



# WEBNEWS

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## Two Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan



OTTAWA - Two Canadian soldiers were killed at approximately 6:30 p.m. Kandahar time on January 6, when their Light Armoured Vehicle rolled over, during a tactical move across difficult terrain.

The incident occurred in Nalgham, in the Zhari District, 40 km South-West of Kandahar City during Operation TENG AZEM (Steadfast Decision), a joint ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces operation, aimed at disrupting insurgent activities in the region and establishing a permanent coalition presence in the area. This incident was not the result of enemy activity.

The identity of the fallen is:

Cpl Éric Labbé, age 31, 2e Bataillon, Royal 22e Régiment, based out of Valcartier, Quebec.

WO Hani Massouh, age 41, 2e Bataillon, Royal 22e Régiment, based out of Valcartier, Québec.

Warrant Officer Hani Massouh, and Corporal Éric Labbé were members of the 2e Bataillon, Royal 22e Régiment, based in Valcartier, Québec.

OTTAWA - The Honourable Peter Gordon MacKay, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, issued the following statement today on the deaths of two Canadian soldiers in

Afghanistan:

*"We have all been deeply saddened to hear of the deaths of Warrant Officer Hani Massouh, and Corporal Éric Labbé, who died in a tragic accident while serving Canada in Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their loved ones at this time of loss.*

*These soldiers were participating in Operation TENG AZEM (Steadfast Decision) when their armoured vehicle rolled over into a streambed. This operation was a joint ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces effort aimed at disrupting insurgent activities in the region and establishing a permanent coalition presence in the area. These efforts are part of Canada's overall mission to improve security and allow progress with much-needed reconstruction and development."*

The Governor General said she was "deeply saddened."

*"With the New Year having just begun, this new tragedy reminds us of the perilous conditions our soldiers are facing in Afghanistan," Jean said. "I salute their merit, their hard work and all the sacrifices they made so fearlessly. On behalf of all Canadians, I would like to tell their families and friends, who are grieving today, that they will not be forgotten."*

Massouh, 41, and Labbe, 31, were members of 2nd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment - the Van Doos - based out of Valcartier, Que. Massouh was born in Alexandria, Egypt. Labbe was from Rimouski, Que.

Massouh was a career soldier, serving in the Forces for more than 17 years. He was also a veteran of several overseas missions.

Prior to joining the Afghan mission earlier this summer, Massouh had previously been deployed to Haiti, Croatia, Somalia and twice more to the former Yugoslavia.

Labbe served alongside Massouh during a 2002 rotation in the former Yugoslavia. It was the Rimouski native's only other overseas posting during a six-year career with the military.

The two soldiers died when their light armoured vehicle flipped over Sunday evening in the region of Nalgham,

about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city. The military said they were travelling on dirt tracks, and rain in recent days had made the terrain very difficult.

It's the third time Canadian soldiers have died as a result of a light armoured vehicle rollover. Cpl. Paul Davis and Master Cpl. Timothy Wilson died in March 2006 when their armoured vehicle ran off the road, while Pte. Braun Woodfield was killed in a similar rollover in November 2005.

The soldiers were involved in a multiday operation in the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province at the time.

Meant to disrupt insurgent activity in the area, Operation Steadfast Decision is expected to continue despite the accident, the military said.

There were four people in the vehicle at the time of the accident and the two who died were sitting in the turret.

The two fatalities bring the number of Canadian military personnel killed in Afghanistan to 76. The majority of those deaths were the result of improvised explosive devices.

Sunday, January 06, 2008  
CEFCOM/COMFEC NR-08.001  
Section: Afghanistan

### ATTENTION MEMBERS.



Certain members have voiced concerns about their contact information being made available to them via the secure member's area of the new branch website.

Be assured, the information is secured behind your Name and Personal Membership Number and can ONLY BE VIEWED by the individual member<sup>1</sup> and by those membership executives who already have access to the master membership list.

However, despite this, we realize that some of you have little faith in technology and would still like your

contact information removed.

If you fall into this category, please feel free to log in and clear any fields that you would rather not see listed.<sup>2</sup>

Website Committee  
Jan 8th 2007

<sup>1</sup> Provided said member does not allow others to know their membership number.

<sup>2</sup> Removal of e-mail address may restrict our ability to inform you of upcoming special events and other information.

Tuesday, January 08, 2008  
Webmaster  
Section: Miscellaneous

### No Sea King successors until 2010



**Canada's faltering helicopters may not last until the Cyclones land, military expert warns**

The long-awaited arrival of new military helicopters to replace Canada's worn-out Sea King fleet has been delayed by up to three years, CanWest News Service has learned.

The obsolete, 1960s-era Sea Kings were due to be phased out starting this year with the arrival of new CH 148 Cyclone helicopters, designed to be flown off the decks of the navy's warships.

The first of 28 Cyclones, which were ordered in 2004 from Sikorsky International in Connecticut, at a cost of \$1.8 billion, was scheduled to arrive at the Shearwater air base near Halifax in November this year, with additional aircraft coming one per month thereafter.

But military staff at Shearwater have been told that the first new Cyclone won't arrive until 2010 or 2011 -- two to three years later than promised.

The team of pilots, mechanics and

technicians assembled to do trials on the first new helicopter has also been put on hold because of the delay.

That means the military will have to keep the old Sea Kings flying -- already a difficult task -- another two or three years until the Cyclones are delivered and made operational.

"Trying to maintain Sea King operations until the arrival of the Cyclone is already a very trying exercise," says Lee Myrhaugen, a retired air force colonel, Sea King pilot, and former deputy commander of the military's maritime air group.

"Parts are being taken from other aircraft, we're down in fleet numbers, down in flying hours, down in serviceability. All of this is putting a strain on operations."

Col. Myrhaugen, one of a number of retired officers who have campaigned hard to have the Sea Kings replaced, says negotiations are currently under way between the federal government and Sikorsky, the prime contractor, to rewrite portions of the Cyclone procurement contract.

He says new engineering requirements -- likely a result of technology advances in certain aircraft components, which weren't foreseen in 2004 -- mean the original contract must now be reworked.

"Manufacturers may well have new equipment or upgrades available. And as a result of it, they've come to a situation where the original contract is undeliverable," Col. Myrhaugen says. "What's being negotiated between Sikorsky and the Crown is how we get the end product in view of that situation."

"This is not abnormal," he says, "but when contracts change, it has an impact on arrival time and cost, and it's almost like starting over in some respects."

The original 2004 contract included penalties against the manufacturer in the event of delivery delays.

Col. Myrhaugen says he isn't aware of any penalties being levied yet, and no announcement has been made about any delays. Sikorsky's website still says the first Cyclone is due for delivery in November.

Officials at Sikorsky and the Department of Defence did not answer requests for interviews on the matter.

But Jacques Gagnon, spokes-man from the office of Public Works Minister Michael Fortier, said the government was "considering all possible options with respect to Sikorsky's default on the timely delivery of the maritime helicopters."

Col. Myrhaugen says Sikorsky may still find a way to deliver the aircraft on time, but warns that if a delay occurs, "the likelihood of making the Sea Kings survive is extremely limited."

The Sea King's primary job is flying off Canada's frigates and destroyers.

It is a valuable tool for surveillance, search and rescue, and transport .

But some Canadian warships no longer sail on overseas missions with helicopters -- or with their full detachment of helicopters -- because there aren't enough reliable Sea Kings available.

Those aircraft that do go to sea must be used sparingly, because the old airframes (an aircraft's structure) and engines now require roughly 30 hours of maintenance for every hour they spend in the air.

Col. Myrhaugen says helicopter crews are only getting a fraction of the flying hours they were once required to have to maintain proficiency. "They've cut back to the absolute essentials," he says.

Online: Delivery Delay

Global National's Ross Lord reports that Canada's aging Sea King fleet of helicopters is at least three years away.

To view a video report go to Today's Videos at [ottawacitizen.com](http://ottawacitizen.com)

Thursday, January 10, 2008  
Richard Foot, The Ottawa Citizen  
Section: Miscellaneous

## 166 Years Ago



### Retreat from Kabul, a lesson unremembered.

All in the Valley of Death rode the 16,000. Marched. Crawled. Froze. And died.

When British history's worst military catastrophe ended in January 1842 in Afghanistan's Khoord-Kabul Pass, only one man -- a wounded surgeon on a lame pony -- managed to reach the Kabuli Gate in Jalalabad.

The Army of the Indus became a hill of bones.

And then the cover-up began.

This is probably a good time for us to read up on the many reasons why Afghanistan, so famous in the past for hospitality toward travelers and "honored guests," is so hard on its conquerors. Alexander the Great spent two years (326-325 B.C.) trying to quell revolts in his newest acquisition, but left little more than a city with his Afghan name, Kandahar.

Wave after wave of foreign armies found it's a lot easier to invade Afghanistan than to govern its warrior tribes in a jagged landscape ideally suited for guerrilla war.

If it hadn't been kept quiet, the instructive story of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838-42) might have spared another generation of redcoat colonizers the further humiliation of the Battle of Maiwand. In 1880 in the Second Anglo-Afghan War, an Anglo-Indian force of 2,500 lost 1,000 dead and fled from a rebel army of about 25,000 fearless, howling irregulars.

As a result, Afghanistan remained more or less independent until invaded in 1979 by Soviet forces. That takeover gave rise to the Taliban and a decade of guerrilla war that took the lives of more than a million Afghans until the Soviets, with 14,500 dead and half a million casualties, pulled out

of a devastated nation in 1989.

The Soviet experience just goes to show that the lessons of history don't do much good if suppressed and forgotten.

The retreat from Kabul in 1842 was shushed for 12 years by the British government. Not until 1854 did an official inquiry provide the public with the full story of imperial arrogance, rebel ferocity, treacherous ambushes and the role of Maj. Gen. William G.K. Elphinstone, a commander armed with what one writer calls "the leadership qualities of a sheep."

The episode began in 1838 when British India's governor general worried that Russia's growing influence in Afghanistan might someday threaten Britain's extraction of treasure from India. He dispatched to Kabul the Army of the Indus which, after a long march and several battles, installed a puppet on the throne. The redcoats and the Indian soldiers known as sepoys settled down to a languid garrison life of cricket, polo and the cuckolding of Afghan husbands. Each officer was entitled to 10 servants; each soldier, two. But in late 1841, fury with the puppet shah inspired murderous riots and an uncontrollable uprising. In January, Elphinstone ordered a 90-mile retreat through the snowy passes to Jalalabad.

With promises of safe conduct, the march began with about 3,800 Indian soldiers, 700 Britishers (400 soldiers of the 44th Foot, about 100 cavalrymen, various officers and a few families), 3,800 Indian soldiers and 11,000 to 12,000 servants, cooks, water carriers, grooms, blacksmiths, families of the fighting men and prostitutes.

The promises weren't kept. The columns were ambushed with deadly fire from the cliffs above. Baggage trains were looted. Stragglers were killed, stripped and mutilated. Thousands of soldiers and civilians perished in the cold. The rest were shot or stabbed to death.

Nine children, eight women, three officers and the general were taken as hostages. When he died in captivity, Elphinstone was spared a court martial. The rest were rescued months

later.

Thirty-six years after the slaughter, when the Rev. Arthur Male visited the passes in 1878, a guide showed him where the redcoats and sepoys made a last stand.

"The summit of the hill was of fairly large extent," he wrote, "but as I came nearer the middle, I saw that there the surface seemed strangely white. What could it be? I hurried forward, and to my horror there I saw gathered together in a great heap the skeleton bones of that heroic band."

Sixty-five soldiers on foot and 14 men on horseback had somehow managed to escape the passes. All but one were tracked down, surrounded and killed.

On Jan. 13, seven days after the columns left Kabul, a sentry on the walls of Jalalabad looked out on the barren plain and spotted a badly wounded man on a pony. He was Dr. William Brydon, an assistant regimental surgeon and, except for the hostages, sole survivor of the 16,000 men, women and children who left Kabul.

An imaginative version of Brydon's escape was later painted by Lady Elizabeth Butler, entitled "The Remnants of an Army" and presented to the Tate Gallery in London. It's a forgotten reminder of an unlearned lesson.

Edited from Original Post San-Francisco Chronicle 28 Oct 2001

Thursday, January 10, 2008  
Lynn Ludlow / SF Chronicle  
Section: Afghanistan

## Our Condolences to Comrades Judy Dennis and Jim Meyer



It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Comrade Judy Dennis' mother, Mrs. Ina Christina (Dolson) Buss. Funeral details from the K-W Record are listed below:

BUSS, Ina Christina (Dolson) - Born in Galt in 1927 to Jenny and Charles Dolson, beloved wife for over 60 years to Ken Buss, Camlachie. Mother to Dan, Victoria, B.C., Judy Dennis and friend Jim Meyer, Kitchener, Doug and Judy Buss, Camlachie, Pat and Carol Buss, Lacombe, Alberta and Kellie and Jamie Doan, Dorchester. Loving grandmother to nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Sister to Gladys Bain, Brantford and Ileane O'Neill, London. Predeceased by brothers, Roy and Ron, California, Charles of Galt; sister, Florence, Galt; grandson, Scott Buss, Point Edward and granddaughter, Stacey Koebel, Tsiigehtchic, N.W.T. Ina was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion for 26 years and the Marcin Bowl Wednesday Ladies League for 30 years. Cremation has taken place and a memorial service will be held in the Chapel of the D.J. Robb Funeral Home, 102 Victoria St. N., Sarnia, on Tuesday, January 15th at 11 a.m. Visitation will be held at the funeral home on Tuesday from 10 a.m. until the time of service. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 62 Poppy Fund or Shriner's Hospital for Kids (cheques only please) would be

appreciated by the family.  
Arrangements entrusted to the D.J.  
Robb Funeral Home. Messages of  
condolence can be sent to  
djrobbfh@ebtech.net.

Saturday, January 12, 2008  
Gloria McKibbin, PRO  
Section: Births Deaths and Marriages

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