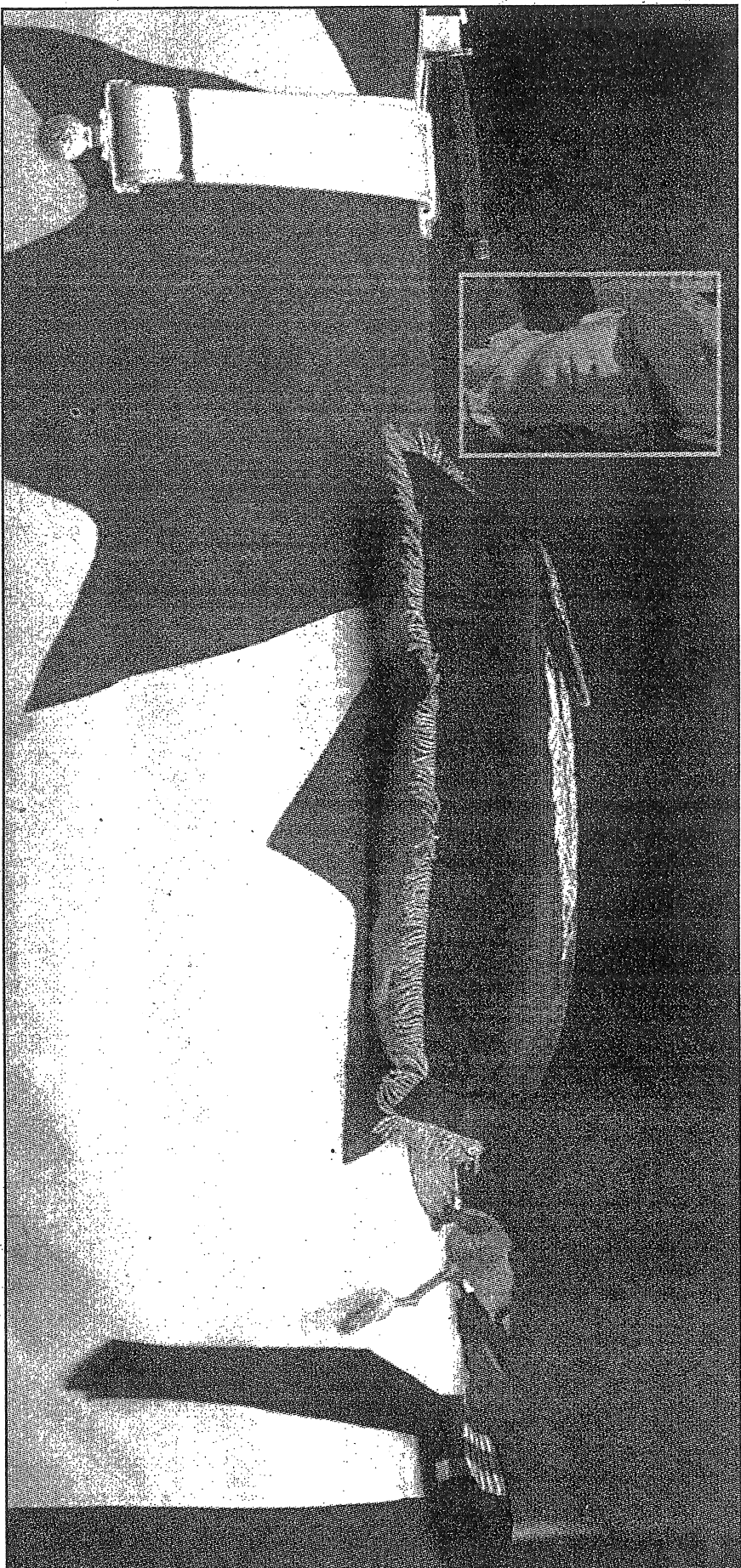


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THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL      *Tuesday, July 18, 2006*

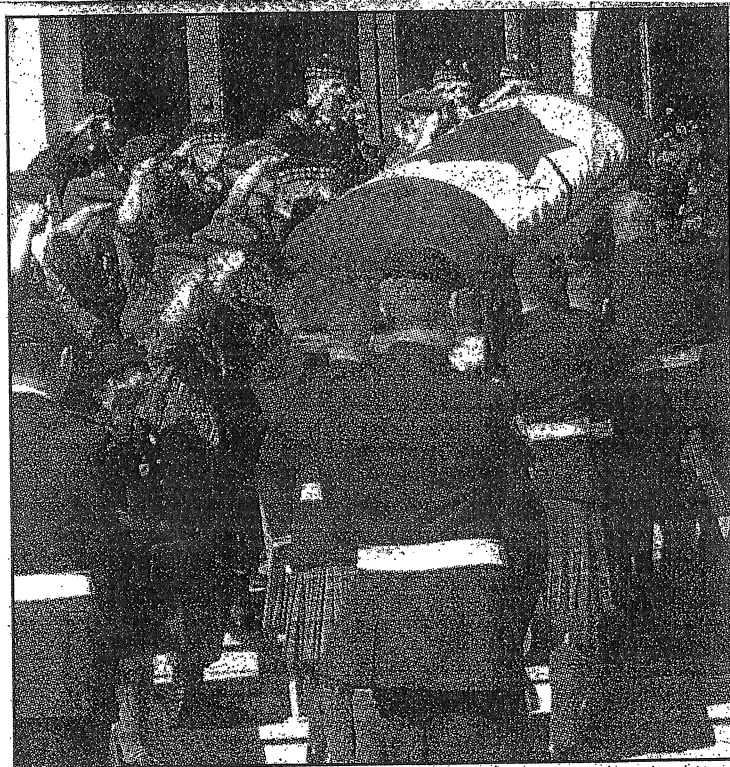
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# 'Until we meet again'



SANDI KRASOWSKI/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Medals and the hat of Cpl. Anthony Boneca, inset, were placed on top of his casket along with a wreath and his belt during his funeral mass Monday at St.



BIANCA GAROFALO/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

The casket of Cpl. Anthony Boneca is carried into St. Patrick's Cathedral by members the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment.



SANDI KRASOWSKI/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Shirley and Antonio Boneca, Megan DeCorte and her father Larry DeCorte are heart-fallen during Monday's funeral mass for Cpl. Anthony Boneca.

# Boneca proud to serve his country

BY SARAH ELIZABETH BROWN  
THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

Cpl. Anthony Boneca returned from his first tour to Afghanistan "gleaming with pride" and so excited he couldn't stop talking about it, a fellow soldier and friend said at his funeral Monday.

A young man with an "unforgettable personality," Boneca was quickly identified by his section commanders as one of the best candidates as he went through basic training, said Master Cpl. Craig Loverin.

"Over-excited at times and extremely opinionated," Boneca "would always carry out an order without hesitation," he said.

In 2004, when Boneca, Loverin and eight other Lake Sups went overseas to the Middle East, the call came for only eight to continue on to Afghanistan.

Initially, it looked like T-Bone, as his army buddies called him, would stay behind, said Loverin, and the younger soldier came to him so upset the master corporal couldn't understand what he was saying.

"He wanted so badly to go up there," said Loverin.

Returning from his stint in Afghanistan — Boneca got his wish — he was simply "gleaming with pride."

"He was so proud to serve his country," said Loverin. "After concluding that tour, he was a man — a man of courage."

After a pause to choke back tears, Loverin was unable to finish reading his tribute.

Stepping in to finish, fellow Lake Superior Scottish Regiment member Cpl. Jon O'Connor read, "His last order is to rest in peace. Until we meet again brother."

O'Connor spoke of a May 2005 training operation in England, and a side trip to France and Belgium to tour battlefields from the First and Second world wars.

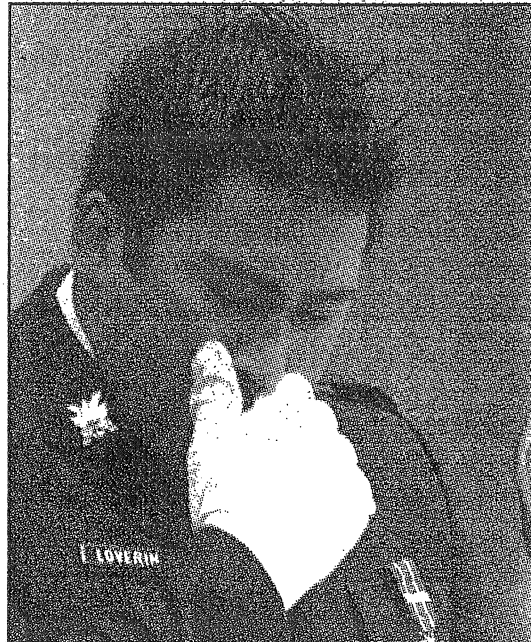
Boneca helped find the war graves of brothers of O'Connor's grandfather.

"We were blown away by all the graves marked as unknown Canadian soldier," and those of soldiers whose bodies were never recovered, said O'Connor.

Today, he said, we're lucky we can put a face and name to all fallen soldiers, "all our true Canadian heroes like Tony Boneca."

Megan DeCorte, introduced as Boneca's "special friend," was the young woman the soldier planned to marry.

Born the day before Valentine's Day, Boneca chose Feb. 14 to first tell DeCorte he loved her. They'd been an inseparable pair since Dec. 31, 2004,



An emotional Master Cpl. Craig Loverin shares his memories of his fellow soldier and friend Cpl. Anthony Boneca.

DeCorte said during her tribute, the first of three eulogies for her young man.

While the two spent his 21 days of leave together in Italy and Greece in May, he gave her a promise ring while they floated down a Venetian canal on a gondola.

During that trip, the two planned their future together — going back to school, marriage, kids, travel.

"Our time together went by so fast," she said. "But we knew we would be back together in a few short weeks."

Killed in combat July 9, Boneca and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry he was serving with were due to return home July 31.

"Tony was the most amazing guy," said DeCorte. "He treated me like a princess."

Her parents constantly reminded her she'd never find another man as good, she said.

Calling him "my sweet, sweet Tony," DeCorte said she was proud to be part of Boneca's life.

"You are my love, my life, my soul mate and my destiny," she said. "I love you and I can't wait until the day we're together again."

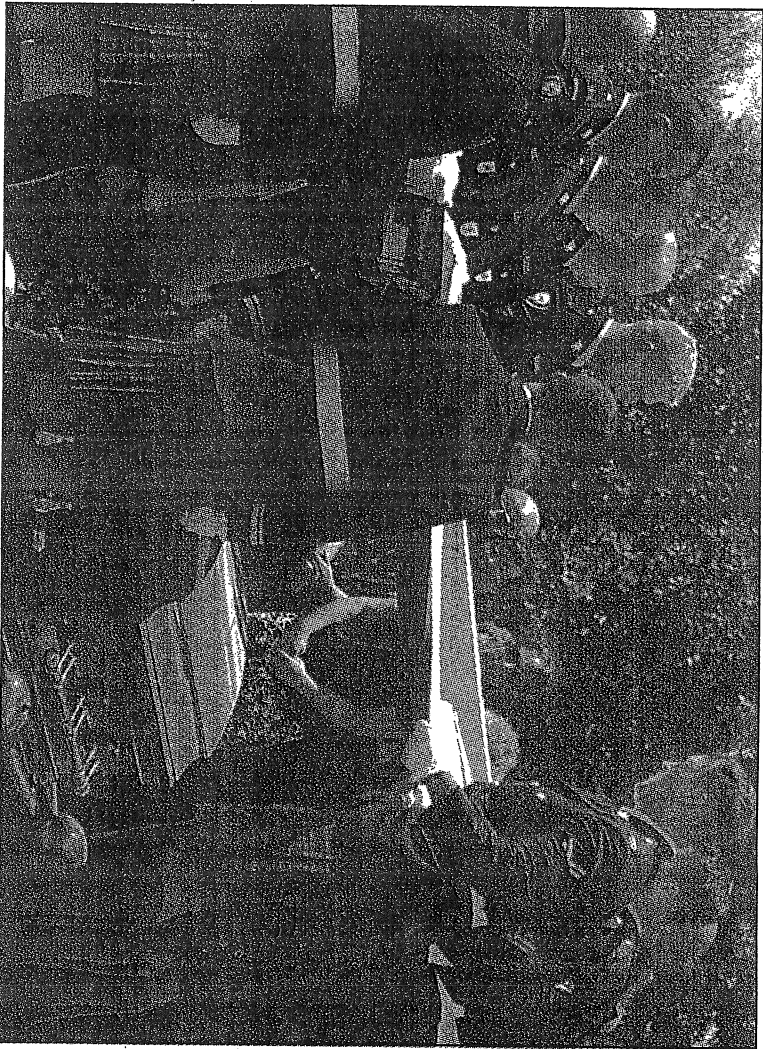
More coverage of the funeral/A7

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THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL Tuesday, July 18, 2006

NEWS A7

# The final farewell



PHOTOS BY BINCA GAROFALO/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Members of the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment fold the Canadian flag that was draped on the casket of fallen soldier Cpl. Anthony Boneca during his funeral interment at Mountain View Cemetery on Monday. The flag was presented to his family. Above, a young boy places a cross of yellow flowers near the casket.



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# Top brass attend funeral

IN a pew full of gleaming brass generals and colonels, the top military official attending Cpl. Anthony Boneca's funeral Monday was Brig. Gen. Tim Grant, commander of Land Force Western Area, which encompasses all regular force and reserve soldiers from Victoria to Thunder Bay.

Also attending was Brig. Gen. Denis Tabbenor, the highest-ranking officer in Canada's army reserve, and Col. Kelly Woiden, commander of 38 Canadian Brigade Group, to which the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment belongs.

From Thunder Bay, Mayor Lynn Peterson was joined by most of the city councillors. MPs Joe Comuzzi and Ken Boshcoff were joined by MPPs Bill Mauro and Michael Gravelle.

Patricia Lang, president of Confederation College, attended the funeral as well.

Standing out among the dark green dress uniforms of the Canadian army was warrant officer Shaun Peterson, who sported the desert camouflage of a working member of Canada's force in Afghanistan.

Peterson, a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry 1st Battalion — and from the same company as Boneca — had accompanied the young corporal's remains home all the way from Afghanistan.

During the service, Christopher Valente, one of Boneca's cousins, recited the poem May you always have angels by your side.

The city bus on the Current River route Monday sported a yellow ribbon on the driver's side mirror.

On Friday night, during a sold-out concert in Winnipeg, rock legend Neil Young dedicated a song, Families, to Cpl. Boneca. Performing with former bandmates David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash at a concert heavy with music protesting war, Young said: "I wanted to do this song tonight for a boy from Thunder Bay."

— THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

## Soldiers 'live on in the fighting spirit in the rest of us'

BY SARAH ELIZABETH BROWN  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

After all the uniforms filed past Cpl. Anthony Boneca's casket Monday, the last to salute the fallen soldier was the 21-year-old's father.

Leaning on his only child's casket with both hands after he and his wife Shirley each placed single red roses on the lid, Antonio Boneca wept.

His wife's hand under his elbow, the dignified father with the thick Portuguese accent of his homeland straightened and gave a short, sharp salute.

The young woman who would have been their daughter-in-law, 19-year-old Megan DeCorte, was the second last of hundreds to pay their respects to Boneca at Mountain View Cemetery.

Placing an ice-white rose next to the two red blossoms, DeCorte patted the casket several times before the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment's padre, Capt. Neil O'He, led her back to her seat.

The very last was the youngest.

A little boy from Boneca's large extended family dressed all in black and sporting the same yellow lapel ribbon worn by his relatives, carried a cross — half his size — made of yellow roses — and placed it on the ground next to the casket.

Minutes before, eight Lake Sups. members of Boneca's Lake Superior

Scottish Regiment, had folded the Canadian flag that covered his casket since it left Kandahar.

Lt. Col. Brent Faulkner, the LSSR commander, and chief warrant officer George Romick, LSSR's regimental sergeant major, presented the folded flag and Boneca's two service medals — one for each of his two overseas tours — to his parents.

The Memorial Cross, previously called the Silver Cross, was given to Shirley Boneca during a private ceremony Sunday.

Soldiers from other units posted at the Thunder Bay Garrison, along with two sailors from HMCS Griffon, gave the 21-gun salute in three cracking volleys with C7 rifles.

A bugler from the Royal Winnipeg Rifles Band played the Last Post, and again played Reveille after a moment of silence.

At least 200 uniforms — soldiers, sailors, air force personnel and police of all stripes — stood at attention during the graveside service.

Military personnel came from all corners of the country, many paying their own way to come pay their respects to the soldier who died in a fire fight with Taliban near Kandahar on July 9.

Four hours earlier, mourners had filled St. Patrick's Cathedral to overflow-



A 21-gun salute marked the final farewell to Cpl. Anthony Boneca.

Uniforms filled 12 pews, including one row of generals and colonels.

Chairs bristling with medals, veterans sat behind several rows of young soldiers in the LSSR's kilts of MacGillivray tartan and the Canadian army's working uniform of green camouflage.

Across the aisle was the young soldier's large family, all sporting yellow ribbons and flowers to match.

Members of the public filled the cathedral's back half, stood along the back wall and sides, spilled down the front steps and into the basement, where speakers were set up so everyone could hear the funeral mass.

More stopped outside the cathedral, stood across the street, leaned over the nearby parkade's railings and spilled

down side streets.

At least 1,500 people laid a Thunder Bay son to rest Monday.

After the cathedral bells slowly tolled at 11 a.m., eight LSSR pallbearers carried their friend's casket up the centre aisle to the strains of a lone piper.

Following Boneca's family into the church were four more young soldiers, carrying the fallen soldier's white dress belt, Glengarry dress cap, his two service medals and a wreath.

Ignoring a second pew set aside for them, the 12 Lake Sups squeezed in together, shoulder to shoulder, a solid wall of green coats and red kilts.

During one of three tributes to Boneca, Cpl. Jon O'Connor recalled when a younger Boneca first joined the reserves.

"We couldn't believe how much energy he had," said O'Connor.

The new soldier was so excited, asked so many questions and so clearly wanted to learn, "which was probably what made him a great soldier," said O'Connor.

He never gave up, O'Connor said. "A soldier never really dies," he said. "They live on in the fighting spirit in the rest of us."

Remembered for his boundless energy and loyalty to family and friends, Boneca was called a "true Canadian hero."

The main celebrant, Rev. Gerry Mc-

Dougall of St. Peter's Church, recalled Boneca as "a man who lived his life fully," a man of faith and a man who delighted in helping others.

He was a bright light that burned bright and the world will miss him.

Boneca was one of the first confederations Most Rev. Fred Collis celebrated after being named bishop of the Thunder Bay Diocese.

In confirmation, he said, God is asked to strengthen in young people the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment and courage.

"Anthony Boneca lived those gifts, especially courage, in a very real way," he said. "We thank God for allowing him to be an example for all of us."

As the pallbearers, all wearing black arm bands, carried Boneca's casket back down the centre aisle, Antonio Boneca turned to watch his son leave.

While pallbearers placed the casket into a waiting hearse, Pipes and Drums Thunder Bay played Amazing Grace and Flowers of the Forest.

Standing unobtrusively beside the hearse was the soldier who'd accompanied Boneca's remains 10,000 kilometres from Kandahar, still wearing desert camouflage.

The pallbearers, infantry soldiers beneath those Highland dress uniforms, rode to their buddy's graveside in an open army truck.