

Sarah Mercer - Canadian Hero In Service

By Matteo Mercer

In a world full of uncertainty and adversity, heroes emerge as a beacon of hope and freedom. They captivate our hearts and draw us to them, earning our respect and admiration. Many of us want to make a positive impact on the world. To do this, we can learn from those who came before us; those who change the world on the front lines. This is the story of a hero from Fredericton, New Brunswick, who went on to brilliantly and courageously serve her country. This extraordinary woman is my aunt and hero, Sarah Mercer.

Sarah's story began in 1996, when at 23, she joined the navy to travel the world. In 1999, Sarah was deployed to Northern Europe with the NATO SNF. She served as an NCI Operator, searching for submarines, tracking surface vessels, and learning to evade enemies trying to board their ship.

Shortly thereafter, Sarah was deployed to the Persian Gulf, supporting the U.S invasion of Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. Acting as an NCI Operator, Sarah played a key role in tracking smuggling ships. She recalls one experience in particular, when their ship was tracking a vessel that kept disappearing. Eventually, they found and boarded the ship, once they discovered the hull had been painted differently on each side to evade detection.

In September 2006, after becoming an Intelligence Operator and joining the Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Centre, Sarah deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Afghanistan Intelligence support team. There, she worked with the Deployed Imagery Support Team, supporting Operation Medusa. As an Imagery Analyst, Sarah provided crucial intelligence that assisted in locating and dismantling Taliban hideouts. Sarah also helped locate and disrupt Taliban supply lines via drone strikes. She remained in Afghanistan until February 2007, contributing to other operations in Kandahar, while also going "outside the wire" on an assignment at a Forward Operating Base in Sperwan Ghar.

After returning from Afghanistan, she became a Naval Intelligence Officer and took a 3-year posting in Miami, Florida. Upon her return to Canada, she retired after 24 years of service. For her dedication and service, she received the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the General Campaign Star, and the Canadian Decoration Medal.

Sarah now lives in Ottawa, Canada with her two playful Corgis; Oscar and Cooper. She works for the Department of National Defence, continuing to serve, just in a different way. Sarah does not regret her decision to join the military, and says that if she had to live her life over again, she would absolutely choose to serve.

The story of my aunt, Sarah Mercer, is a testament to the bravery and valour of our veterans. Sarah joined the military for the opportunity to travel, but now realises that it was really about a sense of service, to protect her country and its people. To me, in her own way, she changed the world. She inspires me to try to do the same, and makes me honoured and proud to be her nephew.