

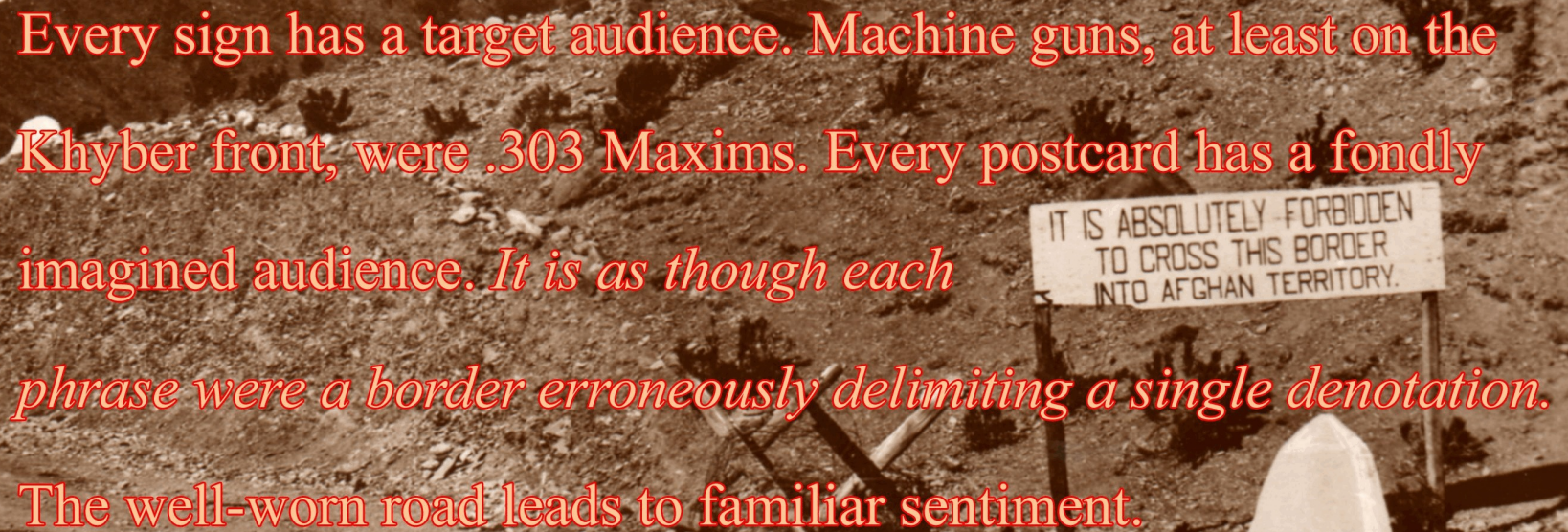
# **AFGHANISTAN WAR TRUE, FALSE - OR NOT**

**FRANK DAVEY**

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Every sign has a target audience. Machine guns, at least on the Khyber front, were .303 Maxims. Every postcard has a fondly imagined audience. *It is as though each phrase were a border erroneously delimiting a single denotation.* The well-worn road leads to familiar sentiment.

*Deterritorialization. Refus globals. Nation-building. Debordement.*

The boundry between the Afghan & British  
territory on the N. W. Frontier

FD

3

1. Armies fight in Afghanistan because it is a historic military terrain.
2. Armies fight in Afghanistan to make air travel safer.
3. Peace comes dropping slow.
4. Armies fight in Afghanistan so they don't have to fight in places that are more inhabited.



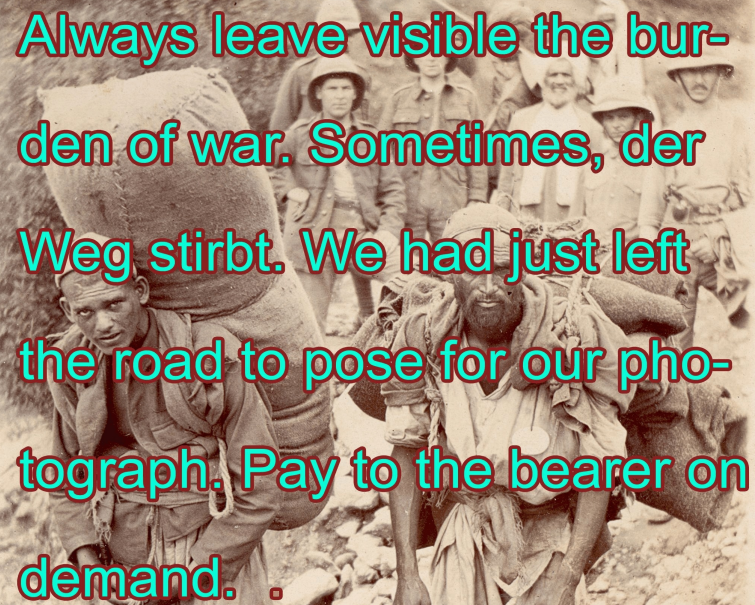
Looking into Afghanistan from Lundi Kotal

Seemingly empty space appears to beckon. The road disappears quickly, although the valley itself stretches several miles before us. Each barrier is a preface to a further barrier. *All that is solid melts into air.* We become convinced that any inhabitants must live in different dimensions, or have properties that render them unreachable by our instruments.

FD

5. Armies fight in Afghanistan because of the logistical challenges.
6. Small children will wave large flowers.
7. Armies fight in Afghanistan because it is a buffer zone between Iran and China, between Russia and India, between Burma and Germany, between Japan and Iceland.
8. Armies fight in Afghanistan to assist research into stress disorders.





Always leave visible the burden of war. Sometimes, der Weg stirbt. We had just left the road to pose for our photograph. Pay to the bearer on demand. .

*Contractors. Sandals on the ground.*

Bearers Lead the Way in Afghanistan

FD

9. Most of Nadir Khan's prisoners were shot before being hanged.
10. Armies fight in Afghanistan over differing readings of the Koran.
11. Armies fight in Afghanistan to improve the security of neighbouring countries.



The new Afghan state of 1840 was precarious, resting on a network of British political officers, garrisons, and handouts to malevolently neutral tribal chiefs. Actual weight versus the other kinds. I've just come back after a long national celebration. With additional sepoy's our commanders would venture out, even hold jirgas in the villages. Time and space died yesterday. Small children will wave large flowers. Tribesmen who responded say they have detained a female with a knife.

Fort Maude  
in Khyber Pass.

FD

12. The freest minds pass lightly in the patterns of the step.
13. Armies fight in Afghanistan to protect tall buildings in the West.
- 14 Armies fight in Afghanistan to protect world oil supplies.
15. Airlifts centralize cemetery maintenance.





Tribal fabrics could be purchased easily at nearby markets. Ethnographic richness everywhere! We need an art which does not react to the idea that we made it. Attempts to blend native and European architectural elements were not repeated, officially at least, at the social level.

Headscarf bans. Residential schools.  
Manifesto 'Blanco'.

FD

*Afghan Dancer*

16. Armies fight in Afghanistan to protect world opium supplies.
17. Armies fight in Afghanistan because the US has run low on Cruise missiles.
18. Very few figures, human or animal, can be found in the work of the Group of Seven.
19. Armies fight in Afghanistan because of traditional ethnic conflicts.



This paper asks whether cultural norms underpin gun ownership or whether they underpin social or political relations which stimulate gun ownership. From both north and south travellers encounter difficult mountain passes. The range of Gavriolo Princip's pistol was much greater than he could have anticipated. Crystalline and metamorphic rock make up this central Himalayan zone with granites, gneisses, schists, and sediments. The arms stolen and snatched from American forces in Afghanistan have flooded arms markets in tribal areas. Then, just as suddenly, they melted into the hills.

FD

Pashtun Tribesman

20. Armies fight in Afghanistan to restore the Bamyān Buddhas.
21. The well-worn road leads to familiar sentiment.
22. The first I.E.D. was made in China.
23. The first off-label Kalashnikov was made in Gary, Indiana, my home sweet home.



Jumrood Fort. 10 Miles out of Peshawar.

**Order was restored once thirty-three demonstrators had been shot to death and thirty injured. We have numbered beggars, hermits, opium farmers and prostitutes among the self-employed. Headquarters of the**

**celebrated Khyber Rifles. The Sikh builders of the fort were attacked almost immediately by the Pathan fighters of Dost Mohammed. Instruments of death remain among the most treasured. Summer job seekers face big hurdles. *I am neither for them nor against them, and I won't explain myself because I hate common sense.***

FD

*Roadside bombs. Underground economies.*

24. All that is solid melts into air.

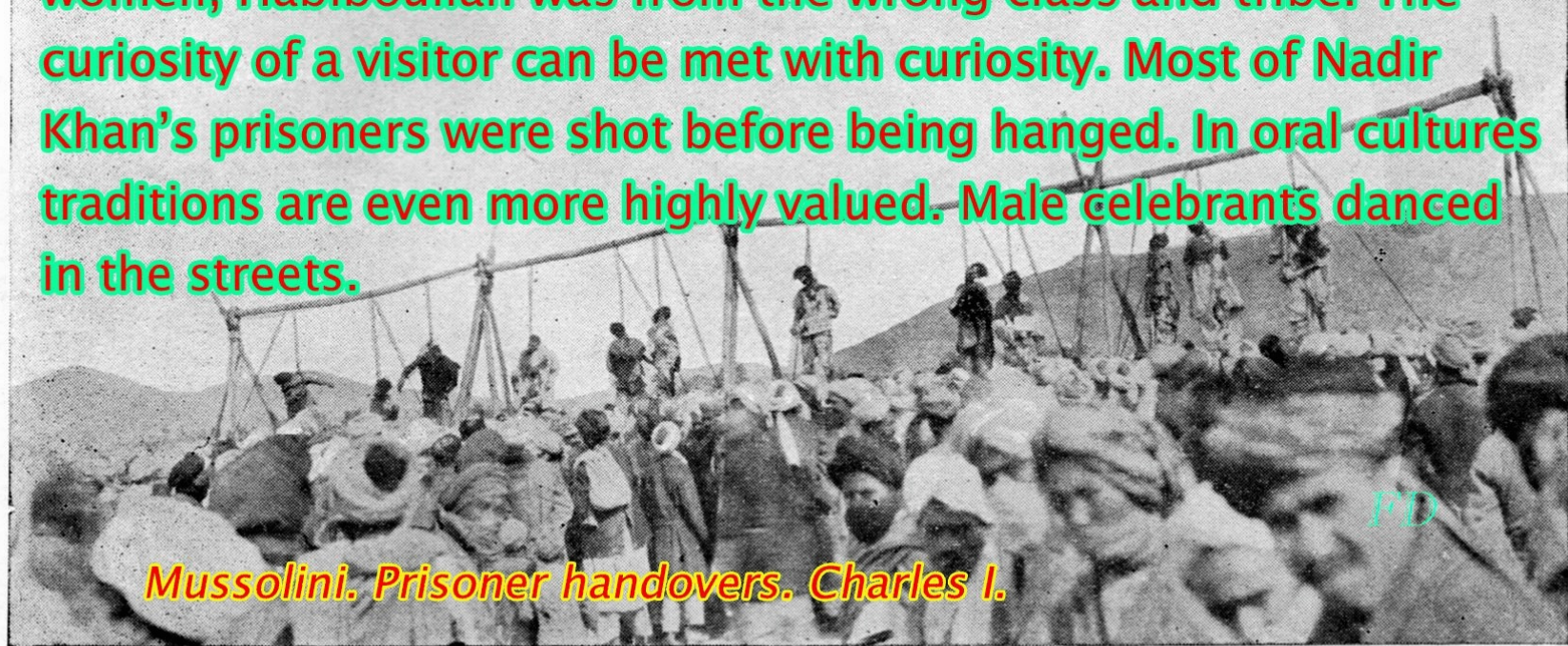
25. Afghanistan's first hydrocarbon bidding round began last February.

26. The first Afghan in space was Abdul Momand in 1988.

27. Summer job seekers face big hurdles.



Major changes in Afghanistan governance occur approximately every twenty years. Roads, bridges, health care and other public works can be makeshift but often are effective. Even though he shunned non-traditional clothing and denounced schools for women, Habiboullah was from the wrong class and tribe. The curiosity of a visitor can be met with curiosity. Most of Nadir Khan's prisoners were shot before being hanged. In oral cultures traditions are even more highly valued. Male celebrants danced in the streets.



*Mussolini. Prisoner handovers. Charles I.*

**Habiboullah et ses ministres suppliciés.**

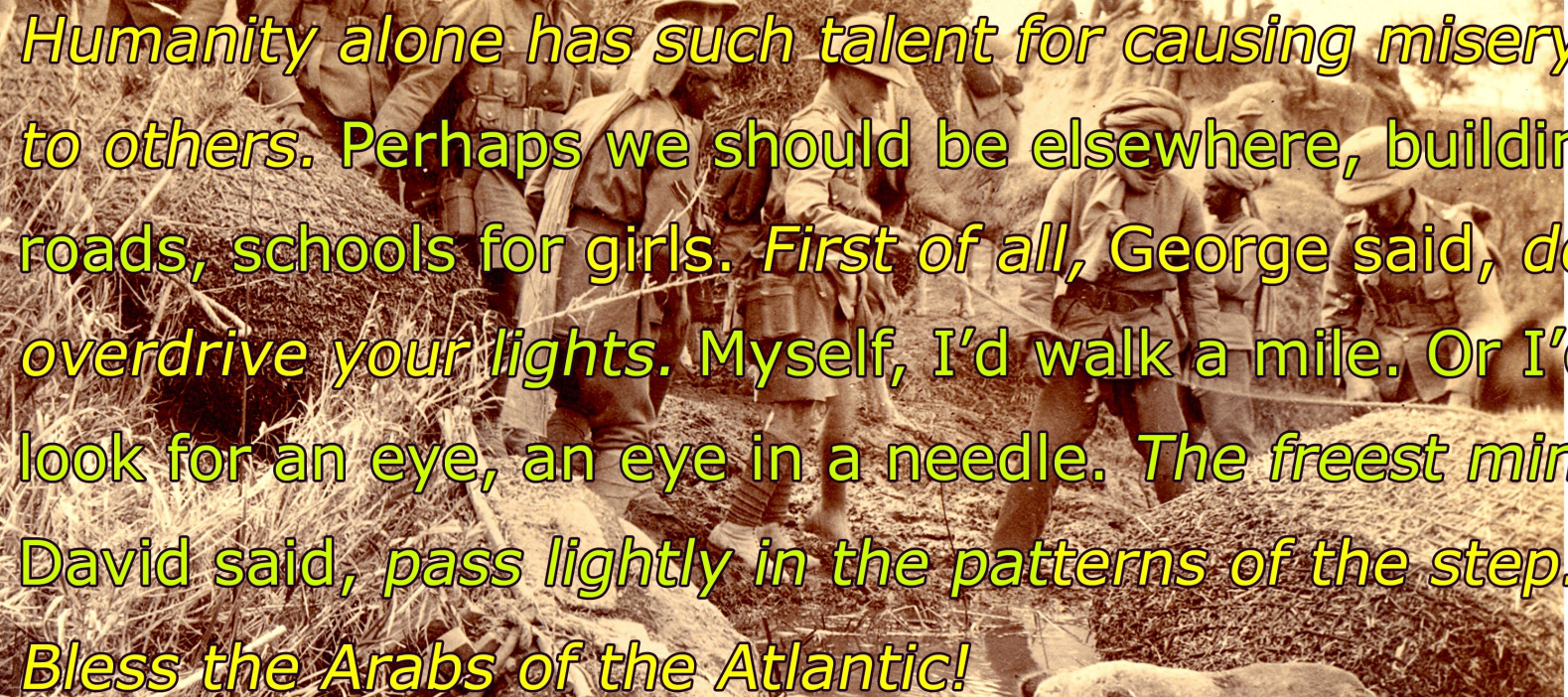
28. The first Afghani tank was built in the U.S. in 1934.

29. The first Canadian to sing “Welcome Back Khadr” was John Harris in Prince George, December, 2005.

30. We need an art that does not react to the idea that we made it.

31. More guns are sold in arms markets in the Khyber Pass than in ammo shops in Michigan.





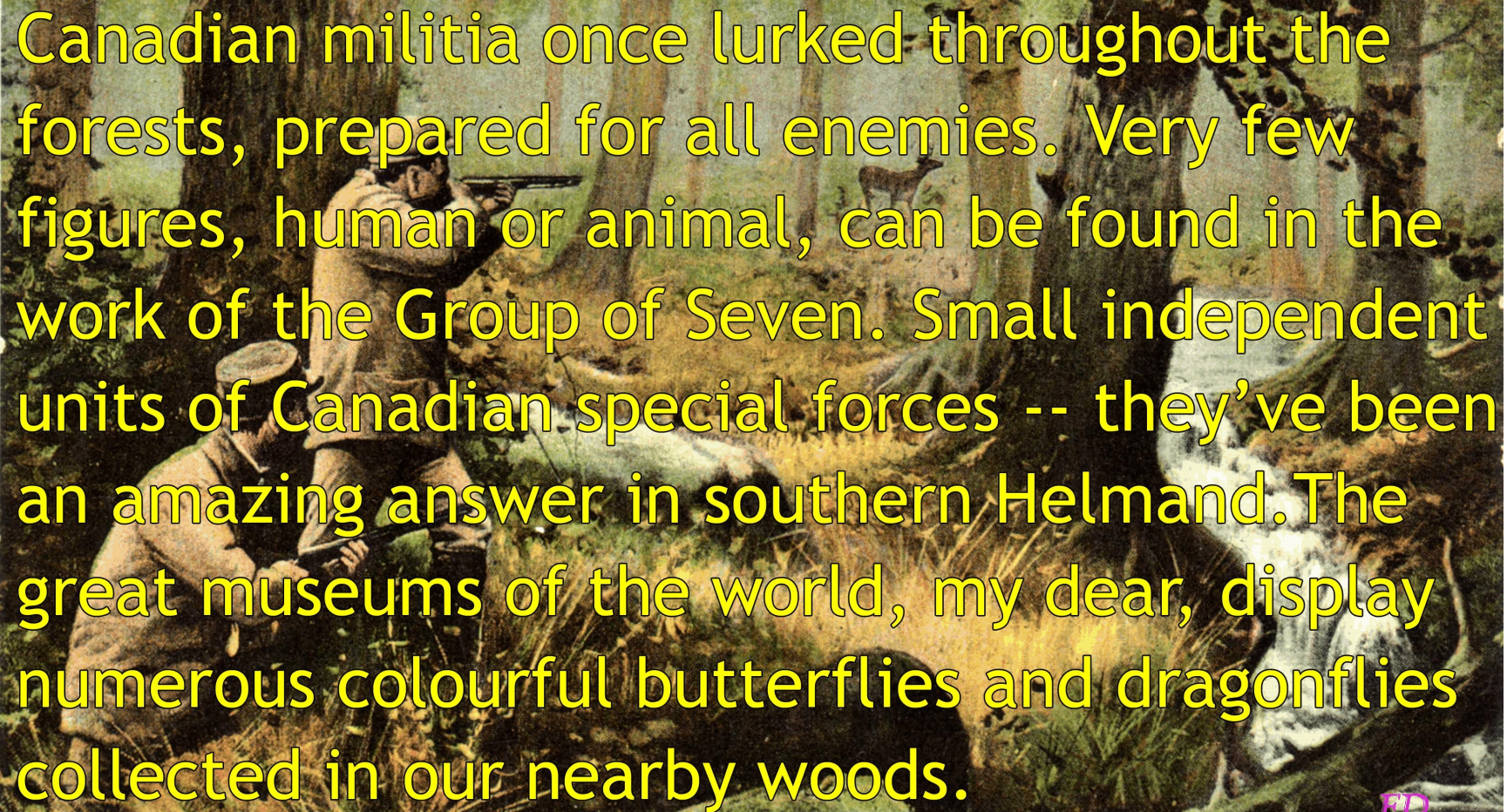
*Humanity alone has such talent for causing misery to others. Perhaps we should be elsewhere, building roads, schools for girls. First of all, George said, don't overdrive your lights. Myself, I'd walk a mile. Or I'd look for an eye, an eye in a needle. The freest minds, David said, pass lightly in the patterns of the step. Bless the Arabs of the Atlantic!*

Near Spin Boldak, May 1919

FD

- 32. More afghans have been crocheted in Canada than in Kandahar.
- 33. Major changes in Afghan governance occur approximately every twenty years.
- 34. More troops have been requested for Afghanistan than are currently serving.
- 35. More changes have been made in this century to the Afghanistan national flag than to Canadian refugee policies.





Canadian militia once lurked throughout the forests, prepared for all enemies. Very few figures, human or animal, can be found in the work of the Group of Seven. Small independent units of Canadian special forces -- they've been an amazing answer in southern Helmand. The great museums of the world, my dear, display numerous colourful butterflies and dragonflies collected in our nearby woods.

DEER HUNTING, AHVIC LAKE, MAGNETAWAN RIVER, BURK'S FALLS, ONT

FD


36. More armoured vehicles rust on Afghan hillsides than can be mustered by American and Russian armed forces.

37. In oral cultures traditions are even more highly valued.

38. More poppies bloom in Afghanistan than in Flanders.

39. More free-range sheep ramble around Afghanistan than diesel cars around Ontario.





Field Marshal Roberts rushed to the relief  
of Kandahar in an epic march from Kabul.  
Hey ho, here we go. Now that we realize  
that Empire was part of a much larger mar-  
keting plan, does research help?

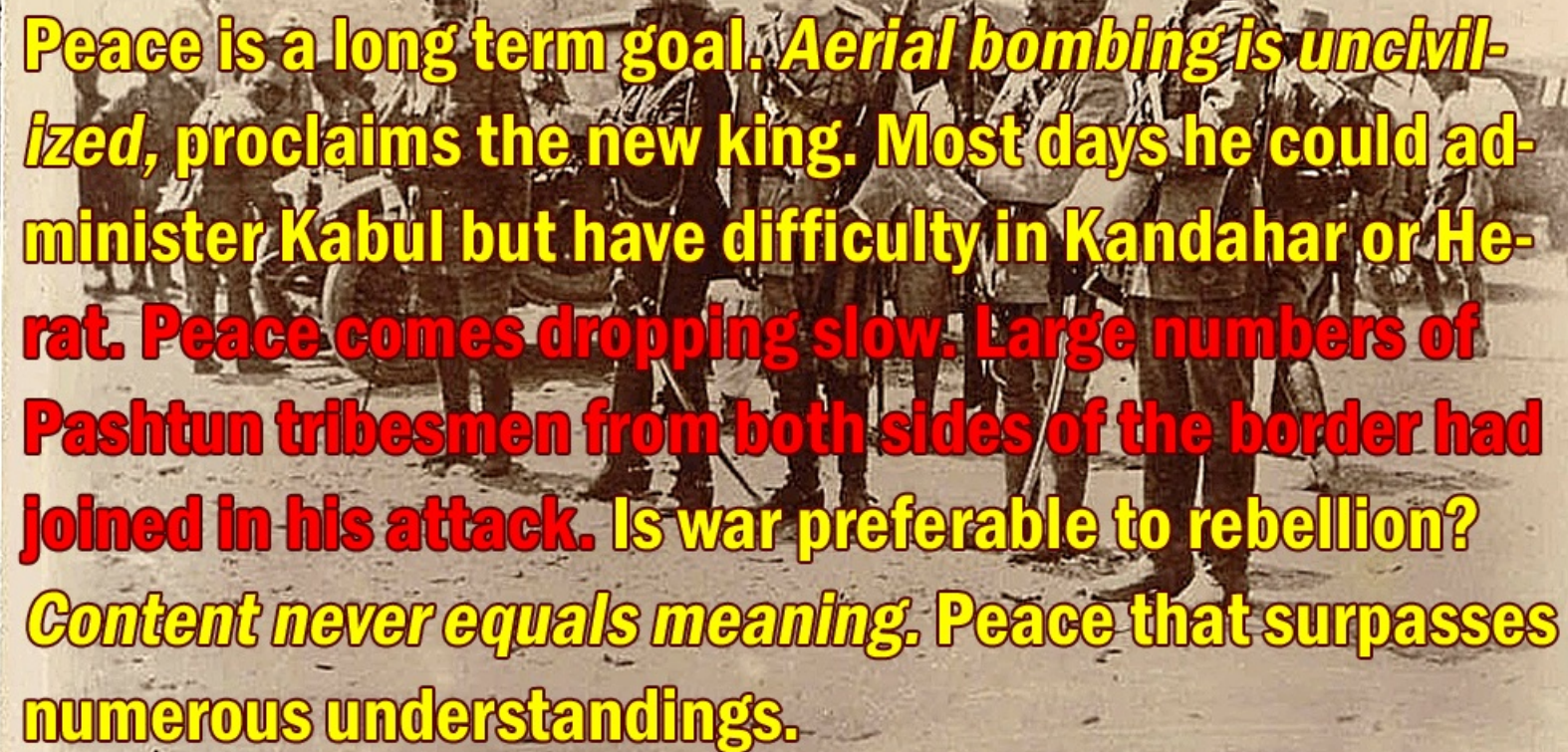
*Stunning video from the Rift Valley. The Calcutta General Post Office.  
Montreal bagels.*

*A Donkey Ambulance.*

FD

- 40. Every postcard has a fondly imagined audience.
- 42. Prisoner abuse in Afghanistan is a historical human practice.
- 43. Prisoner abuse in Afghanistan is caused by poverty and illiteracy.
- 44. Prisoner abuse in Afghanistan is a historical patriarchal practice.





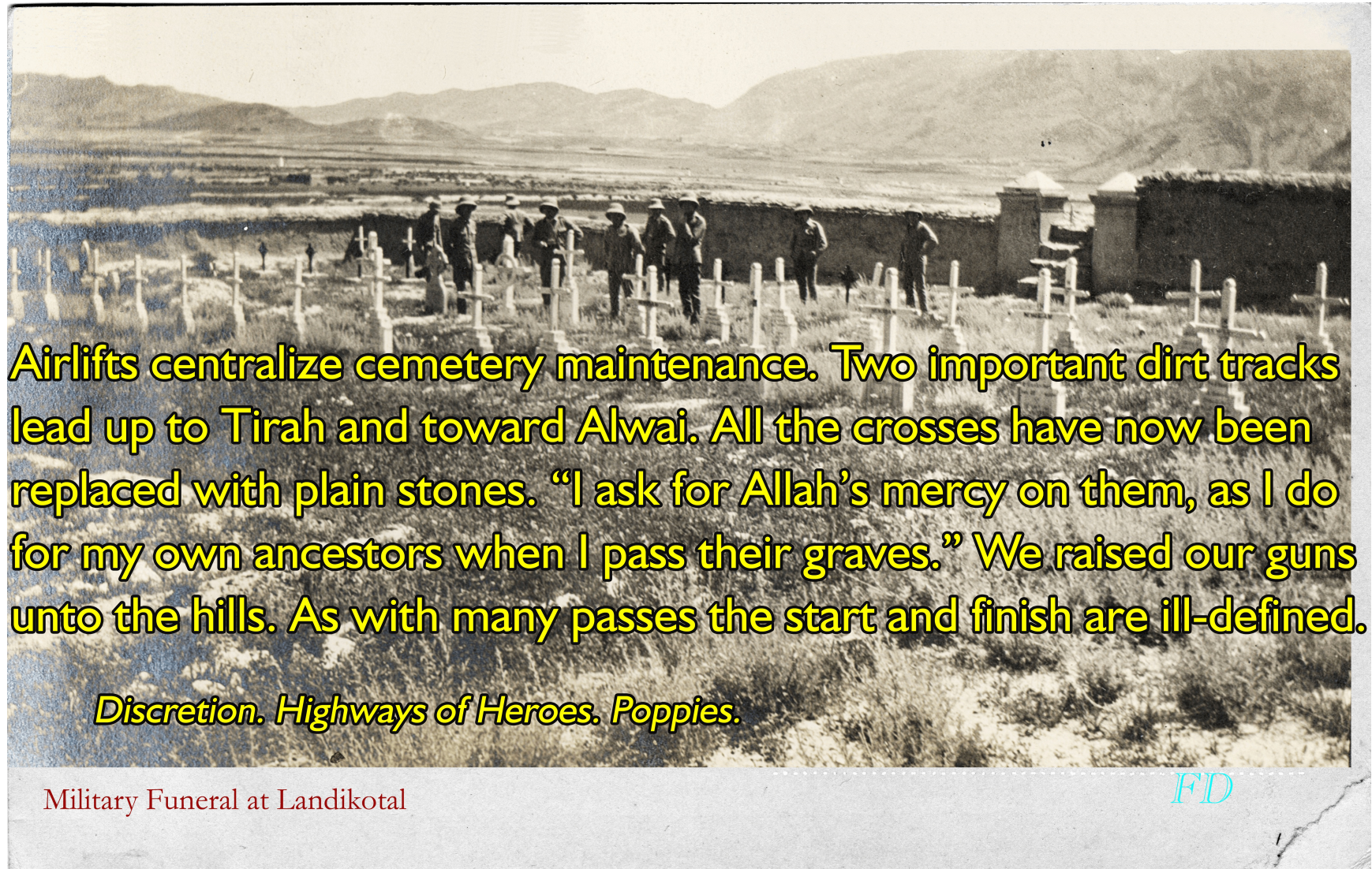
**Peace is a long term goal. Aerial bombing is uncivilized, proclaims the new king. Most days he could administer Kabul but have difficulty in Kandahar or Herat. Peace comes dropping slow. Large numbers of Pashtun tribesmen from both sides of the border had joined in his attack. Is war preferable to rebellion? Content never equals meaning. Peace that surpasses numerous understandings.**

AFGHAN PEACE DELEGATES 1919.

NO. 38.

- 45. Western representations of Afghanistan are orientalist.
- 46. The range of Gavrilo Princep's pistol was greater than he had anticipated.
- 47. Western representations of Afghanistan are worthy of poetry.
- 48. Western representations of Afghanistan are amazing.





Airlifts centralize cemetery maintenance. Two important dirt tracks lead up to Tirah and toward Alwai. All the crosses have now been replaced with plain stones. "I ask for Allah's mercy on them, as I do for my own ancestors when I pass their graves." We raised our guns unto the hills. As with many passes the start and finish are ill-defined.

*Discretion. Highways of Heroes. Poppies.*

Military Funeral at Landikotal

FD

- 49. Afghanistan is a potential source of rare-earth minerals.
- 50. Tribal fabrics could be purchased easily at nearby markets.
- 51. Afghanistan is a loosely joined group of tribal regions.
- 52. Afghanistan is a traditional British army training ground.





Is there a road out of Afghanistan? Is it straight? What city does it run through? Our contestants tonight all love new challenges. Only silence betrayed the presence of the families huddled on both sides of the road.

The one road to Pakistan is now so bad, I'm told, that the bus rocks like a small boat in tall seas. How would you like your meat done? How much can you eat?

KHYBER PASS, SHOWING STRAIGHT ROAD TO AFGHANISTAN. No. 2.

- 53. Western troops go to Afghanistan to help Afghani women run for office.
- 54. Western troops go to Afghanistan help deflate the U.S. dollar.
- 55. All the crosses have now been replaced with plain stones.
- 56. Western troops go to Afghanistan to buy Afghani prayer rugs.



**ALTHOUGH THE ARTIST WAS SKILFUL, HE  
COULD NOT QUITE DECLARE VICTORY.**



*Saving the Guns at Maiwand*

70 copies of this edition have been printed  
of which 40 are hors de commerce. An e-chapbook  
edition in pdf format is also available on CD  
from [openletter@sympatico.ca](mailto:openletter@sympatico.ca)