

AFGHAN CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT
SEARCH AND ARREST OPERATION
(MENTORED BY THE NZSAS)
WARDAK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

28 September 2011



Lance Corporal Leon Smith, NZSAS

LCPL Leon Kristopher Smith

Born 24 Jul 1978. LCPL Smith was 33 years old.

- Grew up in Wellington and moved to Auckland with his work.
- Enlisted in RNZN 14 Jan 1997.
- Released in the rank of Ensign on 12 Jan 1999.
- Enlisted into the Territorial Force 19 Aug 2005 as a Rifleman.
- LCPL Smith qualified on the NZSAS Selection course in 2006.
- Following the successful completion of the NZSAS cycle of training courses, LCPL Smith was accepted and *Badged* into the NZSAS on 08 Sep 2008.
- LCPL Smith was promoted to the substantive rank of Lance Corporal on 28 Jan 2011.
- LCPL Smith, although junior, was an operationally experienced NZSAS Trooper having first served in Afghanistan in 2010. He had spent almost 11 out of the last 24 months on operations.
- LCPL Smith was employed as an Advanced Medic and he had also recently returned from conducting training in the United Kingdom with other international Special Forces.
- LCPL Smith was also the Advanced Medic who first treated Cpl Doug Grant when he was injured in August during an attack on the British Council Compound in Kabul.
- LCPL Smith was single with no children and resided in Auckland.
- LCPL Smith leaves behind his mother, grandmother and two brothers in Wellington and his father and grandparents in Tauranga.

FAMILY STATEMENT

Leon was loved by his family. He was also loved by his friends and his comrades. He was a wonderful grandson, son, brother and a friend to many. He was sincere and genuine.

Leon was proud to serve in the NZSAS. He believed in what he was doing, and we supported him in what he did.

We are grieving the loss of Leon. We ask for our privacy to be respected at this very difficult time.

Rest in peace, Leon.

OPERATION OVERVIEW

Task: High Risk Arrest in order to disrupt an insurgent operation targeting Kabul.

Intent: Pre-empt key insurgent leadership through the disruption of insurgent movement and supply within Kabul and its surrounding provinces.

Purpose: Execute a judicially authorised search and arrest warrant on compounds of interest that are suspected to host suicide bombers. Additionally, to arrest a named individual who is suspected of being a suicide bomber preparing to target Kabul.

Intelligence: Time sensitive reporting indicated that along with the named individual that weapons and suicide vests were located within the compound.

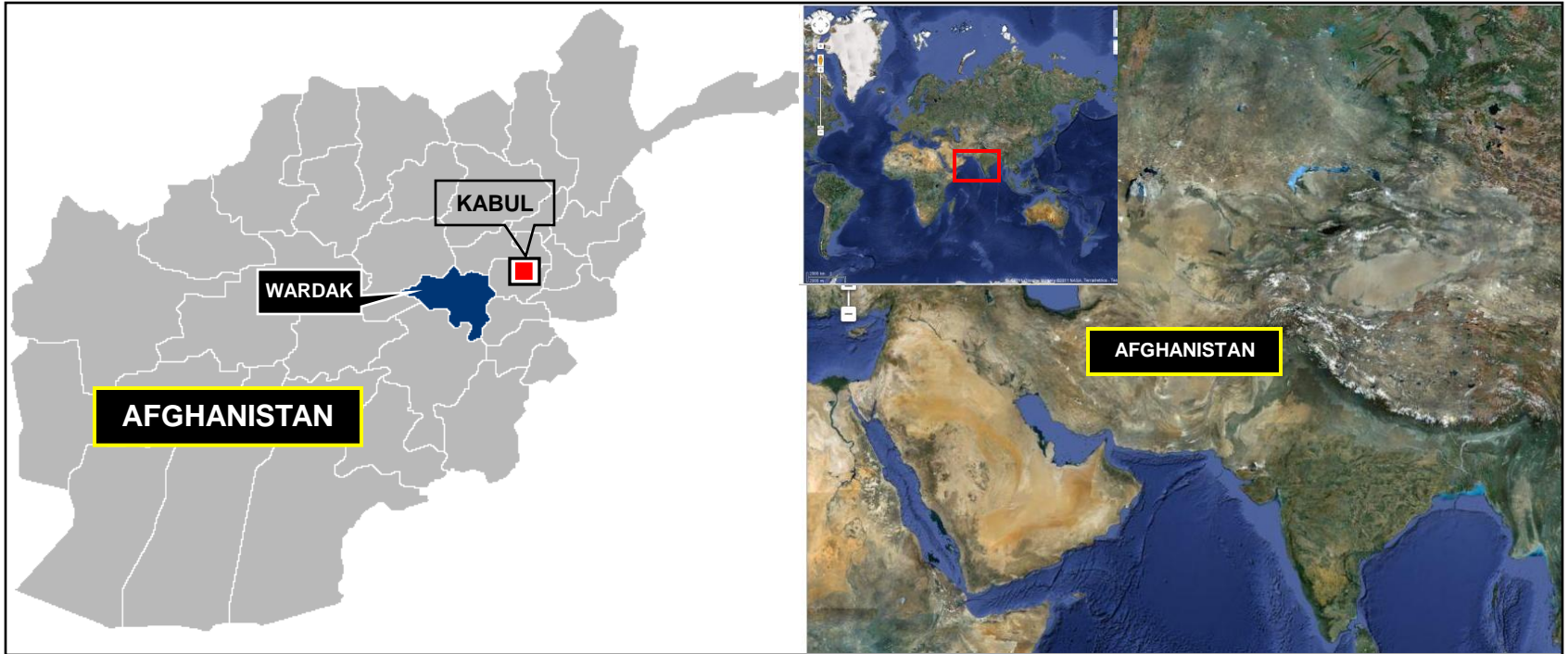
Location: WARDAK PROVINCE approx 35Km SW of KABUL

OPERATION OVERVIEW

- This operation was directed by the Counter Terrorism Police (CTP) branch of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and executed by the Crisis Response Unit (CRU). The operation was authorised by an Afghan search and arrest warrant and then planned and executed by the CRU with mentorship and support from the NZSAS. The operation was carried out in response to time sensitive information being obtained about a compound housing a suicide bomber. This operation was Afghan led and an Afghan legal team accompanied the assault force onto the target. Preparation for the operation occurred over several days. It was not an immediate response to a family dispute.
- During the emplacement of the cordon force LCPL Leon Smith, NZSAS, whilst assisting in the co-ordination of the cordon being placed, climbed up a ladder and into a position to observe the compound. At this point he was involved in an exchange of fire with an insurgent firing from inside the compound and he received a gunshot wound to the head. This insurgent was briefed yesterday as a fighting aged male. At this point NZ forces moved to extract LCPL Smith while the CRU made entry into and cleared the compound. They conducted a search and found the male insurgent involved in the firing with LCPL Smith with gunshot wounds to the head and a young girl who was injured with a fragmentation wound to the stomach. Both casualties received immediate medical treatment. The CRU then moved to clear and search an adjoining compound.
- Simultaneously, the NZ forces in support conducted the casualty evacuation of LCPL Smith and continued to provide assistance to the CRU completing the assault, where required, although the clearance and search of the compounds was carried out by Afghan forces. LCPL Smith was evacuated by helicopter to a nearby US Base as quickly as possible. A second helicopter was utilised once the compounds were secured to evacuate the male insurgent and young girl. The male insurgent died of his wounds, however, the young girl sustained only minor injuries and is expected to be released today.
- The deceased insurgent has since been confirmed as a person of interest in the warrant. In addition, a further insurgent who fired upon our forces was unharmed and arrested. He is also confirmed as a person of interest in the search and arrest warrant.

OPERATION OVERVIEW

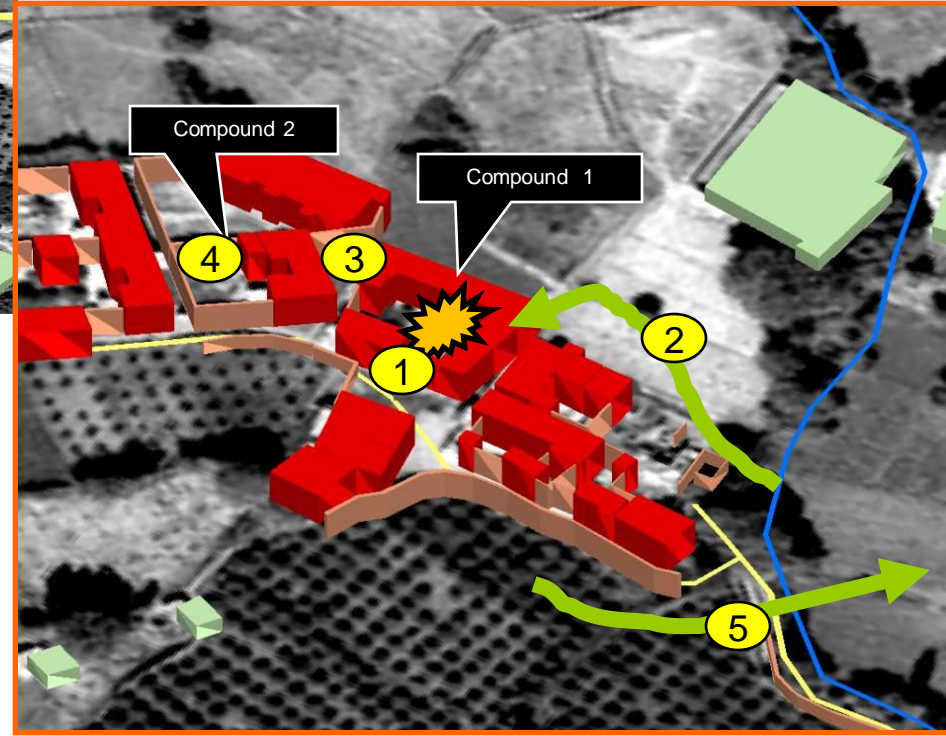
- **These operations are the result of thorough intelligence and preparation. The intelligence utilised must meet required legal thresholds and evidential requirements before a warrant is issued by the Ministry of the Interior. There are multiple layers to this process including review by NZ Defence Force and ISAF legal personnel. If these parameters are not met, the operation will not proceed.**
- **Often, these operations are conducted in a hostile environment that does not have traditional combatant boundaries. There is no front line as you would expect to encounter on a conventional battlefield. Threats often emerge from unexpected quarters. At all times, the CRU partnered with the NZSAS attempt to serve these warrants with the minimum of force and disruption. On 95 per cent of these operations a shot is never fired. On occasion however, those being arrested can sometimes respond with armed resistance.**
- **The NZSAS primary role is to partner with the CRU. This involves the provision of specialist training. When the CRU deploys on an operation that training role develops into a mentoring role where advice and counsel is provided. This requires NZ personnel to be in close proximity to their partnered force. Frequently this means they are within range of these emerging threats. On occasion, NZSAS personnel are also required to provide specialist enablers. Some examples of this include the British Council rescue where a specialist entry capability proved essential and, in the case of the Intercontinental Hotel, helo sniping was required.**



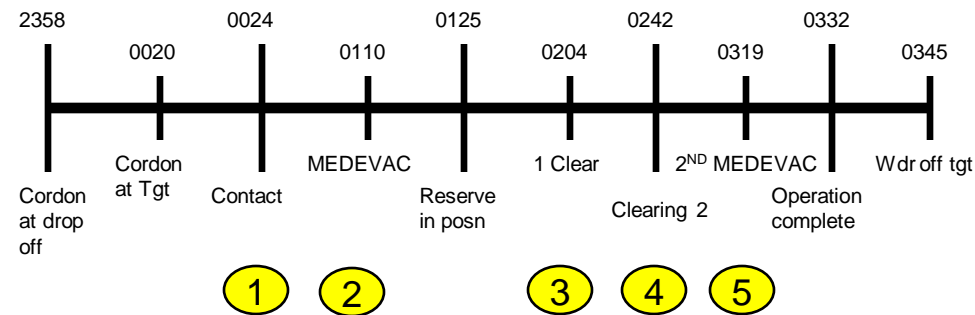
Operation Overview



①	SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM WITHIN THE COMPOUND. LCPL SMITH WOUNDED.
②	NZSAS MOVE TO EXTRACT LCPL SMITH
③	CRU USE ALTERNATE ENTRY POINT AND CLEAR AND SECURE THE FIRST COMPOUND
④	SECOND COMPOUND CLEARED. INSURGENT CASUALTY AND YOUNG GIRL EVACUATED.
⑤	CASUALTY EXTRACTION ROUTE TO HLZ



TIMELINE



NZSAS ROLL OF HONOUR

- 34872 **Tpr A.R. Thomas**, 2 May 1956, Killed in action, Malaya
- 208473 **Cpl A.G. Buchanan**, 11 May 1957, Died on operations, Malaya
- 38871 **Tpr F.M. van Oorschot**, 19 January 1961, Died in training, Papakura
- 645961 **LCpl P.T. Harawira**, 7 September 1961, Died in training, Waikato
- 41240 **Sgt G.J. Campbell**, 14 January 1970, Killed in action, Vietnam
- 373390 **LCpl G. Porter**, 14 August 1970, Died in training, Meremere
- 80163 **WO2 R.D. Heywood**, 26 February 1981, Died in training, Philippines
- 40897 **Sgt D.M.N. Terry**, 26 February 1981, Died in training, Philippines
- 47178 **Cpl R.D. Ngaira**, 25 January 1984, Died in training, Arthur's Pass
- 757211 **LCpl D.A. Flanagan**, 16 June 1995, Died in training, Zimbabwe
- 996810 **A/Maj N.J. McNutt**, 13 March 2001, Died in training, Kuwait
- Q90427 **FSgt A. Forster**, 19 November 2009, Died in EOD operation, Waiouru
- P754045 **Cpl D. Grant**, 19 August 2011, Killed in action, Afghanistan
- T1002840 **LCpl L. Smith**, 28 September 2011, Killed in action, Afghanistan

Total: 14 persons