



The new front line: Glyn Berry (in flak jacket) meets with local tribesmen in the Marouf district, a remote area of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border, 160 kilometres east of Kandahar city.

These people—diplomats, soldiers and aid workers—are the new front line in the struggle to help the most vulnerable and dispossessed people on the planet. They work under extreme circumstances, often in conditions of great danger. They need enormous reserves of compassion, commitment and courage.

Glyn Berry exemplified these qualities. His compassion for the people he met in Pakistan and Afghanistan defined the last years of his life. He volunteered for Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar because he felt deeply that the Afghan people deserve a better life.

Commitment was not an abstraction for Glyn. He believed that if you could help—if you wanted to help—then you should do so with real passion. He was passionately committed to the work he was doing in Kandahar. He could be a thorn in our side, demanding the support he needed to get the work done, but it was always about the work—it was never about himself.

As for his courage, we should think here of Winston Churchill's words: "Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities...because it is the quality which guarantees all others." Glyn was a brave man. Only weeks before the explosion that ended his life, he was in another convoy when a bomb went off. He was only five seconds away from the centre of the blast. Glyn did not flinch. He did not waver in his commitment, nor did his compassion for the Afghan people ebb away as he considered the dangers around him. He stayed on.

He was aware of the risks. So were we. He volunteered in spite of them, eyes wide open. Assisting Afghans was a cause he and we thought worthy. He did a great job. We never thought it would be otherwise.

Nobody could have been more dedicated to the people of Afghanistan than he was. But the strength of Glyn's commitment and the generosity of his beliefs do not lessen the grief that we, in the Canadian foreign service, feel at a human life of such value extinguished.

There is an old Welsh proverb that says: "The best candle is understanding." Glyn

understood that each and every one of us can make a difference, and his life will serve as a candle to the Canadian foreign service now and in

the future, especially to those younger than he. He has shown us that the foreign service is more than just a job, and that our individual efforts can add up to something worthwhile, something noble, something that changes lives for the better and brings honour and distinction to the country we are privileged to serve. 🍁

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Find information about Canada's efforts in Afghanistan at www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca.

In the line of duty

Canadian foreign service officers killed abroad in the line of duty in the past include John Douglas Turner, the political advisor to the Canadian commissioner on the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC) in Vietnam. Turner was shot down on October 18, 1965, while travelling on an ICSC airplane from Vientiane to his post in Hanoi. His body was never recovered.

Another Canadian official killed while serving overseas was J.M. Boyer, an assistant trade commissioner who was killed during anti-Western riots in Cairo on January 26, 1952.

There are plans to place a plaque in the foyer of the Lester B. Pearson Building in Ottawa to commemorate those who have died under tragic circumstances while serving Canada abroad. The memorial is meant to honour the lives of these people and the sacrifices they made in the service of Canada.