

Table of Contents

<u>Un 83e soldat canadien tué.....</u>	1
<u>National Journal.....</u>	2
<u>Soldier killed in Afghanistan; Calgary man killed by ambush during foot patrol.....</u>	4
<u>Medic latest soldier to die in Afghanistan.....</u>	6
<u>Calgary EMS chief says slain soldier did his duty in Canada, Afghanistan.....</u>	8
<u>TUÉ PAR LES TALIBANS UN 83E SOLDAT CANADIEN TOMBE AU COMBAT.....</u>	10
<u>Canadian soldier killed.....</u>	12
<u>83e soldat Canadien tué en sol afghan.....</u>	13
<u>Soldat tué par un tir ennemi.....</u>	14
<u>Un soldat canadien est tué en Afghanistan.....</u>	15
<u>Un 83e soldat tué en sol afghan.....</u>	16
<u>Un 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.....</u>	17
<u>WORLD.....</u>	19
<u>Soldier killed in Afghan ambush; xxx.....</u>	20
<u>Canadian soldier killed on patrol in hotly contested area in Kandahar; Gun battle with Taliban militants leaves soldier 83rd Canadian to die in conflict.....</u>	22
<u>Un soldat canadien est tué pendant une patrouille en Afghanistan.....</u>	23
<u>Michael Starker est le 83e soldat Canadien tué en sol afghan.....</u>	24
<u>Canadian death toll in Afghanistan: 83 soldiers, one diplomat.....</u>	26
<u>Calgary EMS chief says slain soldier did his duty in Canada, and in Afghanistan.....</u>	30
<u>Canadian soldier killed on foot patrol in hotly contested area outside Kandahar.....</u>	32
<u>The Canadian Press World News Budget – Tuesday, May 6, 2008.....</u>	34
<u>Top stories and photo for Tuesday, May 6.....</u>	36
<u>Canadian death toll in Afghanistan: 83 soldiers, one diplomat.....</u>	37

Table of Contents

<u>The Canadian Press News Budget, Tuesday, May 6, 2008</u>	40
<u>Update:adds name; quotes</u>	43
<u>--Fourteenth NewsWatch--</u>	44
<u>INDEX:Advisories</u>	46
<u>(Auditor-Main)</u>	48
<u>Staffing advisory</u>	50
<u>(Auditor-Main)</u>	51
<u>INDEX:Advisories</u>	53
<u>--Thirteenth NewsWatch--</u>	55
<u>INDEX:Defence, Health, International, Labour, Politics</u>	57
<u>INDEX:Advisories</u>	58
<u>INDEX:Defence, Health, International, Labour, Politics</u>	60
<u>INDEX:Advisories</u>	61
<u>Medic killed in ambush</u>	63
<u>Slain medic remembered as 'fine soldier' who cared; Canadian corporal on goodwill patrol killed in ambush by Taliban</u>	64
<u>Enemy attack kills 83rd Canadian soldier</u>	66
<u>Canadian medic killed Taliban ambush takes life of Calgarian on goodwill patrol</u>	69
<u>Ambush kills medic Goodwill patrol hit in Kandahar</u>	71
<u>Medic killed in ambush Canadian fatally shot, another wounded as Taliban militants change tactics</u> ..	73
<u>Medic killed in ambush AFGHANISTAN: Cpl. Michael Starker becomes the 83rd Canadian soldier to die since the fall of the Taliban in 2001</u>	75
<u>'Lost a fine soldier' Corporal killed in ambush</u>	77
<u>Medic's death brings home reality of war</u>	79

Table of Contents

<u>Ambush kills medic</u>	81
<u>Fundraiser for soldiers' families gains urgency</u>	83
<u>Calgary's fallen</u>	84
<u>Tears and tributes for heroic soldier</u>	85
<u>FRONTPAGE City Medic Slain by Taliban Cpl. Michael Starker shot dead in ambush while on foot patrol</u>	87
<u>Quote/unquote</u>	88
<u>Canadian soldier dies in ambush; Taliban attack kills medic on foot patrol</u>	89
<u>Alberta soldier killed in ambush; Calgary medic and reservist came under attack while out on foot patrol; comrade also injured</u>	90
<u>5 Minute Herald; Breaking news at calgaryherald.com</u>	93
<u>When true cost of war hits home</u>	98
<u>Healers turned soldiers</u>	101
<u>EMS staff in shock over loss; Starker 'never hesitated to help people'</u>	102
<u>Only at calgaryherald.com</u>	104
<u>'He just thought it was his duty to serve'; Calgary medic killed in Taliban ambush was on second tour</u>	106
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: COMBAT DEATH Canadian soldier killed by enemy fire 'wanted to help others'</u>	109
<u>Medic killed in ambush; Corporal Michael Starker is Canada's 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan</u>	111
<u>Medic killed in ambush; 83rd Canadian to die in Afghanistan</u>	113
<u>Reservist medic dies in ambush, soldier hurt</u>	115
<u>83rd soldier killed</u>	116
<u>Canadian soldier killed in ambush; Personnel were conducting civil–military patrol when attacked</u>	117
<u>Soldier on foot patrol killed in ambush; Calgary paramedic 'was there for the people of Afghanistan'</u>	119

Table of Contents

<u>Canadian soldier 83rd to die in Afghanmission; Enemy fire in Pashmul region claims corporal.....</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>Canadian soldier killed on patrol.....</u>	<u>123</u>
<u>Calgary paramedic killed in ambush Soldier on goodwill patrol in Afghanistan.....</u>	<u>124</u>

Un 83e soldat canadien tué

PUBLICATION: La Voix de l'Est
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: Actualité
PAGE: 13
SOURCE: La Presse Canadienne
PHOTO: photo La Presse canadienne
DATELINE: Kandahar, Afghanistan
ILLUSTRATION: Le caporal Michael Starker a été déclaré mort à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier à environ 25 km de Kandahar.
WORD COUNT: 261

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

"Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens", a pour sa part déclaré le premier ministre Stephen Harper.

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à bien comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan.

"Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois.

National Journal

IDNUMBER 200805070061
PUBLICATION: New Brunswick Telegraph–Journal
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: News;News
PAGE: A4
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Telegraph–Journal (New Brunswick)
WORD COUNT: 670

Defence

Canadian soldier killed on patrol

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar. Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city. A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home. Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late Tuesday.

Fisheries

Fish farm opponents to petition court

VANCOUVER – Some of the most vociferous critics of fish farming on the West Coast filed a petition in court Tuesday, asking it to declare that the way fish farms are regulated in B.C. is contrary to the Constitution. Marine biologist Alexandra Morton said she and an association of gillnetters, the Vessels Owners Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association filed the petition in B.C. Supreme Court. But Agriculture Minister Pat Bell, the minister responsible for aquaculture, strongly suggested changes are in the works for an aquaculture industry that has been the focus of heated debate for more than two decades. At a news conference outside the courthouse where the petition was filed, Morton summed up the petition in a single sentence: "We think the oceans should be regulated by the federal government and not the provincial government."

Business

Mother's Day tote bags recalled

TORONTO – Indigo and Chapters have recalled about 10,000 tote bags because they may cause skin irritation. A company spokesman said Tuesday that the bags were part of a Mother's Day gift–with–purchase promotion. The bags were distributed across Canada. The spokesman said a few cases of skin irritation have been reported from handling the blue floral printed tote bag that has a green lining. Indigo and Chapters said it pulled the bags from its stores on May 2.

Religion

Anglican churches may appeal order

TORONTO – Three breakaway Ontario Anglican parishes are considering appealing an interim court ruling that requires they share their churches with the diocese. Anglican Network in Canada director Cheryl Chang says Monday's ruling by Justice Jane Milanetti is vastly different than that of an earlier judge. She says that presents one of several possible grounds to appeal and that the church has seven days to decide if it will. In the meantime, clergy and congregants are deciding whether to find new accommodations or sort out the logistics of sharing the facilities.

Environment

Lake Superior water level slowly rising

DULUTH, Minn. – The water in Lake Superior is slowly rising to more normal levels. The International Lake Superior Board of Control says the lake level rose 15 centimetres in April and is now 25 centimetres higher than it was at this time last year. Over the last two years, the water level in Lake Superior has been as much as half a metre or more below long-term monthly averages. The lake level is still 20 centimetres below normal.

Missing

Rain halts search for Nunavut family

HALL BEACH, Nunavut – Freezing rain and poor visibility have forced rescuers to put on hold a search for seven members of a family missing in Nunavut. An official at the rescue co-ordination centre at CFB Trenton says a Hercules airplane from CFB Winnipeg was able to look for only a short time overnight before being grounded. The family left Repulse Bay on a snowmobile last Thursday, but didn't arrive as expected at Hall Beach 270 kilometres away two days later. The search is to resume after the weather improves.

Soldier killed in Afghanistan; Calgary man killed by ambush during foot patrol

IDNUMBER 200805070009
PUBLICATION: Times & Transcript (Moncton)
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: News
PAGE: C1
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Times & Transcript (Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 427

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker's age and hometown were not released by the Canadian army in Kandahar last night, but reports out of Calgary say he worked as a paramedic in the city.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche about Tuesday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks. Those so-called standoff weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians.

There have been ambushes on foot patrols, but rarely deaths.

It's been almost 20 months since the last time a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up-close confrontation with insurgents, according to records on the National Defence website.

Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed in an insurgent attack on Oct. 16, 2006, during a volley of rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire.

They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area of Pashmul.

Medic latest soldier to die in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200805070033
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 323

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late Tuesday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche about Tuesday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

Calgary EMS chief says slain soldier did his duty in Canada, Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2008.05.07

SECTION: National

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: Calgary

ILLUSTRATION: Cpl. Michael Starker is shown in this recent DND handout photo. Starker was killed Tuesday after he came under enemy fire during a patrol in the Pashmul region of the Zharey district in Afghanistan. – Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 392

The life-sized photo that now haunts the hallway of Calgary's Emergency Medical Services headquarters shows Cpl. Michael Starker with his arm draped across an ambulance and a determined look in his eye.

Starker, 36, a Calgary paramedic and Canadian soldier, was killed Tuesday in southern Afghanistan when his patrol came under fire during an ambush.

With tears in his eyes, Calgary EMS chief Tom Sampson said Starker was one of those guys who would always help those in need, and that's what he died doing.

"I think it's clear from his ... profession that he was one of those people who wanted to help others," Sampson said during a hastily convened press conference Tuesday afternoon, just hours after hearing of Starker's death.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgaryans here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker had been with Calgary's EMS for nearly three years, but had served with the Canadian military before and during his time as a paramedic, said Sampson.

Born and raised in the southern Alberta city, Starker was married but did not have any children.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said Tuesday that the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

Starker becomes the 83rd Canadian soldier to be killed in the war-ravaged Asian country since 2001. He was a reservist with 15 Field Ambulance, which is headquartered in Edmonton, but has a detachment in Calgary.

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach said Tuesday that Starker's death is part of the human cost of Canada's role in Afghanistan.

"The numbers are increasing, but I do know the soldiers take extreme pride in the support that they have from Albertans and the job they are doing in Afghanistan. There is sacrifice and Albertans don't forget that."

Both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Opposition Leader Stéphane Dion issued statements of condolence.

Dion spoke of "the sacrifice our brave men and women" make, while Harper lauded the Canadian military for "working to bring security and democracy" to Afghanistan.

Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance, said the unit's first priority is to care for Starker's family.

"He was a dedicated member and someone who could be relied on to do his job with the utmost professionalism," Scott said in a release. "His dedication to the unit was second to none and he was well-liked by his colleagues."

Scott noted that Starker had been a reservist for five years.

"He volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan out of a profound sense that he could make a difference to the people of that country, as well as his fellow members in the Canadian Forces," Scott said.

"This is what he was doing when he lost his life in the service of his country."

TUÉ PAR LES TALIBANS UN 83E SOLDAT CANADIEN TOMBE AU COMBAT

SOURCETAG 0805070126
PUBLICATION: Le Journal de Montréal
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Nouvelles
PAGE: 4
ILLUSTRATION: 1. PHOTO REUTERS Michael Starker
BYLINE: PC
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 252

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — (PC) Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone.

L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

" Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés ", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

" Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens ", a pour sa part déclaré Stephen Harper.

Partie intégrante de la mission

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan.

" Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins ", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois.

En 2006, un membre des COCIM avait déjà été tué et un autre, blessé. !@MOTSCLES=AFGHANISTAN

Canadian soldier killed

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: National/World
PAGE: B1
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
ILLUSTRATION: starker
WORD COUNT: 287

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late yesterday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgarians here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker was married but had no children. He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said yesterday that the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten." Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

83e soldat Canadien tué en sol afghan

PUBLICATION: La Tribune (Sherbrooke, Qc)
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: National
PAGE: 48
SOURCE: La Presse Canadienne
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 148

Le caporal Michael Starker, de la 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar. Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. ", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche.

Soldat tué par un tir ennemi

PUBLICATION: Le Quotidien
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: Actualités
PAGE: 4
SOURCE: La Presse Canadienne
PHOTO: (Photo PC)
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
ILLUSTRATION: Le brigadier-général Guy Laroche a confirmé le décès du caporal Starker.
WORD COUNT: 293

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu mardi dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants.

"Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

"Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens", a pour sa part déclaré le premier ministre Stephen Harper.

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à bien comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan.

"Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois. En 2006, un membre des COCIM avait déjà été tué et un autre, blessé.

Il est trop tôt pour savoir si l'attaque est le signe d'une modification tactique des talibans, mais le fait est que la façon dont s'est déroulé l'assaut n'est pas commun. o

Un soldat canadien est tué en Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: Le Droit
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: Actualités
PAGE: 24
SOURCE: Presse Canadienne
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 317

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu mardi dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar. Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. Le caporal Starker pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan. "Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens", a déclaré le premier ministre Stephen Harper.

Aide aux familles

Le gouvernement fédéral accroît son aide aux familles de militaires, en embauchant huit nouveaux coordonnateurs et du personnel administratif pour son programme de Soutien social aux victimes de stress opérationnel.

Le gouvernement ajoute 1 million \$ au budget du programme, ce qui permettra de faire passer le nombre de coordonnateurs du soutien des pairs de 12 à 20.

Le programme, qui est basé sur le principe du soutien par les pairs, vise à offrir un support social aux membres et aux vétérans des Forces armées canadiennes, ainsi qu'à leurs proches, qui sont touchés par un traumatisme lié au stress opérationnel, comme l'anxiété, la dépression ou le syndrome de stress post-traumatique résultant du service militaire.

Le ministre des Anciens Combattants, Greg Thompson, a souligné que le stress des opérations militaires affecte profondément les familles et la société en général, tout autant que les soldats et les vétérans.

Un 83e soldat tué en sol afghan

PUBLICATION: Le Soleil
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: Actualités
PAGE: 16
SOURCE: La Presse Canadienne
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORD COUNT: 368

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary. "Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à bien comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan. "Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois. En 2006, un membre des COCIM avait déjà été tué et un autre, blessé.

Il est trop tôt pour savoir si l'attaque est le signe d'une modification tactique des talibans, mais le fait est que la façon dont s'est déroulé l'assaut n'est pas commun.

Les talibans préfèrent en général les explosifs, les bombes placées le long des routes ou les tirs de mortiers aux confrontations directes comme celle qui a coûté la vie à Michael Starker, hier. La dernière de ce genre remonte à plus de 20 mois. Cette attaque intervient alors que les forces de l'OTAN se préparent à affronter le regain de violence qui accompagne habituellement la fin de la récolte du pavot.

Un 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan

PUBLICATION:	La Presse
DATE:	2008.05.07
SECTION:	Actualités
PAGE:	A20
SOURCE:	La Presse Canadienne
BYLINE:	Brewster, Murray
PHOTO:	photo REUTERS
DATELINE:	KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
ILLUSTRATION:	Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, est mort à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.
WORD COUNT:	362

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu hier dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone. L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

"Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens", a pour sa part déclaré le premier ministre Stephen Harper.

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à bien comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan.

"Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois. En 2006, un membre des COCIM avait déjà été tué et un autre, blessé.

Il est trop tôt pour savoir si l'attaque est le signe d'une modification tactique des talibans, mais le fait est que la façon dont s'est déroulé l'assaut n'est pas commun.

Les talibans préfèrent en général les explosifs, les bombes placées le long des routes ou les tirs de mortiers aux confrontations directes comme celle qui a coûté la vie à Michael Starker, hier. La dernière de ce genre remonte à plus de 20 mois.

Cette attaque survient alors que les forces de l'OTAN se préparent à affronter le regain de violence qui accompagne habituellement la fin de la récolte du pavot.

WORLD

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: SpeedRead
PAGE: B8
WORD COUNT: 154

YANGON, Myanmar – The death toll in Myanmar's devastating cyclone soared above 22,000 on Tuesday, with more than 41,000 others missing, state radio reported. Meanwhile, international aid officials said up to one million people may be homeless in the wake of cyclone Nargis, which ravaged the Southeast Asian country, also known as Burma, early Saturday. / A3

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly con–tested district west of Kandahar. Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city. A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. / A3

Soldier killed in Afghan ambush; xxx

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2008.05.07
SECTION: World
PAGE: A3
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
ILLUSTRATION: Cpl. Michael Starker
WORD COUNT: 403

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker's age and hometown were not released by the Canadian army in Kandahar on Tuesday night but reports out of Calgary say he worked as a paramedic in the city.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten." Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche about Tuesday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks. Those so-called standoff weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians.

There have been ambushes on foot patrols but rarely deaths.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement Tuesday offering condolences to Starker's family and friends.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," Harper said.

Canadian soldier killed on patrol in hotly contested area in Kandahar; Gun battle with Taliban militants leaves soldier 83rd Canadian to die in conflict

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2008.05.07

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A8

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

ILLUSTRATION: Starker; Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, centre, announces the death of Cpl. Michael Starker in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Tuesday. Laroche is flanked by Lt.-Cmdr. Pierre Babinsky, left, and Chief Warrant Officer Gilles Arcand, right. Canadian Press photo

WORD COUNT: 216

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil-Military Co-operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker's age and hometown were not released by the Canadian army in Kandahar on Tuesday night, but reports out of Calgary say he worked as a paramedic in the city.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten." Civilian-military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

Un soldat canadien est tué pendant une patrouille en Afghanistan

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DÉFENSE INTERNATIONALE
PUBLICATION: pcf
WORD COUNT: 125

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Un soldat canadien a été tué et un autre blessé, mardi, lors de combats avec des militants talibans près de la ville de Kandahar.

Cet affrontement survient au moment où les soldats de l'OTAN dans le sud de l'Afghanistan se préparent à une augmentation de la violence qui accompagne généralement la fin de la saison de récolte du pavot.

Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15^e Ambulance de campagne, appartenait à une équipe de militaires et de civils qui tente de créer des liens avec les Afghans de la région.

Sa patrouille a été attaquée le long d'une route dans le secteur de Pashmul, une zone chaude depuis que les soldats canadiens sont arrivés à Kandahar il y a plus de deux ans.

Ce décès porte à 83 le nombre de soldats canadiens tués en Afghanistan depuis le renversement du régime taliban en 2001.

(La Presse Canadienne,ns)

ngns7

Michael Starker est le 83e soldat Canadien tué en sol afghan

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DÉFENSE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: pcf
WORD COUNT: 342

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN _ Le caporal Michael Starker, du 15e Ambulance de campagne, a été déclaré mort dans un hôpital militaire à la suite d'une attaque talibane qui a eu lieu mardi dans le district de Zhari, à environ 25 km de Kandahar.

Il est le 83e soldat canadien tué en sol afghan.

Les talibans ont attaqué le convoi de coopération civilo-militaire (COCIM) dont il faisait partie. Un autre soldat a été blessé. Son identité n'a pas été révélée, mais il serait dans un état stable et suffisamment bien portant pour avoir appelé sa famille au téléphone.

L'âge et la ville d'origine du caporal Starker n'ont pas été indiqués, mais il pourrait avoir travaillé comme ambulancier à Calgary.

"Il est mort en aidant les Afghans à construire un meilleur avenir pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs enfants. Son dévouement et son sacrifice ne seront pas oubliés", a déclaré le brigadier-général Guy Laroche, commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan.

"Le caporal Starker a fait l'ultime sacrifice et ses efforts resteront une source de fierté pour tous les Canadiens", a pour sa part déclaré le premier ministre Stephen Harper.

Le but des coopérations civilo-militaires est de créer des liens de communication entre les soldats, qui ont parfois du mal à bien comprendre les besoins des villageois, et les Afghans, qui se montrent toujours méfiants envers eux.

Les COCIM sont devenues partie intégrante de la mission canadienne en Afghanistan.

"Le but de ces patrouilles est de montrer leur présence, d'interagir avec la population locale et de discuter avec la population de ses besoins", a expliqué le brigadier-général Laroche.

La guerre a prélevé un lourd tribut sur ces patrouilles qui vont de village en village et font remonter auprès de leur commandement les préoccupations des villageois. En 2006, un membre des COCIM avait déjà été tué et un autre, blessé.

Il est trop tôt pour savoir si l'attaque est le signe d'une modification tactique des talibans, mais le fait est que la façon dont s'est déroulé l'assaut n'est pas commun.

Les talibans préfèrent en général les explosifs, les bombes placées le long des routes ou les tirs de mortiers aux confrontations directes comme celle qui a coûté la vie à Michael Starker, mardi. La dernière de ce genre remonte à plus de 20 mois.

Cette attaque intervient alors que les forces de l'OTAN se préparent à affronter le regain de violence qui accompagne habituellement la fin de la récolte du pavot.

Canadian death toll in Afghanistan: 83 soldiers, one diplomat

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1518

Since 2002, 83 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died in Afghanistan. Here is a list of the deaths:

2008

May 6 _ Cpl. Michael Starker, 36 of Calgary, of the 15 Field Ambulance Regiment based in Edmonton, is killed in a gun battle with Taliban militants outside of Kandahar.

April 4 _ Pte. Terry John Street, 24, of Hull, Que., from 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Shilo, Man., killed when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device. Street and his colleagues were redeploying after a long day of activity in the volatile Panjwaii district west of Kandahar city when the explosion occurred.

March 16 _ Sergeant Jason Boyes, 32, of Napanee, Ontario from 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Shilo, Man., killed by an explosive device while on foot patrol in Panjwaii district of Kandahar province.

March 11 _ Bombardier Jeremie Ouellet, 22, of Matane, Que., from 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, Shilo, Man., found dead in accommodation room at Kandahar Airfield. Military says death not related to combat.

March 2 _ Trooper Michael Yuki Hayakaze, 25, from Lord Strathcona's Horse, Edmonton, killed by roadside bomb in Mushan, 45 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Jan. 23 _ Sapper Etienne Gonthier, 21, of St-Georges, Que., near Quebec City, a combat engineer serving with 5ieme Regiement du Genie de Combat, killed in a mine-clearing operation when his light armoured vehicle was hit by roadside bomb in the Panjwaii district.

Jan. 15 _ Trooper Richard Renaud, 26, of Alma Que., a member of the 12e Regiment blinde du Canada, killed when the Coyote light armoured vehicle he was travelling in hit a roadside bomb while on patrol in the Arghandab district, north of Kandahar city.

Jan. 6 _ Warrant Officer Hani Massouh, 41, and Cpl. Eric Labbe, 31, of 2nd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment, killed when their armoured vehicle rolled over in wet, rugged terrain southwest of Kandahar City.

2007

Dec. 30 _ Jonathan Dion, 27, gunner with 5th Regiment d'Artilerie legere du Canada from Val-d'Or, Que., killed when his light armoured vehicle struck a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan.

Nov. 17 _ Cpl. Nicolas Raymond Beauchamp of the 5th Field Ambulance in Valcartier and Pte. Michel Levesque of the Royal 22nd Regiment, killed when their light armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb near Bazar-e Panjwaii.

Sept. 24 _ Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, with the King's Own Calgary regiment, killed by a mortar shell while trying to repair a Leopard tank in southern Afghanistan.

Aug. 29 _ Maj. Raymond Ruckpaul, 42, died from a gunshot wound in his room at the headquarters of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Kabul. He was an armoured officer based at the NATO Allied Land Component Command Headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany.

Aug. 22 _ Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier, Royal 22nd Regiment; Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, 5th Field Ambulance unit, both based in Valcartier, Que., killed when light armoured vehicle struck by roadside bomb after battle for strategic hill west of Kandahar city.

Aug. 19

_ Pte. Simon Longtin, 23, of Longueuil, Que., on Montreal's south shore, a member of the Royal 22nd Regiment, killed when his light armoured vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

July 4 _ Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Pte. Lane Watkins and Cpl. Jordan Anderson, all of 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton; Master Cpl. Colin Bason, a reservist from The Royal Westminster Regiment based in New Westminster, B.C., and Capt. Jefferson Francis of the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery based in Shilo, Man., killed by a roadside bomb 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 when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb near a forward-operating base at Sperwan Ghar, west of Kandahar.

June 11 _ Trooper Darryl Caswell, 25, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, killed when an improvised explosive device detonated underneath his vehicle north of Kandahar City.

May 30 _ Master Cpl. Darrell Jason Priede, a combat photographer based at CFB Gagetown, N.B., killed when a U.S. helicopter was reportedly shot down by the Taliban in Helmand province.

May 25 _ Cpl. Matthew McCully, 25, a signals operator from 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Headquarters and Signals Squadron based at Petawawa, Ont., killed by an improvised explosive device in Zhari district.

April 18 _ Master Cpl. Anthony Klumpenhower, 25, of Listowel, Ont., died after falling from a communications tower while on duty with the elite Special Operations Forces Command, conducting surveillance in Kandahar City.

April 11 _ Master Cpl. Allan Stewart, 30, and Trooper Patrick James Pentland, 23, both of the Royal Canadian Dragoons based in Petawawa, Ont., killed when their Coyote vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

April 8 _ Pte. Kevin V. Kennedy, 20, of St. Lawrence, Nfld., Sgt. Donald Lucas, 31, of Burton, N.B., Cpl. Aaron E. Williams, 23, of Lincoln, N.B., Pte. David R. Greenslade, 20, of Saint John, N.B., Cpl. Brent Poland, 37, of Sarnia, Ont., all of Gagetown, N.B.-based 2nd Battalion, RCR; and Cpl. Christopher Stannix, 24, of Dartmouth, N.S., from the Halifax-based Princess Louise Fusiliers, killed when their armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb in the Maywand district.

March 6 _ Cpl. Kevin Megeney, 25, of Stellarton, N.S., a member of 1st Battalion of Nova Scotia Highlanders, killed by accidental shooting at NATO base in Kandahar.

2006

Nov. 27 _ Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Girouard, his battalion's regimental sergeant major, and Cpl. Albert Storm, both of Royal Canadian Regiment based in CFB Petawawa, killed when suicide car bomber attacked their Bison armoured personnel carrier on outskirts of Kandahar City.

Oct. 14 _ Sgt. Darcy Tedford, based at CFB Petawawa, and Pte. Blake Williamson from Ottawa killed in ambush west of Kandahar.

Oct. 7 _ Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson of Royal Canadian Dragoons, based in Petawawa, Ont., killed when his armoured vehicle hit by roadside bomb in Panjwahi district.

Oct. 3 _ Sgt. Craig Gillam and Cpl. Robert Mitchell of Royal Canadian Dragoons, based in Petawawa, Ont., killed in series of mortar, rocket attacks just west of Kandahar City.

Sept. 29 _ Pte. Josh Klukie of First Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, based in Petawawa, Ont., killed by explosion in Panjwahi while on foot patrol.

Sept. 18 _ Pte. David Byers, Cpl. Shane Keating and Cpl. Keith Morley, all of 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Shilo, Man., and Cpl. Glen Arnold, 2 Field Ambulance, based in Petawawa, Ont., killed in suicide bicycle bomb attack while on foot patrol in Panjwahi.

Sept. 4 _ Pte. Mark Graham, based at CFB Petawawa, killed when two NATO planes accidentally strafed Canadian troops in Panjwahi district.

Sept. 3 _ Sgt. Shane Stachnik, Warrant Officer Frank Robert Mellish, Pte. William Cushley and Warrant Officer Richard Francis Nolan, all based at CFB Petawawa, Ont., killed in fighting in Panjwahi district.

Aug. 22 _ Cpl. David Braun, based at Shilo, Man., killed in suicide bomb attack in Kandahar City.

Aug. 11 _ Cpl. Andrew Eykelenboom, 23, of Comox, B.C., stationed with 1st Field Ambulance, based in Edmonton, killed in suicide attack.

Aug. 9 _ Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh, 33, of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Shilo, Man., killed by apparent accidental discharge of rifle.

Aug. 5 _ Master Cpl. Raymond Arndt, 31, of Loyal Edmonton Regiment, killed when large truck collided head-on with his G-Wagon patrol vehicle.

Aug. 3 _ Cpl. Christopher Reid, 34, of 1st Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton, killed by roadside bomb. Three other members of same battalion killed in rocket-propelled grenade attack by Taliban forces west of Kandahar: Sgt. Vaughan Ingram, 35, Cpl. Bryce Keller, 27, and Pte. Kevin Dallaire, 22.

July 22 _ Cpl. Francisco Gomez, 44, of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Edmonton, and Cpl. Jason Warren, 29, of Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, based in Montreal, killed when car packed with explosives rammed their armoured vehicle.

July 9 _ Cpl. Anthony Boneca, 21, reservist from Lake Superior Scottish Regiment based in Thunder Bay, Ont., killed in firefight.

May 17 _ Capt. Nichola Goddard, artillery officer based in Shilo, Man., with 1st Royal Canadian Horse

Artillery, killed in Taliban ambush during battle in Panjwahi region. She was first Canadian woman to be killed in action while serving in combat role.

April 22 _ Cpl. Matthew Dinning of Richmond Hill, Ont., stationed with 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade in Petawawa, Ont., Bombardier Myles Mansell of Victoria, Lt. William Turner of Toronto, stationed in Edmonton, and Cpl. Randy Payne, born in Lahr, Germany, stationed at CFB Wainwright, Alta., all killed when their G-Wagon destroyed by roadside bomb near Gumbad.

March 29 _ Pte. Robert Costall of Edmonton, machine-gunner, killed in firefight with Taliban insurgents in Sangin district of Helmand province.

March 2 _ Cpl. Paul Davis of Bridgewater, N.S., and Master Cpl. Timothy Wilson of Grande Prairie, Alta., killed when their armoured vehicle ran off road in Kandahar area.

Jan. 15 _ Glyn Berry, British-born Canadian diplomat who had served with Foreign Affairs Department since 1977, killed in suicide bombing near Kandahar.

2005

Nov. 24 _ Pte. Braun Woodfield, born in Victoria and raised in Eastern Passage, N.S., killed when his armoured vehicle rolled over near Kandahar.

2004

Jan. 27 _ Cpl. Jamie Murphy, 26, of Conception Harbour, Nfld., killed in suicide bombing while on patrol near Kabul.

2003

Oct. 2 _ Sgt. Robert Short, 42, of Fredericton, and Cpl. Robbie Beerenfenger, 29, of Ottawa, killed in roadside bombing southwest of Kabul.

2002

April 18 _ Sgt. Marc Leger, 29, of Lancaster, Ont., Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, 24, of Montreal, Pte. Richard Green, 21, of Mill Cove, N.S., and Pte. Nathan Smith, 27, of Tatamagouche, N.S., all killed when U.S. F-16 fighter mistakenly bombed Canadians on pre-dawn training exercise. Eight other Canadians wounded in friendly-fire incident.

Calgary EMS chief says slain soldier did his duty in Canada, and in Afghanistan

DATE: 2008.05.06

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 481

CALGARY _ The life-sized photo that now haunts the hallway of Calgary's Emergency Medical Services headquarters shows Cpl. Michael Starker with his arm draped across an ambulance and a determined look in his eye.

Starker, 36, a Calgary paramedic and Canadian soldier, was killed Tuesday in southern Afghanistan when his patrol came under fire during an ambush.

With tears in his eyes, Calgary EMS chief Tom Sampson said Starker was one of those guys who would always help those in need, and that's what he died doing.

"I think it's clear from his ... profession that he was one of those people who wanted to help others," Sampson said during a hastily convened press conference Tuesday afternoon, just hours after hearing of Starker's death.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgarians here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker had been with Calgary's EMS for nearly three years, but had served with the Canadian military before and during his time as a paramedic, said Sampson.

Born and raised in the southern Alberta city, Starker was married but did not have any children.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said Tuesday that the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

Starker becomes the 83rd Canadian soldier to be killed in the war-ravaged Asian country since 2001. He was a reservist with 15 Field Ambulance, which is headquartered in Edmonton but has a detachment in Calgary.

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach said Tuesday that Starker's death is part of the human cost of Canada's role in Afghanistan.

"The numbers are increasing but I do know the soldiers take extreme pride in the support that they have from Albertans and the job they are doing in Afghanistan. There is sacrifice and Albertans don't forget that."

Both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Opposition Leader Stephane Dion issued statements of condolence.

Dion spoke of "the sacrifice our brave men and women" make, while Harper lauded the Canadian military for "working to bring security and democracy" to Afghanistan.

Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance, said the unit's first priority is to care for Starker's family.

“He was a dedicated member and someone who could be relied on to do his job with the utmost professionalism,” Scott said in a release.

“His dedication to the unit was second to none and he was well-liked by his colleagues.”

Scott noted that Starker had been a reservist for five years.

“He volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan out of a profound sense that he could make a difference to the people of that country, as well as his fellow members in the Canadian Forces,” Scott said.

“This is what he was doing when he lost his life in the service of his country.”

Sampson said Starker will be remembered by friends and colleagues in the Calgary EMS as a man with the heart of gold who brought out the best in everyone.

“We have a bit of a saying here: when people leave us before their time, it is our opinion that the sun went down while it is still day.”

Starker was one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan.

Travis Lanoway, who was deployed a month ago, can be seen as big as life, standing beside his friend and colleague in that same EMS photo of Starker.

“We understand that Travis is very interested in bringing Mike home,” Sampson said while choking back tears. “And that’s what we’re thinking may happen.”

Canadian soldier killed on foot patrol in hotly contested area outside Kandahar

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 644

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late Tuesday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

“He certainly served his duty helping Calgarians here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that.”

Starker was married but had no children. He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said Tuesday that the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

“We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends,” Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

“He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten.”

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

“The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community,” said Laroche about Tuesday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks. Those so-called standoff weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians.

There have been ambushes on foot patrols, but rarely deaths.

It's been almost 20 months since the last time a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up-close confrontation with insurgents, according to records on the National Defence website.

Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed in an insurgent attack on Oct. 16, 2006, during a volley of rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire. They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area of Pashmul.

The arid swath of farming country west of Kandahar has been a hotly contested region since Canadian troops deployed in Kandahar more than two years ago. On more than one occasion commanders have declared the area pacified, only to have insurgents sneak back to plant bombs or take potshots at soldiers.

The fact the soldiers could walk through the area and interact with the locals was a hopeful sign and Canadian troops won't be deterred, said LaRoche.

“The intent was to exchange with the population – something we could not do last year,” he said. “We will maintain our presence there as long as we need to do so.”

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement Tuesday offering condolences to Starker's family and friends.

“Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians,” Harper said.

(With files from The Canadian Press)

The Canadian Press World News Budget – Tuesday, May 6, 2008

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 588

Here are the budgeted stories as of 23:00 ET. The editor handling World news in Toronto can be reached at 416-507-2165.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar. Cpl. Michael Starker, of Calgary, a medic with the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was killed after his patrol came under fire about 25 kilometres outside the city. 650 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-Afghan-Cda-Death. Moved.

YANGON, Myanmar _ The death toll in Myanmar's devastating cyclone soared above 22,000 on Tuesday, with more than 41,000 others missing, state radio reported. Meanwhile, international aid officials said up to one million people may be homeless in the wake of cyclone Nargis, which ravaged the Southeast Asian country, also known as Burma, early Saturday. 750 words. See AP Photos. BC-Myanmar-Cyclone. Moved.

See also:

_ BC-Myanmar-The-Junta's-Vote. Moved Datafile only

_ BC-Myanmar-Delta-Glance. Moved.

GENEVA _ Travel and visa obstacles on Tuesday hampered aid deliveries to the hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar now believed to be homeless after the devastating cyclone, officials said. But a green light from Myanmar's military rulers on accepting international aid has started the global relief effort rolling. 800 words. By Alexander G. Higgins. See Photos. BC-Myanmar-Cyclone-Aid. Moved.

WASHINGTON _ Democratic front-runner Barack Obama easily captured North Carolina on Tuesday and was running just slightly behind Hillary Clinton in Indiana despite his roughest few weeks in the extraordinary U.S. race. Obama was beating Clinton by 14 points in the southern state, where about a third of voters were black, giving him more delegates and pushing him closer to claiming the party nomination. Clinton, who needed to win Indiana to survive, was carrying a four-point advantage with more than 85 per cent of results reported. 1000 words. By Beth Gorham. See Photos. BC-US-Democrats. Moved.

MOSCOW _ Dmitry Medvedev takes the oath of office to become the third president of the Russian Federation on Wednesday, in an elaborate ceremony that will remind Russia and the world of his country's czarist roots and 21st century wealth. The 1993 constitution stipulates that the president takes the oath of office "in a ceremonial atmosphere," and there is little risk Medvedev's invitation-only inauguration on the grounds of the Kremlin will fail to do that. 550 words. By Steve Gutterman. See AP Photos. BC-Russia-Medvedev-Inauguration. Moved.

JERUSALEM _ As Israel celebrates its 60th birthday, Israelis are looking back in time. Turn on the TV and you'll see grainy archive footage and old-timers reminiscing about victorious desert wars and pioneering days on the kibbutz. The love affair with the past comes at a time of unease _ Israelis have much to be proud of but aren't sure what they have to look forward to. 850 words. By Matti Friedman. BC-Israel-Turns-60. Moved

Datafile only.

See also:

_ BC–Israel–Palestinians. Moved.

CP is also following:

PARIS _ Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean has promised to speak to French President Nicolas Sarkozy about the importance of Canadian francophones who live outside Quebec. Jean arrived in Paris on Tuesday to kick off a five-day trip that will include meeting with Sarkozy, attending ceremonies in Normandy marking the 63rd anniversary of V–E Day, and visiting Canadian war graves in Beny–Revières. 300 words. By Michel Dolbec. BC–Gov–Gen–France.

Top stories and photo for Tuesday, May 6

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 377

TOP PHOTO:

OTTAWA _ OTTH106 (Horizontal) A tourist looks towards the Prime Minister's residence at 24 Sussex Drive in Ottawa.

TOP STORIES:

AUDITOR GENERAL POINTS OUT HOLES IN SYSTEM

OTTAWA _ Canada's border agency doesn't know the whereabouts of 41,000 people ordered to leave the country, makes flawed decisions about when to lock up suspected illegals and keeps poor tabs on spending when it does usher them out of Canada, says the federal auditor general. In a report Tuesday, Sheila Fraser criticized the Canada Border Services Agency for failing to monitor its detention and removal decisions across the country to ensure they are being made properly. By Jim Bronskill. See Photos, Video. BC-Auditor-Main.

CANADIAN SOLDIER DIES, ANOTHER WOUNDED

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar. Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil-Military Co-operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city. By Murray Brewster. Espy Edm. BC-Afghan-Cda-Death.

GLOBAL RELIEF EFFORT STARTS ROLLING TOWARDS MYANMAR

GENEVA _ Travel and visa obstacles on Tuesday hampered aid deliveries to the hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar now believed to be homeless after the devastating cyclone, officials said. But a green light from Myanmar's military rulers on accepting international aid has started the global relief effort rolling. By Alexander G. Higgins. See Photos. BC-Myanmar-Cyclone-Aid.

THE BUZZ...

SPEAR REWARDED BY JUDGE FOR PROGRESS

LOS ANGELES _ Britney Spears will have expanded visits with her sons following a child-custody hearing that went off without a hitch Tuesday, capping a three-month period of relative calm and stability for the troubled pop star and mother of two. The longer visits are "recognition of the progress that has been made, a progress in structure and stability," said Mark Vincent Kaplan, lawyer for Spears' ex-husband Kevin Federline. At a post-hearing press conference, Kaplan said Federline retains custody of two-year-old Sean Preston and one-year-old Jayden James, but that Spears would be allowed to see them for longer periods. By Linda Deutsch. See Photos LA101-104. BC-MUSIC-Britney-Spears.

Canadian death toll in Afghanistan: 83 soldiers, one diplomat

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 793

Since 2002, 83 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died in Afghanistan. Here is a list of the deaths:

2008

May 6 _ Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, of Calgary, of the 15 Field Ambulance Regiment based in Edmonton, is killed in a gun battle with Taliban militants outside of Kandahar.

April 4 _ Pte. Terry John Street, 24, of Hull, Que., from 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Shilo, Man., killed when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in Panjwaii district.

March 16 _ Sergeant Jason Boyes, 32, of Napanee, Ont., from 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Shilo, Man., killed by an explosive device while on foot patrol in Panjwaii district of Kandahar province.

March 11 _ Bombardier Jeremie Ouellet, 22, of Matane, Que., from 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, Shilo, Man., found dead at Kandahar Airfield. Military says death not related to combat.

March 2 _ Trooper Michael Yuki Hayakaze, 25, from Lord Strathcona's Horse, Edmonton, killed by roadside bomb in Mushan, 45 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Jan. 23 _ Sapper Etienne Gonthier, 21, of St-Georges, Que., near Quebec City, serving with 5ieme Regiment du Genie de Combat, killed when light armoured vehicle was hit by roadside bomb in Panjwaii district.

Jan. 15 _ Trooper Richard Renaud, 26, of Alma Que., a member of the 12e Regiment blindé du Canada, killed when the Coyote light armoured vehicle he was travelling in hit a roadside bomb while on patrol in the Arghandab district, north of Kandahar city.

Jan. 6 _ Warrant Officer Hani Massouh, 41, and Cpl. Eric Labbe, 31, of 2nd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment, killed when their armoured vehicle rolled over in wet, rugged terrain southwest of Kandahar City.

2007

Dec. 30 _ Gunner Jonathan Dion Jonathan Dion, 27, a gunner with the 5th Regiment d'Artilerie legere du Canada, killed and four others injured when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan.

Nov. 17 _ Cpl. Nicolas Raymond Beauchamp of the 5th Field Ambulance in Valcartier and Pte. Michel Levesque of the Royal 22nd Regiment, killed when their light armoured vehicle hit a roadside bomb near Bazar-e Panjwaii.

Sept. 24 _ Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, with the King's Own Calgary regiment, killed by a mortar shell while trying to repair a Leopard tank in southern Afghanistan.

Aug. 29 _ Maj. Raymond Ruckpaul dies from gunshot inside a secure NATO compound in Kabul.

Aug. 22 _ Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne killed by roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

Aug. 19 _ Pte. Simon Longtin killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

July 4 _ Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Pte. Lane Watkins, Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Master Cpl. Colin Bason and Capt. Jefferson Francis, killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

June 20 _ Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe, killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

June 11 _ Trooper Darryl Caswell killed a roadside bomb north of Kandahar.

May 30 _ Master Cpl. Darrell Jason Priede, killed when a U.S. helicopter was reportedly shot down by the Taliban in Helmand province.

May 25 _ Cpl. Matthew McCully 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 while on duty conducting surveillance in Kandahar city.

April 11 _ Master Cpl. Allan Stewart and Trooper Patrick James Pentland, killed when their Coyote vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

April 8 _ Sgt. Donald Lucas, Cpl. Aaron E. Williams, Pte. Kevin V. Kennedy, Pte. David R. Greenslade, Cpl. Christopher P. Stannix and Cpl. Brent Poland killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

March 6 _ Cpl. Kevin Megeney 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 by explosion in Panjwaii while on foot patrol.

Sept. 18 _ Pte. David Byers, Cpl. Shane Keating, Cpl. Keith Morley and Cpl. Glen Arnold killed in suicide bicycle bomb attack while on foot patrol in Panjwaii.

Sept. 4 _ Pte. Mark Graham killed when two NATO planes accidentally strafed Canadian troops in Panjwaii district.

Sept. 3 _ Sgt. Shane Stachnik, Warrant Officer Frank Robert Mellish, Pte. William Cushley and Warrant Officer Richard Francis Nolan killed in fighting in Panjwaii 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. She was first Canadian woman to be killed in action while serving in combat role.

April 22 _ Cpl. Matthew Dinning, Bombardier Myles Mansell, Lt. 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 18 _ Sgt. Marc Leger, Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, Pte. Richard Green and Pte. Nathan Smith killed when U.S. F–16 fighter mistakenly bombed Canadians.

The Canadian Press News Budget, Tuesday, May 6, 2008

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1634

Here are final coverage plans for top Canadian news as of 22:30 ET. Please note plans may change as circumstances warrant. The next coverage advisory will move about 13:00 ET Wednesday. If you have any questions, contact CP's National Desk at 416-507-2150.

Copy moves by 18:00 ET unless otherwise noted; all times ET.

For queries about non-Canadian Press syndicated copy, call the Specials Desk at 416-507-2152.

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

OTTAWA _ Canada's border agency doesn't know the whereabouts of 41,000 people ordered to leave the country, makes flawed decisions about when to lock up suspected illegals and keeps poor tabs on spending when it does usher them out of Canada, says the federal auditor general. In a report Tuesday, Sheila Fraser criticized the Canada Border Services Agency for failing to monitor its detention and removal decisions across the country to ensure they are being made properly. 995 words. By Jim Bronskill. See Photos. With BC-Auditor-Highlights. BC-Auditor-Main. Moved.

OTTAWA _ The stone residence that's supposed to house the prime minister in regal splendour is a drafty, outmoded plumbing nightmare that would take \$10 million to fix, says the auditor general. Even worse, the massive overhaul would kick out the honourable resident for more than a year, says Sheila Fraser in a report Tuesday to Parliament. 560 words. By Sue Bailey. See Photos. BC-Auditor-PM-Reno. Moved.

OTTAWA _ Children on native reserves are eight times more likely to wind up in under-funded, poorly tracked foster care that appears to be failing them, says the auditor general. In a report tabled Tuesday in Parliament, Sheila Fraser urgently calls on Ottawa and the provinces to work with First Nations on badly needed improvements. 714 words. By Sue Bailey. See Photo. With vars BC-Auditor. BC-Auditor-Native-Care. Moved.

See also:

BC-Auditor-Afghanistan

BC-Auditor-Fees

OTHER CANADIAN

CALGARY _ The life-sized photo that now haunts the hallway of Calgary's Emergency Medical Services headquarters shows Cpl. Michael Starker with his arm draped across an ambulance and a determined look in his eye. Starker, 36, a Calgary paramedic and Canadian soldier, was killed Tuesday in southern Afghanistan when his patrol came under fire during an ambush. 581 words. See Photos. With KANDAHAR BC-Afghan-Cda-Death. BC-Afghan-Death-Paramedic. Moved.

OTTAWA _ There was no top-level interference in the RCMP probe that led to criminal charges against former privacy commissioner George Radwanski, says the Mountie who headed the investigation. Supt. Al Mathews, testifying Tuesday in Ontario Superior Court, said then-RCMP commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli never spoke to him about the politically volatile case or issued any directives on how to handle it. 689 words. By Jim Brown. BC-Radwanski-Charges. Moved.

LITTLE BLACK BEAR RESERVE, Sask. _ A man has been charged with murder and a second man has been arrested as police attempt to shed light on the mystery that has surround the case of 19-year-old woman who has been missing for nearly three years. RCMP confirmed late Tuesday afternoon that Albert Patrick Bellegarde, 29, has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of Amber Redman, who disappeared from outside a Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask., bar July 15, 2005. 697 words. By Tim Cook. BC-CRIME-Teen-Missing. Moved.

TORONTO _ A former police officer who alleged that an organized pedophile ring was operating with impunity in eastern Ontario faces the possibility of being hammered in the final report of the judicial inquiry his allegations helped spark. Documents obtained by The Canadian Press show the inquiry is considering several adverse findings against Perry Dunlop, who is in jail for refusing to testify at the commission in Cornwall, Ont. 525 words. By Colin Perkel. BC-Cornwall-Inquiry. Moved.

BRAMPTON, Ont. _ A pair of sisters serving 10-year sentences for drowning their mother in a bathtub after plying her with alcohol and painkillers were denied an early conditional release from prison Tuesday. While Ontario Superior Court Justice Bruce Duncan said the girls' rehabilitation progress behind bars is encouraging, releasing them only two years into their sentences is simply "too much, too soon." 450 words. By Jered Stuffco. BC-CRIME-Mom-Slain. Moved.

TORONTO _ Neither the wrath of his Catholic mother nor the thousands of e-mails and petitions from the public prove Ontario should cling to the tradition of opening the daily proceedings of the legislature with the Lord's Prayer, Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday. Although at least one Jewish Conservative says the Liberals should listen to the 5,700 people who have written to the province about the proposal to replace the prayer, McGuinty said it's the government's job to lead and ensure the daily reading at the legislature reflects the diversity of Ontario. 550 words. By Chinta Puxley. BC-Ont-Legis-Lord's-Prayer. Moved.

VANCOUVER _ The mother of a mentally ill man stunned by a Taser pleaded for a moratorium on the weapon until more is known about it, while a police officer showed an inquiry dramatic video footage of why the Taser is needed. The two dramatically different sides were presented to former B.C. Appeal Court justice Thomas Braidwood on Tuesday during a public inquiry into the weapon. 660 words. By Terri Theodore. BC-Taser-Inquiry. Moved.

VICTORIA _ Provincial social workers were sent to a Vancouver Island home that would later become a grisly murder scene but they did not talk to the six-year-old boy who would die there, a senior B.C. children's ministry official testified Tuesday at a coroner's inquest into the murder-suicide of the Lee family. Tom Weber said social workers were dispatched to the home to investigate abuse allegations. 637 words. By Dirk Meissner. BC-Family-Murdered-Inquest. Moved.

VANCOUVER _ Some of the most vociferous critics of fish farming on the West Coast filed a petition in court Tuesday, asking it to declare that the way fish farms are regulated in B.C. is contrary to the Constitution. Marine biologist Alexandra Morton said she and an association of gillnetters, the Vessels Owners Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association filed the petition in B.C. Supreme Court. 705 words. By Greg Joyce. BC-Salmon-Sea-Lice. Moved.

VANCOUVER _ The Charter doesn't protect the rights of drug addicts to shoot up, federal lawyers told a B.C. court Tuesday, arguing that the future of Vancouver's supervised-injection site is a matter of policy, not

law. Ottawa has until June 30 to decide whether the supervised-injection site in the city's troubled Downtown Eastside, known as Insite, will be allowed to remain open under an exemption from Canada's drug laws. 600 words. By James Keller. See Photos. Safe-Injection. Moved.

VICTORIA _ A new report by British Columbia's auditor general questions the viability of the province's move to shift the delivery of child protection services for aboriginal children from provincial to First Nations agencies. The report released Tuesday by Auditor General John Doyle concluded the government's service delivery approach for aboriginal children has been only partly successful and should be re-examined. 975 words. By Scott Sutherland. See also BC-Auditor, placelined OTTAWA. BC-B.C.-Auditor-Aboriginal. Moved.

TORONTO _ As three breakaway Ontario Anglican parishes decide whether to appeal an interim court ruling that requires they share their churches with the diocese, efforts are underway to figure out what to do about this Sunday's services. Because Monday's ruling is so vastly different than that of an earlier judge, Anglican Network in Canada director Cheryl Chang said the breakaway group is seriously considering an appeal and has seven days to make a decision. 613 words. By Tobi Cohen. BC-Anglican-Dispute. Moved.

TORONTO _ A hormone that works in the gut spurs people to eat more by making food look more appealing, new research shows. Brain imaging done on people who were given the hormone ghrelin showed parts of the brain known to be involved in sensing pleasure lit up when study subjects were shown photos of different foods. 700 words. By Helen Branswell. Also moves Lifestyles (L). BC-Hunger-Hormone. Moved General (G) and Lifestyle (L).

HALIFAX _ Officers escorting a "high-risk" offender weren't told of his previous escape attempts from jail, and didn't properly frisk him before he boarded a van bound for a Halifax hospital, an internal government review has concluded. Those were just two items in a laundry list of errors found by a Nova Scotia Justice Department review released Tuesday into the escape of Jermaine Carvery, who is still at large. 730 words. By Michael Tutton. Original moved Atlantic only. BC-NS-Prisoner-Escapes. Moved.

MONTREAL _ The Quebec government should crack down on puppy-mill owners in the wake of a stiff sentence given to a man who operated what was described as the "kennel from hell," say animal-rights activists. Nicole Joncas, who runs an animal refuge in Ontario and has long fought against Quebec puppy mills, was categorical when she was asked how such operators should be sentenced. 619 words. By Nelson Wyatt. BC-CRIME-Puppy-Mill. Moved.

HALIFAX _ A Nova Scotia cabinet minister whose son crashed a government-leased vehicle has decided to pay for the damages, reversing a decision she made when the story became public on Monday. Community Services Minister Judy Streach says Nova Scotia taxpayers won't be on the hook for the repairs even though she had purchased a so-called personal use premium that she thought allowed her 17-year-old son to drive the vehicle. 500 words. By Keith Doucette. BC-NS-Minister-Son-Accident, 2nd Writethru. Moved Regional (A).

The Canadian Press is also following:

EDMONTON _ Peacha Atkinson, mother of 13-year-old Nina Courtepatte, to testify at the trial of a 19-year-old woman accused in the girl's sex slaying. Copy develops from court proceedings.

Update:adds name; quotes

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 130

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A Canadian soldier is dead and another wounded today in a gun battle with Taliban militants outside of Kandahar.

The attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15 Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital on Tuesday after his patrol was ambushed in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres west of Kandahar city.

Brigadier-General Guy Laroche, commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, says the wounded soldier is being treated in hospital at Kandahar Airfield and was able to call home on his own.

The name of the wounded soldier has not been released.

The soldiers were part of a civilian military affairs team, which is attempting to reach out to local Afghans.

(The Canadian Press)

--Fourteenth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 314

The international community is struggling to deliver aid to cyclone victims in military-ruled Myanmar.

More than 22-thousand people have been killed, 41-thousand are missing and as many as one (m) million are believed to be homeless after the devastating storm hit Saturday.

Some aid agencies report their assessment teams have reached some areas of the hardest-hit coastal regions.

But they say getting in supplies and large numbers of aid workers will be difficult. (14)

(NB-Flooding) (Audio: 129)

New Brunswick officials say the total cost of flood damage could be in the tens of (m) millions of dollars.

Emergency Measures spokesman Andy Morton says water levels are declining on the St. John River, including the lower reaches of the river at Saint John.

Public Safety spokesman Dick Isabelle says more than one-thousand people will have applied for financial assistance by the end of today. (14)

(Afghan-Cda-Death) (Audio: 142)

Canada has lost another soldier in Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker was killed and another soldier was wounded when their civilian military affairs team was ambushed in the Zhari district.

Brigadier-General Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in the war-torn country, says the gunfight happened along a road in the hotly contested region.

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in the war-torn country since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. (14)

(Auditor-PM-Reno)

The auditor general suggests 24 Sussex Drive is about ready for a visit from Mike Holmes.

If not the famous T-V home fixer, then at least his equivalent.

Sheila Fraser's report today says the official prime minister's residence in Ottawa needs 10 (m) million dollars in repairs.

In order to do that the prime minister will have to move out for about a year.

The report says the prime minister's residence has leaks, ancient electrical work and deficient plumbing. (14)

(U-S Primaries) (Audio: 141)

North Carolina's election chief says few problems are being reported as voters cast ballots in Democratic primaries that are expected to bring a record turnout in the state.

There are 115 delegates at stake today in North Carolina, and another 72 up for grabs in Indiana.

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have been doing some last-minute campaigning there. (14)

(Pudgy Police)

The city of Los Angeles has hired its first food coach to see if she can help reduce the waistlines of some pudgy police.

Rana Parker is trying to convince the corpulent cops that it will be better for them in many ways to lose the pounds.

The dietitian lays down the law for recruits, veterans and top brass alike.

She warns officers not to adopt a steady diet of drive-thru burgers, microwave burritos and greasy pizza. (14)

(NewsWatch by Roger Ward)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.05.06

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 272

Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day says he will work to improve the way government tracks illegal immigrants.

Day is reacting to an auditor-general's report that says some 41-thousand people who have been ordered to leave Canada are unaccounted for.

The auditor says many may have left on their own, but there's no way to be certain.

Day agrees that might be the case.

He adds the government has to keep better tabs on who has been expelled. (16)

(Auditor-Native-Care) (Audio: p10)

The N-D-P says the federal government is failing to help troubled aboriginal children.

N-D-P Leader Jack Layton says a new report from the auditor-general shows the government is underfunding child welfare services on reserves.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the government is pumping new money into the system. (16)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

A Canadian reserve soldier is dead and another is wounded after a gun battle today with Taliban militants outside of Kandahar.

Corporal Michael Starker, who was a paramedic from Calgary and member of 15 Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital.

His patrol was ambushed in Zhari district, about 25 kilometres west of Kandahar city.

The name of the wounded soldier has not been released. (16)

(Myanmar-Cyclone)

Aid has begun to trickle into cyclone-ravaged Myanmar.

But the worst-hit Irrawaddy delta, where nearly 22-thousand people have perished, is largely cut off.

With more than 40-thousand still missing and one (m) million possibly left homeless, the international community is struggling to deliver aid in the military-ruled country. (16)

(Auditor-PM-Reno)

The prime minister is brushing aside suggestions that his house needs some major work.

That's despite a new report from the auditor general, which says the official residence of 24 Sussex Drive needs 10 (m) million dollars in repairs.

The auditor says the home has drafty windows, outdated plumbing, asbestos, and an electrical and heating system that hasn't been updated in 50 years.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says the prime minister's residence is a publicly-owned building that should be preserved. (16)

(ENT-MUSIC-Britney Spears)

A lawyer for Kevin Federline says Britney Spears will have expanded visits with her two sons.

The announcement came after a child-custody hearing today in Los Angeles.

Federline's lawyer says the longer visits are ``recognition of the progress that has been made."

It suggests Spears is conforming to court requirements better than she has before. (16)

(NewsWatch by Roger Ward)

(Auditor–Main)

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 253

Canada Border Services is getting raked over the coals by the auditor general.

Sheila Fraser says there are 41–thousand people Canada wants to deport, but cannot locate.

Fraser says that threatens the integrity of the immigration system.

She says if foreigners enter Canada and remain illegally, there's not much point in them going through the complicated process of becoming a Canadian citizen. (18)

(Auditor–PM Reno) (Audio: P14)

The Prime Minister's Office says there's no need for major renovations at 24 Sussex Drive, the P–M's official residence.

But, Auditor General Sheila Fraser disagrees, saying the prime minister's official residence urgently needs repairs.

Fraser says it will take about 10 (m) million dollars to bring the 140–year–old mansion up to snuff.

The house — known by some Ottawa residents as “the 2–4” — hasn't had any major work for 50 years. (18)

(Afghan–Cda–Death)

Brigadier–General Guy Laroche says Canada has lost “a fine soldier.”

Laroche, commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, made his remark after Corporal Michael Starker was killed in an ambush by Taliban militants 25–kilometres from Kandahar City.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years.

He's the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002. (18)

(U–S Primaries)

Barack Obama won the Democratic party's primary in North Carolina.

However, his opponent, Hillary Clinton, is leading the Indiana primary — the other major contest being held today.

With votes still being counted in Indiana, Clinton has 57 per cent of the vote, while Obama has 43 per cent. (18)

(HEALTH–Hunger Hormone) (Audio: 168)

(Auditor–Main)

Researchers say people are encouraged to eat more by a hormone produced in the gut.

The study by McGill University says that hunger hormone, called ghrelin, makes food look more appealing.

The study appears in the medical journal Cell Metabolism. (18)

(ENT–Thurman Stalker)

A former mental patient faces up to a year in jail after he was convicted in New York of stalking actress Uma Thurman.

Thirty–seven–year–old Jack Jordan was also convicted of one count of aggravated harassment.

The judge ordered a psychiatric exam for Jordan before his next court date on June 2nd. (18)

(MUSIC–Stamps)

Canada Post is honouring some well–known Canadian musicians by issuing their own stamps.

They are Bryan Adams, Stompin' Tom Connors, Robert Charlebois, and Edith Butler.

Their stamps will be out in June of next year. (18)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

Staffing advisory

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 56

Tom Sampson of Calgary emergency medical services is holding a media availability at 3:30 p.m. at 3705 35 Street N.E. on the death of a Canadian soldier who was killed in Afghanistan today. Cpl. Michael Starker was a paramedic with Calgary EMS.

Reporter James Stevenson of The Canadian Press is staffing.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Edmonton

(Auditor–Main)

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 277

There are plenty of government gaffes in the latest report tabled today by the auditor general.

Sheila Fraser says Canada's border agency has no idea of the whereabouts of 41–thousand illegal immigrants who were ordered to leave Canada as of last fall.

Fraser also says the Canada Border Services Agency makes bad decisions about when to lock up suspected illegals, and keeps poor tabs on spending when it kicks them out of the country.

Fraser adds passport fees are too high because Foreign Affairs has overcharged for consular services. (17)

(Auditor–Day) (Audio: P11)

Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day is trying to put a positive face on the auditor general's report, which says too many immigrants are in Canada illegally.

Day says six years ago, 87–hundred illegal immigrants were kicked out of the country.

He says two years ago, the number has risen to 12–thousand 600. (17)

(Afghan–Cda Death)

Another Canadian soldier has died in Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker was killed in a gun battle with Taliban militants 25–kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Another Canadian soldier has been wounded.

Starker, a Calgary paramedic, had been in Afghanistan for the past five months.

That raises to 83 the number of Canadian soldiers who've died in Afghanistan since 2002. (17)

(Myanmar Cyclone) (Audio: 171)

Aid is beginning to trickle into Myanmar, where the death toll is approaching 22–thousand from a devastating cyclone last weekend.

However, officials say that will likely rise because more than 40–thousand are still missing in that poor Southeast Asia country.

There's major concern over the lack of food, water and shelter.

That has prompted U–N officials to say the aftermath could be more lethal than the storm itself. (17)

(Auditor–Main)

(NB Flooding)

Floodwaters from the St. John River in New Brunswick are dropping, even near its mouth at the Bay of Fundy.

Officials say the focus is on getting evacuees back to their homes.

By midday today, more than 800 people had applied to the province for disaster relief.

The Public Safety Department estimates total damage across New Brunswick will be in the tens of (m) millions of dollars. (17)

(BIZ–Oil Prices)

The price of oil hit a record high today of \$122.73 U–S a barrel before retreating.

It ended the day at \$121.84 -- up more than a dollar–80 from yesterday's close.

Traders attribute it to the falling U–S dollar as well as concern about lower production in Mexico and Russia.

They also point to a prediction from Goldman Sachs, a huge investment bank, that oil could hit 200–dollars a barrel within two years. (17)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 457

(CRIME–Teen–Missing–Charge) (Sask note)

A man has been charged with first–degree murder in the death of a Saskatchewan woman.

Twenty–nine–year–old Albert Patrick Bellegarde of the Little Black Bear First Nation is expected to appear in a Regina courtroom tomorrow.

He's charged in the death of 19–year–old Amber Redman, whose remains R–C–M–P believe they have found on the same reserve.

Redman disappeared nearly three years ago. (The Canadian Press)

(CRIME–Teen–Missing–Women) (Sask note)

Members of a national aboriginal group are heartbroken, after hearing that human remains — believed to be those of a missing 19–year–old Saskatchewan woman — have been found northeast of Regina.

R–C–M–P have been combing the Little Black Bear First Nation today after the discovery of what they believe to be the human remains of Amber Redman were found in a patch of brush.

Theresa Ducharme, a spokeswoman for the Native Women's Association of Canada, says it's been tough to cope with this latest news.

They'd been hoping that Redman would be found alive.

She disappeared three years ago.

A 29–year–old man has been charged with first–degree murder in Redman's death and is scheduled to appear in court in Regina tomorrow. (The Canadian Press)

(Afghan–Cda–Death) (Alta note)

The commanding officer of an Edmonton military unit says the latest soldier to die in Afghanistan was profoundly committed to helping the people of that country.

Corporal Michael Starker, who was a Calgary paramedic, has become the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

Lieutenant–Colonel Roger Scott, the commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance at C–F–B Edmonton, says Starker — a reservist — had been part of the unit for five years.

He says the unit is focusing on supporting Stark's family.

Tom Sampson, the chief of Calgary's emergency medical services, says another city paramedic who is also serving in Afghanistan has expressed interest in helping to bring Starker's body home. (The Canadian Press)

(Alta–Stelmach–Health)

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach says the Calgary Health Region isn't the only health agency that wants more money.

Speaking in Calgary today, the premier says his government hasn't yet made a decision on the region's request for an additional 190 (m) million dollars per year.

Ron Liepert (LY'–purt), the province's education minister, is doing a review of the funding request, and Stelmach says nothing will happen until that review is complete.

(The Canadian Press)

(CRIME–Underage–Driver) (Mba note)

A 14–year–old Winnipeg girl could be charged after the vehicle she was allegedly driving rolled, injuring her and five young passengers.

R–C–M–P say the incident happened on the Long Plain First Nation near Portage la Prairie on Sunday.

Sergeant Line (lynn) Karpish says the girl, who was allegedly the driver of the vehicle, was the most seriously hurt in the incident and was sent to hospital in Winnipeg. (The Canadian Press)

(Sask–Daycare–Pay)

Daycare workers in Saskatchewan are about to get a pay raise.

The provincial government is putting up 1.7 (m) million dollars to boost wages from 13–dollars and 90 cents per hour, to 14–dollars and 50 cents per hour.

Ken Krawetz, the province's education minister, says the money will help to recruit and retain more daycare workers. (The Canadian Press)

(Mba–Poverty)

People on social assistance in Manitoba are getting some extra money for things like housing.

The provincial government is spending another 4.3 (m) million dollars to help low–income earners with housing and to get jobs.

Housing allowances for single, non–disabled adults will rise from 271–dollars to 285–dollars per month.

Rooming house payments will be raised from 236–dollars to 285–dollars per month.

(The Canadian Press)

(Prairie Update by Lisa Arrowsmith)

--Thirteenth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 332

Aid is beginning to slowly to trickle in to cyclone-ravaged Myanmar.

The U-N's World Food Program says it has begun distributing aid in damaged areas of Yangon, the largest city, where 800 tons of food have arrived.

But the worst-hit Irrawaddy delta -- where more than 22-thousand people have been killed -- remains largely cut off.

The U-S says it stands ready to help if the military government agrees to let American disaster teams into the country.

France has reduced its relief to about 300-thousand dollars because it says Myanmar officials are willing to accept aid, but insist on distributing it themselves. (13)

(Afghan-Cda-Death) (Audio: 126)

A Canadian soldier is dead and another wounded today in a gun battle with Taliban in Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker, of the 15 Field Ambulance Regiment, was part of a civilian military affairs team that's attempting to reach out to local Afghans.

The patrol was ambushed along a roadway in the Pashmul area, which has been a hotly contested region.

The wounded soldier is being treated in hospital at Kandahar Airfield and was able to call home on his own. (13)

(Auditor-Immigrants) (Audio: p04)

Auditor General Sheila Fraser says thousands of illegal immigrants have been ordered to leave the country, but 41-thousand are unaccounted for.

In a report today, Fraser criticizes the Canada Border Services Agency for failing to monitor its detention and removal decisions to ensure they are being made properly.

Fraser says as a result, growing numbers might be in Canada illegally. (13)

(CRIME-Mom-Slain) (Audio: 119)

A Toronto judge has denied an early prison release for a pair of sisters convicted of drowning their mother in the bath tub.

One lawyer for the women, Robert Jagielski (JAG-e-LES-SKI), says the release application was made so the pair would get proper access to rehabilitation programs.

The sisters, who can't be named, were found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to 10-years in prison in late 2005. (13)

(U-S Primaries)

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are making no bold predictions about Democratic presidential primaries today in North Carolina and Indiana.

Clinton today toured the Indianapolis Motor Speedway where she declined to predict an outcome.

Earlier in the day, Obama said he felt good, but believed both races would be close. (13)

(Britney Spears)

Britney Spears is in a Los Angeles court in person today for a child-custody hearing.

For a change she arrived quietly with no spectacle of previous appearances that included screaming fans with banners and frenzied paparazzi.

A somber Spears entered the courtroom flanked by a handful of people, including her parents and lawyers.

Infamous for appearing in public without underwear, today she wore a modest brown polka dot dress. (13)

(NewsWatch by Roger Ward)

INDEX:Defence, Health, International, Labour, Politics

DATE: 2008.05.06

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 146

EDMONTON _ The commanding officer of an Edmonton-based military unit says the latest reservist to die in Afghanistan volunteered for duty there out of a "profound" commitment to make a difference.

Corporal Michael Starker, who was a Calgary paramedic, has become the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in the conflict there since 2001.

His unit was ambushed by Taliban forces outside of Kandahar City.

Lieutenant Colonel Roger Scott, the commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance at C-F-B Edmonton, says Starker had been a member of the unit for five years and was committed to helping others.

He says his dedication was second to none, and he was well-liked by his colleagues.

Tom Sampson, the chief of Calgary's emergency medical services, says Starker and another city paramedic were serving in Afghanistan.

The other paramedic has expressed interest in bringing his colleague's body home to Calgary, where Starker was born and raised.

Another soldier was wounded in the incident, though military officials have said he was able to call his family himself from hospital in Kandahar City.

(The Canadian Press)

lga

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.05.06
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 232

One more Canadian soldier is dead and another wounded today in a gun battle with Taliban militants outside of Kandahar.

The soldiers were with a civilian group that does outreach work with Afghans.

Dead is Michael Starker, a corporal with the 15th Field Ambulance.

Starker was a paramedic with Calgary E-M-S.

Calgary officials say his death is a "significant loss" for emergency services, the city and the entire community. (15)

(Auditor-Native-Care) (Audio: p09)

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is insisting his government is improving child welfare services for aboriginals, but the federal auditor says otherwise.

Auditor General Sheila Fraser says native foster care is often unevenly funded.

But Harper told the Commons today the government is pumping new money into the system.

N-D-P leader Jack Layton says the government is failing to ensure aboriginals have adequate services. (15)

(CRIME-Teen-Missing) (Audio: 143)

Mounties are combing two locations on a Saskatchewan reserve following the discovery of a young woman's remains.

Amber Redman was 19 when she disappeared from the Fort Qu'Appelle area three years ago.

Police are checking a house about five kilometres from where the remains turned up.

One person has been arrested but no charges have been laid.

Mounties haven't released any details on what led them to the location of the body. (15)

(Myanmar-Cyclone)

U-N officials say some aid is starting to reach people in and around Myanmar's largest city, in the wake of the weekend's deadly cyclone.

But holdups with travel and visas are slowing deliveries to what could be one (m) million people left homeless by the storm.

Over 22–thousand are dead and over 40–thousand are missing. (15)

(U–S Primaries)

Democrat Hillary Clinton isn't predicting the winner of today's Indiana primary, saying every race is ``filled with the unexpected."

Rival Barack Obama won't guess either, except that he says ``it's going to be close."

Indiana has 72 delegates at stake.

Today's North Carolina primary offers 115 delegates up for grabs. (15)

(OBIT–Robbins)

It seems ice cream didn't do much harm to Irvine Robbins.

The co–founder of Baskin Robbins has died at age 90.

Robbins opened his first ice cream store in Glendale, California, in December 1945, following his discharge from the army.

Robbins offered 21 flavours at that store.

He eventually helped build the 31–flavour craze at Baskin–Robbins. (15)

(NewsWatch by Roger Ward)

INDEX:Defence, Health, International, Labour, Politics

DATE: 2008.05.06

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 121

CALGARY – Calgary EMS chief Tom Sampson says Cpl. Michael Starker was one of those guys who would always help those in need, and that's what he died doing.

Starker, a paramedic with the city of Calgary for the past three years, died in Afghanistan Tuesday after his patrol with the 15 Field Ambulance Regiment was ambushed.

Sampson says Starker was one of two Calgary paramedics who are currently serving in Afghanistan with the Canadian forces.

The other paramedic has expressed interest in bringing Starker's body back to Calgary, where the slain soldier was born and raised.

Sampson says Starker had served with the military a decade ago and after helping Calgarians for several years, he went to Afghanistan to help others.

He also says when good people like Starker die before their time, it's like the sun going down while it's still daytime.

(The Canadian Press)

INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2008.05.06

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 275

Stephen Harper is rejecting a call that 24 Sussex Drive, the prime minister's official residence, undergo a major update.

Auditor General Sheila Fraser says 10 (m) million dollars needs to be spent on the 140-year-old mansion.

Fraser says among other things, the windows are very leaky, asbestos needs to be removed, and the heating, plumbing and electrical systems need updating.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says Harper should say ``yes," adding 24 Sussex is an historic building that belongs to the people of Canada.

However, Harper's office says there's no need for the house to undergo ``substantial renovation programs at this time." (19)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

A 36-year-old paramedic from Calgary is the latest Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker was killed near Kandahar City when his patrol came under fire from a Taliban ambush.

Tom Sampson, chief of the Calgary E-M-S, says Starker always helped those in need, adding that's what he died doing.

He's the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002. (19)

(Myanmar Cyclone)

Almost 730-tonnes of food has arrived in Yangon, the largest city in cyclone-ravaged Myanmar.

And, U-N workers say they're handing out that desperately-needed aid.

The death toll from last weekend's cyclone in Myanmar is 22-thousand.

However, U-N officials say that will likely rise because twice that many are missing. (19)

(US Primary)

Barack Obama won the North Carolina Democratic primary, where he got just under 60 per cent of the vote against Hillary Clinton.

Obama says that leaves him ``less than 200 delegates away" from winning his party's presidential nomination.

The other major contest in the Indiana primary, where Clinton narrowly leads Obama 52 per cent to 48. (19)

(CRIME–Teen Missing) (Audio: 172)

A charge of murder has been laid after a 19–year–old woman vanished in July, 2005 outside a bar in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

A body believed to be that of Amber Redman was found Monday in a ditch on the Little Black Bear reserve, 200–kilometres northeast of Regina.

Charged with first–degree murder is 29–year–old Albert Bellegarde, who is from the same reserve.

He's due to appear in a Regina court in the morning. (19)

(Que–Extreme Fighting)

Quebec says it wants to outlaw unregulated extreme fighting.

Jacques Dupuis, the province's minister of public security, was reacting to a no–holds–barred fight held April 26th in Sherbrooke.

Dupuis says wants to fill a legal vacuum that exists which allows these events to be held. (19)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

Medic killed in ambush

IDNUMBER 200805070135
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A01
ILLUSTRATION: Cpl. Michael Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghan–istan. He was killed yesterday after his patrol was ambushed. ;
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 26

Cpl. Michael Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghan– istan. He was killed yesterday after his patrol was ambushed.

Slain medic remembered as 'fine soldier' who cared; Canadian corporal on goodwill patrol killed in ambush by Taliban

IDNUMBER 200805070078
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A21
ILLUSTRATION: LARRY MACDOUGAL the canadian Press In a portrait hung at CalgaryEmergency Medical Services, Michael Starker poses beside an ambulance in January before leaving for Afghanistan. ;
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
SOURCE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 406

A Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar was killed yesterday in an ambush by Taliban militants.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside Kandahar city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He was reported in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home. Starker, a Calgary paramedic, is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

In Calgary, teary–eyed EMS chief Tom Sampson described Starker, who worked for the city for the past three years, as someone who would always help those in need, and that's what he died doing.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgaryans here and ... he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker, 36, was one of two Calgary paramedics currently serving in Afghanistan with the Canadian Forces, Sampson said.

The other paramedic, Travis Lanoway, has expressed interest in bringing Starker's body back to Calgary, where the slain soldier was born and raised. Starker was married but had no children.

Sampson said Starker will be remembered by friends and colleagues in the Calgary EMS as a man with the heart of gold who brought out the best in everyone.

"We have a bit of a saying here: when people leave us before their time, it is our opinion that the sun went down while it is still day."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's mission. Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

It's been almost 20 months since a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up–close confrontation with insurgents, say records on the National Defence website.

Insurgents killed Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, on Oct. 16, 2006, during a volley of rocket–propelled grenades and gunfire. They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area of Pashmul.

The arid swath of farm country west of Kandahar has been hotly contested since Canadian troops deployed in Kandahar.

Enemy attack kills 83rd Canadian soldier

IDNUMBER 200805070026
PUBLICATION: The Leader–Post (Regina)
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: Canwest News Service; Edmonton
Journal
WORD COUNT: 919

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A Canadian soldier was killed and another was wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, a reservist and medic, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district.

The Calgary soldier was taken to the Kandahar Airfield after the attack that took place around 11:45 a.m. local time, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but the soldier was in stable condition Tuesday and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker, who was with 15 Field Ambulance, is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Flags outside Calgary's Emergency Medical Service headquarters were lowered to half–mast Tuesday and staff added a strip of black underneath their yellow ribbon pins in memory of Starker, a former city paramedic.

"It touches every Calgarian because he was there when you dialed 9–1–1," EMS Chief Tom Sampson said. "And he was there for the people in Afghanistan."

Unlike the Calgary Police Service and the city's fire department, Calgary EMS had not seen a death in the line of duty until Starker.

"It's not a membership we wanted to join," EMS chaplain John Hein said.

Starker joined Calgary EMS in June 2005 and worked as an emergency medical technician before graduating as a paramedic in 2007.

"He had some previous military experience and decided he would go back in the reserves and go for one more tour," said CUPE local 3421 president Bruce Robb.

He left for Afghanistan in December. Hein said he was also known as a compassionate individual who cared for his patients.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement offering his condolences to the soldier's family and friends.

"Our Canadian Forces are making immense sacrifices. They are working to bring security and democracy to the people of Afghanistan, while also protecting and promoting Canadian values," Harper said.

"Cpl. Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians."

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also offered his sympathies.

"This tragic loss serves to remind us of the sacrifice our brave men and women in uniform make every day while working to protect Afghan civilians and trying to bring stability to the region," he said in a statement.

Cpl. Michael Starker was a natural leader, said the former academic co-ordinator of a paramedic training program where he was a student.

Steven Pilkington said Starker graduated from the Paramedic Outreach Program at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary in 2005 with high marks.

"Because of his military background, he had the obvious military leadership abilities," he said. "He worked extremely hard. He set the bar high."

Pilkington recalled how one day Starker and two other outreach program students were at the school's testing centre when another student started to have a seizure.

"(Starker) recognized that it was a medical emergency and he immediately, with the assistance of the other two students, provided emergency care," he said.

"He was a leader in the classroom. He was an outstanding student and it's quite unfortunate that (his death in Afghanistan) happened."

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Once a Taliban-held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla-style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Laroche said Tuesday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said, the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Laroche said.

"We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us everyday. We see more farmers. Our presence is necessary, I would say essential, in those districts."

The aim of civilian–military co–operation groups, which operate across the Panjwaii and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles with a squad of soldiers. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach locals on foot.

Members of the teams have said the process is a good way to meet local Afghans in a low–stress environment and have equated their role with police officers walking a beat back in Canada.

"This was something we could not do last year at the same time," Laroche said. "Now we can do that, not only in the Pashmul area, but throughout Zhari and Panjwaii."

Although seen as crucial work in building bridges between the military and Afghans who have a poor history with foreign soldiers, this is not the first time a civilian–military team has been met with violence.

In spring 2006, Lt. Trevor Greene was seriously injured when he was struck in the head with an axe during a meeting with elders.

Two months after that, Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist from Edmonton, was killed when his armoured vehicle drove over a roadside bomb.

Most of the soldiers who specialize in civilian–military team duties are reservists, part–time soldiers who train during evenings and weekends and who must take extended leaves from their civilian jobs to join missions like the current deployment in Afghanistan.

Last week, a member of one of the co–operation teams said, "We're not there to fight. We're prepared to fight if things go wrong, but we're mainly there to communicate."

Laroche said there would be a review of the latest incident to determine if any changes in how the teams operate are needed, but added the goal is to increase the number of patrols in the region.

The killing of a soldier by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians.

The commander of Canadian Forces in Afghanistan stated that his soldiers remain dedicated to the mission.

Canadian medic killed Taliban ambush takes life of Calgarian on goodwill patrol

SOURCETAG: 0805070442

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 13

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Laurie–Ann White, DND, CP Cpl. Michael Starker, a paramedic, died in an ambush yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 350

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 km outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late yesterday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgarians here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker was married but had no children. He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said yesterday the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at Kandahar Airfield.

'DIED HELPING AFGHANS'

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of (yesterday's) patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lieut. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack at a community meeting.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Ambush kills medic Goodwill patrol hit in Kandahar

SOURCETAG 0805070305

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 2

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo Cpl. Michael Starker, a Calgary paramedic, was killed yesterday when his patrol came under enemy fire. Another soldier was wounded. 2. photo of GUY LAROCHE "Fine soldier"

BYLINE: BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 395

Bringing aid to Afghan villagers has cost a Calgary paramedic his life in that war-torn country.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a full-time paramedic serving with the Edmonton-based 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was killed yesterday by small arms fire when his patrol was ambushed by Taliban guerrillas in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 km west of Kandahar.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition.

The patrol was a civilian-military team gauging the development needs of impoverished Afghans in the much fought-over area, Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten," the general said.

Reservist Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

'HE WAS THE BEST'

Starker became a Calgary paramedic in 2005, quickly earning the respect of his colleagues, said a saddened EMS chief Tom Sampson.

"They said he was the best they'd worked with," he said.

"There's no doubt this is a significant loss to EMS, the city of Calgary and the entire community -- our thoughts and our prayers are with his family and his friends."

He'd also served with Cochrane EMS.

Starker, who was married with no children, was on his second tour of Afghanistan, which began in December.

Small-arms fire deaths among Canadians have been rare in Afghanistan, with the last one occurring in October 2006, in the same area where Starker was killed.

Most casualties are caused by roadside bombs.

In a statement, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Starker's service and that of his wounded colleague set an example of determination to help the oppressed.

"They are working to bring security and democracy to the people of Afghanistan, while also protecting and promoting Canadian values."

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of all soldiers after three decades of conflict.

HARSH TOLL

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," Laroche said.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel from village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to commanders.

Lieut. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting.

The arid farming country west of Kandahar has been a hotly contested region since Canadian troops deployed in Kandahar more than two years ago. On more than one occasion, commanders have declared the area pacified, only to have insurgents sneak back to plant bombs.

The fact the soldiers could walk through the area and interact with the locals was a hopeful sign, Laroche said.

"The intent was to exchange with the population -- something we could not do last year," he said. "We will maintain our presence there as long as we need to do so." KEYWORDS=WORLD

Medic killed in ambush Canadian fatally shot, another wounded as Taliban militants change tactics

SOURCETAG: 0805070227

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by MCPL Laurie–Ann White Cpl. Michael Starker was killed yesterday after his patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Afghanistan. Starker was on a goodwill mission when Taliban militants attacked. 2. photo by CP Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche announces the death of Cpl. Michael Starker, who was killed while on foot patrol.

BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORD COUNT: 387

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in hospital after his patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 km outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

CALGARY PARAMEDIC

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement offering condolences to Starker's family and friends.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," Harper said.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief said.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of Taliban rule in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lieut. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

SURGE IN VIOLENCE

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While it's too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual due to the fact militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks.

It's been almost 20 months since a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up–close confrontation with insurgents.

Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed in an insurgent attack Oct. 16, 2006, during a volley of rocket–propelled grenades and gunfire. They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area of Pashmul.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Medic killed in ambush AFGHANISTAN: Cpl. Michael Starker becomes the 83rd Canadian soldier to die since the fall of the Taliban in 2001

SOURCETAG 0805070678
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B1
ILLUSTRATION: photo Cpl. Michael Starker was killed yesterday during a patrol in the Pashmul region of the Zharey district of Afghanistan.
BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORD COUNT: 501

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief said.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgarians here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Starker was married, but had no children. He is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of soldiers.

Medic killed in ambush AFGHANISTAN: Cpl. Michael Starker becomes the 83rd Canadian soldier to die since

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," Laroche said of yesterday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders. Lt. Bill Turner, reservist and postal worker from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack at a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks. Those so-called standoff weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians. There have been ambushes on foot patrols, but rarely deaths.

It's been almost 20 months since the last time a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up-close confrontation with insurgents, according to records on the National Defence website.

Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed in an insurgent attack Oct. 16, 2006. They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area of Pashmul.

The arid swath of farming country west of Kandahar has been a hotly contested region since Canadian troops deployed in Kandahar more than two years ago. Commanders have declared the area pacified, only to have insurgents sneak back to plant bombs or take potshots at soldiers.

The fact the soldiers could walk through the area and interact with the locals was a hopeful sign and Canadian troops won't be deterred, said LaRoche. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

'Lost a fine soldier' Corporal killed in ambush

SOURCETAG 0805070762

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Master Cpl. Laurie–Ann White, DND Cpl. Michael Starker, of 15 Field Ambulance based in Edmonton, was killed yesterday after being ambushed by Taliban during a patrol in the Pashmul region, 25 km from Kandahar, Afghanistan. 2. photo of GUY LAROCHE Commander

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 400

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment based in Edmonton, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late yesterday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

"He certainly served his duty helping Calgaryans here and I think he went to help there. And it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that," Sampson said.

Starker was married but had no children. He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

A member of Starker's family in Calgary said yesterday that the soldier's father didn't want to speak publicly, preferring all information on his son's death to come from the military.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and mailman from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

It's been almost 20 months since the last time a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up-close confrontation with insurgents, according to records on the National Defence website.

Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson, of Charles Company 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, were killed in an insurgent attack on Oct. 16, 2006, during a volley of rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement yesterday offering condolences to Starker's family and friends.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," Harper said. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Medic's death brings home reality of war

SOURCETAG 0805070572
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: ROY CLANCY
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 228

Cpl. Michael Starker died as he lived, caring for his fellow man.

Starker, 36, a City of Calgary paramedic serving as a medic in Afghanistan, was killed yesterday while on a goodwill patrol.

A reservist with the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, Starker was on his second tour in Afghanistan.

The aim of his patrol was to interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community.

His Civil–Military Co–operation Team came under fire in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

"His dedication will not be forgotten."

EMS Chief Tom Sampson was equally lavish in his praise for Starker, who had worked as a Calgary paramedic since 2005.

"He never hesitated to help people," Sampson said.

"Indeed he was doing just that in Afghanistan."

The war has taken its toll on the select specialists who conduct these patrols designed to earn the confidence of local Afghans.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist from Edmonton, was killed in April 2006. A month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting.

That Starker didn't flinch from danger was also apparently an intrinsic part of his character.

"He was one of those individuals who brought out the best in everyone," said Sampson. "One of those guys who would stand up when you need someone to stand up."

While Starker's wife and family grieve their loss, his death brings home the reality of the sacrifice being made by our troops in Afghanistan.

Sadly, the price for freedom runs high.

Starker is the fourth Calgarian and the 83rd Canadian to die there since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," said Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"We take comfort in the fact that, along with our allies, we are making a difference in the daily lives of the Afghan people."

Starker spent his life trying to "make a difference."

For his sake, and for the sake of others who've died, Canadians must stand steadily behind our troops as they continue this dangerous and vital mission.

Ambush kills medic

SOURCETAG 0805070550

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 3

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Mike Drew, Sun Media Calgary paramedic Michael Starker in a photo displayed in the main hallway at EMS headquarters in the city's northeast. Starker was killed in Afghanistan yesterday.

BYLINE: BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 204

Bringing aid to Afghan villagers has cost a Calgary paramedic his life in that war-torn country.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a full-time paramedic serving with the Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance Regiment, was killed yesterday by small-arms fire when his patrol was ambushed by Taliban guerillas in the Zhari district, about 25 km west of Kandahar.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche.

A second soldier was wounded and is in stable condition.

Starker became a Calgary paramedic in 2005, quickly earning the respect of his colleagues, said a visibly saddened EMS Chief Tom Sampson.

"They said he was the best they'd worked with," he said.

"There's no doubt this is a significant loss to EMS, the city of Calgary and the entire community ... our thoughts and our prayers are with his family and his friends."

Reservist Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan

He is the fourth Calgarian to be killed in action there.

Starker, who was married with no children, was on his second tour in Afghanistan.

Small-arms fire deaths among Canadians have been rare in Afghanistan, with most casualties caused by roadside bombs.

In a statement, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Starker's service and that of his wounded colleague set an example of determination to help the oppressed.

"I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Cpl. Michael Starker," said Harper.

"They are working to bring security and democracy to the people of Afghanistan, while also protecting and promoting Canadian values."

Tim Goddard, whose daughter, Nichola, was killed in Afghanistan nearly two years ago, said despite the continuing bloodshed there, he's now more optimistic.

"Maybe the extra U.S. marines will help with a sort of surge there," he said, adding Afghans are now more willing to fight government corruption. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Fundraiser for soldiers' families gains urgency

SOURCETAG 0805070549
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 3
BYLINE: BILL KAUFMANN, CALGARY SUN
WORD COUNT: 173

The death of another Calgary soldier in Afghanistan has made an upcoming fund-raiser for military families even more poignant, says the father of another slain city trooper.

Michael Hornburg, whose son Nathan was killed in Afghanistan last September, said the death of Cpl. Michael Starker brought back the emotions of that fateful.

"I can't interpret what Michael's family is going through. I just know in my own case it's utter disbelief and shock and certainly an occasion when any family would require a great deal of privacy and respect for the sacrifice their loved one has made for the whole world community," said Hornburg.

The Loop for the Troops Father's Day walk June 15 will raise funds to support military families.

"What happened today just emphasizes the need to help support soldiers who have issues to deal with," said Hornburg, who's organizing the event.

"I'm sure Michael's brothers and sisters-in-arms are going to be shocked and upset for the rest of their lives."

Recent news reports detailing the corruption of the Afghan government Canadian troops are being wounded and killed to support hasn't shaken Hornburg's belief in the mission.

If anything, that government's shortcomings make the Canadian soldiers' presence there even more vital, he said. **KEYWORDS=ALBERTA**

Calgary's fallen

SOURCETAG 0805070548
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 3
ILLUSTRATION: 4 photos
WORD COUNT: 50

May 17, 2006: Capt. Nichola Goddard, 26, dies after a long battle near Kandahar with Taliban insurgents.

Aug. 3, 2006: Pte. Kevin Dallaire, 22, of the PPCLI, is killed west of Kandahar by a rocket-propelled grenade.

Sept. 24, 2007: Cpl. Nathan Hornburg is killed by an anti-tank round during a 12-hour battle.

May 6, 2008: Cpl. Michael Starker is killed in an ambush while on foot patrol Afghanistan's Zhari district.
KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Tears and tributes for heroic soldier

SOURCETAG 0805070547

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 2

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Mike Drew, Sun Media An emotional EMS Chief Tom Sampson remembers slain soldier Michael Starker as a great man who helped others.

BYLINE: MICHAEL PLATT

WORD COUNT: 419

Two summers ago, it was Cpl. Michael Starker leaving a message of condolence, writing an online tribute to a friend, Sgt. Vaughn Ingram, who died in an Afghanistan grenade attack.

"Vaughn you will be missed ... thank you for the great memories in the time we served together...'Jambo'....Rest in Peace brother," wrote Starker.

Yesterday, Starker became the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, killed by a Taliban bullet while on a mission of peace in a dangerous area west of Kandahar.

It isn't clear if the 36-year-old Calgary paramedic ever imagined friends, family and strangers would someday be offering tributes to him, as a soldier who paid for his devotion to duty with his life.

His Facebook site became a place of sombre messages, as word of his death spread.

Those who knew the volunteer military medic say it isn't an end they would have expected for Starker, who seemed almost impervious to harm.

"We thought he was bulletproof -- no one ever thought this could happen to him at all," said Cpl. Alasdair Robertson-More, who served with Starker both as a City of Calgary paramedic and as a medic with 15th Field Ambulance.

Robertson-More appeared in yesterday's Sun, speaking about a two-month trip he's slated to leave on today, serving aboard a U.S. Navy hospital ship in the Pacific Ocean.

The question of whether to go, or stay and attend his friend's funeral has Robertson-More torn -- "I'm trying to decide that now. I'll talk to Mike's wife, and then I'll see."

In the meantime, like anyone else who knew Starker, Robertson-More is left with memories of a soldier and paramedic who boosted the morale of everyone around him.

Without hesitation, Robertson-More places Starker on a pedestal of praise, saying anyone who knew him would do the same.

"He was an amazing guy; a really good guy," said Robertson-More.

"He was an incredibly solid person, who would play any role needed, as they came up -- he was a

cheerleader to everyone around him."

Initial reports out of Afghanistan say Starker, who'd served with Calgary EMS since 2005, had carried his career of caring on overseas.

He was apparently attacked while on a "goodwill" mission, in which soldiers go into troubled areas to speak with locals and elders, acting as a liaison between civilians and the military.

Starker was pronounced dead in a military hospital.

Robertson–More said he's not surprised Starker would be patrolling in a dangerous area.

"He wasn't a guy who would shy away from anything," he said.

In Calgary, flags above the Emergency Medical Services building flew at half–staff — a symbol of sorrow.

Inside, a larger–than–life photograph of Starker and fellow paramedic/soldier Travis Lanoway, dressed in combat fatigues, stands in a hallway of honour — a symbol of pride.

EMS Chief Tom Sampson struggled with tears as he paid tribute to Starker, who'd worked for the service since 2005.

"We've already had a chance to talk to some of his very good friends on the job, and they are sensing a huge loss right now," said Sampson.

"His friends describe him as being a man with a heart of gold, a very great man.

"He was one of those individuals who brought out the best in everyone, one of those guys who would stand up when you need someone to stand up.

"And he never hesitated to help people — indeed he was doing just that in Afghanistan."

Yesterday, Starker's family in Calgary left quotes and questions to the military, preferring to stay silent as the news sank in.

But one close relation, who asked not to be named, says it was Starker's dream to be a medic.

"It's what Michael wanted," she said. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

FRONTPAGE City Medic Slain by Taliban Cpl. Michael Starker shot dead in ambush while on foot patrol

SOURCETAG 0805070544
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 1
ILLUSTRATION: photo
WORD COUNT: 0

Quote/unquote

IDNUMBER 200805070053
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A12
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 50

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche of Task Force Afghanistan, on the death of a soldier in an ambush Tuesday. Cpl. Michael Starker was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

Canadian soldier dies in ambush; Taliban attack kills medic on foot patrol

IDNUMBER 200805070024
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters, DND / Cpl. Michael Starker was killed when his unit came under enemy fire while on patrol in the Panjwayi district of southern Afghanistan. ;
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 244

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district yesterday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a.m. Starker, of Calgary, was taken to the Kandahar Airfield, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan. "The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Once a Taliban–held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla–style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Laroche said yesterday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Laroche said.

Alberta soldier killed in ambush; Calgary medic and reservist came under attack while out on foot patrol; comrade also injured

IDNUMBER 200805070002

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Department of National Defence / Cpl. Michael Starker ; Photo: Calgary Herald, Canwest News Service / Cpl. Michael Starker of Calgary, a reservist and medic, was ambushed and killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday. This photograph, taken shortly before his deployment, hangs in Calgary's EMS headquarters. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; DEATHS

DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Ryan Cormier

SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal; with files from the Calgary Herald

NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Michael Starker.

WORD COUNT: 641

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – An Albertan soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district Tuesday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance in Calgary, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a.m. Starker was taken to the Kandahar Airfield, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan. "The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Flags outside Calgary's Emergency Medical Service headquarters were lowered to half–mast Tuesday and staff added a strip of black underneath their yellow ribbon pins in memory of Starker, a former city paramedic.

Alberta soldier killed in ambush; Calgary medic and reservist came under attack while out on foot patrol; comrade also injured

Starker joined Calgary EMS in June 2005 and worked as an emergency medical technician before graduating as a paramedic in 2007.

He had already dedicated years of his life to the Canadian military when volunteers were sought to serve in the Afghan mission.

Despite having a wife and a burgeoning career, the medic felt the need to serve one more time.

"He ... decided he would go back in the reserves and go for one more tour," said Bruce Robb, president of CUPE local 3421, which represents Calgary's paramedics.

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Once Taliban-held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla-style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Laroche said Tuesday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region. In fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Laroche said. "We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us everyday. We see more farmers. Our presence is necessary, I would say essential, in those districts."

The aim of civilian-military co-operation groups, which operate across the Panjwai and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles with a squad of force protection. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach locals on foot.

Members of the teams have said the process is a good way to meet local Afghans in a low-stress environment, equating their role with police walking a community beat back in Canada.

"This was something we could not do last year at the same time," Laroche said. "Now we can do that, not only in the Pashmul area, but throughout Zhari and Panjwai."

Laroche said there would be a review of the incident to determine if any changes are needed in how the teams operate, but added the goal is to increase the number of patrols in the region.

Last week, a member of one of the co-operation teams said: "We're not there to fight. We're prepared to fight if things go wrong, but we're mainly there to communicate."

A quick-reaction squad of the Afghan National Security Force was on the scene soon after the attack, Laroche said.

A soldier killed by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians. Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who died in a mortar attack on Sept. 24, 2007, was the last combat casualty that did not involve a roadside bomb.

The last Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan was Shilo, Man.-based Pte. Terry John Street, 24, who was killed by a roadside bomb April 4.

Alberta soldier killed in ambush; Calgary medic and reservist came under attack while out on foot patrol; con

rcormier@thejournal.canwest.com

Alberta soldier killed in ambush; Calgary medic and reservist came under attack while out on foot patrol; con

5 Minute Herald; Breaking news at calgaryherald.com

IDNUMBER 200805070069

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: B12

Colour Photo: Michael Starker; Colour Photo: Myanmar's death toll hits 22,500, foreign aid arrives ; Colour Photo: Hu Jintao ; Colour Photo: Max Rossi, Reuters / Picture of the Day: The 33 new recruits of the Vatican's elite Swiss Guard march at the end of their

ILLUSTRATION: swearing in ceremony at St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Wednesday. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Swiss Guard. ; Colour Photo: Bill Boyd ; Colour Photo: Stephen Ames ; Colour Photo: Ken Hitchcock ; Colour Photo: Easy recipes let kids impress mom ; Photo: (See hard copy for description). ;

KEYWORDS: 0

BYLINE: Compiled by Heather Ryan

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 1074

Top Stories

Calgary Soldier Killed in Afghan Ambush

A Canadian soldier was killed and another was wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in Afghanistan on Tuesday. Calgary Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, a reservist and medic, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred.

Page A1

Analyst Sees Oil Rising to \$200 Per Barrel

Oil could shoot to \$200 within the next two years as part of a "super-spike," investment bank Goldman Sachs said Tuesday, as crude cruised to a record price north of \$122 US per barrel and at least one Calgary station briefly advertised regular gasoline at a record \$1.29 per litre.

Page A1

Family Dog Keeps Lost Child Safe

All through the night, as searchers in planes and on the ground combed the treacherous bush 250 kilometres southwest of Ottawa for missing two-and-a-half-year-old Destiny King, Shilo the border collie stayed close, keeping the tot warm and safe.

Page A2

News Sections -- A and B

City & Region

Building Code Changes Aimed at Dousing Fire Worry

Proposed changes to the building code aimed at blunting what Calgary's fire chief calls a potentially "national problem" -- the quick spread of a fire from one home to another -- will soon go to the Tory caucus, Municipal Affairs Minister Ray Danyluk said Tuesday.

Page B1

Truck Crashes Into Home

A Calgary woman awoke to a crash and the smell of smoke early Tuesday after a truck drove into her southwest home. "I was sleeping and heard this bang and didn't know what it was. All you could smell was . . . rubber," Tracy Turner said.

Page B3

Canada

Burial Site Found on Plains of Abraham

Construction workers digging to install a public restroom on the historic Plains of Abraham made a stunning discovery: a burial site with two human skeletons. It's the first time a burial site has been found on the Plains where the British troops fought the French in 1759.

Page A13

World

Myanmar's Death Toll Hits 22,500, Foreign Aid Arrives

Myanmar's military government raised its death toll from Cyclone Nargis on Tuesday to nearly 22,500 with another 41,000 missing, nearly all of them from a massive storm surge that swept into the Irrawaddy delta. The United Nations' World Food Program began doling out emergency rice in Yangon and the first batch of more than \$10 million worth of foreign aid arrived from Thailand on Tuesday.

Page A3

China's President in Japan for Rare Visit

President Hu Jintao on Tuesday started the first visit by a Chinese leader to Japan in 10 years as the Asian powers eased decades of tension, but thousands took to the streets to protest over Tibet.

Page A17

Traffic

- Road closure: On the emergency access road for the Hamptons subdivision off of Sarcee Trail north of Citadel Boulevard N.W. the road is closed until Friday at about 3 p.m.
- Road closure: On 90 Avenue at 44 Street S.E. the road is closed until Thursday at about 6 p.m.
- Lane closure: On westbound Sun Valley Boulevard west of Midpark Boulevard S.E. the right lane is closed

starting 9 a.m. May 8 until May 13.

– Lane closure: On westbound Southland Drive between Macleod Trail and Bonaventure Drive S.E. the right lane is closed until June 6.

Commuter Weather

6 A.M. Off to Work: Mainly cloudy.

Temperature: 5 C

12 Noon Lunch: Thunderstorms.

Temperature: 11 C

5 P.M. Heading Home: Rain.

Temperature: 11 C

Overnight: Rain. Low: 3 C

Thursday: RAIN. High: 7 C Low: –2 C

Tuesday: High: 11.2 C Low: 5.8 C

Online Features

CalgaryHerald.com

News: Norman Slepko, Jonathan Kaplan and Nancy Lewitt, who left Canada for Israel, have no regrets.

News: Department of National Defence tells contractors to keep mum on equipment bids.

Quote of the Day

"More deaths were caused by the tidal wave than the storm itself. . . . They did not have anywhere to flee"

Minister for Relief and Resettlement Maung Maung Swe on Cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar resulting in nearly 22,500 deaths.

See story, Page A3.

Calgary Business -- D1

Markets

– TSX Composite 139.96 14414.30

– Dow Jones 51.29 13020.83

– Nasdaq 19.19 2,483.31

–s TSX Venture 5.38 2,499.14

Alberta, Saskatchewan Compete for Nuclear Plant

Alberta and Saskatchewan are competing to house Western Canada's first commercial nuclear power plant, Saskatchewan's Natural Resources Minister Bill Boyd confirmed on Tuesday. The energy point man for the recently elected Saskatchewan Party said his government has held "early" talks with Bruce Power LP.

Page D1

Surging Crude Prices Fuel Shift to Pipelines

Surging crude prices are fuelling a big shift to oil pipelines, the National Energy Board said Tuesday in its 2007 annual report. Last year the national regulator considered applications for nearly one million barrels per day of new oil pipeline capacity, the group said in its annual presentation to Parliament.

Page D4

Editorial — A18

Make Recyclables Pay

An even bigger stench than national embarrassment has emerged from Calgary's position as the only major Canadian city without an effective waste management strategy: a flawed funding model.

Page A18

Letter of the day

Marianni Jaromi is sadly misinformed about how airlines operate. Taxes and fees do not go to Air Canada or WestJet.

Vern Guenther, Page A19

Sports — C1

Stephen Ames Shoots for Sawgrass Sequel

It's great being back here at Sawgrass, writes Stephen Ames. So many wonderful memories. I guess the only sad part is that my brother Robert isn't on the bag anymore. It meant so much to both of us two years ago, when we were here together and were able to share in the success of victory.

Page C1

Hitchcock in Hot Seat Leading Talented Squad

If this all–world collection of hockey talent doesn't improve every game and wind up winning the first–ever world hockey championship on Canadian soil, home will be where the heartburn is for head coach Ken Hitchcock.

Page C1

Real Life -- E7

Easy Recipes Let Kids Impress Mom

In many households, Mother's Day starts early, with dads and kids whipping up a nice breakfast for their queen—for a day. That's fine, but sometimes it's nice for the whole family to sleep in and keep breakfast simple, and then, later on, impress Mom with a wonderful lunch.

Page E7

Honing Cooking Skills

Sous-chefs are the next generation of chefs, the up-and-coming kitchen stars -- "comers," as some refer to them. Page E8

Sudoku

World's Hottest Puzzle Craze

How to Play:

Complete this grid by placing the digits 1 to 9 exactly once, and only once, in each horizontal row and in each column. Also, each digit should only appear once in every 3x3 shaded or white mini-grid in the puzzle. Sudoku appears on the 5 Minute Herald page Monday to Friday and on the Saturday and Sunday puzzle pages.

Entertainment -- E1

Phaneuf Latest Hockey Star to Grace the Tabs

Hockey players are hot. Just check out Alberta native and Calgary Flames star defenceman Dion Phaneuf who became the latest hockey player to grace the pages of tabloids around the world. He was photographed with bikini-clad Calgary-born actress Elisha Cuthbert, star of TV thriller 24, by paparazzi frolicking in the Hawaii surf.

Page E1

Tonight's TV Picks:

- CSI: NY: 8 p.m. on CTV (Ch. 3).

It's An Odd World

Austrian Rugby Team's Strip Show on Video

The Austrian national rugby team tried to get over their 48-0 defeat by Lithuania by staging a mass striptease in the capital Vilnius late Saturday, only to find they had been caught on video and put on the Internet. The video on www.virb.com/justafa/blog/701053 and then taken up by the Lithuanian news portal Delfi, showed a group of 20 men singing and stripping off their clothes on a street, while people in a nearby bar clapped and cheered.

When true cost of war hits home

IDNUMBER 200805070018
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
COLUMN: Valerie Fortney
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Capt. Nichola Goddard; Photo: Pte. Kevin Dallaire ; Photo: Cpl. Nathan Hornburg ; Photo: Cpl. Michael Starker ;
KEYWORDS: CANADIANS
BYLINE: Valerie Fortney
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 793

We cover the breaking stories of the day, many of them tales of tragedy and unimaginable loss.

Such daily inundation can, from time to time, make us in the news media feel disconnected from life's twists of fate. But it's an illusion we harbour at our own peril.

On Tuesday morning, my colleagues and friends at local television station Global are reminded, in the cruellest way, of this inescapable fact. In the morning, not long after everyone has poured their first cup of coffee at this station that is part of our parent company, Canwest Global Communications, a group of military personnel arrive on their doorstep.

Within minutes, it's clear what they are here for: to break the horrible news to employee Nicole Starker that her handsome husband Michael is the fourth Calgarian, the 83rd Canadian soldier, to be killed in Afghanistan.

In a few short minutes, the old adage of six degrees of separation shrinks to zero for the people who come here every day to work at jobs ranging from ad sales to accounting to on-air reporting.

Rather than breaking the news, on this day they are the news.

"We're all just so upset -- when they told us it was just unbelievable," says one teary colleague who asks not to be named. "Oh my God, it actually happened."

Nicole, who works as a publicist for E! Network National, which is under the Canwest Global umbrella, never openly discussed the possibility with her colleagues that her husband Michael, a Calgary paramedic on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, might never come home.

"Everybody knew Mike and none of us wanted to open that door unless we had to," says the colleague, describing the prevailing mood as one of total shock.

Now, though, that door has swung wide open. And for those who work each day with Nicole, the devastation is being felt full-on as the flags outside the station are lowered and crisis counsellors are made available to fellow employees.

"It's been a tough day, and the emotions are just getting tougher," Ron Bell, the station's general manager, tells me in the afternoon. "But Nicole has a very deep and strong character, that I know will help her through this."

Brad Parry, vice-president of marketing for E! Network National and Nicole's supervisor, considers himself also a friend to both Nicole and Michael. It's clear he's having a tough time keeping it together as he spends his day helping to phone the couple's friends and colleagues across North America, to relay the horrible news.

"Nicole's one of the smartest people I know, she's a great teammate and she is so well liked by everyone here," he says.

When I ask him about Michael, he can barely speak through the sadness.

"Mike was a quiet, reserved person," says Parry of the 36-year-old reservist.

"But he was the type of guy who very much wanted to help people."

In other pockets of the city, whole communities reel from the loss of what is by all accounts a soldier of great principle, a man who devoted his life to caring for others, who ultimately gave his life in this quest.

"He had a heart of gold," says Tom Sampson, Calgary's EMS chief, through tears at an afternoon press conference. "He never hesitated to help people."

Sally Goddard got the news on her e-mail alert just after lunch.

"You just know how difficult the journey is, and what Nicole and her family will have to face in the coming days," says Sally, whose daughter Nichola Goddard was killed in Afghanistan on May 17, 2006, the first Canadian woman to die in combat.

"It's good to know she and her family are surrounded by people who can help her handle the onslaught she's about to face."

For his part, Tim Goddard is so overtaken by emotion to hear of another Canadian soldier's death that he has trouble articulating his thoughts.

"It must be bloody horrible," he says as he chokes back tears. "Our thoughts and prayers are with them today."

Such is the effect, on a wide variety of communities throughout our city, of the death of a great man, one who died trying to help bring stability to a country on the other side of the planet. In the coming days, no doubt, the reverberations will be felt in even more pockets of our city, as friends, former colleagues and even those who never knew him will feel the loss of Cpl. Michael Starker.

It can happen to us, it can happen here. And it can happen when least expected, while out on a community outreach mission, mere weeks before coming home.

vfortney@theherald.canwest.com

— — —

Calgary Soldiers Killed in Afghanistan

– May 17, 2006

Capt. Nichola Goddard, 26, a combat engineer with the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and Canada's first female combat death, was killed during a battle against Taliban forces in the Panjwaii region, 24 kilometres west of Kandahar.

– Aug. 3, 2006

Pte. Kevin Dallaire, 22 was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade in the village of Pashmul along with two other soldiers from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Earlier in the day, another Canadian soldier died when a roadside bomb ripped apart his light armoured vehicle.

– Sept. 25, 2007

Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, of the Kings Own Calgary Regiment, was killed by mortar fire while trying to repair the track of a Leopard tank during an operation in the Panjwaii district.

– May 6, 2008

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and a medic with the Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance, was killed during a foot patrol in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district. Another soldier was wounded in the ambush.

Healers turned soldiers

IDNUMBER 200805070017
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: AMBULANCE SERVICES; EMERGENCY SERVICES; PARAMEDICS
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal; with files from the Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 157

Cpl. Michael Starker was serving with the Calgary detachment of Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance when he died in Afghanistan.

Civilians often come to 15 Field Ambulance with some background in the medical field -- in their real lives, they can be paramedics, doctors or nurses. When they go overseas, they are put to work in medicine.

Born at the start of the Second World War, the unit was first named 4 Casualty Clearing Station in 1939. Soldiers assigned to that unit worked in England treating patients from Dieppe, then moved on to Sicily and other parts of Italy in 1943.

In the '70s, the unit became an independent company and was renamed 15 Field Ambulance. A reserve medical unit, it is headquartered in Edmonton and has a detachment in Calgary.

The unit's commanding officer, Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, expressed condolences on Tuesday. "The family is our first and only focus at the moment and they will be looked after," said Scott in a statement.

Reservists are not assigned to serve in Afghanistan. They volunteer.

EMS staff in shock over loss; Starker 'never hesitated to help people'

IDNUMBER 200805070016

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / EMS Chief Tom Sampson talks to reporters about the death of Calgary paramedic and Forces reservist Cpl. Michael Starker. "It touches every Calgarian because he was there when you dialed 911," said Sampson. "And he was there for the people in Afghanistan." ; Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / Flags fly at half-mast Tuesday outside Calgary EMS headquarters ;

KEYWORDS: PARAMEDICS; AMBULANCE SERVICES; EMERGENCY SERVICES

BYLINE: Gwendolyn Richards

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 281

Calgary EMS staff have added a strip of black ribbon underneath the yellow ribbon pins they wear to support soldiers overseas Tuesday — a move to honour a fellow paramedic killed in action in Afghanistan.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a Calgary paramedic and member of the 15 Field Ambulance unit, died after he was shot during an ambush while on foot patrol in an attack that injured a fellow soldier.

Flags outside Calgary EMS headquarters were lowered to half-mast as staff reeled from the news they had lost one of their own.

"He never hesitated to help people and, indeed, he was doing just that in Afghanistan," Chief Tom Sampson said at an emotional news conference.

"I think he went to help there. Such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that."

Unlike the Calgary Police Service and the city's fire department, Calgary EMS had not seen a death in the line of duty until Starker.

"It's not a membership we wanted to join," EMS chaplain John Hein said.

Those who worked closely with Starker, 36, weren't on shift on Tuesday as news filtered back to Calgary from overseas. His platoon is due back at work today.

"Which, I'm sure, will be a challenging day for them," CUPE Local 3421 president Bruce Robb said.

Starker joined Calgary EMS in June 2005 and worked as an emergency medical technician before graduating as a paramedic in 2007.

He had also served with the Canadian Armed Forces a decade ago, Sampson said.

He left for Afghanistan in December for one last tour.

An photo of him and fellow Calgary paramedic Travis Lanoway, captured days before they both were sent overseas, hangs in the hallway of EMS headquarters.

On Tuesday, a flower and flag had been set up near the image of the two men smiling, standing next to an ambulance.

Sampson said he heard, indirectly, that Lanoway is interested in being involved in bringing Starker back to Calgary.

The loss is significant not only to EMS, but the city and the entire community, Sampson said.

"It touches every Calgarian because he was there when you dialed 911," Sampson said, breaking down.

"And he was there for the people in Afghanistan."

Chaplain Hein anticipates Starker's fellow medics will be grieving for the compassionate man.

Sampson added, "When people leave us before their time, and it is in our opinion, the sun went down while it's still day."

grichards@theherald.canwest.com

IDNUMBER 200805070007
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Elisha Cuthbert;
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 100

Breaking News

Tragic Loss: Read the latest on Cpl. Michael Starker, the Calgary EMS technician killed in Afghanistan.

– Look for the link to add your condolences.

Celebrate Spring

Galleries: The snow may be gone for the season. Look in Editor's Picks for a link to send in your photos.

Celebrities

– See video of Elisha Cuthbert frolicking with Dion Phaneuf.

– Check out our photo gallery of hot women who have dated hockey stars.

News Alerts

Get the Latest: Sign up online to receive e-mails on major breaking news from the Herald.

Innovation

Solar Power: The University of Calgary's solar car put on a show at Race City on Tuesday. Check online for a photo gallery of the car.

World Hockey

Hot Shots: Celebrate Canada's big win over the U.S., by reviewing our photo gallery. And watch the latest updates.

Online Extras

Unique Content That Goes Beyond the Headlines

News: Department of National Defence tells contractors to keep mum on equipment bids.

News: Canadians who made Israel their home 30 years ago have no regrets.

calgaryherald.com

'He just thought it was his duty to serve'; Calgary medic killed in Taliban ambush was on second tour

IDNUMBER 200805070001

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2008.05.07

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / This photo of Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, taken before his deployment to Afghanistan, hangs in Calgary's EMS headquarters. ; Photo: Reuters / Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche breaks news of the death at Kandahar on Tuesday. ;

BYLINE: Gwendolyn Richards, Sarah McGinnis and Stephane Massinon

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 716

Cpl. Michael Starker had already dedicated years of his life to the Canadian military when volunteers were sought to serve in the dangerous Afghan mission.

Despite having a wife and a career as a Calgary paramedic, the local medic felt the need to serve one more time.

What was anticipated to be his last tour in Afghanistan proved deadly for the Calgary reservist, who was killed Tuesday during a Taliban ambush that also injured another Canadian soldier.

"He had some previous military experience and decided he would go back in the reserves and go for one more tour," said Bruce Robb, president of CUPE Local 3421, which represents Calgary's paramedics.

The 36-year-old member of 15 Field Ambulance was on foot patrol when the group was attacked in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district.

Starker is the fourth Calgarian, and 83rd Canadian soldier, to die during the Afghanistan mission.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Calgary-born Starker leaves behind his wife, Nicole.

The couple had been together for more than a decade. They had no children.

Starker's family did not wish to speak publicly Tuesday, so soon after receiving the tragic news.

"We don't want to make any comments right now. We're grieving and we just want to deal with our grief right now," said a cousin.

His friends amongst the Calgary EMS crews were sensing the loss Tuesday as word trickled back from Afghanistan.

He was a man with a heart of gold, a man who brought out the best in everyone, EMS Chief Tom Sampson said during a news conference. "He was one of those guys who would stand up when you needed someone to stand up.

"He never hesitated to help people and, indeed, he was doing just that in Afghanistan."

Starker had already done a practicum with Calgary EMS before joining as an emergency medical technician in June 2005, eventually becoming a paramedic in 2007.

He ensured his patients were taken care of and advocated for them at the hospitals, said EMS chaplain John Hein.

Amongst medics, the mood has gone from disbelief to utter grief. Starker was always laughing, always smiling and joking with his friends in the ambulance bay, said fellow paramedic Sean Steeden. He had a passion for the outdoors, especially mountain biking.

But it was his life's work to help others — be they Calgarians calling 911 or Afghans in the wartorn country who have nowhere to turn.

"He just thought it was his duty to serve," Steeden said softly, shaken by the loss. "He just wanted to make things better."

The driving need to improve the lives of others remained a constant throughout Starker's life. As a student in SAIT Polytechnic's paramedic program, Starker was a natural leader, said Steven Pilkington, the program's former academic co-ordinator.

Starker came to the Paramedic Outreach Program already enrolled in the military, and he graduated in 2005 with high marks.

"Because of his military background, he had the obvious military leadership abilities. He worked extremely hard; he set the bar high. He made sure the rest of his classmates achieved the same level of expertise that he did," Pilkington said.

Pilkington remembered how one day Starker and two other outreach program students were at the school's testing centre when a SAIT student had a seizure.

"(Starker) recognized that it was a medical emergency and he immediately, with the assistance of the other two students, provided emergency care," Pilkington recalled.

The fact he stayed calm and provided urgent medical care to a student in need showed what type of person Starker was, Pilkington said.

Using his medical skills to serve his country was also at Starker's core.

He had been with the Edmonton-based unit for the past five years and "his dedication was second to none," 15 Field Ambulance commanding officer Lt.-Col. Roger Scott said in a statement.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil-military co-operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Laroche in Afghanistan.

'He just thought it was his duty to serve'; Calgary medic killed in Taliban ambush was on second ~~107~~

Politicians across Canada offering their condolences to the soldier's family and friends.

"Our Canadian Forces are making immense sacrifices," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in an official statement. "Cpl. Starker made the ultimate sacrifice, and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians."

Premier Ed Stelmach's thoughts also went out to the family Starker leaves behind.

"The soldier is a Calgarian and this is again part of the sacrifice of human life in Afghanistan," Stelmach said at a news conference Wednesday in Calgary. "We support them . . . it's a difficult task but, again, (it's a) human sacrifice and I hope we don't forget that."

The killing of a soldier by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians.

Cpl. Nathan Hornburg of Calgary died in a mortar attack on Sept. 24, 2007 — the last combat casualty that did not involve a roadside bomb.

The mission has also claimed the lives of Calgarians Capt. Nichola Goddard, 26, and Pte. Kevin Dallaire, 22.

with files from Canwest News Service and Michelle Lang, Calgary Herald

smcginnis@theherald.canwest.com

Online Features

CalgaryHerald.com

Video of Afghanistan press conference on Cpl. Starker

US soldier killed at CFB Wainwright

Send Your Condolences

CalgaryHerald.com

Share your thoughts for Cpl. Michael Starker in our online book of condolence

THE AFGHAN MISSION: COMBAT DEATH Canadian soldier killed by enemy fire 'wanted to help others'

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 081280219

DATE: 2008.05.07

PAGE: A16 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: UNNATI GANDHI

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 514

WORD COUNT: 457

UNNATI GANDHI With a report from Dawn Walton in Calgary A Canadian soldier on foot patrol in Kandahar's troubled western district was killed yesterday after Taliban insurgents opened fire on the troops, marking the first combat death for the Canadian Forces in nearly eight months. A second soldier was injured during the attack.

Corporal Michael Starker, with the Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance Regiment, was ambushed while soldiers were trying "to show their presence [and] interact with the local population" in the Pashmul region, a cluster of villages about 15 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city, Brigadier-General Guy Laroche said in Afghanistan yesterday.

Shots were fired from the road about 11:45 a.m., and there weren't any crowds nearby, he said.

The troops were airlifted to Kandahar Air Field, where the injured soldier, whose name was not released yesterday, was able to call his family and tell them of his injuries himself.

Cpl. Starker, 36, a paramedic and reservist from Calgary, was pronounced dead at hospital.

"We lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.-Gen. Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten." Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement yesterday offering condolences to Cpl. Starker's family and friends.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," Mr. Harper said.

The rare, up-close confrontation happened as NATO forces throughout the region brace for the anticipated surge in violence that usually comes with the end of the poppy harvest.

Only two of the 27 Canadian casualties in Afghanistan since June of 2007 have been actual combat deaths. The vast majority have been the result of improvised explosive devices, or roadside bombs.

In fact, it has been nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an ambush by insurgents, according to Department of National Defence records.

"If we have to readjust the way we are doing things, yes we will do that," Brig.-Gen. Laroche said. "But the intent is not to reduce our patrols, the intent is to increase our presence in the region.

We have seen a lot of progress since we [have been] there. . . .

We have seen a lot of people coming back to the region." Back in his hometown of Calgary, Cpl. Starker was remembered as a man who dedicated his life to saving others.

"He was one of those people who wanted to help others," Calgary Emergency Medical Services Chief Tom Sampson said of Cpl. Starker, who had been a paramedic with the city since June of 2005. ". .

. I think he went to help there and it's such a shame that he should die while trying to help like that." He became involved with the military a decade ago, and was deployed to Afghanistan in December.

His family asked for privacy as they mourned, but friends described him as a strong, caring individual with a "heart of gold" as well as the "best partner they ever worked with."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: war deaths; strife; defence

PERSONAL NAME: Michael Starker

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

Medic killed in ambush; Corporal Michael Starker is Canada's 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200805070021
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A6
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / Corporal Michael Starker was killed yesterday in Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: Kandahar, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 301

Taliban militants chose to stand and fight yesterday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Corporal Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late yesterday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

He became the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brigadier–General Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission. Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between the army, which sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages, and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of (yesterday's) patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," Laroche said.

The attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While it's too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, the ambush was unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars, for their attacks. Those weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians.

See a slide show tribute to Canada's fallen soldiers.

Medic killed in ambush; 83rd Canadian to die in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200805070085
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: DND / KIA: Cpl. Michael Starker was killed Tuesday when he came under enemy fire during a patrol in the Pashmul region of Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Michael Starker.
WORD COUNT: 259

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A Canadian soldier was killed and another was wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district.

The Calgary soldier was taken to the Kandahar Airfield after the attack that took place around 11:45 a.m. local time, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but the soldier was in stable condition Tuesday and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker, who was with 15 Field Ambulance, is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Flags outside Calgary's Emergency Medical Service headquarters were lowered to half–mast Tuesday and staff added a strip of black underneath their yellow ribbon pins in memory of Starker, a former city paramedic.

"It touches every Calgarian because he was there when you dialed 911," EMS Chief Tom Sampson said. "And he was there for the people in Afghanistan."

Unlike the Calgary Police Service and the city's fire department, Calgary EMS had not seen a death in the line of duty until Starker.

Reservist medic dies in ambush, soldier hurt

IDNUMBER 200805070010
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
COLUMN: Canada In Brief
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canadian soldier Michael Starker of Calgary was killed in Afghanistan. Another soldier was injured in the ambush. ;
KEYWORDS: WORLD WAR I; COURT MARTIAL; DEATHS
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Michael Starker.
WORD COUNT: 161

KANDAHAR — A Canadian soldier was killed and another was wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in Afghanistan Tuesday. Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, a reservist and medic, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district. The Calgary soldier was taken to the Kandahar Airfield after the attack that took place around 11:45 a.m. local time, but was pronounced dead on arrival. An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but the soldier was in stable condition Tuesday and notified his family of his injuries himself. Starker, who was with 15 Field Ambulance, is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed. About 2,500 Canadian troops are based in Afghanistan, most in the province of Kandahar.

83rd soldier killed

IDNUMBER 200805070057
PUBLICATION: The Province
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A31
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Cpl. Michael Starker of the 15 FieldAmbulance died yesterday in a firefight while on foot patrol. ;
KEYWORDS: WORLD WAR I; COURT MARTIAL
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 134

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district yesterday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a Calgary reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a.m.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil-military co-operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghan-istan. "The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

Canadian soldier killed in ambush; Personnel were conducting civil–military patrol when attacked

IDNUMBER 200805070079
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C12
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Cpl. Michael Starker;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Michael Starker.
WORD COUNT: 406

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district Tuesday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a.m. Starker, of Calgary, was taken to the Kandahar Airfield, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan. "The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Laroche said. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Once a Taliban–held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla–style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Laroche said Tuesday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Laroche said. "We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us every day. We see more

farmers. Our presence is necessary — I would say essential — in those districts."

The aim of civilian–military co–operation groups, which operate across the Panjwai and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles with a squad of force protection. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach locals on foot.

A soldier killed by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians.

Cpl. Nathan Hornburg died in a mortar attack on Sept. 24, 2007 — the last combat casualty that did not involve a roadside bomb.

Soldier on foot patrol killed in ambush; Calgary paramedic 'was there for the people of Afghanistan'

IDNUMBER 200805070012
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Cpl. Michael Starker;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 452

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district yesterday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a.m. Cpl. Starker, of Calgary, was taken to the Kandahar Airfield, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

Cpl. Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan. "He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Flags outside Calgary's Emergency Medical Service headquarters were lowered to half-staff yesterday and staff added a strip of black underneath their yellow ribbon pins in memory of Cpl. Starker, a city paramedic.

"It touches every Calgarian because he was there when you dialed 911," EMS Chief Tom Sampson said. "And he was there for the people in Afghanistan."

The soldiers were conducting a civilian-military co-operation patrol in the Pashmul area, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City, when they were ambushed.

The aim of the patrols, which operate across the Panjwahi and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure that they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

Once a Taliban-held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla-style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Brig.-Gen. Laroche said yesterday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," he said.

"We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us every day. We see more farmers. Our presence is necessary, I would say essential, in those districts."

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach citizens on foot.

"This was something we could not do last year at the same time," Brig.-Gen. Laroche said. "Now we can do that, not only in the Pashmul area, but throughout Zhari and Panjwaii."

He said there would be a review of the incident to determine if any changes in the way the teams operate are needed, but added the goal is to increase the number of patrols in the region.

A soldier killed by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians.

Online: 'We Have Lost a Good Soldier'

To view a Global News report on Cpl. Michael Starker, or to send your condolences, go to ottawacitizen.com

Canadian soldier 83rd to die in Afghanmission; Enemy fire in Pashmul region claims corporal

IDNUMBER 200805070028
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A11
ILLUSTRATION: Color Photo: Reuters, Dnd / Corporal Michael Starker;
BYLINE: Ryan Cormier
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 387

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN – A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district yesterday.

Corporal Michael Starker, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a foot patrol when the attack occurred about 11:45 a. m. Cpl. Starker, of Calgary, was taken to the Kandahar Airfield, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

An unidentified soldier was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"At the time of the incident, our soldiers were conducting a civil–military co–operation patrol in the area, when they came under attack," said Brigadier–General Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community."

Cpl. Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Laroche said.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City. Once a Taliban–held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla–style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Brig.–Gen. Laroche said yesterday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Brig.–Gen. Laroche said.

"We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us everyday. We see more farmers. Our presence is necessary, I would say essential, in those districts."

The aim of civilian–military co–operation groups, which operate across the Panjwaii and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles with a squad of force protection. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach locals on foot.

A soldier killed by enemy fire has become a rare event in Afghanistan, where roadside bombs and mines have killed the majority of fallen Canadians.

Corporal Nathan Hornburg died in a mortar attack on Sept. 24, 2007 — the last combat casualty that did not involve a roadside bomb.

KEYWORDS: COURT MARTIAL; CANADIANS

Canadian soldier killed on patrol

IDNUMBER 200805070041
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2008.05.07
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE / Cpl. Michael Starker, killed on goodwill foot patrol. ;
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
BYLINE: RYAN CORMIER
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 317

A Canadian soldier was killed and another wounded by enemy fire during an ambush in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district yesterday.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic with 15 Field Ambulance, was on a goodwill foot patrol when the attack occurred. Starker, of Calgary, was taken to Kandahar Airfield but was declared dead on arrival.

Another Canadian soldier, not yet identified was injured in the same attack, but is in stable condition and notified his family of his injuries himself.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, commanding general of Task Force Afghanistan

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die during the Afghanistan mission. A Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

The Pashmul area is in Kandahar province, roughly 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City. Once a Taliban-held territory, the Pashmul area has been the scene of many battles over the past two years, including a peak in guerrilla-style attacks in the fall of 2006.

Laroche said yesterday's death does not mean Canadians are losing their hold on the region; in fact, he said the situation has improved in the past two years.

"We have seen a lot of progress since we were there," Laroche said. "We have seen a lot of people coming back in the region, and it's a good sign. We have seen people interacting with us everyday. We see more farmers. Our presence is necessary, I would say essential, in those districts."

The aim of civilian-military co-operation groups, which operate across the Panjwai and Zhari districts, is to talk with civilians about any security or social concerns they may have and ensure they know how to contact Canadian troops and Afghan National Security Forces.

The teams, based out of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City, travel in armoured vehicles with a squad of force protection. They walk around rural areas with an interpreter and approach locals on foot.

Calgary paramedic killed in ambush Soldier on goodwill patrol in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2008.05.07

PAGE: A1

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 452

CP Wire Murray Brewster KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Taliban militants chose to stand and fight Tuesday, unleashing an ambush that killed a Canadian medic on a goodwill patrol in a hotly contested district west of Kandahar.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment, was pronounced dead in a military hospital after his Civil–Military Co–operation team (CIMIC) patrol came under fire in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city.

A second, unidentified soldier was wounded. He is reported to be in stable condition, and well enough to be able to call his family at home.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary, where he worked as a paramedic for three years, the city's EMS chief told reporters late Tuesday.

Tom Sampson said Starker, one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan, was the type of person who would always help those in need.

He becomes the 83rd soldier to die in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"We have lost a fine soldier today and our thoughts are with his family and friends," Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, told reporters at nearby Kandahar Airfield.

"He died helping Afghans build a better future for themselves and their children. His dedication and sacrifice will not be forgotten." Civilian–military teams have become a signature part of Canada's Afghan mission.

Select soldiers, usually reservists, try to build bridges of understanding between an army that sometimes has trouble comprehending the needs of villages and local Afghans, who are suspicious of any soldiers after three decades of conflict.

"The aim of the patrol was to show their presence, interact with the local population and discuss the development needs of the community," said Laroche about Tuesday's ambush.

The war has taken a harsh toll on these specialists, who travel village to village talking to elders and bringing their concerns back to local army commanders.

Lt. Bill Turner, a reservist and postal carrier from Edmonton, was killed in a roadside bomb attack in April 2006. One month before that, Capt. Trevor Greene was severely injured in an axe attack during a community meeting in Shinkay, Afghanistan.

The latest attack comes as NATO forces throughout southern Afghanistan are bracing for the anticipated surge in violence that usually accompanies the end of the poppy harvest.

While too soon to say whether the ambush heralds a shift in Taliban tactics, it is unusual for the fact that militants had previously preferred improvised explosives, or roadside bombs or mortars to carry out their attacks. Those so-called standoff weapons don't risk a direct confrontation with the better armed and better trained Canadians.

It's been almost 20 months since the last time a Canadian soldier was shot and killed in an up-close confrontation with insurgents, according to records on the National Defence website.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement Tuesday offering condolences to Starker's family and friends.

"Corporal Starker made the ultimate sacrifice and his efforts will remain a source of pride for all Canadians," Harper said.

— The Canadian Press