

THE PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY COMMITMENT TO AFGHANISTAN

Approximately 1000 Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) soldiers are presently serving in Afghanistan at this time. The largest contingent of PPCLI soldiers is serving in the Second Battalion (2 PPCLI) Battle Group. The Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) is based on a contingent from Third Battalion (3 PPCLI) and includes PPCLI officers and NCOs from across Western Canada. The First Battalion (1PPCLI) has provided a rifle company (B Coy) to protect the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry has served with distinction in Afghanistan since 2002. The Regiment is continuing its proud tradition of service and is working hard to promote security, good governance and development.

Composition of the 2 PPCLI Battle Group

The Second Battalion (2PPCLI) Battle Group is commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel David Corbould. The 2 PPCLI Battle Group is part of the Multi-National Brigade in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Regional Command (south). Like the battle groups on previous rotations of *Operation ATHENA*, the 2 PPCLI Battle Group was formed in Canada and prepared for this deployment through months of individual and collective training. Its duties include patrolling the Regional Command (south) area of responsibility, suppressing hostile activity, and escorting road convoys.

The 2 PPCLI Battle Group consists of the following sub-units:

- From 2 PPCLI in Shilo, Manitoba:
 - Battle Group Headquarters,
 - B Company,
 - C Company, and
 - Reconnaissance Platoon;
- Elements of A Company from the 3 PPCLI in Edmonton, Alberta;
- From the 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in Shilo:
 - B Battery, armed with the 155-mm M777 howitzer, and
 - two Surveillance and Target Acquisition Troops;
- B Squadron from Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) in Edmonton, mounted in Leopard C2 tanks;
- D Squadron from the 12^e Régiment blindé du Canada, mounted in Coyote armoured reconnaissance vehicles; and
- 12 Field Squadron and the Armoured Engineer Troop from 1 Combat Engineer Regiment in Edmonton.

Operational Mentor and Liaison Team

The Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) is supported by officers and Non Commissioned officers (NCOs) from the PPCLI, from various locations across Canada (1 and 3 PPCLI Edmonton, Alberta and, 2 PPCLI Shilo, Manitoba). The Commander of the OMLT is Colonel Jean-François Riffou. The Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) advises, mentors and assists the senior leadership of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA). This professional development initiative was undertaken to help the ANA grow and develop into a force to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan and extend the legitimate authority of the Government of Afghanistan.

The development of Afghanistan's national security forces will take years, and it is not possible at this time to set out a schedule for completion. Progress depends on overcoming the challenges of recruiting, training, equipping, retaining and mentoring personnel in an environment that is still very dangerous.

Building the capabilities of Afghanistan's national security forces, with the help of ISAF, non-governmental organizations and the international community, is a crucial aspect of ensuring the security of Afghanistan. Security is essential to continued progress in reconstruction, development and good governance.

Mentoring the Afghan National Army

In May 2007, the Canadian OMLT began working with the 1st Brigade of the ANA's 205 Corps, based in Kandahar Province. 1st Brigade consists of a headquarters, three infantry *kandaks*, one combat support *kandak* and one logistics *kandak*. (A *kandak* is about the size of a Canadian infantry battalion.)

The OMLT help ANA units bridge the gap between the collective training they do at the Kabul Military Training Centre and field operations. Training delivered with the help of the OMLTs staff ranges through the full spectrum of ANA responsibilities from garrison functions to operational deployments. OMLTs also provide the critically important conduit for liaison and command-and-control between ANA units and nearby ISAF and coalition forces, while providing the ANA with essential combat enablers.

Mentoring the Afghan National Police

Joint Task Force Afghanistan now includes a Police OMLT to support the Afghan National Police (ANP). The Police OMLT is a joint initiative by the Canadian Forces and the ANP in co-operation with Afghan civil authorities, the ANA and Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan to help the ANP develop basic combat survival skills as well as policing capabilities.

With about 60 soldiers from CF military police and combat arms units (NCOs from the PPCLI), the Police OMLT advises, mentors and assists district-level ANP leaders to reinforce professional development efforts and bring the ANP to a level of proficiency at which it can operate independently. The Police OMLT works with ANP checkpoints and patrols in the field.

Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team

The Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) is commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Dana Woodworth. Since August 2005, the 250-strong Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) has operated from Camp Nathan Smith in downtown Kandahar City, where it will remain until February 2009. As well as a large CF contingent drawn mostly from Land Force Western Area, the KPRT includes personnel from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Correctional Service of Canada, and several law enforcement agencies that contribute to the Civilian Police Section led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

KPRT projects reinforce the authority of the Afghan government in Kandahar Province by fostering stability and development. KPRT teams monitor security, promote the policies and priorities of Afghanistan's national government with local authorities, and encourage security sector reform.

The military component of the KPRT includes:

- The KPRT Commander's Tactical Headquarters Group, made up of soldiers who protect the KPRT Commander and his staff and drive their vehicles;
- A company of infantry from 1 PPCLI to defend Camp Nathan Smith, protect KPRT teams visiting projects, and provide a quick reaction force for Kandahar City;
- Military engineers to manage quick-impact reconstruction and development projects;
- A Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) platoon made up of Army Reserve soldiers from Land Force Western Area; and
- Service and support elements drawn from across Canada.

Reserve Force Support

With the building of the 2 PPCLI Battle Group early in 2007, reserve force soldiers from across Canada took up the call to join in work up training and be selected for operations with 2 PPCLI Battle group in Afghanistan. From Victoria, British Columbia to Thunder bay, Ontario, reservists are employed in various capacities within the Battle group. The Loyal Edmonton Regiment (4 PPCLI) has made a significant contribution to this mission, deploying 22 soldiers to support operations in Afghanistan.

Sources

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2. Canadian Expeditionary Force Command:
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3. Second Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Website:
www.army.forces.gc.ca/2PPCLI
4. PPCLI Regimental Headquarters Newsletter (Winter 2008).