

Background to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Commendation medal awarded to Jim on 25 March 2010 at a ceremony held on the Canadian Military Base in Edmonton



Jim was deployed as the Team Leader of the 2008 ROTO 5 (rotation5) chaplain team sent into the NATO Mission in Afghanistan, located in the Kandahar District. Along with his duties of coordinating, ensuring training for, and supporting the chaplain team were added three more assignments, one from which his recent Chief of Defence Staff Commendation was nominated:

His three particular assignments as chaplain were to:

The Role 3 (NATO) Hospital in KAF, staffed by coalition force personnel of many nationalities.

The UAVS unit (unstaffed surveillance vehicles (planes) sent out to dangerous sights). Jim was given the gift of a large cross made for him by this team, crafted from the wings of demobilized vehicles.

The Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT). The OMLT's commanding officer, Colonel Drew, nominated Jim for the award.

The OMLT was mandated to mentor/train the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers, with the design to enable them to be an effective security force for their country. The duties performed by the Canadian OMLT with the ANA, meant they were regularly in direct combat contact with terrorist insurgents, clearing villages of the insurgents, protecting road ways from the setting of mines, suppressing the manufacturing and distribution of weapons by the insurgents, and intercepting activity of suicide bombers. In other words, the OMLT team was in continuous battle mode.

As their Chaplain, Jim spent time with them both in training areas, and in battle forward operating sites. It is due to his presence at volatile sites and during battle, that Jim was regarded by Colonel Drew, for his valued skills and character. Jim was considered 'a fool for Christ' by some of the soldiers because he navigated the travel to and from these sites and into the battle zones unarmed. He stayed focussed in his relationship with the Colonel and soldiers as Padre...being a calm loving presence, offering physical and empathetic care, pastoral sensitivity, and advisor on morale. He was active in these situations with both the Canadian and Afghan soldiers. He stayed composed under fire, knew his place in the battle activity, and was a knowledgeable debriefing resource following battle contact.



Cathy Bone (spouse) and Jim

Jim is honoured by the nomination and award. He was relieved and thankful that his training, beliefs, and personal character traits stood up well in the war zone.

Although he had prepared specifically and diligently for military deployment, he also knows that years of being with people in the other battles of life made him the skilled chaplain he wanted to be. He has held the hands of many a person traumatized by life's suffering, illnesses, death, tragedy, relationship loss, violence, anguish, suicide...honouring their journey with words of encouragement or comfort, rallying resources beyond himself for their needs, and at other times, communicating God's love silently, or with tears of solidarity.

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He has been witness to the amazing spirit of peoples' quivering courage, tenacity, fortitude, and celebrations. This has shaped and honed Jim to believe that there is a Sacred Presence at work in and around and beyond all human capacity and expectations. **Knowing** this- supported Jim's desire to be with people in war, and his hope that he could do it with due diligence. **Trusting** and **practising** this in community- allowed Jim to do more than he dared hope possible, in an impossible place.



L-Gen Leslie (award presenter) & Rev Maj Short



CDS Bar



Dave (the cook) and Jim



Col. Drew (Colonel of the OMLT) & Jim