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# Operation Falcon Summit

**Operation Falcon Summit** (Pashto: *Baaz Tsuka*) was a Canadian-led operation in the [Battle of Panjwai](#) and on a larger scale, the [2001–present War in Afghanistan](#).

NATO forces launched the operation on December 15, 2006, with the intention of expelling [Taliban](#) fighters from the Panjawi and Zhari districts of [Kandahar](#).

Canadian troops had been fiercely battling Taliban fighters in the area for several months. Although the operation was under a British command, the majority of the movements and elements on the ground were [Canadians](#) operating from [forward operating bases](#) set up in the district during the fighting of [Operation Mountain Thrust](#) and [Operation Medusa](#).

## Information campaign

During the early morning hours of December 15, [NATO](#) aircraft attacked a Taliban command post in the area, using laser-guided [bombs](#), [rockets](#), and fuel air explosives to blast apart the makeshift fortress the stone, concrete, and sheet began dropping three [sets of](#) warning the population of the for locals to turn their backs on and the third consisting of an



and fuel air explosives to blast Taliban had constructed out of metal. The same day, aircraft [leaflets](#) over the region, the first impending conflict, the next a plea the Taliban and support NATO, image of a Taliban fighter with a

large X through it to warn Taliban fighters to either leave the area, or face NATO.

## Landmine accident

During the days prior to the operation, Canadian soldiers held several meetings with tribal elders to discuss reconstruction efforts that would begin, and to persuade locals to help support NATO and to help NATO keep the Taliban out of the area after the Taliban had been removed. While en route to one of these meetings (or *shuras* in Pashto) a Canadian soldier from the [Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment](#), the "Van Doos", out of Quebec, stepped on a landmine. The soldier, Private Frederic Couture, suffered severe but non-life threatening injuries and was [medivac](#)'d to a coalition hospital where he was stabilized. The landmine had been planted the night before by two Taliban fighters, who were spotted, shot and killed by Canadian soldiers. Engineers then came to clear the area of landmines, but they missed the one that Couture set off. The mine attack was the first casualty of the operation and worked to temper the Canadian resolve.

## Preparations for battle

On December 14 in Helmand province there was a lot of activity around British bases prior to the announcement of the operation. Soldiers were seen packing large amounts of equipment and ammunition for a long stay outside the wire and troops began moving out towards the area of operations.

Although the Canadian commanders in Afghanistan did not officially announce that the [Canadian Forces](#) in the area would take part in the operation until the information campaign had been all but completed, Canadian officers gave very

obvious hints that Canadians would be an active participant. British commanders also stated prior to this, that if need be Canadian personnel would be called upon for the operation.

Back at the Canadian Forward Operating Bases in the Panjwahi District, soldiers could be seen preparing for battle. Troops were gathering ammunition and web-gear; and last minute checks were being conducted on Canadian armoured vehicles such as the [LAV III](#) and Leopard C2 tanks.

### **Offensive operations**

On December 19, the offensive operations of Falcon Summit began. A massive barrage of Canadian [artillery](#) and tank fire rained down on Taliban positions in the area of operations which killed around 60 Taliban. The [artillery barrage](#) lasted for forty-five minutes and was supported by [heavy machine gun](#) fire from Canadian .50 caliber guns. Shortly after the barrage ended, Canadian armoured convoys left the "protection" of being behind the wire and headed out into the area of operations and set up perimeters without a single shot being fired. The Canadians stationed themselves around the village of Howz-e Madad and are said to be on a "soft knock" approach with the villagers to help gain support.

Over the next few days, NATO forces secured several more objective towns with very little resistance from Taliban fighters. Canadian Leopard C2 tanks were requested for support by the head of the [Afghan National Army](#) (ANA), but were turned down due to the high number of [anti-tank mines](#) littering the ground in the area where the tanks would have been used. Commanders believe that the lack of resistance they have encountered is due to the bombardment of leaflets dropped during the information campaign.

Near the village of Howz-e Madad were a 10-square-kilometre area full of mud-walled fortresses and 900 surrounded Taliban fighters. Canadian infantry and armour surrounded the area, which was ideal for the Taliban's style of attacks. The complex build of the area the fighters were held up in made it nearly impossible to escape from, and to the east of the complex was a road built by the Canadians after [Operation Medusa](#), which ran along the [Arghandab River](#), which made it impossible for any Taliban to escape using the road. Ten kilometres to the south of Howz-e Madad was a line of American soldiers, and to the west were more British soldiers making this a truly combined effort by the three nations to protect the Afghan people living nearby and bring down the Taliban.

After 48 hours passed, the Taliban fired. Two rockets flew past C Company just south of Howz-e Madad. This was responded to by a burst of machine-gun fire from the Afghan National Army, but nobody on either side of the skirmish took any casualties.

After the new year began, on January 5 a 45-minute firefight between about 20 members of the Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment and a force of Taliban fighters about half that size. Small arms including automatic rifle and machine gun fire, rocket propelled grenades and [mortars](#) were used against the Canadians. The Van Doos were conducting operations in the village of Lacoookhal, which is just south of Howz-e Madad, looking for arms caches and Taliban fighters when the enemy force opened fire. By the time the fire ceased, at least two of the Taliban fighters had been killed with no Canadian or ANA casualties.

The next day, Canadian [light infantry](#) forces, backed by U.S. helicopter [gunships](#), swept into the mud fortresses and routed out the remaining Taliban, most of whom fled.

## References

CTV.ca Soft approach working in Operation Baaz Tsuka