures. A Canadian soldier is killed and we know about it. What else do we know?

How can civilians evaluate the progress of a war? Obviously the generals will always know more, but in a democracy the people also need to reach their own conclusion. From a civilian's point of view,

comparative casualty figures are a start. If we have lost three score and some, how many enemy forces have been killed? It makes a difference whether it is a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand, does it not?

One needn't return to the Second World War maps showing the advancing front and the bold arrows, but how many Canadians who follow the news have any idea of whether we are advancing or retreating? How much territory has been seized?

There was something distasteful in the many media commentaries about last week's Cabinet shuffle, arguing as it did that the task of the new Minister of Defence, Peter MacKay, was to communicate the Afghan policy better than his predecessor, Gordon O'Connor. The sense that this is simply a matter of better public relations is to understate the gravity of the issue. In order to make an educated decision about a war, it is necessary to have some sense of the victories as well as the cost to be paid in blood and treasure.

Indeed, the just war tradition in Christian thinking requires some assessment of the likelihood of success — sending soldiers to certain death in a war that cannot be won is

unjust — and the proportionality of the price to be paid. At the moment, the only information that really filters through to the home front is the death of our soldiers in action. Who would support a war in which there are only casualties? I know that there is a policy of not reporting enemy combatant deaths. Nobody, especially from a moral point of view, wants to know of, much less encourage, enemy combatant deaths solely for statistical satisfaction. But it is vital to know more than just our own casualty figures.

We all know that this is not a war like other wars, with clearly defined troops massed along clearly defined lines. Yet there must be a way to present to the Canadian public a clearer picture of what our troops are accomplishing. It is not easy to do, but coalition forces have been in Afghanistan for almost five years now. It needs to be done. It is an essential part of going to war today. Anything less is a disservice to our servicemen.

It is not a matter of building support for the government's policy. It is a matter of permitting a mature public judgment on the policy itself. And it is a matter of doing justice to our troops who are fighting and dying overseas. They are entitled to their countrymen knowing about their successes, not only their sacrifices.

Between now and Canada's withdrawal in February, 2009, there will be more Canadians killed in action. They deserve an account of the war that tells us, if not the whole story, at least significantly more than the grossly unbalanced picture we have got thus far. To date, we know those who have died bravely. The fact that we know little more than that is a failure of their military and political superiors. The fallen—and the stillfighting— deserve better.

KEYWORDS: WAR

Reader beware opinion polls by interest groups; The questions and how they are asked can predetermine the outcome

IDNUMBER 200708230089
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A23
KEYWORDS: HEALTH CARE; MEDICARE; ROYAL COMMISSIONS
BYLINE: DAN GARDNER
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 776

Of late, I have been worrying about the environment and health care, and how the environment affects health care, and in particular how rising global temperatures caused by the build-up of human-emitted greenhouse gases could put health at greater risk of such diseases as West Nile virus.

And, apparently, I'm not alone. I read in the paper the other day the "overwhelming majority of Canadians are worried" about the very same thing. Who knew?

We have the Canadian Medical Association to thank for uncovering this previously unknown source of national anxiety.

"Dead heat for environment, health care in terms of public concern," reads the headline on the CMA press release announcing the results of its poll.

The findings highlighted in the press release include the "obvious concern about the impact of climate change, with 82 per cent of respondents being somewhat or very concerned about the effect it will have on their personal health. The same proportion is worried about the potential for climate change to spread diseases such as West Nile virus."

"The environment and health care are likely to set Canada's political table well into the future," the press release emphasizes. "The environment and health care each drew the support of 29 per cent of respondents who were asked about the most pressing issue facing Canada." Colin McMillan, the CMA president, finds this amazing. "It is interesting that no other issues are even in the same ballpark in terms of their importance and relevance to Canadians," he says in the press release.

McMillan and I must be using different definitions of "ballpark."

In the poll, 22 per cent of Canadians cited "environment" or "pollution" as the issue that "should receive the greatest attention of Canada's leaders." Another six per cent mentioned climate change and one per cent cite the Kyoto agreement. The CMA bundled these answers together.

But 15 per cent of Canadians cited war in Afghanistan, war in the Middle East or some variation on the same theme as their top concern. A further seven per cent said the military was their top issue. And two per cent cited terrorism. Bundle those answers and they total 24 per cent. Given that the poll's margin of error is 3.2

Reader beware opinion polls by interest groups; The questions and how they are asked can predetermine the

percentage points, that's not only in the same ballpark, it's a tie game.

But let's leave tendentious interpretations aside and go back to the original poll. That question about top issues was the first. It was followed by a long list of questions about health care.

This matters because, as every pollster knows, the order of questions can frame a poll. Here, the survey begins by repeating the word "health" over and over and the person listening on the phone gets the message that this is a conversation about health. That is its "frame." Everything that follows is coloured by it.

The poll then switches to questions about environmental issues:

"How concerned are you about climate change and the effect that it will have on you and your family's health? How concerned are you about the use of herbicides and pesticides in your neighbourhood and the effects they have on your health?"

Outwardly, these are questions. But they also contain statements. They say climate change will affect your health. And pesticides affect your health. Does that concern you?

Why, no. Why would I care about the health of my children? Seriously, it's not surprising four out of five Canadians answered these questions in the affirmative. It's surprising one out of five did not.

The last question in this series is the only one that did not say the something bad was definitely happening. "How concerned are you," it asks, "about the potential for climate change to encourage the spread of diseases like West Nile virus?"

Four out of five said they were somewhat or very concerned. And that really gives the game away.

Researchers have shown people often will give opinions when asked questions they know and care nothing about. Do you think democracy will survive in Upper Slobovia?

And that's if the questions are asked straight. Tilt them in the direction you want and you're almost certain to get a confident opinion based on neither knowledge nor belief.

I'm pretty confident not even a small fraction of the population knows climate change might cause changes that could promote disease and the proportion that is genuinely concerned about that issue is probably a little smaller than the Green Party's vote.

So why did the CMA go to all this trouble and expense? "The results also pointed to a major role for family physicians," the press release triumphantly declares.

Green is hot. By claiming health care and the environment are tightly linked in the average Canadian's mind, the CMA can make itself a player on the leading issue of the day. This is about political clout.

I don't actually want to pick on the CMA. Their poll isn't particularly bad. In fact, it's typical.

Self-interested organizations do this stuff all the time. Sometimes their dubious numbers don't make it into the media. Sometimes they do. Sometimes they become "facts" known to everybody.

As always, reader beware.

Radio-Canada staff 'very emotional'; Is it worth the risk, network questions after two journalists injured

IDNUMBER 200708230014
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: RADIO-CANADA / Cameraman Charles Dubois.; Photo: RADIO-CANADA / Reporter Patrice Roy. ;
KEYWORDS: RADIO BROADCASTING
BYLINE: JASON MAGDER
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 256

Tension ran high at Radio-Canada yesterday when news came of an explosion in Afghanistan that wounded two journalists.

"Everyone was very emotional in all of our newsrooms today," said Sylvain Lafrance, vice-president of Radio-Canada's French operations. "We heard from the Canadian army at 12:30 that they were in an explosion. We didn't hear until later in the afternoon what their condition was."

Veteran Radio-Canada reporter Patrice Roy, 44, and his cameraman, Charles Dubois, 29, were injured in the explosion. Roy is Radio-Canada's chief Ottawa correspondent, but spent most of his 17-year broadcast career in Montreal.

Dubois also is posted to Ottawa, but had been to Afghanistan several times. His brother is a Canadian soldier who has served in Afghanistan.

Dubois was seriously injured in the leg and was airlifted to a hospital in Kandahar. He is expected to survive. Roy suffered shock, but no physical injuries, TV network executives said.

It was the first time journalists for Radio-Canada have been injured while covering a war, said Alain Saulnier, the news director.

Saulnier said the journalists knew the dangers of what they were doing. He said both had worked in war zones in the past.

They had been in Afghanistan for two weeks and were expected to stay another four weeks.

Dubois will be sent home after he is released from the hospital. Roy will decide today whether he will return home.

"I spoke to Patrice," Saulnier said. "It's clear he is in a state of shock. For now, he's going to rest. We'll re-evaluate things when we speak to him (today)."

Saulnier said the television network will re-evaluate whether it's worth the risk to send reporters to the region. Another team is scheduled to leave for Afghanistan tonight.

"This kind of coverage is part of our mission, but we have to ask ourselves, should we change our methods," Saulnier said.

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Tears flow as brother honours fallen soldier; Pte. Longtin. Sibling, also in the military, carries coffin to hearse

IDNUMBER 200708230013

PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: FRED THORNHILL, REUTERS / Family members placeflowers on the casket of Pte. Simon Longtin at Canadian Forces Base Trenton yesterday during a repatriation ceremony. ;

KEYWORDS: COURT MARTIAL; CANADIANS; WAR

DATELINE: CFB TRENTON, Ont.

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 440

Fighting back tears the whole time, Pte. Benoît Longtin served as an honour guard for his brother's body as it arrived back from Afghanistan yesterday.

Pte. Simon Longtin was killed in action in Afghanistan last Sunday, only three weeks after he had arrived as part of a Royal 22e Régiment contingent.

In an emotionally charged ceremony, Benoît Longtin, who wore the dark green military dress uniform and white gloves, was one of eight soldiers to serve as his brother's honour guard. While the other soldiers' faces largely remained stoic, Benoît Longtin's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon Longtin's girlfriend and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane.

Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace while his flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

The family wept only as it placed the roses on Simon Longtin's coffin before the hearse was driven off toward Toronto, where an autopsy will be performed before the body is sent back to Quebec for a funeral, which is expected this weekend. Details for Longtin's funeral have not yet been released.

At one point during the CFB Trenton ceremony, a distraught Benoît Longtin and his father walked hand in hand.

About 100 fellow soldiers, some from CFB Gagetown who had recently returned from Afghanistan, and dignitaries, including Gov.-Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Defence Minister Peter MacKay, also were in attendance.

Along the drive from CFB Trenton to Toronto, people lined Highway 401 to watch the hearse pass by and to pay respects to Longtin. Residents, firemen and veterans stood on a bridge crossing Highway 401 near

Tears flow as brother honours fallen soldier; Pte. Longtin. Sibling, also in the military, carries coffin to hearse

Cobourg as the hearse passed by.

Longtin, 23, was in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it struck the bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City last Sunday.

Longtin was the first member of the Van Doos to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The Royal 22^e Régiment, as it is officially known, took command of Canada's operations in Afghanistan on Aug. 1.

A native of Longueuil, he had been living with his girlfriend in Quebec City before shipping out to Afghanistan on Aug. 1. The Van Doos are based at CFB Valcartier, which is just outside Quebec City.

In a statement released after he died, his family said they are devastated by the death.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," the message said.

"He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

Longtin's fellow soldiers said he was the joker of the platoon, but when it came to his duty and the mission in Afghanistan, he showed an unyielding conviction.

His death was a shock to his comrades.

"Everybody's morale is really low right now," one soldier said.

The Canadian Forces contribution in Afghanistan consists of about 2,500 soldiers. Troops are rotated every six to nine months.

Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he will seek a consensus from Parliament before extending the mission.

Tears flow as brother honours fallen soldier; Pte. Longtin. Sibling, also in the military, carries coffin to hearse

Afghan governor survives attack

IDNUMBER 200708230012
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: GOVERNOR GENERAL
DATELINE: KHOST, Afghanistan
SOURCE: AFP; Reuters
WORD COUNT: 92

The governor of Afghanistan's southeastern province of Khost survived an assassination attempt yesterday when a suicide car bomber struck his convoy, witnesses and officials said.

At least three of Governor Arsala Jamal's bodyguards were killed in the attack, which occurred close to a base for NATO troops just outside Khost town, they said.

Minutes after the attack, Jamal told Reuters he was fine. "The attack was against my convoy.

I am fine, but I see some people in flames in cars ahead of me."

A NATO convoy was also attacked in the relatively peaceful western province of Herat. The attack destroyed a vehicle, a provincial official said, but he did not know if there were casualties.

Two soldiers killed in Taliban raid on base

IDNUMBER 200708230011
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: ASADABAD, Afghanistan
SOURCE: AFP; Reuters
WORD COUNT: 86

Taliban militants wearing Afghan army uniforms raided a NATO base yesterday, killing two Afghan soldiers and injuring 11 NATO troops, capping a day of deadly violence, officials said.

A total of 15 people were killed in a spate of attacks across the country in the past 24 hours, officials said.

In Nuristan, the raid on the base "resulted in two Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers killed and 11 ISAF soldiers wounded," the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement.

An ISAF spokesperson, U.S. Major Christine Nelson-Chung, said several Taliban fighters were killed in the attack.

War hits close to home; 2 Van Doos killed

IDNUMBER 200708230001

PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: FRED THORNHILL, REUTERS / Weeping Pte. Benoît Longtin (centre) of Longueuil, member of an honour guard, helps carry the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at CFB Trenton in a military service yesterday. Simon Longtin, a Van Doo, was in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy Sunday when it was struck by a bomb near Kandahar City. Story, Page A4 ; Map: (See hard copy for map) ;

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: ANDREW MAYEDA, PHILIP AUTHIER of The Gazette and Marianne White of CanWest News Service contributed to this report

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 807

Two soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22e Régiment and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City yesterday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army.

The name of one of the dead soldiers was made public just before midnight. He is Master Corporal Christian Duchesne of the Fifth Field Ambulance. His hometown was not given

Radio-Canada said that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded.

The Taliban are using tactics "that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

"Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The dead soldiers were members of the regiment popularly known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday. In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war-torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

At CFB Valcartier, military officials held a brief news conference last night. "The Valcartier community is deeply touched by the loss of two of our members and a third one being wounded," said Lt.-Col. Hercule

Gosselin. "We are a very tight community here and we all share the same emotions. We are going to get even closer and deal with that and go through that."

In a statement, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said: "I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government of Canada, our sympathies to the family and friends of these brave soldiers and the Afghan interpreter."

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices."

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion said in a statement that he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan today."

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

In St. Hyacinthe, a shaken-looking Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe expressed shock and sympathy over the losses in Afghanistan.

"I want to offer my condolences to the families of the two soldiers as well as to the family of the Afghan interpreter who is dead and our solidarity and wishes for recovery to Mr. (Charles) Dubois, who suffered serious injuries to a leg, and to Mr. Patrice Roy, who suffered nervous shock, I am told," Duceppe said to reporters.

"I think today we have to show absolute solidarity with all the families who have a brother, a husband and a father in Kandahar and who today are all feeling this pain. We have to show compassion and solidarity."

Asked whether the new deaths meant it's time to review Canada's role in Afghanistan, Duceppe said now was not the time to analyze the politics of the war.

In Afghanistan earlier yesterday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled out before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases to the southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was, and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Major Patrick Robichaud, who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Laroche later described the mission as a success, adding that the deaths came at the end of it.

"It's always risky," he said. "It's not a lack of care – it's the reality of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doos' Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian Forces were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED that had been planted along Foster Road. The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

When a soldier dies; Military teams form support system, helping family cope with the aftermath

IDNUMBER 200708230015
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A6
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Mourners watch the casket of Private Simon Longtin being carried to a hearse outside CFB Trenton yesterday. ;
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Bob Weber
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 741

The first warning is a phone call. It is never good.

It alerts a spouse, partner or parent that within the next few minutes they can expect a visit from a team of sombre military officers. Even before the dreaded knock on the door, the family knows something bad has happened.

Practice makes perfect in tragedy as in everything else, and military officials acknowledge that 18 months of fighting in southern Afghanistan has made them much better at delivering word of death or injury, and supporting those affected by it.

"Unfortunately, we've gotten very good at it," said Captain Rod De Roij, a casualty repatriation liaison officer, one of six officers who recently sat down to talk about what happens when a soldier dies.

The bombing death on Sunday of Private Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., and yesterday of Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, based in Valcartier, Que., and of an as-yet unidentified soldier, means those chosen to stand guard for their families' welfare are already in action.

Delivering bad news, especially in an age when the Internet makes details and events almost immediately available, has come a long way from previous conflicts. During the Second World War, families were sometimes notified by telegrams delivered by railway service agents.

Today, casualty reports reach Canada almost as soon as they are radioed in from the battlefield, said Captain Larry Cashman of the operations centre at Land Force Western Area headquarters in Edmonton.

Duty officers in Kandahar type whatever information they have into a secure Internet connection, a sort of chat room constantly monitored by officers from all units in the theatre of operations.

Still, first reports are always sketchy.

"They tell us how many have been hurt," said Cashman. "It takes a while from the theatre before they can tell who the people are."

Word starts to spread from Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier's office to the unit involved. That unit scrambles its notification team: the commanding officer, the regimental sergeant-major and a padre.

When identities are confirmed, the team heads out the door, usually within six hours of the tragic bomb or bullet. They make the phone call when they're about five minutes away, or, sometimes, while sitting in the driveway.

"It's an opportunity for (the next-of-kin) to throw on a housecoat," Major John Bruce, a personnel manager, said. "They probably have an indication that something not good has happened."

Although it takes place far from the front, what comes next is one of the toughest jobs in the military.

"I've had all the reactions," said Captain Dennis Newhook, an Anglican padre who has broken tragic news five times. "Shock. Disbelief. Anger."

One man took a swing at him. Once, a woman turned and ran out the front door. Most just listen, stunned.

"The first thing to do is explain what happened and, as best we can, how," said Bruce. "Beyond that, they really don't hear much else."

If there is no one to stay with a person who has just lost a loved one, someone from the notification team remains behind. Nobody is left alone.

Each family is then assigned an assisting officer, whose responsibility it is to ensure they get whatever help they need: counselling, financial advice, assistance with a move, sometimes just being there. It's an all-consuming job.

"All my waking hours, pretty much," said De Roij, thinking back to when he served in that capacity. "For the first two weeks, you live to do what you're doing for this family."

"It was also one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had."

The relationship between the assisting officer and the affected family can last for months. The officer joins them as they travel at military expense to Trenton, Ont., where returning bodies arrive.

"It's draining," said Newhook. "You become embedded in their family. You're so personally tied to them you're experiencing the grief, the anguish, the happy times. It's hard to pull out on that."

The job is so demanding the military recently held a retreat in the Rocky Mountains for assisting officers.

Public affairs officers also become part of the protective cluster around the family, helping them deal with media demands.

Sometimes telling reporters about their loved one can help mourners deal with the tragedy, Captain Lena Angell said.

"They realize putting their names in print does honour (the deceased)," she said. "They do use it as a way to connect with Canadians and it can be part of the healing process."

Eventually, hopefully, families of the dead heal and move on. Usually, someone from the unit keeps in touch, checking in on special days that can be tough, such as birthdays.

The seriously wounded are eventually returned from the military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, and go for rehabilitation at the nearest suitable facility to their home. Decisions on whether wounded soldiers can remain in the Forces are made on an individual basis by Hillier.

And so the military carries on, getting better and better at a job it would rather not have to do.

Current practices are now being reviewed and consolidated into a formal set of guidelines, said Bruce.

"There's always been policies to support soldiers. Some have been around for decades," he said.

"The Canadian Forces is dusting off those policies and trying to articulate them in a coherent manner. It's certainly not finished.

"And it won't be finished for a while."

Canada's troops are not scheduled to pull out of the war-torn country until February 2009.

Shock and disbelief; Hours after a tearful goodbye to their first comrade-in-arms killed in Afghanistan by a roadside bomb, the Van Doos lose two more soldiers in an attack that also killed an interpreter and wounded another soldier and two journalists.

IDNUMBER 200708230001
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Local
PAGE: A1
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Benoit Longtin, right, walks with his father, Maurice Longtin, after helping to carry the casket of his brother, Private Simon Longtin, at CFB Trenton yesterday. ;
DATELINE: TRENTON, Ont.
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
NOTE: Pallbearers, among them Private Simon Longtin's brother, stepped slowly to the mournful notes of Amazing Grace. Family watched tearfully as the casket was carried across the windswept tarmac.
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WORD COUNT: 209

Benoit Longtin wasn't standing with his grief-stricken family when the remains of his brother, slain Quebec soldier Private Simon Longtin, arrived from Afghanistan yesterday. Instead, he was among the eight uniformed men who carefully hoisted the flag-draped casket on their shoulders and carried it toward a waiting hearse.

The ceremony took place hours before two more Canadian soldiers from the same Quebec-based Van Doo regiment were killed when an explosion tore through their light armoured vehicle in southern Afghanistan. The military has not identified them. NATO said the roadside bomb also claimed the life of an interpreter and injured another soldier and two Radio-Canada journalists, Charles Dubois and Patrice Roy.

In Trenton, as the mourners approached the hearse, a visibly upset Benoit — who recently completed basic training — joined his father at the head of the group, gripping his hand tightly as the tears were finally allowed to fall.

Some of Canada's top civilian and military leaders joined Longtin's loved ones to receive the soldier's remains.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Afghanistan as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from the Van Doos. Since 2002, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed. Hamilton Spectator wire services

Taliban bombs kill 3 in 4 days; Two Van Doos die as body of 3rd comes home

IDNUMBER 200708230003

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Journal Stock / (Pte. Simon) Longtin; Colour Photo: Reuters / An honour guard carries the casket of Pte. Simon Longtin to a hearse at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., on Wednesday. Longtin, 23, with the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, was killed on Sunday in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb detonated underneath the army vehicle he was in. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 516

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light-armoured vehicle hit a homemade bomb while on patrol Wednesday.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were hurt in the explosion about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army.

Charles Dubois, a cameraman for Radio-Canada, required surgery for serious leg injuries, the network said. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were in stable condition.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names had not been released Wednesday evening, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They were the second and third members of the regiment killed since Sunday. In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," Laroche said at a news conference on the Kandahar base.

"It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

The new casualties came as the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a military ceremony Wednesday.

Longtin, also a Van Doo, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks.

He was in an armoured vehicle struck by a bomb as it travelled in a convoy about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting tears, Longtin's brother, Pte. Benoit Longtin, was one of eight soldiers to serve as an honour guard for his brother's body.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as the flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to a waiting hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Longtin's family.

"He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

Longtin's funeral is expected this weekend.

Earlier in the day, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled out before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a western region that recently had fallen under Taliban control.

The regiment's troops set out from Patrol Base Wilson, a forward operating base southwest of Kandahar City, to reclaim Gundy Ghar.

The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who fired back with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants up to two metres high. They were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the area to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

None were encountered, but soldiers discovered a massive bomb planted along Foster Road, which is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous routes for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers detonated the bomb, a type considered deadliest in Afghanistan.

The convoy of Afghan army soldiers which found the bomb had rolled over it before the discovery.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Capt. Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the soldiers.

Currently, about 2,500 Canadian soldiers are serving in Afghanistan. Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

Taliban bombs kill 3 in 4 days; Two Van Doos die as body of 3rd comes home

IDNUMBER 200708230001

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Journal Stock / (Pte. Simon) Longtin; Colour Photo: Reuters / An honour guard carries the casket of Pte. Simon Longtin to a hearse at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., on Wednesday. Longtin, 23, with the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, was killed on Sunday in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb detonated underneath the army vehicle he was in. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 523

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light-armoured vehicle hit a homemade bomb while on patrol Wednesday.

Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Ambulance company, based in Valcartier, Que., was one of the soldiers killed, the Defence Department said late Wednesday.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier was temporarily withheld.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were hurt in the blast about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army.

Charles Dubois, a cameraman for Radio-Canada, required surgery for serious leg injuries, the network said. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded.

The two dead soldiers were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1. They were the second and third members of the regiment killed since Sunday. In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war since 2002.

"Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," Laroche told a news conference. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

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THE AFGHAN MISSION: STORIED ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT SUFFERS ITS THIRD CASUALTY IN AS MANY WEEKS Quebec grieves as two more are slain Roadside blast kills interpreter and injures two Radio-Canada journalists while body of Vandoos who died Saturday is returned to Canada

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350244

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

SECTION: Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 759

WORD COUNT: 709

CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Two soldiers from the Royal 22nd Regiment of Quebec and their Afghan interpreter were killed yesterday, and two Radio-Canada television journalists injured, when the light- armoured vehicle in which they were travelling hit a roadside bomb.

The incident occurred in the volatile Zhari district about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar early last evening in Afghanistan, or midmorning Eastern Standard Time in Canada.

Another soldier was also hurt.

One of the dead was identified last night as Master Corporal Christian Duchesne, based in Valcartier.

The blast followed a battle in which the Canadians called in their big artillery to fight Taliban insurgents armed with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. The troops also discovered a massive improvised-explosive device, or IED, and deliberately blew it up, sending a column of fire 20 metres into the sky.

Reporter Patrice Roy and cameraman Charles Dubois, of the French service of the CBC, were travelling as embedded journalists with Bravo Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Vandoos, as members of the Royal 22nd are called.

Mr. Dubois is expected to lose a foot and was to be flown to a U.S. hospital in Germany for treatment, while Mr. Roy, physically fine but shaken, was resting at the hospital at Kandahar Air Field.

The soldiers were on the first combat mission for the Vandoos – called Operation Barkeh Sterbeh, which is Pashto for Eagle Eye.

It was the regiment's third death since it arrived on the ground in southern Afghanistan less than three weeks ago.

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STORIED ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT SUFFERS ITS THIRD CASUALTY IN AS MANY WEEKS

On Saturday, Private Simon Longtin, 23, was killed when his LAV hit an IED while returning from a resupply run.

His convoy was but five kilometres from the safety of Masum Ghar, another small Canadian base, when the blast occurred. Pte. Longtin has yet to be buried.

While soldiers of the 22nd have been making "presence patrols" in the numerous villages of Zhari, the area north of the Arghendab River, and Panjwai, which lies south of the river – these are designed to show the flag and maintain gains made earlier by other Canadian troops – yesterday's was the regiment's first offensive manoeuvre into this fertile region soaked in Canadian blood.

Dozens of Canadians, most from the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Patricias, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment, have died on the roads and lush fields of the area in the past two summers, both in combat and by IED.

B Company was aiming to take a small hill at Gundy Ghar, about 20 kilometres further west of Patrol Base Wilson, named after Master– Corporal Tim Wilson, a soldier from the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, who was killed last spring in a vehicle accident. The primitive base is now the new home for the soldiers of B Company, headed by Major Dave Abboud.

Ghar means hill in the Pashto language, and this one was of strategic value because it offers long views or eyes on the ground of the river valley.

News of the casualties here began leaking out shortly after the incident, when there was a "comms lockdown" at KAF and all other Canadian bases and strong points.

The lockdown is to allow the military chain of command time to notify relatives of the fallen and wounded, a complicated task with five different Canadian families involved, and has come to be the canary in the coal mine for both soldiers and reporters here.

For deaths, such notifications are made in person, usually by what's called a regiment's "rear party" – meaning those left back home – and by senior officers.

Brigadier–General Guy Laroche made the formal announcement here, telling reporters at the air field that this was "an extremely difficult and emotional time" and that he could offer the families of the dead soldiers little comfort "except to say the soldiers were involved in something in which they believed." Lieutenant–Colonel Bob Chamberlain, who commands troops at a smaller Canadian satellite base called the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city, said each new rotation of troops into southern Afghanistan has gone through a similar brutal initiation.

"I think every unit goes through that adjustment of coming here from training," Lt.–Col. Chamberlain said yesterday.

"At first, there's lots of adrenalin and there may be some anxiety, but it quickly becomes that classic Canadian professional soldier . . . this [the Royal 22nd] is a methodical, cautious battle group, and a brave one – week three, and they're doing a combat operation." cblatchford@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; strife; war; deaths; journalists

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STORIED ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT SUFFERS ITS THIRD CASUALTY IN AS M

PERSONAL NAME: Patrice Roy; Charles Dubois; Simon Longtin; Christian Duchesne

ORGANIZATION NAME: ROB 1000; Canadian Broadcasting Corp.; Radio-Canada; Armed Forces; Taliban

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STORIED ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT SUFFERS ITS THIRD CASUALTY IN AS M

THE AFGHAN MISSION: REACTION Wounded cameraman 'marvellous,' colleague says Charles Dubois never shies from dangerous assignments, including journeys to Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350243

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A17 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: UNNATI GANDHI

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 875

WORD COUNT: 816

UNNATI GANDHI With a report from Tu Thanh Ha As the pallbearers carried the casket of Private Simon Longtin toward the Hercules aircraft during this week's ramp ceremony in Kandahar, Charles Dubois was working his magic once more.

The Radio-Canada cameraman, sitting in a military vehicle with journalist Patrice Roy, captured the depth of emotion on the tarmac for Canadians to see back home on their TV screens.

"In his pictures, you could see the pallbearers, not crying openly but they were trying to keep their tears inside," veteran Radio-Canada correspondent Daniel Lessard said yesterday from Ottawa. "He got everything. You were looking at that and your heart was stopping." In a sudden twist of fate yesterday, Mr. Dubois, a 29-year-old from Gatineau, found himself in front of the cameras.

After the armoured vehicle he and Mr. Roy were travelling in hit a roadside bomb west of the city, he was being treated for a severe leg injury in a military hospital. His injuries weren't considered life threatening. Mr. Roy suffered from nervous shock.

The two newsmen were on a six-week assignment in Afghanistan, said Radio-Canada news manager Alain Saulnier. Both had taken a security training course with a specialized British company to prepare for work in a combat zone. "The two were going there well prepared," Mr. Saulnier said.

Mr. Dubois, known among colleagues as one of the best cameramen in the profession, had seen his fair share of combat zones.

This was his fourth assignment in Afghanistan. He had also travelled on assignment to Iraq, Iran and Haiti, and spent three years posted in Beijing.

"Every time we need someone to go to a dangerous place, he's always willing to go," Mr. Lessard said. "He's a marvellous cameraman, a great editor." He was in Afghanistan for two weeks last Christmas, when he had a chance to spend time with his younger brother, Martin, a Canadian soldier stationed there.

In fact, when Martin signed up last August for the overseas rotation, Mr. Dubois tried to brief him on the dangers of the war-torn country.

Martin returned from his six-month tour a few weeks ago.

In an interview with Radio-Canada before he set off last December, Mr. Dubois was asked how he prepared himself psychologically for the trip.

He said it was difficult for him that time because he had to leave his wife, Zarah Malik, and newborn daughter Indya during the holidays.

But, he said in French, once people get a taste of what it's like in such combat zones, two camps emerge: those who never wish to return, and those, like him, who do.

"C'est le gout de l'aventure ." IN THE LINE OF FIRE Journalists covering the war in Afghanistan have often found themselves the target of attacks or inadvertently caught in the crossfire.

Nov. 11, 2001: Johanne Sutton, a reporter for Radio France Internationale, Pierre Billaud, a reporter for Radio Television Luxembourg, and Volker Handloik, a freelance reporter on assignment for the German news magazine Stern, were killed in the early days of the war in Afghanistan when Taliban forces fired on a Northern Alliance military convoy. Three journalists survived the attack, including Levon Sevunts, a reporter for the Montreal Gazette.

Nov. 19, 2001: Azizullah Haidari, an Afghan-born photographer for the Reuters news agency, Harry Burton, an Australian cameraman for Reuters, Julio Fuentes, a Spanish correspondent for the Madrid-based newspaper El Mundo, and Maria Grazia Cutuli, an Italian correspondent for the Milan-based daily Corriere della Serra, were travelling at the head of a convoy of about eight vehicles when they were stopped by a group of armed men who dragged the four journalists out of two of the front cars, marched them into the surrounding hills, and executed them using Kalashnikov rifles, according to a driver and translator who were allowed to flee and later spoke to reporters.

Nov. 26, 2001: Ulf Stromberg, a cameraman for the Swedish channel TV4, was shot dead in the early morning during a robbery at the house in Taloqan where he and several other journalists were staying.

March 4, 2002: Kathleen Kenna, a reporter for the Toronto Star, was a passenger in a car when a grenade was tossed inside, leaving her with lasting injuries.

Dec. 12, 2005: Timothy Albone, a freelance journalist for The Globe and Mail, was lightly wounded when the G-Wagon he was travelling in with three Canadian soldiers was caught in a roadside bomb explosion.

Two soldiers suffered broken limbs.

July 22, 2006: Abdul Qodus, a cameraman for the private Afghan Aryana TV, was killed in a double suicide bombing in the city of Kandahar.

Oct. 7, 2006: Karen Fischer, 30, and Christian Struwe, 39, Deutsche Welle journalists doing research for a freelance documentary, were shot dead in a tent they had pitched along a road near Baghlan, about 150 kilometres northwest of Kabul.

April 8, 2007: Afghan journalist Ajmal Nakshbandi was abducted with La Repubblica reporter Daniele Mastrogiacomo and the group's driver Sayed Agha in Helmand province. Mr. Agha and Mr. Nakshbandi were beheaded a few days after the abduction, while Mr. Mastrogiacomo was released in exchange for five Taliban

prisoners.

Source: Committee to Protect Journalists

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; bombs; journalists; deaths; chronology; list

PERSONAL NAME: Patrice Roy

ORGANIZATION NAME: ROB 1000; Canadian Broadcasting Corp.; Radio-Canada

JOB SECURITY Don't let reservists down

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350206

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A19

BYLINE: HUGH SEGAL

SECTION: Comment

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 631

WORD COUNT: 665

HUGH SEGAL Conservative Senator from Ontario senior fellow at Queen's University's School of Policy Studies Major Wallace Noseworthy came home to no job after a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan. As a reservist, he had to choose between his work and his deployment. His is no isolated incident. This long-standing problem has only recently been widely recognized, as more Reserve Force members are being called on to train and serve.

In September, 2006, I introduced a motion in the Senate urging the government to bring into force the sections of the Public Safety Act that give reservists job protection "in respect of an emergency." My motion also asked the government to strike out that phrase in the Act and to consult with the provinces and territories as soon as possible, on how to deal with this serious inequity. The Senate passed the motion unanimously in November.

These people are more than weekend soldiers, and many are called on to backstop our regular forces. They are standing alongside regular force members, fighting, being wounded and, sadly, dying. Three hundred Canadian reservists are serving in Afghanistan to supplement our regular forces. These people are mechanics, bank tellers and public servants in civilian life. They are men and women who choose to train on weekends and during their vacations and subsequently to serve overseas. To do this, they must request leaves of absence and rely on the goodwill of their employers to hold their positions during training and service in overseas missions.

While employers in many sectors have that goodwill, all too often these reservists must make a choice: Do I serve my country or do I step back and not risk my job? Unfortunately, some employers, including government employers, are less than enthusiastic about requests for unpaid leaves for training or overseas service.

As far back as 1987, the Canadian Forces instituted a "total force" concept, which was reaffirmed by the 1994 white paper on defence.

Reservists are trained to the level of their regular force counterparts and serve in the same units. This concept, while still in the implementation phase in the late 1980s and 1990s, faced its biggest challenge during Canada's UN involvement in the former Yugoslavia. Canada had earmarked 2,000 peacekeepers to fulfill our duties to our missions abroad overall, but by 1993 all 2,000 were assigned exclusively to the former Yugoslavia. Reservists were deployed so that Canada might fulfill its other commitments in the world.

Without assurances of any kind, how are our Reserve Forces to recruit and train the personnel they need? The cadet program of the Reserve Forces also counts on its members to train new recruits.

One deputy commanding officer at a reserve training facility stated publicly that the shortage of training officers was due directly to their lack of job security. In one instance, the employer assured a young officer that there would not be a job waiting for him at the end of his unpaid leave of absence.

The issue of job protection for reservists has been discussed for many years. It was supported at length in the 1995 Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves and the 2005 Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves. The Canadian Forces Liaison Council attempts to support the Department of National Defence, in the absence of job protection legislation, by educating employers, promoting support of reservists and outlining the advantage of hiring reservists.

When necessary, the council also tries to mediate employment situations to allow for job security or unpaid leave – all worthwhile efforts, and I am grateful such an organization exists, especially since current laws afford no protection.

This discussion has gone on for 20 years. How many times must we reach the same conclusions? Members of Canada's Reserve Forces, who serve this country bravely at home and abroad, deserve meaningful job protection.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; employment

PERSONAL NAME: Wallace Noseworthy

ORGANIZATION NAME: Army Reserves; Armed Forces

'SUPPORT OUR TROOPS' DECALS Calgary's principled stand

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350188

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A18

BYLINE:

SECTION: Editorial

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 450

WORD COUNT: 488

When the City of Toronto flirted with removing "Support Our Troops" decals from fire and emergency vehicles earlier this summer, the ensuing outcry prompted Mayor David Miller to hastily reverse his position. "It is important Toronto demonstrate its support for the troops, since there was a perception that it didn't," Mr. Miller said just days after defending the yellow-ribbon stickers' removal on the basis that some residents were upset by what they perceived as "a symbol of support for the war in Afghanistan." City councillors were similarly persuaded, with not one voting against keeping the stickers.

Municipal politicians in Calgary might now be tempted to have a similar change of heart. Last month, city council voted against placing "Support Our Troops" decals on city vehicles. Now, a local veteran has made headlines by calling for Mayor Dave Bronconnier and the 10 councillors who joined him in opposing the stickers to be banned from the city's Legion halls and excluded from Remembrance Day ceremonies. Meanwhile, a local company has taken out ads in newspapers calling for Calgarians to contact their councillors to voice their disagreement with the decision.

To date, Mr. Bronconnier has held firm. He should continue to do so.

Few and far between are the Canadians who don't support our troops, insofar as they wish them to return home safely. While roughly half the country opposes the mission in Afghanistan, only those on the furthest fringes fail to recognize the sacrifice our men and women make by serving there. And Mr. Bronconnier, who initiated a project to sell stickers to the public to raise funds for military families, can hardly be accused of indifference toward Canada's soldiers.

But as he has identified, sporting the yellow ribbon is widely perceived not just as an abstract form of well-wishing but as a highly charged political statement. That is not how it was originally intended, but in the United States, where it originated, it has since the Persian Gulf war of 1991 – and especially in the continuing war in Iraq – come to be seen as support for conflicts themselves. In this instance, to many Canadians that means a tacit endorsement of the decision to keep troops in Afghanistan.

Supporting the mission is a perfectly reasonable sentiment, one that this newspaper shares. But it is not one for municipal governments, which have no say in the matter, to be expressing on behalf of all local residents. That's why at least one Calgary councillor who has a decal on his own car rightly opposed putting them on city vehicles. And it is why Mr. Bronconnier should resist backing down as easily as his counterpart in Toronto.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Calgary; Toronto; Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:political; strife; defence

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

IRAQ: DRAWING COMPARISONS WITH VIETNAM

Quitting Iraq would have dire results, Bush warns

Retired general says President is 'cherry-picking' history to support his case for staying the course

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350174

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A16

BYLINE: PAUL KORING

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Washington DC

WORDS: 528

WORD COUNT: 502

PAUL KORING WASHINGTON Quitting Iraq "without getting the job done would be devastating," U.S. President George W. Bush said yesterday, warning that a premature and ignominious exit, such as the one from Vietnam, could unleash genocide and could dishonour the United States.

Mr. Bush portrayed the struggle with radical Islam as apocalyptic.

"We fight for a free way of life against a new barbarism, an ideology whose followers have killed thousands on American soil and seek to kill again on even a greater scale," he said.

He predicted a bloodbath, such as the killing fields of Cambodia where Pol Pot murdered millions, if the United States beats a hasty retreat from Iraq.

Mr. Bush, deeply unpopular during the past 18 months of his second term, rejected the rising chorus demanding U.S. troops be brought home.

To those urging an early end to combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, those who claim the cost of blood and bullion is too high, Mr. Bush said they have failed to understand history.

"As long as I am commander in chief, we will fight to win," the President vowed.

But critics pounced, saying it was Mr. Bush who doesn't understand the lessons of history.

Steven Simon, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said the horrors of the killing fields occurred because "the United States left too late, not too early. It was the expansion of the war that opened the door to Pol Pot and the genocide of the Khmer Rouge. The longer you stay the worse it gets." Mr. Bush is girding for what may be a showdown with the Democrat-controlled Congress next month when General David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, is to report on the results of the so-called "surge" that sent tens of thousands of additional U.S. soldiers into Baghdad in an effort to crush the insurgency.

In an impassioned defence of his widely criticized wars delivered to a mostly friendly audience, the President compared the grim, repressive threats posed by imperial Japan in the 1930s to the "radical caliphate

envisioned by Osama bin Laden." He told thousands of veterans gathered in Kansas City, Mo., that, just as today, naysayers then had warned, both in postwar Japan and in Korea, of the impossibility of the United States sowing democracy in defeated states.

"There are many differences between the wars we fought in the Far East and the war on terror we're fighting today," Mr. Bush said.

"But one important similarity is at their core – they are ideological struggles. The militarists of Japan and the Communists in Korea and Vietnam were driven by a merciless vision for the proper ordering of humanity.

"Like our enemies in the past, the terrorists who wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places seek to spread a political vision of their own: a harsh plan for life that crushes freedom, tolerance and dissent." But retired Brigadier-General John Johns, who served in Vietnam, said, "Bush is cherry-picking history to support his case for staying the course. What I learned in Vietnam is that U.S. forces could not conduct a counterinsurgency operation."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Iraq; United States

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; defence; strife; statements; political

PERSONAL NAME: George W. Bush

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION: PUBLIC SUPPORT: RAPID-FIRE REMINDERS OF MISSION'S RISK

Province reels, skepticism mounts

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350142

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: TU THANH HA

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Montreal PQ

WORDS: 635

WORD COUNT: 525

TU THANH HA MONTREAL The perils of the Afghanistan mission grew very personal for Quebecers last night after a roadside bomb killed two Vandoos, badly wounded a Radio-Canada cameraman and left a television correspondent who is a household name in shock.

The development came on a day marked by the sad repatriation ceremony for the body of the first soldier from a Quebec unit to die in Afghanistan, and by a poll showing support for the mission eroding further in the province.

The identities of the two soldiers killed yesterday and another who was injured were not immediately released.

Veteran Radio-Canada cameraman Charles Dubois, on his fourth assignment in Afghanistan, was severely injured. He was riding in the military vehicle with his reporter, Patrice Roy, the network's high-profile Ottawa bureau chief.

Radio-Canada's top anchorman, Bernard Derome, was to leave for Kandahar tonight but the network is reviewing the decision.

As a result, news from Afghanistan dominated the local media the entire day.

Earlier, the casket carrying the body of Private Simon Longtin, who died in a roadside bomb attack on the weekend, arrived at CFB Trenton.

His face etched with pain, Pte. Longtin's brother, Benoit, who had just joined the military, was one of the pallbearers.

Pte. Longtin was the fourth soldier from Quebec to die in Afghanistan.

But he was from the first rotation of troops in southern Afghanistan to feature Quebec-based units, so there is a looming awareness in his home province that more will die.

In a CROP poll released yesterday, the percentage of respondents who opposed sending troops from Quebec rose to 68 per cent from 57 per cent after Pte. Longtin's death. Also, 69 per cent wanted troops withdrawn

before the 2009 deadline, compared with 57 per cent before the soldier's death on Sunday.

CROP had begun the poll last Friday. Midway through the survey, Pte. Longtin's death was announced and the firm noticed a change within the next two days.

Other polling firms with different methodology have recorded even lower levels of support. CROP pollster Claude Gauthier said the key element was the shift in attitude within days.

"There's a good 11 points. That's a significant gap," he said.

"We can reasonably believe that the weekend's events had an impact on public opinion." The survey of 601 people was conducted Aug. 17 to 20. It has a four-point margin of error.

The poll also showed that opposition to the mission wasn't limited to francophones, Mr. Gauthier said.

Results for non-francophone Quebecers showed slightly more support but that disparity is statistically within the margin of error.

While groups opposing the Afghanistan mission have been cautious in reacting to Pte. Longtin's death, many individual reactions on the Internet or in letters to editors have been bluntly negative.

Pte. Longtin is alluded to in Quebec anti-war footage posted Tuesday on the popular YouTube video-sharing website.

The two-minute and 42-second French-language video, which includes images from a ramp ceremony on the tarmac at Kandahar Airfield when a soldier's casket was loaded onto a Trenton-bound plane, portrays the war in Afghanistan as one intended to further American oil-driven interests.

"Sorry if you got hoodwinked. They didn't even force you. You never did fight for freedom," someone recites, alluding to Pte.

Longtin having volunteered for duty in Afghanistan.

Military issues are likely to remain in the headlines in Quebec.

Early this fall, the Montreal World Film Festival will present *Les épouses de l'armée*, an NFB documentary by Claire Corriveau, a military wife who recorded the loneliness and hardships experienced by army families.

Federal cabinet ministers have remained discreet, leaving it to military spokesmen from Valcartier to defend the mission.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Quebec

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; war; deaths; journalists; public opinion polls; statistics

PERSONAL NAME: Charles Dubois; Patrice Roy

ORGANIZATION NAME: ROB 1000; Canadian Broadcasting Corp.; Radio-Canada; Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION To honour the soldiers

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072350141

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A17

BYLINE:

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: CP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: PICTON, ONT.

WORDS: 183

WORD COUNT: 143

Canadian Press PICTON, ONT.

Ontario's Premier says he will consider a call to rename Canada's busiest highway in honour of the country's soldiers.

Dalton McGuinty says he will listen to recommendations that Highway 401 be renamed the Highway of Heroes.

The highway's overpasses have become the scene of impromptu gatherings in recent months, as people wave flags while motorcades pass by bearing the remains of soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

An online petition has been started asking the province's Transportation Ministry to make the name change.

Ontario premier John Robarts designated Highway 401 as the Macdonald–Cartier Freeway in 1965, in honour of two Fathers of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George–Etienne Cartier.

Mr. McGuinty was previously involved in changing the name of an Ottawa highway to Veterans Memorial Highway.

He said the province needs to look for opportunities to lend support to Canada's soldiers and thank them for their sacrifices.

The flag–draped coffin of the latest soldier to be killed, Private Simon Longtin, was returned to CFB Trenton yesterday to be transported to Toronto for an autopsy.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Ontario

SUBJECT TERM: highways; transportation; memorials

PERSONAL NAME: Dalton McGuinty

2 Van Doos dead after IED attack Quebec now has 3 fallen soldiers

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.08.23

PAGE: A1

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 566

CP Wire Martin Ouellet KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A powerful explosion ripped into a Canadian armoured vehicle Wednesday, killing two soldiers and wounding three others from Canada after the Quebec-based Van Doo regiment had fought its first major battle in Afghanistan.

An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the 6:20 p.m. local time blast that wounded two Canadian journalists and another soldier.

Their light-armoured vehicle hit an "improvised explosive device" in the troubled Zhari district about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Laroche told reporters at Kandahar Airfield the three injured Canadians had non-life threatening injuries and were being treated at the base hospital.

Radio-Canada says its cameraman Charles Dubois, 29, has serious leg injuries and reporter Patrice Roy, 44, was suffering from shock but otherwise fine.

The military has not identified the soldiers killed, but they belonged to Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, which began its rotation of duty in Afghanistan a few weeks ago.

"This isn't a question of experience," Laroche said about his troops. "At the level of tactics being used by the enemy — these are tactics that are vicious, to say the least," referring to IEDs, which have proved to be one of the deadliest weapons used by insurgents against coalition forces.

The Royal 22nd, known as the Van Doos, has now lost three of its soldiers in Afghanistan on this mission.

The first fatality was Pte. Simon Longtin of Longueuil, Que., killed Sunday when his vehicle triggered another IED. His body arrived back in Canada earlier Wednesday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper called it "a very sad day." "These soldiers gave their life helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan," Harper said in a statement. "We will always remember them." The latest explosion happened after soldiers from 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd had fought in their first major combat operation in Afghanistan.

They launched Operation Eagle Eye jointly with Afghan security forces Wednesday morning. Intense fighting was reported between the troops and Taliban insurgents near Masum Ghar, some 20 kilometres west of Kandahar.

Witnesses said the thunderous rumble of Canadian tanks on the move could be heard kilometres away. Insurgents were fighting back with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

There were no Canadian casualties from the fighting and the military declared their operation to secure a strategic hill as a success.

Laroche said the high ground gained was "key terrain." "From that location, essentially, we can observe and we can also control what's going on in the district" where insurgents have been active in recent weeks, he said.

"The mission was a success... The losses that have occurred today occurred at the end of the operation." The Canadians also discovered a massive roadside bomb and blew it up. A 20-metre fireball could be seen as it was detonated.

But it was another IED that proved so deadly later as the day drew to a close.

The military called it "a suspected mine." A military officer suggested it could have been an anti-tank mine, but it has not been confirmed.

"This is an extremely difficult and emotional situation for the families, friends and colleagues of those who have lost their lives or been injured the incident," Laroche said.

"There is no way to comfort those who are grieving today except to say these soldiers were involved in something that they believed in." With the latest casualties, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada has about 2,300 soldiers in Afghanistan serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force. The multinational force has a mandate to support the Afghan government in Kabul and help it establish authority in areas controlled by Taliban insurgents.

— Canadian Press

2 soldiers killed near Kandahar; 6 casualties in bombing

IDNUMBER 200708230002
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Charles Dubois; Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / A BROTHER'S GRIEF: Benoit Longtin, centre, part of an honour guard, helps carry the casket of his brother Pte. Longtin, attached to the 22nd Regiment based at Valcartier, Que., was killed Sunday in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb detonated under the vehicle he was in. ;
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 719

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation EAGLE EYE.

Radio–Canada reported that Ottawa–based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries, requiring surgery.

Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche.

"Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doo, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1.

They are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the war–torn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing.

"It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

By coincidence, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday. Longtin, also a member of the Van Doo, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Pte. Benoit Longtin was one of eight soldiers to serve as an honour guard for his brother's body. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoit's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

FAMILY WEPT

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace and Longtin's flag-draped coffin was carried from the Hercules 130 transport plane to the hearse.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," said a statement issued by Longtin's family. "He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

Earlier Wednesday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from Patrol Base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud, who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Laroche later described the mission as a success, adding that the deaths came at the end of it.

"It's always risky," he said. "It's not a lack of care; it's the reality of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doo's Bravo Company set out from Patrol Base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

LOOKING FOR INSURGENTS

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian Forces were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED, which had been planted along Foster Road. The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers arrived on scene to detonate the bomb, which unleashed a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high.

It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Capt. Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the Afghan army soldiers who discovered the bomb near a small bridge. His convoy had rolled over the IED before it was discovered.

Soldiers welcome Yule cheer

IDNUMBER 200708230215
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Neighbours
PAGE: NA8
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Neighbours
WORD COUNT: 165

Not sure what to do with all those promotional items cluttering your office?

Send them to Canadian soldiers serving overseas.

Articles of clothing, books, playing cards, candy -- anything which might send a tangible, heartfelt message of thanks to the more than 3,500 Canadians serving in such war-torn locales as Afghanistan are greatly appreciated.

Operation Santa Claus sends members of the Canadian Forces a Christmas gift package filled with items donated by Canadian corporations as well as letters and Christmas cards from school children and loved ones.

A unique program designed to enhance the morale of deployed Canadian Forces personnel during the holiday season, the large-scale project starts collecting donations in April each year with packaging and delivery preparation occurring in late September to ensure delivery and distribution by December.

Norman Leach & Associates has agreed to co-ordinate donations here in Calgary for Operation Santa Claus.

All items must be shipped by Oct. 1 if they are to reach their destinations.

For more information, call Norman Leach at 663-0652.

Canadians are also encouraged to post holiday messages on the Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces' electronic 'Write to the Troops' message board.

To post an electronic message, go to 'Write to the Troops' at http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/Community/Messageboard/index_e.asp.

Senseless

IDNUMBER 200708230052
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Q: Queries – Quibbles – Quirks
PAGE: A19
COLUMN: Inbox: Your Space – Your Time
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: Ken Erickson
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 112

Death – Re: "Storied troop mourns soldier," Aug. 20.

Another Canadian has died in Afghanistan for George Bush.

Rather than debate whether to place decals on city vehicles, we should be clamouring for Canada to withdraw all its soldiers from Afghanistan. This latest death will be exploited by yellow ribbon proponents (all of whom support the mission, I'll wager) as a reason for council to reverse its earlier decision regarding the decals.

I congratulate council for taking a principled stand on the decal issue, and hope they can pass a resolution calling on the federal government to bring our troops back now. At least on this one issue, I can say I'm proud to be a Calgarian.

Ken Erickson,

Calgary

Soldier's body flown back to Canada; Private died Sunday after convoy struck roadside bomb

IDNUMBER 200708230018
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.08.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
KEYWORDS: COURT MARTIAL; CANADIANS; WAR
DATELINE: CFB TRENTON, Ont.
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 289

The body of a young Canadian soldier who was killed by a roadside bomb last Sunday returned to Canada Wednesday morning.

Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, was in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it struck the bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City. He had been in Afghanistan just three weeks when he was killed.

The plane carrying the body of Pte. Longtin arrived at Canadian Forces Base Trenton in eastern Ontario shortly before 11 a.m. Wednesday. Waiting for the flag-draped coffin were about 10 members of Longtin's family, about 100 fellow soldiers, and dignitaries including Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean and Peter MacKay, the newly appointed minister of national defence.

In a solemn ceremony, the coffin was carried to a waiting hearse on the shoulders of an honour guard.

Details for Longtin's funeral have not yet been released. His body is expected to be transferred to Quebec for funeral services.

Longtin was the first member of the Van Doos to be killed while serving in Afghanistan. The Royal 22nd Regiment, as it is officially known, took command of Canada's operations in Afghanistan on Aug. 1.

A native of Longueuil, Que., Longtin had been living with his girlfriend in Quebec City before shipping out to Afghanistan Aug. 1. The Van Doos regiment is based at CFB Valcartier, just outside of Quebec City. His parents still live in Longueuil.

In a statement, the family said they are devastated by the death.

"Simon left us in dignity while proudly serving his country with tremendous honour, amongst his brothers in arms in Afghanistan," the message said.

"He left for his mission at peace with himself and his family."

Longtin's fellow soldiers said he was the joker of the platoon, but when it came to his duty and the mission in Afghanistan, he showed an unyielding conviction, say those who knew him well.

His death was a shock to his comrades. "Everybody's morale is really low right now," said one soldier.

The death pushed the Canadian military toll in Afghanistan to 67. One diplomat has also died.

The Canadian Forces contribution in Afghanistan consists of about 2,500 soldiers. Troops are rotated every six to nine months.

Roadside bomb kills two Quebec soldiers; Fellow soldier, two Canadian journalists hurt

IDNUMBER 200708230002

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Benoit Longtin,centre, helps carry the casket of his brother Pte. Simon Longtin at CFB Trenton in Ontario. See story, Page A6. ; Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Benoit Longtin, right, walks with his father, Maurice Longtin, after carrying the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at Canadian Forces Base Trenton on Wednesday. Pte. Longtin, a member of the Van Doos regiment based at Valcartier, Que., was killed by a roadside bomb Sunday. ; Photo: Francois Vachon, For CanWest News Service / Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin speaks to journalists at Canadian Force Base Valcartier, Que., after the death of two soldiers from the base in Afghanistan on Wednesday. ; Photo: Patrice Roy ; Photo: Charles Dubois ;

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 904

Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

The two dead soldiers, whose names have not been released, were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1.

The soldiers are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the wartorn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

Meanwhile, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, who was killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday. Longtin, also a member of the Van Doos, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Fighting back tears, Simon's brother Pte. Benoit Longtin served as an honour guard with seven other soldiers. While the other soldiers' faces remained largely stoic, Benoit's lips quivered and tears streamed down his cheeks as he carried the coffin to the black hearse.

Their parents, Simon's girlfriend, and about seven other family members, each carrying a single rose, met the plane. Some of the other family wept quietly as a trumpeter played Amazing Grace.

"I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government of Canada, our sympathies to the family and friends of these brave soldiers and the Afghan interpreter," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper in a statement.

"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices.

"I also wish a quick recovery to the Canadian soldier and two journalists injured in this incident. These soldiers gave their lives helping to bring stability and security to Afghanistan. We will always remember them."

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said in a statement he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan.

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

The deaths of two more soldiers came as a shock to those at CFB Valcartier, Que. The news was on everyone's lips with no one left indifferent.

"It really touches me because my brother-in-law is in Afghanistan. Everyday I think about my sister and her son," said Nathalie Levesque, who stopped by the base to lay flowers at the gate. "It's important to pay our respects," she added.

Earlier Wednesday, the Canadian Forces launched their biggest operation since the Valcartier, Que.-based regiment took command of military operations.

Canadian tanks and armoured vehicles rolled forth before dawn to reassert NATO's military presence in Gundy Ghar, a region in the western Zhari district that had recently fallen under Taliban control.

The most recent Canadian offensive was launched from patrol base Wilson and Masum Ghar, two forward operating bases to the southwest of Kandahar City.

The operation had three prongs. A team of Canadian and Afghan National Army soldiers conducted patrols around Masum Ghar while a battle group force ventured along the Arghandab River.

"The intent of the patrol was to draw them out and see what their combat fire was and it worked," said Masum Ghar base commander Maj. Patrick Robichaud who led the Arghandab thrust. The Canadians were not impressed by the Taliban's arsenal, he said.

Laroche later described the mission as a success, adding the deaths came at the end of it.

"It's always risky," he said. "It's not a lack of care; it's the reality of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, members of the Van Doos' Bravo Company set out from patrol base Wilson to reclaim Gundy Ghar. The territory was under Canadian control until the Taliban overran police checkpoints in the area.

The thunderclap of artillery could be heard from Masum Ghar as Canadian forces exchanged fire with the Taliban at Gundy Ghar and along the Arghandab River.

Canadian tanks opened fire on Taliban insurgents, who responded with mortar attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

West of Masum Ghar, Afghan and Canadian soldiers waded through marijuana plants that in some places had grown to more than two metres in height.

Canadian soldiers were looking for insurgents believed to have slipped back into the region to capitalize on the impending marijuana harvest.

The group did not encounter any Taliban, but discovered a massive IED, which had been planted along Foster Road. The road is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous thoroughfares for Canadian troops.

Canadian engineers arrived on scene to detonate the bomb, which unleashed a large fireball and a cloud of smoke about seven metres high.

It was classified as a type 5 IED, considered the deadliest form in Afghanistan.

"We are very lucky to be alive today," said Capt. Richard Bernatchez, who was overseeing the Afghan army soldiers who discovered the bomb near a small bridge. His convoy had rolled over the IED before it was discovered.

Canada's military commitment ends in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will not be extended without a consensus in Parliament.

Go online at calgaryherald.com for latest updates

Roadside bomb kills two Quebec soldiers; Fellow soldier, two Canadian journalists hurt

IDNUMBER 200708230001

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.08.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Benoit Longtin, centre, helps carry the casket of his brother Pte. Simon Longtin at CFB Trenton in Ontario. See story, Page A6. ; Photo: Fred Thornhill, Reuters / Pte. Benoit Longtin, right, walks with his father, Maurice Longtin, after carrying the casket of his brother, Pte. Simon Longtin, to a hearse at Canadian Forces Base Trenton on Wednesday. Simon Longtin, a member of the Van Doos regiment based at Valcartier, Que., was killed by a roadside bomb Sunday. ; Photo: Francois Vachon, For CanWest News Service / Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin speaks to journalists at Canadian Force Base Valcartier, Que., after the death of two soldiers from the base in Afghanistan on Wednesday. ; Photo: Patrice Roy ; Photo: Charles Dubois ;

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 900

Two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed when their light armoured vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during a patrol about 50 kilometres west of Kandahar City Wednesday evening.

Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne of the 5th Ambulance company, based out of Valcartier, Que., was named as one of the soldiers killed by the Department of National Defence.

Family members of the soldiers have been notified. At their request, the name of the remaining soldier is being temporarily withheld.

Another soldier and two Canadian journalists were also hurt in the incident, which occurred during a joint operation with the Afghan National Army referred to as Operation Eagle Eye.

"These are tactics that are vicious, to say the least, tactics that have to do with improvised explosives," said Canadian commander Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche. "Despite the fact that we regularly find these explosives, it is always difficult to prevent this threat."

Radio-Canada reported that Ottawa-based cameraman Charles Dubois suffered serious leg injuries requiring surgery. Reporter Patrice Roy, the news organization's Ottawa bureau chief, was also slightly wounded. Both were reported to be in stable condition later Wednesday.

The two dead soldiers were members of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Van Doos, which took over command of the mission Aug. 1.

The soldiers are the second and third members of the regiment to die in Afghanistan since Sunday.

In all, 69 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in the wartorn country since 2002.

"We've always said that this mission was dangerous," said Laroche at a news conference on the Kandahar base after the bombing. "It's no more dangerous today than it was yesterday."

At CFB Valcartier, military officials held a brief news conference Wednesday night. "The Valcartier community is deeply touched by the loss of two of our members and a third one being wounded," said Lt.-Col. Hercule Gosselin. "We are a very tight community here and we all share the same emotions. We are going to get even closer and deal with that and go through that."

He offered his condolences to family and friends of the fallen soldiers. "It's a tragedy and a very difficult time for them," he added.

Gosselin said the soldiers are aware of the risk of their mission and that the recent events will not alter their determination.

Meanwhile, the body of Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, who was killed by a roadside bomb Sunday, arrived back at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, Ont., in a solemn military ceremony Wednesday. Longtin, also a member of the Van Doos, had been in Afghanistan just three weeks. He had been in an armoured vehicle travelling in a convoy when it was struck by a bomb about 20 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

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"We are all proud of these exceptional Canadians and grateful for their sacrifices.

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Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said in a statement he was "deeply saddened to learn of the loss of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter in Afghanistan.

"Our thoughts are also with the injured Canadian journalists and soldier. We wish them a fast and full recovery. We are grateful to the members of the media who put their safety on the line to keep Canadians back home informed of the actions of our courageous soldiers."

News of the deaths was on everyone's lips with no one left indifferent at CFB Valcartier.

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