

SUPPORT THE TROOPS

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Why does the Military Ordinariate [MO] Provincial Council wish to visibly show its support for deployed Canadian Forces personnel? If you were to ask Canadian troops what they would most appreciate while deployed, the answer is often that they want your support. MO members know just how much support is needed by troops in war-torn countries. Not only does the MO have members who have stoically endured the deployment of their spouses, it has had, and continues to have, League members deployed on missions such as that of Afghanistan.

For many Canadians, life in the military is the unknown. They are unaware that these families may move every three to five years, uprooting their children, complicating education due to differences in provincial standards, forcing their spouses to find new jobs, backsliding into entry-level wages and rebuilding a circle of friends and a support network to replace families that may be on the other end of the country. Families may endure long absences due to courses at other locations or high-risk deployments. The worries linked to being stationed in war-torn countries have not changed. Families struggle every day waiting for their loved ones to return.

How can you as a Canadian show your support for the troops and their families? Over the years, there have been many campaigns organized that show support for the Canadian Forces. MO members have promoted and supported these campaigns. I would like to bring a few of them to your attention.

Invisible Ribbon Campaign: One of the first initiatives in support of the military I saw was the invisible ribbon campaign. It was created to symbolize the “invisible uniform” worn by the families of military members. The ribbon is a strip of clear plastic fastened with a Canadian flag pin. Two military spouses initiated this campaign during the deployment of troops from C.F.B. Cold Lake in support of the 1999 NATO Air Campaign mission in Aviano.

Yellow Ribbon Campaign: The best-known campaign is the yellow ribbon campaign. Having been around since the American Civil War, it symbolizes support for the safe return of deployed troops. Yellow ribbons are now seen as lapel pins, lawn signs, car stickers or magnets.

Wear Red on Friday: This is the newest campaign. A group of military spouses from C.F.B. Petawawa championed

this campaign in the spring of 2006. Soldiers from their base were serving in Afghanistan at the time, and they decided to show support for these troops by wearing red on Fridays. Every venture like this starts small, but this campaign has taken off across Canada, not only in centres where the military is located, but also in communities where there may be a former resident or relative of someone in the town who has deployed.

These are great ways of showing support for the Canadian Forces, whether it be for the work done abroad, or the work done in Canada after a flood, ice or snow storm. The men and women of the Canadian Forces are encouraged by the support Canadians have shown through the invisible ribbon campaign of the 1990s, and the current yellow ribbon and wear red on Friday campaigns. This is particularly so for those troops currently deployed in Afghanistan. †

ST. JOSEPH PARISH COUNCIL SALMON ARM, BRITISH COLUMBIA

With the initiative and effort of council members, 60 young girls in Afghanistan will learn to read and write. How? The council organized a catered dinner and silent auction which raised \$750.00, the cost of one teacher for one year. Way to go! Pictured are: Mary Sinhuber, Sharon Geiger, Mavourneen Reddecliff, Frances Kostiuk and Sandie Cockram.

