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Afghan–Cda–Roundup

DATE: 2007.07.05

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PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 416

One of the Canadian military's strongest vehicles was no match for a powerful roadside bomb that killed six Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter.

Yesterday's blast overwhelmed the sturdy armour of the R–G–31 Nyala, which is designed to withstand mine blasts.

Brigadier–General Tim Grant, the top Canadian commander in Afghanistan, says it's not clear why this particular bomb managed to defeat the Nyala's defences. One report suggested it was a triple mine, or three devices stacked on top of each other.

Grant says an investigation is underway.

Meantime, the identities of four of the dead were released late yesterday afternoon — Corporal Cole Bartsch, Captain Matthew Dawe, Private Lane Watkins and Master Corporal Colin Bason.

The next of kin of the other two killed haven't yet agreed to the release of their names. (CP)

(Afghan–Cda–IED)

Military analysts say NATO forces are locked in a deadly game of one–upmanship with insurgents that will lead to higher casualties.

Steven Staples, of the Ottawa–based think–tank Rideau Institute, says it's an arms race between insurgents and soldiers.

Staples says they develop more sophisticated bombs while the Canadian military tries to put more armour out there, but the insurgents always seem to be able to overcome what the military can deploy.

Out of 66 Canadian military deaths in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002, at least 26 have now been a result of roadside explosions. (CP)

(Afghan–Cda–Opposition)

It's looking more likely that Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan will end in 19 months.

Prime Minister Harper has pledged not to extend Canada's combat role in the war–torn country without a consensus in Parliament.

But two federal party leaders aren't budging in their positions against extending the mission.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion says Harper will never get the support he needs to keep the mission going.

He says Harper should have told NATO weeks ago that Canadian soldiers would withdraw from the mission

by February 2009.

N-D-P Leader Jack Layton says Canada doesn't need to give notice — it should just pull out now. (BN)

(Afghan-Cda-Mother)

The grieving mother of one of the six Canadian soldiers who died yesterday says Colin Bason had only six weeks left on the mission.

Ann Bason of Abbotsford, B-C, tells C-T-V News her son Colin was among the first reservists to sign up when the call went out for volunteers for the Afghan mission.

Bason says her son died doing something he believed in.

The master corporal was with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B-C. (CTV-s, CP)

(Afghan-Cda-Dawes)

One of the soldiers killed yesterday in Afghanistan was in charge of three other Canadian soldiers who were killed last month.

Captain Matthew Dawe was killed along with five other Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter when their armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

Three members of Dawe's infantry unit — Private Joel Wiebe, Sergeant Christos Karigiannis and Corporal Stephen Bouzane — were killed by a roadside bomb June 20th.

In the wake of that tragedy, Dawe had turned to his father, a career soldier, for moral support and advice.

Yesterday, Colonel Spike Hazleton of C-F-B Kingston, broke the sad news of his son's death to retired lieutenant-colonel Peter Dawe. (Whig-Standard)

(Afghan-Cda-Roundup by Neena Chowdhury, Terry Pedwell and Shawn Waddell)

INDEX:International, Defence, Politics

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PUBLICATION: bnw

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OTTAWA – The military has released the name of a fifth Canadian soldier killed in Wednesday's roadside bombing in Afghanistan.

Corporal Jordan Anderson was a member of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton.

Three of the other soldiers killed – Captain Matthew Dawe, Corporal Cole Bartsch and Private Lane Watkins – were members of the same battalion.

Master Corporal Colin Bason, a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C., also died in the incident.

At the request of the family, the name of the remaining soldier killed is being withheld.

The six soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were travelling in an armoured vehicle west of Kandahar City when a powerful roadside bomb detonated.

(BN)

Afghan–Violence–Update (details, additional injuries)

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PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 61

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber blew himself up at a checkpoint in southern Afghanistan today, killing five policemen and injuring 11.

The attacker detonated his explosives in a room where the policemen were eating their lunch.

It occurred at a checkpoint near Spin Boldak, a town on the Pakistani border.

Grisly suicide attacks have become a prominent tactic of Taliban militants, who have dramatically stepped up their campaign of violence.

RxH

CORRECTION–Afghan–Cda–Mourning

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PUBLICATION: bnw

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Stations: Please substitute the following for the item that moved at 15:54 ET.

(Subs para 2 to confirm that four casualties based at CFB Edmonton)

EDMONTON — A military leader says the army grieves for the six Canadian soldiers who died in Afghanistan this week, but will also steel itself for future sacrifices.

Brigadier–General Mark Skidmore says the six who died — four of them based at Edmonton Garrison — were dedicated to their jobs and committed to the task Canada had set before them.

He says their colleagues are proud to have known them, were privileged to have served beside them and are willing to stand in their stead if called to do so.

Colonel Jon Vance says the most important thing right now is to stand behind the families who have lost their loved ones.

Vance says the families are well aware that there is a debate about Canada's mission in Afghanistan, but the most sensitive and mature approach right now is to send out a 'clarion call' of love and support.

The six soldiers, along with an Afghan interpreter, died Wednesday in a roadside explosion as they were returning from a mission southwest of Kandahar.

(BN)

Capt. Matthew Dawe remembered as a family man who loved his work

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KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 134

TORONTO – The family of one of the highest-ranking Canadian officers to be killed in Afghanistan remembered him Thursday as a dedicated soldier who wouldn't let something as minor as a ruptured Achilles tendon get in his way.

The family of Capt. Matthew Dawe was not speaking to the media, but released a statement Thursday praising Dawe's love for the soldiers who worked under him.

The statement says Dawe ruptured his Achilles tendon in the months leading to his deployment to Afghanistan, but he recovered faster than expected because he 'didn't want his boys to go without him.'

Dawe leaves behind his wife, Tara, and a two-year-old son named Lucas.

The statement says Dawe was very close to his parents, brothers and his large extended family.

Dawe was killed Wednesday along with five other Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter when an armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

(BN)

Cpl. Cole Bartsch remembered as outgoing, outdoorsy and reliable

DATE: 2007.07.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 137

EDMONTON – The family of a corporal killed Wednesday in an explosion in Afghanistan is remembering the fallen soldier as a generous young man who loved the outdoors and stood by his friends.

Cpl. Cole Bartsch was one of six soldiers and an Afghan interpreter who were travelling in an armoured vehicle west of Kandahar City when a powerful roadside bomb detonated.

His aunt, Karen Shilson, recalls Bartsch was a man his friends and family always relied on.

Speaking from Calgary, Shilson said that if anybody needed to be picked up after a late-night party, her nephew would always drop whatever he was doing to get the person home safely.

Shilson also says Bartsch loved to zoom around the bush on quads at his family's home in rural Alberta; he also liked to camp and fish and spent as much time out-of-doors as he could.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

(BN)

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.07.05
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The Defence Department has released the name of a fifth Canadian soldier killed in yesterday's roadside bombing in Afghanistan.

Corporal Jordan Anderson was based in Edmonton along with Captain Matthew Dawe, Corporal Cole Bartsch and Private Lane Watkins.

Master Corporal Colin Bason, a reservist based in New Westminster, B-C, also died in the incident.

The name of the sixth soldier killed is being withheld at the request of the family. (10)

(CRIME-Bank-Robbery) (Audio:105)

Police in Quebec are tight-lipped about an ongoing hostage-taking at a branch of the Laurentian bank in the Montreal suburb of Longueuil (long-AY').

Quebec provincial police would not confirm that an armed man is holed up in the bank with at least one person.

They say the goal is to end the standoff without violence.

Earlier, Constable Gaetan Durocher said are people inside the bank but would not comment on how many. (10)

(Brant-Surrender) (Audio: 107)

Mohawk demonstrator Shawn Brant has a bail hearing this afternoon after turning himself in to provincial police at Napanee, Ontario.

An arrest warrant had been issued for Brant on a mischief charge since he led blockades of roads and a railway in eastern Ontario last Friday.

The blockades came during the national aboriginal day of action and shut down Canada's busiest highway — Highway 4-0-1 — for 11 hours. (10)

(Britain-Terrorism)

Police are searching a rented house near the airport in Glasgow, Scotland for clues to failed car bombings in Glasgow and London.

British media reports say at least two of the suspects lived in the house and made bombs there.

A cab company says an Iraqi physician who was among eight people arrested was a regular customer lately. (10)

(Britain–Online Terror)

An al–Qaida inspired computer expert who called himself “the jihadist James Bond” may be shaken by his sentence.

Morocco–born Younis Tsouli has been sentenced to 10 years in prison in Britain.

Prosecutors say he and two accomplices offered advice and motivation to would–be terrorists on a myriad of Web pages run from their London homes. (10)

(Mexico–Landslide)

Fourteen bodies have been recovered from a bus that was buried on a road in rural Mexico after a mountainside gave way.

Heavy rains triggered the landslide early yesterday.

State civil protection officials say at least 40 passengers were believed to be on the bus. (10)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

Edmonton base pays heavy price; Nearly half of Canada's casualties in Afghanistan originated here; community mourns its latest loss

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ILLUSTRATION: John Ulan cp Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore said the uneven toll reflectstroop rotations. ;

BYLINE: Petti Fong

SOURCE: Toronto Star

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 572

Sitting on the front porch of her house inside the Edmonton Garrison, the proud woman looked straight up into the sun, but it did nothing to dry her tears.

"I left Europe after the war so my sons would never know war," she said, as her grandson played outside. "This is not peacekeeping any more. This is a war and I never thought Canada will be in a war."

The woman, who declined to give her name, has a son and daughter-in-law in the Canadian forces. She knows grief, recognizing it in other houses on her block and in the apprehensions of those around her.

The Edmonton Garrison has seen its share of loss. Soldiers come from around the country to make their temporary and sometimes permanent home here. Of the 66 Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan since 2002, 31 were based in Edmonton.

On Wednesday, six soldiers, who were due to return home in six weeks, were killed when the vehicle they were in, an RG-31 Nyala troop carrier, hit an improvised explosive device about 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Four of the six – Capt. Matthew Jonathan Dawe, 27; Cpl. Jordan Anderson, 25; Cpl. Cole Bartsch, 23; and Pte. Lane Watkins, 20 – were members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 3rd Battalion Charlie Company from Edmonton. Master Cpl. Colin Bason, 28, was a reservist from The Royal Westminster Regiment and Capt. Jefferson Francis, 37, was with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shiloh, Man.

"Edmonton has been hit and hit hard. Roughly half of the deaths are from this base. We've been deployed a lot, we're very active," said Capt. Lou Marselje, public affairs officer for the Edmonton Garrison. "We've had casualties and there will be more."

Just two weeks ago, Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, 31; Cpl. Stephen Bouzane, 26; and Pte. Joel Wiebe, 22 – all members of the same battalion based in Edmonton – were also killed by a roadside bomb.

On the base, Manuela Armstrong, whose former husband was a member of the Patricias, said she takes comfort in knowing how cohesive that battalion is and the support it provides for the soldiers who remain in

Edmonton base pays heavy price; Nearly half of Canada's casualties in Afghanistan originated here,10 commu

Afghanistan.

"The Patricias are very proud and they think of themselves as brothers," she said. "Six is unimaginable, no one gets used to people dying. One is too much."

Silence has descended over the base with the latest casualties, said Armstrong, with everyone wondering how many more there will be.

Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of the western land force, said Edmonton's high number of casualties is a reflection of cyclical rotations. Most of the soldiers who have been deployed were based in western and central Canada.

"It's not (that) the Taliban are targeting people from Edmonton," said Skidmore.

At Joint Task Force West Headquarters in Edmonton, Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, said there will be time later to debate the mission, but the focus now has to be on bringing the six soldiers home to their grieving families. Now, he said, is the "proper time to reflect on the individual sacrifices of the families."

Trooper Michael Hayakaze, who may be leaving for Afghanistan next month, said it's frustrating to hear debates about whether Canada should pull out of its mission before it ends in 2009.

"When we hear of these tragedies, it's always depressing and always makes me go quiet and think about why we're really there," he said. "What happens to all those men and women who've died if we just leave?"

"We need time now to grieve," said Master Cpl. Bason's mother, Anne, yesterday from the family's home in Abbotsford. "He had the privilege of serving his country and for us, we need time now."

Families mourn their heroes; 'It's going to be tough when she asks why she doesn't have a daddy,' says soldier's wife

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ILLUSTRATION: Chuck Stoody cp Lt.-Col. Matthew Haussmann, commanding officer of The Royal Westminster Regiment, pauses while speaking to media in New Westminster yesterday about the death of Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist with the regiment. ;

SOURCE: Canadian Press

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WORD COUNT: 621

The military yesterday released the last two names of the six Canadian soldiers killed Wednesday by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Capt. Jefferson Francis, 37, was with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shiloh, Man. The military says he was originally from New Brunswick.

Cpl. Jordan Anderson, 25, whose hometown was Iqaluit, was based in Edmonton.

Like three other soldiers who died Wednesday, Anderson was with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton. The others are Capt. Matthew Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins.

The sixth to die was Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C.

The six soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were travelling in an armoured vehicle southwest of Kandahar City when a powerful roadside bomb detonated.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers and diplomat Glyn Berry have now died in Afghanistan since 2002.

The army, still grieving for its last group of Afghanistan casualties, will steel itself for future challenges even as it mourns new losses, a Canadian military leader said yesterday. "The army was their life, the army is our life and Canada is No. 1," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of western land forces.

Francis volunteered for the patrol in Afghanistan that ultimately took his life. Quoting an unnamed source, the Halifax Chronicle Herald says he wasn't originally supposed to be in the patrol vehicle but volunteered to go out when a sixth soldier was needed. Francis was with 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shiloh, Man., but was from Halifax. He was married and had an eight-month-old child.

A military source in Nova Scotia says he was an artillery co-ordinator, known as a "fire-effects officer."

Families mourn their heroes; 'It's going to be tough when she asks why she doesn't have a daddy,' says soldier's wife

The family of Dawe, who is one of the highest-ranking Canadian officers to be killed in Afghanistan since the war began, remembered their son, brother and husband as a dedicated soldier.

Family members were not speaking to the media, but released a statement yesterday. "Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," it read. "He loved his soldiers very much and we know that this feeling was reciprocal."

The statement said Dawe, 27, ruptured his Achilles tendon in the months before his deployment to Afghanistan, but recovered faster than expected because he "didn't want his boys to go without him."

Dawe came from a prominent military family in Kingston, Ont. His father is a retired lieutenant-colonel, and all three older brothers are in the Forces. Two of them served in Afghanistan in 2002.

Master Cpl. Colin Bason was a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C. The father of a baby daughter, he was a "history buff" who made his family proud, his mother said from Abbotsford, B.C.

"Here he is fulfilling something – democracy – trying to get democracy and peace established in another land and fighting terrorists," said Ann Bason. "He knew the chances that he was taking ... he was fulfilling something he wanted to do and we're proud of him."

At a gathering held by his regiment yesterday in New Westminster, B.C., commanding officer Lt.-Col. Matthew Haussmann said Bason loved his job.

"He was a reserve soldier, which means he didn't do this full time. Although in his case it was hard to tell. He loved soldiering and made this pretty much his passion and his primary vocation."

Haussmann said the family is being looked after by the army. "It's sad, but the army is getting pretty good at dealing with this kind of stuff. Too much practice."

Katrina Blain of Langley, B.C., is fighting to deal with the tragic loss of Bason, who was her partner and the father of their 5-month-old baby daughter, Vienna.

"It's going to be tough when she grows up and asks why she doesn't have a daddy," she told the Star's Richard Brennan.

"But we're just going to tell her how brave her daddy was and that he died doing what he loved and that he loved her very much and he is looking down on her," said Blain, who spoke briefly with the 28-year-old reservist just days ago.

"We told him that we love him, and send hugs and kisses, and that we missed him and we would see him soon."

Families mourn their heroes; 'It's going to be tough when she asks why she doesn't have a daddy,' says soldier

Too soon to leave, PM says; Pressure growing on Harper to review Canada's mission in Afghanistan

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ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW VAUGHAN cp Prime Minister Stephen Harper is piped on board HMCS Halifax yesterday as he arrives in Halifax to make a defence spending announcement. ;
BYLINE: Allan Woods
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 476

Prime Minister Stephen Harper tried to sidestep growing pressure yesterday to begin debating the future of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan following the deaths of six soldiers in a roadside explosion.

Dodging opposition calls to signal to NATO that Canada's end is drawing near, the Harper acknowledged that the mounting deaths "weigh heavily" on him, but he said it is too soon to contemplate a complete pullout once the current commitment ends in February 2009.

Harper said he has been "clear" that he will seek a consensus in the minority Parliament before extending Canada's presence in the war-weary country.

But today is not the day for political debates, he said, ignoring Liberal Leader Stephane Dion's vow that a consensus to extend the mission will never materialize. "We have the House of Commons for that. Today is a day to express our condolences for these soldiers."

Master Cpl. Colin Bason, Capt. Matthew Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Pte. Lane Watkins, Cpl. Jordan Anderson and Capt. Jefferson Francis were killed when their supposedly bomb-resistant armoured vehicle struck a roadside bomb buried along a frequently used gravel road in Kandahar province's Panjwaii district. An Afghan interpreter was also killed in the explosion, which spared up to a dozen other vehicles in the convoy.

The Canadian dead now number 66, plus diplomat Glyn Berry. That exceeds the 63 British soldiers killed in the country despite the U.K. having almost 1,000 more troops on the ground than Canada. And the British mission started in 2001, a year before Canada's.

"As Prime Minister, casualties of any kind weigh heavily on my mind. Casualties at this level weigh very heavily on my mind," Harper said aboard HMCS Halifax.

"I speak to families that lose loved ones. I'm aware of the pain that causes. I'm aware also of the pride they feel for their loved ones who have served this country and have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice."

Harper was in Halifax to announce money to upgrade the navy's Halifax-class frigates. He was accompanied by Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay.

At the Halifax harbour, just a few hundred metres from Harper's carefully staged announcement, a dozen protesters gathered to express their displeasure that Canadian soldiers are fighting and dying in Afghanistan.

The latest Canadian deaths have opened up a new debate on the ability of Canada's most resilient vehicles to withstand what several military experts have termed a shift in insurgent tactics to the use of more powerful explosive devices.

The Canadians were travelling in an RG-31 Nyala, considered blast-resistant because its V-shaped hull gives it the ability to withstand up to two simultaneous anti-tank mines. Though an investigation is underway into the particulars of Wednesday's explosion, retired colonel Alain Pellerin, the executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations, said Wednesday that the blast appears to have been caused by a "triple mine" – three land mines stacked on top of one another for increased effect.

10 policemen, 1 NATO soldier killed in separate attacks

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WORD COUNT: 164

A suicide bomber blew up a room full of policemen eating lunch at a southern Afghan checkpoint yesterday, killing 10 officers.

Elsewhere, a roadside bomb in the east killed a NATO soldier, authorities said.

The suicide attack occurred near Spin Boldak, a town in the southern province of Kandahar near the Pakistan border. The blast that killed the 10 policemen also wounded 11 officers, said Sayeed Agha Saqib, the provincial police chief. Spin Boldak's district police chief was among the wounded.

Suicide attacks have become a prime tactic of Taliban militants, who have dramatically stepped up their violent campaign against the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and its western backers.

Militants deployed a roadside bomb against NATO-led forces in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, leaving one soldier dead and wounding two others, the alliance said.

The wounded soldiers were taken to a medical facility for treatment and were in stable condition, NATO said in an emailed statement. It did not release the soldiers' nationalities. Most foreign troops in the east are American.

The blast raised the number of foreign soldiers killed this year to at least 103.

NDP leader is worth watching

IDNUMBER 200707060125
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
BYLINE: Chantal Hebert
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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WORD COUNT: 573

According to Decima's Bruce Anderson, more voters say that their opinion of NDP Leader Jack Layton is improving than fading, a distinction he shares only with Green Leader Elizabeth May these days.

That is particularly true in Quebec where Layton now ranks second to the Bloc Quebecois' Gilles Duceppe.

This summer, Layton will attempt to parlay that personal appreciation into votes for the NDP by turning three soon-to-be-called Quebec by-elections into a mini-referendum on the Afghan mission. Over the course of a news conference (scheduled before the latest casualties in Afghanistan came to light), Layton made his intentions crystal clear Wednesday. And he reiterated his call for bringing the troops home before Canada's current commitment to NATO ends in February 2009.

The NDP seized on the Afghan issue last summer in part to stake distinct ground from the surging Green party. To this day, its position also sets it apart from the bulk of Quebec's establishment.

Although the Bloc Quebecois voted against the extension of the mission last year, it has not been pushing for its early termination. As one Bloc MP put it in a conversation this week, the party agrees that the government has a parliamentary mandate to pursue the deployment until 2009.

Beyond that, Duceppe is pretty much on the same page as Liberal Leader Stephane Dion. Both oppose another extension of the deployment in Kandahar province but could support an alternative role for Canada in Afghanistan.

Duceppe has so far begged to differ with the vocal section of Quebec public opinion that sees Afghanistan as just an extension of the American-led Iraq war. In a major speech last January, he stressed that, like Canada, a sovereign Quebec would have signed on to the international coalition in Afghanistan.

For his part, Premier Jean Charest just attended the send-off ceremonies for the Valcartier-based contingent that will be off to Afghanistan next month. When a group of battle-bound soldiers visited the National Assembly, Health Minister Philippe Couillard, whose son is an officer-in-training, berated the handful of PQ members who declined to applaud. He is not the only supporter of the mission within the Quebec government.

Culture Minister Christine St-Pierre, who served as a reporter on Parliament Hill until she ran in the provincial election, wrote a letter to the editor of La Presse in support of the deployment last fall. (She was briefly suspended from her Radio-Canada duties for this breach of journalistic neutrality.)

This may be a case where Quebec's sovereignist and federalist tenors are out of synch with mainstream voters.

Or it could be that the 70 per cent of Quebecers who tell pollsters they oppose the mission are answering a black-and-white question that leaves no room for nuances. The by-elections will provide part of the answer.

Against the sobering backdrop of probable Quebec casualties, Layton will be making the case that the lives of young soldiers are being squandered on a misguided mission. And while it is a prospect that makes every other party privately squirm, there is no question that the Afghan issue has not been well served by the rhetorical shortcuts that have been offered by both sides in the debate to date.

But there is at least one other reason why the distinctive NDP contribution to this debate should be welcome and it has to do with peace on the Canadian home front. But more on that in another column.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Reality too often a casualty of war in films; Standards set to fool viewers

IDNUMBER 200707060111

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: Entertainment

PAGE: E01

ILLUSTRATION: Bruce Willis in Live Free or Die Hard. Bruce Willis in Live Free or Die Hard. ;

BYLINE: Peter Howell

SOURCE: Toronto Star

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 545

News this week of the deaths of six more Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan is a tragic reminder of the reality of war.

When people engage in armed conflict, they risk injury or death. They bleed red blood.

The above may seem obvious, unless you're in the business of making movies. Then it becomes the art of denying the obvious about war and blood.

Two of the biggest movies of the summer, Transformers and Live Free or Die Hard, have incredible scenes of mayhem. In both cases, the military gets involved and the violence spills onto crowded city streets, where buildings are destroyed, freeways are ripped up and bullets and bombs fly.

There is destruction as far as the eye can see.

What the eye can't see is any real evidence of the human carnage.

There are no bodies strewn about. There are no missing limbs.

No one is even bleeding, apart from maybe a few scratches on Shia LaBeouf in Transformers and a whole lot of scratches on Bruce Willis in Live Free or Die Hard.

Yes, you do see instances of people running for cover, or being tossed by a robot or thrown by the force of an explosion. But very few of the wounds (and presumed deaths in many cases) reflect the severity of the injuries received.

This is necessary for the films to obtain the highly profitable PG-13 rating doled out by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the organization that effectively acts as global censor. Different countries have their own censors, such as the Ontario Film Review Board, but most movies arrive cut to MPAA standards.

And those standards, set with the best of intentions, serve to let us fool ourselves and our children about what it is we're watching on the big screen.

We watch many "intense sequences of violence" in PG-13 films, to use MPAA terminology. What we don't often see are intense sequences of the results of that violence. If moviemakers were to show that, they'd be saddled with an "R" or "NC-17" rating that would limit attendance and risk a possible advertising ban.

Clever filmmakers can dodge the more punitive ratings by changing the colour of blood from bright red to something less emotional. They often switch to black-and-white for scenes of major bloodletting, as Quentin Tarantino did for his two Kill Bill movies. Monochrome blood is way less upsetting than red blood.

The hybrid movie Sin City got really creative by introducing yellow and white blood, along with occasional red.

You might argue that this is a good thing. Why show bodies and blood if you don't have to, especially to impressionable children?

You might also point out that earlier this year I criticized the huge body count and high bloodletting of 300, the only recent major feature I can recall where wartime casualties were shown in anything close to real circumstances.

Excellent points both, except I'm starting to wonder if masking harsh reality is always a good thing. Prior to 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, there was a lot of talk in America about the "New War," one in which aircraft and guided missiles would rain death from above, with no loss of life to the good guys. Only the bad guys would die, and they'd be invisible on western TV screens.

The Canadian fatalities this week in Afghanistan, along with the deaths of U. S. and Allied soldiers in Iraq, showed once again how foolish this thinking was.

Down at the multiplex, though, the New War argument still reigns. Nobody really dies and the blood rarely flows red, if it flows at all.

Why are we still kidding ourselves?

Instead of banning blood from our screens, perhaps we should go the other way and insist upon seeing it in military scenes.

If we realized the true cost of war, perhaps we'd be less eager to start one.

phowell @ thestar.ca

Too high a price to pay

IDNUMBER 200707060091

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: Letter

PAGE: AA07

ILLUSTRATION: FINBARR O'REILLY Reuters Canadian Cpl. Rikk Lewis, right, embraces another soldier on Wednesday after arriving at Ma'sum Ghar base in southeast Afghanistan. Earlier, six Canadian soldiers and an interpreter were killed in a roadside bomb attack. ;

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WORD COUNT: 510

PM faces more pressure over mission

July 5

Our hearts ache yet again for the families and friends of six more Canadians killed in Afghanistan. Canada's new direction under Prime Minister Stephen Harper is putting the lives of Canadians in peril.

There is no question Canadians support our women and men. What Canadians do question is the government's change in our foreign policy. We used to be respected for our role as conciliator and peacekeeper, but that respect has been lost as a result of Canada's new government following a more aggressive style of foreign policy.

Is it a coincidence that our soldiers were killed on the 4th of July?

Paul Connolly, Victoria, B.C.

Surely it makes sense that the more we interfere with the Middle East, the more we encourage interference in our own country, as the British have found out. How can we try to tell others how to live, be a part of a war that kills civilians and not expect anger in return?

The more involved in Afghanistan, the more under threat we will be, and the government will revel in the further application of "security" measures that take away even more of our freedom.

Our government should be telling NATO that we leave Afghanistan in February 2009, if not earlier.

Therese MacDonald, Chatham, Ont.

Twenty-first-century technology versus a band of determined freedom fighters, and Canadians are left with six more dead young soldiers in Afghanistan. The mission has definitively changed for Canada, whether or not those in power agree. The rhetoric must stop about how important this mission is to the Canadian people and allow the realities of war to sink in.

Bring our troops home, before we allow this travesty to join the Vietnam conflict in the annals of irresponsible and needless death.

Daniel Kowbell, Toronto

It is with a tear in my eye that I write this letter. Six more young lives have been lost. I don't care if the Afghan government wants our troops there or not.

Did we not learn anything from the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan in the 1980s? Even with all of the strength of the Soviets, they realized it was futile and pulled out.

Joe Miles, Brampton

Canada's mission costly but worthy

Editorial, July 5

Your editorial took a fair and balanced position to a critical and sensitive issue facing our nation. While all Canadians are saddened at the loss of any life – particularly those serving in the Canadian Forces who serve to establish and protect the values that make this country great – all Canadians also support those same men and women who risk so much to ensure that we continue to live in freedom and with security.

Those who demand that Canada withdraw from Afghanistan show only their weakness and lack of commitment to what they profess to stand for: freedom and human rights. We are fortunate to live in a country in which our Charter protects these principles.

NDP Leader Jack Layton should realize that we have an obligation to ensure that others less fortunate may also come to experience and share in those same rights and freedoms. Layton should also understand that the path to establishing and defending these rights and freedoms is not without its challenges – thus further illustrating the reverence with which they should be defended and protected.

Blair Johnston, Mississauga

Afghanistan

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EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA02
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 64

But second-hand smoke

might not be Job 1 here

Afghanistan may be the world's largest producer of heroin, but the government has taken the first step toward a ban on smoking in public places.

The council of ministers has ordered a campaign through the media and mosques to inform the public that smoking in educational institutions, hospitals and government offices has been outlawed.

The ban will be widened to cover hotels and restaurants.

The reports did not say how the government would monitor the ban or what penalties there might be for violators.

All the polish, none of the blood

IDNUMBER 200707060008

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: News

PAGE: A11

ILLUSTRATION: FINBARR O'REILLY Reuters Canadian soldier from India company seen Tuesday during firefight in Afghanistan. There's no reason to believe other NATO member–nations will step up if Canada abandons the war in 2009, says Rosie DiManno. FINBARR O'REILLY Reuters Canadian soldier from India company seen Tuesday during firefight in Afghanistan. There's no reason to believe other NATO member– nations will step up if Canada abandons the war in 2009, says Rosie DiManno. ;

BYLINE: Rosie DiManno

SOURCE: Toronto Star

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 622

Afghans were right all along. The West can't be trusted.

They had the wrong impression, exposed essentially to soldiers, who are a different breed and mean what they say, putting their lives on the line for ideals as espoused by their fair–weather political bosses.

Of course, soldiers don't often speak of ideals, the geopolitical framework of the Afghanistan mission, and when they do, to journalists, it sounds stilted or corny, as if rehearsed or reading off a teleprompter. They know the sound bytes that are required of them and getting to the pith of the thing requires a level of trust that must be earned. But even beneath the patina of propaganda, and despite the quietly expressed doubts that some troops might harbour about the assignment – not self–doubt; rather, suspicion of politicians and shifting public opinion – there is sturdiness and confidence in their sense of purpose.

Their governments, too many of which have paid mere lip service to the rehabilitation of Afghanistan as a functioning state, are made of weaker stuff.

Only Canada, Britain and the United States – selectively, Holland, and a small Romanian contingent – have genuinely put their shoulders to the wheel. The failure of most NATO countries to fulfil their Bonn Conference promises has severely jeopardized, perhaps outright doomed, the bold undertaking. By this impotence, the very concept of NATO has been invalidated.

There's no reason to believe other member–nations will step up if Canada abandons Afghanistan in 2009, or retreats to the relative safety of Kabul as an urban cantonment. The likes of France, Italy and Germany won't fill the combustible gap in Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan. Easier for them to stay beyond reach in Kunduz or Herat, where insurgent attacks are rarities and showcase reconstruction humming along nicely: All the brass polishing with none of the blood.

And this facade of deployment is what many Canadians want for their troops.

The British will likely stay and the Americans aren't leaving. But southern Afghanistan will probably collapse, further imperilling the central government in Kabul while simultaneously affording Al Qaeda a huge

operating sanctuary in Central Asia: Afghanistan as terrorist state redux.

The neo-Taliban are not the Mongol hordes, sweeping across the plains of Afghanistan. They are a localized and heavily infiltrated – by Arab and Pakistani fighters – phenomenon, stubborn and fanatical, effective in tactics disproportionate to their numbers, but far, far from an undefeatable opponent. They can plant roadside explosives and crank out suicide bombers from here till Armageddon without ever gaining either political or strategic control of Afghanistan. But they do have patience and the West doesn't.

It behooves defeatists – in their weird upside-down triumphalism – to conflate Afghanistan and Iraq. Calamities such as Wednesday's dreadful attack against a Canadian convoy, killing six troops and an Afghan interpreter, suck the ballast out of a nation and buoy the political ambitions of opposition parties.

But Afghanistan isn't Iraq, most especially in this one core factor: There is no religious schism driving the madness and exploited to fuel the barbarity. In Iraq, religion is politics is power. Al Qaeda involvement aside, minority Sunnis (40 per cent) seek to reassert their paramount political eminence and the majority Shiite (60 per cent) have little willingness to share, not after the oppression they long suffered.

Afghanistan is 88 per cent Sunni. Most Shiites are in the distant west, along the border with Iran. The Pashtun tribes in southern Afghanistan may be more fundamentalist, and intractably resentful of Kabul, thus widely supportive of the Taliban, but this is still a religiously homogenous country.

It is not preordained to implode unless the international community – and Canada – forsakes Afghanistan again.

Rosie DiManno usually appears Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Retired Canadian colonel described Taliban tactics

IDNUMBER 200707060007
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
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PAGE: A02
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 34

Alain Pellerin is a retired Canadian colonel. He was misidentified in a July 5 article about a roadside bomb that killed six Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

The Star regrets the error.

Tributes for soldier; Anderson attended Notre Dame before joining the military

IDNUMBER 200707060086

PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Cpl Jordan Anderson, 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was killed on Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and one Afghan interpreter, when the vehicle they were travelling in struck an improvised explosive device, 20 kilometres south of Kandahar City. ;

BYLINE: Rob Vanstone

SOURCE: Leader-Post

WORD COUNT: 431

The attributes Jordan Anderson displayed while playing high school football for the Notre Dame Hounds are being saluted following his death in Afghanistan.

Anderson, 25, was one of six Canadian soldiers who were killed Wednesday when their armoured vehicle was destroyed by an improvised explosive device about 20 kilometres south of Kandahar City.

Anderson attended Wilcox-based Athol Murray College of Notre Dame and played on the offensive and defensive lines for the Regina Intercollegiate Football League's Hounds in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

"He was one of the team guys," veteran Notre Dame football coach Rob Palmarin said Thursday, when he discovered the tragic news about Cpl. Anderson. "He was willing to make sacrifices for the team when he played and he was willing to make sacrifices for his country."

Palmarin kept in touch with Anderson — a member of the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry — following his graduation from Notre Dame in 1999. Anderson is from the Northwest Territories.

"He e-mailed me two years ago from Afghanistan on one of his earlier missions," Palmarin recalled. "He said, 'I know we pray at assembly in the morning (at Notre Dame) when we all gather. Please pray for me and all the boys.'"

"He had a favourite prayer, which began, 'Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle.' He e-mailed me the words. He kept it simple.

"We're all in shock. We'll try to figure out a way to honour him during the (2007 football) season."

Palmarin has fond recollections of Anderson and his contributions to the Hounds and the school.

"It's like losing one of your own kids, even though it's eight or nine years removed," he said. "He was a tough, two-way lineman. He never made the all-star team, but he was kind of the next guy on the list. He was a battler. I'll always remember that. In one-on-ones, he'd always look to go after the toughest guy."

Anderson also played rugby for the Hounds for four years.

In his graduating year, he wrote the following in Notre Dame's yearbook: "Thanks, Mom and Dad, for all you've done for me even when times were low. I'll always try and make you proud of me."

The Hounds' 1998–99 yearbook also listed his ambitions: "To find work that I love, to never look back, and never have any regrets."

Five of the six deceased soldiers' names have been released. Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins were in Anderson's battalion. Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from The Royal Westminster Regiment, also died. The soldiers were to have concluded their deployment in Afghanistan at the end of the month.

"You recall the days of the Second World War where Pere Murray would rally the boys at Notre Dame to join the Canadian Armed Forces and fight the Nazis," Palmarin said. "I think we lost 67 Hounds in the Second World War.

"It hits home. It brings the war closer."

Army stoic in face of losses

SOURCETAG 0707060493

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: HALIFAX and EDMONTON

WORD COUNT: 390

Capt. Jefferson Francis volunteered for the patrol in Afghanistan that ultimately took his life.

Francis, 34, was in an armoured vehicle when a roadside bomb detonated Wednesday near Kandahar, killing six Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter.

Francis was with 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., but was from Halifax.

He was married and had an eight-month-old child.

Quoting an unnamed source, the Halifax Chronicle Herald says Francis wasn't originally supposed to be in patrol vehicle but volunteered to go out when a sixth soldier was needed.

A military source in Nova Scotia says Francis was an artillery co-ordinator, known as a "fire-effects officer."

A media briefing is scheduled for this morning at CFB Shilo.

Grieving for its last group of Afghanistan casualties, the army will steel itself for future challenges even as it mourns new losses, a Canadian military leader said yesterday.

Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore says the six who died — four of them based at Edmonton Garrison — were dedicated to their jobs and committed to the task Canada had set before them.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers. We are privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in their noble cause in the accomplishment of our shared mission," Skidmore, the commander of Land Force Western Area, said yesterday.

'STEEL OURSELVES'

"The army was their life, the army is our life and Canada is No. 1. And with those anchor points in our thoughts, we'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for the future challenges."

Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade, the formation to which the dead soldiers belonged, agreed.

"The greatest and immediate impact on the soldiers is the sense of loss and grief, but they very quickly recover from that and steel themselves for the continuation of the mission," he said.

"We're in the business of hard and we know that this is a complex and long-term engagement. "We grieve, we lay soldiers to rest properly, we support the families and get on with the mission."

The six soldiers, along with an Afghan interpreter, died Wednesday in a roadside explosion as they were returning from a mission southwest of Kandahar.

In addition to Francis, Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Capt. Matthew Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins were all members of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton.

Master Cpl. Colin Bason was a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C.

Watkins, 20, who grew up in Clearwater, Man., was characterized as sometimes being shy, although he was also remembered as someone everybody liked.

"I find it very hard to look at his picture on the news and think of him as gone, being so young," said Lynn Galbraith, who taught Watkins at Pilot Mound Collegiate.

"He was well-liked by all his classmates. He was a big strapping lad. He was a good-sized kid. He could be shy at times, but he was outgoing with his friends."

Galbraith said Watkins always thought of joining the military once he graduated.

The casualties came 15 days after another roadside bomb killed three soldiers as they rode an unarmoured utility vehicle. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Winnipeg Sun Online Poll

SOURCETAG 0707060482

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 2

WORD COUNT: 34

TODAY'S QUESTION

Should the head of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority earn more than the prime minister?

or call 632-2661 to agree

or 632-2662 to disagree

Yesterday, we asked "Do you think Canada should extend its commitment in Afghanistan beyond 2009?" Out of 1,759 responses, 29% said yes, 71% said no.

Cast your vote at winnipegsun.canoe.ca

No consensus, no mission Liberals to PM: Troops should count on return in February 2009

SOURCETAG 0707050795

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 5

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo of STEPHANE DION Tell NATO 2. photo of JACK LAYTON Bring 'em home
3. photo by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters A Canadian soldier heads out atop a tank from Ma'sum Ghar base after six countrymen were killed in Afghanistan yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 341

It's looking more like Prime Minister Stephen Harper's pledge not to extend Canada's combat role in Afghanistan without the consensus of all four federal parties means the combat mission will end in 19 months.

Two party leaders were unyielding in their positions yesterday as news filtered back from Kandahar that six more Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter had been killed by a roadside bomb.

With Canada's death toll in Afghanistan reaching 66 soldiers and a diplomat since 2002, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion told a news conference that Harper should have informed NATO allies weeks ago that Canada would not be renewing its combat commitment in the Central Asian country.

"The prime minister has said that he needs to have a consensus in order to extend the mission beyond February of 2009," Dion said. "This consensus will never exist."

"You know what is the views of the other parties and what is the view of the official Opposition. So the prime minister should say that right away."

Dion's news conference came a few hours after NDP Leader Jack Layton said Canada doesn't need to give notice, it should just pull out now.

Citing a mounting military and civilian death toll, Layton said Harper should engineer an immediate scaledown of operations and take a lead role in developing a peace process with Taliban leaders.

That suggestion has been ridiculed in the past by Harper.

The prime minister has said he will not risk undercutting the mission by contemplating an extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan beyond 2009 unless there is a consensus to do so.

Aides to Harper said the prime minister does not expect unanimity on the issue. The NDP has been consistent in its opposition to the current role Canadian troops are playing in Afghanistan.

But the prime minister might have been hoping for support from the Liberals.

Dion's reiterated opposition to extending the mission gives Harper a way to draw down Canada's military role in Afghanistan while insisting he had little choice in doing so.

NATO's presence in Afghanistan is only boosting Afghan support for the Taliban, Layton said.

The war is escalating and Ottawa is misguided in its commitment to provide combat troops to the NATO alliance in Afghanistan for at least two more years, he said.

"It's the wrong mission; it's not working; it's not going to accomplish the goals," Layton said.

He wants Dion and Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe to reconsider their positions on Canada's role in Afghanistan and join the NDP in calling for an immediate withdrawal.

Dion dismissed that possibility — and he refused to discuss the domestic political implications on a day that six more Canadians died. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Death toll

SOURCETAG 0707050793

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

WORD COUNT: 354

Since 2002, 66 Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan. Here's a list of the deaths:

2007

- July 4 — Six soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Panjwahi district west of Kandahar city.
- June 20 — Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe, all of 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar.
- June 11 — Trooper Darryl Caswell, 25, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, by a roadside bomb north of Kandahar.
- May 30 — Master Cpl. Darrell Jason Priede, killed when a U.S. helicopter was reportedly shot down in Helmand province.
- May 25 — Cpl. Matthew McCully, 25, killed by an improvised explosive device in Zhari District.
- April 18 — Master Cpl. Anthony Klumpenhower, who served with elite special forces, died after falling from a communications tower in Kandahar City.
- April 11 — Master Cpl. Allan Stewart and Trooper Patrick James Pentland killed when their Coyote vehicle struck an IED.
- April 8 — Sgt. Donald Lucas, Cpl. Aaron Williams, Pte. Kevin Kennedy, Pte. David Greenslade, Cpl. Christopher Stannix and Cpl. Brent Poland killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.
- March 6 — Cpl. Kevin Megeney, 25, killed in accidental shooting at NATO base in Kandahar.

2006

- Nov. 27 — Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Girouard and Cpl. Albert Storm killed by suicide car bomber.
- Oct. 14 — Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson killed in ambush.
- Oct. 7 — Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson killed by roadside bomb.
- Oct. 3 — Sgt. Craig Gillam and Cpl. Robert Mitchell killed in series of mortar, rocket attacks.
- Sept. 29 — Pte. Josh Klukie killed in explosion in Panjwahi.

- Sept. 18 — Pte. David Byers, Cpl. Shane Keating, Cpl. Keith Morley and Cpl. Glen Arnold killed in suicide bicycle bomb attack in Panjwahi.
- Sept. 4 — Pte. Mark Graham killed when two NATO planes accidentally strafed Canadian troops in Panjwahi district.
- Sept. 3 — Sgt. Shane Stachnik, Warrant Officer Frank Mellish, Pte. William Cushley and Warrant Officer Richard Nolan killed in fighting in Panjwahi district.
- Aug. 22 — Cpl. David Braun killed in suicide attack.
- Aug. 11 — Cpl. Andrew Eykelenboom killed in suicide attack.
- Aug. 9 — Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh killed by apparent accidental discharge of rifle.
- Aug. 5 — Master Cpl. Raymond Arndt killed when his G-Wagon patrol vehicle collided with truck.
- Aug. 3 — Cpl. Christopher Reid killed by roadside bomb. Sgt. Vaughan Ingram, Cpl. Bryce Keller and Pte. Kevin Dallaire killed in rocket-propelled grenade attack.
- July 22 — Cpl. Francisco Gomez and Cpl. Jason Warren killed when car packed with explosives rammed their armoured vehicle.
- July 9 — Cpl. Anthony Boneca killed in firefight.
- May 17 — Capt. Nichola Goddard killed in Taliban ambush.
- April 22 — Cpl. Matthew Dinning, Bombardier Myles Mansell, Lieut. William Turner and Cpl. Randy Payne killed when their G-Wagon destroyed by roadside bomb.
- March 29 — Pte. Robert Costall killed in firefight with Taliban.
- March 2 — Cpl. Paul Davis and Master Cpl. Timothy Wilson killed when their armoured vehicle ran off road.
- Jan. 15 — Glyn Berry, British-born Canadian diplomat, killed in suicide bombing.

2005

- Nov. 24 — Pte. Braun Woodfield killed when his armoured vehicle rolled over.

2004

- Jan. 27 — Cpl. Jamie Murphy killed in suicide bombing while on patrol.

2003

- Oct. 2 — Sgt. Robert Short and Cpl. Robbie Beerenfenger killed in roadside bombing.

2002

- April 17 — Sgt. Marc Leger, Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, Pte. Richard Green and Pte. Nathan Smith killed when

U.S. F-16 fighter mistakenly bombed Canadians. KEYWORDS=CANADIAN ABROAD; FATAL; CANADA; MILITARY; STATISTIC

Armour no match for bomb 'They have managed to kill 6 great young Canadians today and that is an absolute tragedy'

SOURCETAG: 0707050790

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: 1. 2 photos by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters Corp. Rikk Lewis embraces a fellow soldier on his safe arrival at Ma'sum Ghar base after six Canadians were killed yesterday. They were riding in a RG-31 Nyala like its companion armoured vehicle which made it back safely.
2. file photo by Darryl Dyck, Sun Media Capt. Matthew Dawe, one of the six killed, reaches out for his son Lucas, 1, in a photo taken in February at CFB Edmonton.

BYLINE: STEPHANIE LEVITZ, THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATELINE: KANDAHAR

WORD COUNT: 609

A powerful roadside bomb killed six Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter yesterday, overwhelming the sturdy armour of a vehicle designed to withstand mine blasts as it was moving along a gravel road in southern Afghanistan.

The RG-31 Nyala patrol vehicle is considered one of the military's strongest in protecting against the deadly scourge of roadside bombs, but it failed to save the lives of the seven people inside its armoured body.

The identities of four of the dead were released late yesterday afternoon: Cpl. Cole Bartsch, of Whitecourt, Alta.; Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe and Pte. Lane Watkins, from Clearwater, Man., all of 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton; and Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C.

Families of the other two had not agreed to the release of their names last night.

Dawe, 27, was identified by the Kingston Whig-Standard as the commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion's C company.

Dawe, midway through a tour of Afghanistan, was in charge of Pte. Joel Wiebe, Sgt. Christos Karigiannis and Cpl. Stephen Bouzane when their unarmoured Gator vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb June 20, the Whig-Standard said. All three were killed.

Ann Bason of Abbotsford, B.C., told CTV News her son was probably one of the first reservists to join when the call went out for volunteers for the Afghan mission.

'HE WAS VERY PROUD'

"He was very proud that he got picked," she said.

"The sad thing is he only had six weeks left to go before he was on his way home. But how many people get to do the things they really love and he loved the infantry."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement last night saying: "On behalf of all Canadians, my most sincere condolences go out to the family, friends and colleagues ... they are all in our thoughts and prayers."

Altogether, 66 Canadian soldiers have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002, along with one diplomat.

The six soldiers were returning to a forward operating base after a joint mission with Afghan security forces around 11 a.m. local time when their vehicle struck the improvised explosive device, said Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, the top Canadian in Afghanistan.

The vehicle was on a well-travelled route, used by army and locals alike, in an area of Kandahar province considered among the safer zones.

The troops had been on a cordon-and-search operation, following intelligence that Taliban were in the area. They had been passing through the village of Salavat, 20 km southwest of Kandahar city, when the bomb went off.

It's not the first time a Canadian soldier has been killed while riding in a Nyala.

In October, Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson died from injuries sustained when his Nyala was hit by an improvised explosive device — or IED — in the same district.

SIGN OF DESPERATION

Though the military has said the rising use of roadside bombs is a sign of a desperate insurgency, their deadly blasts have claimed more lives during the current rotation of Canadian troops than any other weapons — 19 of the 22 soldiers killed so far.

"Clearly they have managed to kill six great young Canadians today which is an absolute tragedy, but the other parts of this is that they are killing lots of Afghans," Grant said.

"These are not the tactics of anything other than terrorists."

Grant pointed out that many IEDs are discovered and neutralized by the military before causing any harm.

"We're not perfect and we do miss some, as we have seen today, but the battle against the Taliban and the battle against their choice of weapons, IED, is successful," Grant insisted.

"And more often than not we do find them and we do disarm them."

Grant maintained that Panjwaii is still much safer than the nearby district of Zhari, despite yesterday's attack and one at the end of June that killed three Canadians.

Canadians have been conducting a series of operations in Zhari for months, trying to flush out the stubborn Taliban insurgency there. But Panjwaii is often heralded as a military-reconstruction success story after heavy fighting last fall.

'GREAT RELATIONSHIPS'

"Panjwaii is an area we are comfortable in travelling in, we have great relationships with local elders and the

Armour no match for bomb 'They have managed to kill 6 great young Canadians today and that is an absolute

district leadership and the people on the ground," he said.

"So this is an area that while the Taliban operate in it, they do not operate freely."

The current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan is due to return home at the end of this month.

Yesterday's blast was the deadliest for Canadians since Easter Sunday, April 8, when another roadside bomb killed six Canadian soldiers inside a LAV-3, another light armoured vehicle. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Armour no match for bomb 'They have managed to kill 6 great young Canadians today and that is 39 absolutely

Frontpage Numb with pain 6 more of our boys killed in Afghanistan KEYWORDS=WORLD

SOURCETAG 0707050787

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 1

ILLUSTRATION: 4 photos 1. photo of CORPORAL COLE BARTSCH 2. photo of MASTER CORPORAL COLIN BASON 3. photo of CAPTAIN MATTHEW JOHNATHAN DAWE 4. photo of PRIVATE LANE WATKINS

WORD COUNT: 0

Military family mourns fallen Captain 'prided himself on serving from the front'

SOURCETAG 0707060308

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 6

ILLUSTRATION: 6 photos 1. photo of MATTHEW DAWE One of the six soldiers killed on Wednesday, holds his son Lucas before leaving for Afghanistan in February. 2. photo of COLE BARTSCH 3. photo of COLIN BASON 4. photo of LANE WATKINS 5. photo of JEFFERSON FRANCIS 6. photo of JORDAN ANDERSON.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: KINGSTON

WORD COUNT: 333

The family of one of the highest-ranking Canadian officers to be killed in Afghanistan since the war began remembered their son, brother and husband yesterday as a dedicated soldier who wouldn't let something as minor as a ruptured Achilles tendon get in his way.

The family of Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, was not speaking to the media, but released a statement praising Dawe's love for the soldiers who worked under him.

"Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," the statement reads.

"He loved his soldiers very much and we know that this feeling was reciprocal."

The statement says Dawe ruptured his Achilles tendon in the months leading to his deployment, but he recovered faster than expected because he "didn't want his boys to go without him."

ROADSIDE BOMB

Dawe was killed Wednesday along with five other Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter when an armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb.

Dawe leaves behind his wife, Tara, and a two-year-old son named Lucas.

The statement says Dawe was very close to his parents, brothers and his large extended family.

Dawe comes from a prominent military family in Kingston. His father is a retired lieutenant-colonel, and all three of his older brothers are enlisted with the Canadian Forces. Two served in Afghanistan in 2002. His family acknowledges this in their statement, but asks people to pay tribute to all the soldiers who were killed.

"It is important to remember that Matt was one of six soldiers who lost their lives," it reads. "Our hearts go out to the other families who may not have understood the dangers of this mission to the extent that we did."

Four of the soldiers killed on Wednesday — Dawe along with Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins — were based in Edmonton with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Capt. Jefferson Francis was with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shiloh, Man., and Master Cpl. Colin Bason was a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C.

In Edmonton, Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore yesterday said the soldiers who died Wednesday were dedicated to their job and committed to the task Canada had set before them.

"The army was their life, the army is our life and Canada is No. 1. And with those anchor points in our thoughts, we'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for the future challenges," he said.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Harper vows to soldier on

SOURCETAG 0707060307

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 6

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: HALIFAX

WORD COUNT: 215

Prime Minister Stephen Harper restated his determination yesterday to keep Canadian troops in Afghanistan until 2009 despite mounting casualties at the hands of an enemy emboldened by a lethal shift in tactics.

Harper, in Halifax to make a \$3.1-billion funding announcement for the navy, said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly, but they will not alter his plan to maintain the current operation even as opposition calls grow louder for a withdrawal from the war-torn nation.

"Obviously as prime minister, casualties of any kind weigh heavily upon my mind," he said on the flight deck of HMCS Halifax.

"But today is not the day to have a political debate on the future of the mission. Today is a day to express our condolences for these soldiers, to their families."

WITHSTAND BLASTS

The pledge to stay on followed one of the deadliest days in Afghanistan for Canadian troops. Six soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were killed Wednesday when they hit a potent roadside bomb in Kandahar's Zhari district. They were travelling in a RG-31, a heavily armoured patrol vehicle with a V-shaped hull that's designed to withstand mine blasts.

Harper said the federal government has provided soldiers with a full range of equipment, but declined to discuss how the military should respond to the Taliban's use of more powerful roadside bombs.

"We have supplied our Canadian troops in Afghanistan with a full range of equipment all the way from small vehicles up to tanks." **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

Al-Qaida urges Muslims to rally

SOURCETAG 0707060381

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

BYLINE: AP

DELINE: BAGHDAD

WORD COUNT: 275

Al-Qaida's deputy leader sought to bolster the terror network's main arm in Iraq in a new video released yesterday, calling on Muslims to rally behind it at a time when the group is on the defensive, faced with U.S. offensives and splits with other insurgent groups.

Ayman al-Zawahri defended the Islamic State of Iraq — the insurgent umbrella group headed by al-Qaida — against critics among Islamic militant groups, saying it was a vanguard for fighting off the U.S. military and eventually establishing a "caliphate" of Islamic rule across the region.

Al-Zawahri, the top deputy of Osama bin Laden, called on Muslims to follow a two-pronged strategy: work at home to topple "corrupt" Arab regimes and join al-Qaida's "jihad," or holy war, in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia to fight and train "to prepare for the next jihad."

He urged Hamas not to compromise under Arab and international pressure to end its rule in the Gaza Strip and make way for a unified Palestinian government that could pursue peace with Israel.

"As for the leadership of Hamas, I tell it: return to the truth, for you will only get something worse than what (late Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat got" from the Israelis in negotiations.

The peace process, he said, is a U.S. attempt to "deceive the Islamic nation and say that America solved the issue of Palestine, so what need is there to fight it and wage jihad against it?"

In an earlier message after its seizure of Gaza, al-Zawahri urged Hamas to form an alliance with al-Qaida, a call the Palestinian militant group shunned.

The Egyptian militant did not mention last week's failed car bombing bids in Britain, which British authorities are investigating for al-Qaida links. That suggested the video, posted on an Islamic militant website, was made before the events in London and Glasgow. KEYWORDS=WORLD

MacKenzie calls for 15,000 more troops

SOURCETAG 0707060373
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: photo of LEWIS MACKENZIE
BYLINE: MERITA ILO, CP
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 375

In the wake of six more Canadian deaths in Afghanistan, a retired army general said the military mission in that country can only be successful if NATO doubles the number of troops on the ground.

"We need more boots on the ground," said retired Canadian major-general Lewis MacKenzie, who has commanded troops in some of the world's most dangerous places.

"I know the commanders (in Afghanistan) can't ask for the numbers they would like because it's politically sensitive to do that, but they need another 15,000 troops, a division in the south, to help the Dutch, the Canadians, the Brits and the Americans do their jobs."

Canada has about 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, most of them based in the southern province of Kandahar.

MacKenzie insisted the mission has achieved significant successes, citing the return of more than three million refugees to their homes, the opening of 300 new schools and the fact that girls are now free to go to school, something unimaginable under the Taliban.

"Kabul was almost abandoned when I first went there and when I was there last year, it was a bustling city," MacKenzie said.

But he is highly critical of NATO's handling of the war in the impoverished country.

MacKenzie said there are more than a million troops available throughout NATO, but only about 35,000 in Afghanistan.

He said the ratio of soldiers to the population in an insurgency is the lowest in the history of warfare.

The retired major-general said he is frustrated that NATO has failed to make good on its promise for more troops for the Afghan mission.

"For some reason we have a tiny, tiny force and an alliance that was supposed to preach one for all and all for one — well, it sure in hell hasn't turned out that way," MacKenzie said.

He says it's clear some NATO members are not doing enough and should step up to the plate. If NATO as an alliance fails to generate the troops necessary, MacKenzie said, "then I would agree that the time has come to part (leave Afghanistan)."

Canada has one of the highest death tolls of any NATO member in Afghanistan, with 66 soldiers killed since 2002.

The latest victims were six soldiers killed Wednesday by a roadside bomb.

MacKenzie said the loss of Canadian lives in Afghanistan is something that had to be expected and there have already been warnings by both the Conservative and the former Liberal governments.

"The centre of gravity of this operation are the hearts and minds of the Canadian public. It's just like Vietnam and the American public," said MacKenzie, warning that calls for withdrawal would give the wrong signals to the insurgents.

The Afghan society is a warrior society, he said .

"They understand insurgency and they understand where they should attack and attacking the soldiers is an indirect way of attacking the morale of the Canadian public." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Harper stands by Afghan mission

SOURCETAG 0707060372

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHEN HARPER Prime minister says deaths of soldiers "weigh heavily" on his mind.

BYLINE: ALISON AULD, CP

DATELINE: HALIFAX

WORD COUNT: 250

Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday restated his determination to keep Canadian troops in Afghanistan until 2009 despite mounting casualties at the hands of an enemy emboldened by a lethal shift in tactics.

Harper, in Halifax to make a \$3.1-billion funding announcement for the navy, said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly, but they will not alter his plan to maintain the current operation even as opposition calls grow louder for a withdrawal from the war-torn nation.

"Obviously as prime minister, casualties of any kind weigh heavily upon my mind," he said on the flight deck of the frigate HMCS Halifax.

"But today is not the day to have a political debate on the future of the mission. Today is a day to express our condolences for these soldiers, to their families."

The pledge to stay on followed one of the deadliest days in Afghanistan for Canadian troops. Six soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were killed Wednesday when they hit a potent roadside bomb in Kandahar's Zhari district.

They were travelling in a RG-31, a heavily armoured patrol vehicle with a V-shaped hull that's designed to withstand mine blasts and is considered one of the military's strongest in protecting against the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But somehow the explosion managed to engulf the Nyala in flames, leaving the soldiers little chance of survival and raising fears that the insurgents have adopted the same kind of deadly tactics used in Iraq.

"There's a real danger that Afghanistan starts to look more and more like Iraq," said Steven Staples of the Rideau Institute, an Ottawa-based think-tank.

"It's pretty clear that insurgents are learning from the experience in Iraq, where roadside bombs have proven to be incredibly lethal at striking back against the foreign militaries there.

"So Canadians are going to confront this a lot more often."

Soldiers' bravery earns praise Military officials extol their dedication, while families begin to speak of their dependability.

SOURCETAG 0707060371

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: 7 photos 1. photo by Reuters SYMBOL: The Canadian flag flies at half-mast beneath the Afghan flag at the NATO coalition force military base at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, yesterday. Six Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday when their armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb. 2. photo of MATTHEW DAWE 3. photo of LANE WATKINS 4. photo of COLIN BASON 5. photo of COLE BARTSCH 6. photo of JEFFERSON FRANCIS 7. photo of JORDAN ANDERSON

BYLINE: BOB WEBER, CP

DATELINE: EDMONTON

WORD COUNT: 569

A Canadian military leader says the army grieves for the soldiers who were killed in Afghanistan this week, but will also steel itself for future challenges.

Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore says the six who died were dedicated to their jobs and committed to the task Canada had set before them.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers. We are privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in their noble cause in the accomplishment of our shared mission," Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, said yesterday.

"The army was their life, the army is our life and Canada is No. 1. And with those anchor points in our thoughts, we'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for the future challenges."

Skidmore called on Canadians to honour the memory of the young soldiers who "have given so much and asked for so little."

Col. Jon Vance, commander of the 1st Canadian Mechanized Brigade, echoed those thoughts, saying the most important thing right now is for all Canadians to stand behind the families who have lost their loved ones.

Vance said the families are well aware that there is a debate about Canada's mission in Afghanistan, but the most sensitive and mature approach right now is to send out a "clarion call" of love and support.

The six soldiers and an Afghan interpreter died Wednesday in a roadside explosion as they were returning from a mission southwest of Kandahar.

Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Capt. Matthew Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins were all members of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton.

Soldiers' bravery earns praise Military officials extol their dedication, while families begin to speak of their de

Master Cpl. Colin Bason was a reservist with the Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C., and Capt. Jefferson Francis was with 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man.

The family of Dawe, one of the highest-ranking Canadian officers to be killed in Afghanistan, remembered their son, brother and husband as a dedicated soldier who wouldn't let something as minor as a ruptured Achilles tendon get in his way.

Family members were not speaking to the media, but released a statement praising his love for the soldiers who worked under him.

"Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," the statement read. "He loved his soldiers very much and we know that this feeling was reciprocal."

The statement said Dawe, 27, ruptured his Achilles tendon in the months leading up to his deployment to Afghanistan, but he recovered faster than expected because he "didn't want his boys to go without him."

Dawe comes from a prominent military family in Kingston. His father is a retired lieutenant-colonel and all three of his older brothers are enlisted with the Canadian Forces. Two of them served in Afghanistan in 2002.

Dawe was reportedly badly shaken when three other Canadian soldiers under his command were killed by a roadside bomb June 20.

Bartsch was remembered by his aunt as a much-loved young man whom friends could count on when they needed him.

"He was always the reliable one," a tearful Karen Shilson said from Calgary. "He would think nothing of taking the shirt off his back and giving it to you if you needed it worse than him. He was a good kid. He was one you could trust anywhere, any time."

Bartsch, whose family is from Whitecourt, Alta., enlisted in the military right out of high school and re-enlisted in the hope of further service to Canada, Shilson said.

"His belief was, even if it cost him his life, he was going to help his country. And it did."

Shilson said Bartsch was outgoing and got along with everybody.

"He never thought twice about going out of his way to help somebody else."

Watkins, 20, who grew up in Clearwater, Man., was characterized as sometimes being shy, although he was also remembered as someone everybody liked.

"I find it very hard to look at his picture on the news and think of him as gone, being so young," said Lynn Galbraith, who taught Watkins at Pilot Mound Collegiate high school.

"He was well-liked by all his classmates. He was a big strapping lad. He was a good-sized kid. He could be shy at times, but he was outgoing with his friends."

Galbraith said Watkins, too, always thought of joining the military once he graduated.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since the war began in 2002.
KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Soldiers' bravery earns praise Military officials extol their dedication, while families begin to speak ~~40~~ their de

Experienced soldier confident in Nyala vehicle

SOURCETAG 0707060370

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

BYLINE: STEPHANIE LEVITZ, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORD COUNT: 280

Bumping along on a gravel road yesterday morning, the RG-31 Nyala vehicle shook and shuddered.

Lt.-Col. Wayne Eyre was uncomfortable, but unfazed.

The day before, six Canadians died when their Nyala was ripped apart by a roadside bomb.

Eyre said he still has complete faith in the RG-31 as his vehicle slammed into potholes and thunked over speed bumps en route back to Kandahar Airfield from Spin Boldak on the Pakistan border.

The Nyala armoured patrol vehicle is considered by the military as its heaviest protection against the scourge of improvised explosive devices or IEDs — commonly known as roadside bombs.

"I still have confidence in the vehicle," he said as the driver squawked out commands over the intercom.

"It's getting us from point A to point B. There's no vehicle in the world that will be an answer for every threat out there."

Tired from their drive and shaken by the latest deaths, soldiers gathered quietly to the side of the sand-coloured vehicles in Kandahar early yesterday.

Like the six men killed Wednesday, members of the force protection unit navigating the rugged terrain in this RG-31s are due to return home in August.

"This is a wake-up call," said one soldier who didn't want his name used. "What we thought was the safest thing out there maybe isn't."

Tucked into the window panelling of their vehicle were two woollen teddy bears, a gift from a female soldier for good luck.

It was the only soft touch inside the harsh, cramped Nyala, with its plastic seats and awkward seatbelts.

The seatbelts are designed to keep soldiers from slamming their heads into the metal ceiling of the vehicles, if a blast strikes and pressure waves fill the narrow interior.

The young soldier said it was hard for him to climb into the Nyala in the morning, hard to keep going when the end of his mission is only weeks away.

But Eyre said now is the time for soldiers to work harder than ever before.

"There is a hollow spot, make no doubt about that," he said. "But what we need to do is be strong and we have to dig deeper than we've ever dug before and carry on with our task here."

In his more than 20 years with the Canadian Forces, Eyre has seen death many times and been to farewell ceremonies for Afghan soldiers, whom his team trains, and countless ramp ceremonies for Canadian soldiers who have died. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

No ballots for overseas troops October municipal elections

SOURCETAG 0707060799

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Tim Smith Director of Elections Steve Thompson displays the new mail-in ballots available to Edmontonians who are out of the city on municipal election day, October 15, beside a mailbox near City Hall after a press conference yesterday.

BYLINE: FRANK LANDRY, CITY HALL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 251

Edmonton-based soldiers stationed overseas will be out of luck if they want to vote in the October municipal election.

And that's causing concern among military officials, who argue soldiers shouldn't lose out just because they're on a tour of duty.

For the first time, Edmontonians will be able to cast mail-in ballots in a civic election.

Steve Thompson, the city's director of elections, said military personnel in Afghanistan will be ineligible.

"It simply would not be possible," Thompson said yesterday. "There is not enough time."

He said the ballots will be produced and mailed out after nomination day, which is Sept. 15.

That's when all candidates are confirmed.

Thompson said the timeline is too tight to get the ballots overseas and returned to Edmonton by voting day – Oct. 15.

Capt. Lou Marselje, public affairs officer at Edmonton Garrison, said that's not what he wanted to hear.

"That's exactly what we're worried about," he told Sun Media.

Marselje said there's a chance up to 200 Edmonton-based soldiers could be overseas on election day, and he still hopes some sort of plan can be worked out.

He said in federal elections, soldiers overseas are still able to vote in advance polls.

"Our soldiers have a right to vote, and we insist on all three levels of government. Our soldiers should have the opportunity to vote, even if they decided to decline to do so."

Changes in provincial legislation permitted municipalities to accept mail-in ballots starting in 2004, but this is the first time Edmonton has taken advantage of the changes.

Calgary used mail-in ballots in 2004, when there were allegations of voter fraud.

Voters will now have to include a photocopy of their ID – such as a driver's licence – when they return their ballot package. To ensure a secret ballot, voters will be given separate envelopes for their ballot and ID.

As well, voters who will be out-of-town will only be able to request mail-in ballots for themselves, not other family members.

Civic affairs expert Jim Lightbody said despite the precautions, there's no guarantee against voter fraud.

"Any system can be corrupted if people are intent to do so," said the University of Alberta professor.

The new program is expected to cost \$30,000.

Thompson said voters can already request a mail-in ballot by calling 496-8008 or going to www.edmonton.ca/election. KEYWORDS=EDMONTON

'The saddest of days' Commanders speak of loss of comrades and need to show support for families

SOURCETAG 0707060778

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Brett Gundlock, Special to Sun Media Brig-Gen. Mark Skidmore addresses the media at the Griesbach army base yesterday. He called on all Canadians to show their support for the families of the soldiers who were killed Wednesday in Afghanistan .

BYLINE: RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 427

Canada's Armed Forces need to feel love and support from Canadians during one of its saddest times, says the commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group.

In the wake of the recent loss of six Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, including four who were based in Edmonton, Col. Jon Vance talked about his personal connection to one of the slain soldiers and the impact the deaths have had on the military.

"These are the saddest of days and saddest of events for our brigade," Vance told reporters yesterday at a press conference in front of the Land Force Western Area headquarters. "We must ensure that their families hear a clarion call of love and support from Canada."

Vance said that's "the most sensitive and mature approach" to the tragedy.

Vance has a personal connection to a military family hit by the tragedy.

"I can tell you that I was closest with Capt. Matthew Dawe and his family. I grieve right now with his family. It's painful."

"I know his dad, Peter Sr. We worked with each other for a long time. I worked with his brother, Lt. Col. Peter Dawe Jr."

He called the Dawes a "model Canadian family, who have given so much of their time and talent to Canada through the Canadian Forces.

"I personally am as hurt as anyone that we've lost Matthew. He's a great soldier."

Dawe was killed by a roadside bomb along with Master Cpl. Colin Bason, Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Pte. Lane Watkins and Capt. Jefferson Francis.

Anderson, Dawe, Bartsch and Watkins were all members of the Edmonton-based 3rd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

"I call upon all Canadians to support these grieving families and to honour the memories of these brave young Canadians, who are not asking so much but so little," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area.

"Afford them the respect and dignity while they're enduring their sacrifice and advancing the ideals (of this country)," he implored.

Vance said debates on Canada's presence in Afghanistan should be set aside and that the immediate priority must be the grieving families.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians. They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

Skidmore said he could say little about the fact that the soldiers were killed in an armoured vehicle on a road that was thought to be safe.

A powerful roadside bomb killed the Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter on Wednesday, overwhelming the armour of a vehicle designed to withstand mine blasts, as it moved along a gravel road in south Afghanistan.

The RG-31 Nyala patrol vehicle is considered one of the military's strongest in protecting against the deadly scourge of roadside bombs, but it failed to save the lives of the seven people inside its armoured body.

"We're up against a wily and clever enemy who are used to observing. They see patterns and react to patterns. That's something we always have to be ready to accept. The enemy will adapt their tactics as we adapt ours," Skidmore said.

The Edmonton-based soldiers would have finished their deployment in Afghanistan at the end of this month.

"There are no words to adequately explain the mix of grief and pride that we in uniform deal with in remembering our comrades.

"For now, we focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of our loved ones.

"We will remember them, we will remember them." KEYWORDS=CANADA

Failed armour defended All vehicles called vulnerable

SOURCETAG 0707060661

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 40

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters Canadian soldiers seek cover during a lull in a firefight against Taliban insurgents. Six Canadian soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb while travelling in a Nyala armoured vehicle Wednesday in southern Afghanistan.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR

WORD COUNT: 204

Bumping along on a gravel road yesterday morning, the RG-31 Nyala vehicle shook and shuddered.

Lt.-Col. Wayne Eyre was uncomfortable, but unfazed.

On Wednesday, six Canadians died when their vehicle, also a Nyala, was ripped apart by a roadside bomb.

Eyre said he still has complete faith in the RG-31 as his vehicle slammed into potholes and thunked over speed bumps en route to Kandahar Airfield from Spin Boldak, on the Pakistan border.

The Nyala armoured patrol vehicle is considered by the military as its heaviest protection against the scourge of improvised explosive devices or IEDs — commonly known as roadside bombs.

"I still have confidence in the vehicle," he said as the driver squawked out commands over the intercom.

"It's getting us from point A to point B. There's no vehicle in the world that will be an answer for every threat out there."

His sentiment was shared by retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie back in Canada.

"You'll never have a military vehicle that's 100-per-cent safe," MacKenzie said.

"It's just never been invented.

"They all have their vulnerabilities. And in this particular case, with the IED probably being based on an artillery shell that causes penetration, the result was as we saw it yesterday."

Tired from their drive and shaken by the latest deaths, soldiers gathered quietly to the side of the sand-coloured vehicles in Kandahar early yesterday. Like the six men killed Wednesday, members of the force-protection unit navigating the rugged terrain in this RG-31 were due to return home in August.

"This is a wake-up call," said one soldier who didn't want his name used. "What we thought was the safest thing out there maybe isn't." KEYWORDS=WORLD

MASTER CPL. COLIN BASON

SOURCETAG 0707060660
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 40
ILLUSTRATION: photo
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.
WORD COUNT: 94

Master Cpl. Colin Bason is being remembered as a good soldier and a bit of a trickster.

Bason was one of six soldiers and an Afghan interpreter who died when a roadside bomb detonated as they were travelling in an armoured vehicle.

Lt.-Col. Matthew Haussmann told a news conference in New Westminster Bason, a reservist, had planned on becoming a full-time soldier and was a good leader.

He said Bason was well-regarded and well-known for his joking around with his peers. Haussmann notified Bason's family that he wouldn't be coming home.

The last time the Royal Westminster Regiment lost a soldier was June 1945.

Seven reservists from the regiment were with Bason in Afghanistan and another 28 more from the same regiment are in training to go. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

CAPT. MATTHEW DAWE

SOURCETAG 0707060659
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 40
ILLUSTRATION: photo
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: KINGSTON, Ont.
WORD COUNT: 113

The family of one of the highest-ranking Canadian officers to be killed in Afghanistan since the war began remembered their son, brother and husband as a dedicated soldier who wouldn't let something as minor as a ruptured Achilles tendon get in his way.

The family of Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, released a statement yesterday praising Dawe's love for the soldiers who worked under him.

"Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," the statement reads. "He loved his soldiers very much."

The statement says Dawe ruptured his Achilles tendon in the months leading to his deployment to Afghanistan, but he recovered faster than expected because he "didn't want his boys to go without him."

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

CAPT. JEFFERSON FRANCIS

SOURCETAG 0707060657
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 40
ILLUSTRATION: photo
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: HALIFAX
WORD COUNT: 95

Capt. Jefferson Francis volunteered for the patrol in Afghanistan that ultimately took his life.

Quoting an unnamed source, the Halifax Chronicle Herald says Francis wasn't originally supposed to be in patrol vehicle but volunteered to go out when a sixth soldier was needed.

Francis was with 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shiloh, Man., but was from Halifax.

He was married and had an eight-month-old child.

A military source in Nova Scotia says Francis was an artillery co-ordinator, known as a "fire-effects officer."

Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore said yesterday spoke of the respect soldiers have of their fallen comrades.

"We are privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in their noble cause in the accomplishment of our shared mission." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

PTE. LANE WATKINS

SOURCETAG 0707060656
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 40
ILLUSTRATION: photo
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: WINNIPEG
WORD COUNT: 108

He will never get to meet the little girl who will carry on his name.

Pte. Lane Watkins was remembered yesterday as a proud uncle to three-month-old Chloe Colleen Lane Cairns, born several months after he was deployed to Afghanistan last December.

Watkins had been scheduled to come home in a few weeks and was looking forward to meeting Chloe, the daughter of his older brother.

"(Lane) was very proud of her and he couldn't stop talking about how much he wanted to see her and hold her and all that stuff," Chloe's mother, Candice Cairns, wrote in an e-mail.

Cairns said she and her partner Andrew Watkins included Lane in the baby's name because they were so proud of his work overseas.

"I know he will be looking over her... He is her angel now," she wrote on a web page created in Lane's honour. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Sunflashes column

SOURCETAG 0707060603
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: SUN WIRE SERVICES
COLUMN: Sunflashes
WORD COUNT: 249

AL-QAIDA RELEASES NEW VIDEO THREAT

BAGHDAD — Al-Qaida's deputy leader sought to bolster the terror network's main arm in Iraq in a new video released yesterday, calling on Muslims to rally behind it at a time when the group is on the defensive, faced with U.S. offensives and splits with other insurgent groups. Ayman al-Zawahri called on Muslims to follow a two-pronged strategy: Work at home to topple "corrupt" Arab regimes and join al-Qaida's "jihad," or holy war, in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia to fight and train "to prepare for the next jihad."

YOUNG SAILORS RESCUED

DUBLIN — Rescuers plucked about 110 children from the Irish Sea yesterday after a sudden squall hit their flotilla of sailboats during a race, capsizing many of the 91 boats, officials said.

The sailors, mostly teenagers but some as young as 12, were rescued and evaluated on shore for hypothermia and shock.

MARCH FOR LIBERATION

BOGOTA — Hundreds of thousands of people marched through Colombia's major cities yesterday in a mass protest to demand the immediate liberation of the country's kidnap victims.

In all, some 3,000 Colombians are being held by kidnappers, according to the citizens' group Pais Libre.

WAR CRIMINAL JAILED

BRUSSELS — A former Rwandan army major was sentenced to 20 years in prison yesterday for his involvement in the 1994 killings of 10 Belgian peacekeepers at the start of the Rwandan genocide. Bernard Ntuyahaga, 55, was found guilty of manslaughter by a jury in the 1994 killings.

24 KILLED IN LANDSLIDE

ELOXOCHITLAN, Mexico — Soldiers and rescue workers yesterday recovered 24 bodies from a bus buried in a landslide but held out little hope of finding survivors among the 40 to 60 passengers.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Military 'needs our love' Commander says Canadians must support soldiers in 'saddest of days'

SOURCETAG 0707060587

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: 3 photos 1. photo by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters Canadian Pte. Mark Amos takes cover behind a mud wall during a firefight against Taliban insurgents earlier this week. Six Canadian soldiers were killed in southern Afghanistan Wednesday when their armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb. 2. photo of JEFFERSON FRANCIS 3. photo of JORDAN ANDERSON

BYLINE: RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 329

Canada's Armed Forces need to feel love and support from Canadians during one of its saddest times, says the commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group.

After the loss of six Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, Col. Jon Vance talked about his personal connection to one of the slain soldiers and the impact the deaths have had on the military.

"These are the saddest of days and saddest of events for our brigade," Vance told reporters yesterday. "We must ensure that their families hear a clarion call of love and support from Canada."

Vance said that's "the most sensitive and mature approach" to the tragedy.

Vance has a personal connection to a military family hit by the tragedy.

"I can tell you that I was closest with Capt. Matthew Dawe and his family. I grieve right now with his family. It's painful.

"I know his dad, Peter Sr. We worked with each other for a long time. I worked with his brother Lt.-Col. Peter Dawe Jr."

He called the Dawes a "model Canadian family, who have given so much of their time and talent to Canada through the Canadian Forces."

Dawe was killed along with Master Cpl. Colin Bason, Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Pte. Lane Watkins and Capt. Jefferson Francis. Anderson, Dawe, Bartsch and Watkins were all members of the Edmonton-based 3rd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry after their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

Bartsch, from Whitecourt, was remembered by his aunt in Calgary as a much-loved young man whom friends could always count on.

"He was always the reliable one," said a tearful Karen Shilson. "He would think nothing of taking the shirt off his back and giving it to you if you needed it worse than him. He was a good kid. He was one you could trust anywhere, any time.

"He never thought twice about going out of his way to help somebody else."

Bartsch enlisted in the military right out of high school and re-enlisted in the hope of further service to Canada, Shilson said.

"His belief was, even it was going to cost him his life, he was going to help his country. And it did."

Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, called on all Canadians to support the grieving families and to honour the memories of the fallen soldiers.

"Afford them the respect and dignity while they're enduring their sacrifice and advancing the ideals (of this country)," he implored.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians. They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

The Edmonton-based soldiers would have finished their deployment in Afghanistan at the end of this month.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

Harper won't back down on mission

SOURCETAG 0707060586
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 3
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHEN HARPER Committed
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: HALIFAX
WORD COUNT: 187

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the recent carnage in Afghanistan weighs heavily on his mind, but it won't sway his commitment to have the Canadian military carry out its mission there until February 2009.

The prime minister, in Halifax to make a \$3.1-billion funding announcement for the navy, said his government has been very clear about the duration of the mission, and he stressed that now was not the time to engage in political debate.

"We have the House of Commons for that," he said as he stood on the deck of the frigate HMCS Halifax.

Instead, Harper said it would be more appropriate to express condolences to the families and comrades of the fallen soldiers, and to emphasize Canada's support for the mission.

"On the issue of the duration of the mission, I think we've been absolutely clear on that," he said.

"At the same time ... casualties at this level, weigh very heavily upon my mind.

"I speak to families that lose loved ones, I'm aware of the pain that it causes, I'm aware also of the pride they feel for their loved ones who have served this country, and have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice."

Harper says Ottawa has provided soldiers with a full range of equipment — including tanks — but he declined to discuss how the military should respond to the use of larger, more lethal bombs.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Canada has veered off course in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707060025
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A10
BYLINE: Eugene Parks
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 240

Re: New Abbotsford father among six soldiers killed in Afghanistan, July 5

Canada's original purpose for being in Afghanistan was under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386 to destroy Osama bin Laden and his international terrorist network al-Qaida, as well as to secure Afghanistan's capital and the surrounding area for a new interim government.

Last year, French intelligence leaked the information that bin Laden might be dead; al-Qaida is no longer operating from Afghanistan — if it is operating at all. Kabul and the surrounding area have been secured for years with a permanent government. Accordingly, the UN mandate ends officially under UN Security Council Resolution 1707 this Oct. 13, unless it's extended.

Today, Canada is far from our original purpose for being in Afghan-istan. Canada is fighting local insurgents in the outer regions with a promise to continue until 2009. However, there is no longer a clear connection between killing local insurgents and our original mandate of fighting international terrorism.

In contrast to the greater numbers of our allies who have been concentrating on both the renewal and reconstruction of Afghanistan, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has increased the spending of billions of combat-directed dollars at a cost of Canadian lives. He's also committed Canada to combat into 2009, nearly two years beyond the UN mandate.

When Canada finally withdraws from Afghanistan, history will record that Harper's lack of savvy in foreign affairs was tragic.

Eugene Parks

Victoria

Canadians urged to rally around families; Despite debate over Afghan mission, 'soldiers working on behalf of all Canadians'

IDNUMBER 200707060017

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A8

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Capt. Jefferson Francis of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery died in road explosion. ; Colour Photo: Cpl. Jordan Anderson of 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry died. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR

DATELINE: EDMONTON

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 476

EDMONTON — Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan earlier this week was identified Thursday as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

"The families are well aware that there is debate on this mission," Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, told a news conference at the Edmonton base of four of the fallen soldiers.

"Nonetheless, at this particular point in time, the most sensitive and, I think mature, approach would be to show them a clarion call of love and support, [an acknowledgement] that these soldiers died in a mission that they believed in.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians," Vance said. "They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road approximately 20 km southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Cpl. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, his voice breaking repeatedly during his remarks. "We're privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in this noble cause and in the accomplishment of our shared mission."

Skidmore said the dead soldiers' families and their "brothers and sisters in uniform" will have to grieve as best they can.

"We'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for future challenges," he said. "For now, though, we'll focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of their loved ones."

The latest deaths, which bring to 66 the number of Canadian soldiers who have died since the Afghan mission began in 2002, cast a pall over a government announcement in Halifax of a \$3.1-billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper, standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax.

"But as well to emphasize the support we all share as parliamentarians for the important work they do on our behalf of our country, and we appreciate it.

"We consider it a terrible loss whenever we lose anyone, but obviously losing six is a terrible tragedy."

Harper told the crowd, "I speak to families that lose loved ones. I'm aware of the pain that causes. I'm also aware of the pride they feel for their loved ones who have served their country and have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice."

Despite Wednesday's deaths, which come just two weeks after three other men died in a similar attack, Harper said the government's commitment to the mission remains firm.

Comrade's death adds to resolve; Colin Bason's regiment 'will carry on with task at hand'

IDNUMBER 200707060016

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A8

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Richard Lam, Vancouver Sun / Ron O'Bray, a former member of the Royal Westminster Regiment, pins a poppy at a memorial for Master Cpl. Colin Bason at the armoury in New Westminster. ;

BYLINE: Jonathan Fowlie

SOURCE: Vancouver sun

WORD COUNT: 382

Sgt. Curtis Beglaw says he was hit with a wave of "shock and disbelief" when he first heard his colleague and friend, Master Cpl. Colin Bason, had been killed in Afghanistan.

"I just sat around and was sad," said Beglaw, 36, who belongs to the same New Westminster-based regiment as Bason.

As he spoke on Thursday, however, Beglaw said Bason's death has also given him something else as well — a stronger commitment to go overseas.

"You just have to carry on with the task at hand," said Beglaw, explaining he is scheduled to go to Afghanistan with 27 other members of the Royal Westminster Regiment this coming February.

"If anything, it [Bason's death] just strengthens my resolve to go," he added, echoing a sentiment expressed by several others at the New Westminster armoury on Thursday afternoon.

Bason, a regiment member since 2000, was killed along with five other Canadian soldiers and an interpreter in southern Afghanistan earlier this week when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb. The 28-year-old from Abbotsford left behind a loving family that includes his girlfriend and five-month-old baby, who was born only four days before he went overseas.

The death is the first time someone in the regiment has died in battle since June 1945, and on Thursday that loss was clearly taking its toll.

"Right now, we are in mourning," said commanding officer Lt.-Col. Matthew Haussmann.

"One of our family has died and it's a mixture of anger and sadness," he added.

In a news conference, Haussmann recalled Bason as being a "very well regarded soldier" with a penchant for leadership.

"He had a fascination and interest in military history," Haussmann said, adding Bason had been to Bosnia in 2002 with the Forces.

"Soldiering was his life, his passion," he added, saying Bason, who was a reservist, had planned to join the regular forces upon his return.

Hausmann said two temporary memorials will be established for Bason, one at the regiment's armoury on Queens Avenue in New Westminster, and the other outside Canadian Forces Station Aldergrove. He added a funeral will be planned once Bason's body is returned to B.C.

In the meantime, however, members of Bason's regiment continue to deal with the loss.

"We're all here for each other. We really miss Colin," said Cpl. Paul Khullar, who went to Bosnia in 2000 and knew Bason through the regiment.

"He was a great guy," he added, saying that while Bason was a serious and professional soldier, he could make people smile during even the most austere of missions.

"We are going to miss the pranks and the jokes and everything he brought to the unit," he said.

Pte. Cody Morck said he looked up to Bason.

"It definitely hurts," said 20-year-old, who says he'd like to get to Afghanistan in the coming year.

"I guess in the end we just have to carry a piece of him with us and train harder than ever."

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He knew the danger—and liked being a soldier; Slain city infantryman was proud of Afghan mission

IDNUMBER 200707060198
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
COLUMN: Graham Thomson
Colour Photo: Journal Stock / Cpl. Jordan Anderson; Colour Photo: Journal Stock / Capt. Jefferson Francis ; Photo: Graham Thomson, The Journal, file / Cpl. Jordan Anderson
ILLUSTRATION: takes a break after a daylong patrol in southern Afghanistan on March 23. Cpl. Anderson, five other soldiers and an Afghanistan interpreter died on Wednesday in a roadside explosion that destroyed their armoured vehicle. ;
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Graham Thomson
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 878

EDMONTON – Just about every day for five months, Cpl. Jordan Anderson slogged his way through the dangerous Afghan countryside toting a rifle, a rucksack and a dream — that one day he could return without having to wear body armour and travel in armed convoys.

He wanted to come back as a tourist.

"I would like to see Afghanistan turn into somewhere I could visit one day," he said last January, just days before he left Edmonton for his second tour of duty in Afghanistan.

He will never see that dream come true. On Wednesday, he and five fellow soldiers were killed by a bomb planted on a gravel road.

Overnight Thursday, the military identified Anderson and Capt. Jefferson Francis, a Halifax native and member of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., as the final two of six soldiers killed in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan on Wednesday.

There is always a terrible sadness when word comes that a Canadian soldier has died. Jordan's death hit me especially hard because he was one of the soldiers I had come to know personally. He was 25 and married. He e-mailed me in April to say he had spent his few weeks' leave from Afghanistan in Florida with his wife.

I had come to know Jordan because he had volunteered to help me prepare for my stint as an embedded journalist with the military in Afghanistan this spring. I liked him immediately. He was friendly, articulate and as curious about the media as I was about the military.

He was also blunt, expressing skepticism of the media's coverage of the military mission, thinking reporters focused too much on Canadian casualties and too little on the work soldiers were doing to make Afghanistan a better place.

He knew the danger—and liked being a soldier; Slain city infantryman was proud of Afghan mission

I didn't see Jordan again until after we had both been in Afghanistan almost six weeks. I had been trying to link up with his unit — Charlie Company of 3 Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry from Edmonton — but Afghanistan has a way of turning plans upside down.

It was March 23, when I was tagging along on what the military had dubbed Operation Marguerite, that I heard a friendly voice call out to me, "Hello, Mr. Thomson."

I looked up, and even though he was one of 250 identically uniformed soldiers with helmets and sunglasses walking along that dusty path, I knew immediately it was Jordan from his smile and easygoing attitude.

We didn't have time to chat at that point. The day was just starting and Jordan was busy helping sweep the district clear of Taliban fighters so that Afghan police could set up a permanent checkpoint to improve security in the area. As patrols go, this was a relatively quiet day. There were all kinds of reports of Taliban fighters, but no shots were fired. At one point we found an improvised explosive device (IED) planted in our path, but it was blown up by engineers.

At the end of the day, with the sun beginning to set and the troops preparing camp for the night, Jordan made a point of seeking me out. He talked about his experiences since arriving in country and his brush with death while on patrol just three days before. A bomb-sniffing dog had triggered an IED that had killed the dog, severely wounded the dog's handler and sent shrapnel tearing through the legs of a military engineer. Jordan was the first soldier on the scene, and I heard later from officers that he had handled the situation so coolly and professionally that he was in line for a commendation.

He was quietly proud of the work he and his colleagues were doing. He genuinely felt he was making life safer and better for Afghans and thus helping rid the country of international terrorism. And, as odd as it might sound in a war zone, Jordan seemed content.

"There's no such thing as a typical day here," he said as troops around him began preparing for the night. "The first three weeks we were here was really slow. We did perimeter security at our FOBs (forward operating bases), just our general shakeout, and we responded to two suicide bombings a day and then nothing for three or four days, and then a whole bunch of patrols, like one a day for a week.

"Everything changes in a heartbeat here. There is no typical day for a (soldier) in the battle group."

He seemed to be actually enjoying himself.

"Oh, yeah," he said. "This is what I joined the army to do. Nobody joined the army to stay in Edmonton."

How could he be so relaxed, I asked him. What about the constant danger?

"Everybody dies," he said with a laugh. "It's dangerous, yeah, but with the equipment we have and the training we have, it's a lot more dangerous for the Taliban here than it is for us."

Sadly, on Wednesday he was proven wrong.

But on that day in late March, he was optimistic and upbeat. Jordan knew the danger and enjoyed being a soldier. On his helmet he had written in ink "Death From Above," a reference to his training as a paratrooper. But he was no rifle-waving Rambo. He was quiet and thoughtful, and when I asked permission to take his picture he didn't strike a "hero pose" with rifle at the ready, as many soldiers happily do.

He placed his weapon on the ground, perched himself on a low mud wall and put his arm around his rucksack. He looked at ease, as if he had finally realized his dream of being a backpacker on vacation in the Afghan

He knew the danger—and liked being a soldier; Slain city infantryman was proud of Afghan mission

countryside.

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Families, friends mourn loss of dedicated soldiers

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
KEYWORDS: COURT MARTIAL
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Meghan Hurley, With files from Ryan Cormier and EliseStolte
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
NOTE: Afghan Mission
WORD COUNT: 731

EDMONTON – Capt. Matthew Dawe knew he would miss his son's birthday while he was in Afghanistan, but thought he would see him next month.

Instead, he was killed by a roadside bomb on the very day his son turned two.

"He believed in what he did," his father Peter said in a phone interview from his Kingston, Ont. home. "He loved it and it killed him."

Peter Dawe broke down in tears as he talked about his son's dedication to the military.

The entire Dawe family remembered him as a determined soldier who wouldn't let a torn Achilles tendon stop him from going to Afghanistan.

"Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," a statement issued by the Dawe family read. "He loved his soldiers very much and we know that this feeling was reciprocal."

Dawe, 27, was one of the four Edmonton-based soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Only two weeks earlier, three soldiers Dawe commanded were killed in a similar attack.

His father, a retired lieutenant-colonel, said that Dawe joined the military as a private in Kingston when he was 17. He then went to the Royal Military College where he graduated at the top of his class in 2004. He was posted to Afghanistan shortly after graduation.

Dawe was two-thirds of the way through his tour and was expected to return home mid-August, he said.

Dawe's wife, Tara, will be escorted from Edmonton to Kingston to be with the rest of the family, Peter Dawe said. She should be in Kingston by tonight.

Meanwhile, other families of the Canadian soldiers killed mourned the loss of their sons, brothers, husbands and friends.

CPL. COLE BARTSCH

The family of Cpl. Cole Bartsch gathered at their Whitecourt home. Bartsch's parents, Dennis and Juanita, were not ready to speak to media Thursday and did not issue a statement.

Relatives of Bartsch who live in Calgary said their 23-year-old nephew would have done just about anything for his brothers and sisters.

He took a leave from serving in the army four years ago when his brother had heart transplant surgery, Bartsch's aunt, Karen Shilson, said. He wanted to help his younger brother in his recovery.

"He was an easygoing and friendly type of guy," Shilson said. "He was a great kid and he had a lot of friends."

Bartsch graduated from high school and immediately joined the military in 2003, she said. He was scheduled to return home at the end of July.

A friend from the military said Bartsch was a great person and a dedicated soldier who always put others before himself.

"If anyone said they didn't get along with Cole, they were lying," Jamie

Rutledge, a military friend, joked. "He's one of those guys you could always have around and he wasn't afraid to make a goof of himself to make other people laugh."

Shilson got the tragic news that her nephew had been killed from her sister, Juanita, on Wednesday morning.

"You don't want to believe it. You don't want it to happen to someone you know. But that's what happens when you take on that kind of job," Shilson said.

As soon as his body returns to Alberta, around 15 Bartsch family members from Calgary will take a bus to Whitecourt. Southland Transportation is providing the family with a bus, Shilson said.

CPL. JORDAN ANDERSON

Cpl. Jordan Anderson, 25, lived in Edmonton with his wife, Amanda.

They were married less than two years. Anderson was supposed to come home July 21, on his 26th birthday. The following day was to be their second anniversary.

"We're still learning to deal with this," said his mother Sheila, reached in Inuvik, N.W.T.

Other members of his family declined comment Thursday, adding they expected to release a statement through the military at a later time.

Anderson was born in Iqaluit, Nunavut, but spent most of his childhood years in Inuvik along with his parents and three brothers.

He moved to Saskatchewan for high school to play football and rugby, his mother said.

Anderson joined the Canadian Forces six years ago after one year studying political science and history at the University of Regina. He continued to take correspondence courses as he trained and served and was only one course away from graduating.

On June 22, two days after three members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were killed in

Afghanistan, Anderson posted the following message for friends on the social networking website Facebook: "Bad couple of days here, gave the boys a good send-off, the next order of business is to locate and repay those responsible."

Friends, who described him as an example-setter and an amazing soldier, posted several messages to his site Thursday.

"You were doing something that only a special person could do... again," wrote one friend, who promised Anderson's memory would not be forgotten.

Another wrote, "You were one of the toughest guys I have ever known... I have been sitting on pins and needles for the last day waiting for the message from you, like always, saying you were OK. I will miss you."

PTE. LANE WATKINS

In Crystal City, Man., the family of Pte. Lane Watkins did not wish to comment.

A memorial page for Watkins on the Facebook website had nearly 200 friends from across the country registered 24 hours after his name was publicly released.

Watkins served with the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He is survived by his mother, father and two brothers, one of whom is his twin.

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Homemade bombs more sophisticated; Soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan face lethal array of new threats

IDNUMBER 200707060194
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: file / Iraqi police discovered this improvised explosive device in 2005 in eastern Baghdad and disarmed it before it could be detonated in a terrorist attack. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Richard Foot
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
NOTE: Afghan Mission
WORD COUNT: 805

OTTAWA – In Iraq today, where militants have been honing their hit-and-run bombing tactics for more than four years, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are no longer just makeshift packages of random, roadside terror.

They are the single most important weapon in the insurgents' arsenal, used in a methodical and increasingly sophisticated way to impede the entire U.S. war effort and represent what could be the deadliest threat to the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, where a powerful IED killed six Canadian soldiers on Wednesday.

Many observers of the Afghan insurgency believe the Taliban imports its IED methods from its Islamic brethren in Iraq, where bombing tactics are tested on the streets and suburbs of Baghdad.

What happens with IEDs in Iraq today may foreshadow the kind of problems that await Canadian troops in Kandahar.

On May 30 in Iraq, six American soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb as they rushed to rescue the crew of a U.S. helicopter shot down by Islamic insurgents. The men who attacked the chopper had placed their bomb on a road on which they knew the rescuers would come.

Two weeks earlier, Iraqi insurgents killed one soldier and wounded three others after luring them into a palm grove laced with homemade bombs. Moments earlier, the insurgents had attacked a U.S. patrol, and then fled into the palms knowing the Americans would follow.

"Iraq is the testing ground for IEDs," says Francois Boo, a research analyst with Globalsecurity.org, a U.S.-based military information website.

"IED tactics are first used and proven in Iraq, and then those same tactics start appearing in Afghanistan.

"And in Iraq there has certainly been an evolution of tactics — how the bombs are employed, how they're made up, and how they're detonated."

IEDs have been responsible for the deaths of 27 of the 66 Canadian troops killed in Afghanistan since 2002, or 41 per cent. In Iraq, they are now responsible for about 80 per cent of all U.S. combat deaths, according to a recent Time magazine investigation.

Where once U.S. soldiers in Iraq faced the same threat now dealt with by Canadians in Afghanistan — random roadside attacks against individual vehicles — U.S. forces must now cope with a lethal array of IED threats, while patrolling on foot, in their vehicles or in the air.

"This country needs to focus on one thing, and that is defeating IEDs," a U.S. defence official told the Christian Science Monitor last May. "If we could figure that out, we could change the face of the war."

According to a 2006 report prepared for the U.S. Congress, Iraq insurgents have planted "daisy-chain" IEDs — a single detonator triggering a series of bombs along a roadway, in the hopes of crippling not just a single vehicle but an entire military convoy, for the past two years.

IEDs have also been used to kill soldiers in pursuit of fleeing insurgents, or to attack first responders rushing to the scene of an emergency.

Insurgents have experimented with shortening the fuses on mortar bombs, to be fired at helicopters, creating the first "aerial IEDs," according to the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Methods of remotely detonating IEDs have also evolved from simple electronic radio devices such as cellphones, to infrared "trip-wire" technology.

And in Iraq, IEDs are no longer just hidden under rocks or inside road culverts. They are stashed in refrigerators abandoned on curbsides, or camouflaged under mounds of human feces, or stuffed into animal carcasses. Sometimes they are shoved inside live sheep, which are herded towards military patrols.

The U.S. military has spent more than \$6 billion, recruited teams of engineers and set up an entire Defence Department agency — all in the hopes of solving the deadly threat of IEDs.

WHAT IS AN IED?

Improvised explosive device, or IED, is military jargon for a homemade bomb, particularly the bombs that are the backbone of the insurgencies in Iraq and increasingly, Afghanistan.

Sometimes they are detonated remotely by a hidden insurgent, watching and waiting for his target. At other times, they are placed inside cars and used in suicide-bombing attacks. In this case, they are known as VBIEDs — vehicle-borne IEDs.

Munitions for the bombs typically include artillery shells, rocket-propelled grenades and landmines, but can also include smaller explosives such as hand grenades.

In many cases munitions are packaged together — with multiple landmines sometimes stacked one on top of the other — for a bigger explosive punch.

More lethal IEDs include sophisticated, conically shaped bombs, designed to penetrate the armour of tanks or the bodies of landmine-resistant vehicles.

IEDs are typically detonated remotely by someone activating a radio-controlled device. More recent IEDs have been equipped with infrared beams similar to those found in household burglar alarms.

Homemade bombs more sophisticated; Soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan face lethal array of new threats

The explosives come from a range of sources: in Iraq, from the munitions left behind by the regime of Saddam Hussein. In Afghanistan, from the arsenal of explosives that littered the country following the insurgency against the Soviets and the years of civil war.

Some experts believe IED "factories" in various cities in Iraq and southern Afghanistan are also supplied by sources in Iran and Pakistan.

IEDs are designed, principally, to spread terror among both civilian populations and soldiers, and assert the will of insurgents in areas where they lack the strength to fight with conventional military means.

CanWest News Service

'Today is not the day to have a debate'; Harper urges public to grieve fallen soldiers, not argue about mission in Afghanistan

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PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Chris Schwarz, The Journal / Flags fly at half-mast behind Brigadier General Mark Skidmore, Commander, Land Force Western Area in Edmonton, as he listens to a reporter's question on Thursday at a press conference concerning the deaths of six Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. At left is Colonel Jon Vance, Commander, 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: EDMONTON

BYLINE: Ryan Cormier

SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal; With files from Reuters

NOTE: Afghan Mission

WORD COUNT: 463

EDMONTON – Prime Minister Stephen Harper as well as military leaders in Edmonton have called for public focus on the deaths of six soldiers, and not the debate surrounding the Afghanistan mission they died on.

At a televised news conference in Halifax Thursday, Harper said: "Casualties at this level weigh very heavily upon my mind. Obviously, casualties weigh very heavily on the government."

Harper, who has said there would have to be general political agreement to extend the 2,600-strong Canadian mission to Afghanistan past 2009, did not reply when asked whether other NATO countries should be shouldering more of the load.

"Obviously today is not the day to have a political debate on the future of the mission," he said.

Speaking at the Edmonton Garrison, Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, said the immediate priority must be the grieving families.

"These are the saddest of days and saddest of events for our brigade," he said. "We must ensure that their families hear a clarion call of love and support from Canada."

Vance called that "the most sensitive and mature approach" to the tragedy, although he added that the military embraces debate about the mission from all corners of the country.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians. They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

'Today is not the day to have a debate'; Harper urges public to grieve fallen soldiers, not argue about mission

Brigadier-General Mark Skidmore, commander, Land Force Western Area, said the military will have to grieve as best they can and then prepare itself for what lies ahead.

"We'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for future challenges," he said.

"For now, though, we'll focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of our loved ones. We will remember them."

Six Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were killed on Wednesday when their RG-31 Nyala armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Skidmore said little about the fact the soldiers were killed in an armoured vehicle on a road that was thought to be safe.

"We're up against a wily and clever enemy who are used to observing," he said as flags flew at half-mast behind him. "They see patterns and react to patterns. That's something we always have to be ready to accept. The enemy will adapt their tactics as we adapt ours."

The soldiers have been identified as Pte. Lane Watkins, Capt. Matthew Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch, and Cpl. Jason Anderson — all with the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Master-Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from the Royal Westminster Regiment, and Capt. Jefferson Francis of the 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery out of Shilo, Man., were also killed.

Skidmore also paid tribute to the unnamed interpreter.

"He was their comrade, he shared their values, shared their risks and we honour his memory and sacrifice."

Premier Ed Stelmach was at the Western Premiers Conference in Iqaluit, but released a statement of support.

"The bond between Albertans and their military families is unwavering.

"Canada's soldiers are the best of the best, and need to know we stand firmly with them at times like these. Their sacrifices will not be forgotten."

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor gave condolences as well.

"Canada will remain grateful for their sacrifice, and we are all saddened by this loss."

The Canadian mission has now suffered 66 deaths in Afghanistan.

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'Today is not the day to have a debate'; Harper urges public to grieve fallen soldiers, not argue about mission

Death strengthens resolve of comrades

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Journal Stock / (Master Cpl. Colin) Bason;
KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; WAR
DATELINE: VANCOUVER
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun; CanWest News Service
NOTE: Afghan Mission
WORD COUNT: 229

VANCOUVER – Sgt. Curtis Beglaw says he was hit with a wave of "shock and disbelief" when he first heard his colleague and friend, Master Cpl. Colin Bason, had been killed in Afghanistan.

"I just sat around and was sad," said Beglaw, 36, who belongs to the same New Westminster-based regiment as Bason.

As he spoke on Thursday, however, Beglaw said Bason's death has also given him something else as well — a stronger commitment to go overseas.

"You just have to carry on with the task at hand," said Beglaw, explaining he is scheduled to go to Afghanistan with 27 other members of the Royal Westminster Regiment this coming February.

"If anything it (Bason's death) just strengthens my resolve to go."

Bason, a member of the Royal Westminster Regiment since 2000, was killed along with five other Canadian soldiers and an interpreter in southern Afghanistan earlier this week when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

The 28-year-old from Abbotsford left behind a family that includes his girlfriend, Katrina Blain, and five-month-old daughter, Vienna, who was born only four days before he went overseas.

The death is the first time someone in the regiment has died in battle since June 1945, and on Thursday that loss was clearly taking its toll.

"Right now we are in mourning," said Lt.-Col. Matthew Haussmann, commanding officer of the Royal Westminster Regiment. Haussmann recalled Bason as a "very well-regarded soldier" with a penchant for leadership. "Soldiering was his life, his passion," he added, saying Bason, a reservist, had planned to join the regular forces upon his return to Canada.

Afghan mission complex, but vital

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KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 467

How do we honour the six Canadians who died on a gravel road in southern Afghanistan this week? First, by appreciating how terribly dangerous the Canadian mission is, and how much we're asking of our soldiers. Sixty-six dead in just a few years, all of them young people with their lives ahead of them and families who loved them.

Members of the 3rd Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry made up most of the 250 Edmonton troops that headed to Kandahar in February for their six-month rotation.

This battalion, just 570 people in all, has suffered heartbreaking losses.

Four of the six killed this week were from this group, as were three soldiers killed June 20.

It's hard to imagine what the members of 3PPCLI are suffering.

Second, let's think of the mission itself.

It's not enough to put a Support Our Troops bumper sticker on our car. Canadian soldiers aren't served well by citizens who unquestioningly accept what their government says about our need to have troops in this faraway nation.

There may be a point in which our soldiers are dying for no good reason, and when that happens, Canadians need to recognize it and demand a troop withdrawal. That point hasn't happened yet, but it could.

Similarly, it's not enough to say, "I'm against war, bring the troops home." We all need to do our homework, try to understand what's going on and what our duty as a nation is.

This is a complex, confusing mission because the modern world is complex. When terrorists in southern Afghanistan were able to plot and execute the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center, we all learned that this is a small planet in which one out-of-control country can cause global problems.

Today, thanks to the NATO mission, much of Afghanistan is gradually recovering from decades of warfare and brutal Taliban rule.

Thousands of kilometres of roads have been built, millions of children have gone back to school, 2,500 villages have received electricity, and a national government has been operating in Kabul.

None of those things could have happened if outside forces hadn't taken on the Taliban.

Canada, along with the Americans and British, is doing the mission's hardest task, battling Taliban fighters in the country's two southern provinces.

The British have lost nearly as many soldiers as we have, the Americans six times as many — not counting its troops in Iraq.

It's a brutal job, and it's a job where success has been hard to measure.

How important it is to have journalists like Canwest's Don Martin in Afghanistan to give us a sense of what's happening.

The Journal's Graham Thomson provided similar vital reporting from the war zone earlier this year.

As things stand right now, Afghanistan is where Canadian troops need to be. We are doing our part to create a stable Afghanistan, to eliminate a global base for terrorism, to show solidarity with 36 other nations supporting the NATO mission, to demonstrate that a rich western nation is willing to fight for a better world for all.

Canada is committed to the Afghan mission until at least February 2009.

Until then, the government should give our soldiers everything they need to do their job.

Let us not begrudge such expenses as the \$29 million spent this spring on new vehicles designed to detect roadside bombs.

The rest of us can do our bit by paying attention to this difficult war, wrestling with its complexities, tracking its ragged progress.

And, sadly, mourning its dead.

It all changes 'in a heartbeat'; Slain soldier knew risk, but was proud of Afghan mission

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DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
COLUMN: Graham Thomson
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Andy Clark, Reuters / Lt.-Col. Matthew Hausmann remembers Master Cpl. Colin Bason in New Westminster, B.C., on Thursday. ; Colour Photo: Capt. Jefferson Francis ; Colour Photo: Cpl. Jordan Anderson ; Colour Photo: Graham Thomson, Edmonton Journal / Cpl. Jordan Anderson, who was killed with five comrades on Wednesday, is pictured in Afghanistan in March. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Graham Thomson
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 839

Just about every day for five months, Cpl. Jordan Anderson slogged his way through the dangerous Afghan countryside toting a rifle, a rucksack and a dream — that one day he could return without having to wear body armour and travel in armed convoys.

He wanted to come back as a tourist.

"I would like to see Afghanistan turn into somewhere I could visit one day," he said last January, just days before he left Edmonton for his second tour of duty there.

He will never see that dream come true. On Wednesday, he and five fellow soldiers were killed by a bomb planted on a gravel road.

There is always a terrible sadness when word comes that a Canadian soldier has died. Jordan's death hit me especially hard because he was one of the soldiers I had come to know personally. He was 25 and married. He e-mailed me in April to say he had spent his few weeks of leave from Afghanistan in Florida with his wife.

I had come to know Jordan because he had volunteered to help me prepare for my stint as an embedded journalist with the military in Afghanistan this spring. I liked him immediately. He was friendly, articulate and as curious about the media as I was about the military.

He was also blunt, expressing skepticism of the media's coverage of the mission, thinking reporters focused too much on Canadian casualties and too little on the work soldiers were doing to make Afghanistan better.

I didn't see Jordan again until after we had both been in Afghanistan almost six weeks. I had been trying to link up with his unit — Charlie Company of 3 Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry from Edmonton — but Afghanistan has a way of turning plans upside down.

It was March 23, when I was tagging along on what the military had dubbed Operation Marguerite, that I heard a friendly voice call out to me, "Hello, Mr. Thomson."

I looked up, and even though he was one of 250 identically uniformed soldiers with helmets and sunglasses walking along that dusty path, I knew immediately it was Jordan from his smile and easygoing attitude.

We didn't have time to chat at that point — the day was just starting and Jordan was busy helping sweep the district clear of Taliban fighters so Afghan police could set up a permanent checkpoint to improve security in the area. As patrols go, this was a relatively quiet day. There were all kinds of reports of Taliban fighters, but no shots were fired. At one point we found an improvised explosive device (IED) planted in our path, but it was spotted and blown up by engineers.

At the end of the day, with the sun beginning to set and the troops preparing camp for the night, Jordan made a point of seeking me out. He talked about his experiences since arriving in country and his brush with death while on patrol just three days before. A bomb-sniffing dog had triggered an IED — it killed the dog, severely wounded the dog's handler and sent shrapnel tearing through the legs of a military engineer. Jordan was the first soldier on the scene and I heard later from officers that he had handled the situation so coolly and professionally that he was in line for a commendation.

He was quietly proud of the work he and his colleagues were doing. He genuinely felt he was making life safer and better for Afghans and thus helping rid the country of international terrorism. And, as odd as it might sound in a war zone, Jordan seemed content.

"There's no such thing as a typical day here," he said as troops around him began preparing for the night. "The first three weeks we were here was really slow. We did perimeter security at our FOBs (forward operating bases), just our general shakeout, and we responded to two suicide bombings a day and then nothing for three or four days, and then a whole bunch of patrols, like one a day for a week.

"Everything changes in a heartbeat here. There is no typical day for a (soldier) in the battle group."

He seemed to be actually enjoying himself. "Oh, yeah," he said. "This is what I joined the army to do. Nobody joined the army to stay in Edmonton."

How could he be so relaxed, I asked him. What about the constant danger?

"Everybody dies," he said with a laugh. "It's dangerous, yeah, but with the equipment we have and the training we have, it's a lot more dangerous for the Taliban here than it is for us."

Sadly, on Wednesday, he was proven wrong.

But on that day in late March, he was optimistic and upbeat. Jordan knew the danger and enjoyed being a soldier. On his helmet he had written in ink "Death From Above," a reference to his training as a paratrooper. But he was no rifle-waving Rambo. He was quiet and thoughtful and when I asked permission to take his picture he didn't strike a "hero pose" with rifle at the ready, as many soldiers happily do.

He placed his weapon on the ground, perched himself on a low mud wall and put his arm around his rucksack. He looked at ease, as if he had finally realized his dream of being a backpacker on vacation in the Afghan countryside.

Local help risk it all for \$40 a day

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PAGE: A4
COLUMN: In Afghanistan
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 499

They hide behind oversized sunglasses and face scarves. Even while masked, the military prohibits media from taking their photos or using their real names.

Freelance interpreters are the key to NATO soldiers communicating with villagers and tribal leaders in Afghanistan, a service that has earned them top spot on the Taliban's most-wanted list.

They are paid about \$40 a day to tag along with the Canadian military, which is a fortune in a country where the per capita gross domestic product is roughly \$300 per year.

But the Taliban have put a \$50,000 price on their heads, viewing "terps" as tattlers to the infidels and traitors to what they see as Allah's extremist calling.

The first Canadian-hired interpreter was killed Wednesday alongside six soldiers when the armoured vehicle they were riding in was demolished by a roadside bomb.

Officials remained tight-lipped about the tragedy on Thursday, refusing to allow media embedded here to talk to the brass in charge of the ill-fated convoy.

A ramp ceremony for the six soldiers is scheduled for today, but the interpreter will be denied a memorial service or Canadian help covering the considerable expenses that accompany the traditional Afghan funeral.

His real name will never be released. He will simply disappear, his family desperately trying to conceal the cause of his death, lest the Taliban seek to avenge his service to Canadians by killing parents or siblings.

An interpreter I'll call Mohammed is assigned to the provincial reconstruction team at the frontier outpost of Patrol Base Wilson.

He was introduced to me by Warrant Officer Jim Hunter as the best source of local cultural intelligence in the region.

Mohammed is quiet and, unfortunately, prone to mumbling. He has a curious tendency to listen to five minutes of dialogue in Pashto and deliver a two-sentence reply in English. It makes you wonder if the full meaning of the discussion is being relayed.

But he often goes beyond abbreviated translation to inform soldiers what the villagers are really saying behind their backs.

Without people like Mohammed, interaction between Canadian forces and Afghans would be limited to hand gestures. There'd be no way of knowing if the Taliban were active or absent from a given district or what Afghans living in poverty really need to improve their lives.

"Many of the locals support the Taliban because the military doesn't stay there 24 hours. They arrive, talk for a few minutes and leave for weeks or months," he says. "The minute the soldiers leave the village, the Taliban might return."

The way Mohammed sees it, the risk of his job is manageable for the rewards of earning more money in a day than most Afghans earn in a week. "It's all about the money here," he shrugs. "If police were paid \$150 a month, there'd be no need for other countries to be here. But they get paid half that amount, so they're mostly corrupt."

The challenge of cross-cultural interpretation will increase next month when the Quebec-based Van Doo take over command. Bilingual military brass will have to be placed in every convoy because Mohammed knows of no French-speaking Pashto interpreters.

But without someone to bridge the linguistic divide, any Canadian message of hope to the locals will be meaningless if our offers are lost in translation.

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'Soldiers died in a mission they believed in': commander; Loved ones share stories of fallen men

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PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Chris Schwarz, Edmonton Journal / The Canadian Forces Ensign flies at half-mast behind Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, in Edmonton as he discusses the deaths of six Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan on Wednesday. ;

KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; WAR; ARMED FORCES; CANADA; ALBERTA

BYLINE: Nicole Baer, Meghan Hurley and Ryan Cormier

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 793

Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan earlier this week was identified Thursday as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

"The families are well aware that there is debate on this mission," Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, told a news conference at the Edmonton base of four of the fallen soldiers.

"Nonetheless, at this particular point in time, the most sensitive and, I think mature, approach would be to show them a clarion call of love and support, that these soldiers died in a mission they believed in.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians," Vance said.

"They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Corp. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, his voice breaking repeatedly during his remarks. "We're privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in this noble cause and in the accomplishment of our shared mission."

Skidmore said the dead soldiers' families and their "brothers and sisters in uniform" will have to grieve as best they can.

"We'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for future challenges," he said. "For now, though, we'll focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of their loved ones."

The latest deaths, which bring to 66 the number of Canadian soldiers who have died since the Afghan mission began in 2002, cast a pall over a government announcement in Halifax of a \$3.1-billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper, standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax. "We consider it a terrible loss whenever we lose anyone, but obviously losing six is a terrible tragedy."

As the day unfolded, portraits of the fallen soldiers began to emerge. It was learned, for instance, that Master Cpl. Colin Bason, 28, a member of the 39 Canadian Brigade Group Reserve of the Royal Westminster Regiment, left for Afghanistan just four days after his daughter Vienna was born in February.

Bason's father, Gary, said his son had wanted to be in the military since he was a young child. "He used to read books on the army," his father recalled.

Vienna's mother, Katrina Blain, said her longtime boyfriend never lost his passion and dedication for the military.

But she acknowledged he was shaken by the June 20 deaths of three friends from his platoon, Pte. Joel Wiebe, Sgt. Christos Karigiannis and Cpl. Stephen Bouzane.

"You could hear that he was sad in his voice, but he didn't let on; he just moved on and did his job."

Just two weeks before he died in a roadside bomb blast, Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, had struggled to come to terms with the deaths of Wiebe, Karigiannis and Bouzane, all three of them under his command. This week, Dawe suffered the same fate as his men.

"Matt was a superb soldier. He was very fit and prided himself on leading from the front," a statement issued by the Dawe family read.

"He loved his soldiers very much and we know that this feeling was reciprocal."

The 27-year-old, who joined the military a decade ago, was expected home mid-August and was killed on the second birthday of his son, Lucas, said his father, Peter.

Dawe is also survived by his wife, Tara, of Edmonton.

Hours after news broke of Cpl. Cole Bartsch's death, his friends began posting their goodbyes on his Facebook web page, alongside his favourite Churchillian quote: "Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all others."

Bartsch, 23, was remembered on the popular social networking website as a gentle person who was more worried about his family than himself as he headed off to serve.

The native of Whitecourt, Alta., about 180 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, took a leave from serving in the army four years ago when his brother had major heart surgery, Bartsch's aunt, Karen Shilson, said in an interview from her Calgary home. He wanted to help his younger brother in his recovery.

"He was an easygoing and friendly type of guy," Shilson said. "He was a great kid and he had a lot of friends."

Like all the Edmonton-based soldiers, Pte. Lane Watkins, 20, was nearing the end of his deployment in Afghanistan. The son of Charles and Wanda Watkins of Clearwater, Man., about 200 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg, Watkins had two brothers, including a twin.

Cpl. Jordan Anderson, who lived in Edmonton with his wife, Amanda, was supposed to come home July 21, his 26th birthday. The following day would have been the couple's second anniversary.

"We're still learning to deal with this," said his mother, Sheila, from Inuvik, N.W.T.

Aid and comfort to the enemy

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CANADA
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 464

A peaceful observer might suppose it this country's good fortune to have led such a sheltered national life for 60 years, that the arts of war are so poorly understood by those who seek to lead it.

Yet, when impregnable ignorance is broached as a serious contribution to debate on the war in Afghanistan, it is revealed as a national embarrassment. Sadly, both Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and NDP Leader Jack Layton ladled out their share in the wake of news that six Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter had been killed, when their armoured vehicle was destroyed by an improvised explosive device.

Dion, a member of the government that first committed Canadian troops to Afghanistan (ironically, believing it a soft option to supporting U.S. operations in Iraq,) is effectively sending a defeatist message to those now actively attacking Canadian troops.

For, even as Prime Minister Stephen Harper holds out the prospect of extending Canada's NATO mission in Afghanistan past February 2009, with the consent of parliament, so Dion promises, "This consensus (in Parliament, to extend the mission,) will never exist."

Likewise, NDP Leader Jack Layton goes so far as to call the Canadian war effort "wrong," and would have troops returned immediately: "We (the NDP) believe that two more years is two years too long . . . If the mission is wrong in 2009, why isn't it also wrong in 2007?"

For the leader of a party that promotes the rights of women and gay people to question the morality of a struggle against an enemy who oppresses the one and slaughters the other, it is a peculiar disconnect.

His repeated calls for a negotiated peace compounds his error: Negotiate what? How expeditiously Afghanistan can be returned into the hands of people who brutalized its people, and gave terrorists space to prepare attacks on the West?

Thanks to these two, even Taliban discouraged by the maulings they have received from Canadian regiments must get the message: Just hang on until February 2009, and there's a good chance that whether they're winning or losing, the Canadians will just go home.

War is something one fights to the finish, or until no longer able. Imagine a politician of the stripe of either Dion or Layton telling Canadians during the Second World War, right after the ill-conceived 1942 Dieppe raid when 907 Canadians were killed in a few hours, that they should give the struggle with this Hitler guy until May 1944, and not a month longer.

Would that have lent aid and comfort to an enemy worth defeating? Absolutely.

What happens in Afghanistan, affects southern Asia and the Middle East. What happens there, matters to people in New York, London and every other western city of consequence — including those in Canada. The death toll — 66, and counting — is a matter of profound sorrow.

However, Canada cannot walk away from this fight.

Stampeders party for a purpose; Charity events take spotlight this year

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SECTION: Stampede Extra

PAGE: B4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Mikael Kjellstrom, Calgary Herald / Sweet Potato bandmembers, from left, David Gray, Dave Neufeld, Wayne Immonen and Nick Twyman are hosting today's Liquid Courage fundraising party. ;

BYLINE: Alexandra Burroughs

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 728

There's a world of difference between the dusty roads of wartorn Afghanistan and the booming streets of Calgary during Stampede, but a connection between them could mean everything to one young family.

More than a year ago, Canadian soldier Trevor Greene was meeting with several elders in a small Afghan town to help plan the rebuilding of the area. The Canadian reservist, who volunteered to be sent to the conflict in Afghanistan, had just taken his helmet off out of respect when a young man clubbed him in the back of the head with an axe.

"They weren't even in combat," says Calgary's Nick Twyman, who met Greene 20 years ago during their heydays at the University of King's College in Halifax. "(Greene) is a humanitarian."

Somehow Greene survived the attack and, with his fiancée Debbie Lepore and two-year-old daughter by his side, has been working to recover his motor functions ever since. Later this month, he will move to a specialized long-term treatment facility in Ponoka, but because of his special needs, the family needs to buy an expensive, specially fitted car to get him around there.

So his old friend Twyman is calling on Calgary's Stampede spirit to help.

Twyman, an investment adviser at HSBC Securities, and his rock band, Sweet Potato, which includes CBC-TV's David Gray, are hosting Liquid Courage, a Stampede party to raise money for the refitted minivan that will enable Greene and his family to travel together (call 807-6219 for tickets).

"It feels good to do this during Stampede because it's often not really about anything but getting drunk," says Twyman.

"It's nice to go to a Stampede party and wake up the next day feeling good about yourself, as opposed to waking up and going: 'Oh jeez, what happened to me.' "

This party is one of an increasing number of events — both private and corporate — that are putting charitable causes at the forefront of Stampede celebrations this year. The charity events run from the completely free and accessible to the more exclusive, such as Diana Krall's private concert Thursday before a crowd of 500 who paid \$1,000 each to be there.

Although fundraising has been a part of the Stampede in the past, some say people are more inclined to party for a purpose this year because of Calgary's boom and the Stampede's partnership with breast cancer's pink campaign, which is one of the most successful in the world.

"In the past, it usually had a charity twist to it, but we were nonchalant," says Acumen Capital's Rob Laidlaw, whose Rompin' Rob's annual private party hosts more than 4,000 people to live music and drinks at Cowboys.

"I want everyone to have fun, but this year the charity will be more obvious. I've made it very clear on the ads that we're hoping to raise money for breast cancer. I'm hoping to get up to \$100,000 this year."

In past years, Laidlaw has raised about \$10,000 for the Kids Cancer Care Foundation, a charity he says he will return to next year. This year, however, the Stampede board member was inspired to join the breast cancer campaign because his party took place Thursday, during the Stampede's 30 Hours of Tough Enough to Wear Pink.

"For the last four or five years, I've seen the Stampede grow its desire to reach out into the community in very significant ways," says the Stampede's Gord Fache, who'll be attending his 30th Stampede this year.

Fache says that under the leadership of past Stampede presidents such as Don Wilson, Steve Allen and now George Brookman, charitable work has become increasingly important.

Earlier this year, Wrangler asked the Stampede to participate in its Tough Enough to Wear Pink breast cancer campaign, which has been established for several years. The American blue jeans company was hoping to sponsor a rodeo performance, but the Stampede took it bigger, expanding the campaign to today's 30 Hours of Tough Enough to Wear Pink, which also included Thursday night's Sneak-A-Peek.

Fache says public feedback has been unlike anything he's ever seen. He says people unilaterally support their unorthodox choice in Stampede parade marshals — three 20-somethings who raised money for breast cancer by skateboarding across the country — and many have looked into linking their private or corporate functions to the cause.

If you measure success by ticket sales, the Stampede is ahead this year so far. For Fache, who doesn't judge gate sales until he sees the weather, buzz surrounding this Stampede is stronger than ever before.

"The feelings and the sense of enthusiasm and commitment we're getting is way up," he says.

"I feel pretty bullish on this one — probably the best ever."

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Soldiers get help as they recuperate; Family friend inspired to raise funds for wounded

IDNUMBER 200707060161

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: City &Region

PAGE: C2

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canwest News Service Archive / Mike McTeague, a Canadian soldier wounded in Afghanistan, was the inspiration for a fund to supply other Canadians, recuperating in Germany, with personal items, like CD players, to help pass the time. ;

BYLINE: Meghan Waters

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

NOTE: Acts of Kindness: People – Volunteers – Good Deeds EveryFriday in the Herald

WORD COUNT: 349

Soldiers wounded overseas often leave their possessions behind in the war zone.

Soon, they will be able to look forward to a care package, thanks to the Sapper Mike McTeague Wounded Warrior Fund and some Alberta supporters.

"It's stuff to keep their mind off the hurt, and build a bit of self-esteem and pride back into them," said Wayne Johnston, fund president and a captain in the Canadian Forces.

The first shipment of care packages, which consist of personal DVD players, books and CDs, are assembled and will soon be sent to a hospital in Germany, where most Canadian troops injured in Afghanistan are treated.

The fund has already distributed money so hospitals can buy entertainment systems for the wounded troops, Johnston said.

The fund is based in Toronto, but some of its biggest supporters are based in Western Canada, he said.

One of those is Sean Wentzel, a former South African soldier living in Pincher Creek, 210 kilometres south of Calgary, who has served around the world and is running five marathons this summer to raise money for the cause.

"I am not trying to run fast times in these races, just to complete it for this worthy cause," said Wentzel.

He has a torn calf muscle, but will still compete in Calgary this Sunday and plans to do two marathons in B.C.

"Even though I am injured, this is nothing compared to what your soldiers have to endure abroad, and that would be my biggest motivation," said Wentzel.

This summer, he will run more than 190 kilometres.

Johnston said the fund has also received support from communities such as Lethbridge, which raised \$14,000

at a single event.

"They got hearts of gold out there," Johnston said. "The issue is viewed a whole lot differently out west."

Johnston pointed to the recent debate over the placement of temporary Support Our Troops decals on Toronto ambulances. Some critics suggested the decals were a sign of support for the Afghanistan war and should be removed.

"That's incredibly insensitive," he said. "Our young men are getting hurt. The rights and wrongs of the mission don't matter."

The fund started after Mike McTeague was hit by a ball bearing in the neck during a deadly suicide bombing last September while serving in Afghanistan.

Johnston, a friend of the McTeague family, went to Germany, where the soldier was recovering slowly.

While Johnston waited for McTeague to get better, he realized the other wounded soldiers were bored. He drew out a plan on the back of a beer mat and he says it quickly took off.

"They're not heroes because they got wounded," he said. "They're standing up, trying to gain normality, learning to walk again. That's courage to me."

Visit www.woundedwarriors.ca for more information.

Shipyard shares in refit windfall; Frigate contract worth \$500 million to Victoria company

IDNUMBER 200707060129
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Cindy E. Harnett and Rob Shaw
SOURCE: Times Colonist; With CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 410

Victoria Shipyards will refit five of Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates as part of a \$3.1-billion program to make the Canadian navy stronger and safer, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor announced yesterday.

The refit will be a massive boon to the local shipbuilding industry, adding 300 jobs at Victoria Shipyards for a project worth up to \$500 million, said yard manager Malcolm Barker.

"It's an excellent deal," said Barker. "The big deal for us is it's long-term. The program is scheduled to start in 2010, but obviously we need to ramp up immediately to get project-management teams and facilities ready."

The \$3.1-billion refit deal will be followed by an even bigger announcement in Victoria next week, when the federal government is set to reveal the purchase of six new ice-protected Arctic patrol vessels, sources said.

The Halifax-class frigates are known as the backbone of the navy for their versatility in handling missions in Canada and overseas. Refits will turn the seven frigates in the Atlantic and five at CFB Esquimalt into giant, floating command posts, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said.

O'Connor said the mid-life refit work will be done simultaneously on the East and West Coasts starting in 2010 and be completed by 2017.

Victoria Shipyards and a shipyard in Halifax were the only companies that responded to the federal government's request for interest and qualifications, O'Connor said.

Barker said negotiations with the government have been ongoing for a "substantial period" but a contract has yet to be signed. Nonetheless, yesterday's announcement makes the company confident the project will move forward, he said.

O'Connor said the deal could also include lucrative lifetime-maintenance contracts for the 12 ships. Barker said he does not know how much the maintenance contracts would be worth.

The refit job is one of the biggest projects on the table for Victoria Shipyards and will add stability to the workforce while allowing younger workers to get jobs in the industry, said Barker.

The five Halifax-class ships based at CFB Esquimalt are HMCS Calgary, Ottawa, Regina, Vancouver and Winnipeg. They patrol 27,000 kilometres of Pacific coastline, monitoring other ships in Canadian waters, conducting surveillance, training and responding to national-security threats.

The ships are also deployed overseas. HMCS Ottawa returned in May from a six-month tour in the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Altair, Canada's naval contribution to the American anti-terrorism effort near Iraq and Afghanistan.

Each ship carries a crew of 225, including Sea King helicopters. The refit will allow the ships to handle the new Cyclone helicopters, set to replace the Sea Kings starting in 2009. Some of the Cyclones will be stationed at 443 Squadron in Patricia Bay.

Ottawa to build new Arctic patrol vessels

IDNUMBER 200707060123
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
BYLINE: Cindy E. Harnett and Peter O'Neil
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 272

The federal government is set to announce, in Victoria next week, the purchase of six new ice-protected Arctic patrol vessels.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, federal Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Senior Minister for B.C. Chuck Strahl are tentatively scheduled to attend a press conference at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt Monday morning to announce the deal.

On a national level, the purchase of the new multi-purpose vessels eclipses the \$3.1 billion refit of 12 frigates announced yesterday, a government source confirmed. The price tag however has not been released.

Canada's navy has not operated icebreakers for half a century and it is the Canadian Coast Guard who have filled that role with 19 vessels. Two are operated by private firms.

But a copy of the government's Canada First Defence Strategy leaked earlier this year to CanWest News Service indicated the military would instead be outfitted with Arctic patrol ships.

A subsequent media report in May said that a key cabinet committee had approved a plan to build six 100-metre-long warships at a cost of about \$300 million each.

The new warships could operate in Baffin Bay and Hudson Bay, and in the approaches to the Northwest Passage, but couldn't enter during heavy ice conditions.

Patrol ships with extra-thick hulls will "kill two birds with one stone," University of B.C. professor Michael Byers, director of the Liu Institute for Global Issues, said yesterday.

"You get to address concerns about sovereignty by saying you've got ice-strengthened ability, but you are actually at the same time getting six new frigates to send to the Persian Gulf or wherever [because] it's a multi-purpose vessel."

The presence of the prime minister and federal defence minister in Victoria Monday is dependent on their ability to be back in Trenton for the return of the latest Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

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Three NATO soldiers die; mass grave found

IDNUMBER 200707060115
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 125

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AFP) — Two soldiers with the NATO–led force were killed yesterday in eastern Afghanistan, the alliance said today.

Several NATO and Afghan soldiers and one civilian worker were also wounded in the incident, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement that gave no further details.

Meanwhile, a third soldier with the NATO–led force died in a separate incident when a bomb struck a vehicle in southeastern Afghanistan. The 37–nation force does not release the nationalities of its casualties.

Meanwhile, a mass grave containing hundreds of bodies was unearthed in an underground prison north of Kabul, a report said today. The BBC reported that the grave was found in a former military base dating back to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Blasts kill 11, including NATO soldier

IDNUMBER 200707060114
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 130

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AFP) — A suicide attacker blew himself up at a police gathering in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing nine other people, including a boy. A NATO force soldier died in a separate blast.

The two attacks occurred as a German national and his driver abducted a week ago in the southwest of the country were released, but the Taliban denied being responsible for their capture.

The suicide attack blew off the ceiling of a room at the highway police command in the southern town of Spin Boldak, near the border with Pakistan, where a lunch was being held to welcome a new district police chief.

The nationality of the NATO soldier killed by a bomb in the southeastern province of Paktika was not released. Two other soldiers with the International Security Assistance Force were injured.

'A clarion call of love, support' issued for families of the fallen; Members of Royal Westminster Regiment undeterred in desire to serve mission

IDNUMBER 200707060113

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Department of National Defence / Capt. Jefferson Francis, left, was a member of the 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man. Cpl. Jordan Anderson was from Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. ; Photo: Department of National Defence / Cpl. Jordan Anderson was from Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. ; Photo: Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe ; Photo: Cpl. Cole Bartsch ; Photo: Pte. Lane Watkins ; Photo: Master-Cpl. Colin Bason ;

DATELINE: EDMONTON

BYLINE: Nicole Baer, Meghan Hurley and Ryan Cormier

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 580

EDMONTON — Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan Wednesday was identified as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

"The families are well aware that there is debate on this mission," Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, told a news conference at the Edmonton base of four of the fallen soldiers.

"Nonetheless, at this particular point in time, the most sensitive and, I think mature, approach would be to show them a clarion call of love and support, [an acknowledgement] that these soldiers died in a mission that they believed in.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians," Vance said. "They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Cpl. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

The other four killed, along with an Afghan interpreter, were: Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins, all of 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton, and Master-Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from The Royal Westminster Regiment.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, his voice breaking repeatedly during his remarks. "We're privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in this noble cause and in the accomplishment of our shared mission."

Skidmore said the dead soldiers' families and their "brothers and sisters in uniform" will have to grieve as best they can.

"We'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for future challenges," he said. "For now, though, we'll focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of their loved ones."

The latest deaths, which bring to 66 the number of Canadian soldiers who have died since the Afghan mission began in 2002, cast a pall over a government announcement in Halifax of a \$3.1-billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper, standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax. "But as well to emphasize the support we all share as parliamentarians for the important work they do on our behalf of our country, and we appreciate it."

At the New Westminster armoury yesterday afternoon., Sgt. Curtis Beglaw says he was hit with a wave of "shock and disbelief" when he first heard Bason, a friend and colleague, had been killed.

"I just sat around and was sad," said Beglaw, 36, who belongs to the same regiment as Bason.

Beglaw said Bason's death has also given him something else as well — a stronger commitment to go overseas.

"You just have to carry on with the task at hand," said Beglaw, explaining he is scheduled to go to Afghanistan with 27 other members of the Royal Westminster Regiment in February.

"If anything, it [Bason's death] just strengthens my resolve to go," he added, echoing a sentiment expressed by several others at the New Westminster armoury.

The 28-year-old from Abbotsford left behind a loving family that included his girlfriend and five-month old baby, who was born only four days before he went overseas.

The death is the first time someone in the regiment has died in battle since June 1945.

Taliban place interpreters atop most-wanted list

IDNUMBER 200707060112
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 510

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – They hide behind oversized sunglasses and face scarves. Even while masked, the military prohibits media from taking their photographs or using their real names.

Freelance interpreters are the key to NATO soldiers communicating with villagers and tribal leaders in Afghanistan, a service which has earned them top spot on the Taliban's most-wanted list.

They are paid about \$40 a day to tag along with the Canadian military, which is a fortune in a country where the per capita gross domestic product is roughly \$300 per year.

But the Taliban have put a \$50,000 price on their heads, viewing "terps" as tattlers to the infidels and traitors to what they see as Allah's extremist calling.

The first Canadian-hired interpreter was killed Wednesday alongside six soldiers when the armoured vehicle they were riding in was demolished by a roadside bomb.

Officials remained tight-lipped about the tragedy yesterday, refusing to allow media embedded here to talk to the brass in charge of the ill-fated convoy that claimed all seven occupants of an RG-31 armoured vehicle.

A ramp ceremony for the six soldiers is scheduled for today, but the interpreter will be denied a memorial service or Canadian help covering the considerable expenses that accompany the traditional Afghan funeral.

His real name will never be released. He will simply disappear, his family desperately trying to conceal the cause of his death, lest the Taliban seek to avenge his service to Canadians by killing parents or siblings.

An interpreter I'll call Mohammed is assigned to the provincial reconstruction team at the frontier outpost of Patrol Base Wilson.

He was introduced to me by Warrant Officer Jim Hunter as the best source of local cultural intelligence in the region.

Mohammed is quiet and, unfortunately, prone to mumbling. He has a curious tendency to listen to five minutes of dialogue in Pashto and deliver a two-sentence reply in English. It makes you wonder if the full meaning of the discussion is being relayed.

But he often goes beyond abbreviated translation to inform soldiers what the villagers are really saying behind their backs, while adding occasional insight into unique local circumstances.

Without people like Mohammed, interaction between Canadian Forces and Afghans would be limited to hand gestures. There'd be no way of knowing if the Taliban were active or absent from a given district or what Afghans living in poverty really need to improve their lives.

"Many of the locals support the Taliban because the military doesn't stay there 24 hours. They arrive, talk for a few minutes and leave for weeks or months," he says. "The minute the soldiers leave the village, the Taliban might return."

The way Mohammed sees it, the risk of his job is manageable for the rewards of earning more money in a day than most Afghans earn in a week.

"It's all about the money here," he shrugs. "If police were paid \$150 a month, there'd be no need for other countries to be here. But they get paid half that amount, so they're mostly corrupt."

The challenge of cross-cultural interpretation will increase next month when the Quebec-based Van Doo take over command. Bilingual military brass will have to be placed in every convoy because Mohammed knows of no French-speaking Pashto interpreters.

But without someone to bridge the linguistic divide, any Canadian message of hope to the locals will be meaningless if our offers are lost in translation.

We can only win peace by winning the war

IDNUMBER 200707060088
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A14
COLUMN: John Robson
BYLINE: John Robson
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 698

The British doctors' plot certainly helps clarify things. I am glad the operation was a failure and the patients did not die for the obvious reasons. But also because it helps me discuss the merits of this botched atrocity.

First, its sheer incompetence. One of our advantages in the war on terror, albeit unearned, is that we are fighting people who have difficulty setting themselves on fire in a car full of propane.

The Globe and Mail claimed Saturday that British police were "hunting for at least three other suspects and a mastermind," but I doubt they'll find the latter in this affair. Despite the defeatist tone of much Western news coverage, our enemies are often as clueless as they are vicious.

Second, that this comically inept villainy was apparently the work of educated people with lucrative, prestigious jobs underlines that our problem here is not poverty, social exclusion or racism, but an idea.

Specifically, the belief that we should be blown up as promiscuous, intoxicated unbelievers. "Death to infidels" is the root cause of Islamist terrorism, as more and more people realize.

That's why the third piece of good news was the blase public reaction. The usual suspects feigned horror that such terrorist acts should have been attempted by highly paid professionals honoured by the host society, but few others were fooled.

To call terrorism a product of poverty is, as Chesterton said of crime, a slander on the poor, many of whom live decent, honourable lives.

It is also a slander on all mankind, a pernicious denial of free will, for materialists to claim we can buy off our enemies with big salaries, fancy offices and high-definition TVs.

Ultimately we are accountable for our choices, not our circumstances, and deep down we all know it. Life is never easy, though tribulations vary. But adversity crushes some and strengthens others.

And while poverty can contribute to despair and rage, as indeed can wealth, both are at best partial explanations, not legitimate excuses. If you believe in a merciful God, you must prepare one day to explain to Him why you chose terrorism, not why you had no choice.

In public policy, too, choices and ideas matter far more than circumstances. Islamists try to blow us up not for refusing them attractive jobs or for our foreign policy misdeeds, but because they think we should die for being happy, tolerant people who do not claim to love the Creator while despising His creation and His

creatures.

And unless we convert to their way of thinking, they will not relent.

Not everyone gets it. At a Wednesday press conference, NDP Leader Jack Layton said we should label civilian casualties in Afghanistan "unacceptable," distance ourselves from the Bush administration, withdraw our troops and initiate a "comprehensive peace process" because "nobody could advance the idea that there's a military solution ultimately in Afghanistan."

Since the Taliban see an obvious military solution, shooting their way back into power and killing everybody who taught girls, I asked him: "When you talk about your comprehensive peace process, what's the offer to the Taliban?"

Layton blithered that "students of history will know that all major conflicts are resolved ultimately through peace-oriented discussions."

Unfortunately for him I am a student of history with three university degrees in the subject from two different countries, so I said: "And by the armies marching into Berlin and an atomic bomb dropped on Japan. That's how World War II ended and students of history know that."

He responded: "Well I beg to differ that if you study the precise processes that took place in most of the conflicts in the world you'll see that there are always negotiations that take place. And that's what needs to happen here."

His response was insolently stupid. Of course at some point in almost any war someone staggers forward to sign an instrument of surrender, but other obvious historical examples of major conflicts that ended by crushing victory include the First World War, the Napoleonic Wars and the Cold War.

I didn't have time to make this point, but it didn't matter because most other journalists present, including from francophone media, were openly incredulous about Layton's proposal.

They might not support the Afghan war. But even the press grasp that you can't sign useful treaties with people who dream of waving your severed head at a cheap webcam.

As students of history know, John Maynard Keynes was right that "soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good and evil."

It's why doctors try to bomb nightclubs and airports. Clearly.

Stand tall behind the troops

IDNUMBER 200707060081

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Comment

PAGE: A15

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / War in Afghanistan: Canadian soldiers look over a mud wall toward Taliban positions 20 metres away during a firefight near Sangsar, Zhari district in southeastern Afghanistan this week. A total of 66 Canadians have been killed in the Afghanistan conflict, prompting calls from many in Canada to end the mission. But others say the troops should be supported. ;

BYLINE: Darren Gilby

SOURCE: Times Colonist

WORD COUNT: 119

I urge the media and letter writers to cease calling for a withdrawal of our troops.

This constantly undermines the military, and a pullout now would prove that our 66 dead have all died in vain.

Do Canadians want to be known as a race that when the going gets tough the Canadians get going?

By retreating now, in any future conflict the enemy would attack the Canadians first, knowing we will run with our tails between our legs. I strongly suggest standing tall behind our troops and backing their fight for the freedom they are trying to provide a nation who can no longer fight for itself.

Our troops are brave enough to face this danger, and they know the consequences first hand. The least we can do at home is stand behind them.

Darren Gilby

Victoria.

Time to bring the soldiers home

IDNUMBER 200707060079
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A15
BYLINE: Nanaimo.
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 105

As a mother I can't begin to imagine the suffering and loss felt in families who now have lost their beloved sons and husbands in Afghanistan.

I believe that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has a gut feeling this so-called "mission" is failing and is making plans to blame the inevitable on the people of Canada who opposed the war, along with some of the government's opposition.

As a veteran of the Second World War I support our young soldiers. I saw war, the dead, and wounded. I am sad now that we hear again of another six of our finest, killed — for what?

Bring them home now before any more are wounded or die.

M.E. Little,

Nanaimo.

THE FALLEN 'The army was their life'

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870296

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A13 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: UNNATI GANDHI

SECTION: National News

SOURCE: STAFF CP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 551

WORD COUNT: 504

UNNATI GANDHI With a report from Canadian Press Flying thousands of feet over Afghanistan with fellow soldier Corporal Jordan Anderson, Cole Rosentreter could only gaze at his friend in amazement.

The 26-year-old corporal had recently been seriously injured, yet there he was, ready to jump into action.

"I will never forget sitting next to you in the bird, after you broke your back," Gunner Rosentreter recalled yesterday in an online memoir dedicated to Cpl. Anderson. "Not many people would have the guts to jump again." But he did, Gunner Rosentreter wrote, because that's the kind of soldier he was.

Cpl. Anderson was one of the six soldiers killed Wednesday when their tank rolled over an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan.

Their deaths are being taken particularly hard in Edmonton, where the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry lost four more soldiers in this latest attack, including Cpl. Anderson.

The regiment has suffered the biggest blow in Afghanistan since troops were first deployed in 2002: 23 of the 66 Canadian soldiers killed were based at its three infantry battalions in Edmonton and Winnipeg.

Brigadier-General Mark Skidmore, commander of the Land Force Western Area Edmonton, said yesterday the six who died, including Captain Jefferson Francis of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shilo, Man., (whose name was the last of the six to be released yesterday) were dedicated to their jobs. Capt. Francis, 37, was from New Brunswick and had an eight-month-old baby.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers. We are privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in their noble cause in the accomplishment of our shared mission," Gen. Skidmore said.

"The army was their life, the army is our life and Canada is No.

1. And with those anchor points in our thoughts, we'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for the future challenges." Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach expressed his condolences to the families of the dead soldiers.

"I am extremely saddened at our losses in Afghanistan," he said in a statement. ". . . The bond between Albertans and their military families is unwavering. Canada's soldiers are the best of the best, and need to know we stand firmly with them at times like these." Shaun Arntsen, who was a corporal with the 3rd

Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry for six years, met Cpl.

Anderson before their first tour to Afghanistan in 2002.

He said every soldier he has known from the unit has upheld the highest standards of the military, and Cpl. Anderson led the pack.

"He kind of had this way of motivating people around him. I don't know what it was: It was just this thing that he gave off." Cpl. Anderson, who had served in the military for about seven years, leaves his wife, Amanda, who could not be reached yesterday.

But Gunner Rosentreter said he was like Cpl. Anderson's other wife, and the pair were remembered yesterday as an old, married couple that constantly bickered.

"I suppose it's true," he wrote. "The trouble is you were as stubborn as me. I swear to God, in 10 years you were going to be Fortune 500. So much potential, you lived your life in only one direction, the one you chose."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; war deaths

PERSONAL NAME: Jordan Anderson; Jefferson Francis

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION Debate over pullout can wait, PM says Harper refuses to discuss when mission will end, saying his thoughts are with families of fallen soldiers

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870295

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A13

BYLINE: GLORIA GALLOWAY AND OLIVER MOORE

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: STRONGFIELD, SASK., HALIFAX

WORDS: 342

WORD COUNT: 331

GLORIA GALLOWAY AND OLIVER MOORE STRONGFIELD, SASK., HALIFAX The debate over the length of the mission to Afghanistan must wait for a day when Canada is not grieving the loss of six young soldiers, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has made it clear that his party will not support keeping Canadian troops in the war-torn country past February, 2009, when the current mandate ends.

And Mr. Harper has said there will be no extension without parliamentary approval – something that would seem unlikely given a lack of support on opposition benches.

But "I don't think today is the day for that debate," the Prime Minister said in response to questions after an announcement about biofuels in this tiny Saskatchewan hamlet.

"We just had the tragic loss of six soldiers. These are Canada's finest people out there protecting our country's interests and doing a tremendous job trying to help people who live in a terribly deprived country that's just fraught with violence." The six died on Wednesday when the vehicle they were in ran over a massive roadside bomb.

Canada's soldiers are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the security of the Canadian people and of human beings around the world, Mr. Harper said.

"And frankly, my thoughts today are with their families and with their comrades and I think we can leave that debate [about the length of the mission] to another day." The subject of the soldiers' deaths was also raised earlier in the day, at another funding announcement in Halifax.

The government is retrofitting the country's 12 Halifax frigates at a cost of \$31-billion because "our ships are on the front line of the fight against international terrorism." The Conservative government has argued from the outset that it is important for Canada to be part of the mission in Afghanistan because it is a seat of terrorism.

However, Mr. Harper said that he understands the price that is being paid in Canadian lives.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Debate over pullout can wait, PM says Harper refuses to discuss when mission will

"Obviously, as Prime Minister, casualties of any kind weigh heavily on my mind."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; defence; strife; war deaths; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION: HARPER STANDS BY TROOPS AS DETAILS EMERGE OF OBSTACLES THEY FACE IN VOLATILE DISTRICT

How Panjwai slipped out of control Bitter dispute between police forces gives Taliban upper hand in district where Canadians were slain

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870294

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: GRAEME SMITH

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 901

WORD COUNT: 828

GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Afghan police fought deadly battles against their own colleagues from the intelligence service in Panjwai recently, local officials say, in a bloody example of the chaos that has partly unravelled security in a district where six Canadians died this week.

In the hours after an explosion engulfed a Canadian troop carrier in Panjwai on Wednesday, military commanders described the attack as an exception to the success they have enjoyed in the district.

Panjwai has been largely pacified, Canadian officials say, by a year of intense military effort and millions of dollars in aid.

"This part of Afghanistan, the Panjwai area, is one of the safer areas in the province," Brigadier-General Tim Grant said of the latest deaths.

But parts of the district are falling back into Taliban hands, locals say, after security duties were handed to a ragtag police force that quickly found itself overwhelmed by a lack of supplies and reduced to banditry for survival.

The 05 Police Standby Battalion, a reserve unit, became notorious for corruption and desertions soon after it deployed to Panjwai this spring. The police unit also marked a new low point in the recent history of policing in the region when a police commander revived an old feud with an official from the National Directorate for Security, the Afghan intelligence agency.

The personal dispute spiralled into open warfare between the two law-enforcement agencies around the villages of Mushan and Talokan in recent weeks, according to police who survived the battles, and village elders from the district.

At one point, officers from the 05 Battalion say they were besieged in a concrete outpost and watched three of their friends die slowly of gunshot wounds, unable to take them to hospital as they remained trapped for days

THE AFGHAN MISSION: HARPER STANDS BY TROOPS AS DETAILS EMERGE OF OBSTACLES THEY

by hostile fire.

Dozens have been reported killed or injured in the fighting, although it's unclear how many of the casualties were the result of internecine warfare and how many were caused by Taliban fighters returning to take advantage of the feud between government forces.

Ismatullah, a young police commander, said his 05 Battalion unit was assigned in April to take over security in Mushan, about 50 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city. By his own admission, Ismatullah says his men quickly resorted to thievery to supply themselves with things in short supply: money, food, bullets and fuel.

Even their outpost was taken by force, he said, describing how his police chased away a family that had been living in an abandoned clinic and turned it into a small fort.

Ismatullah says his unit contained 40 officers when they arrived in Mushan, but he now commands only a handful of men after 14 died, five were injured, and others ran away.

What remains of his group pulled back last month to the village of Zangabad, where the fighting continues, he said.

"I haven't slept in two days," he said, during a visit to Kandahar city for supplies. "We are ambushed every night. We have enemies from both sides, Taliban and government. It's a bad position." Ismatullah's mobile phone rang as he talked and he quickly excused himself. Fighting had resumed, he said, and he needed to help his men.

Another police commander from the 05 Battalion, a middle-aged former mujahedeen fighter named Obidullah, said his unit in Zangabad has suffered similar losses. He commanded 50 police earlier this year, he said, but deaths and desertions have left him with 20 men.

The government hasn't given him enough supplies for any part of his job, he said; he even lacked money to give his fallen comrades a proper burial. But the biggest concern facing the local police is the infighting, he said.

"This is a big problem when two arms of the government fight each other," Obidullah said. "The Taliban take advantage of this." The recent battles in Mushan started without any Taliban involvement, Obidullah said: The conflict was only between tribal relatives of two factions who held grudges dating back to the 1980s. But the infighting weakened the government forces and insurgents were able to seize the western edge of the district, he said.

The feud started with two commanders of the mujahedeen – holy warriors – who fought the Russians together but then squabbled over control of checkpoints around Kandahar after the Soviet retreat, said Haji Abdul Rahim Jan, a local tribal elder.

Both of the mujahedeen have long since died, Mr. Jan said, but their loyal followers Mohammed Azim and Abdul Ghafar continued the feud even after both enlisted as commanders of pro-government forces, Mr. Azim in the police and Mr. Ghafar in the intelligence service.

The NDS has now imprisoned Mr. Azim, the tribal elder said, and the policeman's family continues the feud. Pashtun culture contains a strong imperative for revenge, and Mr. Jan expressed concern that the dispute could grow into a tribal conflict.

"The tribes aren't involved right now, but they could be pulled in," he said.

Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Walker, Canada's battle group commander, said in a recent interview that he knows the 05 Battalion has struggled.

The district has grown more restive since early June, he said, but it's hard to tell why the police have suffered so many casualties.

"They started getting hit," he said. "Was it because they were extorting people? Was it because they're soft targets for the Taliban?"

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Panjwai

SUBJECT TERM: strife; police; corruption; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870249

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: ALEX GORLEWSKI

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Newmarket, Ont.

WORDS: 96

WORD COUNT: 95

Alex Gorlewski Newmarket, Ont.

There are two acceptable options in Afghanistan: Start bringing troops home now, or commit Canada to the mission indefinitely (Taliban Adopt Deadly Iraqi Tactics – July 5).

I don't know what it takes to win in Afghanistan, but I do know nothing miraculous is going to happen by February of 2009, the time to which Canada has agreed to continue the combat mission.

If we refuse to either pull out now or stay for the long haul and, instead, set an arbitrary withdrawal date, any soldiers killed between now and then will have died for nothing.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870238

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: DAVID FOX

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Toronto ONT

WORDS: 44

WORD COUNT: 67

David Fox Toronto * As the situation in Afghanistan becomes increasingly similar to Iraq's, will Stephen Harper and his government see a need to re-evaluate the mission, or will they continue to stubbornly stand by the Bush administration as more Canadians and Afghans are needlessly killed?

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870236

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: G.D. GURR

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Nanaimo, B.C.

WORDS: 47

WORD COUNT: 64

G.D. Gurr Nanaimo, B.C.

* As a veteran of Korea, the tragic deaths of six more soldiers make me think some of our politicians have been partially to blame: By continually harping about troop withdrawal, they are encouraging the Taliban to target our soldiers, knowing how it will affect public opinion here.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870235

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: KRIS SAHAY

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Winnipeg MB

WORDS: 89

WORD COUNT: 101

Kris Sahay Winnipeg * Not a single country has been able to make Afghanistan safer and more secure on the basis of engaging in combat and street fighting.

A moral obligation exists on the part of all responsible nations to offer Afghans the help they need to equip themselves with the skills and training required to fend for themselves.

That help has to be in the form of health care, education for the children, infrastructure to guarantee clean water, police security, fundamental human rights regardless of gender, and a roof over their heads.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870234

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: FRED DEHMEL

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DELINE: Stillwater Lake, N.S.

WORDS: 50

WORD COUNT: 59

Fred Dehmel Stillwater Lake, N.S.

* On the day six of our soldiers die, politicians of all stripes should let us mourn their loss without using Canadian heroes for political gain.

I would have expected our MPs to extend their condolences and, at least for one day, refuse to discuss the politics of the Afghan mission.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870233

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: GREG SCHMIDT

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Calgary AB

WORDS: 67

WORD COUNT: 99

Greg Schmidt Calgary * In reaction to the tragedy of six more dead soldiers, how does the military define success? According to the chief of staff for the Canadian headquarters in Kandahar, "the fact that we've lost a lot of soldiers from IED attacks indicates a success, in the sense that our conventional operations have succeeded against the Taliban." Now that is military intelligence. Sadly, they believe it makes sense.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870232

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: STEVE MARTIN

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Toronto ONT

WORDS: 32

WORD COUNT: 56

Steve Martin Toronto * Opposition leaders Jack Layton and Stephane Dion, along with our Prime Minister, should be pressing NATO to send more troops from other countries to help defeat the Taliban and rebuild Afghanistan.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870231

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: KIT GAGNON

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Burlington, Ont.

WORDS: 34

WORD COUNT: 48

Kit Gagnon Burlington, Ont.

* The front-page photo of the young soldier and father (July 5) killed in Afghanistan made me weep. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Violent means will give violent freedom." Bring our soldiers home.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Options in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870230

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A14

BYLINE: FRANK BROWN

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Nanaimo, B.C.

WORDS: 31

WORD COUNT: 43

Frank Brown Nanaimo, B.C.

* How dare you manipulate my emotions with your picture of the soldier and child to make a tawdry anti-war comment? How does this little boy's mother feel seeing this?

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; war deaths; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

QUEBEC: COURT Discharge refused in soldier's sex-assault conviction

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071870173

DATE: 2007.07.06

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: INGRID PERITZ

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DELINE: QUEBEC CITY

WORDS: 583

WORD COUNT: 529

INGRID PERITZ QUEBEC CITY A Quebec soldier who had hoped to serve his country in Afghanistan will instead serve time in the community for sexual assault.

Judge Carol St.-Cyr of Quebec Court yesterday refused to grant Private Pier-Olivier Boulet an absolute discharge. The judge said the soldier may have had a promising career in uniform, but giving him a court discharge would have rendered his crime "banal." Pte. Boulet was convicted of sexually assaulting his friend's 18-year-old sister in 2004.

The 22-year-old soldier, a member of the Royal 22nd Regiment based at Valcartier, Que., stood straight-backed in court as the judge read out his sentence: 15 months to be served in the community.

Pte. Boulet's lawyer sought a discharge on the grounds the soldier had already suffered from the publicity of his trial and could better serve society on the front than behind bars.

While yesterday's punishment lets him avoid prison, it will almost certainly end his days in the army. The sentence gives Pte. Boulet a criminal record that normally would bar him from serving.

Pte. Boulet left the courtroom in Quebec City without speaking, but his lawyer said his client feels crushed by the turn of events.

The soldier still believes the sexual relations that led to his conviction were consensual.

"He's devastated, completely devastated," defence lawyer Richard Philippe Guay told reporters. "We thought he had a great chance of getting an absolute discharge.

"I hope this young man is going to stay in the army and going to have a great career," he said. "He's an excellent soldier." The Department of National Defence in Ottawa has the final word on Pte. Boulet's fate. A senior officer from Valcartier already testified that a soldier with a criminal record has a "95-per-cent chance" of being booted out of the Armed Forces.

Pte. Boulet is appealing his conviction, so the army will wait until all legal steps are taken before deciding his fate, a spokesman said yesterday. In the meantime, Pte. Boulet is assigned guard and maintenance duties for his unit at Valcartier base.

"These acts are completely regrettable and can't be tolerated by the Canadian Armed Forces," Captain Eric Chamberland, a spokesman at Valcartier, said of Pte. Boulet's crime. Capt. Chamberland noted that the sexual assault occurred before Pte. Boulet had signed up for the army. When he enlisted in 2005, he hadn't been charged yet.

Judge St.-Cyr said he recognized that the soldier was young, had an unblemished army record and a bright future in uniform – all factors that played in his favour. The judge also noted that Pte.

Boulet had apologized for the assault.

But the soldier had violated the young woman's trust and took advantage of her drunken state when he had sex with her at a birthday party at her family's home, he said. While the judge recognized a criminal record would have an impact on Pte. Boulet's life and career, a discharge would make light of his crime, he said.

And, the judge noted, the life of the rape victim was also turned upside-down by the assault.

Prosecutor Sarah-Julie Chicoine said the soldier's victim is relieved that he wasn't given a discharge. Pte. Boulet will be under house arrest with permission to leave to go to work. Although the Crown had sought a prison term, the young woman was satisfied with the judge's ruling.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Quebec

SUBJECT TERM:justice; sexual offences

PERSONAL NAME: Pier-Olivier Boulet

PM: Soldiers' deaths 'weigh very heavily'

IDNUMBER 200707060097
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo; Photo: Photos From the Canadian Press / ;
DATELINE: HALIFAX
SOURCE: Hamilton Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 278

Prime Minister Stephen Harper tried to sidestep growing pressure yesterday to begin debating the future of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan following the deaths of six soldiers in a roadside explosion.

Dodging opposition calls to signal to NATO that Canada's end is drawing near, Harper said the mounting deaths "weigh heavily" on him but declared that it is too soon to contemplate a complete pullout once the current commitment ends in February 2009.

Harper said he has been "clear" that he will seek a consensus in the minority Parliament before extending Canada's presence in the war-weary country.

Harper said the time for political debate is not while the nation mourns its latest losses. He ignored Liberal leader Stephane Dion's vow that a consensus to extend the mission will never materialize.

"We have the House of Commons for that. Today is a day to express our condolences for these soldiers.

"As Prime Minister, casualties of any kind weigh heavily on my mind. Casualties at this level weigh very heavily on my mind," he said on the HMCS Halifax. "I speak to families that lose loved ones. I'm aware of the pain that causes. I'm aware also of the pride they feel for their loved ones who have served this country and have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice."

His comments came as the military released the names of the two remaining soldiers killed in Wednesday's roadside bombing in Afghanistan.

Captain Jefferson Francis, left, was with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shiloh, Manitoba. Corporal Jordan Anderson, right, was with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton. The Canadian dead now number 66, plus diplomat Glyn Berry.

Harper, pictured being piped aboard HMCS Halifax, was in the port city to announce a \$3.1-billion upgrade for the navy's frigates, starting in 2010.

Politics, patriotism collide in Halifax; Casualties, rivalries reduce impact of frigate upgrade

IDNUMBER 200707060068

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A8

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Paul Darrow, Reuters / SALUTE: Sailors pipe Stephen Harper aboard the frigate HMCS Halifax Thursday in Halifax harbour to announce refitting for part of the fleet. ;

DATELINE: HALIFAX

BYLINE: Charles Mandel

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 469

HALIFAX — What should have been a good-news announcement for the Harper government — a \$3.1 billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates — was overshadowed by the death of six soldiers Wednesday in Afghanistan and continued acrimony over equalization payments.

Standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Thursday wasn't the day for a political debate on the Afghanistan mission.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades, but as well to emphasize the support we all share as parliamentarians for the important work they do on our behalf of our country, and we appreciate it," Harper said.

Politician after politician expressed sympathy for the families and sorrow over the loss.

Harper said the casualties "weigh heavily" on him and told the crowd, "I speak to families that lose loved ones. I'm aware of the pain that causes. I'm also aware of the pride they feel for their loved ones who have served their country and have been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice."

Despite Wednesday's deaths — bringing the total of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan to 66 — Harper said the government's commitment to the mission remains firm.

The announcement of the work on the frigates will see seven ships being worked on in Halifax and the other five in Victoria. Harper said the retooling will transform them into "giant floating command posts."

PREMIER NOT INVITED

Nova Scotia Premier Rodney MacDonald wasn't invited to Thursday's event.

Harper dismissed any ideas that MacDonald's absence from Thursday's announcement was a snub. "I don't think we've ever had a premier at any defence announcement I've made anywhere in the country, so this is not an unusual situation."

But Conservative MP Gerald Keddy denied that Wednesday's provincial announcement of funding for a tire plant in his Nova Scotia riding, which the province made without inviting him, was pointedly done because of Nova Scotia's grievances over equalization funding.

"This is business as usual," Keddy said. "This is not about tit for tat."

MacDonald called the frigate announcement good news for Nova Scotia, but then lit into the federal government over the Atlantic Accord. In an interview, he said the Harper government broke a commitment that will cost the province over a billion dollars. "I'm not going to back away from my position on the issue."

The premier said the average Nova Scotian doesn't understand the fine points of equalization. "What they do understand is a deal is a deal and the federal government has broken their commitment to them."

"There are times when you have to stand up for your province and this is one of those times."

But back at the announcement, Harper told media he was disappointed that the province hadn't acknowledged that it had received \$200 million more in transfer payments in the last budget and another nearly \$100 million more in equalization.

"I don't expect us to continue bickering about this, I expect us to get on with business and to work together and that's what we're prepared to do," he added.

Taliban's lethal tactics born in Iraq; Improvised explosive device (IED) killed 6 Canadian troops Wednesday

IDNUMBER 200707060028

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: C2

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: John D. McHugh , Agence France–Presse, GettyImages, File / **HIDDEN** DANGER: A Canadian combat engineer in Afghanistan displays retrieved components similar to those used to make Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). ;

DATELINE: OTTAWA

BYLINE: Richard Foot

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 575

OTTAWA – In Iraq today, where militants have been honing their hit-and-run bombing tactics for more than four years, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are no longer just makeshift packages of random, roadside terror.

They are the single most important weapon in the insurgents' arsenal, used in a methodical and increasingly sophisticated way to impede the entire U.S. war effort and represent what could be the deadliest threat to the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, where a powerful IED killed six Canadian soldiers on Wednesday.

Many observers of the Afghan insurgency believe the Taliban imports its IED methods from its Islamic brethren in Iraq, where bombing tactics are tested on the streets and suburbs of Baghdad. What happens with IEDs in Iraq today may foreshadow the kind of problems that await Canadian troops in Kandahar.

"Iraq is the testing ground for IEDs," says Francois Boo, a research analyst with Globalsecurity.org, a U.S.-based military information website.

"What we've seen is that IED tactics are first used and proven in Iraq, and then those same tactics start appearing in Afghanistan.

"And in Iraq there has certainly been an evolution of tactics — how the bombs are employed, how they're made up, and how they're detonated."

IEDs have been responsible for the deaths of 27 of the 66 Canadian troops killed in Afghanistan since 2002, or 41 per cent. In Iraq, they are now responsible for about 80 per cent of all U.S. combat deaths, according to a recent Time magazine investigation.

"This country needs to focus on one thing, and that is defeating IEDs," a U.S. defence official told the Christian Science Monitor last May. "If we could figure that out, we could change the face of the war."

For at least two years in Iraq, according to a 2006 report prepared for the U.S. Congress, insurgents have planted "daisy-chain" IEDs — a single detonator triggering a series of bombs along a roadway, in the hopes

Taliban's lethal tactics born in Iraq; Improvised explosive device (IED) killed 6 Canadian troops Wednesday

of crippling not just a single vehicle but an entire military convoy.

IEDs have also been used in complex ambush scenarios — witnessed in May — to kill soldiers in pursuit of fleeing insurgents, or to attack first responders rushing to the scene of an emergency.

The U.S. military has even raised fears that insurgents have experimented with shortening the fuses on mortar bombs, to be fired at helicopters, creating the first "aerial IEDs," according to a 2006 report by researchers with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Methods of remotely detonating IEDs have also evolved from simple electronic radio devices such as cellphones, to infrared "trip-wire" technology.

And in Iraq, IEDs are no longer just hidden under rocks or inside road culverts. They are stashed in refrigerators abandoned on curbsides, or camouflaged under mounds of human feces, or stuffed into animal carcasses. Sometimes they are even shoved inside live sheep, which are then herded towards military patrols.

Iraqi police have also reported IEDs hidden inside human cadavers, with the bombs being detonated when authorities come to investigate the remains.

ALL NOW IDENTIFIED

Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan earlier this week was identified Thursday as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Corp. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

Angry? You'd better believe it

IDNUMBER 200707060004

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: D8

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Sajjad Hussain, Agence France–Presse, GettyImages, File / HELLO AGAIN: Here is Indian Kashmiri Muslim Shakeel Bhat, right, protesting in September 2006 during a pro–Pakistani Muslim League Jammu Kashmir demonstration. Despite showing up almost on schedule, he vows that he is genuinely enraged. ;

DATELINE: SRINAGAR, India

BYLINE: Izhar Wani

SOURCE: Agence France–Presse

WORD COUNT: 253

SRINAGAR, India – He has become the face of Muslim fury: an angry young man whose bushy beard and fiery-eyed scowl take centre stage at nearly every pro–Islamic demonstration in Indian Kashmir.

Shakeel Bhat, 31, has been displaying his teeth and shaking his fist over anything from Salman Rushdie's knighthood to Danish cartoons, becoming a photographer's favourite and earning himself the nickname Rage Boy in online columns and blogs.

One American columnist has dismissed him as a "professional Muslim protester," while other bloggers have also held him up for ridicule as a person who appears to be very easily enraged about anything.

But Bhat, the man behind the angry face, said he could take any kind of criticism in his stride.

"Whatever I do, I do for Allah and the Prophet Mohammed," said Bhat, who admits to having been an armed militant between 1991 and 1994 with a pro–Pakistan rebel group.

"I can't resist injustice. I protest for all the oppressed Muslims in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan," he told AFP.

Bhat dropped out of school in his early teens, and quickly found his way into the armed struggle against New Delhi's disputed hold over part of the scenic Himalayan region.

In 18 years the conflict has left at least 42,000 people dead, nearly a third of them civilians.

After escaping scores of police raids, Bhat finally spent three years behind bars — a lucky escape from the Indian army's "catch and kill" tactics of the 1990s.

While he no longer carries a weapon, Bhat said he was still fuming about the Indian army's often suffocating presence in Kashmir. He has been arrested more than 300 times.

"If my photographs get published across the world, it is because my emotions are real and my looks are not deceptive. The photos show the anger inside," said the full–time demonstrator.

Soldiers' families deserve support: military

IDNUMBER 200707060104
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CanWest News Photo / Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore listens to a question during a news conference on Thursday ; Colour Photo: Francis ; Colour Photo: Anderson ;
BYLINE: Nicole Baer, Meghan Hurley and Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 513

Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in a roadside explosion in Afghanistan earlier this week was identified Thursday as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

"The families are well aware that there is debate on this mission," Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, told a news conference at the Edmonton base of four of the fallen soldiers.

"Nonetheless, at this particular point in time, the most sensitive and, I think mature, approach would be to show them a clarion call of love and support, (an acknowledgement) that these soldiers died in a mission that they believed in.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians," Vance said. "They are pursuing a mission they believe in and, in fact, to the reasonably well-informed, has demonstrated some progress."

Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other Canadian Forces members and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Corp. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area, his voice breaking repeatedly during his remarks. "We're privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in this noble cause and in the accomplishment of our shared mission."

Skidmore said the dead soldiers' families and their "brothers and sisters in uniform" will have to grieve as best they can.

"We'll tend to our fallen and steel ourselves for future challenges," he said. "For now, though, we'll focus on the sacrifice of our comrades and the anguish of their loved ones."

The latest deaths, which bring to 66 the number of Canadian soldiers who have died since the Afghan mission

began in 2002, cast a pall over a government announcement in Halifax of a \$3.1-billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper, standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax. "But as well to emphasize the support we all share as parliamentarians for the important work they do on our behalf of our country, and we appreciate it.

"We consider it a terrible loss whenever we lose anyone, but obviously losing six is a terrible tragedy."

As the day unfolded, portraits of the fallen soldiers began to emerge. It was learned, for instance, that five-month-old Vienna Bason will only know her father, Master Cpl. Colin Bason, through photographs and stories.

Bason, 28, a member of the 39 Canadian Brigade Group Reserve of the Royal Westminster Regiment, left for Afghanistan just four days after his daughter was born in February. Bason's father, Gary, said his son had wanted to be in the military since he was a child.

A reservist from Abbotsford, B.C., Bason had previously done a tour in Kosovo, something he considered a "walk in the park compared to Afghanistan."

Talk of quitting Afghan mission insults Canada

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PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A8
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 782

Canadians shouldn't be surprised at the ability of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan to adjust their tactics to deadly effect.

Military analysts long have pointed out that the insurgents, while outgunned, are intelligent, resourceful, determined and increasingly desperate. They have lost the initiative on the battlefield and are increasingly losing the support of the indigenous populations in those Afghan regions where NATO has been able to provide security and a sense of normalcy.

But, unlike NDP Leader Jack Layton, the Taliban aren't about to cower in defeat. They exist to re-enslave the Afghan people and enforce their twisted ideology on a compliant population. It is not for nothing that their victims consistently have included women and girls seeking an education, teachers who dare to provide that education, and those working on basic infrastructure such as paved roads.

Al-Qaida, deprived of a nation that provides it cover, isn't likely to negotiate terms of surrender. Yet this is Layton's plan as he urges Canadians to pack up their tents, tuck their tails between their legs and surrender Canada's honour.

While one at least can understand Liberal Leader Stephane Dion's frustration over the unwillingness of NATO allies to carry more of the load, his insistence that the opposition never will give Prime Minister Stephen Harper the consensus needed to extend the mission beyond February 2009 is both foolish and dangerous.

It is true that Canada's allies have a responsibility to step up to help provide security in the more dangerous parts of Afghanistan. But setting an ultimatum is not likely to achieve that end.

Making it clear that Canada is on the verge of retreat only can embolden the insurgents and further endanger our troops. Dion's timing is particularly poor, considering that military experts believe the insurgents' change of tactics in increasing the use of suicide bombers and improvised explosive devises — although deadly — is a clear indication the battle for the hearts and minds is heading in the right direction for the Afghan government and its allies.

It also does nothing for the morale of Canadian soldiers on the front lines to hear that, unless more of our European allies live up to the responsibility they assumed when we all undertook this task, the sacrifices and 66 deaths they have suffered will have been in vain.

To threaten the governments of countries such as Germany and France that Canada will retreat unless they step up to put their troops on the front lines is unlikely to get them to do the right thing. But a large percentage of citizens in both countries believe NATO is correct in trying to bring stability to Afghanistan and shouldn't abandon the objective. In a recent survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 44 per cent of German and 48 per cent of French respondents agree that NATO must stay until Afghanistan is stable.

But in both these countries — just as is increasingly the case in Canada — the debate has become a partisan issue rather than a moral or military one.

In Germany, the situation is complicated even further because of its history. In another survey, compared to citizens of other western nations, Germans were most likely to express shame over their country's past — not surprising, considering Germany's record in the Second World War and its responsibility for the Holocaust.

Canadians should be trying to convince Germans that using one's power to do the right thing is a means to rebuild national pride. It is from the disproportionate use of Canada's military during past wars that this country built an international reputation for defending the rights and freedoms of others.

A recent decision by the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, Germany, reinforced the constitutionality of the Afghan mission. It also reminded Germans that, while the mission's intent is to rebuild Afghanistan and prevent the resurgence of the al-Qaida terrorist network and the Islamist Taliban, the deployment "serves the security of the Euro-Atlantic area" because an attack on a NATO ally prompted the action.

To be sure, Harper deserves the lion's share of the blame for the political mess this mission has become in Canada. The prime minister hasn't missed an opportunity to use it for partisan purposes. He must now try to rebuild consensus among Canadians, particularly among parliamentarians.

Dion must stop his foolish ultimatums and remember that it was the Liberals who put Canada on the front lines. It's his responsibility to make sure the sacrifice hasn't been in vain.

Layton can go ahead with trying to talk to the Taliban and see if he can do what no one else — not even its friends and allies — have been able to accomplish: make it into a responsible member of the world community.

Notre Dame coach remembers soldier killed in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707060070
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Sports
PAGE: B2
BYLINE: Rob Vanstone
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix; Regina Leader-Post
WORD COUNT: 401

The attributes Jordan Anderson displayed while playing high school football for the Notre Dame Hounds are being saluted following his death in Afghanistan.

Anderson, 29, was one of six Canadian soldiers who were killed Wednesday when their armoured vehicle was destroyed by an improvised explosive device about 20 kilometres south of Kandahar City.

Anderson attended Wilcox-based Athol Murray College of Notre Dame and played on the offensive and defensive lines for the Regina Intercollegiate Football League's Hounds in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

"He was one of the team guys," veteran Notre Dame football coach Rob Palmarin said Thursday, when he discovered the tragic news about Cpl. Anderson. "He was willing to make sacrifices for the team when he played and he was willing to make sacrifices for his country."

Palmarin kept in touch with Anderson — a member of the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry — following his graduation from Notre Dame in 1999. Anderson is from the Northwest Territories.

"He e-mailed me two years ago from Afghanistan on one of his earlier missions," Palmarin recalled. "He said, 'I know we pray at assembly in the morning (at Notre Dame) when we all gather. Please pray for me and all the boys.'"

"He had a favourite prayer, which began, 'Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle.' He e-mailed me the words. He kept it simple.

"We're all in shock. We'll try to figure out a way to honour him during the (2007 football) season."

Palmarin has fond recollections of Anderson and his contributions to the Hounds and the school.

"It's like losing one of your own kids, even though it's eight or nine years removed," he said. "He was a tough, two-way lineman. He never made the all-star team, but he was kind of the next guy on the list. He was a battler. I'll always remember that. In one-on-ones, he'd always look to go after the toughest guy."

Anderson also played rugby for the Hounds for four years.

In his graduating year, he wrote the following in Notre Dame's yearbook: "Thanks, Mom and Dad, for all you've done for me even when times were low. I'll always try and make you proud of me." The Hounds'

1998–99 yearbook also listed his ambitions: "To find work that I love, to never look back, and never have any regrets."

Five of the six dead soldiers' names have been released. Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Cpl. Cole Bartsch and Pte. Lane Watkins were in Anderson's battalion. Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from The Royal Westminster Regiment, also died. The soldiers were to have concluded their deployment in Afghanistan at the end of the month.

Grave unearthed in Afghan jail

IDNUMBER 200707060013
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D7
COLUMN: World in Brief
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 110

KABUL (AFP) — A mass grave containing hundreds of bodies has been discovered in an underground prison north of the Afghan capital, the BBC reported early today.

Police Gen. Ali Shah Paktiwal told the BBC the grave was unearthed in a former military base dating back to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The grisly find was made after an old man who recently returned to Afghanistan led police to the site.

"An old man told us about the grave. He told us he worked as a driver when there was a Russian military base here," Paktiwal told the BBC World Service.

Several hundred bodies have been discovered in the 15 rooms unearthed so far, but it was not known how many were buried there in total, the report said.

IEDs 'evolution' of Taliban tactics; Bombs 'used and proven in Iraq' bound for Afghanistan, expert says

IDNUMBER 200707060164
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Richard Foot
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 695

In Iraq today, where militants have been honing their hit-and-run bombing tactics for more than four years, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are no longer just makeshift packages of random, roadside terror.

They are the single most important weapon in the insurgents' arsenal, used in a methodical and increasingly sophisticated way to impede the entire U.S. war effort and represent what could be the deadliest threat to the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, where a powerful IED killed six Canadian soldiers on Wednesday.

Many observers of the Afghan insurgency believe the Taliban imports its IED methods from its Islamic brethren in Iraq, where bombing tactics are tested on the streets and suburbs of Baghdad. What happens with IEDs in Iraq today may foreshadow the kind of problems that await Canadian troops in Kandahar.

On May 30 in Iraq, six American soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb as they rushed to rescue the crew of a U.S. helicopter shot down by Islamic insurgents. The men who attacked the chopper had placed their bomb on a road they knew the rescuers would use.

Two weeks earlier, Iraqi insurgents killed one soldier and wounded three others after luring them into a palm grove laced with homemade bombs. Moments earlier, they had attacked a U.S. patrol and fled into the palms, knowing the Americans would follow.

"Iraq is the testing ground for IEDs," says Francois Boo, a research analyst with Globalsecurity.org, a U.S.-based military information website. "What we've seen is that IED tactics are first used and proven in Iraq, and then those same tactics start appearing in Afghanistan.

"And in Iraq, there has certainly been an evolution of tactics — how the bombs are employed, how they're made up, and how they're detonated."

IEDs have been responsible for the deaths of 27 of the 66 Canadian troops killed in Afghanistan since 2002, or 41 per cent. In Iraq, they are now responsible for about 80 per cent of all U.S. combat deaths, according to a recent Time magazine investigation.

Where once U.S. soldiers in Iraq faced the same threat now dealt with by Canadians in Afghanistan — random roadside attacks against individual vehicles — U.S. forces must now cope with a lethal array of IED threats, while patrolling on foot, in their vehicles or in the air.

"This country needs to focus on one thing, and that is defeating IEDs," a U.S. defence official told the Christian Science Monitor last May. "If we could figure that out, we could change the face of the war."

IEDs 'evolution' of Taliban tactics; Bombs 'used and proven in Iraq' bound for Afghanistan, expert says

For at least two years in Iraq, according to a 2006 report prepared for the U.S. Congress, insurgents have planted "daisy-chain" IEDs — a single detonator triggering a series of bombs along a roadway, in the hopes of crippling not just a single vehicle but an entire military convoy.

IEDs have also been used in complex ambush scenarios — witnessed in May — to kill soldiers in pursuit of fleeing insurgents, or to attack first responders rushing to the scene of an emergency.

The U.S. military has even raised fears that insurgents have experimented with shortening the fuses on mortar bombs, to be fired at helicopters, creating the first "aerial IEDs," according to a 2006 report by researchers with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Methods of remotely detonating IEDs have also evolved from simple electronic radio devices such as cellphones, to infrared "trip-wire" technology.

And in Iraq, IEDs are no longer just hidden under rocks or inside road culverts. They are stashed in refrigerators abandoned on curbsides, or camouflaged under mounds of human feces, or stuffed into animal carcasses. Sometimes they are even shoved inside live sheep, which are then herded towards military patrols.

Iraqi police have also reported IEDs hidden inside human cadavers, with the bombs being detonated when authorities come to investigate the remains.

The U.S. military has spent more than \$6 billion, recruited teams of engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and set up an entire Defence Department agency — all in the hopes of solving the deadly threat of IEDs in Iraq and more recently Afghanistan.

"It's basically been a war of back and forth measures and countermeasures," says John Pike, the director of Globalsecurity.org.

"As the enemy comes up with something new, our forces find out how to mitigate it, and then the enemy simply comes up with something else."

Can the scourge of IEDs ever be beaten?

"Not until we kill all the enemy," says Pike, "or they decide to stop building them."

To see a Global video report on the latest from afghanistan go to ottawacitizen.com

Homemade, but deadly; Improvised devices are weapons of choice for outgunned insurgents

IDNUMBER 200707060154
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
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PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: The variety of improvised explosive devices is limited only by the imagination of the bomb maker. Some make use of existing munitions — mortar bombs, mines and artillery shells are popular. Others use gas cylinders or plastic explosives. The detonator can be a cellphone or, in the case of a powerful bomb found in an Iraqi house, two video cassette recorders. ;
BYLINE: Richard Foot
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 243

Improvised explosive device, or IED, is military jargon for a homemade bomb, particularly the bombs that are the backbone of the insurgencies in Iraq and, increasingly, Afghanistan.

Sometimes they are detonated remotely by a hidden insurgent, watching and waiting for his target. At other times, they are placed inside cars and used in suicide-bombing attacks. In this case, they are known as VBIEDs — vehicle-borne IEDs.

Munitions for the bombs typically include artillery shells, rocket-propelled grenades and landmines, but can also include smaller explosives such as hand grenades.

In many cases, munitions are packaged together — with multiple landmines sometimes stacked one on top of the other — for a bigger explosive punch.

More lethal IEDs include sophisticated, conical-shaped bombs, designed to penetrate tank armour or the bodies of landmine-resistant vehicles.

IEDs are typically detonated remotely by someone activating a radio-controlled device. More recent IEDs have been equipped with infrared beams similar to those found in household burglar alarms.

The explosives come from a range of sources: in Iraq, from the munitions left behind by the regime of Saddam Hussein. In Afghanistan, from the arsenal of explosives that littered the country following the insurgency against the Russians and the years of civil war.

Some experts believe IED "factories" in various cities in Iraq and southern Afghanistan are also supplied by sources in Iran and Pakistan.

IEDs are designed, principally, to spread terror among civilian populations and soldiers, and assert the will of insurgents in areas where they lack the strength to fight with conventional military means.

Show grieving families 'love and support'; General says slain soldiers believed in their mission

IDNUMBER 200707060153

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.07.06

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

BYLINE: Nicole Baer, Meghan Hurley and Ryan Cormier

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 584

Senior military officers called on Canadians to rally around the families of all the soldiers who have died in a mission they truly believed in as the sixth soldier to die in Wednesday's roadside explosion near Kandahar was identified yesterday as Capt. Jefferson Francis.

"The families are well aware that there is debate on this mission," Col. Jon Vance, commander of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, told a news conference at the Edmonton base of four of the dead soldiers.

"Nonetheless, at this particular point in time, the most sensitive and, I think mature, approach would be to show them a clarion call of love and support, (an acknowledgment) that these soldiers died in a mission that they believed in.

"No matter what your opinion is, these soldiers are working on behalf of all Canadians," Col. Vance said.

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Capt. Francis, of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, based in Shilo, Man., was killed Wednesday, along with five other soldiers and their Afghan interpreter, when their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device along a road 20 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

Overnight, the military also identified Cpl. Jordan Anderson of Edmonton's 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, as one of the dead.

"We're proud to have known these soldiers," said Brig.-Gen. Mark Skidmore, commander of Land Force Western Area. "We're privileged to have served alongside them and we would be honoured to replace them in this noble cause and in the accomplishment of our shared mission."

Brig.-Gen. Skidmore said the dead soldiers' families and their "brothers and sisters in uniform" will have to grieve as best they can.

The latest deaths, which bring to 66 the number of Canadian soldiers who have died since the Afghan mission began in 2002, cast a pall over a government announcement in Halifax of a \$3.1-billion upgrade for Canada's 12 Halifax-class frigates.

"Today is the day to express our condolences for these soldiers and to their families and their comrades," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper, standing on the deck of HMCS Halifax. "But as well to emphasize the support we all share as parliamentarians for the important work they do on behalf of our country, and we appreciate it.

As the day unfolded, portraits of the fallen soldiers began to emerge. It was learned, for instance, that five-month-old Vienna Bason will only know her father, Master Cpl. Colin Bason, through photographs and stories.

Master Cpl. Bason, 28, a member of the 39 Canadian Brigade Group Reserve of the Royal Westminster Regiment, left for Afghanistan just four days after his daughter was born in February.

Vienna's mother, Katrina Blain, said her longtime boyfriend never lost his passion and dedication for the military.

But she acknowledged he was shaken by the June 20 deaths of three friends from his platoon.

"You could hear that he was sad in his voice, but he didn't let on; he just moved on and did his job."

Just two weeks before he died in a roadside bomb blast, Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, had struggled to come to terms with the deaths of three of the men under his command. This week, Capt. Dawe suffered the same fate.

Peter Dawe, the captain's father and a retired lieutenant-colonel, told the Kingston Whig Standard he knew what his son was going through after the loss of his soldiers.

"You question your competence. You question your procedures. You look sideways. You wonder if perhaps you've been too trustful of the villagers," the elder Dawe said, adding that his son was angry that the soldiers died in a place where they thought they had already achieved victory against the Afghan insurgents.

Quebec. Soldier to appeal sexual assault sentence

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DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 141

A Valcartier-based Canadian Forces soldier was denied an absolute discharge that would have allowed him to serve in Afghanistan and was sentenced yesterday to 15 months served in the community for sexual assault. The sentence could end the two-year military career of Pierre-Olivier Boulet, 22, but defence attorney Richard-Philippe Guay said there would be an appeal and noted that Pte. Boulet remains a member of the military. Pte. Boulet will be under 24-hour house arrest for the first five months except for work-related matters, leaving him an opportunity to still serve in the military. Pte. Boulet was found guilty in February of sexual assault on a 19-year-old woman in 2004. He claimed the act had been consensual.

Face the truth

IDNUMBER 200707060119
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
BYLINE: Amro Gamal
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 208

Isn't it enough? On Wednesday, six more Canadian soldiers died in Afghanistan. How many more Canadians should die there? How many more Afghans should be killed until we're satisfied? Let's not fool ourselves; we're the ones who sent our soldiers halfway around the world to kill them.

For, whether we like it or not, the Taliban are Afghans. They are not an outside force that occupies Afghanistan. There is no country in the world that is called Talibistan. They are as Afghan as any other ethnic group who calls Afghanistan home.

Let's face another truth. Although we call our Afghan mission "The Provincial Reconstruction Team," we didn't really reconstruct anything. How many hospitals have we reconstructed? How many schools? If it's really a reconstruction mission? Shouldn't we have sent more engineers and construction workers than soldiers?

I don't believe we're there to spread freedom, either. How many burqas have we managed to lift? Not a whole lot. And how many beards have we shaved? Even fewer than the lifted burqas.

We failed to understand that these are their customs. This is their way of life. Besides, we should not sacrifice our sons and daughters in Afghanistan to force them to lift their burqas and shave their beards.

So what are we doing there?

Amro Gamal,

Ottawa

Are we reaching our objectives in Afghanistan?

IDNUMBER 200707060118
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
BYLINE: Roy Weston
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 137

Re: Troop death toll climbs to 66, July 5.

Sixty-six deaths over five years? I would hardly call that a carnage. Still, there comes a time when we must question whether the mission in Afghanistan is achieving anything, and whether leaving in February 2009 will give us enough time to make that evaluation. But by raising the issue now, we are putting NATO on notice that there is only so much we can be expected to do without increased military support from other NATO countries. We have always been accused by them in the past of not contributing enough while others do the heavy lifting. Well, by February 2009, it will be our turn to accuse them of doing the same thing.

Roy Weston,

Burnaby, B.C.

We win peace by winning the war

IDNUMBER 200707060110
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: John Robson
BYLINE: John Robson
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 816

The British doctors' plot certainly helps clarify things. I am glad the operation was a failure and the patients did not die for the obvious reasons. But also because it helps me discuss the merits of this botched atrocity.

First, its sheer incompetence. One of our advantages in the war on terror, albeit unearned, is that we are fighting people who have difficulty setting themselves on fire in a car full of propane. The Globe and Mail claimed Saturday that British police were "hunting for at least three other suspects and a mastermind," but I doubt they'll find the latter in this affair. Despite the defeatist tone of much western news coverage, our enemies are often as clueless as they are vicious.

Second, that this comically inept villainy was apparently the work of educated people with lucrative, prestigious jobs underlines that our problem here is not poverty, social exclusion or racism but an idea. Specifically, the belief that we should be blown up as promiscuous intoxicated unbelievers. "Death to infidels" is the root cause of Islamist terrorism, as more and more people realize.

That's why the third piece of good news was the blase public reaction. The usual suspects feigned horror that such terrorist acts should have been attempted by highly paid professionals honoured by the host society, but few others were fooled. To call terrorism a product of poverty is, as Chesterton said of crime, a slander on the poor, many of whom live decent, honourable lives. It is also a slander on all mankind, a pernicious denial of free will, for materialists to claim we can buy off our enemies with big salaries, fancy offices and high-definition TVs.

Ultimately we are accountable for our choices, not our circumstances, and deep down we all know it. Life is never easy, though tribulations vary. But adversity crushes some and strengthens others. And while poverty can contribute to despair and rage, as indeed can wealth, both are at best partial explanations, not legitimate excuses. If you believe in a merciful God, you must prepare one day to explain to Him why you chose terrorism, not why you had no choice.

In public policy, too, choices and ideas matter far more than circumstances. Islamists try to blow us up not for refusing them attractive jobs or for our foreign policy misdeeds, but because they think we should die for being happy, tolerant people who do not claim to love the Creator while despising His creation and His creatures. And unless we convert to their way of thinking, they will not relent.

Not everyone gets it. At a Wednesday press conference, NDP leader Jack Layton said we should label civilian casualties in Afghanistan "unacceptable," distance ourselves from the Bush administration, withdraw our troops and initiate a "comprehensive peace process" because "nobody could advance the idea that there's a military solution ultimately in Afghanistan."

Since the Taliban see an obvious military solution, shooting their way back into power and killing everybody who taught girls, I asked him: "When you talk about your comprehensive peace process, what's the offer to the Taliban?" Mr. Layton blithered that "Students of history will know that all major conflicts are resolved ultimately through peace-oriented discussions ..."

Unfortunately for him I am a student of history with three university degrees in the subject from two different countries, so I said: "And by the armies marching into Berlin and an atomic bomb dropped on Japan. That's how World War II ended and students of history know that." He responded: "Well I beg to differ that if you study the precise processes that took place most of the conflicts in the world you'll see that there are always negotiations that take place. And that's what needs to happen here."

His response was insolently stupid. Of course at some point in almost any war someone staggers forward to sign an instrument of surrender, but other obvious historical examples of major conflicts that ended by crushing victory include World War I, the Napoleonic Wars and the Cold War. I didn't have time to make this point, but it didn't matter because most other journalists present, including from francophone media, were openly incredulous about Mr. Layton's proposal. They might not support the Afghan war. But even the press grasp that you can't sign useful treaties with people who dream of waving your severed head at a cheap webcam.

As students of history know, John Maynard Keynes was right that "soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good and evil." It's why doctors try to bomb nightclubs and airports. Clearly.

John Robson's column appears weekly.

The most dangerous job

IDNUMBER 200707060109
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: Don Martin
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CanWest News Service / A masked interpreter, right, listens on a radio for Taliban communications while accompanying Canadian soldiers on patrol in Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: The Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 516

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — They hide behind oversized sunglasses and face scarves. Even when they are masked, the military prohibits media from taking their photographs or using their real names.

Freelance interpreters are the key to NATO soldiers communicating with villagers and tribal leaders in Afghanistan, a service that has earned them top spot on the Taliban's most-wanted list.

They are paid about \$40 a day to tag along with the Canadian military, which is a fortune in a country where the per capita gross domestic product is roughly \$300 per year.

But the Taliban have put a \$50,000 price on their heads, viewing "terps" as tattlers to the infidels and traitors to what they see as Allah's extremist calling.

The first Canadian-hired interpreter was killed Wednesday alongside six soldiers when the armoured vehicle they were riding in was demolished by a roadside bomb.

Officials yesterday remained tight-lipped about the tragedy, refusing to allow media embedded here to talk to the brass in charge of the ill-fated convoy that claimed all seven occupants of an RG-31 armoured vehicle.

A ramp ceremony for the six soldiers is scheduled for today, but the interpreter will be denied a memorial service or Canadian help covering the considerable expenses that accompany the traditional Afghan funeral.

His real name will never be released. He will simply disappear, his family desperately trying to conceal the cause of his death, lest the Taliban seek to avenge his service to Canadians by killing parents or siblings.

An interpreter I'll call Mohammed is assigned to the provincial reconstruction team at the frontier outpost of Patrol Base Wilson.

He was introduced to me by Warrant Officer Jim Hunter as the best source of local cultural intelligence in the region.

Mohammed is quiet and, unfortunately, prone to mumbling. He has a curious tendency to listen to five minutes of dialogue in Pashto and deliver a two-sentence reply in English. It makes you wonder if the full meaning of the discussion is being relayed.

But he often goes beyond abbreviated translation to inform soldiers what the villagers are really saying behind their backs, while adding occasional insight into unique local circumstances.

Without people like Mohammed, interaction between Canadian forces and Afghans would be limited to hand gestures. There'd be no way of knowing if the Taliban were active or absent from a given district or what Afghans living in poverty really need to improve their lives.

"Many of the locals support the Taliban because the military doesn't stay there 24 hours. They arrive, talk for a few minutes and leave for weeks or months," he says. "The minute the soldiers leave the village, the Taliban might return."

The way Mohammed sees it, the risk of his job is manageable for the rewards of earning more money in a day than most Afghans earn in a week.

"It's all about the money here," he shrugs. "If police were paid \$150 a month, there'd be no need for other countries to be here. But they get paid half that amount, so they're mostly corrupt."

The challenge of crosscultural interpretation will increase next month when the Quebec-based Van Doos take over command. Bilingual military brass will have to be placed in every convoy because Mohammed knows of no French-speaking Pashto interpreters.

But without someone to bridge the linguistic divide, any Canadian message of hope to the locals will be meaningless if our offers are lost in translation.

Don Martin is a columnist for the Calgary Herald.

An envoy explains why; Afghan ambassador urges Canadians not to lose heart

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COLUMN: Kelly Egan
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Bruno Schlumberger, the Ottawa Citizen / Of Canadian Forces Capt. Matthew Dawe's death this week, Afghan Ambassador Omar Samad says, 'I don't have to be Canadian to feel for that family and for the loss they've incurred.' ;
BYLINE: Kelly Egan
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
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The day after six Canadians die in Afghanistan, you want to hear someone say it, say it out loud, maybe say it over and over. Well done, soldier. Thank you.

Omar Samad looks at the picture on the front page of the newspaper. Beautiful image.

Capt. Matthew Dawe, 27, is crouched down, about to embrace his son, Lucas, a blond-haired tyke with his back to the camera.

The soldier, a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, is wearing desert camo gear. The boy is wearing a white jersey with yellow stripes on the arms, arms he is flailing about, little fists flying, in a toddler trot.

Capt. Dawe is smiling broadly. A good-looking man. His eyes look red, as though overly tired.

There is a Canadian flag on a shoulder patch. He is extending his hands, as though about to sweep the one-year-old off the ground. One is young and innocent, the other grown and worldly.

It was February, as Capt. Dawe was departing CFB Edmonton. And now he is dead. Dad will lift Lucas no more.

Mr. Samad is Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada. He is shown the picture in his office yesterday. I want him to say it.

"I saw this picture," he said, leaning forward in his chair to glance at the paper on the coffee table.

Funny, but the way foreign embassies work around the world, this is actually a piece of Afghan territory in downtown Ottawa. It is the fourth floor of a yellow brick building on Queen Street, above a Thai restaurant and a commercial realtor.

Nothing special about it, really; not like the country it represents. A waiting room with a matching sofa and love seat. A desk with an HP computer. A water cooler in the corridor. A bookcase loaded with magazines.

"I have an 11-month-old son and I saw this picture of the father about to embrace this little boy, the father who is not going to come back to his little boy," and then he leans back in his chair, and finishes.

"And it's heart-wrenching."

Mr. Samad is a well-educated man, fluent in English and French, and speaks slowly, as though practised at careful oral composition.

"I don't have to be Canadian to feel for that family and for the loss they've incurred."

It is only to be human, he added, to appreciate the sacrifice that Canadians have made in his homeland.

"Every time we hear about casualties, we feel it, in the same way Canadians feel it."

It was an affirming visit. After 66 fatalities, it is useful to have a well-positioned someone answer the question: Why, again?

Mr. Samad, a third-generation diplomat in his mid 40s, grew up in Kabul during a time of peace.

He fled in 1979, following a Communist coup and spent many years in the U.S. earning a masters degree.

He said he was one of the first Afghans in exile to return after the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

Opinion polls have shown that Canadians are decidedly gloomy about the prospects of success in Afghanistan, a country with a history of resistance toward outside meddling.

But Mr. Samad says we should not lose heart.

"If you care about security and the threat of terrorism as we know it today, post 9/11, and how Afghanistan became a victim, pre-9/11, then it makes sense to be in Afghanistan," he said, beginning a recitation.

"If you care about the plight of one of the most impoverished nations on Earth, that has endured almost three decades of continuous destruction and a million deaths and millions of refugees, from the humanitarian point of view, then Afghanistan is the place to be, to help.

"If you care about such issues as gender rights, women's rights, children having access to basic health and education, democracy and freedom of expression, then Afghanistan is the place to show some type of caring."

The ambassador speaks to many groups across Canada and delivered best wishes to the famed Van Doos in a pre-deployment speech in Quebec City on June 22.

Do not fall prey to the idea that progress is not being made, he said yesterday.

"The difference today, for most Afghans, is the difference between night and day."

The rule of the Taliban was apocalyptic, he said, adding that government institutions and the economy are on the rebound. The gross national product, for instance, has tripled in six years, he said.

"I fully believe in the righteousness of what we are doing in Afghanistan, whether for us Afghans to try and rebuild our country, or our international friends, who are there to lend us a hand."

Righteousness. A good, strong word.

You needed to hear that, in a week when six men come home in boxes, wrapped in flags, reunited with parents, wives, daughters — and sons, big and little — for the final hurt, everlasting.

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Allen–Vanguard shares rise on bomb scares

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Shares of Allen–Vanguard Corp. hit a record high yesterday despite a warning that sales will be soft in the quarter that ended in June.

Investors were heartened by a promise that AV bomb–control technology will generate sales in the \$50–million range in the second half of the year ending in September, 45 per cent higher than a year earlier.

"Timing of deliveries means a light third quarter but an exceptional fourth quarter," said David Luxton, chief executive of the bomb–control technology company.

AV said it will deliver about 500 electronic counter–measure Symphony Systems to Lockheed Martin for use by the U.S. military this fiscal year and an additional 500 by the end of December.

The technology is designed to stop the detonation of remotely–controlled roadside bombs in Iraq and other trouble spots.

AV said it is in negotiations with a possible strategic acquisition target.

"If this proceeds it would cause us to broaden our shareholder and organizational base in the U.S. so that we capitalize on opportunities in the world's largest defence and homeland security market," said Mr. Luxton.

The stock hit a high of \$8.47 following the news before closing at \$8.34, up two per cent. The stock has risen more than 400 per cent in the past year as demand took off for technology which deals with the improvised bombs that play a big role in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

Mouse antibodies may offer way to save troops; Former RIM Researcher Behind IED 'Sniffer'

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BYLINE: Tom Blackwell

SOURCE: National Post

NOTE: Don Martin in Afghanistan, A4 Letters to the editor, Page A12

WORD COUNT: 1226

One of the inventors of the Black-Berry says he and U.S. colleagues have developed a biological sensing device that could sniff out the IEDs that have taken such a bloody toll on soldiers in Afghanistan, but says the Canadian government has shown little interest.

The novel system uses tiny sensors affixed with mouse antibodies that can detect TNT and other explosives. The sensors then send out signals to approaching convoys or foot soldiers. Peter Edmonson, former research director at Research in Motion, the BlackBerry inventor, said yesterday that he and scientists at Georgia Tech university are in talks with the U.S. Marines and are about to sign a deal with a Pennsylvania company to manufacture the hardware.

Attempts to interest various federal officials in Canada have been unsuccessful, he said. "We haven't heard boo from the Canadian government."

"Why they aren't talking to us just doesn't make sense.... It pains us."

A spokeswoman for Defence Research and Development Canada, one government branch working on the IED (improvised explosive device) problem, said a partial search found no record of Mr. Edmonson having contacted the federal agency. However, she said the organization was "open to new ideas" and urged the engineer to submit a proposal.

His team's system is just one of the high-tech solutions being explored in response to the deadly, but low-tech, explosive devices that have caused havoc among foreign forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Researchers have developed or are studying radio-jamming devices that thwart remote-controlled bombs; a robot-mounted explosive sensor called FIDO; and a gadget that is supposed to detonate IEDs before the vehicle hits them. Much of the work is funded by the Joint IED Defeat Organization, a U.S. military agency that has a budget of \$4.4-billion this year and includes some Canadian officers on its staff.

At Defence Research and Development Canada in Ottawa, meanwhile, \$72-million has been redirected over

the past year to work on combatting IEDs.

Nothing has done much yet to reduce the toll. Six Canadians were killed by a roadside bomb on Wednesday, and three others two weeks earlier.

Still, Christine DeVries, a spokeswoman for the three-year-old U.S. IED organization, argues that lives have been saved by new procedures and technology developed over the past couple of years.

The total number of casualties has not dropped because insurgents in both Iraq and Afghanistan are planting several times the number of bombs they were a few years ago, she said. However, the rate of injuries and deaths per bomb is falling. "We're not there yet," she said. "But we absolutely have made a difference."

Mr. Edmonson joined RIM in 1994 as its first radio engineer and was instrumental in developing the BlackBerry, a wireless e-mail device that is now one of Canada's most recognizable international brands.

He left the company in 2001 and more recently hooked up with Professor William Hunt of Atlanta's Georgia Institute of Technology on the sensing project, a curious marriage of biotechnology and microelectronics.

Explosive material such as TNT is injected into mice to produce antibodies, which are then applied to the sensors, about the size of two quarters stacked together. The idea is that roads or buildings soldiers want to use would be "salted" with thousands of sensors hours or days before troops arrive, Mr. Edmonson said. If a bomb had been planted nearby, molecules from the vapour around it would bind to the antibody, triggering the sensor.

It could send a radio transmission back to the approaching convoy or soldier, or light an LED visible to troops with night-vision goggles. The convoy would stop and bomb specialists would find the exact location of the IED and neutralize it, Mr. Edmonson said.

"It would be like having a sniffer dog patrol the road 24/7," he said. "It's one piece of the puzzle, but it's a major piece of the puzzle."

The sensors have detected several different types of explosives in experiments, and can distinguish them from similar, innocuous molecules, such as musk oil, that tend to confuse sniffer dogs, he said.

Zen Sensing, the company he formed with Prof. Hunt and Desmond Stubbs, another Georgia Tech scientist, is also eyeing a commercial application: placing bomb sensors in the thousands of shipping containers that criss-cross the globe and are seen as a prime transport method for weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, another Canadian firm, Allen-Vanguard Corp., is already supplying key tools in the anti-IED fight. It makes electronic counter measures — devices mounted in military vehicles or in backpacks carried by soldiers that jam radio signals used to trigger some of the bombs.

THE FALLEN

Master Corporal Colin Bason left for Afghanistan in February, four days after his daughter was born. "He was brave, and as much as he only got to spend four days with his daughter, he was a good daddy. He made sure he looked out for her," said his long-time girlfriend, Katrina Blain. The 28-year-old reservist from Abbotsford, B.C., had wanted to be in the military since he was a young child, his parents said. "We are proud of Colin and he was nothing but army," his mother, Anne, said. "He was doing what he loved."

Captain Matthew Dawe, 27, came from a well-known military family in Kings-ton, Ont. Peter Dawe, the captain's father, is a retired lieutenant-colonel. Two of Capt. Dawe's brothers have also served with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He had struggled to come to terms with the deaths of three soldiers under his command a few weeks earlier after they also died in a roadside bomb blast. Capt. Dawe is survived by his wife, Tara, and his son, Lucas.

Corporal Cole Bartsch, 23, grew up in Whitecourt, about 180 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. Shortly before he left for Afghanistan, the soldier spoke to the Whitecourt Star. "It worries me a little bit, but we're well-equipped, well-trained and I'm going with a great bunch of guys, so it really negates a lot of that," Cpl. Bartsch said at the time. "It's more worrying about your family worrying about you, because you know they are going to." He took a leave from serving in the army four years ago when his brother had heart transplant surgery, his aunt, Karen Shilson, said. He wanted to help his younger brother in his recovery.

Private Lane Watkins, a 20-year-old Manitoba native, had less than a month to go before he was headed out of Afghanistan. Pte. Watkins was the son of Charles and Wanda Watkins and had two brothers, including a twin. "He could make you smile even on your worst day. The best friend a person could possibly have. We were lucky to have him," a friend, Justine Lee McKay, wrote online. Pte. Watkins' former teacher, Lynn Galbraith, said he always wanted to be in the military. "Something just appealed to him about it. I think he was looking for the discipline," she said.

Corporal Jordan Anderson, 25, of the 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was from Iqaluit, Nunavut. He is reportedly the first from the North to die on the mission. James Anderson told the CBC that his son's six-month tour was ending and he had been expected home in time for his birthday and second wedding anniversary.

Captain Jefferson Francis of 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. Identified shortly before press time.

National Post

KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES

Mission's unsung hero bridges gaps; Afghan Interpreter Who Died In Blast Remains Nameless

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BYLINE: Don Martin
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WORD COUNT: 475

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan –They hide behind oversized sunglasses and face scarves. Even while masked, the military prohibits media from taking their photographs or using their real names.

Freelance interpreters are the key to NATO soldiers communicating with villagers and tribal leaders in Afghanistan, a service which has earned them top spot on the Taliban's most-wanted list.

They are paid about \$40 a day to tag along with the Canadian military, which is a fortune in a country where the per capita gross domestic product is roughly \$300 per year.

But the Taliban have put a \$50,000 price on their heads, viewing "terps" as tattlers to the infidels and traitors to what they see as Allah's extremist calling.

The first Canadian-hired interpreter was killed on Wednesday alongside six soldiers when the armoured vehicle they were riding in was demolished by a roadside bomb.

A ramp ceremony for the six soldiers is scheduled for today, but the interpreter will be denied a memorial service or Canadian help covering the considerable expenses that accompany the traditional Afghan funeral.

His real name will never be released. He will simply disappear, his family desperately trying to conceal the cause of his death lest the Taliban seek to avenge his service to Canadians by killing parents or siblings.

An interpreter I'll call Mohammed is assigned to the provincial reconstruction team at the frontier outpost of Patrol Base Wilson.

He was introduced to me by Warrant Officer Jim Hunter as the best source of local cultural intelligence in the region.

Mohammed is quiet and, unfortunately, prone to mumbling. He has a curious tendency to listen to five minutes of dialogue in Pashto and deliver a two-sentence reply in English. It makes you wonder if the full meaning of the discussion is being relayed.

But he often goes beyond abbreviated translation to inform soldiers what the villagers are really saying behind their backs, while adding occasional insight into unique local circumstances.

Without people like Mohammed, interaction between Canadian forces and Afghans would be limited to hand gestures. There'd be no way of knowing if the Taliban were active or absent from a given district or what Afghans living in poverty really need to improve their lives.

"Many of the locals support the Taliban because the military doesn't stay there 24 hours. They arrive, talk for a few minutes and leave for weeks or months," he says. "The minute the soldiers leave the village, the Taliban might return."

The way Mohammed sees it, the risk of his job is manageable for the rewards of earning more money in a day than most Afghans earn in a week.

"It's all about the money here," he shrugs. "If police were paid \$150 a month, there'd be no need for other countries to be here. But they get paid half that amount, so they're mostly corrupt."

The challenge of cross-cultural interpretation will increase next month when the Quebec-based Van Doos take over command. Bilingual military brass will have to be placed in every convoy because Mohammed knows of no French-speaking Pashto interpreters.

But without someone to bridge the linguistic divide, any Canadian message of hope to the locals will be meaningless if our offers are lost in translation.

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; EXPLOSIONS; BOMBINGS

Is Afghanistan a cause worth dying for?; Do Afghans even want democracy?

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BYLINE: Isaac Glick

SOURCE: National Post

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Unfortunately, democracy cannot be defended by foreign forces. This has been proven again and again in history. The people of Afghanistan will have to step up, if they really want to live in a more progressive society. But perhaps they don't, and this is the reason why the Taliban is still alive and well in Afghanistan. This is why the war in Afghanistan will continue to claim the lives of our soldiers. The question is whether we are ready to pay the toll or whether we, like the British, Americans and Russians, will leave without succeeding in changing the minds of these people.

Isaac Glick, Thornhill, Ont.

KEYWORDS: 0

Is Afghanistan a cause worth dying for?

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Once again, peace activists like Jack Layton are accused of helping the enemy by speaking the truth. War apologists like the National Post do not seem to understand that the Taliban is flourishing because of the NATO presence in Afghanistan. Our presence in Afghanistan gives the Taliban an opportunity to expand their numbers and gain public support amongst the Afghan people.

It is clear that the Bush/Harper strategy in the Middle East is a total disaster (as was predicted by the peace movement). The troops are not to blame, but the conservative warmongers who give the orders should be held to account. The best way to support our troops is to bring them back now.

Ken Erickson, Calgary.

KEYWORDS: 0