

November 26th, 2008

Dear 12th CAR Veterans, Families and Friends,

I expect that many of you had a great summer, and are not anticipating our long winter months. (Not so joyful way to start a newsletter!)

NEWSWe had some news from your fellow Comrades --- Len MURPHY, still staying in Mississauga,

and I recently had a nice chat (905-492-1040 905-492-1040 GRATUIT) – he is well and healthy. His son, Neil, forwarded a framed picture taken in yesteryear, along with a photo of his medals to the Regimental Museum,Bill STEWART, is not living on his farm anymore but keeps on painting - his wife Mary has been ordained “Minister of the UC” and takes good care of him – he still keeps his two portraits of Montgomery and Tecunseh hung in his bed room and believes that they are still the

two really great Generals – talked, from Florida (941-896-5688 941-896-5688 GRATUIT), with Jack C. HUBBARD, who has written a book “*Patriots Will*”, that can be ordered via Email

hubbnet@aol.comVernon DOWIE (450-632-3240 450-632-3240 GRATUIT), YOUR President, is also fine and regularly attends the Regimental activities at the Mother House in Trois-Rivières as well in Valcartier.....As for Edmund “TOJO” Griffiths...He is still keeping up the fight to make sure that the Ortona tank “ATHENA” memorial be ready by the end of this year ----Here is what he wrote:

“It came as no surprise that 60 years after the battle, town fathers of Ortona asked us to provide a Sherman, the same model of the one used during our visit there at Christmas 1943. I asked Cdn military attaches in Western Europe to scout around and one was eventually found in Holland (where we left 55 of them in 1945). The Dutch wanted \$90,000.00 and we were lucky to find three generous Cdns who each contributed \$30,000.00 – Harry STEEL, of Dartmouth, Seymour SCHULICH and Mike WEKERLE of Toronto came to our help. Then John CLEGHORN of Toronto, former chairman of the Royal Bank, gave us \$10,000.00 to move the vehicle to Italy, and buy two .30 cal Browning to complete the armament.

Before the tank was moved, the Dutch repainted it with our wartime tact signs in place. So between all our memorabilia in the local museum, the *Price of Peace* monument in the center of town, and the Sherman tank, all future visitors to Ortona will know the *Three Rivers Regiment* was there when the chips were down.

With the Cdn Ambassador in attendance the vehicle was turned over to the city in July 2008. Then, next problem arose. We had to find money for a permanent base for it. Senator Michael MEIGHEN got the DILLON family of London, Ontario, to contribute \$24,000.00 in honour of the late Hon. Col. Dick DILLON, who, as a captain in the RCR, was wounded just outside on Christmas Eve 1943. But, before work could begin, our glorious Canada Post managed to lose the cheques from the Dillion family. The family kindly reissued the cheques and money was moved to Italy so work could begin. Our regimental agent, Angela ARNONE (a local business woman with more gonads than most males) will supervise construction. The money went to her, rather than to the city, as local officials were thought to be prone to diverting some of the funds to projects of their own.

So, if you wish to refresh your memory about the *Battle of Ortona* and the *Three Rivers Regiment (12 CAR)*, go visit *ORTONA*. – ADSUM Tojo”.

The Government of Canada has expanded the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) to provide housekeeping and/or grounds maintenance benefits to eligible low-income Veterans. For more information contact your local Veterans Affairs agent.

Tojo Griffiths has been informed that he will be the recipient of this year’s City of Ortona “28th December” Award – congratulations – He wrote “I don’t know what this means, but if they follow true to form it will probably be a bill for the damage I caused during the battle”the Colonel of the Regiment, LGen Paul ADDY, replied to Tojo “I hope it isn’t a bill. In any event, if it is, I hope they at least wave the accumulated interest”! On November 13th, the mission in Rome organized the important Italian premiere of a new Italian documentary film entitled *Un Natale di Sangue: Ortona 1943 (A Bloody Christmas: Ortona 1943)*. This initiative was part of Remembrance Day activities this year, and commemorated in particular the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Ortona, one of Canada’s most hard-fought and important battles of the Italian Campaign during the Second World War.

Please let us know if you change your address. Both Regiments want to keep you informed – the only way is to let us know where you are. There is also, for those who wish to have up to date news, consult our two web sites – following is the one that has a link about the 12 CAR – <http://www.12rbc.ca> , and the Canadian Forces site that houses the 12e RBC in Trois-Rivières: http://www.armee.qc.ca/12rbc_milice .

We have "Lost Trail" of the following: C.D. STACEY; W. YOUNG; R. ANDERSON; H. BARTLEY; L.L. ALLEN – if some of you know their mailing address please let us know.

The Regiment in Trois-Rivières are planning to host your Vet's Association reunion sometime on May 9th and 10th 2009 – this is to be confirmed – after a quick survey with other of your Comrades, and as the 12e RBC performed their first engagement with a tank since WWII, they now join the "**BAND OF BROTHERS**" that made our great Regimental history, and would therefore be invited to take part to this reunion.

REGIMENTAL SITREPS MAY-DEC 08

VALCARTIER – Commanding Officer – Lieutenant Colonel Stephen TREMBLAY, CD – Regimental Sergeant Major – Chief Warrant Officer Philippe TURBIDE, CD

The year 2008 has seen much changes and activities at the Regiment. Abroad or at home, members of the unit have been busy on exercises, training and Regimental duties. From Afghanistan to Wainwright, the colours of 12e RBC have flown high and proud to honour the hard work and dedication of our members. Sadly, this commitment has been dearly paid, as often before, with losses throughout our history and more recently with Cpl Richard Renaud. Despite all hardships, accidents and tragedy, members of the 12e RBC continue to work toward the mission achievement with the same level of professionalism.

REGIMENTAL ACTIVITIES

On 13 June was held a commemorative dinner for the families of those who gave their life on duty during Afghanistan roto 4 Op ATHENA. Commanding officers from Sector Quebec and particularly the 5 CMBG attended this emotionally charged ceremony. LCol Tremblay, CO 12e RBC, was present to honour the memory of the unit fallen. Cpl Renaud was one of them. He was member of A Sqn TF 3-07.

Cpl Renaud died on duty on the 15th of January 2008 from combat exposure. This event has been a tremendous blow to A Sqn, close family and Regt family as a whole. However, Cpl Renaud would have, more than anything, desired that we carry the torch on his behalf. He will never be forgotten by his family, colleagues and friends for his kindness, professionalism and «joie de vivre».

As June was a time of remembering and support, July was a time of commemoration and celebration. The Regiment participated in the festivities of the 400e Anniversary of Quebec City. The CO, RSM and a 100 (mostly B Sqn) men guard took part in the «*Droit de Cité*» parade on the 3th July. Under a huge rainstorm, 2500 members of the 5 CMBG paraded within Quebec walls to celebrate the ageless bond between the civilian and the military community. Braving rain and wind, citizen of Quebec City were there in great numbers to show their support to the CF.

On a more Regimental note, Major Pierre Huet, commanding officer of A Sqn, was posted to Wainwright Canadian Manoeuvre Training Center during last APS and been replaced by Major Josh Major. Although considered in reconstitution, A Sqn provided considerable support to B Sqn build-up training as part of Task Force 1-09.

Physical condition is still a premium within the Regt and as such a Regimental sport challenge was held on the 26th June. Two hundred and thirty members from all squadrons took part in a duathlon which consisted of an 8km run and 34 km of bicycle trek. Later on, after block leave, another sports day was held on the 28th of August, pitting Sqn against each other in four different sports : soccer, softball, ultimate Frisbee and volleyball. HQ Sqn was the all around point winner of the event. These activities still contribute to boost morale, sharpen squadron competition spirit and foster cohesion between unit members.

Qualification training is still ongoing and career courses are ran full speed at CFB Gagetown. Even with such a taxing schedule, multiple courses were ran within unit: four driver courses, two turret operator (25mm) courses and one serial 105mm gunner's course. The Regiment was also responsible to conduct four TCCC (Tactical Combat Casualty Care) course throughout the summer and fall as part of Bde School.

On the social calendar, preparation is ongoing and well advanced for the Regimental Ball on the 29th November. More than 515 persons already bought their ticket for this long awaited event, celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Regiment access to Regular Force. As of now, 150 dignitaries and ex unit members have enthusiastically accepted the invitation. As the Ball keeps getting closer, participation will increase as close to 600 persons are expected to attend. The Ball will mark, in a grandiose way, the 40th Anniversary of the Regiment and also mark the closing moment of 2008.

BRIGADE AND REGIMENTAL EXERCICES

Exercise wise, springtime and fall, saw B Sqn, under command of Major Jean-François Cauden, busily moving toward its operational readiness status. The Sqn took part in two exercises in June, BAROUDEUR RUSÉ and BAROUDEUR ROYAL from Ptl to Sqn level training. The whole regiment supported BAROUDEUR ROYAL in order to prepare B Sqn to join the 2e R22eR Battle Group in early July.

The Regiment also took a critical part in planning and execution of REFLEXE RAPIDE II, a crucial combat team level exercise to forge cohesion of TF 1-09 (which B Sqn is part of). REFLEXE RAPIDE was also a great learning experience for all the units involved. It offered the opportunity to practice all the TTPs and the essential combined arms tactics understanding needed in their next deployment to Afghanistan. The TF has concluded REFLEXE RAPIDE III in mid-October and completed in November Ex MAPLE GUARDIAN 0802 in Wainwright, AB, as their final training event. A final realistic training opportunity will wrap-up in January/February at Fort Bliss, USA and confirm its operational status prior to overseas deployment in March 09.

OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT

After more than seven months in theatre, D Sqn finally made it home. The last plane carrying Sqn staff members touched down in Quebec City on the 5th October. They will be enjoying a month long leave with their families. They will return to Regt duty before end of November. A reintegration ceremony will be held on the 24th November to celebrate the Sqn's return within regimental lines. Quebec's city mayor, Mr. Régis Labeaume, will be present and will be part of a flag exchange ceremony. The city flag was carried in Afghanistan with the Sqn to mark the special relationship between the city and 5 CMBG.

While in theatre, D Sqn participated in 27 major operations and more than 500 patrols. In soaring heat, well above 55 deg celsius, members of the Regiment diligently accomplished their duty. They conducted security operations in Afghanistan to provide Afghans with enabling tools to allow them to build a brighter future. D Sqn covered 9 of the 16 districts of Kandahar province and 69 and its crew achieved more than 12 000 km.

CONCLUSION

As usual, it is a busy time for the Regiment. We continue to generate troop/squadron for the Afghanistan mission and B Sqn is in its last preparation stage. We will also provide some individual augmentees to the Bde HQ 6-09, who will deploy in fall 2009. We have already started the planning for our next integral contribution, TF 3-10, scheduled to deploy in fall 2010. The Regiment is identified to provide the recce sqn and also a tank troop to our regimental brother, the LdSH (RC).

Kudo to all the Regiment members for a job well done and we will continue to maintain the focus : mission, team, member and the family.

TROIS-RIVIÈRES – Commanding Officer – Lieutenant Colonel François CHEVRETTE, CD –
Regimental Sergeant Major – Chief Warrant Officer Richard BOISCLAIR, MMM, CD.....

This past September, the Regiment began its armoured reconnaissance collective training. So far, three exercises have been conducted with a fourth confirmation exercise to be held during the weekend of 28th – 30th November 08. All exercises will have been held at the Farnham Garrison in partnership with the Sherbrooke Hussars. A variety of tasks were trained, from traditional route, area, point and zone reconnaissance to tactical security tasks such as convoy and VIP escorts along with camp security. This will complete our recce collective training for this season and allow for us to be deployed in Mississippi in January 2009 (2nd – 12th) in order to validate our armoured training at the Land Force Quebec Area Level during the NOBLE GUERRIER exercise. During this week-long exercise, the Regiment will deploy a troop and SHQ and perform the same types of tasks within a battle group reconnaissance squadron context.

In February, the Regiment will hold two weekends of winter warfare training in order to send personnel to support the brigade-level exercise in the Great North (TARRAMI UNATARTIT 09) from the 27th of February to 7th of March 09. This spring will see additional individual training for our new recruits. Moreover, the Regiment is currently organizing a Crew Commander course for our armoured reservists to be held during the winter.

Lastly, our Regimental 138th anniversary activities will be held during the weekend of March 21st.

ADSUM – CWO Richard Boisclair, MMM ,CD

MUSEUM

The aim of the *Museum of the 12e RBC* situated in the Armouries in Trois-Rivières, which is now known to have the most diversified artefacts of all the museums that are situated in military installations across Canada, is to promote the spirit of its members and for them to feel proud of having inherited such a glorious history, and also to make sure that it will be never forgotten. To underline the 40 years of the formation of our Regular force unit in Valcartier and their missions that they undertook during all these years, this summer exhibition, was open to all veterans, members of the Forces, public and their families, in order let know to each and everyone, what the Regiment has done to maintain peace across the planet. The official opening took place on June 12th – in attendance were 125 guests, which included our newly comrades of 'BAND OF BROTHERS' that had just returned from their mission in Afghanistan as well as a delegation of the 12 CAR Vets headed by your president Mister Vernon DOWIE. This ceremony was also very emotional, as the Commanding Officer in Valcartier, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen TREMBLAY, unveiled the commemorative plaque on the Memorial, inside the "Mother House", in memory of Corporal Richard RENAUD that did not return from this mission.

This exposition was very exceptional this year, as the majority of the artefacts and photos shown were from the members of the Regimental Family, that were in one, and most of the time, many missions with the UN and NATO; an observation post, built in Valcartier; interpretive panels of their various missions with numerous photographs displaying the roll of the Unit; a video (made by the "BOYS"), paintings of the regimental official artist, Mister Real GAUTHIER, (exposed in the Amiens Salon); as well as the numerous artefacts from the Museum collection. The visitors could also contemplate the 14 stain glass windows above the Memorial, made by the fame international local artist, Mister Jean Beaulieu. Early this month, to complete this project, the actual Regimental Crest will be in the center, above the Memorial. All these stain glass windows, which have as back ground the regimental colors – a flower that represents each province and territory – the maple leaf and all over headed by a poppy, has been paid for by our generous donators, which included MANY 12 CAR Veterans. A mosaic will soon be sent to all donors, along with their receipt for income tax purposes.

Two veterans, just back from Afghanistan and that were members of the tank crews (Troop 32), Corporal Éric LEDUC and Trooper Yannick ROCH, came to give a hand to assemble this summer exhibition and stayed with us and acted as our guides – you can imagine with all the experience that these fellows had, the visitors stayed and listen, while passionately they related, not only their own stories but also that of the other squadrons who were there at the same time. Unfortunately, Corporal Éric LEDUC died tragically in a car accident along with his brother Jonathan, also just back from this same mission (see attached – "We shall remember Corporal Éric Leduc" written by his Crew Commander 32C – Sergeant Patrick Lepage). This death greatly affected, not only those who were working with him at the Museum, but all of the "BAND OF BROTHERS" of the Regiment. Military honours were given to these two *Veterans*. Another member of the troop 32, Trooper Alexandre GOSSELIN, took over for the remainder of the exhibition, which ended on Sunday, August 24th.

All the visitors had but praise for these guides as well as for the quality of the exhibits, which was seen by many of the Regimental Family, and public at large, which came to visit Trois-Rivières.

A page of history was written in Afghanistan – for the first time since WWII the Regiment was engaged in a fighting mission – Troop 32, headed by Captain Pascal Croteau (CO of the tp), perpetuated the tradition of excellence and professionalism of the Regiment. It was with pride that they fought with the tanks named Commander II – Cyclops II – Cobalt II and Comanche II – same names used on the tanks of the 12 CAR – the II is to underline that they are the JUNIORS! The first round fired is proudly displayed in the Museum - they have worn the black beret and rekindled the passion for tanks with pride.

CONCLUSION

Again I am very proud and honoured to write you once again this "News Letter"- do not hesitate to send me your comments and news - *YOUR BAND OF BROTHERS* will be most please to hear from you!

In this month of November, I wish to send you this poem from an Unknown Author:

The Last Trumpet Call
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow

I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain
When you awaken in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the soft star that shines at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there, I did not die

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

ADSUM

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We Shall Remember.

On this past 22 July, bad news struck with blunt force a family, the 12e RBC and the 3R22R. The death of Éric and Jonathan Leduc took everyone by surprise. Our thoughts go out to the family, friends and colleagues of the Leduc brothers. Éric was a guy who highly valued friendship, family and enjoyed having fun. He liked to be surrounded by friends and laugh. Éric had been shortly back from Afghanistan, where he was gunner for T32C in the tank troop. He served on the Leopard 1 and the Leopard 2A6M. During the mission, Cpl Leduc participated in no less than 25 major operations. He excelled in completing his task, and always focused on the mission. He retained his professionalism even after receiving RPG and small arms fire, as well as rolling over 2 IEDs. He returned with his head high, proud of what he had accomplished... of being a real TANKER! Following his vacation, he was employed as a guide for the 12e RBC Trois-Rivières museum, where he explained the 40 years of missions of the 12e RBC, and mostly of his last mission on tanks. Cpl Éric Leduc was part of the crew who performed 12e RBC's first engagement with a tank since WWII. As a Leopard gunner, he thus joined the regimental history. Following the tragic accident, the members of the Regiment lost a friend, a colleague but 32 troop lost a brother in arms, and this... we shall remember.

ADSUM

FEAR THE DARK!

Sgt Patrick Lepage
Crew Commander 32C, 12eRBC