

Just Another Non-Restricted Firearm

The L115A3 sniper rifle mentioned in the article below, which can shoot more than 2 km away, is classified as a non-restricted firearm in Canada. The rifle, as issued by the British army, is equipped with a sound suppressor which is a prohibited device in Canada. If the sound suppressors is removed, the L115A3 sniper rifle is classified as a non-restricted firearm. More details on this firearm is available on the British army web site: <http://www.army.mod.uk/equipment/support-weapons/1459.aspx>

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security will begin to hear witnesses on Bill C-391 today. This bill proposes to repeal the requirement to register unrestricted firearms like the L115A3 sniper rifle. There are also no provisions in Bill C-391 to reinstate the requirement that businesses keep records of sales, a requirement which was in place since 1977, and was removed when the Firearms Act passed in 1995 as the information would be in the registry.

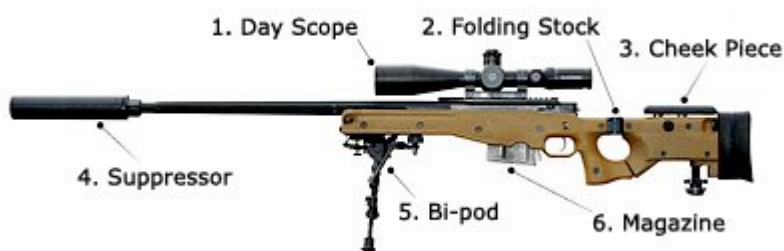


Photo source: <http://www.army.mod.uk/equipment/support-weapons/1459.aspx>

British sniper shoots down Canada's bragging rights

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Military observers are marvelling at a British sniper, revealed this week to have killed two Taliban fighters from a mountain perch 2.47 kilometres away. The story of these shots is being heard around the world as a feat of marksmanship without parallel in history. Sadly, the news also puts an end to some national bragging rights: Until now, the Canadian Forces had claimed the world's best sniper shot.

In 2002, when the Afghanistan war was still in its infancy, Canadian army Corporal Rob Furlong killed an alleged al-Qaeda fighter from 2.43 kilometres away – seemingly an unsurpassable feat.

That shot was never formally publicized – snipers are covert by nature, after all – but word leaked out over the years. The legend grew to the point where military observers hailed it as a landmark Canadian achievement.

"There was a certain frisson of pride involved there," said historian Jack Granatstein. "I don't think it's significant in Canadian military history except insofar that it demonstrates that we are good snipers, after 25 years of assuming that we didn't fight anybody."

Contemplating both shots, he couldn't help but marvel. "It's amazing," Mr. Granatstein said. "It's absolutely amazing that you could fire a shot at someone [that far] away and hit them. ... And the Brit hit two!"

Last November in Helmand province, British Corporal Craig Harrison killed the two insurgents from an astounding distance of 8,120 feet. News of the new record is only now being made public.

"The first round hit a machine-gunner in the stomach and killed him outright," the British soldier told The Sunday Times of London. "The second insurgent grabbed the weapon and turned as my second shot hit him in the side. He went down, too."

Former Canadian Forces sniper Rob Furlong killed an alleged al-Qaeda fighter in Afghanistan from 2.43 kilometres away in 2002, a legendary feat - but one now taking a back seat to British Corporal Craig Harrison's two kills of Taliban fighters from a distance of 2.47 kilometres.

In war zones, soldiers are given high-powered scopes and other rifle technologies that get better all the time. "The reason they are able to make these kind of shots is they have high-quality lasers that tell them where their target is within one metre," said retired U.S. major John Plaster, a Vietnam War veteran who now runs a U.S. sniper school.

Good students there, Mr. Plaster said, can hit a dime at 100 yards.

Luck, as ever, remains a factor. Snipers live for the those moments when their rules of engagement and a windless day combine to create the conditions for the perfect kill – even if a target is a mile or more away.

Marksmanship, of course, has impressed nations ever since ancient Greeks boasted that clear-eyed Odysseus could kill many enemies with a single arrow. The Swiss had William Tell shoot an apple off his son's head with a crossbow. Medieval Brits marvelled at Robin Hood.

And Canada had Francis (Peggy) Pegahmagabow, an Ojibwa Indian from Ontario who was the highest-scoring Canadian sniper of the First World War, with accounts of his kills running as high as 378.

As for Corp. Furlong, his shot, though surpassed, will create chatter for years to come, Mr. Plaster said. He said he even bumped into the shy Canadian – now an Edmonton police officer – at a U.S. gun show last winter.

"I applauded him. Shook his hand," Mr. Plaster said. "You can take great pride in him."

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-sniper-shoots-down-canadas-bragging-rights/article1555772/?cmpid=rss1>