

Canadian military in double-A dilemma

by UPI

OTTAWA -- The Canadian Defense Department is grappling with how to keep soldiers equipped with double-A batteries for the growing number of devices that need them.

With increasing technology, each of the 2,800 Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan uses about 40 batteries every three days, the Toronto Star reported Monday. That runs to about 750,000 batteries for each six-month deployment at a cost of \$1 million, the Defense Department said.

The batteries are used in night-vision goggles, flashlights, radios and global positioning systems, as well as night, thermal and laser-guided gunsights, a 156-page defense report said.

Rechargeable batteries were ruled out because of the logistics of transporting them and the extra manpower required just to keep charging, the Star said.

One option is switching to lithium batteries, which are half the weight of alkaline batteries, but cost three times as much, the study said.

Another problem is being seen with freezing nighttime temperatures in Afghanistan and also in the Arctic, where Canadian soldiers patrol. The study said alkaline batteries lose 80 percent of their capacity when the temperature falls to around zero Fahrenheit.

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