

Backgrounder: Gallery 4 — New World Disorder

The concluding section of **Gallery 4: From the Cold War to the Present** covers overseas conflicts in which Canadian Forces have participated since the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. With this major update, the gallery now contains more comprehensive information on military operations from the Gulf War to Afghanistan. New artifacts, eyewitness testimonies and works of art connected to individual stories highlight how these missions have affected Canada and the world.

This section of the gallery focuses on five conflicts.

Gulf War (1990–1991)

Canada was part of a successful U.S.-led coalition that included air, land and naval deployments to the Persian Gulf in response to Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. This also marked the first time that Canadian women served in combat roles.



Key highlights: A Desert Cats sign; antidotes issued to Canadian personnel to counteract nerve-gas attacks; paintings from Ted Zuber, Canada's official war artist during the Gulf War.

Somalia (1993–1994)



Canada's mission in Somalia was successful when it came to helping end a famine caused by civil war but was overshadowed by controversy, leading to the disbanding of the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Key highlights: Weapons captured during security sweeps; artwork by war artist Allan Harding MacKay.

Rwanda (1994–1995)



The tiny contingent of Canadian soldiers warned of — and then witnessed — a genocide that killed more than 800,000 people. Many of those who served remain haunted by the experience.

Key highlights: First-hand accounts from survivors; improvised weapons used in the genocide and recovered by Major-General Roméo Dallaire.

Former Yugoslavia (1992–2004)

Although nominally a peacekeeping mission, Canadian troops were constantly harassed and witnessed numerous atrocities during this chaotic conflict. Canada was also involved in NATO missions providing security in Bosnia-Herzegovina and took part in a 1999 air campaign aimed at preventing ethnic cleansing.

Key highlights: A Canadian Iltis soft-skinned vehicle that was attacked in Croatia; an Olympic torch gifted to a Canadian soldier for smuggling vulnerable civilians out of Sarajevo; material related to the story of Master Corporal Mark Isfeld, who was killed by a land mine in Croatia; the uniform and equipment of a CF-18 pilot who flew missions over Kosovo.



Afghanistan (2001–2014)



Canada's most complex and dangerous mission since the Korean War resulted in 158 deaths, including Canada's first female war casualty. Canada's involvement in Afghanistan would eventually shift from combat operations to training the Afghan Army.

Key highlights: A fragment of one of the aircraft used to attack the World Trade Center on 9/11; an Afghan election ballot; personal effects belonging to Canadian survivors of improvised explosive device, or IED, attacks; seized Taliban weaponry, including IEDs; a destroyed Canadian Forces G-Wagen.