



*The Royal Canadian Legion  
Zone F1  
Operation Homefires*



*“Letter of Appreciation”*



*Our Brave Canadian In Afghanistan  
Leigh Clements*

*Robert Rohrer  
P.R.O.  
Royal Canadian Legion  
Branch #112, Whitby*

*Hi There..*

*My name is Leigh Clements, a Canadian civilian living and working at the Provincial Reconstruction Team Camp in Afghanistan. I work for CFPSA and run the kit/smoke shop on camp.*

*Yesterday, I received a package from your Legion full of very welcomed goods.. magazines, books, cookies, Werthers candies and Tim Horton's coffee and tea!!*

*I realize that this was probably intended to come in prior to Christmas (candy canes!!), but with the amount of personnel and equipment that was coming over, much of our 'from-home' packages were delayed.*

*I just want to say, on behalf of all of the Canadian's here..... THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your consideration and gifts. It is a wonderful treat to receive and it truly is appreciated by one and all here.*

*After a very trying couple of days, it was with pleasure that I was able to give out the goods that you sent and see people smile. Thanks for your generous gifts and heartfelt encouragement - it goes a long way!*

*Sincerely, Leigh*

*Ms. Leigh Clements  
Canadian Forces Personnel  
Support Agency PRT, Afghanistan*



## *The Royal Canadian Legion Zone F1 The History of Canadian Peacekeeping*



### *Canadian Peacekeepers*

More than 100,000 Canadians have participated in United Nations and NATO peacekeeping duties throughout the world. That is more Peacekeepers than any other country. Peacekeepers have helped to make the world a better place in which to live. The Nobel Committee recognized the good work that UN Peacekeepers have been doing by awarding them the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.

Canada has honoured its Peacekeepers, past, present and future, by dedicating a monument to their service and dedication. The monument was unveiled in Ottawa, ON in October 1992. The Canadian Peacekeepers Service Medal is awarded to all Canadians who serve with peacekeeping missions.

### *The Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal*

Inspired by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to United Nations Peacekeepers in 1988, the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal (CPSM) was created to acknowledge the efforts of all past, present and future Canadian Peacekeepers. This includes all serving and former members of the Canadian Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police services, and Canadian civilians who have upheld the long tradition of Canadian peacekeeping.

The seeds of peacekeeping can be found buried on the battlefields, in the trenches and in the graveyards of Europe and Asia. The men who fought and lived through two world wars never wanted to see another. They believed that by putting an end to regional conflicts they could reduce the potential of the world ever being consumed by war again. They would create a new international body to keep peace in the world and support social and economic progress.

The newly formed United Nations seemed the perfect place to put such lofty ideals into practice; an organization founded on the principle of discussing and mediating ideological and political differences.

The first United Nations peacekeeping mission was in 1948. Its objective was to supervise the cease-fire between Israel and her Arab neighbours after the War of Independence. Monitors were sent to supervise the truce.

But the first peacekeeping force wasn't established until 1956, a time filled with fears of another global conflict erupting. And once again the backdrop was the Middle East.

In the midst of summer, Egyptian President Gamal Abdal Nasser declared he was nationalizing the Suez Canal, cutting out the Anglo-French company that held controlling interest in the vital waterway that joins the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.

Nasser told a cheering crowd that the imperialists could "choke on their rage." From that point on, ships wishing to use the canal would pay a toll and that money would go toward financing the building of the Aswan High Dam on the Nile.

France and Britain were worried about Nasser's future plans to control such a strategically important waterway. They were also worried about what amounted to a direct challenge from Egypt to their trading interests. Secret plans were made for Israel to attack Egypt. France and Britain would send troops to protect the canal.



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In October fighting erupted. On one side the Egyptians; on the other, Britain, France and Israel. Once again it looked as if the major military powers of the world would be drawn into battle. Would the Soviet Union come to Egypt's aid? Would the United States become involved in order to keep the Suez open? The world braced for another deadly meeting of the world's military powers.

But it was not to be. A former diplomat, relatively unknown on the world stage, now Canada's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, had a proposal. He argued that a force sponsored by the UN, made up of soldiers from non-combatant countries, could separate the warring armies and supervise the cease-fire.

The UN General Assembly accepted his proposal, as did the various belligerents. Canadian General E.M.L. Burns was named commander of the UN force and peacekeeping was born.

Although the "Suez Crisis" remains a vivid reminder of how seemingly regional issues can threaten to draw much larger nations into conflict, it is equally important to applaud the political and diplomatic courage shown by UN members who agreed on an untried and untested idea - peacekeeping.

For his vision of a world where countries would enter a conflict in order to bring stability and peace, Lester B. Pearson would receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Since then Canada has been at the forefront of peacekeeping operations around the world. Soldiers, police and civilians have all played prominent roles in separating armies and in the resolution of conflicts in Golan Heights, Cyprus, Croatia, Haiti, Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan, El Salvador, Somalia, Rwanda and Angola to name a only few. Currently Canadian peacekeepers are serving in 14 operations in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East.

But Canada's involvement in so many trouble spots has not come without a price. More than 150 Canadians have been killed while on peacekeeping duties around the world. The operations in both Somalia and Rwanda led to a crisis of confidence in the Canadian military.

Canada's armed forces have undergone dramatic change over the years since Pearson proposed that first peacekeeping effort in the Middle East. Canadian soldiers now find themselves more likely to be disarming combatants than fighting battles.

The job they will most likely face now is protecting civilian populations, organizing elections and guarding humanitarian convoys. The military has also set up a Rapid Response Force to fly to the scene of natural disasters. Its first deployment came in 1998 when Hurricane Mitch ravaged Central America. Canadian soldiers and medical staff rushed to provide medical and humanitarian relief.

Arguments exist for the end to UN peacekeeping operations: too costly, too ineffective, a hindrance to the development of a stable, lasting peace negotiated by politicians and diplomats. But in the near future it seems unlikely the UN will abandon what has become its most highly respected international symbol. The blue helmets of the peacekeepers are likely to remain as a buffer between the world's warring factions.



***The Royal Canadian Legion  
Zone F1  
Canada: Peaceable Kingdom No More***



***Don't those damn Taliban know that we are kindly and benign Peacekeepers of the World?***

***Well no. Not this time.***

One of Canada's sustaining myths is that we are a peaceable kingdom, and that even when our armed forces are dispatched on gruesome missions abroad, they will be recognized as spreading goodwill and not be harmed. The ideal was comedian Robin Williams' satire of the unarmed British bobby, chasing a thief, who yells, "Stop! And if you don't stop, I'll shout STOP! again."

That benign expression of our national will appears pretty threadbare these days, as our troops, on their usual mission of saving infidels from themselves, are being greeted with primitive axes buried in their skulls. And worse: we appear destined to spend the next decade trying to bring civility to a country that no one, not the mighty armies of the old U.S.S.R., or the even mightier legions of the U.S. of A., have been able to tame.

Increasingly, Canadians are demanding to know what we have done to deserve this. Aren't Asian quagmires supposed to be an American specialty? If Capt. Trevor Greene had been wearing a blue, United Nations helmet, this would never have happened. We don't start wars, harbour any territorial ambitions, and are merely in Afghanistan to be noble and righteous. Don't them damn Taliban read *Globe and Mail* editorials and realize we are kindly and benign Peacekeepers to the World?

Well, no. This time, we drew the short straw. We are out there charged with cleaning up Kandahar, the lethal southern province of the rogue nation that housed al-Qaeda terrorists, the deadliest of Islamic jihadis. We have been sent to Afghanistan as the command wedge of a NATO search and destroy contingent assigned to bring peace, order and good government to a country that consists mainly of impenetrable mountain ranges and poppy farms, still occupied by the same people who brought us 9/11. When Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier described the enemy as "murderers and scumbags who detest our freedoms and want to break our society," he was only stating the facts. Lucky us, that we at last found a military man who doesn't sound -- or act -- like Dr. Phil.

Oh, and by the way, while a few wishful souls are still caught up in the image of Canadians as leading the free world in distributing chewing gum to innocent youths, it has been a very long time since we really were the world's peacekeepers. The deliberate inattention of Canadian governments to maintain viable armed forces that could field credible numbers of effective peacemakers is far behind us. Typically, when I once asked Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau how he rated national defence among his priorities, he shrugged: "Oh, about 14th, just behind pig subsidies." That attitude was not new. Back in the 1930s, when our cavalry regiments began switching from horses to tanks, they were so short of funds they had to simulate the new vehicles by using burlap-covered frames mounted on motorcycles, which were later switched to Chevrolets clad in sheet metal, painted khaki.

The dedication of our armed forces is beyond question; much of their equipment is beyond salvage. The problem is that our armed forces have managed to do so much with so little that our politicians have come to assume they can do almost anything, with almost nothing. According to Ottawa's Polaris Institute, there was a time when Canadian participation in UN-led rescue missions accounted for \$9.27 of every \$10 the Canadian Forces spent on international operations. By July 2005, UN-led missions accounted for a miserly 31 cents out of every \$10 spent by our forces on foreign operations. We rank a pathetic 36th in the size of our military presence on UN missions, about the same as Guatemala. As our commitment to the blue helmets shrunk, troops kept being sent overseas under the NATO banner -- as in Bosnia and Afghanistan.