



REMEMBRANCE DAY



MAJOR DAVID HODSON

Tour in Afghanistan was one of the most satisfying experiences ever for local Canadian Forces officer

David Hodson is a man with a mission, a most unusual mission.

David, who lives in Prince Albert with his wife and family in the old Rowan Tree Hall, is a highly respected criminal lawyer, but that's only part of his story. David is also a Major in the Canadian Forces and recently returned from a seven-and-a-half month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

David joined the military immediately after graduating from high school. He stayed in the military for two years and then remained in the Reserves as he attended university and law school at the University of Ottawa.

Following his graduation, he transferred his military affiliation to the Judge Advocate General. In this capacity he gives legal advice to base commanders and in the battlespace, and is involved in courts martial. David later completed a doctorate at the University of Toronto.

When the prospect arose for him to go to Afghanistan, he jumped at the opportunity and during his tour of duty he was a Legal Advisor for the Afghan Army. "There is such a sense of purpose, such a determination to move toward a civilized, structured, peaceful society among the Afghan people," he said.

When asked about Canada's withdrawal from the war ravaged country in 2014, he responded, "Many Afghans, both military and civilian would prefer that we stay longer. They acknowledge that there will be security concerns and civil unrest for some time to come. After all, look how long it took us to evolve into a democratic society."

He continued, "Afghanistan is an insurgency and the enemy, the Taliban, is a motivated group in its extreme form of Islam. The Taliban has a cellular structure and it is extremely difficult to make inroads into the system."

When asked about his most pleasant experiences in Afghanistan, without hesitation he answered, "Spending time with the Afghan children. Even in poverty they have hope. So many children are struggling to survive. There are many kids who are



Major David Hodson of Port Perry.

supporting their families while others are orphans.

For the Afghan people, hope is the greatest weapon of all. Afghans don't whine and complain. We are so spoiled in Canada. After seeing hard working Afghan kids, my greatest disappointment on returning to Canada, was seeing young Canadians who either won't work or don't want to."

"One of the greatest tragedies in Afghanistan is hearing and seeing kids being blown up and dozens of kids who are maimed, blinded or seriously injured. Children are being killed at a far greater rate than is being publicized," he commented.



MONDAY NOVEMBER 11



David was based at Kabul and was involved in 180 missions during his tour of duty. During these missions he was able to see and meet many of the tremendous number of Afghans who are putting their lives on the line to support our efforts to help them develop.

He added, "Some of the most valuable and under-rated contributors to progress are the interpreters. They face the same dangers as we do but their challenges are far greater. They are targeted by the Taliban. I had four interpreters working with me and their lives were constantly in danger."

"Many interpreters are trying to reach a safe haven such as Canada, or the USA because they will be targeted after our forces depart from Afghanistan. Females will be the most targeted," he noted.

When asked about the challenges that face countries like Canada and the USA who are trying to help the Afghans, David commented, "Negotiators have to be aware of tribal politics, for safety and common decency. We must develop an awareness of political affiliations, rivalries and the history of the country. Without that knowl-

edge, we will fail to help them move forward. Changes are going to take several generations, just as democracy took 200 years to evolve in the United States."

"Afghanistan is such a beautiful country. From our

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REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Monday, November 11th at 11am

*in front of the Scugog Township
Municipal Office.*

181 Perry Street, Port Perry

Blackstock Remembrance Day Service
St John's Anglican Church - 10:30 a.m.
Cenotaph - 11:00 a.m.



REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

*Let us
never
forget
the
sacrifices
made to
protect
our
future*



Take time to remember those who served
in the name of freedom and peace.

We will remember them.

Durham Regional Council



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base we could see the snow-capped mountains dominating the distance. If it wasn't for the war, Afghanistan could be an amazing tourist destination. In Afghanistan there is an elegant simplicity and clarity in life. It helps you to realize and appreciate what we have in Canada."

He went on to say, "Having witnessed the struggles other people have for the most basic of human rights and dignities, like access to clean water, education and the freedom to not only speak their thoughts, but the privilege to even think them.

I am aware that although our Country may not be perfect, by comparison it is utopia. I have an abundant and blessed life that has allowed me to watch my children grow in safety and health, and to love and respect my wife as an equal and free spirit.

Most significantly, I am aware that to live each day with those is a gift not to be taken lightly. This gift was paid for with the lives of Canadian men and women fighting for freedom and we should all be grateful and forever thankful for their sacrifice."

David was also full of praise for the Canadians who supported him during his absence from Canada, judges, lawyers and clients, but most importantly, his family and friends here in Scugog. He then added, "I would have been lost without SKYPE. It enabled me to be in touch with my family on a daily basis."

When asked if he would like to visit Afghanistan again, David's response was emphatic, "In a heartbeat! It's so thrilling to be making an active contribution to peace and seeing that progress. This is one of the most satisfying experiences I have ever had."

As his time in Afghanistan drew to a close he had an extremely pleasant surprise. While participating in a huge parade, he was called up by Afghan General Sher Mohamed Karimi who personally presented David with an award recognizing his service to Afghanistan in promoting peace and prosperity.

A rare honour and a proud moment for a resident of Scugog.

*By Paul Arculus
Focus on Scugog*



HMCS Crusader (H60)

- 1930s Built for the Royal Navy - Portsmouth
- 1935 Sent to Mediterranean following the Italian invasion of Abyssinia
- 1935-6 Deployed in Red Sea for Italian war ship surveillance
- 1936 Patrol duties off Spanish Coast in Bay of Biscay
- 1938 Commissioned for RCN service and renamed HMCS OTTAWA
- 1941 Mid-Atlantic Escort Force - Torpedoed and sank killing 114 crewmen, 69 survived

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Remembrance Day November 11th

Lest We Forget

*We must always remember those
who gave their lives and show our
gratitude to those who survived to help
build the Canada we know and love.*



SINCE 1917

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