

# Chief Warrant Officer Chris Pawliw

## Grey and Simcoe Foresters

### Family Life

Chris Pawliw was born to Brian and Patricia Pawliw on September 30, 1974, in Durham, Ontario. The family moved to Mount Forest in 1979 and he attended Mount Forest Public School and Mount Forest District High School, graduating in 1993.

Military service ran in his family and influenced his decision to join the Cadets at 13 and enlist with the Grey and Simcoe Foresters while in high school.

Chris has two children, Gabrielle (born September 10, 2005) and Bailey (born March 5, 2009). The desire to keep the country safe for his children impacted his decision to go to Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

He has worked at Bruce Power since 2015

### Military Service

Chief Warrant Officer Pawliw joined the Grey and Simcoe Foresters in January 1992, at age 17. That year, he completed Basic Recruit Training in Ipperwash and the Infantry Course in Meaford. In 1993, he qualified as a Basic Machine Gunner in Stratford.

In 1994, he went overseas with 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, to Croatia, as part of the United Nations Protection Force. Tasked with manning observation posts with Charles Company, 1RCR, in Sector South near Yankee 3 Headquarters, Chris was always aware of the close proximity of the Serbian fighters, describing them as “very hospitable, until they weren’t.” He saw the changes in engagement after the attack on Master Corporals Philip Badanai, MSM and John Tescione on December 31, 1994. He returned to Canada at the end of his six month tour in June 1995. He states that his experience in Croatia solidified his commitment to be in the military, even though it influenced an Operational Stress Injury in his later life.

In Canada, he completed a number of leadership courses and was teaching courses at the 4th Canadian Division Training Centre (4th CDTC), while also working civilian jobs.



### Decorations

- UNPROFOR (Croatia) 1995
- Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal 1999
- Canadian Decoration 2004
- Operational Service Medal (Sierra Leone) 2007
- General Campaign Star South West Asia with Bar 2010
- Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal 2013

With his name on the UN Standby List, he received a call in mid-August 2006 to work for the Infantry Training Advisor Team (ITAT) in the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), in Benguema, Sierra Leone. Part of a group of 13 from Canada, he served as the Sergeant Major and the Infantry Training Advisor, where he oversaw and trained soldiers in basic recruit courses and jungle warfare courses. One of his tasks was a “train the trainer” program, where he had to rebuild their support weapons systems. This involved him first having to learn the weapons himself and then teach a team of four Sierra Leone Sergeants and one Sierra Leone Staff Sergeant. Pawliw describes this tour as almost a posting, where he had his own apartment, Land Rover, and weekends off. However he states that Sierra Leone was still suffering from the remnants and effects of the Civil War, with many those he was training having been previously child soldiers in the war. His tour ended in April 2007.

In September 2009, he was working at the 4th CDTC, when he was given the opportunity to attach to the Royal Canadian Dragoons, as an Infantry Sergeant Major with the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) in Afghanistan. Pre-deployment he trained in Petawawa, Germany, and the Fort Irwin USA National Training Centre. He deployed at the end of April 2010 and within the first few days in Afghanistan, he witnessed a ramp ceremony. He was originally supposed to be part of CANVAD 4 and attached to an Afghan company to assist with working with the Coalition Forces, however, once they arrived in Afghanistan they learned that the OMLT teams were being removed from the Afghan Army. Instead, he was tasked with working with capacity building with the Afghan National Police, building FOB Walton near Kandahar City, close to 404 Mayward. He had very good interactions with the Americans stationed there, working with three Security Forces Advisory Teams. Pawliw worked at the regional level and would travel across the entire South of Afghanistan to mentor the Regional Sergeant Majors and handle personnel and recruiting (G1) in the Afghan National Police. Towards the end of his tour, he was relocated to the Joint Regional Afghan Centre (JRAC), south of Kandahar Airfield, which was the headquarters of the Coalition Forces, Afghan Nation Civil police, Afghan National Police, and Border Police. He returned to Canada in December 2010 and while they suffered a lot of near misses he states he “brought every guy back healthy.”

He returned to the 4th CDTC as the Operations Sergeant Major and then became the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters. He was offered a commission but he declined, stating that he “had already gotten where he needed to be” and achieved what he wanted from the military. He retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 2019, after 27 years of service.

### Lesson Learned

“Service to your country is a great honour and responsibility but with that there are many potential sacrifices that members are required to make. From potential physical and mental injuries to the effects on family and those around you it is a very tough but rewarding career.”