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## Promises to keep

### General vowed soldier has job

By [PABLO FERNANDEZ](#), SUN MEDIA

One of the last promises the former head of the military made before retiring earlier this month was that a Calgary soldier who lost his legs in Afghanistan would have his job in the Army waiting for him when he got out of the hospital.

And Cpl. Mark Fuchko, who gave his first interview to the Sun on Friday, said he will take him up on the offer.

"The (Chief of the Defence Staff) and the military are really keen in keeping guys like me in and giving us gainful employment," said Fuchko, adding the military is doing everything it can to help severely wounded soldiers returning from Afghanistan.

When former Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier was in Calgary in mid-April to award commendations to two other Calgary soldiers, he met with Fuchko, who was then undergoing rehabilitation at Foothills hospital.

"Corporal Fuchko is a professional and dedicated soldier, an amazing young man and a great Canadian," said Hillier at the time.

Fuchko lost both his legs below the knee and he suffered a shattered pelvis when the armoured vehicle he was driving, while in operations in the Kandahar province in Afghanistan, was struck by one of the largest improvised bombs the Canadians have faced to date.

Fuchko's actions following the blast have been credited for being the reason he survived the tremendous blast.

This week, Fuchko said he fully intends to take the former chief up on his offer, adding his goal is to increase his running distance, using his new prosthetic legs, then passing the Canadian Forces physical standards test and then return to duty.

"My focus right now is to get back into as best a shape I can and to get to where I was before," said Fuchko.

"I'll never be as effective as I was before, but if I'm fit again, I'm sure there's something I can do in the Army.

"I have a lot of experience, so I'd like to help the guys going to Afghanistan and get them ready for the experience."



Fuchko, a corporal with the King's Own Calgary Regiment (RCAC), was on his second tour in Afghanistan when he faced the explosion that forever changed his life.

According to doctors, the 24-year-old Calgary father beat the odds, said his mother Helen.