



Garrison Community Council

London and Region

Connecting

Summer 2021

Welcome to the GCC Summer Newsletter

At the time of putting this Newsletter together in mid-August of 2021, our world is dealing with the fourth wave of the Covid Pandemic and further steps of reopening Ontario are on hold.

We take a glimpse at the CBC and learn of the abandonment of Afghanistan to the Taliban. Canadian soldiers gave their lives in Afghanistan and others were wounded.

We hear radio reports of confusion in the upper echelons of the Canadian military. Who will be the chief of the Defence staff - Army or Navy?

Welcome to the summer of 2021.

Despite everything, your Executive continues its work hoping for the best but planning to realistically protect our members. The members of the Executive are Pres. Tom Dean, Past Pres. Geoff Hutton, VP Mike Leatham, Sec. Randy Harden and Treas. John Martin.

Special July Meeting

There was a good turnout for this Special Meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended and participated.

Your comments and suggestions were noted.

As the Executive is not up to its full complement of personnel, the Executive unfortunately lacks the resources to properly investigate all of the suggestions.

The Executive raised two primary concerns regarding the GCC – our declining membership and a lack of members willing to serve on the Executive. After the appeal for help, no one has come forward to join the Executive. Your Executive is friendly group that is project oriented. Please consider helping. We are prepared to be creative regarding tasks assigned to members of the Executive and can try to match your own talents, interests, and abilities. Please send an email to Pres. Tom at tomdeangcc@rogers.com and let him know that you would like to talk with him about a possible role within the Executive.

Regarding membership, we all need to remember that membership is everyone's responsibility. Guests can be invited to our Zoom meetings. Let the Pres. know who may be attending to assure that they are admitted to the meeting.

In-Person Meetings

Although it would be nice to return to in-person meetings; however, considering recent developments regarding the spread of Covid-19, we are not planning on an immediate return to in-person meetings. We are keeping an eye on the Covid numbers and on the stages of openness as determined by the Province of Ontario. We also wish to be able to meet in a military facility.

In This Newsletter

We have some pretty good articles from a variety of sources in this Newsletter. We appreciate all the contributors.

There is an article by Scott Taylor of **espritdecorps** regarding the situation in Afghanistan. Mr. Taylor is a former soldier, Canadian journalist, writer and publisher who specializes in military journalism and war reporting. His coverage has included wars in Cambodia, Africa, the Persian Gulf, Turkey, South Ossetia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. He is also the author of the book, *Among Others – Encounters with the forgotten Turkmen of Iraq*.

We welcome an article from Rebecca Sousa, Program Coordinator for the South Western Ontario Military Family Resource Centre. This organization, situated at Wolseley Barracks, gives real meaning to the phrase "Support Our Troops". You may wish to check out the website for the SWOMFRC to learn more about this unique and creative organization.

Tom Dean

President and Editor



Lieutenant-General Allen Assumes Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Role



Today, Lieutenant-General Frances Allen assumed the responsibilities of the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) in an assumption of command ceremony which took place at National Defence Headquarters Carling. Lieutenant-General Wayne Eyre, the Acting Chief of the Defence Staff, presided over the ceremony in the presence of a small assembly of military and civilian members of the Defence Team.

As second in command of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the VCDS is responsible for an array of functions ensuring that National Defence policy and strategic objectives are achieved, including moving forward the Defence Services Program. Accountable to both the CDS and the Deputy Minister of National Defence, the VCDS also governs National Defence headquarters and its related activities.

Lieutenant-General Allen began her career in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1983. Since then she has commanded and led at multiple levels, including Officer Commanding the National Systems Management Centre in Ottawa, the Aerospace and Telecommunications

Engineering Support Squadron in Trenton, the Canadian Forces Network Operations Centre, and the Canadian Forces Information Operations Group. A cyber and information warfare expert, she becomes VCDS after serving as the Military Representative of Canada to the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, Belgium since July 2020.

"I am deeply honoured by the appointment to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff position. I intend to continue the work initiated by LGen Rouleau and his team, including in such critical areas as joint capabilities, capability integration, and data and digitalization. The challenges facing the military and our nation are complex, elaborate, and nuanced, and it is a privilege to be contributing to the way forward for the whole of the Defence team," said Lieutenant-General Frances Allen.



Website: <http://www.canadiandefencereview.com/>

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May 3, 2021

Defence Minister Sajjan Attends Virtual ACSV Vehicle Roll-out Ceremony

LONDON, Ontario – General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada today held a virtual ceremony that celebrated the “roll-out” of the Armoured Combat Support Vehicle (ACSV) program’s first vehicle variant -- a Troop Cargo Vehicle (TCV) manufactured for the Canadian Army.

“We are honoured to have Defence Minister Sajjan with us today, virtually, as we showcase the first of eight ACSV variants, the Troop Cargo Vehicle,” said Jason Monahan, Vice President and General Manager of General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada. “Light Armoured Vehicles have protected Canada’s soldiers on missions abroad for over 40 years, and it is a privilege to continue this tradition with the roll-out of this first ACSV variant.”

In September 2019, the Government of Canada awarded General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada a contract to design and produce 360 Armoured Combat Support Vehicles for the Canadian Army. Since then, General Dynamics’ ACSV team has been working to meet tight design and production deadlines, against a backdrop of challenges that comes with manufacturing safely in a global pandemic.

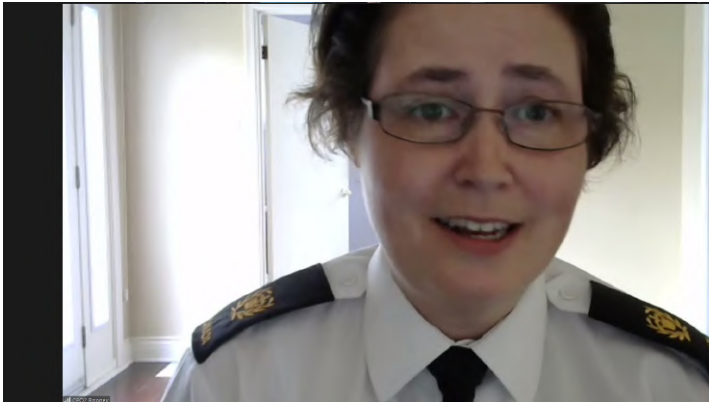
Armoured Combat Support Vehicles are an extension of the existing Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) 6.0 family of vehicles in service with the Canadian Army. The Canadian-designed and Canadian-manufactured LAV 6.0 ACSV variants have a common baseline chassis with the Canadian Army’s in-service LAV 6.0 fleet and reflect the protection and mobility needed to successfully conduct operations in a high-threat environment. The ACSV contract provides for eight additional variants of the LAV 6.0 family of vehicles, including ambulances, command posts, maintenance and recovery vehicles, fitters and troop-carrying vehicles. Having a fleet of LAVs of a common baseline configuration reduces training and long-term maintenance costs.

About General Dynamics Land Systems Canada

General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada is a defence industry leader in land and amphibious systems platform solutions. Based in London, Ontario, the Canadian operations employ approximately 1,700 people in the design, manufacture and support of light- and medium-armoured vehicles, and are specialists in machining, materials, electronics, software development, prototyping, logistics support and systems integration. For more information, please visit www.gdlsCanada.com.



April GCC Meeting with Guest Speaker Commander Norman Gautreau on Arctic Operations

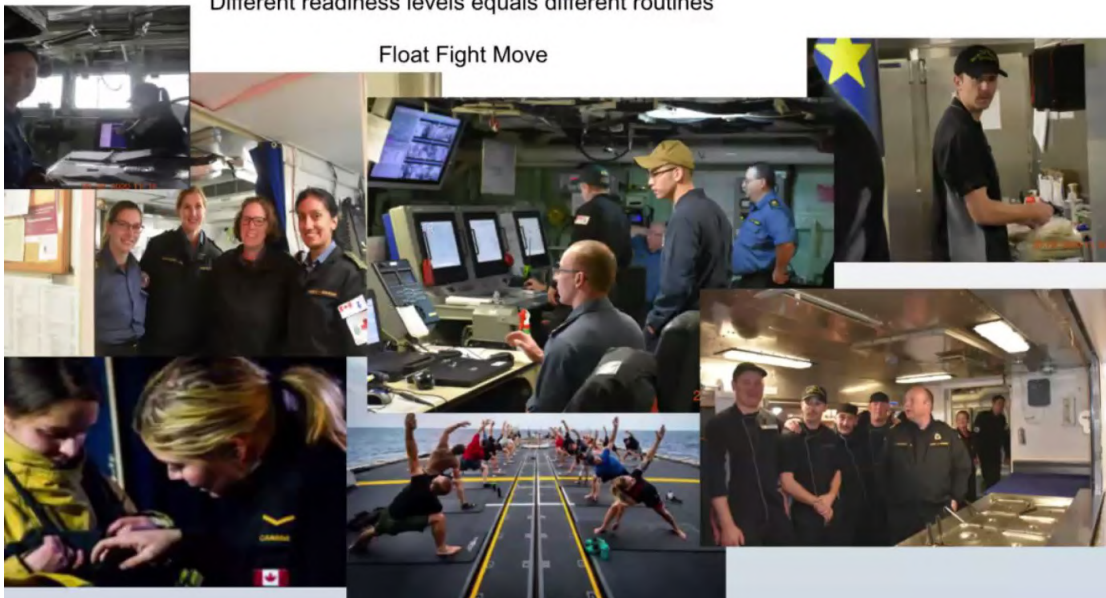


CPO (2) Amy Rooney of HMCS Prevost
introduces Commander Gautreau

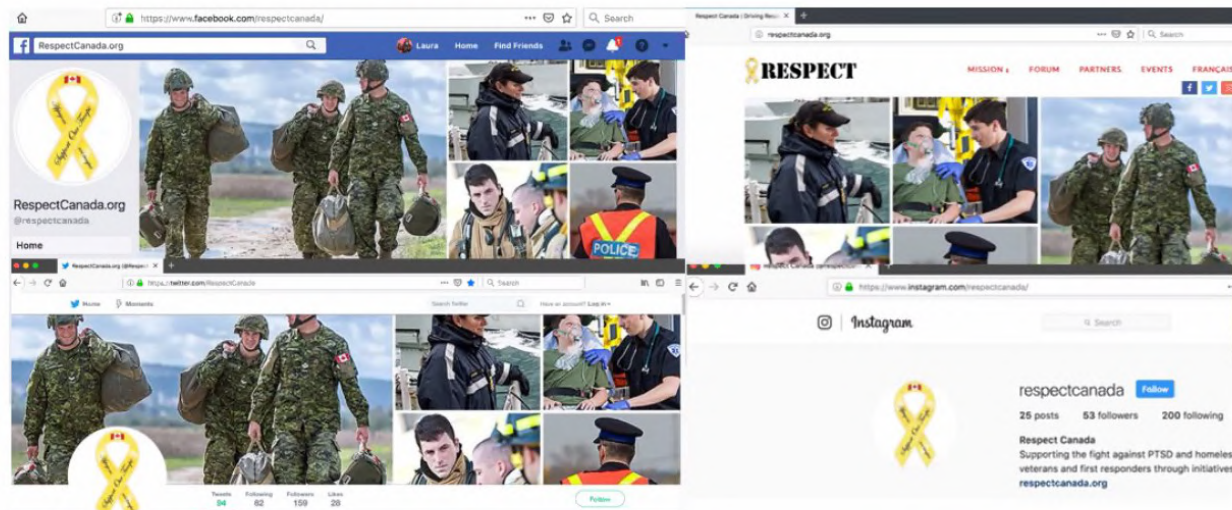


Different readiness levels equals different routines

Float Fight Move



Connect With Us! – **Any Questions**



Better together. *Mieux ensemble.*

May GCC Meeting with Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) Morris Brause speaking on the Respect Canada.org

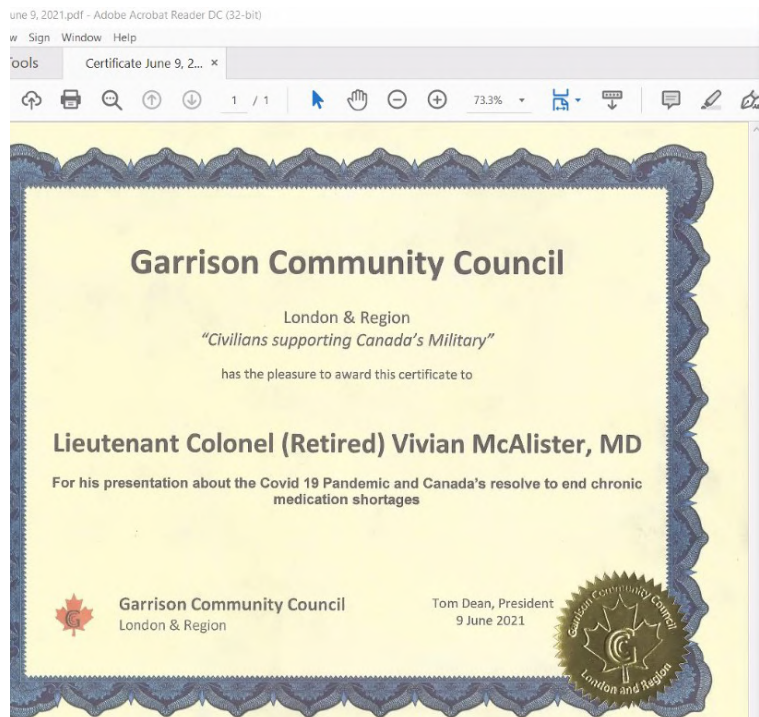


June Meeting with Dr. Vivian McAlister

Pandemic and Chronic Medication Shortage

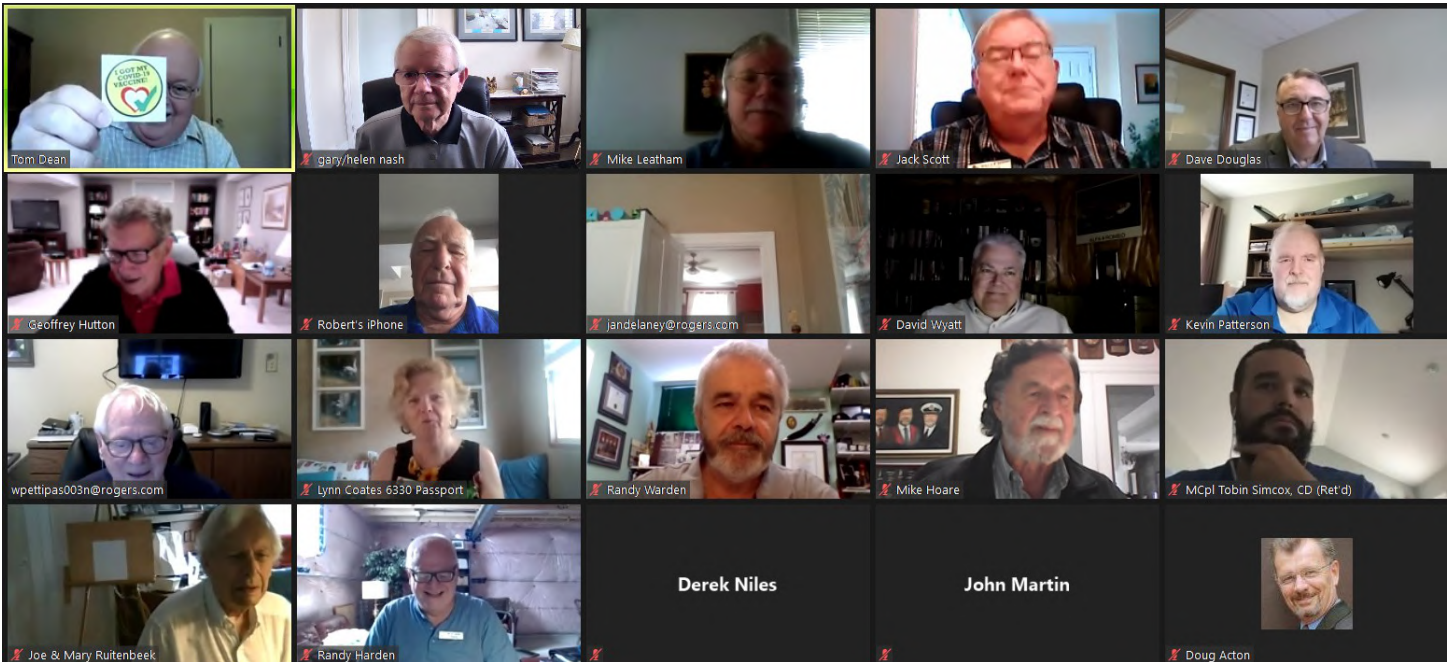


GCC Sec. Randy Harden presents Dr. McAlister with Appreciation Certificate and mounted "Support Our Troops" coin.



Special Meeting of the GCC - July 14, 2021

Asking The Tough Questions



***Thank you all for attending
this Special Meeting. Good
discussion and good ideas.***



**All GCC Meeting screenshots
taken by Gary Nash**



Welcome to the Southwestern Ontario Military Family Resource Centre

By: Rebeca Sousa

The Southwestern Ontario Military Family Resource Centre (SWOMFRC) delivers a wide range of programs and services to military families that empower and encourage independent individuals within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of Military families across Southwestern Ontario. Support is available to all CAF personnel, regular and reserve force, and their spouses, parents, children, and anyone the CAF member deems as family. Whether the CAF member is on a special tasking, temporary duty away from home, field exercises, restricted posting, on course, deployed, or on Basic Training, we are there for families.

Once Covid-19 restrictions began, we were challenged to provide in person programming to our families. We adapted and developed new virtual programs with great success. One of our longest-running programs is a weekly coffee chat, currently being called Wellness Wednesday. Once a week, military families can gather to discuss some of their challenges and learn about other community resources. New military families to the area can connect to the military community and learn about the area before relocating. With the jump to virtual programming, we have reached people who might not have made it in person.

Another program that we hosted virtually was the Dog Treat Cooking class. While this may seem like a simple, fun program, it reflects the community. Some military families may not have children, so offering a service geared towards their pets allows us to build those connections. If ever the need may arise, they know they can reach out to us for support.

We have a wide range of individual support programs as well. We offer individual employment counselling and referral support to military spouses. Through our Preventions Support and Intervention coordinator, we can provide parenting support and mental health workshops. Our Veteran Family Program Coordinator is available to support the transition of medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces members, medically released Veterans and their families into post-service life. Additionally, we have our family liaison officer who can deliver confidential individual, family, or group counselling. These services are most effective when there is a connection built between military families and the SWOMFRC.

Building connections to support our mission has been the key to our success. As we begin to transition back to in-person programming, we have started to develop plans for a hybrid approach. This way, if there is a workshop in Windsor, our families in London or Kitchener will still access them. If you want to learn more about the SWOMFRC, you can visit our website at cafconnection.ca/London or our Facebook page @SWOMFRC.



31 CBG participates in emergency preparedness exercises in London

LtN Andrew McLaughlin, Public Affairs Officer, 31 Canadian Brigade Group

Members of 31 Canadian Brigade Group worked alongside local first responders and Other Government Departments during an emergency response exercise in London on June 17, 2021.

"This type of training embodies the city's commitment to public safety and to working with local partners in planning a response to any type of emergency," Dave O'Brien, City of London director of security and emergency management said.

Captain Will Assis of 4th Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (left) is the Regional Liaison Officer for the area, and he participated in the drills that tested the coordination of assets and procedures; and the readiness of multiple organizations working as a team to help Canadians in times of crisis.

"It's an honour to work with these professionals and ensure that our partnership supports the community when they need us," said Captain Assis.

31 CBG maintains a Regional Liaison Officer presence -- embedded within emergency management centres -- in multiple regions across Southwestern Ontario and Grey-Bruce.



Summer Activities at Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Prevost*

by Sailor 1st Class Liam Carr

Recruit Training

Over the summer months Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Prevost* has had the opportunity to send a number of our recruits to Camp Vimy at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier (just outside Quebec City) to complete the final stage of their Basic Military Qualification. Officers spend five weeks at the camp, and non-commissioned members are in the camp for 3 weeks. This final stage of their training includes field operations, teamwork and collaboration, and general field experience required by every member of the Canadian Armed Forces. Prior to the stage at Camp Vimy, recruits learn the basics of the Canadian Armed Forces including various policies, drill, and weapons handling. Upon their return and graduation from the Basic Military Qualification course, members will begin their trade training which is specific to the job in which they will perform for the remainder of their careers.

Small Boat Exercises



This summer was a busy time for the boatswains and boats at Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Prevost*. This summer included exercises out of Port Stanley as well as visits to Port Glasgow, Port Bruce, and Port Burwell. These exercises and visits were part of a public outreach and training initiative to help spread awareness with the general public who might not know about the rich naval history within their community. The engagement from the public with our sailors has been wonderful - being able to answer questions about the Naval Reserve, our capabilities, and missions is always time well spent. These exercises also provided important training opportunities for our boat operators and supporting staff to quickly deploy to new and unfamiliar areas - something the Naval Reserves are often called to do during Canada's flooding seasons on Operation LENTUS.

Shoreline Cleanup

Members of HMCS *Prevost* had the privilege and opportunity to participate in shoreline cleanups in Port Stanley and at the forks of the Thames River in London. Over 10 of our own sailors were able to partner with the London and Port Stanley communities for these shoreline cleanups. Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Prevost* is proud to be able to contribute to the maintenance of its community shorelines to ensure they are both safe and clean for all Canadians to enjoy.



A Cog in the Army Wheel

LtN Andrew McLaughlin, Public Affairs Officer, 31 Canadian Brigade Group

Wolseley Barracks in London remains a critical hub for the Canadian Army's Regional Summer Training program, hosting 31 Canadian Brigade Group Battle School (31 BSL) courses including various driver training and vehicle serials, Basic Machine Gun (BMG), multiple Development Period One (DP1) courses, and Basic Military / Basic Military Officer Qualifications (amongst others).

"We have a rather large area of responsibility, from Hamilton to Barrie to Windsor, and everything in between," said LCol Peter St. Denis, Commanding Officer of 31 BSL. "But one constant is Wolseley Barracks not only hosting Brigade Headquarters, but also the Battle School."

London has always been a hotbed for Army activity, but Wolseley Barracks has been busier than ever with the pandemic still limiting the use of many other facilities. "The variety and volume of the training we can do here has repeatedly proven its worth as a regional training hub," said St. Denis.

Even with the end of the pandemic in sight, it's clear that London will continue to be a valuable cog in the 31 BSL wheel, and an asset to the Army's vast training system.

Photos: Bdr Julia Currie (LX) & Cpl Dominic Ouellet (IMG), 31 CBG Public Affairs

LCol Peter St. Denis (right) presents an award to a candidate at the Royal School Building, Wolseley Barracks.



31 CBG continues to force-generate for major overseas operations

LtN Andrew McLaughlin, Public Affairs Officer, 31 Canadian Brigade Group

Multiple members of 31 Canadian Brigade Group recently returned from Operation REASSURANCE and Operation IMPACT, where they served with NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group-Latvia and CTAT-Lebanon, respectively.

These important operations are supporting our NATO allies and other partner nations in two global hotspots, and Canadian Army contributions -- including those of 31 CBG -- provide stability and security in these regions.

We're very proud of our members from the 1st Hussars, Windsor Regiment, 4th Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, Royal Highland Fusiliers of Canada, Grey and Simcoe Foresters, Essex and Kent Scottish, and other 4th Canadian Division units for their hard work and dedication on these important missions, which we continue to support.



Proudly representing your Units, the 31CBG and Canada abroad.

Well Done.

The GCC thanks you for this military service in a global setting.

Tom Dean

President GCC



ON TARGET: The U.S. Embarrassing Exit From Afghanistan Was Predicted By The Afghans

By Scott Taylor

It has been just over a week since the Taliban shocked the world with their blitzkrieg speed overthrow of the Afghan regime. The first major shock was the fact that the Taliban accomplished their victory without having to fight any battles.

The 350,000 strong Afghan security forces, simply disappeared. No western military analyst predicted such a complete and instant collapse of a fighting force, into which the U.S. and NATO had invested two decades of training and equipping. The U.S. supplied Afghan military arsenal was valued at nearly \$100 billion and included armoured vehicles, artillery and even combat aircraft. That impressive collection of weaponry and munitions is now in the hands of the Taliban.

While U.S. President Joe Biden was quick to scapegoat the Afghan army for their lack of will to fight, in all honesty no one can blame them for this defeat.

No one can ever question the courage of the average Afghan fighter. Afghanistan has shed a lot of blood over the centuries to earn itself the moniker the graveyard of empires. Courage was not the problem.

As for professionalism and combat proficiency, the Afghan army has twenty years of top-level international instruction, including that of many Canadian soldiers. Compared to their Taliban counterparts the Afghan army were by far better trained, and certainly far better equipped with modern weapons. Firepower was not the problem.

In terms of opposing numbers, estimates of the Taliban's current strength vary greatly but they are thought to have between 30,000 to 60,000 fighters. That means that at the start of the Taliban offensive on August 5th, the Afghan army outnumbered them – on paper – by at least a six to one margin.

Owing to the widespread corruption in the ranks of the Afghan army and police, the actual number of government security forces may have been as low as 100,000 at the start of the Taliban campaign.

The reason for the discrepancy is the phenom of what he became known as the employment of 'Ghost soldiers.'

This brings us to the real reason why the Afghan army proved to be so absolutely useless in the face of the Taliban.

They had no will to fight and they certainly had no will to die for the corrupt puppet government which the U.S. had established in Kabul.

With the abrupt withdrawal of the last of the U.S. combat forces on July 2, the Afghan military knew the plug had been pulled on the regime of President Ashraf Ghani.

During the peace negotiations in Doha, Qatar, the U.S. military leaders had met with the Taliban to ostensibly broker a power-sharing agreement with the Ghani government.

The problem with that scenario was that there were no representatives from the Ghani regime at those talks.

For his part, Ghani understood that he'd been cut from the team and as such his 11th hour departure to safety is understandable. Loyalty is a two-way street. In the end, he owed the U.S. nothing, ditto for the Afghan army.

Sure, they could have put up a fight and delayed the Taliban advance. Their American trainers probably thought that they would resist based purely out of martial pride and esprit de corps.

Unfortunately it is not enough to simply fight against something – in this case the Taliban, if you cannot believe in the cause you are fighting for.

For the two decades the Americans spent occupying Afghanistan they did not realize that the Afghans never considered the presence of foreign troops on their soil as a liberation.

Had we focused on developing a progressive, functioning central government, instead of arming and training a military force to prop up the most corrupt regime on earth, the tragic ending may have been different.

The crazy part is that Afghans always knew this and they predicted exactly how the American withdrawal would play out. In 2008, I interviewed tribal leader Akbar Bey and he forecast "If the U.S and NATO troops leave Afghanistan at 4:00pm, by 6:00pm the [Afghan] government will collapse. They will not last two hours."

His prediction was bang on.



espritdecorps
CANADIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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31 Signal Regiment In The Field

31 Signal Regiment recently completed an 8-day Field Exercise MERCURY GLORY which was the final confirmation exercise for the unit-run Army Communication and Information System Specialist - Development Period 1 (ACISS DP1) course. Training was conducted at the Robert Land Academy near Wellandport, Ontario.



The course was the culmination of 7 months of training that included classroom, online and practical learning. It was the first time that a Signals DP1 course was permitted to run part-time and at a line unit, and served as a proof-of-concept for future training. The course included staff from 31 Signal Regiment and candidates from 31 Signal Regiment (Hamilton and London) and 32 Signal Regiment (Toronto).

In addition to the obvious challenges associated with running a course in the COVID-19 environment, staff and students endured provincial lockdown orders which necessitated constantly shifting schedules, and a shift to entirely online learning, as with so many educational institutions. On the FTX the students endured weather shifting between warm, cold and wet, limited chances to sleep, and regular equipment breakdowns. Overcoming all of these hurdles was further proof of adaptability and perseverance, which is the hallmark of the Canadian Soldier.

In order to qualify, the students practiced and perfected their skills in setting up a Communications Detachment centred around a Command Post (CP) Truck, which is a Light Support Vehicle – Wheeled (LSVW) mounting two VHF radios and towing a trailer with a 10 kW generator.

Their “Det Setup” drills included vehicle placement, getting communications (radios) going, setting up the vehicle camouflage nets, establishing local security, and finally their sleeping tent and other equipment that allows them to live and work in the field.

In addition to the basic Det Setup, they also practiced setting up VHF and HF radios in vehicle, headquarters, “manpack” and handheld configurations, as well as the standard soldier skills of camouflage, overland navigation and the field craft of living and thriving “Off the Grid”. Everyone adhered to all COVID-19 force health protection measures throughout the course and FTX with all staff, instructors and student remaining healthy throughout.

The completion of this course despite challenges of COVID-1 and with everyone remaining healthy is a testament to the professionalism, hard work, dedication of all involved. Bravo Zulu to all!





Student Bursaries 2021

In appreciation of your service, London and Region's **Garrison Community Council**, with support from **General Dynamics Land Systems** and **Militex** in London, will award a number of bursaries to serving military personnel in Primary Reserve units who are enrolled in post-secondary education. Each bursary is worth \$1,000 and may be used for any educational expense.

How to Apply

Information and Application Forms are available on the GCC website under **Bursaries** at www.gcclondon.ca. Applications must be submitted in electronic format only and sent by e-mail to:

garrisoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Primary Reserve members serving in the following **units** and **locations** are eligible to apply for a GCC Bursary:

HMCS Prevost	London
31 Canadian Brigade Group HQ	London
1st Hussars	London, Sarnia
31 Combat Engineer Regiment (The Elgin's)	St. Thomas, Waterloo
31 Signal Regiment Detachment	London
4th Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment	London, Stratford
31 Service Battalion	London, Windsor, Hamilton
31 Military Police	London

The submission deadline for applications is

22 October 2021

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Land Systems-Canada

MILITEX

Student Bursaries

The GCC Student Bursary Programme for 2021 will be offering a total of ten (10) bursaries each valued at \$1,000. The bursaries will be awarded by merit to the ten selected Reservists who are attending or are about to attend post-secondary education. This is possible thanks to the financial support of **General Dynamics Land Systems Canada** and **Militex**.

This is one major way by which the GCC along with General Dynamics and Militex support our Canadian military Reservists.

If you know of a deserving Reservist serving in the units shown on the poster, encourage them to apply by going to our website and following the directions.



Have you seen this logo?

If you have not seen this logo,

you have not yet visited our new GCC website!

Visit today at www.gcclondon.ca and look around.

Get VAXXED!!!

I GOT MY COVID-19 VACCINE!

www.covidvaccinelm.ca Call 226-289-3560

BUREAU DE SANTÉ DE MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT
www.healthunit.com

GCC Guest Speaker on Wed. September 8, 2021 at 12 Noon on Zoom

**Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke, MD, MPH,
CCFP(EM), FCFP**

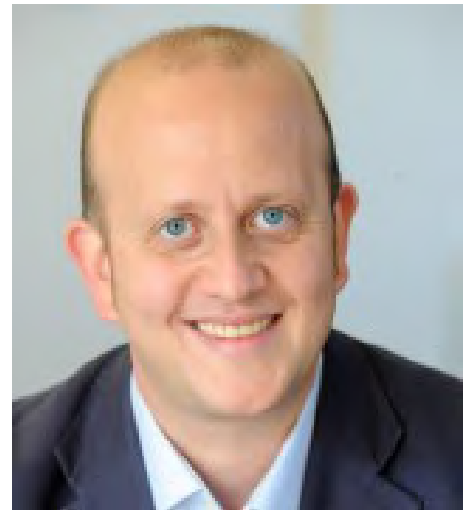


Dr. Urbantke is currently the Regional Supervising Coroner for the West Region – London Office. Prior she was the Acting Medical Officer of Health at the Brant County Health Unit and led its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A graduate of the University of Toronto, she completed her residency in Family Practice and Emergency Medicine at the University of British Columbia. Most recently she completed a Master of Public Health at the University of Waterloo. Prior to transition to Public Health, Dr. Urbantke practiced emergency medicine at Woodstock Hospital where she also was the Chief of Emergency. She has been an Investigating Coroner for over 17 years and has presided over numerous Inquests.

GCC Guest Speaker on Wed. October 13, 2021 at 12 Noon on Zoom

Dr. Saverio Stranges, MD, PhD, FAHA

Saverio Stranges is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, at Western University. Dr. Stranges is a medical doctor, public health specialist and chronic disease epidemiologist, with extensive experience in the field of epidemiology and public health research. Dr. Stranges's research focuses on the epidemiology and prevention of chronic disease and aging, specifically regarding the role of lifestyles, nutritional and psychosocial factors, such as dietary patterns, sleep behaviors and social determinants of health. He is also interested in global health, especially in the area of cardio-metabolic disease in low-resource settings, as well as in interdisciplinary research. Over the years, Dr. Stranges has developed substantial expertise in the evaluation of observational and clinical trial data and secondary data analysis of large datasets.



A Zoom link will be forwarded to all members a few days before the meetings.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend.