

For Immediate Release

January 23, 2008 (Toronto)

The Canadian Landmine Foundation has added a sixth honouree to its mine detection dog (MDD) training project to note the death of Brian Isfeld, MSM, CD. Brian died at age 68 on January 20, 2008 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Comox, BC after a battle with cancer.

This year the Canadian Landmine Foundation set out to fund the training of five mine detection dogs. The first, will be called Izzy in honour of Brian's son, Master Cpl. Mark Isfeld of Courtney B.C., who was killed in Croatia in June 1994; the second will be named Paul in honour of Cpl. Paul Davis of Bridgewater N.S., who was killed in Afghanistan March 2, 2006; the third will be named Jeff in honour of Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh of Regina SK, who was killed in Afghanistan August 9, 2006; the fourth will be named Boomer in honour of Cpl. Andrew Eykelenboom of Comox BC, who was killed in Afghanistan August 11, 2006; and the fifth will be named Carol in honour of Mrs. Carol Isfeld, M.S.M. who passed away on August 15, 2007.

The funds for this project will be raised through Night of A Thousand Dinners (N1KD). Each year, people across the country and around the world come together to enjoy a fundraising event to help end the global landmine crisis. They host a dinner in their home, office, or with others in the community. Instead of the guests bringing wine, flowers, or dessert they are invited to make a donation to the Canadian Landmine Foundation. Details can be found on www.clmf.org.

The story of the Isfeld's is one of the most inspiring accounts of recent times. Their son, Master Corporal Mark Isfeld was killed removing landmines on June 21, 1994 near Kakma, Croatia while carrying out UN peacekeeping duties. One of the things that made Mark unique was that when he would travel on peacekeeping duties he would find that the children had no toys. Personal possessions are often the first things lost during a time of war. He wanted to give them something to play with. So he asked his mother Carol if she could make something for him to hand out to the kids. Carol was an avid knitter - so she knitted him a little woollen doll, about 5 inches tall and on the dolls head she knitted a little blue beret. Mark would hand these dolls out as he travelled.

After Mark was killed, the soldiers in his unit came to the Isfeld's and said 'if you continue to knit them, we will continue to hand them out'. So today there are children all over the world who's first impression of Canada is a little woollen doll with a blue beret.

Brian supported Carol in her work, which continues in the hands of volunteer knitters across Canada. Brian also worked intensely to keep the memory of his son alive, to promote and support the elimination of landmines, and to promote the establishment of August 9th as Peacekeepers Day in Canada. On November 21, 2005, the Governor General awarded Brian and Carol with the Meritorious Service Medal for their efforts.

The six Mine Detection Dogs will be trained by the Canadian International Demining Corps and are expected to be deployed in northern Afghanistan.

More information about Mark Isfeld can be found on
http://clmf.org/peacekeepers_hallHonour_isfeld.cfm
or the family website <http://www.isfeldbc.com/>

More information about Brian and Carol Isfeld can be found on the Governor General's website
<http://www.gg.ca/honours/search-recherche/honours-desc.asp?lang=e&TypeID=msd&id=9671>

More information about Mine Detection Dogs can be found on the Canadian Landmine
Foundation website <http://clmf.org/CanineDemineHome.cfm>

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