

Canadian killed in Afghanistan was based in Petawawa

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[CBC News](#)

The 40th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan was fatally wounded when a roadside explosive blew up near a NATO patrol on Saturday, a military spokesman said.

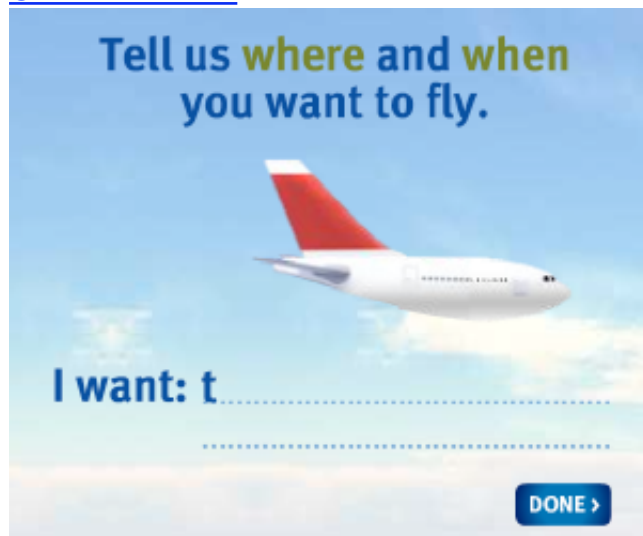
Col. Fred Lewis, the deputy commander of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, said Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson was a gunner inside an armoured vehicle that struck a mine or a roadside bomb early Saturday morning.

Wilson was killed in the Panjwaii district west of Kandahar, the same area where two Canadian soldiers were killed and five others were wounded in an attack on Tuesday.

He was a member of the Royal Canadian Dragoons and based in Petawawa, Ont.

Video footage showed a damaged Nyala RG-31 jeep being towed from the scene. The explosion penetrated the vehicle and the wounded soldier died later of his injuries. There were no other casualties, the colonel said.

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Trooper Mark Wilson
(DND)

Lewis said soldiers remain confident in the protection that the Nyala provides against roadside blasts, but added no vehicle is impervious.

"You can always build a bigger bomb," he said.

Small-arms assault



Canadian military officials said militants, who still have strong presence in the area, assaulted the patrol with small arms fire. Attack helicopters and an explosives disposal team were dispatched to the area.

"We interrupted two small patrols of insurgents," Lewis said. "They were to the west and north of our locations."

More than 2,000 Canadian troops are deployed in the region and Canadians are leading the NATO forces there. The latest death comes on the fifth anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Southern Afghanistan has been the scene of increased fighting and attacks during the past several months. Taliban militants have been stepping up the use of roadside and suicide bombs.

NATO troops had massive clashes with militants in the Panjwai area last month, and NATO said more than 300 fighters had been killed.

German journalists killed

Elsewhere, two German freelance journalists who were researching a documentary were killed by gunmen early Saturday in the northern province of Baghlan, about 160 kilometres northwest of Kabul.

Karen Fischer, 30, and Christian Struwe, 38, had worked for Deutsche Welle, Germany's government-owned broadcaster.

They had worked to re-establish the media in Afghanistan, said Deutsche Welle director Erik Bettermann. Struwe had helped set up a state-run radio and television newsroom.

Militants attack U.S. patrol in Khost

In the eastern province of Khost, a suicide car bomber targeted a U.S. patrol near the border with Pakistan, said provincial police chief Mohammed Ayub. He said there were no casualties but one vehicle was damaged. The U.S. military had no immediate information.

In Ghazni province, police said a regional Taliban commander was killed by police on Thursday.

Mullah Abdul Rahim Sabauun and his bodyguard were riding on a motorbike in Gelan district when they were killed by police, said police Chief Mirhamid, who goes by only one name. Sabuun was reportedly a high-ranking politician during the Taliban's rule.

Fifth anniversary of invasion

The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan began Oct. 7, 2001, to oust the hardline Taliban regime for hosting al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Western forces and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance quickly routed the Islamic regime.

But the militant fighters who once appeared down and out have returned with a vengeance, taking control of large swaths of countryside in the last year.



The heavily armoured Nyala jeep, above, 'is designed to resist a blast equivalent to two anti-tank mines detonating simultaneously,' Canada's Department of National Defence says on its website. (Cpl. Robert Bottrill/DND)

More than 3,000 people have been killed in rising violence this year, mostly militants battling Western forces and their superior firepower.

Suicide bombers are increasingly targeting ordinary Afghans and Western troops, and militants are assassinating key political figures, burning down schools and using roadside bombs to deadly effect.

With files from the Associated Press