



General Peter Devlin received the U.S. Legion of Merit medal for his “exceptionally meritorious conduct” as Deputy Commander of all MultiNational Forces in Iraq.

Over the decades, the U.S. has awarded this medal to dozens of military leaders from many countries, including Adolf Heusinger, who had been the Nazi Army’s Chief of General Staff. Other notable recipients have included Kings of Britain, Greece, Romania, Saudi Arabia and Thailand, and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi—the Shah of Iran.



Canada’s ‘Fiercely Proud’ Lt.Gen. Devlin in Iraq, 2006-08

By Richard Sanders, coordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade.

In 2008, when Peter Devlin was a Canadian Major General, he received the U.S. Legion of Merit medal for his command of multinational forces fighting in Iraq.¹ This decoration is awarded by the U.S. military for “exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements.”² Devlin received this U.S. medal for executing command responsibilities while posted with the U.S. Army to Iraq for 15 months between December 14, 2006 and early 2008.³

In March 2007, while in Iraq, Devlin wrote to the University of Western Ontario alumni magazine, saying: “Greetings from Iraq... I have been in Iraq for almost three months... and I occupy the Deputy Commanding General position for Multi-National

Corps Iraq. It is very rewarding and I am mainly responsible for coalition operations and Iraqi infrastructure.... It is an honour to be serving with the Coalition Forces in Iraq and I am *fiercely proud* to be wearing a Canadian flag.”⁴ (Emphasis added.)

Devlin was deployed to Iraq as part of his three year stint as Deputy Commander of the U.S. Army’s 3rd (III) Corps and the Fort Hood army base in Texas between 2005 and 2008. As the *Fort Hood Sentinel* explained “His time here included a 15-month deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08 where he saw a dramatic change in the war-torn nation. ‘It was a professional response by the U.S. military,’ Devlin said. He added the deployment was among his most cherished memories from his time at Fort Hood.”⁵

Devlin, whose job involved

overseeing issues relating to the military coalition fighting in Iraq, said “there are great strengths that come from multinationality. It brings different cultures, different equipment, different approaches, greater legitimacy to the effort here in Iraq.”⁶

Besides advocating a “greater legitimacy” for the war by having different nations involved in the occupation, Devlin’s tour included visiting various military contingents fighting in Iraq. For instance, in October 2007, he spent some time embedded with an Estonian infantry platoon patrolling Baghdad streets.⁷ This platoon is “buried within” an American battalion.⁸

Devlin was the fourth of five Canadian generals on “exchange” with the U.S. Army to hold this top command position of III Corps and Fort Hood.⁹ In 2008, when replaced by the current deputy commander at Fort Hood, fellow Canadian Brig. Gen. Pe-

General Devlin walked Baghdad streets with this Estonian infantry brigade in 2007.



Devlin

Estonian Military website www.mil.ee/?id=2184

ter Atkinson,

“Devlin complimented the American soldiers he worked with at Fort Hood, calling them smart, disciplined and strong. He wore the III Corps insignia with *‘fierce pride,’* he said.”¹⁰

And, as he told another Texan reporter, Fort Hood “made us feel a part of the family... We wish we were still there. Be *fiercely proud* of that strong sense of community.”¹¹

Upon completing his three years in the Lone Star State as a leading of-

This was not the first time that Devlin expressed such sentiments for Canadian troops fighting in Afghanistan. In 2004, while commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB), Devlin displayed his usual flare by saying “I am *fiercely proud* of the Canadian units deployed as part of KMNB.”¹⁵ Upon leaving that post, with his by now characteristic panache, “his voice strained with emotion,” Devlin proclaimed: “I leave *fiercely proud* of the accomplishments of all the soldiers in the brigade.”¹⁶



In October 2007, General Peter Devlin, who is now Canada’s Army Commander, was in the streets of Baghdad, Iraq, with Lt. Kaido Kivistik, Commander of an Estonian Infantry Battalion.

ficer in the U.S. Army, Devlin became Deputy Commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, which is responsible for all Canadian military missions abroad, except so-called “Special Operations.”¹²

In June 2010, Devlin was promoted to Lt. Gen. and made Chief of the Land Staff. During the “Change of Command” ritual he told predecessor, Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, “you make all of us *fiercely proud* with your devotion and your commitment to our great nation.”¹³

Now, as chief of Canada’s Army, Devlin says the “experience of combat” has “reinvigorated” our troops. With his usual creative flare, he noted that “we need to be *fiercely proud* of what we have accomplished.”¹⁴

Devlin continues to promote Canada’s army with inventive statements to the media. For instance, in support of the annual “Army Run” this September in Ottawa, Devlin dug deep into his impressive linguistic vault to tell CTV News that “Canadians are *fiercely proud* of what we on behalf of them accomplish around the world.”¹⁷

Most Canadians are certainly proud—though it is not known how “fiercely”—of the prevailing political fairy tale that Canada refused to take any part in the U.S.-led war against Iraq. It is, however, not certain where the general public would direct their “fierceness,” if they knew that the current chief of Canada’s army had not only commanded troops in the Iraq war but had actually received a U.S. medal for his role in helping lead that war.

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