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Toll in Kabul Suicide Attack Included U.S. and Canadian Officers

By **ROD NORDLAND**

KABUL, Afghanistan — The suicide bomber who struck in Kabul on Tuesday killed four high-ranking **NATO** officers who had been on a brief visit, military officials confirmed Thursday. They said the victims included two full colonels, an American and a Canadian, and two American lieutenant colonels.

It was the largest number of ranking officers from the American-led forces here killed in any insurgent attack since the Afghan war that ousted the **Taliban** from power began more than eight years ago.

Also Thursday, for the third consecutive day, a Taliban suicide bomber attacked a NATO military target, this time a convoy in the southern province of Kandahar, but the police there said no soldiers were killed.

On Wednesday, Taliban suicide bombers in concert with armed insurgents **orchestrated a failed attempt** to break into the main American military base at **Bagram**, north of Kabul. None of the defenders were killed, but at least five American servicemen were wounded, the military said.

The attack Tuesday in Kabul came as the officers were driving in a convoy of armored sport utility vehicles during the morning rush. A suicide bomber in a minibus drove into their convoy, killing the 4 officers, 2 other American servicemen and 12 Afghan civilians in a passing bus.

The attack on Thursday also involved a minivan, which exploded close to the American convoy in the Shor Andam area of Kandahar Province. The provincial police chief, Sardar Mohammed Zazi, said there were no casualties, other than the suicide bomber, although a local witness said he saw a helicopter evacuating three soldiers.

Canadian military officials identified the colonel who was killed Tuesday as Geoff Parker, 42, from Oakville, Ontario, an officer of the Royal Canadian Regiment, and the highest-ranking

Canadian to die in the Afghan conflict. He was to become the deputy commander of the Stability Division of NATO's southern command in Kandahar on Nov. 1, and was on an assessment visit when the attack took place.

Similarly, the American colonel, [whom the Pentagon identified](#) Thursday as [John M. McHugh](#), 46, from New Jersey, was also on an assessment visit as part of his assignment for the [United States Army Battle Command Training Program](#) at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

The two lieutenant colonels, Paul R. Bartz, 43, of Waterloo, Wis., and Thomas P. Belkofer, 44, of Perrysburg, Ohio, were both on a familiarization visit in advance of assignments in [Afghanistan](#), according to a spokesman for the American military in Kabul, Lt. Col. Joseph T. Breasseale. Both officers were stationed at Fort Drum, N.Y., with the [Army's 10th Mountain Division](#).

The other two American soldiers killed on Tuesday were the officers' drivers, and both had been assigned to Kabul since last fall. The Pentagon identified them as Staff Sgt. Richard J. Tieman, 28, of Waynesboro, Pa., and Specialist Joshua A. Tomlinson, 24, of Dubberly, La.; both had previously been stationed in Heidelberg, Germany.

The American military also announced Thursday that it had [opened a criminal investigation](#) into the involvement of "a small number of U.S. soldiers" in the unlawful deaths of up to three Afghan civilians, according to a press release. One soldier has been detained in the case, the military said.

The investigation was started this month when other soldiers passed information about the civilians' deaths to their commanders. There are also allegations of illegal drug use, assault and conspiracy, the military said.

Colonel Breasseale, the spokesman, declined to give further details, including when or where the alleged killings took place. He said the case was not connected to the [questionable deaths of three Afghan women](#) in Gardez during a bungled night raid by [American Special Operations forces](#) in February.

In other Afghan news, a roadside bomb apparently intended for Jabar Khan, the Alisher District police chief in eastern Khost Province, wounded him and killed two other policemen when they were driving in a police vehicle, officials there said. Another policeman was wounded. A second roadside bomb in the same district struck a vehicle of the Afghan Border Police, killing one officer and wounding two others.

Afghan employees of The New York Times in Kandahar and Khost Provinces contributed reporting.

