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## Election must focus on Afghanistan

By **SUN MEDIA**

Now it's Winnipeg's turn to weep, as the bagpipes play the funeral march and the bodies of Drew Grenon, Mike Seggie and Chad Horn are repatriated home.

All were members of the Manitoba-based 2nd battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. All are now dead after their armoured vehicle was hit by what the military calls an 'improvised explosive device.'

Their ages were 23, 21 and 21.

Last week a similar tragedy struck the Edmonton Garrison when Shawn Eades, Dustin Wasden and John Stock - all of the First Combat Engineer Regiment - died in a similar incident on the dusty plains and hills of violent Afghanistan.

That brings the death toll to 96 since Canadian forces entered the fray, shortly after al-Qaida terrorists flew planes into New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington. The seventh anniversary of the incident that they say 'changed the world' will be marked this Thursday.

Supporting our troops - especially when they are in theatre -- is the duty of all true Canadians.

And providing them with the very best equipment and technical backing is a commitment no moral government can ignore, because the men and women in Canada's armed forces are performing the most admirable job of all.

They are voluntarily putting themselves in harms way in the service of their country. And it doesn't get any better than that.

Not unlike the fellows who fought in the Second World War, against which all modern wars are judged.

But when Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen and women fought the German, Italian and Japanese dictators in the 1940s, they had an end zone in sight. When Berlin fell and the Japanese generals surrendered, victory was declared and the war ended. The Second World War was an easy concept to understand.

Afghanistan isn't so simple, as it hasn't been for the Russians, the British or anyone else who has tried it.

By next week, Canada will be thrust into a general election. In the U.S., a similar exercise is taking place. And in his speech to the Republican National Convention Thursday night, U.S. Presidential candidate John McCain made it clear the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will be hot button issues

Canada's commitment in the fight against terror must also feature prominently in our election.

We know where the likes of the NDP's flippant leader Jack Layton stands. Liberal leader Stephane Dion is hard to pin down.

But the job of defining Afghanistan rests heavily on the shoulders of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, specifically explaining to Canadians what 'victory in Afghanistan' looks like.

How do we actually win this war? All Canadians deserve a clear answer -- especially the brave members of our armed forces.

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