

# ARTISTS DEPICT the FACE of WAR

By JOHN WARD  
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The military has unveiled a collection of paintings depicting Canadian soldiers, sailors and aviators at work in the Arabian Gulf and Afghanistan last year - the fruits of a revived, bargain-basement war-art program.

The program took three artists into the field: Allan MacKay went to an army unit, John Horton sailed with a frigate and Adreff Bourgeois flew with an air force outfit.

They were paid nothing and got only their transportation, quarters and rations for the week or so that they were overseas. In return, each produced a number of works for the Defence Department. The scheme revives a Canadian tradition dating back to 1916, when the first war artists were commissioned to record the military at war.

Bourgeois, a painter from Chilliwack, B.C., who specializes in aviation art, said both the artists and the military got something out of it. "The benefit is obviously that you get the opportunity to experience something that you never would otherwise.

MacKay, who also produced drawings and collages from Somalia in the early 1990s, said his time with the Princess Pats in Kandahar last year was an odd experience.

The Canadians were preparing to go home, and spent little time outside their airport base. "I could have been in an airport in Arizona," he said. Still, he managed to produce three moody paintings, with soldiers darkly silhouetted against glaring light and blowing sand. "it really was to try and convey a sense of what the environment was like."

Horton, who served in the navy, produced three paintings, including a haunting view of a darkened operations room in the belly of a warship. Sailors hooded, gloved and masked against flash from enemy fire, hunch over computer screens and control boards under eerie, red lighting. "This, to me, is very telling of how modern warfare is fought," he said.

Another 21 artists have been chosen by a selection committee to join the program which is open to painters, sculptors and even poets. The collection is likely to end up at the Canadian War Museum, which already houses thousands of pieces of war art.