Afghanistan
-- A SOLDIER'S STORY
2002-2012

Canada's largest overseas commitment is Joint Task Force Afghanistan, the formation comprising all Canadian Forces personnel and assets deployed in southwestern Asia. Canada has one over-arching objective: to leave Afghanistan to Afghans in a country that is better governed, more peaceful and more secure.

The wonderful men and women you will meet within these pages worked tirelessly to make this happen. This is their story.

'I WILL BE THE PUBLIC CHAMPION OF THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN. THEY ARE CANADA'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. IF WE CAN'T MARKET CANADA'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS BACK TO CANADA'S MOMS AND DADS, WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO PROTECT OUR INVESTMENT IN THEM.'

GEN. RICK HILLIER ON NOV 4, 2007, IN RESPONSE TO SUGGESTIONS HE'D BEEN MUZZLED.

BY: DAVID BERCUSON & THOSE WHO SERVED
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Canada and the 40 other nations participating in the International Security Assistance Force (a NATO-led, U.N.-sanctioned mission) are in Afghanistan at the request of the democratically elected government of President Hamid Karzai to help the Afghan people rebuild their nation as a stable, democratic, self-sufficient society.

All Canadian military operations in Afghanistan are conducted with the consent of the Afghan government to establish the security required to promote development and an environment conducive to the improvement of Afghan life. This mission includes (but is not limited to) the following tasks:

- Conduct operations in support of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police;
- Help the Government of Afghanistan and its institutions strengthen and enhance their capacity for good governance;
- Help the Government of Afghanistan extend its authority in the southern provinces;
- Facilitate the delivery of programs and projects that support national economic recovery and rehabilitation; and
- Support Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations that help Afghans meet their personal and family needs.

Canada’s continued engagement in Afghanistan helps create the conditions for longer-term reconstruction.

Canada has shown leadership by committing troops, resources, development and political effort to help the Afghan government secure a better future for its people. We have made a commitment to the Afghan people and we will stand by that commitment.

Canada’s efforts in Afghanistan are guided by the Afghanistan Compact, which includes a five-year framework for coordinating the work of the Afghan government and its international partners, outlining specific outcomes related to security, governance and development with benchmarks and delivery schedules. For example, a new Afghan constitution has restored the rule of law and respect for the human rights of all Afghan citizens, including women and children. The Afghan people now vote, women and girls have rights, and children are going to school.

The biggest threat to rebuilding is continued violence and threats from the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In fact, terrorism is a clear and present threat to global peace and security, and terrorists used Afghanistan as a base of operations during the seven-year Taliban regime. In the interest of collective security, Canada and its international partners share a duty to help ensure that terrorism cannot take root again in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is not a peacekeeping mission. There are no ceasefire arrangements to enforce or negotiated peace settlements to respect.

We know that our mission cannot be accomplished by military means alone. The U.N. has about 20 agencies working tirelessly to help the Afghan people and their national government build a democratic and secure society, and many other humanitarian and development agencies are also running valuable programs in Afghanistan.

As well as military personnel, the Canadian effort in Afghanistan includes diplomats, development workers, police officers, and experts in human rights, good governance, the rule of law, and the institutions of a healthy democracy. This wide range of expertise has been assembled to bring a "whole of government" approach to the complex task of nation-building.

Introduction

Members of 1 Royal Canadian Regiment (1 RCR) Bravo Company (B COY) prepare a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) for a patrol.

Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) is the Canadian Forces (CF) contribution to the international effort in Afghanistan. Its operations focus on working with Afghan authorities to improve security, governance and economic development in Afghanistan.

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Canada, along with 36 other countries, is in Afghanistan at the request of the democratically elected government. All are there as part of a UN mission aimed at helping to build a stable, democratic and self-sufficient society.

150 WORDS

A soldier from 3rd Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment, guards his bunker in the Panjwaii region as the sun sets.

Royal Canadian Regiment (1RCR) Bravo Company (B COY) conduct a presence patrol of Haji Baba and the surrounding area.

Children come out to greet the soldiers during their patrol.

31 May 2010, Kandahar. Photo by Sergeant Daren Kraus, Image Tech, TF Afghanistan, AR2010-0135-10

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The Canadian Forces (CF) contribution in Afghanistan comprises about 2,400 soldiers, most of whom serve with JTF-Afghanistan at Kandahar Airfield and Camp Nathan Smith, Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, in Kandahar City. Additional personnel are assigned to various military headquarters, a support base, and civilian organizations.

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Infantry

1 Royal Canadian Regiment (1RCR) Bravo Company (B Coy) conduct a presence patrol of Haji Baba and the surrounding area. Sapper Aaron Phillips of 2 Combat Engineer Regiment (2CER) leads the way.

31 May 2010, Kandahar. Photo by Corporal Stéphanie Bouthillette, Image Tech, TFK, AR07-135-09

Corporal Greg Knapp, 1RCR B Coy 5 Platoon patrols in the Panjwaii District.

08 August 2010, Panjwaii District, Kandahar. Photo by: Sergeant Daren Kraus, Image Tech, TFK, AR2010-0223-20

An infantry soldier of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, is checking his global positioning system while looking at a map during OP IMPACT. 23 Aug 2008, Kandahar. Photo by M Cpl Karl McKay, photographer, JTF-Afghanistan, AR2008-K074-008
Artillery

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Artillery

Members of 1 Battery, 2 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery fire their 105mm Howitzer into Unique Farm Range from Camp Warehouse in Kabul on October 21, 2003. (Photo by MCpl Brian Walsh, 3 RCR Battalion Group photographer)

Members of Alpha troop from 1 Battery, 2 RCR conduct a fire for effect mission on October 29, 2007. (Photo by MCpl Robert Bottrill, Canadian Forces Combat Camera)

Gunners from X Battery, 50 Regiment (Nord-du-Québec) Royal Canadian Horse Artillery set up a 155mm howitzer to support Coalition forces in Zhari District, Kandahar Province.

Photo by MCpl Jean-François Carpentier, JTF-Afghanistan Image Technician
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Photo by Corporal Jonathan Barrette, JTF-Afg, AR2009-050-65

Engagement

Members of the Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (POMLT) speak with some of the locals of District 9 in Kandahar City. The POMLT, based out of the Kandahar City Police Station, is working on improving community relations with members of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and local citizens.


LCol Don Denne, Commanding Officer of Third Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (3 RCR) Battalion Group, and Mohammed Musa, Governor of Paghman District, cut the ribbon for the Official Opening of a bridge reconstructed with assistance from the Civilian-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Section.

7 Oct 03, Kabul. Photo by MCpl Brian Walsh, 3 RCR Battalion Group Photographer, KA2003-A285D

Captain Garsch of 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, Edmonton, Alberta takes a break from the very hot sun and enjoys the company of Afghan children in the shade of a wall during a foot patrol in Maywand District village during Operation ROOB UNYID JABAL.

8 Aug 2008, Kandahar. Photo by MCpl Karl McKay, photographer JTF-Afg

Lieutenant Andrew Bones walks along with new friends on a foot patrol on a back road of Kandahar City with the remainder of his platoon.


(L) Private Karen Moorhouse, a Military Policewoman with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, distributes bags of rice to families identified by local leaders as the most needy, in preparation for Eid al-Fitr – the celebration of the end of Ramadan. One can only imagine the source of the look on this gentleman’s face to be his surprise at encountering a female soldier.


(Right) Private Karen Moorhouse, a Military Policewoman with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, distributes bags of rice to families identified by local leaders as the most needy, in preparation for Eid al-Fitr – the celebration of the end of Ramadan. One can only imagine the source of the look on this gentleman’s face to be his surprise at encountering a female soldier.

20 Aug 2008, Kandahar. Photo by MCpl Karl McKay, photographer JTF-Afg

(L) Corporal Julie A lain, medic, examining an Afghan girl at a free medical clinic run by Afghan, Canadian and US medical and dental personnel in Spin Boldak.

Just as the elder at right is questioning his cultural view of women, we have to wonder if the curious look on these two young Afghan girl’s faces reflects their hope that the future might offer similar opportunities to those that brought Cpl Julie A lain to this place with her special skills.


(L) Corporal Julie A lain, medic, examining an Afghan girl at a free medical clinic run by Afghan, Canadian and US medical and dental personnel in Spin Boldak.

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