



Land Force  
Atlantic Area  
TF 1-07

Joining  
Instructions

## Understanding medical care entitlements for Reservists preparing for TF 1-07

By Second Lieutenant Adam Thomson



Canadian soldiers evacuate injured personnel after their Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV III) turret was struck by an on-coming vehicle, outside of Kandahar City. The incident wounded two Canadian soldiers late in March 2006. Photo by Corporal Robin Mugridge

As operations in Afghanistan intensify, so does the potential for injury and with it the requirement for follow-on medical care after the completion of the deployment. Reservists from across Atlantic Canada preparing for Task Force (TF) 1-07 need to be aware of their medical entitlements as they gear up for their deployment in February 2007.

“Regardless as to whether you are a Regular or Reserve Force member, if you are injured while on operations overseas, you will receive the best medical care the Canadian Forces (CF) has to offer,” says LCol Roger Tremblay, the Land Force Atlantic Area (LFAA) Surgeon.

Unfortunately, confusion may sometimes arise following deployment when Reservists terminate their Class C contract and worry that they will no longer be entitled to medical coverage through the military. For serious injuries this is usually not a concern, as injured members will remain on Class C service until they are able to return to active duty.

Less serious injuries, however, may not be severe enough to remove members from active duty, but could worsen over time and prevent them from returning to their daily routine once back in Canada. According to LCol Terry LeLievre, LFAA G1, “the key is to make sure all operational injuries are properly documented to validate a member’s entitlement for medical coverage.”

The CF has an established process to ensure that all medical concerns are screened in-theatre prior to the end of a deployment and are properly documented following reintegration back to Canada. Interviews,

medical examinations, as well as a declaration of injury or illness during service in a Special Duty Area are all part of this process to verify good health and determine any requirements for additional medical care.

The military is also committed to educating members on the causes and effects of operational stress injuries (OSI) as high operational tempos and extremely intense deployments add stress to military careers. Recognizing the symptoms and overcoming the stigma associated with this type of injury is the first step towards seeking medical help. An OSI can encompass a broad range of problems including anxiety disorders, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as other conditions that may interfere with daily life.

“As our Reservists focus on TF 1-07, our priority at LFAA is to make sure they are prepared for the upcoming mission. A critical component of this preparation is to ensure they are aware of their medical care entitlements,” remarked Brigadier-General Rick Parsons, the Commander of LFAA. “We ask Reservists to put their civilian careers on hold so that they may serve in Afghanistan, and as a result it is our duty to make sure they receive top quality medical care.”

Due to the unique nature of service in the Reserves, it is important to recognize the basic entitlements for medical care following a deployment overseas. The following quick reference guide summarizes what you need to know regarding medical care coverage for Reservists.

Reservists returning from TF 1-07 will fall into one of the following categories:

**Medical are not required:**

- Reservists returning from operations in good health without injury will benefit from standard post-deployment reintegration and will be entitled to Class C pay for the time required to complete the post-screening process.

**Medical care required:**

- Reservists who are slightly injured while on operations, and not repatriated to Canada, should verify that their injury is properly documented upon receipt of medical care. If the injury requires further medical attention following deployment, this documentation will validate their entitlement for medical coverage.
- Reservists who are seriously injured while on operations will return to Canada and receive the necessary medical care. They will be eligible for a Class C service extension up to a maximum of 24 months, or until such time as the member meets one of the following:
  - Is declared medically fit by a Medical Officer;
  - Resumes active participation in the Reserve Force;
  - Returns to the civilian employment held prior to deployment;
  - Is able to seek civilian employment;
  - Is able to resume attendance at an educational institution if he/she was a full time student prior to deployment; and
  - If member resumes school but cannot parade, missed

Class A training will be reimbursed. (*Ref: CANFORGEN 116/04*)

- Reservists who are permanently injured may be entitled to a number of disability benefits through Veterans Affairs Canada. To review these benefits, visit: [www.forces.gc.ca/centre](http://www.forces.gc.ca/centre) and download *A Guide to Death and Disability Benefits*.
- It may take several years for CF members to recognize that they have an operational stress injury (OSI) as a result of their service overseas. Members who are diagnosed with an OSI will be treated and compensated on a case-by-case basis; however, it is crucial that those affected seek medical assistance to ensure the necessary care can be provided. For more information about the Operational Stress Injuries Social Support Program, visit: [www.osiss.ca](http://www.osiss.ca).

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