



WEBNEWS

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89th Canadian Soldier Killed in Afghanistan



Master Corporal Josh Roberts of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group.
Credit: DND

OTTAWA— A Canadian soldier died of his injuries following an engagement involving coalition forces, insurgents and security personnel from a civilian convoy in the Zharey District around 9 a.m. (Kandahar time) today. An investigation is being conducted to determine the details surrounding this incident and further information will be made public as it becomes available. Unconfirmed reports suggest he may have been shot by a member of a private security firm.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson would not confirm that an employee of the security company was suspected of firing the fatal shot.

“An investigation is being conducted to determine the details surrounding this incident, and further information will be made public when it is available,” he told reporters.

The fallen soldier is Master Corporal Joshua Brian Roberts of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, based in Shilo, Manitoba. First aid was administered to MCpl Roberts immediately following the incident. He was evacuated by helicopter to Kandahar Air Field's Role 3 Multi-National Medical Facility, but sadly was pronounced dead upon arrival.

He is the 89th member of the Canadian Forces killed in Afghanistan. One Canadian diplomat was also killed.

"His best friend describes him as a no-nonsense kind of guy who lived like people dreamed; he was a fun-loving and genuine individual who was totally dedicated to the Army and held his section together. He looked out for his guys in ways they probably didn't realize," said Brig.-Gen. Thompson.

Master Cpl. Roberts is from Saskatoon and was serving as a crew commander with the 9th Platoon, Charlie Company when he was shot while in the turret of his armoured vehicle.

Capt. Scott MacGregor, acting C Company commander, described Master Cpl. Roberts as a "bang-on-guy, a soldier's soldier."

"No matter where he worked or who he worked with, he just fit in well with everybody," he said.

Calling it "one of those tragic stories," Capt. MacGregor said Master Cpl. Roberts was engaged to be married and his fiancée is expecting a child within the next month.

Brig.-Gen. Thompson refused to name the private security firm that was in the area at the time.

One firm, called Compass Integrated Security Solutions, has been involved in more than one incident involving the Canadian military in Afghanistan.

One person was killed and three others were injured in April when a Canadian military convoy opened fire on a Compass vehicle that failed to stop when demanded. And Canadian soldiers opened fire on a Compass vehicle last October, injuring seven Afghans.

But Brig.-Gen. Thompson said he has no concern about the presence of private security firms in the Afghan theatre of operations.

He said that without private security firms, it would be impossible to achieve what Canadians are achieving in Kandahar, noting that some of the security at the base of the Canadian military's own Provincial Reconstruction Team is provided by private companies.

"There are many aspects of the mission here in Afghanistan, many security aspects, that are performed by private security firms which, if they were turned over to the military, would make our task impossible. We just don't have the numbers to do everything."

Sunday, August 10, 2008
CEFCOM NR-08.028 - August 9, 2008 / Globe & Mail
Section: Afghanistan

90th Soldier killed as Taliban artillery hits Canadian outpost



Credit: DND

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN -- An infantryman described as a "friendly giant" was killed by Taliban artillery yesterday at a remote outpost surrounded by grape fields in the hard-scrabble countryside west of Kandahar city.

Master Corporal Erin Doyle, a member of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton, perished at dawn in the type of assault that occurs daily in small, isolated combat stations.

The volley by the Taliban was returned with artillery fire from the Canadians, and air support from the Kandahar Air Field was called in to finish the task.

Military officials say "the enemy was defeated."

"That means we killed a number and wounded a number, the precise numbers we don't track because we are not in the business of body counts," said Brigadier-General Denis Thompson, commander of Task Force Kandahar, at a late-evening press conference.

MCpl. Doyle leaves behind his wife, Nicole, and a daughter, Zarine. Another soldier who cannot be named was injured but was in stable condition.

MCpl. Doyle is the 90th member of the Canadian Forces killed in Afghanistan; a Canadian diplomat was also killed.

"Erin was a big, tough, mountain of a man who enjoyed the outdoors," said Brig.-Gen. Thompson. "He was a true warrior and just the person you would want beside you in a firefight. This was his fifth operational tour and his third tour in Afghanistan."

MCpl. Doyle grew up in Kamloops, B.C., where he played high-school football and enjoyed working on cars and trucks, said friend Tyler Guthrie.

"He was a good friend to have on your side of things," he said.

In particular, MCpl. Doyle spent time working on an older Trans Am and a Dodge pickup truck, his friend said. And school was never a top priority.

"He was always a bit of a rebel. The army was his cause," Mr. Guthrie said.

When reached at a family home, a woman declined to speak with a Globe reporter.

"I would rather not talk to you. I have just lost my youngest son," the woman said.

A local Afghan man who witnessed the conflict at the combat outpost, located in the Panjwai district, said he could see through the smoke and flames that a tower forming part of the complex had been destroyed.

At some point, a large helicopter landed and jets began bombing the insurgents, the man said.

"I need to go far from this fighting to Sperwan village, which is safe now," he said, adding that he saw many Taliban around the outpost, and local people who had been cutting grapes in the nearby vineyards were fleeing to safer

ground.

Another local man said he, too, saw Taliban running from the area. Some of them waited in ambush for a Canadian convoy to pass by later in the afternoon, he said. That convoy of tanks eventually arrived with loudspeakers blaring, warning locals to get out of the vicinity. The Taliban attacked but the ambush dissipated in a volley of shells from the Canadians, he said.

The death of MCpl. Doyle is the second loss for the Canadian military in Afghanistan in three days.

Master Corporal Josh Roberts, of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry battle group based in Shilo, Man., was fatally wounded during a firefight in the perilous Zhari district west of Kandahar city on Saturday morning.

Unconfirmed reports suggest the bullet that felled MCpl. Roberts may have come from the gun of a private security company employee who was escorting a civilian convoy in the vicinity of the field where Canadian soldiers had engaged the Taliban.

Combat outposts, like the one where MCpl. Doyle was killed yesterday, have been established in some of the more remote areas of Kandahar. They are staffed with 30 to 120 Canadian soldiers and have none of the amenities, such as the plumbing, mess halls or air conditioning, which are found at the larger bases of operation.

The soldiers "are out there amongst the population in the most difficult parts of these two districts, Zhari and Panjwai, largely to do what we can to increase the people's confidence that the government is delivering the services for them, and one of those services is clearly security," said Brig.-Gen. Thompson.

"They are in combat outposts because these are difficult areas where the insurgents have a reasonable grip."

The daily assaults by the Taliban generally do little damage, said Brig.-Gen. Thompson.

"What they tend to do is fire a few harassing rounds and then they will disappear into the woodwork," he said.

"In this particular case, it happened at 5:40 this morning. The combat outpost

was engaged in a classic shoot-and-scoot fashion and unfortunately MCpl. Doyle was killed by a direct hit on the outpost."

In a statement issued late yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper expressed condolences to the family and friends of MCpl. Doyle, calling him "an exceptional Canadian and courageous soldier."

Chief Warrant Officer Christopher White, the Task Force sergeant-major who worked with MCpl. Doyle for five years, said the outpost is where the big infantryman wanted to be.

"That combat outpost is where he would have wanted to serve the most himself. He would not be happy back in camp. He was out there doing his job with the soldiers," CWO White said.

On Sunday, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said air strikes on villages in his country are only hurting civilians and he called on other nations to go after terrorist cells in Pakistan that are deploying Taliban fighters.

Asked whether the insurgents he and his soldiers are fighting in Zhari and Panjwai are Pakistanis or Afghans, Brig.-Gen Thompson said it is very difficult to tell a person's nationality in this region.

"What we are talking about are Pashtuns writ large," he said, "and the Pashtun ethnic group crosses both sides of the border, so I couldn't tell you whether the guy was of Pakistani descent or Afghani descent. I can tell you that, for the most part, almost without exception, they are Pashtuns."

Tuesday, August 12, 2008
 GLORIA GALLOWAY, The Globe & Mail
 Section: Afghanistan

LEGION WEEK- September 21st to 27th ,2008



Ontario Provincial Command of The Royal Canadian Legion represents nine Districts which includes 400 Branches, within these branches we have over 160,000 members.

We are a non-profit organization

assuming the responsibility of maintaining the tradition of Remembrance of those that the Supreme Sacrifice by defending our great nation in past and present conflicts, so that we as Canadians can live in the freedom that we maintain today!

We continue to support our veterans of past and present with many benefits and this is due to the determination of our thousands of dedicated members at all levels of the organization.

With our counterparts, the Ladies Auxiliary, we work together to raise funds to support our many programs within Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

With millions of dollars being raised from Branch and Ladies Auxiliary projects we support numerous programs benefiting our Veterans, seniors and youth within our communities.

With knowing this we proclaim September 21-27, 2008 to be Legion Week within Ontario Command of The Royal Canadian Legion.

Friday, August 15, 2008
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 Section: RCL