

# Table of Contents

<b><u>Canadian soldier's death brings toll to 83.....</u></b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>Taliban ambush kills soldier on goodwill patrol.....</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Fallen soldier remembered for devotion to protect others.....</u></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>Les troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan ont un nouveau commandant.....</u></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>New general arrives to take up command of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.....</u></b>	<b>8</b>
<b><u>The Canadian Press World News Budget – Wednesday, May 7, 2008.....</u></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>Latest fallen Canadian soldier begins the final journey home.....</u></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><u>--Ninth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>WINDSOR – The Canadian medic killed in Afghanistan has close ties to Windsor.....</u></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>--Fifth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><u>--Prairie Update--.....</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>--Fourth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>20</b>
<b><u>--Eleventh NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>22</b>
<b><u>Latest fallen Canadian soldier begins the final journey home.....</u></b>	<b>24</b>
<b><u>--Second NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>25</b>
<b><u>--Sixth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>27</b>
<b><u>--Twentieth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>29</b>
<b><u>--Fifteenth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>31</b>
<b><u>(Have–Not–Poll) The Harper Conservatives could also be the ones to suffer in the.....</u></b>	<b>33</b>
<b><u>--Eighth NewsWatch--.....</u></b>	<b>35</b>
<b><u>RADIO–TV A D V I S O R Y.....</u></b>	<b>37</b>
<b><u>Skilled reservist could have stayed in Canada.....</u></b>	<b>38</b>
<b><u>Soldier begins final journey; Canadian paramedic, 36, killed in Taliban ambush.....</u></b>	<b>40</b>

# Table of Contents

<u>Les troupes canadiennes ont un nouveau commandant.....</u>	42
<u>[CP) Fellow paramedics paid tribute to Michael Starker a news conference held in Calgary on Tuesday. (CP)....]</u> .....	43
<u>Soldiers honour 'a good man'; Medic killed in ambush remembered for dedication to those in need....</u>	44
<u>Fallen Canadian begins final journey home; Military plane brings home 83rd casualty in Afghanistan conflict.....</u>	46
<u>Latest fallen soldier begins final journey back to Canada.....</u>	47
<u>Caption Only.....</u>	49
<u>Mission to change command, focus; But Canadian troops won't go on defensive, incoming leader says.....</u>	50
<u>5 Minute Herald; Breaking news at calgaryherald.com.....</u>	52
<u>Reservists 'the best Canada has to offer'.....</u>	57
<u>Medics share risk with other soldiers.....</u>	61
<u>Only at calgaryherald.com.....</u>	63
<u>'In his heart, he was a soldier'; Family describes Cpl. Michael Starker as born leader.....</u>	65
<u>'Rescuer' coming home Soldiers pay tribute to slain medic.....</u>	69
<u>Canuck troops get new leader.....</u>	71
<u>Selfless soldier hailed Thousands of NATO troops salute coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker, killed in Taliban ambush.....</u>	72
<u>Soldiers bid farewell to slain medic.....</u>	74
<u>General stresses civilian side AFGHANISTAN: The next commander of Canadian troops arrives in Kandahar.....</u>	76
<u>Comrades mourn fallen reservist.....</u>	78
<u>Frontpage One too many for road Reports and charges of impaired driving rise sharply.....</u>	79
<u>Deployment will honour reservist's strength.....</u>	80
<u>Coming home Sombre ceremony marks the beginning of fallen Calgary soldier's final journey.....</u>	81

# Table of Contents

<u>Mayor should stop being inconsistent over flag tribute to Calgary soldiers killed in the line of duty.....</u>	83
<u>FRONTPAGE Soldiering On Calgary medic's death inspires comrade.....</u>	85
<u>Mission gets personal for new top soldier.....</u>	86
<u>Afghan focus to shift toward development; New military commander sees 'civilian flavour'.....</u>	88
<u>Caption Only.....</u>	90
<u>Mission changing gears; New commander says focus shifts from security to development.....</u>	91
<u>Clinic planned for servicemen, women with 'mental injuries'; Announcement in Ottawa meant to acknowledge service-related stress conditions.....</u>	93
<u>Mission taking mental toll; New clinics will treat suffering soldiers.....</u>	95
<u>Afghan mission to 'take on civilian flavour'; Focus to shift to development, incoming commander says.....</u>	97
<u>'Technical' gaffes mar court's opening; Light, sound failures add to chaos as first defendant 'boycotts' proceedings.....</u>	99
<u>Afghan mission to take new direction; Canadian goals. Incoming commander says troops will focus on development.....</u>	101
<u>Comrades mourn 'a good man'.....</u>	103
<u>windsorstar.com; Breaking news, sports, photos, health, entertainment -- what's online today from The Windsor Star.....</u>	105
<u>Fallen soldier had local ties.....</u>	106

# Canadian soldier's death brings toll to 83

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**IDNUMBER** 200805070155  
**PUBLICATION:** Waterloo Region Record  
**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** Front  
**PAGE:** A1  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / Cpl. Michael Starker was killed yesterday in Afghanistan. ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**NOTE:** This version of the story ran in the Early Edition.  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2008 Torstar Corporation  
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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 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.

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

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."

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.

"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 letter 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 because militants had previously preferred using 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, during a volley of rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire. They had been defending a road construction project in the same general area.

The arid farm land west of Kandahar has been a hotly contested region since Canadian troops deployed in Kandahar more than two years ago.

Yesterday, 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.

# Taliban ambush kills soldier on goodwill patrol

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**IDNUMBER** 200805070154  
**PUBLICATION:** Waterloo Region Record  
**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Front  
**PAGE:** A1  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / Cpl. Michael Starker was killed yesterday in Afghanistan. ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**NOTE:** This version of the story ran in the Final Edition.  
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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."

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

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"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."

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Yesterday, 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.

# Fallen soldier remembered for devotion to protect others

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080026  
**PUBLICATION:** Waterloo Region Record  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Front  
**PAGE:** A4  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN  
**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2008 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 419

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated yesterday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield that, no matter how many times it has been performed, never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to the edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city but died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said.

"He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He says the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.



During the ceremony, Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written over 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years. Few details have been provided.

Although ambushes happen routinely, it's been nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents. The Taliban have preferred to use improvised explosives or roadside bombs to kill and maim, not only soldiers, but civilians as well.

Starker was part of a Civil-Military Co-operation team that goes village to village talking with local Afghans and bringing their concerns back to Canadian commanders.

It was that spirit Bergeron summoned as thousands of NATO troops — Canadian, British, American, Romanian Dutch — saluted the coffin as it was marched slowly down the tarmac to a piper's lament.

"As Michael passes before us one last time, it is with respect and dignity that we honour his life and his dedication to protecting and rescuing those in need," said the senior padre.

Starker was married but had no children.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is scheduled for tomorrow at 2 p.m. ET at CFB Trenton, Ont.

# Les troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan ont un nouveau commandant

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Nouvelles générales, Assemblée National Québec et Par  
**KEYWORDS:** DÉFENSE INTERNACIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** pcf  
**WORD COUNT:** 210

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan \_ Le nouveau commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan est arrivé, mercredi, en prévenant que la mission prendra possiblement une tournure différente pendant sa période de service de neuf mois.

Le brigadier général Dennis Thompson, qui remplacera sous peu le général Guy Laroche, estime que l'évolution des conditions dans la région permettra de donner plus d'emphase aux opérations civiles de reconstruction et de développement.

Il précise toutefois que la mission aura toujours une composante militaire, et qu'il ne s'attend pas à voir l'armée adopter une position défensive uniquement parce que l'emphase sera mise ailleurs.

Le gouvernement conservateur est en voie de redéfinir la mission, notamment en déterminant les objectifs qui devront être atteints avant la fin des opérations militaires en 2011.

Le général Thompson devra préparer le terrain à cette fin, tout comme préparer la mise en place d'une administration civile pour la base provinciale de reconstruction dont le Canada a la responsabilité dans la ville de Kandahar.

Le général Thompson est l'ancien commandant de la 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade, de la base ontarienne de Petawawa. Cette base a été durement touchée par des pertes subies en Afghanistan.

Le général Thompson est arrivé à l'aéroport de Kandahar au lendemain du plus récent décès d'un soldat canadien en Afghanistan. Le caporal Michael Starker a perdu la vie, mardi, pendant qu'il patrouillait à proximité de Kandahar.

W8548-JBL303

# New general arrives to take up command of Canadian troops in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Foreign general news  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 340

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan \_ There's a new general in town.

The next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan hit the ground in Kandahar Wednesday and says he believes the mission will take on a different flavour during his nine month tour.

Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson says evolving conditions in the war-torn region mean there will be more of an emphasis on the civilian side of development and reconstruction.

He says there will still be a military aspect and doesn't expect the army will be adopting a defensive posture just because the focus is shifting.

"I think there will be a change in emphasis, but I'm not prepared to say how much that will be (because) there are other players here," Thompson said, referring to the Taliban.

The Conservative government is in the process of refocusing the mission and setting down objectives to be achieved before the military mission runs out in 2011.

Thompson will be laying the groundwork for that and for a civilian administration at the provincial reconstruction base, which Canada operates in Kandahar City.

He will be replacing Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, the current commander, in the near future.

Thompson is the former commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade at CFB Petawawa, a base that has suffered a lot of casualties, and he says that aspect of loss personalizes this assignment for him.

"You tend to know an awful lot of people that are either injured or killed," he said.

"It sharpens your focus and it makes you want to do everything you can to mitigate all of those risks."

Thompson arrived at Kandahar Airfield one day after the latest soldier was killed in a shootout with the Taliban.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic, was killed while on patrol with his Civil-Military Co-operation unit, which reaches out to local Afghan villages and serves as a bridge with the community.

Despite the killing, Laroche said yesterday that Kandahar province is safer than when he took over almost 10 months ago.

He said the area where Starker was killed on foot patrol was an area Canadians couldn't enter a year ago.

Thompson and his staff have spent nine months training for the assignment \_ longer than any other headquarters staff.

Their training has involved in-depth briefings and analysis on not only military matters, but development and diplomacy, as well as the complex web of Afghan tribal politics.

Last winter Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier, in an interview with The Canadian Press, described the training as giving the incoming officers and soldiers ``a PhD in Afghan affairs."

# The Canadian Press World News Budget – Wednesday, May 7, 2008

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**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
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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 \_ The latest Canadian soldier killed in combat with the Taliban began his final journey home Wednesday with a moving a ceremony at Kandahar Airfield. Cpl. Michael Starker, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside of the city. 500 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-Afghan-Cda-Death. Moved.

PARIS \_ Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean continued her trip to France on Wednesday by meeting with President Nicolas Sarkozy. The two dignitaries were scheduled to discuss various topics, including the celebrations surrounding the 400th anniversary of Quebec City. 450 words. By Michel Dolbec. With Photos. BC-Gov-Gen-France.

WASHINGTON \_ A cash-strapped Hillary Clinton faced a stinging call Wednesday to give up her bid for the Democratic nomination as Barack Obama plotted strategy for a White House run this fall. Weakened by a big loss in North Carolina and a razor-thin win in Indiana this week, Clinton put on her game face and vowed to fight to the end. 850 words. By Beth Gorham. See Photos. BC-US-Democrats. Moved.

WASHINGTON \_ Industry Minister Jim Prentice told a high-profile conference Wednesday that border delays have created a "two-headed monster" that isn't bolstering security or prosperity. 600 words. By Beth Gorham. BC-US-Prentice. Moved.

YANGON, Myanmar \_ Hungry people swarm the few open shops and fist fights break out in Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta after a deadly cyclone which the top U.S. diplomat says may have killed 100,000. The minutes of a UN aid meeting report obtained by The Associated Press reveal that the military junta's visa restrictions are hampering a massive international relief effort. 1,000 words. BC-Myanmar-Cyclone. Moved.

MOSCOW \_ Dmitry Medvedev is Russia's new president, and the Kremlin leadership now mirrors one of its most potent symbols: the double-headed eagle. Standing by at the Kremlin inauguration is Vladimir Putin, Medvedev's mentor and the incoming prime minister. The world waits to see whether the two can rule in harmony or whether, like the Byzantine crest, the Russian leadership will gaze in opposite directions. 650 words. By Douglas Birch. BC-Russia-Medvedev-Inauguration. Moved.

# Latest fallen Canadian soldier begins the final journey home.

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Foreign general news  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 445

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan \_ A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated Wednesday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

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He says the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written over 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of this day flickered away.

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years.

Few details have been provided.

Although ambushes happen routinely, it's nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents. The Taliban have preferred to use improvised explosives or roadside bombs to kill and maim, not only soldiers, but civilians as well.

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Starker was married but had no children.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is scheduled Friday at 2 p.m. ET at CFB Trenton, Ont.

## --Ninth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 280

---

B-C fire investigators aren't ruling out arson in a deadly blaze last night.

Three people were killed when fire broke out at a three-storey apartment building in North Vancouver.

Residents say they barely made it out alive as the flames quickly engulfed several suites at the back of the building.

Authorities say the investigation is still in the preliminary stages.

But they aren't ruling out the possibility the fire was deliberately set. (9)

(Sask-Teen-Missing)

A second man is now charged in the death of a young Saskatchewan woman who disappeared almost three years ago.

The R-C-M-P says 31-year-old Gilbert Bellegarde of the Little Black Bear First Nation is accused of first-degree murder in the case of Amber Redman.

Authorities believe remains found on the reserve earlier this week are those of the missing 19-year-old.

Twenty-nine-year-old Albert Bellegarde, also of Little Black Bear, was charged yesterday with first-degree murder. (9)

(Clinton Money)

There are signs the Hillary Clinton campaign has more money trouble.

The New York senator has lent her presidential campaign 6.4 (m) million dollars over the past month.

The money more than doubles Clinton's personal investment in her bid for the Democratic nomination.

She's been struggling financially behind the record fundraising of rival Barack Obama. (9)

(Myanmar-Cda-Cyclone) (Audio: 106)

Hungry crowds are storming the few shops that have opened in a hard hit region of cyclone-battered Myanmar.

Thompson's arrival in the war zone comes one day after the death of another Canadian soldier.

Corporal Michael Starker --- a 36-year-old army medic --- was killed in a Taliban ambush. (9)



(Crocodile Hunter Lawsuit)

The widow of "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin has reached a settlement with creditors who claimed the family's zoo owed them 2.3 (m) million dollars.

The lawsuit involved a complex loan deal with an offshore bank that ran into trouble with Australian tax authorities.

Irwin was killed by a stingray in 2006. (9)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

The storm left more than 22-thousand people dead, mainly in the Irrawaddy delta.

As bodies float in floodwaters, survivors are desperately trying to reach dry ground on boats, using blankets as sails.

Toronto-based GlobalMedic is sending five people to Myanmar.

The aid group's rapid response team is bringing enough water purification tablets and equipment to provide clean drinking water for 70-thousand people a day. (9)

(Afghan-Cda-General) (Audio: 38)

The next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan says he sees the mission changing.

Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson says evolving conditions will mean more emphasis on the civilian side of development and reconstruction.

# WINDSOR – The Canadian medic killed in Afghanistan has close ties to Windsor.

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Quebec–Ontario regional news  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 97

---

WINDSOR \_ The Canadian medic killed in Afghanistan has close ties to Windsor.

Corporal Michael Starker was killed in a firefight with the Taliban, near Kandahar.

Starker's wife is from Windsor, as is her late father, Ray Seguin and her brother, Ray Seguin Junior (say–genn) who is in the Windsor fire service.

Bob Mcgonigle (mc–gone–ah–gull), a retired Windsor firefighter, says Starker is his son's best friend.

Mcgonigle says he's always called Starker his third son.

He says they just got an e–mail from Starker who said he was looking forward to going to South Africa on leave with his wife.

Mcgonigle says Starker served in the military years ago, then went on to become a paramedic in Alberta before volunteering to go to Afghanistan.

(CKLW)

gjc

## --Fifth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 236

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Barack Obama is moving closer to the Democratic presidential prize, winning North Carolina's primary.

Hillary Clinton won a slim victory in Indiana.

Celebrating in Indianapolis last night, Clinton says the race for the nomination is far from over.

Both Obama and Clinton are predicting Democrats will unite in the fall.

But exit polls suggest the bitter contest is hardening divisions in the party. (5)

(Myanmar--Cyclone--Cda)

The U--N's World Food Program says it's reached the first of an estimated one--(m) million people left homeless by the cyclone that ravaged Myanmar.

But it says many coastal areas are cut off from food supplies

Stephen Harper is rejecting the idea of a taxpayer--funded fix--up, despite reports his official residence may be crumbling.

Auditor General Sheila Fraser says the stone building needs about 10--(m) million dollars in upgrades.

In her annual report to Parliament, Fraser says 24 Sussex is a drafty, outmoded plumbing nightmare. (5)

(Russia--Medvedev)

Dmitry Medvedev (med--VEHD'--ev) is pledging to bolster Russia's economic development and civil rights.

The 42--year--old was inaugurated as president today, succeeding Vladimir Putin.

Little more than two hours after becoming president, Medvedev nominated Putin to be prime minister. (5)

(MUSIC--Britney Spears)

A court victory for Britney Spears.

The pop singer is being allowed expanded visits with her two young sons after a low--key child--custody hearing in Los Angeles.

The lawyer for the pop singer's ex--husband Kevin Federline says the longer visits are recognition of the progress Spears has made.

The 26-year-old Spears smiled briefly but didn't speak as she left the hearing. (5)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith) because of flooding and road damage.

State radio reports the death toll from Saturday's storm topped 22-thousand yesterday, with 41-thousand others missing.

Foreign Affairs has yet to decide if the Disaster Assistance Response Team will be sent to Myanmar.

The federal government has set aside up to two (m) million dollars in humanitarian aid. (5)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

Canada has lost an 83rd soldier in war-torn Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker died in a Taliban ambush during a goodwill mission west of Kandahar.

The 36-year-old was a medic with the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment based in Edmonton.

Starker was born and raised in Calgary.

He'd been a paramedic there for three years. (5)

(Auditor-PM-Reno)

The prime minister says 24 Sussex isn't in dire need of renovations.

## --Prairie Update--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Western general news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 376

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(CRIME-Teen-Missing)

A 29-year-old man from the Little Black Bear Reserve makes his first court appearance today in the slaying of a 19-year-old woman who disappeared three years ago.

Albert Patrick Bellegarde is charged with first-degree murder in the death of Amber Redman.

Human remains believed to be hers were found in a ditch on the reserve earlier in the week.

The R-C-M-P have arrested another man in the case, but have not said what charges, if any, he will face.  
(The Canadian Press)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

Paramedics in Calgary have been shaken by the death of one of their colleagues -- a reservist who was killed in an ambush in Afghanistan.

Corporal Michael Starker, a member of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment based in Edmonton, was killed in a Taliban attack west of Kandahar.

Tom Sampson, head of Calgary's emergency services, says his colleagues are devastated.

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2001. (CHQR)

(Mba-Fishing-Prohibition)

A Manitoba Tory M-L-A wants to see a ban on sport fishing on Lake Dauphin and its tributaries.

Stu Briese says stocks of pickerel are down and if something is not done for next season, the number of fish will drop even more.

He says the province has the power to step in to stop fishing during the spawning season, which is late this year because of cooler weather.

In 1997, then-Natural Resources Minister Glen Cummings restricted commercial fishing in Lake Winnipeg in an attempt to protect pickerel and sauger stocks. (Wpg F-P)

(Alta-Stelmach-Gas Prices)

The Alberta government doesn't intend to cut its tax on gasoline in an effort to give motorists in the oil-rich province a break at the pumps.

Premier Ed Stelmach says Alberta's portion of the gasoline tax goes only to the upkeep of roads.

Stelmach says he would like to see more refining capacity on the Prairies.

He says he will discuss that at the upcoming Western Premier's conference. (The Canadian Press)

(Mba-Shopping-Bags)

A bid by the Manitoba Liberals to ban plastic shopping bags is doomed to failure.

M-L-As debated the private members bill yesterday, but the government ran down the clock instead of allowing the bill to move to the next legislative phase, meaning it likely will die when the session ends.

That lobs the issue back into the lap of a new industry group called the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, which has been given the task of figuring out a better way to fund and manage recycling.

The idea is that the companies who make and use plastic bags, newspaper and pop bottles ought to be responsible for recycling and disposal. (Wpg F-P)

(CRIME-Underage-Driver)

R-C-M-P say a 14-year-old girl may be charged after she allegedly rolled a car on a Manitoba reserve, injuring herself and five younger passengers.

Sergeant Line (LIHN') Karpish says a one-year-old boy was in the vehicle during Sunday's accident at the Long Plain First Nation.

Police say the driver suffered the most serious injuries and needed further treatment in Winnipeg -- about 80 kilometres east of the reserve. (The Canadian Press)

(Prairie Update by Irv Thomas)

## --Fourth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 272

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A U-N agency says there are fears of a long-term food shortage in Myanmar after a cyclone devastated the impoverished country's rice-growing heartland.

The U-N Food and Agriculture estimates that five states hit hardest by Saturday's cyclone produce 65 per cent of the country's rice.

But Myanmar's exports are so small these days that few expect the cyclone to have any impact on soaring world rice prices.

More than 22-thousand people are dead, 41-thousand missing and as many as one- (m) million are homeless in the cyclone's wake. (4)

(US-Democrats)

Race played a pivotal role in yesterday's Democratic primary votes in the U-S.

Exit polls suggest blacks, young people and college grads supported Barack Obama.

Whites, working-class voters and those without college degrees backed Hillary Clinton.

Obama handily won North Carolina, while Clinton eked out a win in Indiana. (4)

(Afghan-Cda-General)

Canadian troops in Afghanistan have a new commander.

Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson has landed in Kandahar -- a day after Canadian Corporal Michael Starker died in an ambush west of Kandahar city.

Thompson is replacing Brigadier-General Guy Laroche. (4)

(Auditor-PM-Reno) (Audio: 50)

Prime Minister Stephen Harper lives in a drafty, outmoded plumbing nightmare that may be an environmental hazard.

That's according to Auditor General Sheila Fraser, who says 24 Sussex Drive desperately needs 10- (m) million dollars' worth of renos.

Harper says his residence is just fine and no work will be done on it right now.

But Fraser insists delaying the repairs will just make them more expensive down the road. (4)

(Dead-Dog-Lawsuit)

A Minnesota man who ran over a small dog is suing the dog's owners for 11-hundred dollars.

Jeffery Ely hit the 13-pound miniature pinscher named Fester in January and wants to be reimbursed for the damage to his 1997 Honda Civic, time off work to get the car repaired and court fees.

Fester's owners are countersuing. (4)

(ODDITY-Boy-Calls-911)

A five-year-old Ontario boy is being hailed as a hero for calling 9-1-1 after his mother collapsed on the kitchen floor.

Brayden Strub dialled 9-1-1 and then watched over his one-year-old sister while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

His mother says she suddenly felt weak and asked Brayden if he remembered what to do in an emergency before she collapsed.

She has since been treated and released from hospital and will be fine. (4)

(NewsWatch by Neena Chowdhury)



## --Eleventh NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 264

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Police say two of the three elderly victims killed in an apartment building fire in North Vancouver almost made it to safety.

Constable Michael McLaughlin says the bodies of two of the elderly women were found in the building's lobby.

The other victim was found on the third floor.

Firefighters had to rescue six people who were trapped on balconies last night while others jumped to safety.

The fire is being treated as suspicious. (11)

(Myanmar--Cyclone)

Time is of the essence in cyclone--ravaged Myanmar.

The body of the latest fallen Canadian soldier in Afghanistan is being flown back home.

A moving ramp ceremony was held today at Kandahar Airfield for Corporal Michael Starker of Calgary.

The 36--year--old was killed yesterday in an ambush by insurgents outside the city.

During the ceremony, Starker was remembered as a humble man with potent professional skills as a paramedic. (11)

(PEI--Buses--off--Road)

All school buses have been pulled off the road in P--E--I for the next two days while the province conducts safety inspections.

The move comes after structural problems were found in some older school buses earlier this week.

The province says the buses will be taken out of service until a more thorough inspection can be done. (11)

(Russia--Medvedev)

Dmitry Medvedev (med--VEHD'--ev) has been inaugurated as president of Russia, succeeding Vladimir Putin.

He pledged to push for economic development and civil rights.

After becoming president, the 42--year--old Medvedev nominated Putin to be prime minister. (11)

(NYC–Police Lawsuit)

A civil liberties group has filed a lawsuit challenging the New York Police Department's practice of stopping hundreds of thousands of people each year for questioning.

The group says the practice is racially biased and should be declared unconstitutional.

The lawsuit says half the nearly one (m) million people stopped over the last two years were black — even though blacks make up only about a quarter of the city's population. (11)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

Paul Risley of the U–N World Food Program says unless much–needed aid gets to victims soon, it could be too late.

He says drinking water, food and medical supplies must be distributed as quickly as possible or the death toll, now estimated at more than 22–thousand, will climb rapidly.

At least one (m) million people are homeless.

A five–member Canadian relief team with GlobalMedic is on its way to the region with water purification units. (11)

(Afghan–Cda–Death) (Audio: 119)

# Latest fallen Canadian soldier begins the final journey home.

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 112

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The latest Canadian soldier killed in combat with the Taliban began his final journey home today with a moving a ceremony at Kandahar Airfield.

Cpl. Michael Starker, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside of the city.

Thousands of NATO soldiers stood at attention on the tarmac as Starker's flag-draped coffin was carried aboard a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

In his prayer, the padre, Maj. Jim Short, recalled Starker as a humble man with potent professional skills as a paramedic.

He says the 36-year-old instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to died in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

(The Canadian Press)

## --Second NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 279

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Foreign Affairs is trying to figure out how best to help cyclone victims in Myanmar.

Department official Neil Hrab says they haven't decided yet whether to deploy the military's Disaster Assistance Response Team -- also known as DART.

The self-contained emergency team can produce up to 50-thousand litres of clean drinking water a day and was deployed to Sri Lanka after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.

Ottawa has already committed two- (m) million dollars to help Myanmar.

(2)

(Myanmar-Cyclone)

Experts say Myanmar's agricultural heartland has been devastated by Saturday's cyclone.

The U-N estimates the hardest hit regions produce about 65 per cent of the country's rice.

At least 22-thousand are dead, 41-thousand more are missing and one- (m) million people are homeless in the wake of Saturday's cyclone. (2)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

A fellow paramedic is offering to bring the body of the latest Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan home to Calgary.

Michael Starker was one of two Calgary paramedics serving in Afghanistan when he died yesterday after his patrol was ambushed.

Starker is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. (2)

(Defence-Mental-Health)

Two Fredericton psychologists are calling on Auditor General Sheila Fraser to audit the patient files at the mental-health clinic at C-F-B Gagetown.

Robin Geneau and Joyce Belliveau, who have both treated soldiers with post traumatic stress disorder, believe soldiers aren't getting the help they need.

Geneau and Belliveau will appear tomorrow before the Commons defence committee, which will examine health services for the Canadian Forces.

(2)

(US–Democrats)

Hillary Clinton edged out Barack Obama for a razor–thin victory in the Indiana Democratic primary last night.

Clinton grabbed 51 per cent of the vote to Obama's 49 per cent in the state.

But Obama says he's looking ahead to the fall U–S presidential campaign following a strong victory in the North Carolina Democratic primary. (2)

(BIZ–Ford–Transmissions)

Ford says fuel–efficient six–speed automatic transmissions are the way to go.

The automaker is planning on doubling the number of those transmissions by the end of next year, with the 2009–model Ford Escape and Mercury Mariner getting them first.

By 2012, they'll be in 98 per cent of Ford's North American vehicles.

(2)

(NewsWatch by Neena Chowdhury)

## --Sixth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 219

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Hungry crowds of survivors stormed a few shops that opened today in Myanmar's Irrawaddy delta that was devastated by Saturday's cyclone.

The U-N World Food Program says fistfights broke out over supplies.

In the city of Yangon, aid workers distributed food, plastic sheeting, cooking utensils and chlorine tablets.

Many coastal areas remain cut off from food supplies because of flooding and road damage.

The death toll is 22-thousand, but 41-thousand others remain unaccounted for.

Ottawa is pledging up to two (m) million dollars in humanitarian assistance.

Foreign Affairs has yet to decide whether to send in the Disaster Assistance Response Team. (6)

(US-Democrats)

Barack Obama is now less than 200 pledged delegates from the number needed to secure the Democratic presidential nomination.

He gained at least 95 delegates in Indiana and North Carolina.

Hillary Clinton picked up at least 76.

Obama tells his supporters he's closing in on the Democratic nomination following his double-digit victory in North Carolina.

However, Clinton is vowing to press on following her victory in Indiana. (6)

(Illegal-Immigrant-Arrests)

Ottawa is cracking down on people alleged to be in the country illegally.

The Canada Border Services Agency has arrested 45 people in a raid on a distribution warehouse facility in the Toronto area.

That word comes on the heels of the federal auditor general blasting the agency.

Sheila Fraser says the agency doesn't know where 41-thousand people ordered to leave the country are. (6)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

A 36-year-old Canadian army medic is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. Corporal Michael Starker of the 15th Field Ambulance Regiment was based in Edmonton. He was killed yesterday when his unit came under Taliban fire west of Kandahar city. Starker had worked as a paramedic for three years in his hometown of Calgary. (6)

(BC-Fatal Fire)

Fire has claimed three lives in North Vancouver.

The blaze broke out last night at a three-storey apartment building.

The three bodies were found in different locations at the fire scene.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation. (6)

(College Drug Bust)

San Diego State University has suspended six fraternities after a drug sweep that has netted dozens of students.

It was prompted by the cocaine death of a student last year.

Authorities say one of the students arrested was about to get a degree in criminal justice. (6)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

## --Twentieth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 292

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Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day says there must be "a better system to track people who have been told they're inadmissible."

Day was commenting on a damaging report from the federal auditor general.

Sheila Fraser says the government can't locate 41-thousand foreigners it would like to deport.

Day says "many of those people leave of their own accord, but they don't report it."

He also says between 2002 and 2006, there was a 50-per-cent jump in the number of illegal immigrants kicked out of Canada. (20)

(Auditor-PM-Reno) (Audio: P15)

Prime Minister Harper is rejecting a call from the auditor general for what she says are badly-needed updates at 24 Sussex Drive.

Sheila Fraser says among other things, the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems at the prime minister's official residence are badly outmoded.

Fraser estimates the 140-year-old mansion needs 10 (m) million dollars worth of work.

However, Harper says there's no need for major renovations to the house "at this time." (20)

(Afghan-Cda-Death)

Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are preparing to say good-bye to another fallen comrade.

Corporal Michael Starker, a 36-year-old paramedic from Calgary, died when his patrol ran into a Taliban ambush west of Kandahar City.

Colleagues at Calgary E-M-S say Starker died doing what he always does -- helping those in need.

Starker, a married reservist who had no children, is the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002. (20)

(US Primaries) (Audio: 195)

Barack Obama has taken another step toward locking up the Democratic party's presidential nomination.

Obama won at least 63 delegates from the North Carolina primary, which he won, and the Indiana primary, where he narrowly trails Hillary Clinton.



Obama says he's within 200 delegates of clinching the nomination. (20)

(NB Flooding)

Things are slowly getting back to normal in Fredericton, where floodwaters from the St. John River are easing.

The river in the New Brunswick capital is expected to dip to 10-centimetres above flood stage on Wednesday.

As a result, many Fredericton-area businesses that closed last week due to flooding and power outages have re-opened. (20)

(OBIT-Robbins)

Irvine Robbins, who co-founded the Baskins-Robbins ice cream chain, has died in Los Angeles at the age of 90.

Robbins offered 21 flavours at his first store when it opened in 1945 in an L-A suburb.

He eventually joined forces with his brother-in-law, the late Burton Baskin, who opened his own ice cream store a year later not far away. (20)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

## --Fifteenth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 356

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Canadian aid agencies have stepped up efforts to get relief supplies into cyclone-hit Myanmar.

A group of four agencies is calling for donations and another is sending a five-person water-purification team to the country.

GlobalMedic's rapid response team left today, hoping it can help stave off water-borne diseases.

Saturday's cyclone killed more than 22-thousand people, left 41-thousand missing and an estimated one (m) million homeless.

The top U-S diplomat in the region says the death toll could go as high as 100-thousand. (15)

(NB-Flooding)

Floodwaters from the swollen St. John River in New Brunswick have receded but not before taking a heavy toll on highways.

The province's transportation minister says it's going to cost (m) millions to repair the damage.

In many places, huge sections of pavement were completely washed away.

The province is expecting more than one-thousand people to apply for disaster relief and has estimated the total damage to be in the tens of (m) millions of dollars. (15)

(Oilsands-Review)

Imperial Oil is back in court hoping to overcome several legal scuffles that could delay the development of its eight (b) billion-dollar Kearl oilsands mine in northern Alberta.

The case is being watched closely as environmental concerns about the province's massive oilsands projects are capturing unprecedented international attention.

A lawyer for Imperial is arguing that Ottawa should reinstate a permit that would allow it to drain muskeg water at its proposed mine north of Fort McMurray. (15)

(Afghan-Cda-Death) (audio: 156)

A Canadian medic killed in a Taliban ambush near Kandahar was celebrated today as a man who had dedicated his life to protecting and rescuing those in need.

Corporal Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield.

Head chaplain Major Pierre Bergeron says Starker was a reservist who could have stayed in Calgary working as a paramedic -- but instead chose to try to help make the world a better place. (15)

(CFB-Wainwright-Fatal)

The U-S army says a 25-year-old soldier who died in an accident at an Alberta military base was struck by a cargo load that was being carried by a helicopter.

Specialist Josef Cerfus (SUHR'-fuhs) was a member of a Chinook helicopter unit based at Fort Lewis, Washington.

The American unit is involved in Exercise Maple Guardian, a manoeuvre to help Canadian troops get ready for deployment to Afghanistan this summer. (15)

(Grand Theft Auto)

The video game "Grand Theft Auto IV" raked in more than 500 (m) million dollars U-S in its first week in stores.

More than six (m) million units have been sold worldwide.

The game follows Eastern European immigrant-turned-gangster Niko Bellic on crime missions around a fictional Liberty City.

Along with its stellar sales figures, the game has faced a lot of criticism for its violent content. (15)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

# (Have–Not–Poll) The Harper Conservatives could also be the ones to suffer in the

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Quebec–Ontario regional news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 281

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(Have–Not–Poll)

The Harper Conservatives could also be the ones to suffer in the next election if Ontario's economic problems continue.

A poll by The Canadian Press–Harris/Decima suggests that 62 per cent of Ontarians believe the Harper government is not doing enough to help the province from falling into have–not status.

Only 50 per cent say that about Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty.

Ottawa and Queen's Park have been fighting a war of words over the economy and the poll suggests the federal strategy of blaming McGuinty is not working. (The Canadian Press)

(Afghan–Cda–Death–Ontario)

The latest soldier to die in Afghanistan has close ties to Windsor.

Corporal Michael Starker's wife and her family are from Windsor.

Bob McGonigle, a retired Windsor firefighter, says Starker is his son's best friend.

He says they just got an e–mail from Starker who said he was looking forward to going to South Africa on leave with his wife. (CKLW)

(Doctor–Killed)

The man charged in the murder of a Lions Head area doctor is out on bail.

Allan Wayne Powney was released after his family posted 300 thousand dollars bail.

Powney has been in custody since late January when he was charged with first–degree murder in the death of Dr. Henry Janssen.

Powney has been ordered to live under house arrest with family members — and he is not allowed in Bruce County. (CFOS)

(Inco–Mine)

Vale Inco's North Mine is the safest mine in Canada, for the

A Vale Inco official says they have gone three years without a disabling injury.

(Have–Not–Poll) The Harper Conservatives could also be the ones to suffer in the

North Mine employees donated the 25–thousand dollar prize money Vale Inco gave them for winning the trophy in 2006 to the Sudbury Food Bank. (Sudbury Star)

(CAW–Bargaining)

G–M meets with the C–A–W tomorrow for a new round of contract talks.

C–A–W boss Buzz Hargrove says the pending layoff in Oshawa of one thousand workers and the possibility of a multimillion dollar engine plant going into St. Catharines are at the top of his list.

Hargrove says they moving fast and have already met with Chrysler brass. (St. Catharines Standard)

(BRITE–Boy–Calls–(11))

A five–year–old Kitchener boy showed maturity beyond his years after his mother collapsed on the kitchen floor.

Brayden Strub called 9–1–1, calmly told the operator where he lived and watched over his one–year–old sister while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

He even paused before unlocking the door for the paramedics, making sure he recognized their uniforms.

For his quick thinking Brayden has been recommended for a citizen citation from Waterloo Regional Police. (CTV) second year in a row.

## --Eighth NewsWatch--

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** General and national news  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 276

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The U-N says bureaucracy in Myanmar threatens to delay the delivery of emergency supplies to cyclone victims.

The World Food Program says it's working to provide aid to the first of an estimated one-(m) million people left homeless by the storm Saturday.

But a spokesman says they're still have trouble getting visas for disaster relief experts to enter the country.

The death toll stands at 22-thousand.

In Ottawa, the federal government is deciding whether or not to send in the Disaster Assistance Response Team.

Five members of the Toronto-based relief group GlobalMedic left today to try to get into Myanmar to help provide clean drinking water. (8)

(US Votes)

Barack Obama has sent out a call for new donations in an overnight e-mail.

The Illinois senator handily won the North Carolina Democratic presidential primary and narrowly lost Indiana to Hillary Clinton.

She will try to drum up support today in West Virginia, which votes next week. (8)

(Afghan-Cda-General) (Audio: 80)

Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson says he's looking forward to commanding Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Thompson says he wants the mission to take on a more civilian flavour during his nine-month tour.

He's the former commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade at C-F-B Petawawa, Ontario -- a base that's suffered heavy casualties in Afghanistan.

His arrival in Kandahar comes one day after the death of the 83rd Canadian soldier to be killed in the country.

Thirty-six-year-old army medic Michael Starker was born in Calgary and based in Edmonton. (8)

(BC-Fatal Fire) (Audio: 104)

Fire investigators in B-C say they're treating a deadly blaze last night as ``suspicious."

Three people perished in the fire at a three-storey apartment building in North Vancouver.

Firefighters were able to rescue six people trapped on balconies at the back on the burning building.

More details on the blaze are expected at an R-C-M-P news conference scheduled for today. (8)

(Auditor-24 Sussex)

The Opposition is pushing for renovations to 24 Sussex Drive.

The auditor general says the official residence of the prime minister needs 10-(m) million dollars in repairs to remove asbestos, fix windows and update the heating and electrical systems.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says the work should be done.

Prime Minister Harper is rejecting calls for renovations, saying there's no urgent need for a substantial fix right now. (8)

(Movie Award-Nominees)

The honours just keep on coming for "Juno."

Nominations for the M-T-V Movie Awards are out.

The Oscar-winning movie is up for another prestigious nod.

The teen-pregnancy comedy is tapped in four different categories, including Best Movie. (8)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

# RADIO-TV A D V I S O R Y

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**DATE:** 2008.05.07  
**CATEGORY:** Notes and advisories  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 38

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## RADIO-TV A D V I S O R Y

The military is holding a news conference at 12 p-m MT at 1227 38 Avenue N.E. in Calgary with fallen soldier Corporal Michael Starker's commanding officer and another paramedic.

Bill Graveland of The Canadian Press is staffing.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Edmonton



# Skilled reservist could have stayed in Canada

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**PUBLICATION:** The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
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**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2008 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)  
**WORD COUNT:** 338

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated Wednesday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield that no matter how many times it has been performed never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city but died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said.

"He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He said the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written over 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of this day flickered away. The Canadian

army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years.

Few details have been provided. Although ambushes happen routinely, it's nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents.

# Soldier begins final journey; Canadian paramedic, 36, killed in Taliban ambush

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

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B3

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Military pallbearers get set to carry the casket of Cpl. Michael Starker at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, yesterday. The Canadian medic was killed in a vicious Taliban ambush.

**WORD COUNT:** 413

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated yesterday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield that no matter how many times it has been performed never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers. Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city but died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said. "He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He says the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written more than 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of this day flickered away.

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years.

Few details have been provided.

Although ambushes happen routinely, it's nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents. The Taliban have preferred to use improvised explosives or roadside bombs to kill and maim, not only soldiers, but civilians as well.

Starker was part of a Civil–Military Co–operation team that goes village to village talking with local Afghans and bringing their concerns back to Canadian commanders.

It was that spirit Bergeron summoned as thousands of NATO troops – Canadian, British, American, Romanian Dutch – saluted the coffin as it was marched slowly down the tarmac to a piper's lament.

# Les troupes canadiennes ont un nouveau commandant

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**PUBLICATION:** La Presse  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**SECTION:** Actualités  
**PAGE:** A14  
**SOURCE:** La Presse Canadienne  
**PHOTO:** photo Murray Brewster, la presse canadienne  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Le nouveau commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan, Dennis Thompson, est arrivé à Kandahar hier.  
**WORD COUNT:** 212

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Le nouveau commandant des troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan est arrivé, hier, en prévenant que la mission prendra peut-être une tournure différente pendant sa période de service de neuf mois.

Le brigadier général Dennis Thompson, qui remplacera sous peu le général Guy Laroche, estime que l'évolution des conditions dans la région permettra de donner plus d'importance aux opérations civiles de reconstruction et de développement.

Il précise toutefois que la mission aura toujours une composante militaire, et qu'il ne s'attend pas à voir l'armée adopter une position défensive uniquement parce que l'emphase sera mise ailleurs.

Le gouvernement conservateur est en voie de redéfinir la mission, notamment en déterminant les objectifs qui devront être atteints avant la fin des opérations militaires en 2011.

Le général Thompson devra préparer le terrain à cette fin, tout comme préparer la mise en place d'une administration civile pour la base provinciale de reconstruction dont le Canada a la responsabilité dans la ville de Kandahar.

Le général Thompson est l'ancien commandant de la 2e Brigade mécanisée, de la base ontarienne de Petawawa. Cette base a été durement touchée par des pertes subies en Afghanistan.

Le général Thompson est arrivé à l'aéroport de Kandahar au lendemain du plus récent décès d'un soldat canadien en Afghanistan. Le caporal Michael Starker a perdu la vie, mardi, pendant qu'il patrouillait à proximité de Kandahar.

# [CP) Fellow paramedics paid tribute to Michael Starker a news conference held in Calgary on Tuesday. (CP)...]

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle-Herald

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A8

**ILLUSTRATION:** Military pallbearers prepare to carry the casket of Cpl. Michael Starker at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on Wednesday. Cpl. Starker was killed in an insurgent ambush on Tuesday. (Murray Brewster / CP); Fellow paramedics paid tribute to Michael Starker a news conference held in Calgary on Tuesday. (CP)

# Soldiers honour 'a good man'; Medic killed in ambush remembered for dedication to those in need

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A8

**ILLUSTRATION:** Military pallbearers prepare to carry the casket of Cpl. Michael Starker at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on Wednesday. Cpl. Starker was killed in an insurgent ambush on Tuesday. (Murray Brewster / CP); Fellow paramedics paid tribute to Michael Starker a news conference held in Calgary on Tuesday. (CP)

**WORD COUNT:** 309

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated Wednesday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield that no matter how many times it has been performed never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to the edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city but died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said.

"He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He says Starker's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from In Flanders Fields, written over 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of this day flickered away.

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years.



# Fallen Canadian begins final journey home; Military plane brings home 83rd casualty in Afghanistan conflict

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**SECTION:** Canada  
**PAGE:** A11  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Starker  
**WORD COUNT:** 258

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated Wednesday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

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He says the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem *In Flanders Fields*, written over 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

# Latest fallen soldier begins final journey back to Canada

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

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B12

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**DATELINE:** Kandahar, Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Military pallbearers get set to carry the casket of Cpl. Michael Starker at a ramp ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Wednesday. A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated Wednesday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need. – Photo by The Canadian Press

**WORD COUNT:** 432

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Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

Gift of humour

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

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Few details have been provided.

Although ambushes happen routinely, it's nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents.

The Taliban have preferred to use improvised explosives or roadside bombs to kill and maim, not only soldiers, but civilians as well.

Talking to villagers

Starker was part of a civil-military co-operation team that goes village-to-village talking with local Afghans and bringing their concerns back to Canadian commanders.

It was that spirit Bergeron summoned as thousands of NATO troops – Canadian, British, American, Romanian and Dutch – saluted the coffin as it was marched slowly down the tarmac to a piper's lament.

"As Michael passes before us one last time, it is with respect and dignity that we honour his life and his dedication to protecting and rescuing those in need," said the senior padre.

Starker was married but had no children.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is scheduled Friday at 2 p.m. ET at CFB Trenton, Ont.

# Caption Only

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080030  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Stuart Gradon, Canwest News Service / GRIEF FOR AFRIEND: Cpl. Alasdair Robertson–More struggles to maintain his composure yesterday during a news conference at the North East Armoury in Calgary. Robertson–More, who flew out three hours later for a two–month aid mission in Southeast Asia, learned Tuesday that his close friend and fellow paramedic Cpl. Michael Starker, 36, had been killed an ambush in Afghanistan. Starker's remains are being returned to Canada. ;

**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service

# Mission to change command, focus; But Canadian troops won't go on defensive, incoming leader says

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080150  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A22

**ILLUSTRATION:** PETER ANDREWS REUTERS Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance onto a Canadian Forces Hercules plane during a ramp ceremony yesterday at Kandahar Airfield. Brig. Gen. Dennis Thompson says losses felt at CFB Petawawa make Afghan job personal to him. Brig. Gen. Dennis Thompson says losses felt at CFB Petawawa make Afghan job personal to him. ;

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster  
**SOURCE:** THE CANADIAN PRESS  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2008 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 365

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There's a new general in town.

The next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan hit the ground in Kandahar yesterday and says he believes the mission will take on a different flavour during his nine-month tour.

Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson says evolving conditions in the war-torn region mean there will be more emphasis on the civilian side of development and reconstruction.

He says there still will be a military aspect and doesn't expect the army will adopt a defensive posture just because the focus is shifting.

"There will be a change in emphasis, but I'm not prepared to say how much that will be (because) there are other players here," Thompson said, referring to the Taliban.

The Conservative government is refocusing the mission and setting down objectives to be achieved before the mission runs out in 2011.

Thompson will be laying the groundwork for that and for a civilian administration at the provincial reconstruction base that Canada operates in Kandahar city.

He's to replace Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, the current commander, in the near future.

Laroche said yesterday Kandahar province is safer than when he took over 10 months ago, noting the area where a Canadian medic was ambushed on foot patrol is one Canadians couldn't enter a year ago.

Thompson is former commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade at CFB Petawawa, a base that has suffered a lot of casualties, so that aspect of loss personalizes this assignment for him. "You tend to know an awful lot of people that are either injured or killed. It sharpens your focus and it makes you want to do

Mission to change command, focus; But Canadian troops won't go on defensive, incoming leader says

everything you can to mitigate all of those risks."

Thompson arrived at Kandahar Airfield one day after Canada's 83rd soldier was killed in a shootout with the Taliban.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a Calgary reservist and medic, was killed on patrol with his Civil–Military Co–operation unit, which links to Afghan villages and serves as a bridge with the community.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across Kandahar Airfield's tarmac at dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag–wrapped coffin to a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers last night.

Another soldier, wounded with Starker, sat in a wheelchair while eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada, as deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short remembered Starker's humble nature, charisma, gift for humour and "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh."

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is set for 2 p.m. tomorrow at CFB Trenton.

# 5 Minute Herald; Breaking news at calgaryherald.com

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080072

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** B14

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Cpl. Michael Starker; Colour Photo: Daylight N.W. shooting leaves one man dead ; Colour Photo: Tribute to friend comforting ; Colour Photo: Father in Austrian incest case: 'I'm no monster' ; Colour Photo: Dan Kitwood, Getty Images / Picture of the Day: An image of soldiers is projected onto St. Paul's Cathedral after the City Salute sunset pageant on Wednesday in London as the city thanked British troops and their families for the sacrifices they have made. ; Colour Photo: Mike Wilson ; Colour Photo: Henry Burris ; Colour Photo: Dr. Andrew Weil ; Photo: (See hard copy for description). ; Colour Photo: Chris Farley ;

**KEYWORDS:** 0

**BYLINE:** Compiled by Heather Ryan

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 1098

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## Top Stories

### Fallen Soldier Remembered

When Cpl. Alasdair Robertson–More said a quick goodbye to his friend Cpl. Michael Starker at a New Year's Eve party, he had no idea it would be their last meeting. Starker was leaving for a tour in Afghanistan, but everyone assumed he would be back in Calgary by the fall.

### Page A1

### Daylight N.W. Shooting Leaves One Man Dead

A 19–year–old man is dead, a 17–year–old man is in hospital and gang investigators are involved in the probe after a daytime shooting in the northwest Wednesday afternoon.

### Page B1

### Myanmar Cyclone Death Toll Could Top 100,000

The death toll from the Myanmar cyclone could top 100,000, the top U.S. diplomat in the country said Wednesday, as thousands of shell–shocked survivors emerged from the flood waters, desperate for food.

### Page A3

### News Sections -- A and B

### City & Region

## Tribute to Friend Comforting

Still in grief's grip after a dear friend's hit-and-run death, Joanne Dorn says she finds comfort in the piles of flowers and teddy bears left at the scene where Linda Davey died. "I find it tough driving by, but seeing that compassion, it's nice to see what these people in the community are doing," she said.

Page B1

## Accused Rapist Denied Bail

A man accused of luring a woman to the basement of his northwest home, handcuffing her, duct-taping her mouth and ankles and repeatedly raping her has been denied bail. Page B3

## Canada

### Boy Credited With Saving Lives During Vancouver Fire

An 11-year-old boy is being credited for saving the lives of several elderly people after a blaze tore through a North Vancouver apartment building Tuesday night, killing three women and injuring about a dozen others. Dustan Roach-Matthews ran through all three floors of the building, yelling for people to get out.

Page A5

## World

### Father in Austrian Incest Case: 'I'm No Monster'

An Austrian accused of keeping his daughter as a sex slave for 24 years insisted Wednesday he was "no monster," as over 500 residents of his town staged a rally in support of the victims.

Page A14

### Japan, China to Hold Regular Summit Meetings

The leaders of Japan and China agreed Wednesday to resolve a territorial row and start regular summits to ease decades of tension, pledging that Asia's two largest economies would not see each other as a threat.

Page A17

### India Fights Rhino Poachers

Authorities in India's remote northeast said they were increasing security in the world's biggest reserve for the endangered great one-horned rhinoceros to save them from poachers.

Page A17

## Traffic

– Road closure: On 50th Avenue east of 52nd Street S.E. The road is closed until May 20.

– Closure: On Blackfoot Trail north of Southland Drive S.E. There will be various moving closures between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays for road maintenance operations, and speed restrictions in force until May 16.



– Road closure: On Home Road between 19th Avenue and 20th Avenue N.W. Northbound traffic will be directed to use 48th Street N.W. and southbound traffic will be directed to use 52nd Street N.W. to bypass the closure until May 18.

#### Commuter Weather

6 A.M. Off to Work: Cloudy with showers.

Temperature: 4 C

12 Noon Lunch: Cloudy, light rain.

Temperature: 6 C

5 P.M. Heading Home: Rain.

Temperature: 6 C

Overnight: Rain. Low: 0 C

Friday: Mainly sunny, cloudy periods. High: 10 C Low: 0 C

Wednesday: High: 13.1 C Low: -0.1 C

#### Online Features

CalgaryHerald.com

News: Light, sound conk out at Guantanamo's new terror courtroom.

News: Members of the Canadian Mental Health Association told an inquiry Wednesday that police should drop Tasers, pick up "talking skills."

#### Quote of the Day

"You were born a leader and I am honoured to have known you. . . . You define what a hero is"

Brad Olsen, 26 Fire Station, Calgary, wrote of Calgarian Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan.

See more condolences and stories, Page A4.

Calgary Business --- D1

#### Markets

– TSX Composite 42.77 14371.53

– Dow Jones 206.48 12814.35

– Nasdaq 44.82 2438.49

– TSX Venture 5.44 2504.58

### Calgarians Catch on to Condos as Investments

Calgarians are more willing than most Canadian city dwellers to consider owning a condominium purely for investment reasons rather than as a primary residence, says a poll by TD Canada Trust.

Page D1

### Tight Nutrients Supply to Continue: Agrium

Amid a scenario of soaring fertilizer prices and gung-ho food production, Agrium Inc. said it expects the current tight supply of crop nutrients to last for four to six years, if not longer. In theory, that's how long it could take before new facilities can be built to produce the nitrogen, phosphate and potash needed to catch up with global demand, said Agrium's Mike Wilson.

Page D3

### Editorial — A18

#### Israel's 60th Celebrated

A 60th birthday celebration should be a time for peaceful reflection, a time for taking stock while looking forward to a peaceful, mature old age freed from the daily grind in the trenches. Israel should be so lucky.

Page A18

### Letter

In June 1891, according to grandpa, who was almost 19, the Algerian pulled into Kingston harbour to find the city in darkness. On docking, they were told (Sir John A.) Macdonald had died June 6 in Ottawa.

Carl Stephenson, Page A19

### Sports — F1

#### Burris a Winner on and Off the Field

Too good to be true? Nope, says Calgary Stampeders defensive lineman Randy Chevrier. Henry Burris is the real deal. "He's a special personality," said Chevrier on Wednesday, prior to the President's Ring Luncheon at the Telus Centre, where Burris was presented with the 2007 President's Ring, honouring his work on and off the field.

Page F1

### Canada's Dynamic Duds

They are building blocks, the very foundation of their National Hockey League teams. But Ottawa's Jason Spezza and Carolina's Eric Staal have stuck out as square pegs in the roster holes they have been asked to fill at the world hockey championship, and by no mere coincidence Team Canada has struggled to take shape beneath its big line.

Page F3

Real Life --- C1

Famous Doctor in Town

You may know him by his beard. Or maybe you've seen him speak on Larry King Live or Oprah. Or perhaps you've seen his column in the Herald's Real Life pages every Monday. Whatever the case, if you're a fan of his, today you have a chance to see Dr. Andrew Weil live.

Page C1

Paddlers Retrace Journey

A mighty brigade of voyageur canoes will soon ply the waters from Rocky Mountain House all the way to northern Ontario in honour of one of Canada's greatest explorers.

Page C6

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

Farley's Tragi-Comedy

Shaking hands with Tom Farley Jr., I don't quite see the resemblance to Chris. Shorter, darker and much thinner than his late brother, Tom, at 46, has come to talk about his new biography, *The Chris Farley Show*.

Page E1

Tonight's TV Picks:

- Lost: 8 p.m. on CTV (Ch. 3).

It's An Odd World

Safety in Numbers for Speeding Drivers

Speeding drivers in south China are getting clear away thanks to remote-control machines that switch the numbers on their licence plates in seconds, state media said on Tuesday. "More than 50 per cent of cars caught on camera for speeding and other offences either cover up their plates or use a fake licence plate," a policeman in the Guangdong city of Yangjiang told the Beijing Youth Daily. The price of the device is around \$115 US.

# Reservists 'the best Canada has to offer'

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080016

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A4

**COLUMN:** Valerie Fortney

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Peter Andrews, Reuters / A piper plays as the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker is carried onto a Canadian Forces aircraft at Kandahar airfield on Wednesday. ; Photo: Stuart Gradon, Calgary Herald / Lieut. Col. Roger Scott, right, speaks at an emotional tribute to Cpl. Michael Starker at the Northeast Armoury Wednesday. ;

**BYLINE:** Valerie Fortney

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 929

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On Wednesday afternoon, I sent an e-mail to a young woman on the other side of the planet. A few months earlier, I'd spent less than an hour with Anji, as her friends know her.

But Cpl. Angela Clark, a 25-year-old recent University of Calgary grad, left a big impression. Her courage, strength of character and conviction outshone even her beaming smile.

I couldn't stop thinking about the Calgary reservist, currently serving in Afghanistan, and her fellow soldiers. How they were taking the news of Cpl. Mike Starker's death, what the ramp ceremony was like for them, how their morale is or isn't holding up.

I've become acquainted with soldiers like Clark before, but only in the past sense. Through their stories, the families of Calgaryans Cpl. Nathan Hornburg and Capt. Nichola Goddard brought these amazing young people to life.

Like Clark, these two soldiers were smart, well-informed and very aware of the dangers of doing a tour in Afghanistan.

In the descriptions of Mike Starker that have begun to trickle out from colleagues, friends and family, it's clear the Calgary paramedic and reservist was cut from the same cloth.

Well-educated, intelligent and thoughtful, Starker knew what he was doing and why — and the possible consequences.

Starker was part of today's Canadian military, exceptional young people willing to die to serve our country, to help others try to achieve the things we all take for granted. And they are finding many like them in the army's reserve force.

But don't take my word for it. Col. Art Wriedt agrees with such an assessment, and he's got the chops to back up his arguments.

"They're informed, they're dedicated, and they are very professional," says Wriedt, who commands the army reserve formation in Alberta and was the first local military official to receive the news of Starker's death.

"I can unabashedly say we are sending the best Canada has to offer, to places like Afghanistan."

Wriedt, who joined the reserve forces in 1971 and has been training reservists for more than two decades, says he's seen a marked change over the years in the people attracted to a stint with Canada's military.

"We get men and women from all walks of life, university students, government employees, professionals and more mature people, like Mike Starker," says Wriedt of the 36-year-old Calgarian.

"But today's reservist is much better educated than those in the past," he says of the approximately 1,900 reservists based in Alberta (recent Department of National Defence statistics show 64,050 men and women in the regular forces, 34,380 in the reserves countrywide).

"They're a lot better read today, especially about world events and issues."

Today's reservist is also better trained, so when it comes to tours of duty, they are assets to regular forces soldiers like Capt. Nichola Goddard.

"Reservists have careers they have to put on hold, and a tour of duty means taking about nine months off from regular life," he says, for both pre-deployment training and the tour of duty. "It's a major commitment."

Not to mention a major risk.

"He reminds me a lot of Nathan," says Michael Hornburg of Starker, who, like Nathan, believed in helping others.

"There were so many things Nathan could have done, but serving in Afghanistan was what he really wanted to do," says Hornburg, who is currently preparing for the first Loops for the Troops run and walk on June 15, a fundraiser to support military families.

"Michael sounds like he was that kind of person, too."

It's pretty clear from those who knew Starker that he fits such a bill.

Three hours before heading off on a humanitarian mission aboard a U.S. ship -- and a mere 30 or so hours after finding out his close friend died in Afghanistan -- Cpl. Alasdair Robertson-More participates in a press conference at the Northeast Armoury.

He valiantly struggles to keep his composure as the media asks him questions about Starker and his own resolve to go on his mission despite the loss.

Then, one journalist asks Robertson-More about how Starker's family is doing.

"How can anybody cope with this, really?" he says before bursting into tears.

These 21st-century soldiers are certainly exceptional men and women. And definitely, inescapably human.

vfortney@theherald.canwest.com

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Condolences From Our Readers

Go to [calgaryherald.com](http://calgaryherald.com) to share your thoughts on Cpl. Mike Starker's life and death

"Mike was a joy to know and an honour to call a friend, and his passing has left a big hole in our lives."

— Johnny Faulds, Edmonton

"It was an honour and pleasure to work with one of the kindest . . . good-hearted people ever. I will always remember your time out in Nakoda fondly. You will be sorely missed and never forgotten."

— Cam Brander, Calgary

"You promised you would come back, now all I have is your voice on a answering machine. . . . I will miss our ridiculous conversations, and your sarcastic wit, but most of all, I will miss you, my friend!"

— Angie Lowerison, Petawawa, Ont./Edmonton

"He was clearly a compassionate and wonderful human being who sacrificed until the very end."

— Jon Whitney, New York

"The world has lost a terrific person and a true hero. Thank you for trying to make this world a better place. You will not be forgotten my friend."

— Jeff Walker, Calgary

"Mike, you knew the risks. No one said it would be safe. Yet, you went anyway . . . you volunteered. Along with your fellow medics, Reg Force and Reserve, you went to try to make a difference. You did! And they still are! Job well done, mate! Rest easy!"

— Russ Meades, Victoria

"You were born a leader and I am honoured to have known you. I've never seen someone walk so tall and have such a positive attitude. . . . You define what a hero is. You are truly a brother and I will never forget what you have sacrificed. You put the cause above yourself which is a testament to how you lived your life."

— Brad Olsen, 26 Fire Station, Calgary

"I feel blessed to have known you, fortunate to have had you as my Kananaskis EMS partner and lucky to have been able to call you a friend. I cannot help but smile with my memories of you. Your service to humanity is felt by all — you are loved and missed deeply."

— Ciara Wall-Ramsden, Kananaskis

"I am proud to say I had the privilege of working with Mike when he first started with Calgary EMS, and found him to be one of the most upstanding, kind, cool, nice guys to work with. This was a man who gave his life to serving people and his country in many capacities."

— Tim MacDonald, Calgary

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Online Features

CalgaryHerald.com

Gallery: Ceremonies honour Cpl. Starker at home and away.

Text: Prayer from Cpl. Starker's ramp ceremony.

# Medics share risk with other soldiers

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080015  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** AMBULANCE SERVICES; PARAMEDICS; EMERGENCY SERVICES  
**BYLINE:** Gwendolyn Richards  
**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 305

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When an ambush claimed the life of paramedic and soldier Cpl. Michael Starker, it was the first loss for 15 Field Ambulance.

Members of the tight-knit unit, which traces its roots to the Second World War, are trained to save lives, but members are, first and foremost, soldiers.

Starker was among 12 members of 15 Field Ambulance serving in Afghanistan. He left mid-February after continually applying for every deployment opportunity in the past few years.

Scott said Starker had a profound sense he could make a difference to the Afghan people, as well as his fellow members in the Canadian Forces.

The top job for members of the medical reserve unit is providing health services support to the reserve army in Alberta, Scott said, but members are also prepared to supplement forces for domestic and international deployments.

While members of the reserve unit are highly trained to offer medical support, they also receive general military training -- weapon handling, parachuting, field training.

"Our members are deployed as medics, keeping in mind, of course, that all of us are soldiers," Scott said.

The 15 Field Ambulance, which has its headquarters in Edmonton, opened a detachment in Calgary in 1992.

Starker joined the 15 Field Ambulance in 2003, after transferring from the regular force.

The City of Calgary paramedic had volunteered to go to Afghanistan.

His death has forced some members of the unit to examine their own decisions whether to voluntarily deploy.

"It's a real gut check, personally, seeing what can happen to a buddy, especially a good friend," Cpl. Alasdair Robertson-More said.

Master Cpl. Andrew Stevens said he will probably go.

"I can't speak for everyone who decides to go, but, for myself, deciding to go is a sense of duty and patriotism to my friends and my regimental family that's gone over there," he said.



Starker's death, he added, has strengthened his commitment to the Canadian Forces.

Members also volunteer for humanitarian missions, including Robertson–More, who left Wednesday afternoon for a two–month stint aboard the USNS Mercy.

The decision to go ahead with the trip — during which he will provide medical help to people in Guam, the Philippines and Vietnam — was difficult for Robertson–More.

"I think it would have been easy to say, 'No, this is too hard, this is too much. I'm not going,' " he said.

"But that's not the way Mike was, that's not the way he lived. So, I'm going to carry on with the mission and soldier on."

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080009  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Mark Messier; Photo: Chris Farley ;  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 122

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## Mourning a Hero

Fallen Soldier: Coverage of the death of Cpl. Michael Starker includes the prayer from Wednesday's ceremony and a statement from the family. Be sure to sign the condolence board, too.

## Mini–Messier

Toys: Former Edmonton Oiler Mark Messier gets measured by McFarlane Toys, which is making an action figure of the Alberta hockey star.

## Comic Star Remembered

SNL Hero: Entertainment has a look of the life of comedian Chris Farley, who died in 1997.

His brother has written a book.

## Photo Galleries

Costume Duds: The Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has superhero movie costumes on display. We feature some of those famous costumes.

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Celebrate Spring: Look in Editor's Picks for a link to send in your photos.

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News: Light, sound conk out at Guantanamo's new terror courtroom.

News: Police should drop Tasers, pick up "talking skills," inquiry hears.

[calgaryherald.com](http://calgaryherald.com)

# 'In his heart, he was a soldier'; Family describes Cpl. Michael Starker as born leader

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080001

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Peter Andrews, Reuters / Pallbearers carry Cpl. Michael Starker's coffin during a ramp ceremony at Kandahar airfield Wednesday. The Calgary medic was killed in a Taliban ambush Tuesday. ; Colour Photo: Cpl. Michael Starker ; Colour Photo: Stuart Gradon, Calgary Herald / Cpl. Alasdair Robertson—More composes himself while talking about his friend Michael Starker on Wednesday. ; Photo: Jason Kryk, Canwest News Service / Ray Seguin, Starker's brother-in-law, says telling his daughter about her uncle's death was heart-wrenching. ;

**KEYWORDS:** PARAMEDICS

**BYLINE:** Sarah McGinnis and Stephane Massinon, with files from Canwest News Service, Kim Guttormson and Gwendolyn Richards, Calgary Herald

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 819

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When Cpl. Alasdair Robertson—More said a quick goodbye to his friend Cpl. Michael Starker at a New Year's Eve party, he had no idea it would be their last meeting.

Starker was leaving for a tour in Afghanistan, but everyone assumed he would be back in Calgary by the fall.

"We all kinda figured he was bulletproof," Robertson—More said on Wednesday.

Starker, a Calgary paramedic and reservist, was on a foot patrol in the Pashmul region on Tuesday when he was killed in a Taliban ambush.

He was 36 years old.

Starker's family is coping as best they can with his death, said Robertson—More, who visited with Starker's wife Nicole on Wednesday.

"She is an amazingly strong woman. Both her and Mike, I don't think they ever knew the meaning of the word quit," Robertson—More said, choking back tears.

Too overwhelmed by grief to speak with the media, Starker's immediate family issued a statement on Wednesday describing him as a soldier's soldier and a born leader, someone who was never afraid to take on difficult tasks to help others.

"In his heart, he was a soldier and in his blood — a paramedic," the statement said.

"He had the ability to make people feel safe and that they could handle any challenge.

"It made him not only a stellar paramedic and soldier, it made him a great person to know."

Starker's long journey home began in Afghanistan on Wednesday.

As a bagpiper played and the sun went down, Starker's flag-draped coffin was carried by his fellow medics across the Kandahar airfield and into a military aircraft. Thousands of NATO soldiers stood at attention.

His body is expected to arrive in Canada on Friday.

"We give thanks for his warrior spirit, that enabled him on and off the field to be at the centre of the storm, practising the professional skills of saving lives," said Maj. Jim Short, the deputy chaplain for Joint Task Force Afghanistan. "For his compassion and his charisma — for the gift of humour — and his ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh."

Short read lines from *In Flander's Fields*, noting the similarity between Starker's service and that of the author, Canadian surgeon Lt.-Col. John McRae.

"He was a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, but rather, he made a choice," Short said of Starker. "He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve, and do something to make this world a better place."

While his dual careers were important, Starker gave his heart and soul to his wife Nicole, his parents, and his sister and her family, said the statement from his family.

Caring for his loved ones — including his extended military and paramedic families — remained paramount to Starker.

"Always quick with a laugh, a joke and his trademark mischievous smile," Starker was adored by his nieces, nephew and godchildren, who cherished his special brand of humour.

An avid outdoorsman, he could set up a camp worthy of a king in 10 seconds flat before racing off to ride motorbikes, ATVs and mountain bikes.

Starker loved being a paramedic and a soldier, his family said.

"Mike will be missed terribly," the statement said.

In Windsor, Ont., Starker's brother-in-law, firefighter Ray Seguin, 30, said telling his daughter was the hardest part.

To four-year-old Serene, Uncle Mike was a hero.

"I said Uncle Mike was helping his buddies, and Uncle Mike got hurt. He's in heaven now," said Seguin. "My daughter loved him. Telling her this morning was not an easy deal."

In Calgary, the military community is reeling from the loss of their colleague and friend.

Members of the 15 Field Ambulance gathered Tuesday night, just hours after his death, to share stories about their fallen comrade.

"When we were in the field, he would always bolster on the young infantry troops, saying this infantry stuff is so easy," Master Cpl. Andrew Stevens said at a news conference the next morning.

Many of the young soldiers would glare at Starker, shrugging him off as "just a medic," never realizing he had been in the infantry first and had extensive military experience, Stevens said, chuckling.

Stevens himself was a frequent target of Starker's unique brand of teasing.

A past Canadian Airborne Regiment member, Starker hassled Stevens about why he had his wings but spent no time in the air force, Stevens said.

As fellow reservists talked about Starker's joking personality and dedication to service, the pain of losing him was etched on their faces.

"We are a regimental family and a member of our family is lost," said 15 Field Ambulance unit commanding officer Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, who has a dozen members in Afghanistan.

"I thought I was prepared for it, but then the call came," he said.

The sudden death of a co-worker in the field is also untravelled territory for Calgary paramedics. In the main hallway of EMS headquarters, a memorial for Starker is blossoming.

EMS paramedic John Doyle said he had a long chat with his kids about Starker and what happened to him. As a result, they made a card for Starker and taped it to his photo.

"Thank-you for protecting Canada Paramedic Mike. . . . We miss you. . . . Love Taylor, Patrick and Nicholas," it reads.

Doyle is in a different platoon than Starker and was working Wednesday to replace paramedics receiving counselling. He was far from the only one contributing to the memorial.

Many individuals walking past paused to look at the offerings while others laid flowers. Nine bouquets, a wreath and a flag make up the arresting display.

"We lost a soldier, we lost a colleague, and a million people in Calgary lost a good person," Doyle said.

EMS supervisor Phil Dais said that as a paramedic, Starker was one of the first to help out.

"When we got jammed up in the hallways . . . he's one of the first guys to help out other crews with their patients or offer to take over their patient care so they can have a meal break or whatever they needed," Dais said.

City staff plan to lower the flag in front of Old City Hall when Starker arrives back in Canada, likely on Friday. Mayor Dave Bronconnier has told Starker's family the city will offer whatever assistance they need.

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Send Your Condolences

[CalgaryHerald.com](http://CalgaryHerald.com)

Share your thoughts for Cpl. Michael Starker in our online book of remembrance

# 'Rescuer' coming home Soldiers pay tribute to slain medic

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080343  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos 1. photo by Peter Andrews, Reuters Pallbearers carry Starker's coffin onto a Canadian Forces aircraft during a ramp ceremony. 2. photo of MICHAEL STARKER Died in ambush  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 321

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated yesterday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony that no matter how many times it has been performed never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 km outside the city but died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said.

"He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He said the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written more than 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae. "We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn



and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of this day flickered away.

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years. Few details have been provided.

Starker was part of a Civil–Military Co–operation team that goes village to village talking with local Afghans and bringing their concerns back to Canadian commanders. KEYWORDS=CANADA

# Canuck troops get new leader

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080559  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 8  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of DENNIS THOMPSON "Risks"  
**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 219

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There's a new general in town.

The next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan arrived in Kandahar yesterday and said he believes the mission will take on a different flavour during his nine-month tour.

Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson said evolving conditions in the war-torn region mean there will be more of an emphasis on the civilian side of development and reconstruction.

He said there will still be a military aspect and doesn't expect the army will be adopting a defensive posture just because the focus is shifting.

"I think there will be a change in emphasis, but I'm not prepared to say how much that will be (because) there are other players here," Thompson said, referring to the Taliban.

The Canadian government is in the process of refocusing the mission and setting down objectives to be achieved before the military mission runs out in 2011.

Thompson will be replacing Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche.

He is the former commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade at CFB Petawawa, a base that has suffered a lot of casualties, and said that aspect personalizes this assignment for him.

"You tend to know an awful lot of people that are either injured or killed," he said. "It sharpens your focus and it makes you want to do everything you can to mitigate all of those risks."

Thompson arrived in Afghanistan one day after Cpl. Michael Starker was killed while on patrol.

Thompson and his staff have spent nine months training for the assignment — longer than any other headquarters staff. Their training has involved in-depth briefings and analysis on not only military matters, but development, diplomacy and the complexity of Afghan politics. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

# Selfless soldier hailed Thousands of NATO troops salute coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker, killed in Taliban ambush

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080557

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 8

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo by Peter Andrews, Reuters Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker, a Field Ambulance medic, onto a Canadian Air Force aircraft during a ramp ceremony yesterday in Kandahar. 2. photo of MICHAEL STARKER Slain by Taliban

**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER, THE CANADIAN PRESS

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR

**WORD COUNT:** 387

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A Canadian medic killed in a Taliban ambush was remembered yesterday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar Airfield. The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk, as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin before a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday, gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 km outside the city.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said. "He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He said the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem *In Flanders Fields*, written over 90 years ago during the World War I by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert as the last light of day flickered away.

Selfless soldier hailed Thousands of NATO troops salute coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker, killed in Taliban ambush

## ARMY INVESTIGATING

The Canadian army is investigating the circumstances surrounding the ambush, which took place in a sector that has been repeatedly cleared of insurgents over the last two years.

Few details have been provided.

Although ambushes happen routinely, it's nearly 20 months since a Canadian soldier died as the result of direct gun battle with insurgents.

Starker was part of a Civil–Military Co–operation team that goes village to village talking with local Afghans and bringing their concerns back to Canadian commanders.

It was that spirit Bergeron summoned as thousands of NATO troops — Canadian, British, American, Romanian, Dutch — saluted the coffin as it was marched slowly down the tarmac.

"As Michael passes before us one last time, it is with respect and dignity that we honour his life and his dedication to protecting and rescuing those in need," said the senior padre.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker was scheduled for 2 p.m. Friday at CFB Trenton. Starker was married but had no children. KEYWORDS=CANADA

# Soldiers bid farewell to slain medic

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**SOURCETAG** 0805080265

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 6

**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos 1, photo by Peter Andrews, Reuters Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance onto a Canadian Forces aircraft during a ramp ceremony at the Kandahar Airfield yesterday. 2. photo of MICHAEL STARKER "Potent skills"

**BYLINE:** DOUG MCINTYRE, SUN MEDIA

**DATELINE:** CALGARY

**WORD COUNT:** 318

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As the final traces of a sandstorm blew across Kandahar Airfield, Cpl. Michael Starker began his final journey home yesterday with a poignant ramp ceremony that recalled the fallen Calgary reservist's staunch commitment to serving his country.

A silent phalanx of fellow soldiers looked on sombrely as a Bison armoured vehicle carried the 36-year-old's flag-wrapped coffin, one day after he died in a Taliban ambush while on patrol 25 km west of Kandahar — making him the 83rd Canadian soldier, and fourth from Calgary, killed in Afghanistan.

During a ceremony in which he invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected on the sacrifice of a full-time Calgary paramedic who chose to serve in the war-torn nation.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man. He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice ... to make this world a better place," he said.

A humble man of charisma, good humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh" was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker, a medic with Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance Regiment.

He said Starker's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who served with him.

The loss was also keenly felt yesterday among Starker's regimental brothers in Calgary, where he grew up in Oakridge, attending Louis Riel junior high and later Henry Wise Wood high school.

"We are a regimental family and a member of our family is lost, and it's a very emotional time," said Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance.

A former full-time soldier with the Airborne Regiment, based in Petawawa, Starker was elated when he was chosen for a February deployment to Afghanistan, said Scott.

## REMAIN ON DUTY

Twelve members of the medic unit remain on duty in Afghanistan, where Starker was part of a Civil-Military Cooperation Team that visits villages and communicates locals' concerns back to Canadian commanders.

His death, while a harsh blow for his colleagues, only strengthens their collective resolve, said Scott.

"Certainly our medics that go outside the wire in those roles are assuming a risk just like any other soldier is," he said.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is scheduled for noon local time tomorrow at CFB Trenton.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# General stresses civilian side AFGHANISTAN: The next commander of Canadian troops arrives in Kandahar

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080816

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** C3

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Murray Brewster, CP Brig.–Gen. Dennis Thompson is the next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER, CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORD COUNT:** 294

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There's a new general in town.

The next commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan hit the ground in Kandahar yesterday and says he believes the mission will take on a different flavour during his nine-month tour.

Brig.–Gen. Dennis Thompson says evolving conditions in the war-torn region mean there will be more of an emphasis on the civilian side of development and reconstruction.

He says there will still be a military aspect and doesn't expect the army will be adopting a defensive posture just because the focus is shifting.

"I think there will be a change in emphasis, but I'm not prepared to say how much that will be (because) there are other players here," Thompson said, referring to the Taliban.

The Conservative government is in the process of refocusing the mission and setting down objectives to be achieved before the military mission runs out in 2011.

Thompson will be laying the groundwork for that and for a civilian administration at the provincial reconstruction base, which Canada operates in Kandahar City.

He will be replacing Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche, the current commander.

Thompson is the former commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade at CFB Petawawa, a base that has suffered many casualties, and he says that aspect of loss personalizes this assignment for him.

"You tend to know an awful lot of people that are either injured or killed," he said.

"It sharpens your focus and it makes you want to do everything you can to mitigate all of those risks."

Thompson arrived at Kandahar Airfield one day after the latest soldier was killed in a shootout with the Taliban.

Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic, was killed while on patrol with his Civil–Military Co–operation unit, which reaches out to Afghan villages and serves as a bridge with the community.

Despite the killing, Laroche said yesterday that Kandahar province is safer than when he took over almost 10 months ago.

He said the area where Starker was killed on foot patrol was an area Canadians couldn't enter a year ago.

Thompson and his staff have spent nine months training for the assignment — longer than any other headquarters staff.

Their training has involved in–depth briefings and analysis on not only military matters, but development and diplomacy, as well as the complex web of Afghan tribal politics.

Last winter, Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier in an interview described the training as giving the incoming officers and soldiers "a PhD in Afghan affairs." KEYWORDS=WORLD



# Comrades mourn fallen reservist

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080459  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 24

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Murray Brewster, The Canadian Press Military pallbearers get set to carry the casket of Cpl. Michael Starker at a ramp ceremony yesterday in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Canadian medic, killed in a vicious Taliban ambush, was celebrated as a man who had dedicated his life to protecting and rescuing those in need.

**BYLINE:** DOUG MCINTYRE, SUN MEDIA

**DATELINE:** CALGARY

**WORD COUNT:** 240

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As the final traces of a sandstorm blew across Kandahar Airfield, Cpl. Michael Starker began his final journey home yesterday with a poignant ramp ceremony that recalled the fallen Calgary reservist's staunch commitment to serving his country.

A silent phalanx of fellow soldiers looked on sombrely as a Bison armoured vehicle carried the 36-year-old's flag-wrapped coffin, one day after he died in a Taliban ambush while on patrol 25 km west of Kandahar – making him the 83rd Canadian soldier, and fourth from Calgary, killed in Afghanistan.

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"Cpl. Starker was a good man. He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice ... to make this world a better place," he said.

A humble man of charisma, good humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker, a medic with Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance Regiment.

He said Starker's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who served with him.

The loss was also keenly felt yesterday among Starker's regimental brothers in Calgary.

"We are a regimental family and a member of our family is lost, and it's a very emotional time," said Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance.

Twelve members of the medic unit remain on duty in Afghanistan, where Starker was part of a team that communicates locals' concerns back to Canuck commanders. **KEYWORDS=ALBERTA**

# Frontpage One too many for road Reports and charges of impaired driving rise sharply

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**SOURCETAG** 0805080426

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 1

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo by Darren Makowichuk, Sun Media HE WILL NEVER FORGET Cpl. Alasdair Robertson—More pauses while talking about his friend and fellow soldier, Cpl. Michael Starker, who was killed in Afghanistan. Soldiers from the 15 Field Ambulance detachment in Calgary had a press conference yesterday. See Page 24. 2. photo of HALEY GALL EVERY BREATH SHE TAKES ...

**WORD COUNT:** 0

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# Deployment will honour reservist's strength

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**SOURCETAG** 0805080664  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 3  
**BYLINE:** DOUG MCINTYRE  
**WORD COUNT:** 204

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The courage and integrity of fallen Calgary reservist Cpl. Michael Starker was cited as a shining example by an emotional friend and colleague whose own deployment was just hours away yesterday.

The decision to embark on a four-month humanitarian mission with the U.S. Navy in Southeast Asia was admittedly gut-wrenching for 27-year-old Cpl. Alasdair Robertson-More, arriving just one day after the man he worked with at both Calgary EMS and 15 Field Ambulance was killed in Afghanistan.

"I think it would've been easy to say 'No, this is too hard, this is too much, I'm not going,' " said the medic.

"But that's not the way Mike was, that's not the way he lived, so I'm going to carry on with the mission and soldier on."

Among many mourning the loss of Starker is his wife of 10 years, Nicole, who Robertson-More spoke with yesterday morning.

"She's an amazingly strong woman -- both her and Mike, I don't think they ever knew the meaning of the word quit," said Robertson-More.

"I was pretty torn up -- it's been pretty emotional for me to be saying goodbye to everybody, especially given that Mike's not back yet," he said.

"Right now, it's kind of a gut-check personally seeing what can happen to a buddy, especially a good friend."

A friend he fully expected to see once he returned, with the five-year pals saying as much during a New Year's party at Starker's house -- the last time Robertson-More saw the 36-year-old medic before he left for Afghanistan in February.

"Basically I said, 'I'll see you when I get back.' I don't think anybody expected not to see him," said Robertson-More. **KEYWORDS=ALBERTA**

# Coming home Sombre ceremony marks the beginning of fallen Calgary soldier's final journey

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080662

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 3

**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos 1. photo by Peter Andrews, Reuters Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance onto a Royal Canadian Air Force aircraft during a ramp ceremony at the Kandahar airfield yesterday. Starker was killed Tuesday in Afghanistan. 2. photo of CPL. MICHAEL STARKER Killed while on patrol in Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** DOUG MCINTYRE, SUN MEDIA

**WORD COUNT:** 311

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As the final traces of a sandstorm blew across Kandahar Airfield, Cpl. Michael Starker began his final journey home yesterday with a poignant ramp ceremony that recalled the fallen Calgary reservist's staunch commitment to serving his country.

A silent phalanx of fellow soldiers looked on somberly as a Bison armoured vehicle carried the 36-year-old's flag-draped coffin, one day after he died in a Taliban ambush while on patrol 25 km west of Kandahar.

Starker's death makes him the 83rd Canadian soldier, and fourth from Calgary, killed while serving in Afghanistan.

During a ceremony in which he invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected on the sacrifice of a full-time Calgary paramedic who chose to serve in the war-torn nation.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man. He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, rather he made a choice ... to make this world a better place," he said.

A humble man of charisma, good humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian chaplain Maj. Jim Short described Starker, a medic with Edmonton-based 15 Field Ambulance Regiment.

He said Starker's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who served with him.

The loss was also keenly felt yesterday among Starker's regimental brothers in Calgary.

Starker grew up in Oakridge, and attended Louis Riel junior high in that southwest community. He later went on to attend Henry Wise Wood high school.

"We are a regimental family and a member of our family is lost, and it's a very emotional time," said Lt.-Col. Roger Scott, commanding officer of 15 Field Ambulance.

A former full-time soldier with the Airborne Regiment, based in Petawawa, Ont., Starker was elated when he was chosen for a February deployment to Afghanistan, said Scott.

Twelve members of the medic unit remain on duty in Afghanistan, where Starker was part of a Civil–Military Co–operation Team that visits villages and communicates locals' concerns back to Canadian commanders.

His death, while a devastating blow to his military colleagues, only strengthens their collective resolve, said Scott.

"Certainly our medics that go outside the wire in those roles are assuming a risk just like any other soldier is," he said.

A repatriation ceremony for Starker is scheduled for noon Calgary time tomorrow at CFB Trenton, Ont.

KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

# Mayor should stop being inconsistent over flag tribute to Calgary soldiers killed in the line of duty

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**SOURCETAG:** 0805080660  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 2  
**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos 1. photo by Lyle Aspinall, Special to the Sun The Canadian flag flies high outside Calgary City Hall yesterday, unlike a previous occasion when it was lowered to half-staff to honour the death of a local soldier in Afghanistan. 2. photo of DAVE BRONCONNIER Flag rules changed  
**BYLINE:** MICHAEL PLATT  
**WORD COUNT:** 486

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There's a reason the flags outside city hall remain at full-staff, flying high even as Calgarians mourn for a third day over the death of Cpl. Michael Starker, a local soldier and paramedic.

It's protocol.

At least, it's protocol as of now.

Protocol in this case means a decision made by the Mayor's Office at some point early yesterday morning, less than a day after Starker was killed in Afghanistan by a Taliban bullet.

At least, that's when City of Calgary protocol clerk Catherine Humeny says she first heard of the city's official new rule regarding municipal flags and dead Canadian soldiers.

"That was a request of the Mayor's Office, as of this morning," said Humeny.

The new protocol, not voted on by city council or vetted in a single public discussion, is that municipal flags will remain at full height until the body of the dead soldier is back in Canada.

Starker's repatriation ceremony, when his casket officially touches down on Canadian soil, is slated for noon Calgary time tomorrow.

That's four days after Starker died.

From that point, until Starker's funeral is over, the flags outside old City Hall will finally join those at EMS headquarters and Calgary's military facilities and be lowered. At last.

Until then, unlike the citizens of cities like Toronto and towns like Nanton, Calgarians will see no immediate symbol of civic mourning, because of an official protocol that apparently didn't officially exist when the week started.

That's despite Mayor Dave Bronconnier telling two reporters -- whom he approached yesterday morning as they were staring up at the non-lowered flags -- that the city has always stuck to the same flag-lowering rule.

Mayor should stop being inconsistent over flag tribute to Calgary soldiers killed in the line of duty 83

"We always follow the same protocol," Bronconnier.

An e-mail message was sent to aldermen yesterday, saying the same: The city always follows the same protocol.

Except the City of Calgary doesn't.

It's no wonder citizens are confused, and wondering if anyone at city hall is aware a soldier and paramedic is dead, and why the flags haven't shifted.

The last time Calgary suffered a similar tragedy in Afghanistan, back in 2007, Bronconnier himself stepped forward to say the existing protocol, as followed by the provincial and federal government, didn't do enough to honour the dead.

Instead of waiting for the funeral — as per the protocol then — Bronconnier demanded the flags at City Hall be immediately lowered out of respect for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, less than one day after he was killed.

At the time, Bronconnier said the city would follow military tradition, lowering ensigns to fly at half-staff at the soldier's "home base."

In short, when a Calgary soldier died in the line of duty, City Hall flags would fall, too.

"This is a new protocol. I strongly believe we should support the military tradition of home base and I think it's appropriate, given this is a local Calgarian," Bronconnier said at the time.

It was a sound decision made publicly by the mayor; one that reflected the emotion of citizens.

So where's that leadership now?

Just daring to inquire about the decision to delay the flag lowering was condemned as a "distasteful question" by an unhappy member of Bronconnier's staff.

One wonders if those working in the Mayor's Office would condemn the father of Cpl. Hornburg, who also wonders if a four-day delay is appropriate for a symbol of civic mourning.

"It's the same in any city — the instant you hear, the grieving process begins then, not four days later," said Michael Hornburg.

"It's baffling."

Instead of the Mayor's Office making a knee-jerk, scribbled-on-a-napkin decision about flag protocol, city council should debate and pass a flag policy once and for all.

One hopes council would grasp the obvious, and understand Calgarians need an immediate symbol of grief, and a clear sign of official mourning.

That means lowering the flag right away — not four days after tragedy strikes.

But no matter what council decides, at least there will be consistency — unlike now.

KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

# FRONTPAGE Soldiering On Calgary medic's death inspires comrade

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**SOURCETAG** 0805080659

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 1

**ILLUSTRATION:** 4 photos 1. photo by Darren Makowichuk, Sun Media Cpl. Alasdair Robertson–More, a friend and fellow city paramedic to Cpl. Michael Starker, is determined to honour the fallen soldier by going abroad on a humanitarian mission. 2. photo of CPL. MICHAEL STARKER 3. RAUNCHY REALITY Tila Tequila ready to titillate in second season 4. IS SID PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE? Sports pullout

**WORD COUNT:** 0

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# Mission gets personal for new top soldier

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080100  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** C11  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Canwest News Service / Brig.-Gen. DennisThompson arrives in Kandahar Wednesday morning ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Ryan Cormier  
**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 497

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Canada's mission in Afghanistan is expected to shift focus from security to development, the incoming commander of troops said upon arrival in Afghanistan Wednesday.

"Frankly, the mission has been evolving since it started and really that's all that's going to go on," said Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson. "The mission will continue to evolve while we're here. I don't think it's any surprise that it will take on more of a civilian flavour."

Thompson landed at the Kandahar Airfield Wednesday morning for the start of a tour as the top Canadian soldier in the country. He will officially replace Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche sometime in the near future.

The shift to the reconstruction and development side of Canada's mission does not mean that Canada's military is moving from the offensive to the defensive, he said.

Thompson was previously commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, based at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa, Ont. He said his time there makes this assignment to Afghanistan a personal one.

"It certainly personalizes the mission because you tend to know a lot of people that are injured or killed. It personalizes the mission and sharpens your focus and makes you want to do all you can to minimize those risks," he said.

Thompson's arrival coincides with the approaching poppy harvest, a time when Taliban insurgents are expected to become aggressive and launch more attacks. That's not a coincidence, Thompson said, adding that the Canadian Forces want consistent leadership in place throughout the summer months and into the fall.

Thompson also said he will be a part of discussions to set new benchmarks in Afghanistan that will determine levels of success for the mission that the Canadian government is currently mapping out.

Thompson's arrival also comes one day after the latest Canadian casualty in Afghanistan. Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic from Calgary, was killed during a shootout in the Zhari district while on foot patrol with a civil-military co-operation team Tuesday morning. He was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. One Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

The body of Cpl. Starker was sent home Wednesday.

As bagpipes played and the sun went down, Starker's flag-draped coffin was carried by his fellow medics across the Kandahar Airfield and into a military aircraft. Thousands of NATO soldiers stood at attention.

"We give thanks for his warrior spirit, that enabled him on and off the field to be at the centre of the storm, practising the professional skills of saving lives," said Maj. Jim Short, the deputy chaplain for Joint Task Force Afghanistan. "For his compassion and his charisma -- for the gift of humour -- and his ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh."

Short read lines from *In Flander's Fields*, noting the similarity between Starker's service and that of the author, Canadian surgeon Lt.-Col. John McRae.

"He was a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, but rather, he made a choice," Short said of Starker. "He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve, and do something to make this world a better place."

# Afghan focus to shift toward development; New military commander sees 'civilian flavour'

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080012

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Color Photo: PETER ANDREWS, REUTERS / While comrades solemnly salute, pallbearers carry the coffin of Corporal Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance on to a Canadian Forces aircraft. Starker was killed on Tuesday during a foot patrol in the Pashmul region of Zhari district in Afghanistan. ; Color Photo: Ryan Cormier, CNS / Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson arrived at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan yesterday. ;

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Ryan Cormier

**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 434

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Canada's mission in Afghanistan is expected to shift focus from security to development, the incoming commander of troops said upon arrival in Afghanistan yesterday.

"Frankly, the mission has been evolving since it started and really that's all that's going to go on," said Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson. "The mission will continue to evolve while we're here. I don't think it's any surprise that it will take on more of a civilian flavour."

Brig.-Gen. Thompson landed at the Kandahar Airfield yesterday morning for the start of a tour as the top Canadian soldier in the country. He will officially replace Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche sometime soon.

The shift to the reconstruction and development side of Canada's mission does not mean Canada's military is moving from the offensive to the defensive, he said.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson was previously commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, based at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa. He said his time there makes this assignment to Afghanistan a personal one.

"It certainly personalizes the mission, because you tend to know a lot of people that are injured or killed. It personalizes the mission and sharpens your focus and makes you want to do all you can to minimize those risks," he said.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson's arrival coincides with the approaching poppy harvest, a time when Taliban insurgents are expected to become aggressive and launch more attacks.

That's not a coincidence, Brig.-Gen. Thompson said, adding the Canadian Forces want consistent leadership in place throughout the summer months and into the fall.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson also said he will be a part of discussions to set new benchmarks in Afghanistan that will determine levels of success for the mission that the Canadian government is currently mapping out.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson's arrival also comes one day after the latest Canadian casualty in Afghanistan. Corporal Michael Starker, a reservist and medic from Calgary, was killed during a shootout in the Zhari district while on foot patrol with a civil-military co-operation team on Tuesday morning.

He was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. One Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

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**KEYWORDS: WAR**

# Caption Only

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080019

**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Reuters / **FALLEN SOLDIER RETURNS HOME:**Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of Calgary onto a Canadian Air Force aircraft during a Ramp ceremony at the Kandahar air field on Wednesday. Cpl. Starker was killed on Tuesday when he came under enemy fire during a patrol in the Pashmul region of the Zhari district. ;

**KEYWORDS:** 0

**SOURCE:** Reuters

**WORD COUNT:** 4

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NO TEXT

# Mission changing gears; New commander says focus shifts from security to development

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**IDNUMBER:** 200805080002  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**COLUMN:** Ryan Cormier  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,  
Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Ryan Cormier  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 436

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"Frankly, the mission has been evolving since it started and really that's all that's going to go on," said Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson.

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rcormier@thejournal.canwest.com

# Clinic planned for servicemen, women with 'mental injuries'; Announcement in Ottawa meant to acknowledge service-related stress conditions

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080019

**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Peter Andrews, Reuters / Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance on to a Canadian Air Force aircraft during a ramp ceremony at the Kandahar air field Wednesday. Starker was killed in Afghanistan Tuesday in an ambush, while another Canadian soldier was wounded. ;

**KEYWORDS:** MENTAL HEALTH; MENTALLY DISABLED; HEALTH CARE

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Norma Greenaway

**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 364

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OTTAWA -- At least 1,500 of the 20,000 men and women who have served in the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan since 2001 have suffered from service-related stress conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression or addiction, according to federal government figures released Wednesday.

The figures were provided by the Department of National Defence as Greg Thompson, the federal minister of Veteran Affairs, announced the planned creation of a clinic in Ottawa for servicemen and women struggling with a range of "mental injuries."

The Ottawa clinic, which is expected to treat between 100 and 150 clients annually after it opens at the end of the year, is one of several planned across the country.

Thompson held up the increasing number of current and former servicemen and women seeking help for mental stress, and the creation of the clinics as signs of a more progressive attitude toward mental illness within the military.

Making the announcement at the Royal Ottawa Health Centre, where the clinic will be located, Thompson said no effort should be spared to treat those who have suffered "real and tragic psychological" injuries.

"There are no quick fixes, no easy cures and no pill," he said.

Thompson said the number of veterans with operational stress injuries has risen to 11,000 from 3,500 five years ago.

Officials said the tally includes those who served in Rwanda, Somalia and other recent war zones, as well as some who fought in the Second World War and in the Korean conflict.



Thompson attributed much of the almost threefold increase to early detection, something that he said has allowed many men and women to remain within the military and to function well.

"What we're attempting to do is erase the stigma that we attach to this, and the shame that's attached to it.

"Because, you know, we'll accept a broken arm or a leg or bullets and bombs, but somehow we fail (in the mental health area), and, of course we've masked that over the years with shell shock or battle fatigue, using any other name but mental injury."

Raymond Lalonde, director of the National Centre for Operational Stress Injuries, said 700 Veteran Affairs clients who served in Afghanistan have been approved for a disability claim on grounds they suffer an operational stress injury, a number that includes about 300 who are still serving with the military.

Lalonde could not, however, say how many, if any, of those overlapped with the Defence Department tally of 1,500.

# Mission taking mental toll; New clinics will treat suffering soldiers

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080072

**PUBLICATION:** The Province

**DATE:** 2008.05.08

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A55

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Canwest News Service / As pipes wail, pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker on to a Canadian Forces transport plane at Kandahar Airfield at dusk yesterday. The soldier was killed during a fight with insurgents in Zhari district. ;

**KEYWORDS:** MENTAL HEALTH; MENTALLY DISABLED; HEALTH CARE; DEPRESSION

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Norma Greenaway

**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 316

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OTTAWA -- At least 1,500 of the 20,000 men and women who have served in the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan since 2001 have suffered from service-related stress conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression or addiction, the Department of National Defence said yesterday.

At the same time, Veteran Affairs Minister Greg Thompson announced the planned creation of a clinic in Ottawa for servicemen and women struggling with a range of "mental injuries."

The clinic, which is expected to treat between 100 and 150 clients annually after it opens at the end of the year, is one of several planned across the country.

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who are still serving.

# Afghan mission to 'take on civilian flavour'; Focus to shift to development, incoming commander says

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080016  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD  
**BYLINE:** Ryan Cormier, with files from Juliet O'Neill  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 438

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD – Canada's mission in Afghanistan is expected to shift focus from security to development, the incoming commander of troops said upon arrival in Afghanistan yesterday.

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He also said he will be a part of discussions to set new benchmarks in Afghanistan that will determine levels of success for the mission that the Canadian government is currently mapping out.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson's arrival also comes one day after the latest Canadian casualty in Afghanistan. Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic from Calgary, was killed during a shootout in the Zhari district while on foot patrol with a civil-military co-operation team Tuesday morning.

He was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. One Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa yesterday, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada assured MPs that Canadian aid funds are not winding up in the "pockets or bank accounts" of corrupt government officials.

Ambassador Omar Samad made the comment at a Commons committee as he urged Canada to support a request by Afghanistan to ensure a greater portion of international aid arriving in the country is channelled through the government, rather than non-government organizations and private corporations.

Afghanistan will be making that case at an international donors' conference next month in Paris, where authorities will discuss the fate of billions of dollars in assistance while the security situation in the country has worsened.

Canada's aid pledge to Afghanistan will total about \$1.2 billion by the end of 2011.

# 'Technical' gaffes mar court's opening; Light, sound failures add to chaos as first defendant 'boycotts' proceedings

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080015  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Peter Andrews, Reuters / Pallbearers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker of 15 Field Ambulance onto a Canadian Forces aircraft during a ramp ceremony at the Kandahar Airfield yesterday. Cpl. Starker's loss is keenly felt, as he had put his name in for almost every deployment opportunity that came up, and his comrades say he believed in the mission and in helping others. ;

**DATELINE:** U.S. NAVAL BASE GUANTANAMO, Cuba  
**BYLINE:** Steven Edwards  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 507

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U.S. NAVAL BASE GUANTANAMO, Cuba – Light and sound failures led to almost farcical scenes on the first day the United States used its \$12-million courtroom here for trying the "worst-of-the-worst" terror suspects.

Despite extensive security precautions taken to handle detainees, the judge in an arraignment yesterday ended up sitting just feet from admitted al-Qaeda operative Ali Hamza Ahmad Suliman al Bahlul as he left his bench in search of a working microphone.

Army Col. Peter Brownback -- who is also the judge in the case of Canadian-born Omar Khadr -- was in the same spot when the lights went out about a half hour later, and at that point, guards moved closer to the accused.

This all followed an embarrassing snafu in the opening hour of the hearing when sound cut to the gallery where media and human rights monitors were sitting.

Military officials insisted it was because of a "technical difficulty" and not a bid to censor Mr. al Bahlul, who had just written a three-page statement he wanted the judge to read aloud.

"I don't know what's wrong with the AV in this place," Col. Brownback snapped in reference to the audiovisual transmission system.

Mr. Khadr, accused of murder among five war crimes in a 2002 grenade attack in Afghanistan that killed a U.S. serviceman, will appear today for a hearing in the courtroom used until now at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba -- a converted airport control tower.

The 21-year-old's apparent willingness to co-operate during his appearances to date contrasts sharply with stances taken by other detainees -- and the difference was especially sharp in comparison to Mr. al Bahlul's

'Technical' gaffes mar court's opening; Light, sound failures add to chaos as first defendant 'boycotts' proceedings

approach yesterday.

The alleged "media director" of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden waved a paper that said "boycott" in Arabic to indicate he wanted nothing to do with the proceedings.

But Col. Brownback also allowed him to speak for more than an hour about how dedicated Islamists will see U.S. prosecution of the Guantanamo detainees as additional incentive for continued resistance against the U.S. and its allies.

"We will continue our jihad and nothing will stop us ..." he said.

"If you sentence me to life in America or on this island, or even on the moon ... I and others will be the reason for the continuation off the war."

Mr. al Bahlul, 39, signalled the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks were retribution for what he called U.S. oppression of the Muslim world, adding he saw no path to convergence of the al-Qaeda way of thinking and western principles.

"You have your own religion and principles," he said. "We are different from you."

A Yemeni national, Mr. al Bahlul allegedly prepared a propaganda video glorifying the attack on the destroyer USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden. He also allegedly prepared the videotaped will of 9/11 lead hijacker Mohamed Atta, and operated communications gear for Mr. bin Laden. "I am renewing my allegiance to Sheik Osama bin Laden," he said.

An Arabic-speaking CBC cameraman translated Mr. al Bahlul's testimony for journalists during frequent technical interruptions of the commission translator's broadcast, however officials later said Col. Brownback had ordered a transcript be prepared for public release.

"You can't make this stuff up," said Air Force Maj. David Frakt, Mr. al Bahlul's assigned defence lawyer, now describing himself as "standby" attorney following the defendant's boycott pledge.

# Afghan mission to take new direction; Canadian goals. Incoming commander says troops will focus on development

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080029  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A12  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: PETER ANDREWS, REUTERS / The casket of Cpl. Michael Starker is carried during ramp ceremony yesterday. Starker was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD  
**BYLINE:** RYAN CORMIER  
**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 541

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Canada's mission in Afghanistan is expected to shift focus from security to development, the incoming commander of troops said upon arrival in Afghanistan yesterday.

"Frankly, the mission has been evolving since it started and really that's all that's going to go on," Brig.-Gen. Dennis Thompson said. "The mission will continue to evolve while we're here. I don't think it's any surprise that it will take on more of a civilian flavour."

Thompson landed at the Kandahar Airfield yesterday morning for the start of a tour as the top Canadian soldier in the country. He will officially replace Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche sometime in the near future.

The shift to the reconstruction and development side of Canada's mission does not mean that Canada's military is moving from the offensive to the defensive, he said.

Thompson was previously commander of the 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, based at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa in Ontario. He said his time there makes this assignment to Afghanistan a personal one.

"It certainly personalizes the mission because you tend to know a lot of people that are injured or killed. It personalizes the mission and sharpens your focus and makes you want to do all you can to minimize those risks," he said.

Thompson's arrival coincides with the approaching poppy harvest, a time when Taliban insurgents are expected to become aggressive and launch more attacks. That's not a coincidence, Thompson said, adding that the Canadian Forces want consistent leadership in place throughout the summer months and into the fall.

Thompson also said he will be a part of discussions to set new benchmarks in Afghanistan that will determine levels of success for the mission the Canadian government is mapping out.



Thompson's arrival also comes one day after the latest Canadian casualty in Afghanistan. Cpl. Michael Starker, a reservist and medic from Calgary, was killed during a shootout in the Zhari district while on foot patrol with a civil–military co–operation team Tuesday morning.

He was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. One Canadian diplomat has also been killed.

The body of Cpl. Starker was sent home yesterday.

As bagpipes played and the sun went down, Starker's flag–draped casket was carried by his fellow medics across the Kandahar Airfield and into a military aircraft. Thousands of NATO soldiers stood at attention.

"We give thanks for his warrior spirit, that enabled him on and off the field to be at the centre of the storm, practising the professional skills of saving lives," said Major Jim Short, the deputy chaplain for Joint Task Force Afghanistan. "For his compassion and his charisma – for the gift of humour – and his ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh.

"He was a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic, but rather, he made a choice," Short continued. "He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve, and do something to make this world a better place."

Mission's mental toll: At least 1,500 of the 20,000 men and women who have served in the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan since 2001 have suffered from service–related stress conditions, including post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression or addiction, according to federal government figures released yesterday.

The figures were provided by the Department of National Defence as Greg Thompson, the federal minister of Veteran Affairs, announced the planned creation of a clinic in Ottawa for servicemen and women struggling with a range of "mental injuries."

# Comrades mourn 'a good man'

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080033  
**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Canada/World  
**PAGE:** A11  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Peter Andrews, Reuters / The final journey: Fellow soldiers carry the coffin of Cpl. Michael Starker onto a Canadian aircraft in Kandahar yesterday. ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2008 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 273

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A Canadian medic killed in a vicious Taliban ambush was celebrated yesterday as a man who had dedicated his "life to protecting and rescuing" those in need.

Cpl. Michael Starker, the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan, began his final journey home with a ramp ceremony at Kandahar airfield that no matter how many times it has been performed never loses its poignancy.

The last wisps of a sandstorm blew across the tarmac in the gathering dusk as a Bison armoured vehicle carried Starker's flag-wrapped coffin to the edge of a silent phalanx of fellow soldiers.

Starker, 36, of Calgary, was killed Tuesday.

He was gunned down in an ambush by insurgents in the Pashmul region of Zhari district, about 25 kilometres outside the city. He died later in hospital.

Starker didn't have to be there, Maj. Pierre Bergeron reflected.

"Cpl. Starker was a good man," he said.

"He was also a reservist who could have stayed in Canada and continued working as a paramedic. Rather he made a choice. He chose to come to Afghanistan and serve and do something to make this world a better place."

Another soldier wounded with Starker, sat quietly in a wheelchair as eight fellow medics shouldered the coffin into the belly of a Hercules transport for the flight back to Canada.

A man of humble nature, with charisma, a gift for humour and the "ability to hang in there until he had made you smile or laugh," was how the deputy Canadian padre Maj. Jim Short described Starker.

He says the 36-year-old's "potent skills" as a paramedic instilled confidence in those who knew him and served with him.

Bergeron invoked passages from the poem In Flanders Fields, written more than 90 years ago during the First World War by an army surgeon, Lt.-Col. John McCrae.

"We are the dead; short days ago we lived, felt dawn and watched the sunset glow," Bergeron said, his voice cascading from a loudspeaker across the silent desert.

# windsorstar.com; Breaking news, sports, photos, health, entertainment -- what's online today from The Windsor Star

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**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: (See hard copy for photo description.);  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**WORD COUNT:** 69

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Shooting > Click through a gallery of photos or watch a video taken by Star photographer Jason Kryk at the scene of a shooting in Windsor in which a woman was wounded in the foot.

Sound Off! > Should the city's 4 a.m. mandatory closing bylaw apply to other all-night businesses?

Fallen soldier > Watch a slide show of Cpl. Michael Starker narrated by his brother-in-law Ray Seguin. Starker was killed in action Tuesday in Afghanistan.

# Fallen soldier had local ties

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**IDNUMBER** 200805080001  
**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2008.05.08  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Jason Kryk, Star photo / PAINFUL: Ray Seguin, right, talks about the death of his brother-in-law Cpl. Michael Starker, left. ; Photo: Special to The Windsor Star / GENTLE TOUCH: Cpl. Michael Starker, who was killed Tuesday, helps an Afghan boy. ;  
**BYLINE:** Trevor Wilhelm  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**WORD COUNT:** 690

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Cpl. Michael Starker had nothing to prove — he'd already risked his life to serve his country.

It was time to settle down and have babies. Then he learned his buddies were going to Afghanistan. He would ship out one last time, to take care of them.

Starker, 36, a reservist and combat medic whose wife is a Windsorite, was killed Tuesday when his unit was ambushed by the Taliban while on foot patrol.

For local firefighter Ray Seguin, Starker's brother-in-law, telling his daughter was the hardest part. To four-year-old Serene, Uncle Mike was a hero.

"His primary objective was to take care of his guys," said Seguin, 30, his voice cracking as he fought back tears.

"I said Uncle Mike was helping his buddies, and Uncle Mike got hurt. He's in heaven now. My daughter loved him. Telling her this morning was not an easy deal. Telling my four-year-old daughter that Uncle Mike's not coming home, that he got hurt trying to help his friends — just a tough deal."

Another soldier was also injured in the attack, which happened around 11:45 a.m. Tuesday. Starker, a member of 15 Field Ambulance, was the 83rd Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

The Seguin family is headed to Trenton today for a repatriation ceremony. Starker's wife Nicole, 36, is coming from Calgary, where she now lives. Starker's friends, the ones he went to patch up, are stuck in Afghanistan and will miss the funeral.

"It's just killing those guys," said Seguin. "Some of those guys grew up with him, went through the military, served in Somalia together. That was a big reason why he was going over. He said 'this time I can make a difference, try and save some of these guys.' That was a big thing that pushed him along."

Starker, who joined the military at age 18, had previously seen combat in Somalia with the airborne division. After that, said Seguin, Starker's division was disbanded and he went to the regular infantry. He decided that wasn't going anywhere and returned to civilian life in Calgary as a welder. That also didn't go so well.

"As he put it, it wasn't stressful enough," said Seguin. "He needed to find something more stressful."

About four years ago, he became a paramedic. With their lives on track, Starker and Nicole were planning to have children, said Seguin. But he put that on hold for this last tour.

"Ever since I had kids, him and my sister, I think it kind of pushed them along to have kids," said Seguin. "They talked about trying to have kids before. Then when this came up, they said we'll hold off until he gets back. This was supposed to be his last tour."

He'd been there for less than half of his six-month tour when he was killed.

Seguin was at work when he found out. His sister called him at Station 4 on College Avenue.

"She didn't have to say much," said Seguin. "I knew she was calling me at work. It wasn't good. She just said that he was killed outside of Kandahar."

### WAS DEVASTATED

"I was devastated. We'd become close since my dad died. He was my best man at my wedding. My first thoughts were with my sister and Mike's parents. And all the guys that he's with. I know what it is to build a bond with guys that you live with, and that you do extreme things with."

Seguin's sister Nicole brought Starker home 15 years ago.

Starker, a Calgary native, met his future wife through his best friend Bob McGonigal, a Windsorite and fellow soldier. They were both stationed at Petawawa when McGonigal got a visit from his sister, and her friend Nicole Seguin.

"Lo and behold, she meets Mike," said Ray Seguin.

He said Starker wasn't the typical "preppy" guy his sister normally brought home.

"Mike was definitely a Calgary boy," said Seguin. "I remember the first day I met him -- the cowboy boots, the big belt buckle, the big 4 x 4 with the whipper antennas."

Somehow, Starker endeared himself to the tight-knit Seguin family. He married into it 10 years ago. He said his brother-in-law's death was a wake-up call that he'd become apathetic to the risks that soldiers face in foreign lands.

"We all get desensitized to it, that these guys go over there, put their lives on the line," he said. "We hear about guys being killed over there. Every one of those guys has a story. Every one of those guys has a life and a family. We gotta make sure we remember that every time these guys make a sacrifice. It was always somebody else, until yesterday."

### ONLINE

[windsorstar.com](http://windsorstar.com)

Watch a slide show of Cpl. Michael Starker's family photos and an interview with relatives.