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It was a tragedy that shook the nation to the core and though the scars are still visible, the Parliament Hill Shootings of 2014 and the memory of Cpl. Nathan Cirillo has inspired positive change on individual and organizational

levels.

It was the morning of Oct. 22, 2014, and the country was still reeling from the shock of the attack in Quebec that led to the death of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent.

For Department of National Defence/ Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman employee, Martin Magnan, the day started like any other as he headed towards a local downtown Starbucks. Coincidentally, the route he followed that day led him on a path near the National War Memorial, and that's when he heard the gunshots, one, two, three.

He saw the shooter, later identified as Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, but his focus, instead went to the soldier lying on the ground and the other soldier, Cpl. Kyle Button, trying to help his comrade. Magnan rushed to the scene to offer his aide and within minutes a small group had formed to help save Cpl. Nathan Cirillo's life as they waited for help to arrive.

"You hear the sirens in the distance. It seemed like a very long time until the ambulance arrived but we were told it wasn't long at all," said Magnan, Communications Advisor with the Ombudsman's office.

The small group encouraged one another and offered assurances to Cpl. Cirillo to make it through.

Magnan and the group continued offering CPR until the ambulances arrived and it became evident that Cpl. Cirillo had passed away.

"I sat down at that point, I was at the base of the tomb and I looked up and you see the brown statuesque and the horses' faces, it was probably one of the coldest moments of my life, because you're at the monument and you know a soldier just died," recalled Magnan

In the days after the tragedy, Magnan attempted to go through the motions of regular routine but the impact of that day was evident. And thus, he started his long journey through the healing process. Psychologists, friends family, and even a shaman played a role in helping Magnan slowly recover.

Two years later, Magnan now believes the tragedy of the Parliament Hill shootings has shaped him into a better person.

"I do believe it's made me a better person. I certainly appreciate the little things a lot more often. Life is a good thing and you gotta take advantage of that and you just gotta keep going," stated Magnan.

On a larger scale, the memory of that day and the memory of Cpl. Cirillo has inspired an Ottawa-based charity to make a positive impact in the lives of veterans. Boots 4 Pups, a volunteer committee that raises awareness and funds in support of the Citadel Canine Society (CCS), held an inaugural event this year in memory of Cpl. Cirillo that raised funds to train and deliver service dogs to veterans and first responders with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Held on Oct. 1, the Cpl. Nathan Cirillo Memorial Cup Challenge brought together individuals and groups in a day of kayaking and canoeing.

"Nathan loved rescue dogs and we work with shelters across Canada when we require a dog to train for recipients. We rescue the dog, train them and release them to new veterans, and first Responders suffering from PTSD and or OSI at no cost to them," said Barbara Boucher Director of Boots 4 Pups.

The inaugural event helped to raise close to \$6,000.

“This Memorial Cup is not only for Cpl Nathan Cirillo but for all fallen soldiers and first responders...We want the new veterans and first responders to know that there is help and if we can do [it] one dog at [a] time this is what we are here to do,” added Boucher.

Nationwide, more than 45 dogs have been trained or paired with a veteran or first responder.

To learn more about Boots 4 Pups visit their website www.boots4pup.ca (<http://www.boots4pup.ca/>) or visit Twitter @boots4pups.



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