

Excerpts from Dessa K. Bergen-Cico. (2008). *War and Drugs: The Role of Military Conflict in the Development of Substance Abuse*. Routledge, pp. 128-129.

*In 2002, two American fighter pilots, Major Harry Schmidt and Major William Umbach, killed four Canadian soldiers near Kandahar, Afghanistan, because the pilots mistakenly thought the Canadian soldiers were shooting at them. Their court defense attributed the pilots' actions to the Air Force-issued stimulant drugs they were taking at the time. The pilots had been taking the stimulant Dexedrine during the flight, under the standard-order guidelines of their commander.*

*Today, when pilots are finished with their missions, they are provided with Ambien or Restoril, the "no-pills," to bring them down and help them sleep and adjust after defying the body's circadian rhythms and altering neurotransmitter levels with amphetamines. The lawyer for Major Schmidt noted that the depressant sleep aid Ambien, which was given to Schmidt to help him sleep before the mission, also affected his mental state when he bombed the Canadians.*

*Colonel Peter Demitry, chief of the U.S. technology division, said of the practice of dispensing "go-pills": "It is the gold standard for anti-fatigue. We know that fatigue in aviation kills ... This is a life-and-death insurance policy that saves lives ... This is a common, legal, ethical, moral and correct application."*



Combination picture of (clockwise from top left) Sergeant Marc Leger, Private Richard Green, Corporal Ainsworth Dyer, and Private Nathan Smith, members of the Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton. The four Canadian soldiers were killed by a friendly fire bombing incident near Kandahar, Afghanistan in April, 2002. DND HANDOUT PHOTOS