



12th Canadian Armoured Regiment (Three Rivers Regiment)
Perpetuated by



12e Régiment blindé du Canada

NEWSLETTER

December 2009

Dear 12th CAR Veterans, Families and Friends,

LATEST NEWS

12 CAR VETERANS VISIT THE REGIMENTAL HOME – OCTOBER 9th and 10th 2009

With the contribution of Edmund ‘Tojo’ Griffiths



Wreath laying ceremony at “CATHY’S” Memorial by Vernon Dowie, accompanied by Georges Levesque and Edmund Griffiths – Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Young – 12e RBC – Trois-Rivières CO and host of this event, welcomes the 12 CAR Vets

12 CAR Veterans Association once again held their reunion at the General Jean-Victor Allard Armoury, but it appears that Father Time is gaining ground where the German Army failed. The last reunion in Trois-Rivières saw 12 CAR vets down to a corporal’s guard of three. Georges Levesque came up from New Brunswick, Vern Dowie was given transport from Montreal and Edmund ‘Tojo’ Griffiths made it from Ottawa. The lonely three were well and truly feted by those from our regular army unit in Valcartier, and especially from those in our local unit in Trois-Rivières.

The usual “Meet and Greet” was held on Friday, followed on Saturday by a number of activities. There was a screening of a film by Fabio Toncelli “Ortona 1943: a bloody Christmas” that was commentated by Tojo. A copy of this film on DVD is included with the compliments of Lieutenant Colonel Gilles Séguin – retired Honorary of the Regiment –. Still on Saturday, there was a presentation on the new Leopard tank and its different tactics and gadgets by Captain Pascal Croteau who was with Troop 32 in Afghanistan. The main event was the commemoration ceremony at the Regiment of our beloved “CATHY” in memory of our *Band of Brothers*. Lastly, a number of guests joined the 12 CAR Vets for dinner which included the commanding officers of the Valcartier and Trois-Rivières units and Brigadier-General Jocelyn Lacroix, senior serving officer of the 12e RBC. The 12 CAR Vets also welcomed members of Troop 32 to this event. The dinner was enlivened by a string quartet, thanks to the contribution of one of our comrades, Mister W.W. Colpitts.

“Early Saturday morning, a meeting was held and in light of our dwindling number, we decided to put an end to the 12 CAR Veteran’s Association and roll whatever is left into the 12e RBC Association that now count an increasing number of veterans from the conflict in

Afghanistan. The 12e RBC Association guarantees that whatever funds are transferred will be held in a separate account and used for the maintenance of the “Cathy” Memorial and assuring the continuity of our great history.

We admit that it’s sad to see the 12 CAR Vets Association move out of the limelight, but just remember it has been 65 years since our last battle at Apeldoorn.

ADSUM – TOJO

Editors Note:

a) Address of LCol Gilles Séguin: 1099, route de Lotbinière, suite 101 – Vaudreuil, Quebec J7V 8P2 ;

b) The unification of both Associations will not change the existing arrangement according to which both 12e RBC units will maintain all communication with the 12 CAR Vets as well as perpetuating their great history.

UPDATE FROM ORTONA

Tojo wrote

“Originally it was planned to site the 12 CAR tank (Athena) next to the 15th century castle in Ortona. Before work began on building the base for the tank to sit on however, the weather changed and Ortona became waterlogged with heavy rains. Then, as the ground dried out in the spring of 2009, an earthquake devastated the town of Aquila just north of Ortona. This resulted in the entire skilled workforce from Ortona moving to Aquila to help with restoration work. Meanwhile, the Province of Abruzzo decided to build a new exit ramp on the major highway that bypasses Ortona. The exit will lead to the area known by 12 CAR as “Cider Crossroads”. This was the area where “A” Sqn lost six tanks and the RCR lost two companies at the end of Dec 18th 1943, one company had 17 men and the other had 18 remaining. It was 12 CAR’s introduction to the 1st German Parachute (Fallschirmjager) Division. On the Ortona side of “Cider”, Frank Johnson and “C” Sqn lost 5 tanks in a minefield. This too is where the Germans had placed a 250 kg bomb in a culvert that was detonated when Tommy Melvin’s tank passed over it. The tank was totally destroyed and the entire crew killed.

The Province of Abruzzo intends to landscape the area around the “Cider” exit – with a roundabout, parking and lighting. The City of Ortona asked us to agree on moving the tank from the castle area to the new exit as part of the development. They point out that in this new position, the tank will be visible from the highway and they hope this will lure more visitors into Ortona, in order to see the 12CAR artefacts in Musee di Battaglia di Ortona.

The \$24 000 required to construct the base for the tank was provided by the Dillon Foundation of London, Ontario, in memory of Captain (Later Hon. Col.) Dick Dillon, CM, MC, CD, who was wounded at “Cider”. Work is now started and the City of Ortona intends to have a formal unveiling ceremony at the new site on December 28th – a civic holiday commemorating the day the Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver and the Loyal Edmonton Regiment supported “A” and “C” Sqns of 12CAR who finally drove the Germans out of the town.”

Visit of the Chief of the Defence Staff – October 5th 2009

The Commander of the Canadian Forces, General Walter Natynczyk, paid a visit to the General Jean-Victor Allard Armoury to decorate Warrant Officer Serge Boily, Operations WO, with a commendation for his exemplary conduct during a recent incident in Afghanistan. On his arrival, General Natynczyk inspected the honour guard of the 12 RBC – Trois-Rivières, and took time to chat with a group of its members in the Amiens Room, congratulating them for their excellent work in the Canadian Forces.



With the collaboration of Captain Michel Girard – 12 RBC RUPA

Accompanied by the Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General Paul G. Addy, and Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Robert O. Gauthier, the CDS viewed the permanent exhibition of the 12 RBC Museum. He was particularly impressed by the quality of the museum’s collection, and stressed the importance of preserving and developing the regimental history.

Remembrance Day Ceremony – November 8th 2009



Unveiling of the plaque of Cpl K Blais at the Regimental Memorial, by Lcol Young and Lacroix, accompanied by RSM Léger-Fr chet te and Tofts – 12 CAR wreath laying at “CATHY” Memorial – Parading of both 12 RBC units in the City of Trois-Rivi res.

With both 12 RBC Units present, this year’s ceremony was marked by two unfortunate events. First was the unveiling of the name plaque on the Memorial inside the Armoury, in honour of Corporal Karine Blais, first female personnel of the Regiment to be KIA on April 13th 2009 in Afghanistan. Afterwards there was the reading at Cathy’s Memorial, after those of the 114 *Band of Brothers*, the names of the seven fallen 12 RBC members that did not return from various UN – NATO missions:

- VIETNAM
- LAVIOLETTE C.E.
- CYPRUS
- DUPONT J.R.A.
- BOSNIA
- GALVIN P.D.
- LANGEVIN L.P.S.
- ROUSSEAU J.F.Y.
- AFGHANISTAN
- RENAUD R.
- BLAIS K.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

The Colonel of the Regiment, LGen Paul G. Addy accompanied by your “Liaison Officer” LCol (ret) Robert O. Gauthier and the president of the Trois-Rivi res Chapter of the Association, CWO Mario Chevalier, laid the wreath of the 12 CAR.

Proud members of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Canadian Forces, law enforcement and Cadets paraded in the City streets to the post office Cenotaph for the 11th hour ceremony, being well applauded by numerous bystanders.

HONOURING OUR MILITARY BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN – NOV 25TH 2009



Our reservists from 12e RBC – Trois-Rivières as well as those from 62e RAC – Shawinigan who just came back from their deployment in Afghanistan, received a rousing tribute in the Bionest Center in Shawinigan before a game between the local Cataractes and the Maineiacs from Lewiston, Maine.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANK W. JOHNSON, DSO, ED CD TROPHY AWARD



Master Corporal D. Jobin receives from LCol S. Young the LCol Johnson Trophy – they are accompanied by RSM P. Léger-Frechette and the Honorary LCol P. Ayotte

Christmas dinner for the troop was held on December 5th this year. As per tradition, it gathered non-commissioned members, NCOs, officers, retired commandants, RSMs and friends of the Regiment. It was an occasion to strengthen unit cohesion while following the Regiment's history and customs of the traditional Christmas dinners held during wartime. As usual before the meal, a regimental parade was held during which promotions and awards were distributed. One of these awards was the "Lieutenant Colonel Frank W. Johnson, DSO, ED, CD Trophy". This shield is mounted with LCol Johnson cap badge and collar insignias that he wore while on active service during the last war. This trophy is presented annually to a member of the Regiment who distinguished himself, by his involvement, availability, professionalism and leadership. This year's recipient is *Master Corporal Dave Jobin* and is accompanied by a cash prize of 100\$ donated by your 12 CAR Veterans Association.

WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT – VERNON DOWIE

Dear Friends, Comrades,
It was inevitable that the 12 CAR Veterans Association (Three Rivers Regiment), would be disbanded and be unified with the 12 RBC Association. It has been a few years now that our

“Liaison Officer”, has kept us going but it is now time to pass the torch to a new generation of veterans.

The 12 RBC Association reassures all 12 CAR Vets that they will be kept informed, and that our glorious history be kept alive.

Please keep us posted on what is happening to you and your families, via our “LO” *Bob Gauthier*.

May I wish you *GOOD HEALTH AND A COMFORTABLE LIFE!*

ADSUM

Vern Dowie

REGIMENTAL SITREPS - JUNE - DECEMBER 09

VALCARTIER



Commanding Officer - Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Lacroix, CD

GARRISON'S EVENTS

The months of September and October held a multitude of activities throughout the 5th CMBG. The brigade school has been running a great deal of courses, with the emphasis being placed on the 25mm turret operator and the Tactical Combat Casualty Care courses. In addition, 123 reservists have joined the staff of the 5th CMBG in order to receive some individual instruction and training. The fall months also saw some amicable sports competitions between the various units of the 5th Brigade. The first of these was the CCmdt's challenge on October 9th. The Regiment placed a respectable third behind the 1st Battalion Royal 22e Régiment (second) and the 5e RALC (First). The challenge saw most units participating in a 6 km timed run, push-up, chin-up and sit-up competitions. The brigade averaged 31mins for the 6 km run; however, with the end of competition, a new type of challenge might arise from the CCmdt. He is looking to introduce new forms of testing based upon the Army fitness manual in 2010. However, before being able to surpass their standard, the brigade will host winter games in February 2010.

The fall months also saw the return of the members of JTFA 1-09'. Sadly, Major Yannick Pépin (5e RGC), Corporal Jean-François Drouin (5e RGC), Corporal Jonathan Couturier and Private Patrick Lormand (R22eR), were all killed in the line of duty. May they rest in peace.

12e RÉGIMENT BLINDÉ DU CANADA'S EVENTS

At the Regiment level, I have been appointed as Regt commanding officer and my command team is completed with RSM Dave Tofts. Lcol Stephen Tremblay is now on a UN mission and CWO Turbide is CFLRS RSM. The primary focus for activities has been on individual training at both the brigade school and the Armoured School in Gagetown. As previously stated many of these courses were the Turret operator course (25mm); however, many

young drivers were also qualified as drivers for the Leopard and Coyote. Various IBTS were also completed in preparation for the JTFA 3-10 work-up training. While the emphasis for training has been placed on the November 2010 deployment, the Regiment also participated in a lower level validation exercise for the decontamination platoon of Op PODIUM. From November 30th to the 4th of December, the Regt will participate in a level 6 CPX, related to Op PODIUM. Lastly, 11 members of the regiment departed in November as part of the HQ elements for roto 6-09.

“A” Sqn continued its individual training, while simultaneously welcoming 24 reservist members into their ranks. They also undertook some collective training and a DAG in order to prepare themselves for the non-kinetic tasks they may encounter throughout Op PODIUM. As part of this training, they ran a virtual level 2 exercise in early November, as well as a level 2 (ptl) and 3 (troop) field exercise, which culminated with a level 3 25mm firing range. Breaking news, higher HQs have confirmed a recce sqn deployment with TF 3-10.

The members of B Sqn, as well as Regt augmentees, have finally returned to Canada and are presently taking a well deserved leave period. Their members will rejoin the regimental lines in January 2010.

For its part, C Sqn was intimately involved in supporting the Combat Team Commander Course. A single tank troop was deployed to Gagetown for the field portion of the course and returned having not only made the Regiment proud, but having acquired more Leopard C2s for their hangars in Valcartier. The reasons behind the move were to re-establish the fleet which had once existed in Valcartier, as well as to serve as training aides for the squadron members preparing for operations in November 2010. These new vehicles served the squadron well from the 16th to the 20th of November, when they were employed on the firing range. The range served two purposes. The first was the qualification of some 20 new gunners, while the second was the practice of combined arms tactics. The end of the range saw Tankers working with members of 1st and 3rd Battalion Royal 22e Régiment, as well as a FOO party from 5e RALC, in a live fire combat team assault. In addition to the activities being carried out in Canada, 4 crews are presently undertaking training on the Leopard 2 at the German Armoured School, and 10 more are scheduled to participate in similar training in the New Year. Finally, they will conduct a digitized CP exercise in early December.

“D” Sqn has been reduced to minimum number of personnel and is primarily being used to support work-up training for both “A” and “C” squadron’s deployments, while simultaneously generating elements for the 3-10 PRT.

The Cmdt and svc Sqn intensively pursued its IBTS completion and its support to the various regimental elements. The squadron has been placed in a support role for Op PODIUM and will deploy by early December (November 30th and December 1st) in Valcartier’s training areas in order to test the Regiments Leopard 2 capacities as well as its material qualities. Its members are preparing themselves for the traditional St-Vincent-de-Paul event on December 3rd and will depart for Christmas leave shortly thereafter (December 12th to January 5th 2010). The final regrouping for TF 3-10 has been set for the 6th of April 2010.

FAMILY LIFE

The “Noël des enfants” happened on the 22nd of November and was organized by both 12e RBC and the 5e RALC.

VARIOUS EVENTS

With the holiday season rapidly approaching plenty of activities have been planned for the following weeks. An intermess has been scheduled for the 3rd of December and will see the

NCO's hosting the officers at their mess. The Tournée des Lieutenants will happen on the 5th of December with a breakfast at the Cmdt's home in the morning of the 6th. The troop dinner will be held on the 10th, while the traditional hockey game, as well as the Association cocktail has been scheduled for the following day. Finally, the officers will dine at the Cercle de la Garnison on the 12th of December. The upcoming year will be extremely busy but morale is second to none.

ADSUM!

Captain Steve Lessard = Captain/Adjutant – 12e RBC - Valcartier

Trois-Rivières



Commanding Officer - Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Young, CD

As each year draws to a close, the Fall period is a time to be thankful, to remember and to be with family and friends for the holiday season.

For the Reserve part of your Regiment, the year 2009 has been dominated by support to operations. Although we only number some 150 soldiers, nine have gone to and returned from Afghanistan. Two more are currently deployed in theatre and another dozen or so are preparing to go as part of the reconnaissance squadron from Valcartier.

I, and one of my Squadron Commanders, have also been over and back on a short technical assistance visit in support of the new Afghan Army staff college. The Regular Regiment has been tasked to send two full Squadrons to Afghanistan late next year, in addition to the command group for the Provincial Reconstruction Team, so you can see that next year is shaping up to be much the same.

Sadly, the Regiment lost one soldier last year, Corporal Karine Blais. We also have a few wounded in action, although I am proud to say that they are all doing well. One of my soldiers, Master Corporal Martial Boisvert, even sneaked himself on to the Remembrance Day parade. It is hard to imagine that only six months ago he was in intensive care with a broken back, leg and pelvis. (It's a good thing that the RSM didn't notice him on parade, or I am sure that he could have added a broken neck to his list of injuries!) I mention this only to say that the Regimental spirit is strong in both Trois-Rivières and in Valcartier. From my personal observations, I might also add that our soldiers are certainly making a big difference to the lives of the average Afghans. They are fighting a tough insurgency, but they are making a difference.

In terms of the usual hustle and bustle of Regimental life, I must say that the various institutions and associations that make up your Regiment remain active. The museum has seen a particularly good year: the celebration of 375 years of Trois-Rivières history and a dedicated group of volunteers led us to break a record for most visits yet again. The Regimental Association continues its good work: three bursaries have been awarded to deserving students, the museum has received a much-needed donation, and we are to have

a new Regimental tie. I haven't seen it, but when the details are known, we'll be sure to pass on the details. Without a dedicated group of volunteers, former commanding officers and other interested parties, I am the first to admit that my job would be impossible.

The next year promises to be a difficult one. Budget cuts, pressures to deploy more soldiers, and general uncertainty on where we, as an Army, are headed, and means that we are in for some rough weather. The Army has been on a war footing for several years now - equipment, supplies and manpower are slowly wearing down. The costs of rebuilding will be significant and we will all have to do our part.

In closing, let me wish each of you all the best for the holiday season. Take care of one another, and God bless.

Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Young, CD – Commanding Officer 12e RBC – Trois-Rivières

WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM

The Museum continues the work that was undertaken 3 years ago, and its general manager, Mister Daniel Robert, sees that the archives, library and artefacts are regularly being updated and registered in the computer systems.

Again this year a summer exhibit was held that underlined the 375th anniversary of the City of Trois-Rivières, and presented a major exhibition on the history of the Canadian militia, from its origins in this city to this day.



Official opening by the president of the 375th anniversary celebration, Me Jean Fournier, and the president of the Museum, LCol Stephen Young – Our 12 RBC guides, Cpl Yannick Roch and Cpl Philippe Maltais, on “Cathy” – One of the numerous exhibits

Well supported by the local unit, it received a helping hand from 12 RBC – Valcartier who sent two of its members to act as guides. At the opening ceremony they outfitted themselves with the uniforms of the past and present – one with a battledress (with all the markings of the 12 CAR and the black turtleneck) and the new combat uniform worn in Afghanistan. They couldn't resist being photographed on “Cathy”, who would?

The Museum keeps the glorious history of the 12 CAR alive, but is also an important showcase for all the Canadian Forces and has become the most prestigious military museum outside military bases, due to its unique collection of artefacts.

That is why it is very important for all veterans to send in artefacts, and if they wish, their military medals so dearly earned. Unfortunately we see them too often being sold on Ebay. The Museum does not buy artefacts, but can issue a receipt for all donations, as it is recognized by Canada's Revenue Agency, as a charitable organisation under the income tax law. Please tell the members of your family.

You are welcome, as well as your family and friends, to visit your museum. Please do not hesitate and contact your “LO”, who will make it his duty to arrange a visit. It is never closed to the 12 CAR Vets.

NEWS FROM THE NEW GENERATION OF VETERANS

Written by Captain Pascal Croteau



The Leopard -the main battle tank – Capt Pascal Croteau, posing in Germany – The fire power

At your reunion last October 10th, I was given the opportunity to update the situation of the tanks within the Regiment in Valcartier. Here are the main subjects that were dealt with in during my presentation.

The Regiment has deployed three reconnaissance squadrons since 2006. A tank troop - a troop, which is the equivalent of a squadron, escorting logistic convoys within the Provincial reconstruction team – is part of the Brigade Headquarters – mentors of the Afghan army, and will deploy again more than 350 of its members this autumn in Afghanistan. In fact, next November 2010 to July 2011, the Regiment will provide a reconnaissance squadron, a tank squadron and will be responsible for the reconstruction team. So a lot of work awaits our regular and reservist members.

At the tank level, after the return of Troup 32 in March 2008, the Regiment reactivated C Squadron in order to comply with the Commander of the Army and of the Armoured Corps directives, which stated that regular regiments should restructure themselves into three reconnaissance squadrons and one tank squadron. Thus in the summer of 2009, twelve Leopard 1 (old) were returned to our Regimental lines in Valcartier. Hearing the sound of the 830 HP motors of the Leopard roaring again, made a huge impact on the morale of the troopers, as many believed the end of the main battle tank heavy tracked armoured vehicle in the Regiment, after the dismantling of the squadron in 2004.

So the Regiment will deploy three tanks troops, plus a squadron command post and a Sergeant Major echelon. Given that we will operate on the Leopard A6 (anti-mine version), and that is considered the best tank in the world, members of the squadron will have to qualify and train in Germany, as Troop 32 did in 2007. They will spend one month at the Panzertruppenschule in Munster and the squadron will participate in three major exercises at Tactical Group level, before being deployed to Kandahar.

The situation of the Leopard 2 A4s and their arrival at the Regiment is gradually being clarified but they is still much logistic work to be completed before seeing them rolling into squadrons lines. Canada bought 100 Leopard tanks (1990 version), and two ARV Leo 2 (armoured reconnaissance vehicles) from Holland, and plans to modify 20 of them for operational purposes. For the time being only CF Base Wainwright in Alberta and Gagetown in New Brunswick, will have the tanks, giving them time to modify their infrastructures (bridges, etc) and train enough technicians (mechanics – weapon technicians, etc) to support the four bases. The final phase should see 20 tanks in Wainwright for the LdSH (RC); 20 in Petawawa for the RCD's; 20 in Valcartier and 20 others at the Armour School. For now we are not able to set a time date on the arrival of these tanks at the Regiment, but four Leopard 2 A4s arrived at the School, in order to develop courses for gunners, drivers, loaders and tank commanders.

That is roughly the situation of the tanks and the Regiment which will practically be entirely deployed in Afghanistan next autumn 2010. All are very happy and proud to perpetuate the traditions of excellence that all of you from the 12 CAR have created during the Second World War. We will keep you informed on the progress of the squadron up to its deployment. STAY FIT!

***ADSUM – WHATEVER THE OBSTACLE
(Motto of C Squadron)***

Captain Pascal Croteau, CD

CONCLUSION

Hope you have enjoyed reading this *NEWSLETTER* which has been produced thanks to the collaboration of many, which I will not name in case I forget someone. But I will say it has been a great team effort of the old and new Veterans (12 CAR and Afghanistan) as well as both 12 RBC staff. I only hope that the next letter will include more news from the *Band of Brothers* and their families, which will help in making this document more informative as a whole. Do not hesitate to contact me!

Since a few moons, I have made it my main preoccupation to ensure that all that deals with remembering our Vets be maintained and that new additions be made to the existing remembrance functions. Fund raising permitted the maintenance of the bronze memorial plaque on the “Cathy” memorial and the installation of the stained glass widows above the Memorial inside the armoury, which is a work of art by itself. I now intend to illuminate the latter so they can be seen, not only when it is daylight, but also at night. The total cost of this project is 2 000\$! Again I will ask, from our generous donators, to contribute to make this project a reality. All donations will be managed through the “Raoul Pellerin Fund” which is a registered charitable organisation that can issue donation receipts. If you so wish to contribute, please forward your cheques made out to the order of the “Raoul Pellerin Fund” and indicate at the bottom “Stained glass window project”. Here are the two other Regimental funds that people can contribute to, and that are also authorized to issue donation receipts:

***12e RBC Trust Fund
12e RBC Museum***

Please do not hesitate if you need more information about these funds.

Another year is ending, may I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with the best of health – God Bless you all!

ADSUM

Your “Liaison Officer”

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robert O. Gauthier, CD
950, Royal Street – Apartment 604,
Trois-Rivières, Quebec G9A 4H8 Canada

Email : bobog@sympatico.ca - Telephone : 819-379-9088

Visit ou Regimental Web Site: <http://www.12rbc.ca/>
and the 12 RBC – Trois-Rivières site :
http://www.arme.gc.ca/12rbc_milice once open chose the language version

