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# No charges laid in friendly fire

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**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
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**SECTION:** Front  
**PAGE:** A4  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
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Canadian military officials say no charges will be laid in the friendly-fire death of a Canadian soldier last year in Afghanistan.

A report into the March 2006 death of Pte. Robert Costall found that he was killed by gunfire from a U.S. soldier during an attack of "unprecedented intensity" by Taliban forces.

The firefight also injured three other Canadian soldiers, killed a U.S. soldier and injured another.

In July, a U.S. army investigator recommended no charges be filed against the American machine-gunner who killed Costall.

Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.

In a statement, Costall's family said he should be remembered for what he lived for, rather than how he died.



# No charges in friendly–fire death; American gunner not warned Canadians in vicinity, investigation finds

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**PUBLICATION:** Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B1

**SOURCE:** CP

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**ILLUSTRATION:** COSTALL

**WORD COUNT:** 438

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A U.S. military machine gunner, who mistakenly opened fire on Canadians soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned that friendly troops were anywhere in the vicinity, a Canadian investigation concluded yesterday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co–ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which were occupying a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

Canadian military justice officials said that they are not contemplating any charges in relation to the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. special forces commander in charge of remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were located.

Troops were not briefed on the disposition of the roughly 600 coalition forces and Canadian soldiers were not wearing infrared markers that might have identified them as friendly units.

In the heat of the battle, which was fought at night and with powder–like dust kicked up around them, Costall's section rushed out to reinforce the outer edge of the base's northern perimeter.

As he passed the American machine gun position, the Canadian section leader hollered out to his allies, but in the din of incoming rockets and tracer fire, "he did not receive an acknowledgment, nor did he wait for one," the inquiry report said.

The overall commander of the Canadian quick reaction force did not tell the junior U.S. special forces soldier in charge of defending Sangin that a Canadian section had moved in front of American units, which further compounded the confusion.

Withering Taliban fire prompted Costall's section to take cover behind a berm and within seconds of the Canadian unit returning fire, a U.S. soldier targeted and sprayed the Canadian position with machine–gun fire.

Costall was killed instantly and three other Canadians were wounded. The Canadians called over the radio for the Americans to stop firing.

They did, but seconds later the same U.S. troops opened up again on another position, killing a American soldier and wounding another.

No charges in friendly–fire death; American gunner not warned Canadians in vicinity, investigation finds



In July, a U.S. army investigator recommended no charges be filed against the machine-gunner who killed Costall.

Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.

In a statement, Costall's family said he should be remembered for what he lived for, rather than how he died.

"Rob Costall was a true Canadian son who valued life and lived it to the fullest with everything our beautiful country could offer him," the statement read.

"He was the type of person who would hold a door open for a complete stranger, with a smile and a hello.

"He should be remembered for holding the door of hope open to the people of Afghanistan."



# No friendly–fire charges; Military decides Canadian soldier killed by American "in fog of war"

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A3

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

Canadian military officials say no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall last year in Afghanistan. A report into the March 2006 death found that he was killed by gunfire from a U.S. soldier during an attack of 'unprecedented intensity by Taliban forces. (HO / HO); Canadian military officials say no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall last year in Afghanistan. A report into the March 2006 death found that he was killed by gunfire from a U.S. soldier during an attack of 'unprecedented intensity by Taliban forces. (HO / HO)

**WORD COUNT:** 588

---

OTTAWA – Members of elite U.S. Special Forces, who mistakenly machine–gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded Tuesday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall, 22, blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co–ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a dusty hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

"There were some errors made in regard to effective co–ordination," Maj.–Gen. Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board, said in an interview.

Canadian military justice officials said Tuesday that they are not contemplating any charges against Canadian soldiers for their handling of the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar. Last month, a U.S. Army investigator also said no charges would be pursued against American soldiers.

Davis was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage dedication and honour," he said.

Costall, who was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and 37 other Canadian soldiers from the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson on March 28, 2006 for an attack expected the next day.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. Special Forces commander in charge of the remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were located.

Even though Canadian troops had been dropped into battle at the last minute and after dark, Davis said there was time to put together the drawing, considered a "very critical tool" for defensive forces at night.

Fatigue also compounded the tragedy.



The forward base, which had been established only a month before, had been attacked as many as 22 times over a 40-day period.

In addition, investigators found Canadian soldiers were not wearing infrared markers that might have identified them as friendly units. In the heat of the battle, which was fought at night and with powder-like dust kicked up around them, Costall's section rushed out to reinforce the outer edge of the base's northern perimeter.

As he passed the American machine gun position, Costall's section leader hollered out to his allies, but in the din of incoming rockets and tracer fire, "he did not receive an acknowledgment, nor did he wait for one," the inquiry report said.

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Costall was hit in the head and killed instantly, while three others were wounded.

The Canadians called over the radio for the Americans to stop firing.

They did, but seconds later the same U.S. troops opened up again. This time they took aim at a rooftop position where Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall.

Machine-gun bullets cut right through Stone, who was not wearing body armour. One other American soldier was wounded.

In July, a U.S. army investigator recommended no charges and said he spoke with the two Special Forces soldiers manning two machine-guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the those shots, but their statements "lack credibility," the investigator said.

Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the Canadian board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.



# No charges planned in friendly fire death

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**SECTION:** The Province

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 129

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A U.S. military machine gunner, who mistakenly opened fire on Canadian soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned that friendly troops were anywhere in the vicinity, a Canadian investigation concluded Tuesday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which were occupying a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

Canadian military justice officials said that they are not contemplating any charges in relation to the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar.



# No charges to be laid in friendly fire incident: military

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**SECTION:** National

**PAGE:** A9

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**DATELINE:** Ottawa

**ILLUSTRATION:** Pte. Robert Costall

**WORD COUNT:** 659

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"An overall sketch of deployment so that incoming forces could be briefed thoroughly on where everybody is and was; that should have been done and it was an oversight," he said.

The report also found that U.S. troops were not briefed on the disposition of hundreds of coalition forces, many of which had recently flooded into the tiny base after an Afghan resupply convoy was attacked nearby.

Fatigue also compounded the tragedy.



The forward base, which had been established only a month before, had been attacked as many as 22 times over a 40-day period.

In addition, investigators found Canadian soldiers were not wearing infrared markers that might have identified them as friendly units. Davis said it was a "conscious choice" of the commanders on the ground.

"On a night like that, the (infrared) beacons, of course, are very effective, but they're also effective to an enemy who may or may not have night observation devices."

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Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier said he's satisfied with the Canadian board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.



# BC-Cda-News-Digest

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**DATE:** 2007.08.07  
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**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 825

---

OTTAWA (CP) \_ A U.S. military machine gunner, who mistakenly opened fire on Canadians soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned that friendly troops were anywhere in the vicinity, a Canadian investigation concluded Tuesday.

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The military's technical investigation found the U.S. special forces commander in charge of remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were located.

Canadian soldiers making real improvements in Afghanistan: returning commander

EDMONTON (CP) \_ Canada's soldiers in Afghanistan are making real, measurable improvements in the lives of people in Kandahar province, says the former commander of those troops.

And while the Taliban are likely to continue harassing both soldiers and civilians with ``terrorist tactics," Maj.-Gen. Tim Grant believes Afghan security forces have made significant strides toward looking after themselves.

``We went from last year, when there was drought and people were starving, to this year, where it's bumper crops and people are moving back into their homes and really getting on with their lives," said Grant, who returned to Edmonton on Tuesday after handing off his command.

``Across the board, I think it's a success story."

Grant said the development side of Canada's mission has begun to show results in virtually every district of the Kandahar region. Statistics compiled by the military indicate that more than 1,100 wells, 75 kilometres of irrigation canals, 120 kilometres of rural roads and seven kilometres of power lines have been completed.

RCMP investigate after lobsters poisoned with toxin in N.S. pound

METEGHAN, N.S. (CP) \_ The killing of 18,000 kilograms of lobster in what police are investigating as a deliberate poisoning left fisherman Paulin Robichaud so shocked he could barely breathe.

The lobster pound owner said Tuesday he staggered out of his small business after finding the dead lobsters in a holding tank on July 27.

Outside, the 49-year-old said he saw a liquid had been spilled on the ground and several holes had been drilled in the building. It was a poison that Environment Canada and the RCMP have yet to identify.



“Really, I was in shock. Total shock,” he said in an interview.

The losses are huge, roughly the equivalent of a tractor-trailer packed from one end to the other with the shellfish, with a value of about \$280,000.

Robichaud said he drove home and told his wife what had occurred.

“I caught her as she was falling down to the floor. She took a shock, too,” he said.

“I didn't think I had an enemy in the world. But I think I'm starting to think differently about that.”

The peaceful Acadian fishing town in southwestern Nova Scotia hasn't seen such an event before, said RCMP Sgt. Michel LaCroix, the Meteghan detachment commander.

LaCroix said autopsies will be done on some of the dead lobsters to determine when they died and confirm that the poison caused their deaths, which could take weeks.

Asked what possible motives exist, LaCroix responded: “It's a multimillion-dollar business. There's a lot of competition. There's a lot of jealous people. There's big money involved in that.”

Share wealth with Ontario manufacturers, unemployed, McGuinty urges Ottawa

OAKVILLE, Ont. (CP) \_ Ontario's manufacturing sector churns out billions for Canada's economy while its taxpayers generate almost half the country's wealth, yet Ottawa is short-changing both the province and its unemployed workers, Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday.

With broader issues like the environment expected to dominate talks at the upcoming meeting of premiers and territorial leaders in Moncton, N.B., McGuinty used a speech to the Oakville Chamber of Commerce to speak about what he'd like from Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Topping the premier's wish list is a commitment to inject more than \$1 billion into the province's struggling manufacturing sector and an overhaul of the federal Employment Insurance system.

“The federal government hasn't intervened as gas prices, interest rates and the Canadian dollar have risen out of control, and that's put a major strain on Ontario's manufacturers,” McGuinty said.

“A 75 cent dollar or even an 85 cent dollar is one thing, but a 95 cent dollar and a 95 cent petro dollar is quite another.”

McGuinty said the federal government should invest in Ontario's economy by matching the more than \$1.1 billion the province has earmarked to help the manufacturing sector become a world leader in innovation.

Quebec police hoping motorists may have clues to child's disappearance

TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. (CP) \_ Police are hoping that motorists who passed through the residential area where a nine-year-old girl disappeared a week ago may hold some clues to her whereabouts.

Quebec provincial police officers planned to use checkpoints between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. Tuesday night to question people who may have some information that will help lead them to Cedrika Provencher.

They're hoping somebody may remember seeing something that may help in their investigation.



“These people haven't yet been sought out and maybe they saw something,” said provincial police spokeswoman Isabelle Gendron.

Gendron said drivers may have been on their way to an activity or to a friend's and seen or heard something they don't realize is significant.

Police are still not ready to say the nine-year-old was abducted and are saying it's a missing person case.

Almost 60 detectives have been chasing leads since Quebec provincial police took over the case late last week.



# CTV National News, Tuesday, August 7

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**DATE:** 2007.08.07  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 412

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BEIJING \_ Two Canadians are among six protesters detained in China after they unfurled a banner on the Great Wall protesting China's presence in Tibet; the Canadians are Melanie Raoul and Sam Price, both of Vancouver; to get around Chinese censors, the activists sent live video via cellphone camera of the banner's unfurling back to New York, where it was quickly posted to the Internet. MAIN ELEMENTS CVD.

HUNTINGTON, Utah \_ There is a major setback in rescue efforts at a Utah mine where six miners are trapped; a mine executive says seismic activities have shut down rescue efforts. CVD.

MINNEAPOLIS \_ Minnesota releases new video of the bridge collapse last week. MAIN ELEMENTS CVD.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. \_ After ten years of waiting, Canadian astronaut Dave Williams will return to space; the Endeavour is scheduled to launch Wednesday; there is a new system in place that allows the shuttle to get electricity from the space station. MAIN ELEMENTS CVD.

UNDATED \_ New lava is flowing from the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii. CHECKING.

TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. \_ Quebec police begin to use checkpoints in Trois-Rivieres to canvass motorists for information on a nine-year-old girl who has been missing from the community for a week. CVD.

UNDATED \_ The Portuguese newspaper Jornal de Noticias reports that sniffer dogs found specks of blood on a wall in the hotel room in the southern resort town of Praia da Luz where Madeleine McCann vanished in May. UPCOMING.

LONDON \_ British officials now believe the foot-and-mouth outbreak affecting farmers in southern England originated at a vaccine lab; it is possible that human movement spread the virus; the virus is incredibly contagious. CVD.

UNDATED \_ CTV News learns that the federal government is about to protect thousands of square kilometres in Canada's Far North from any mining or oil and gas development; Environment Minister John Baird will be in the Northwest Territories to make the announcement tomorrow. CVD.

UNDATED \_ No one individual is to blame and no charges will be laid in the friendly fire death of Canada's Pte. Robert Costall in Afghanistan, a new report says. CVD.

HEBRON, West Bank \_ Israeli police forcibly remove Jewish squatters who were holed up in several apartments in the market area of the biblical city of Hebron; the army makes clear it would not tolerate any form of mutiny by sentencing a dozen soldiers, including two commanders, to brief terms in jail. CVD.

UNDATED \_ Russia's navy is planning to operate out of Syria; the new Russian strategy will put warships back in the Syrian Port of Tartus. NOT MATCHING.

CP Toronto



# No charges to be laid in friendly fire death of Canadian soldier: military

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**DATE:** 2007.08.07

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 785

---

OTTAWA (CP) \_ Members of elite U.S. Special Forces, who mistakenly machine-gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded Tuesday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall, 22, blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

"There were some errors made in regard to effective co-ordination," Maj.-Gen. Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board, said in an interview.

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Davis was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage dedication and honour," he said.

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The report also found that U.S. troops were not briefed on the disposition of hundreds of coalition forces, many of which had recently flooded into the tiny base after an Afghan resupply convoy was attacked nearby.

Fatigue also compounded the tragedy.

The forward base, which had been established only a month before, had been attacked as many as 22 times over a 40-day period.



In addition, investigators found Canadian soldiers were not wearing infrared markers that might have identified them as friendly units.

Davis said it was a ``conscious choice" of the commanders on the ground.

``On a night like that the (infrared) beacons, of course, are very effective, but they're also effective to an enemy who may or may not have night observation devices."

In the heat of the battle, which was fought at night and with powder-like dust kicked up around them, Costall's section rushed out to reinforce the outer edge of the base's northern perimeter.

As he passed the American machine gun position, Costall's section leader hollered out to his allies, but in the din of incoming rockets and tracer fire, ``he did not receive an acknowledgment, nor did he wait for one," the inquiry report said.

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The Canadians called over the radio for the Americans to stop firing.

They did, but seconds later the same U.S. troops opened up again. This time they took aim at a rooftop position where Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall.

A machine gun bullets cut right through Stone, who was not wearing body armour. One other American soldier was wounded.

In July, a U.S. army investigator recommended no charges and said he spoke with the two Special Forces soldiers manning two machine guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the those shots, but their statements ``lack credibility," the investigator said.

Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the Canadian board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.

Davis said the army has instituted better nighttime training and has developed a checklist for commanders whose units are forced to link up with other friendly forces in a hurry. Other NATO countries are looking at adopting similar records in order to prevent friendly fire cases.

In a statement, Costall's family said he should be remembered for what he lived for, rather than how he died.

"Rob Costall was a true Canadian son who valued life and lived it to the fullest with everything our beautiful country could offer him," the statement read.

"He was the type of person who would hold a door open for a complete stranger, with a smile and a hello. He should be remembered for holding the door of hope open to the people of Afghanistan."



# INDEX:Defence, International, Justice, Politics

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**DATE:** 2007.08.07

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 122

---

OTTAWA – Canadian military officials say no charges will be laid in the friendly–fire death of a Canadian soldier last year in Afghanistan.

A report into the March 2006 death of Pte. Robert Costall found that he was killed by gunfire from a U.S. soldier during an attack of 'unprecedented intensity' by Taliban forces.

The firefight also injured three other Canadian soldiers, killed a U.S. soldier and injured another.

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(BN)



# No charges in death of Canadian by friendly fire

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080132  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A04  
**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster  
**SOURCE:** Canadian Press  
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Members of elite U.S. Special Forces who mistakenly machine-gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded yesterday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006, attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall, 22, blamed the "fog of war" and specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a base that was in danger of being overrun.

"There were some errors made in regard to effective co-ordination," Maj.-Gen. Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board, said in an interview.

Canadian military justice officials said yesterday they are not contemplating any charges against Canadian soldiers for their handling of the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar. Last month, a U.S. Army investigator also said no charges would be pursued against American soldiers.

Davis was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage dedication and honour," he said.

Costall, who was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and 37 other Canadian soldiers from the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, were part of a quick reaction force sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson on March 28, 2006, for an attack expected the next day.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. commander in charge of the outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were.



# 'Fog of war' blamed for friendly-fire death

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080025  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**COLUMN:** Canada Digest  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Journal Stock / Pte. Robert Costall;  
**KEYWORDS:** !@DATELINE=OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 68

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OTTAWA – The "fog of war," combined with a series of human errors, led to the death of Canadian soldier Pte. Robert Costall in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military announced Tuesday no charges will be laid in Costall's death at the hands of U.S. Army gunners.

U.S. investigators reached much the same conclusion in July.



# 'Fog of war' led to friendly fire death

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**SOURCETAG** 0708080444  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 22  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of ROBERT COSTALL Killed  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**WORD COUNT:** 141

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Fatigue and the "fog of war" — not one individual — is to blame for the death of Pte. Robert Costall, an investigation into a friendly fire tragedy in Afghanistan concluded.

The board of inquiry report released yesterday recommends that no charges be laid in connection with the March 28–29, 2006, incident.

Citing "several critical errors" and a "perfect storm" of factors that resulted in deaths and injuries of Canadian and U.S. soldiers, the report also found personnel exhaustion, poor visibility and a surprise attack of "unprecedented intensity" by Taliban insurgents were all factors leading to the fatal confusion.

"The U.S. gun crew, in the heat and confusion of the battle, mistook 2 Section on the berm for insurgent forces. This mistake resulted in the death of Pte. Robert Costall (and an American) and the injuries sustained by three Canadian soldiers," the report reads. KEYWORDS=CANADA



# Confusion killed soldier Report recommends no charges be laid in Afghan friendly fire death of Pte. Costall

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**SOURCETAG:** 0708080270

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 3

**ILLUSTRATION:** file photo, CP Pte. Robert Costall is seen in this undated handout photo in Afghanistan. Costall was killed by friendly fire after Taliban forces attacked coalition troops north of Kandahar in Helmund province March 29, 2006.

**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

**WORD COUNT:** 399

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Fatigue and the "fog of war" — not one individual soldier — is to blame for the death of Pte. Robert Costall, an investigation into a friendly fire tragedy in Afghanistan has concluded.

The board of inquiry report released yesterday recommends that no charges be laid in connection with the March 28–29, 2006 incident. Citing "several critical errors" that resulted in deaths and injuries of Canadian and U.S. soldiers, the report also found personnel exhaustion, poor visibility and a surprise attack of "unprecedented intensity" by Taliban insurgents were all factors leading to the fatal confusion.

## 'INSURGENT FORCES'

"The U.S. gun crew, in the heat and confusion of the battle, mistook 2 Section on the berm for insurgent forces. This mistake resulted in the death of Pte. Robert Costall and the injuries sustained by three Canadian soldiers," the report reads.

Costall and U.S. Master Sgt. John Stone were killed during the night–time battle with the Taliban at the Forward Operating Base Robinson in Helmand province.

The compound served as a temporary sanctuary and operations planning base for soldiers deep in hostile territory.

Last month the U.S. army investigator recommended no charges be laid against an American machine–gunner who fired the fatal shot, and yesterday's Canadian report outlined a "perfect storm" of factors in the death.

Classified as "secret" with several sections blacked out due to ongoing operations in Afghanistan and because of the multinational aspect of the incident, the report said commanders were presented with a significant challenge that night.

The base's population quickly doubled to 400, and a U.S machine–gun crew was not apprised of the location of Canadian soldiers defending the compound. Confused gunfire killed Costall and wounded three of his comrades, while another burst hit U.S. troops.



Gen. Rick Hillier, Chief of Defence Staff, said he is satisfied with the board's "thorough and comprehensive" findings and said standard operating procedures have been enhanced since the incident to boost battlefield safety.

"Pte. Costall and Master Sgt. Stone did not die in vain and we shall never forget their ultimate contribution in the pursuit of peace for the Afghan population," he said.

'TRUE CANADIAN'

Costall's family issued a statement calling the Thunder Bay native "a true Canadian son who valued life and lived it to the fullest with everything our beautiful country could offer him."

"He was the type of person who would hold a door open for a complete stranger, with a smile and a hello," the statement reads. "He should be remembered for holding the door of hope open to the people of Afghanistan. Remembered not for how he died but rather for what he lived for. Being Canadian, proud, strong and free."  
KEYWORDS=NATIONAL



# Your Call Column Ottawa Sun online poll

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**SOURCETAG** 0708080268

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 3

**COLUMN:** Your Call

**WORD COUNT:** 33

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## TODAY'S QUESTION

Do you agree with the decision not to lay charges in the death of Pte. Robert Costall?

– Yes

– No

## YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Do you support the beg-a-thon by the homeless community?

30% It's time for homeless to leave City Hall property

33% Yes

38% No

Vote at [ottawasun.canoe.ca](http://ottawasun.canoe.ca) KEYWORDS=OTTAWA AND REGION



# Probe cites 'fog of war' in friendly fire death

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**SOURCETAG** 0708080550

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos 1. photo by Martin Ouellet, CP GIVING ORDERS: Capt. Stephane Girard gives orders in the Shawali Kot area north of Kandahar City, Afghanistan. Local villagers have complained to Canadian troops about the way they have been treated by their own police, adding Taliban insurgents are not in their area. 2. photo of ROBERT COSTALL

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 459

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A U.S. military machine gunner, who mistakenly opened fire on Canadians soldiers in the midst of a battle with the Taliban last year, was not warned friendly troops were anywhere in the vicinity, a Canadian investigation concluded yesterday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which were occupying a dusty, hilltop base in danger of being overrun.

Canadian military justice officials said that they are not contemplating any charges in relation to the incident in Sangin, in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. special forces commander in charge of the remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were.

Troops were not briefed on the disposition of the about 600 coalition forces and Canadian soldiers were not wearing infrared markers that might have identified them as friendly units.

In the heat of the battle, which was fought at night and with powder-like dust kicked up around them, Costall's section rushed out to reinforce the outer edge of the base's northern perimeter.

As he passed the American machine gun position, the Canadian section leader hollered out to his allies, but in the din of incoming rockets and tracer fire, "he did not receive an acknowledgment, nor did he wait for one," the inquiry report said.

The overall commander of the Canadian quick reaction force did not tell the junior U.S. special forces soldier in charge of defending Sangin a Canadian section had moved in front of American units, which further compounded the confusion.

Taliban fire prompted Costall's section to take cover behind a berm and within seconds of the Canadian unit returning fire, a U.S. soldier targeted and sprayed the position with machine-gun fire.

IN AFGHANISTAN



– Canada's soldiers in Afghanistan are making real, measurable improvements in the lives of people in Kandahar province, says the former commander of those troops. And while the Taliban are likely to continue harassing soldiers and civilians with "terrorist tactics," Maj.-Gen. Tim Grant believes Afghan security forces have made significant strides toward looking after themselves. "We went from last year, when there was drought and people were starving, to this year, where it's bumper crops and people are moving back into their homes and really getting on with their lives," said Grant, who returned to Edmonton on Tuesday after handing off his command.

– Canadian soldiers found no weapons or Taliban during a foray into a region considered a stronghold, but they got an earful from villagers who accused them of failing to keep their promises. "Canadians have come here three times before and promised (to give us a well), but they've done nothing," said Haji Noor Mohammad. KEYWORDS=WORLD



# Death blamed on 'fog of war' U.S. forces not warned of Canadians on ground

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**SOURCETAG:** 0708080778  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 33  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of ROBERT COSTALL Shot by U.S.  
**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER, CP  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 331

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Members of elite U.S. Special Forces, who mistakenly machine-gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of a desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded yesterday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall, 22, blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

"There were some errors made in regard to effective co-ordination," Maj.-Gen. Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board, said in an interview.

Canadian military justice officials said yesterday that they are not contemplating any charges against Canadian soldiers for their handling of the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 km from Kandahar. Last month, a U.S. Army investigator also said no charges would be pursued against American soldiers.

Davis was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage, dedication and honour," he said.

Costall, who was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and 37 other Canadian soldiers from the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson on March 28, 2006 for an attack expected the next day.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. Special Forces commander in charge of the remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were located.

Even though Canadian troops had been dropped into battle at the last minute and after dark, Davis said there was time to put together the drawing, considered a "very critical tool" for defensive forces at night.

"An overall sketch of deployment so that incoming forces could be briefed thoroughly on where everybody is and was; that should have been done and it was an oversight," he said.

The report also found that U.S. troops were not briefed on the disposition of hundreds of coalition forces,



many of which had recently flooded into the tiny base after an Afghan resupply convoy was attacked nearby.  
KEYWORDS=WORLD



# 'Fog of war' caused death

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**SOURCETAG** 0708080652  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 13  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 198

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Fatigue and the "fog of war" -- not one individual soldier -- are to blame in the death of Pte. Robert Costall, an investigation into a friendly-fire tragedy in Afghanistan has concluded.

The board of inquiry report released yesterday recommends no charges be laid in connection with the March 2006 incident.

Citing "several critical errors" that resulted in deaths and injuries of Canadian and U.S. soldiers, the report also found personnel exhaustion, poor visibility and a surprise attack of "unprecedented intensity" by Taliban insurgents were all factors in the fatal confusion.

"The U.S. gun crew, in the heat and confusion of the battle, mistook 2 Section on the berm for insurgent forces.

This mistake resulted in the death of Pte. Robert Costall and the injuries sustained by three Canadian soldiers," the report reads.

Costall and U.S. Master Sgt. John Stone were killed during the nighttime battle with the Taliban at the Forward Operating Base Robinson in Helmand province.

The compound served as a temporary sanctuary and operations planning base for soldiers deep in hostile territory.

Last month the U.S. army investigator recommended no charges be laid against an American machine-gunner who fired the fatal shot, and yesterday's Canadian report outlined a "perfect storm" of factors in the death.

Gen. Rick Hillier, Chief of Defence Staff, said he is satisfied with the board's "thorough and comprehensive" findings and said standard operating procedures have been enhanced to boost battlefield safety since the incident. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL



# THE AFGHAN MISSION Latest developments

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072200222

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**PAGE:** A13

**BYLINE:**

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** AP CP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 335

**WORD COUNT:** 326

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Sources: AP, CP and Guardian Taliban attacks U.S. base A group of 75 Taliban militants tried to overrun a U.S.-led coalition base in southern Afghanistan, a rare frontal attack that left more than 20 militants dead, the coalition said in a statement.

The insurgents attacked Firebase Anaconda from three sides, using gunfire, grenades and 107 mm rockets, the coalition said.

A joint Afghan-U.S. force repelled the attack with mortars, machine guns and air support.

"Almost two dozen insurgents were confirmed killed in the attack," the statement said. Two girls and two Afghan soldiers were wounded during the fight in Uruzgan province, it said.

Friendly-fire death ruling Canadian military officials say no charges will be laid in the friendly-fire death of a Canadian soldier last year in Afghanistan.

A report into the March, 2006, death of Private Robert Costall found that he was killed by gunfire from a U.S. soldier during an attack of "unprecedented intensity" by Taliban forces.

In July, a U.S. army investigator recommended no charges be filed against the U.S. machine-gunner who killed Pte. Costall.

Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.

face-to-face hostage talks South Korean officials and Taliban leaders were expected to agree on a meeting place to negotiate the release of 21 South Korean hostages, an Afghan politician said. The South Koreans and Taliban representatives have been talking by phone for several days and planned to determine a location for their first face-to-face talks by the end of the day.

U.K. focuses on Afghanistan The British Foreign Office has decided that Afghanistan, and not Iraq, is the front line in its battle to defeat terrorism, even if it may take decades to improve the country, the Guardian reported.

The British military also wants to concentrate its forces in Helmand province.



ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: United States; Great Britain; Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; deaths; accidents; hostages; south koreans

PERSONAL NAME: Robert Costall



# Friendly–fire fatality blamed on 'fog of war'

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080028  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Robert Costall: Killed last year;  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Nicole Baer  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 314

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OTTAWA -- The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors, led to the death of a Canadian soldier in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced yesterday that no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall at the hands of U.S. army gunners. Soldiers from the two countries were engaged in a fierce firefight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province. An American soldier also died and three Canadian troops were injured.

"The three causes for the friendly–fire incident were incomplete co–ordination and control, poor situational awareness, and an error in battlefield combat identification," Brig.–Gen. Christopher Davis, president of the board of inquiry, wrote in his final report on the incident, unclassified portions of which were released yesterday.

"The lack of detailed co–ordination, coupled with inadequate control measures, added to the flawed situational awareness of the U.S. army gun crew."

In clearing the Canadian troops and officers who were joining U.S. forces already in place at a forward operating base named Robinson, the report noted that "no one person or persons met the requirements for blame," which include a capacity to foresee the tragedy and failing to take steps to prevent it.

Instead, the investigation pointed the finger at "a collective accumulation of human errors brought on by the complex circumstances."

Those circumstances, described as the "fog of war," included "a deliberate and complex insurgent attack on a very dark night, against a tired and (words blacked out) in–place–force whose leader was faced with the added challenge of co–ordinating the sudden influx of coalition troops that doubled the size of the force within the [forward operating base]."

The military said in a brief statement yesterday that no charges will be laid "in relation to this matter."



# No charges in friendly fire death

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080075  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** National  
**PAGE:** D3  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Nicole Baer  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 625

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OTTAWA — The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors, led to the death of a Canadian soldier in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced Tuesday no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall at the hands of U.S. Army gunners. Soldiers from the two countries were engaged in a fierce firefight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province. An American soldier also died and three Canadian troops were injured.

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"This sudden convergence of a number of events created the uncertainty and friction that set the conditions for this near 'perfect storm' to occur."

To reduce the chances of another tragedy of this nature, the report recommended changes to equipment, training and standard operating procedures in a number of areas, including communications and techniques for assessing the location of friend and foe (situational awareness). It also noted that the Canadian Forces are already well on their way to putting the necessary changes in place.



In a separate investigation, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, an independent military police unit, working with the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division to reviewed the ballistic and forensic evidence collected at the site of the firefight. The investigators confirmed that Costall, a private with the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was "killed by gun fire originating from a weapon manned by a U.S. Army soldier."

However, the service said in a brief statement Tuesday that no charges will be laid "in relation to this matter."

Gen. Rick Hillier, chief of Canada's defence staff, called the board of internal inquiry investigation "thorough and comprehensive."

He also said he is confident that "the lessons that were incorporated into our battlefield standard operating procedures since the incident occurred have significantly improved the safety of the incredibly courageous and professional young men and women who proudly wear our uniform, serving our great country in Afghanistan."

In a statement released by the slain soldier's family, Costall, serving with the Canadian Quick Response Force, was remembered as "a true Canadian son who valued life and lived it to the fullest with everything our beautiful country could offer him."

"He was the type of person who would hold a door open for a complete stranger, with a smile and a hello. He should be remembered for holding the door of hope open to the people of Afghanistan. Remembered not for how he died but rather for what he lived for. Being Canadian, proud, strong and free."



# Inquiry blames 'fog of war' for Canadian soldier's death

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080099  
**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Canada/World  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / Private Robert Costall, 22;  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 198

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Members of elite U.S. Special Forces, who mistakenly machine-gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of a battle with the Taliban in 2006, had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded yesterday.

The inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Private Robert Costall, 22, right, blamed the "fog of war" and a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

Canadian military justice officials said that they are not contemplating any charges against Canadian soldiers for their handling of the incident. Last month, a U.S. Army investigator also said no charges would be pursued against American soldiers.

Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier says he's satisfied with the Canadian board's findings and that new rules have been incorporated into the military's standard operating procedures to improve the safety of soldiers.

In a statement, Costall's family said he should be remembered for what he lived for, rather than how he died.

"There were some errors made," said Major-General Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board.

But he was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage dedication and honour," he said.



# U.S. troops not warned of friendly forces: probe

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**PUBLICATION:** WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**PAGE:** A9

**SECTION:** Canada Wire

**WORD COUNT:** 311

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CP Wire OTTAWA -- Members of elite U.S. Special Forces, who mistakenly machine-gunned Canadian soldiers in the midst of a desperate, pitched battle with the Taliban last year, had not been warned friendly troops were in front of them, a Canadian investigation concluded Tuesday.

The board of inquiry that looked into the March 29, 2006 attack that claimed the life of Pte. Robert Costall, 22, blamed the "fog of war" and more specifically a lack of co-ordination between Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces, all of which occupied a dusty, hilltop base that was in danger of being overrun.

'Some errors' "There were some errors made in regard to effective co-ordination," Maj.-Gen. Chris Davis, who led the Canadian investigation board, said in an interview.

Canadian military justice officials said Tuesday that they are not contemplating any charges against Canadian soldiers for their handling of the incident in Sangin, located in Helmand province about 300 kilometres from Kandahar. Last month, a U.S. army investigator also said no charges would be pursued against American soldiers.

Davis was hesitant to cast blame.

"All of the soldiers who responded that night, responded with courage, dedication and honour," he said.

Costall, who was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and 37 other Canadian soldiers from the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson on March 28, 2006 for an attack expected the next day.

The military's technical investigation found the U.S. Special Forces commander in charge of the remote Sangin outpost did not draw up a defensive plan that showed where all friendly forces were located.

Even though Canadian troops had been dropped into battle at the last minute and after dark, Davis said there was time to put together the drawing, considered a "very critical tool" for defensive forces at night.

-- Canadian Press {Ottawa ONT}



# No charges in friendly fire death of Canadian

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080077  
**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** C1 / FRONT  
**COLUMN:** National Briefs  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** Star News Services  
**WORD COUNT:** 81

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OTTAWA – The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors, led to the death of a Canadian soldier in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded. However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced Tuesday no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall at the hands of U.S. Army gunners.



# Errors, 'fog of war' killed soldier; No charges to be laid in Afghanistan death

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080008  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Department of National Defence, Reuters / Pte. Robert Costall of the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was killed in March 2006. ;  
**BYLINE:** Nicole Baer  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 380

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The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors, led to the death of a Canadian soldier in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced yesterday that no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall at the hands of U.S. army gunners. Soldiers from the two countries were engaged in a fierce fight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province. An American soldier also died and three Canadian troops were injured.

"The three causes for the friendly fire incident were incomplete co-ordination and control, poor situational awareness, and an error in battlefield combat identification," Brig.-Gen. Christopher Davis, president of the board of inquiry, wrote in his final report on the incident, unclassified portions of which were released yesterday.

"The lack of detailed co-ordination, coupled with inadequate control measures, added to the flawed situational awareness of the U.S. army gun crew."

In clearing the Canadian troops and officers who were joining U.S. forces already in place at a forward operating base named Robinson, the report said "no one person or persons met the requirements for blame," which include a capacity to foresee the tragedy and failure to take steps to prevent it.

Instead, the investigation pointed the finger at "a collective accumulation of human errors brought on by the complex circumstances."

Those circumstances, described as the "fog of war," included "a deliberate and complex insurgent attack on a very dark night, against a tired and (words blacked out) in-place-force whose leader was faced with the added challenge of co-ordinating the sudden influx of coalition troops that doubled the size of the force within the FOB (forward operating base).

"This sudden convergence of a number of events created the uncertainty and friction that set the conditions for this near 'perfect storm' to occur."

To reduce the chances of another tragedy of this nature, the report recommended changes to equipment,



training and standard operating procedures in a number of areas, including communications and techniques for assessing the location of friend and foe (situational awareness). It also noted that the Canadian Forces are already well on their way to putting the necessary changes in place.



# 'Fog of war' blamed for Afghanistan shooting; Friendly Fire Incident; No Charges Will Be Laid In 2006 Death Of Robert Costall

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**IDNUMBER** 200708080142

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2007.08.08

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A6

**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: Walter Tychnowicz, CanWest News Service/ Sergeant Jeff Daley, with the Lord Strathcona's Horse Royal Canadians, holds daughter Kaelin Daley, 4, at Edmonton International Airport after returning home from a tour of duty in Afghanistan yesterday. Also yesterday, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry released recommendations in a bid to reduce the chances of friendly fire deaths, such as the one that killed Private Robert Costall in 2006. ;

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Nicole Baer

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 514

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OTTAWA – The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors led to the death of a Canadian soldier in a U.S. friendly fire incident in Afghanistan in March, 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced yesterday that no charges will be laid in the death of Private Robert Costall at the hands of U.S. Army gunners.

Soldiers from the two countries were engaged in a fierce firefight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province when the incident occurred. A U.S. soldier also died and three Canadian troops were injured.

"The three causes for the friendly fire incident were incomplete co-ordination and control, poor situational awareness and an error in battlefield combat identification," Brigadier-General Christopher Davis, president of the board of inquiry, wrote in his final report about the incident, unclassified portions of which were released yesterday.

"The lack of detailed co-ordination, coupled with inadequate control measures, added to the flawed situational awareness of the U.S. Army gun crew," Brig.-Gen. Davis said.

In clearing the Canadian troops and officers, who were joining U.S. forces already in place at a forward operating base named Robinson, the report noted that "no one person or persons met the requirements for blame," which include a capacity to foresee the tragedy and failing to take steps to prevent it.

Instead, the investigation pointed the finger at "a collective accumulation of human errors brought on by the complex circumstances."

Those circumstances, described as the "fog of war," included "a deliberate and complex insurgent attack on a very dark night, against a tired and [words blacked out] in-place-force whose leader was faced with the

'Fog of war' blamed for Afghanistan shooting; Friendly Fire Incident; No Charges Will Be Laid In 2006 Death



added challenge of coordinating the sudden influx of coalition troops that doubled the size of the force within the FOB [forward operating base].

"This sudden convergence of a number of events created the uncertainty and friction that set the conditions for this near 'perfect storm' to occur."

To reduce the chances of another tragedy of this nature, the report recommended changes to equipment, training and standard operating procedures in a number of areas, including communications and techniques for assessing the location of friend and foe (situational awareness).

It also noted the Canadian Forces are already well on their way to putting the necessary changes in place.

In a separate investigation, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, an independent military police unit, worked with the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division to review the ballistic and forensic evidence collected at the site of the firefight.

The investigators confirmed that Pte. Costall, a private with the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was "killed by gunfire originating from a weapon manned by a U.S. Army soldier."

However, the service said in a brief statement yesterday that no charges will be laid "in relation to this matter."

General Rick Hillier, chief of Canada's defence staff, called the board of internal inquiry investigation "thorough and comprehensive."

He also said he is confident that "the lessons that were incorporated into our battlefield standard operating procedures since the incident occurred have significantly improved the safety of the incredibly courageous and professional young men and women who proudly wear our uniform, serving our great country in Afghanistan."



# No charges will be laid in friendly-fire death of Canadian; Pte. Costall killed by U.S. gunners in 2006

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
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**SECTION:** News  
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**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** NICOLE BAER  
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The "fog of war," combined with a series of critical human errors, led to the death of a Canadian soldier from U.S.

"friendly fire" in Afghanistan in late March 2006, a Canadian Forces board of inquiry has concluded.

However, the Canadian military's policing arm announced yesterday no charges will be laid in the death of Pte. Robert Costall, serving with the Canadian Quick Response Force, at the hands of U.S. Army gunners.

Soldiers from the two countries were engaged in a fierce firefight with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province at the time. A U.S. soldier also died and three Canadian troops were injured.

"The three causes for the friendly-fire incident were incomplete co-ordination and control, poor situational awareness, and an error in battlefield combat identification," Brig.-Gen. Christopher Davis, president of the board of inquiry, wrote in his final report on the incident, unclassified portions of which were released yesterday.

"The lack of detailed co-ordination, coupled with inadequate control measures, added to the flawed situational awareness of the U.S. Army gun crew." In clearing the Canadian troops and officers who were joining U.S. forces already in place at a forward operating base named Robinson, the report noted that "no one person or persons met the requirements for blame," which include a capacity to foresee the tragedy and failing to take steps to prevent it.

Instead, the investigation pointed the finger at "a collective accumulation of human errors brought on by the complex circumstances." Described as the "fog of war," they included "a deliberate and complex insurgent attack on a very dark night, against a tired and (words blacked out) in-place force, whose leader was faced with the added challenge of co-ordinating the sudden influx of coalition troops that doubled the size of the force within the base.

"This sudden convergence of a number of events created the uncertainty and friction that set the conditions for this near 'perfect storm' to occur." To reduce the chances of another tragedy of this nature, the report recommended changes to equipment, training and standard operating procedures in a number of areas, including communications and techniques for assessing the location of friend and foe. It also noted that the Canadian Forces are already well on their way to putting the changes in place.

No charges will be laid in friendly-fire death of Canadian; Pte. Costall killed by U.S. gunners in 2006



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The investigators confirmed that Costall, a private with the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was "killed by gunfire originating from a weapon manned by a U.S. army soldier." However, the service said yesterday that no charges will be laid "in relation to this matter." General Rick Hillier, chief of Canada's defence staff, called the board of internal inquiry probe "thorough and comprehensive." In a statement released by the slain soldier's family, Costall was remembered as "a true Canadian son who valued life and lived it to the fullest." "He was the type of person who would hold a door open for a complete stranger, with a smile and a hello. He should be remembered for holding the door of hope open to the people of Afghanistan. Remembered not for how he died but rather for what he lived for. Being Canadian, proud, strong and free."



# In Focus

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Bishop's strike ends

Unionized employees are scheduled to go back to work today after reaching agreements in principle with Bishop's University. Page A8

Land-swap uproar

Israel's proposal for a swap that would leave the Jewish state with five per cent of the West Bank and five per cent for Palestinians in Israel sparks a furor. Page A14

'Fog of war' blamed

A Canadian Forces inquiry decides no charges will be laid in the friendly-fire death of Pte. Robert Costall. "Fog of war" and human error are blamed in the report. Page A11

China flexes muscles China is widely expected to make a serious run at the top of the medal table when it hosts the 29th Olympiad in Beijing in the summer of 2008. Page C1



# U.S. troops cleared in friendly fire death

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Pte. Robert Costall;  
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**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Nicole Baer  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
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Those circumstances, described as the "fog of war," included "a deliberate and complex insurgent attack on a very dark night, against a tired . . . force."

To reduce the chances of another tragedy of this nature, the report recommended changes to equipment, training and operating procedures in a number of areas. It also noted that the Canadian Forces are already well on their way to putting the necessary changes in place.