

# **MILNEWS.CA**

## **MEDIA SUMMARY REPORT**

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### **Highlights: Death of Corporal Anthony Joseph Boneca on July 9, 2006**

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According to military and media accounts as of 091850EDT Jul 06, Cpl. Anthony Joseph Boneca was killed during a firefight with Taliban insurgents approximately 25 kilometres west of Kandahar. The incident occurred at approximately 090830 Jul 06 Kandahar time (090000EDT Jul 06) while Canadian infantry attacked on foot and LAV III light-armoured vehicles. One reporter near the scene said, "He died in an ambush just about 200 metres away from where our patrol was . . . (when) several patrollers were trying to conduct a sweep through a village called Pashmol." Media reports indicate Cpl. Boneca was shot in the chest just above his bullet-proof vest from the roof of a mud-baked compound used to dry grapes by a Taliban gunman as the 21-year-old reservist tried to enter the building in the village of Pashmol, in Zhari District, Kandahar Province in southwestern Afghanistan. Cpl. Boneca was evacuated by helicopter to a military hospital at Kandahar Airfield where he was pronounced dead.

After Boneca's death, U.S. aircraft -- including a remotely controlled Predator, Apache AH-64 attack helicopters and A-10 Warthogs -- reportedly fired Hellfire missiles, and dropped other ordnance on the compound. Howitzers of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery were also called upon to shell the area.

Media reports indicate Cpl. Boneca was a part-time soldier with the a reservist who joined Thunder Bay's Lake Superior Scottish Regiment (LSSR) out of high

school four years ago. A internet search indicates an Anthony Boneca received a Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award for Students in 2003 while attending St. Ignatius High School. Media reports quoting family members indicate Cpl. Boneca had previously done tours that included guard duty in the United Arab Emirates, as well as several trips to Kabul before he arrived in southern Afghanistan in February 2006.

Cpl. Boneca was serving with Task Force Afghanistan as part of the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI) Battle Group. The unit Cpl. Boneca was working with was operating in Zhari District as part of Operation Zahar, which means "Sword" in Pashto. Operation Zahar is a joint Afghan National Army/Coalition security operation aimed at removing the Taliban threat west of Kandahar City while strengthening the Afghan Government's authority in the area.

Unconfirmed reports on a bulletin board indicate the commanding officer of the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment went to the family's home at approximately 090300EDT Jul 06 to inform them of Cpl. Boneca's death. As of 091845EDT Jul 06, the main family spokespeople quoted in media accounts were Elizabeth and William Babe, an aunt and uncle of Cpl. Boneca. A CBC Radio story aired during the 6pm EDT national news on 9 Jul 06 produced by a Thunder Bay reporter included a brief quote from Boneca's father. William Babe is quoted in the same CBC story indicating that Cpl. Boneca was going to leave the military when he returned from Afghanistan because of some dissatisfaction. Babe cited, "things he'd seen, and things he'd had to do, and didn't want to." Other media accounts indicate he was eager to return home following a recent two-week vacation with his partner in Italy and Greece.

As of 091923EDT Jul 06, a ramp ceremony was planned for the morning of 10 Jul 06, but funeral arrangements were still not available.

### ***Highlight Quotes:***

"I have so many memories -- hundreds of memories -- he was just a wonderful boy and a fine young man. Very strong, very honest, really helpful and considerate. I can't say enough good things about him."

*William Babe, uncle, quoted by CTV News*

"He's just the most wonderful boy. Very loyal, very strong, very intelligent, and thrilled to be part of the services. A real angel of a person."

*Elizabeth Babe, aunt, quoted by Canadian Press*

"I was surprised. I was really shocked . . . He was a real joker. He loved to joke around. He was a good guy."

*Master Corporal Will Emsle, a fellow reservist who trained with Boneca, quoted by Canadian Press*

"We really do have to admire his professionalism and his heroic efforts to help out

people less fortunate than ours. Our hearts and prayers go out to his family and friends."

*Brigadier General David Fraser, Canadian commander, Kandahar, quoted by Canadian Press*

"Canada will mourn the loss of Corporal Boneca but he will not be forgotten. His memory will live on through the people whose lives he has touched, while fulfilling our mission to bring peace and security to Afghanistan."

*Gordon O'Connor, Minister of Defence, Statement*

"On behalf of Canadians, I praise Corporal Boneca's courage and self-sacrifice and I take comfort knowing that his memory will live on in the spirit of fellow CF soldiers serving around the world, and in the hearts of his countrymen who pray for their safe return."

*Stephen Harper, Prime Minister, Statement*

"Corporal Boneca's death serves as a further reminder of the dangers faced by our Canadian Forces every day in Afghanistan and also of the steadfastness of our members who each day try to make that country a better place to live. Today, we honour his memory as a hero who fought for what he believed in."

*Michaëlle Jean, Governor General, Statement*

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