



*The Three Rivers Veterans Association
12th Canadian Armoured Regiment
Perpetuated by
12e Régiment blindé du Canada*

NEWS LETTER

October 17th, 2007

Dear 12th CAR Veterans,

Its always with sadness that I have to start a « *News Letter* » by listing some of the *Band of Brothers* that has left us: *F. Milon-Demers; W. Zaikow and H.A. Moon* – on June the 15th we buried the ashes of *Frank Johnson* in the family plot in Trois-Rivières – a few veterans attended, as well as the local Legion – members of the 12e RBC and friends.

There will be NO reunion this year, due to intensive construction work going on at the Armoury – all the electrical system is being changed, in order to comply with the energy saving program – earlier this year the DND has put in a lift to accommodate those who have difficulty climbing the three flight of stairs (like me), to have access to the second floor and the Salons – doors – toilets etc.. have been modified and the building is now accessible to the handicapped. The Armistice parade is still schedule for Sunday, November 11th at 0930 Hres with 300 men of 12e RBC (Valcartier and Trois-Rivières) on parade - and extensive recruiting campaign has paid off – it's a long time we haven't seen more than 135 reservists on parade – shoulder to shoulder, from one end to the other of the parade square! If the construction work permit, there might be a Mess diner sometime in late November – at least the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel François Chevrette hopes so.

In the morning of June 14th (the same day that we buried Frank Johnson's ashes) was the official opening of the Summer Exhibition of the Regiment Military Museum – the 100th anniversary of the construction of the Armoury was underlined – an innovation this year, the Amiens Salon and the mezzanine were open to the public – in the Amiens Salon a special place was made for the 12th CAR Vets – the project *ATHENA* of our Comrade Edmund “Tojo” Griffiths was displayed, giving information as to what the Sherman Memorial will look on his new pedestal facing the sea (which now seems to be on ice – see “News from the Battle of Ortona Museum”) and a frame newspaper article (given by Tojo) reporting on the generous donors: *Misters Seymour Schulich, CM – Harry Steele, OC – Michael Wekerie and John Cleghorn, OC*, who gave 100 000\$ to buy the tank and moved it from Holland to Italy. A small plaque has been mounted on the tank at Ortona to acknowledge this generous donation of these Gentlemen (see photos attached) – the cost of this small plaque (1 500\$) was paid by the Ottawa Branch of the 12th CAR Vets

Association. A larger plaque is being cast which bears the regimental badge and lists the names of all those killed in action in Ortona. It will be shipped to Italy as soon as Mister Griffiths receives it from the foundry. It will be mounted on a large base in front of the tank. . The cost of this plaque (4 650\$) came from the funds sent by the Association of the 12e RBC (Valcartier and Trois-Rivières).

Next to this display were the paintings of a 12th CAR Vet – William A. Steward – one of which was his self portrait – He came down from London ON to be present at the inauguration of the Museum.

After having been closed for two years the Museum is in a rebuilding mode – but still the lack of funds slows down many projects – permanent qualified personnel is needed – five members of the board of directors (headed by LCol Chevrette) has gone to Ottawa to discuss its funding.

On July 17th, Troop 32 from 12e RBC paid a visit to the *Mother House*, before being sent to Afghanistan. They are part of a squadron using the new German Leopard 2 tanks – Captain Pascal Croteau is commanding “C” Squadron and are attached to LDSH (RC) – the same names has been given to their tanks as the ones used during the Italy campaign = 32 Capt Croteau – *COMMANDER*; 32A Adj Curadeau – *CYCLOPS*; 32B Sgt Malenfant – *COBALT*; and 32C Cplc Lepage – *COMMANCHE!* They enjoyed their short stay in Trois-Rivières – also present were three (out of 4) of the reserve members of the Unit that are now serving in Afghanistan. They had a chance to exchange with the 12th CAR Vets that were present. Here is an Email [TO YOU 12th CAR VETS](#) from Capt Croteau dated September 27th – Subject: [Battle of obj Jester – Op Sariq Sarbaz: 24-26 Sept 07](#) “ Good day to all vets from 12 CAR. The second troop of C sqn is just back from a very hazardous mission in the Taliban country. For almost three days we fought our way trough check point 3 (abandoned by ANP the afghan police) close to Zanghabad Ghar in Panjaway district. The plan was to put 32C up front with his plow and scrapped the road followed by a Badger (engineers) and a section of field engineers dismount to clear the road. My call sign was following and the OC of India 3 was behind me. After one hour of advance, 32C came under contact in the front with small arms and RPG’s from 200m. The terrain is very closed with wine fields or marijuana (10 foot high...) surrounded by mud walls as high as the turret. As tankers, that kind of terrain is not to good and we are always afraid of close combat. But we manage to put a LAV III with infantry section behind each tanks. So almost at the same time of the contact up front, the LAV behind me blew up on a mine followed by a good minute of small arms around us. Piss off, I decided to destroy the mud wall to my left in order to see a possible enemy but we only saw wine field and the enemy remained a ghost. After the dust from the explosion, we hook up the LAV who had lost 3 wheels but no casualties and towed it in a safer place. 32C received a direct RPG hit on the mantelet and the blast blew his primary sight. He fought back with his secondary sight and manage to destroy the RPG team. 30 minutes later, we were near the village and the check point when we came under contact from the left side. At this point, we had one coy from ANA (Afghan Army) dismount and they manage to flank the enemy who was hiding in a grape drying hut. 32C was doing a fire base and I manage to position my tank to cover arc in the village while everybody was concentrating on the flank. 32A at the back received small arms shots but had no direct fight. While doing the flanking, my gunner saw a men hiding behind a wall at 600m in the village and as I

was getting down to confirm the target, we saw an RPG on his shoulder and I ordered to fire. At the same time, he fired at us and missed my tank. Everything became dust and dark for a minute and after we saw an other Taliban crawling behind the first one who was probably injured and we fired an other HESH 105mm round at him. Everything goes so fast and drills works. After that, no more movement. After that, a UAV (fighting plane without a pilot and guided with a camera and a thermal sight) saw more Taliban's in a compound in the village. So our Arty FOO called a F-16 and he did a close air attack with 20mm gun marked by a smoke from 32C. We continued to advance and ANA with our infantry cleared all the village. We established an overwatch on the north and started to do our routine. We found a little spot inside a compound all destroyed by RPG and 82mm recoilless canon to rest and tried to sleep. Tankers don't like to sleep far from their horses so we didn't sleep well. The enemy harassed us with mortar and small ambush from the south (one of them was 50m only) and shot one RPG. But we manage to destroy the threat as the infantry was clearing and fighting in close ground. After 2 hours, we had a good 360 degree defence with LAV III and tanks, so the echelon arrived and gave us resupply and engineers started to build the check point. After 96 hours, the troop was RIP by 3 troop and we came back to our FOB (forward observation base at 40km out of Kandahar) Massum Ghar and became the battle group QRF (quick reaction force) and started maintenance because the old Leo 1 suffered a lot from these hits. 32C is now repairing his sight to be fitted as soon as possible. 32B is doing a range today to zeroing his new LEO 2 who just arrived a week ago. So we are busy a lot and no operations are made without tanks anymore. Those battles are not as big as Stalingrad or Op Overlord like you did but they are very intense and unpredictable due to the terrain and complexity to ID the enemy and separate the civilians. After that fight, we saw people coming back in their homes and start to breath a little bit and they were very happy to see us after months of tyranny and fear from the Taliban's. Always happy to see children playing again on their ground. That's why we do it...isn't it?

Excuse for my bad English writing. ADSUM

Capt Pascal Croteau – Troop leader 32

P.S. The names Commander, Cyclops, Cobalt and Commanche are not on the tanks yet because we wait to receive the new one before painting it on the gun. They should be all on the Leo's 2 by Xmas.”

If you wish to write to Capt Pascal Croteau, here is the mailing address (no stamps needed in Canada):

Captain CROTEAU P, C30 927 957

C sqn LDSH (RC) 2 tp

Op Archer, roto 4

PO Box 5058, stn Forces

Belleville, ON K8N 5W6

Canada

Here are the names that are part of troop 32 – if you wish to write them also, via Capt Pascal Croteau = Adjutant Yves CURADEAU; Sergeant Dave MALENFANT; Corporal/Chef Patrick LEPAGE; Corporal Christian DESFOSSÉS; Corporal Étienne TURCOTTE; Corporal Éric GAUTHIER; Corporal Guillaume POIRIER; Corporal Éric LEDUC; Corporal Christian MICHAUD; Corporal Marc MURPHY; Trooper Alex GOSSELIN; Trooper

Yannick ROCH; Trooper Patrick LAVOIE; Trooper Laurent PROULX; and Trooper Médéric BÉLANGER.

We have *LOST TRAIL* of the following veterans: R.V. Osborne; C.D. Stacey and W. Young – if anyone knows their new address, please let me know. Their names will be posted in the Legion Magazine.

Last August, Lieutenant Colonel Chevrette headed a delegation to visit the *Battle of Ortona Museum* – he was well received – at the same time he unveiled the mannequin “BRAD” who now wears William McLellan uniform – the 12th CAR is now well represented in the Italy Museum – the Sherman tank *ATHENA* and Bill McLennan uniform – patches and all. Many thanks to Edmund ‘Tojo’ Griffiths for all that he has done to make these projects come true, as well as the Museum organiser Mrs Angela Arnone – we must not forget also Mr McLellan who came down from California to donate his uniform.

If you wish to consult the Regimental Web Sites on the Internet – two are now available : the 12e RBC Association – <http://www.12rbc.ca> – click on the link “12th CAR” ; the 12e RBC – Trois-Rivières Web Site (new) http://www.armee.gc.ca/12rbc_milice/ - choose the language – then go on the left and choose your link – many photos and short comments.

Please let us know if you change address – both Regiments want to keep you inform and the only way is to know where you are – let us know if you have any comments to add – all will be pleased to hear from you – it’s always a pleasure to read you ALL!! ADSUM

Your Liaison Officer

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NEWS FROM THE BATTLE OF ORTONA MUSEUM

Email from *Angela Arnone* to “*Tojo*” dated *September 15th*

“Dear Ted – Please find attached a document containing four views of the tank with its plaque, and the new location. I wanted you to see where it is so you can get an idea of what the original plan entailed. The urban planning office wanted to create a garden around it, with a raised artistic base, benches and flowerbeds. The cost would, of course be significant – I heard them mention 20,000 euros. At the moment the town has no budget (for anything) because of the political debacle at the end of last year, and the council officers are now having their first meetings to discuss how to proceed on all fronts. As there is a group of Canadians here this week we will be having attention drawn to the tank again so I will talk to Reno and the Mayor to see what the urban planning office thinks it can do.....” Angela Email ends “The gardens are going to have to materialize because what was Ortona’s only park was dug up to make an underground car park and the townsfolk want somewhere to replace it, so the entire area is going to be landscaped. – Angela”.

NEWS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear TRR Vets

Another year behind us and our ranks are getting thinner.

For this reason, and after much consultations, we decided to put forward the resolution passed on October 21st, 2006 in Trois-Rivières, Qué – during this reunion is was agreed to take the necessary steps to close down “*The Three Rivers Veterans Association*” and join the existing “Association du 12e Régiment blindé du Canada – TROIS-RIVIÈRES BRANCH”.

The Trois-Rivières Branch of the Association has agreed to continue to keep inform all of the 12th CAR Vets – organize reunions – and above all make sure that all of us be remembered as well as our great history , FOR EVER.

For some time this is being done by the Trois-Rivières Unit and they assure it will continue.

On November 11th, 2007 – after the Remembrance Parade, the Veterans Association members present, will sign the official papers.

Please continue to support the 12th CAR through the Association du 12e RBC – Trois-Rivières Branch – will keep you inform as soon as all legal matters have been put through.

ADSUM

Vernon Dowie

PHOTOS

- (1) POSTER THAT COULD BE SEEN AT THIS SUMMER EXHIBITION
- (2) Tp 32 IN GERMANY POSING IN FRONT OF A LEOPARD 2
- (3) LOGO OF Tp 32
- (4) SUMMER EXHIBIT SEEN FROM UPSTARIS
- (5) MRS MARIE CARON HAVING A CHAT WITH MR WILLIAM STEWARD
- (6) SHERMAN “ATHENA” NEW LOCATION IN ORTONA – ITALY
- (7) “SUPPORT OUR TROOPS” LOGO ON ONE OF THE TOWERS
- (8) INNAUGURATION OF THIS SUMMER EXHIBITION
- (9) NEW LEOPARD 2 TANK NOW BEING USED IN AFGHANISTAN BY Tp 32
- (10) DONORS PLAQUE WELDED ON “ATHENA”
- (11) Tp 32 – IN GERMANY
- (12) 12th CAR VETS POSES WITH MEMBERS OF Tp 32 & RESERVITS OF THE TROIS-RIVIÈRES REGION
- (13) MR EDMUND GRIFFITHS PROJECT ILLUSTRATED IN AMIEN SALON
- (14) Tp OF “APOLLO” POSING – YESTERYEARS PHOTO
- (15) MR VERNON DOWIE HAVING HIS SAY WITH CAPT CROTEAU (16) MR WILLIAM McLENNAN UNIFORM IN ORTONA MUSEUM
- (17) SELF PORTRAIT PAINTING OF MR. W. STEWARD
- (18) CAPT PASCAL CROTEAU PROUDLY POSES IN FRONT OF A LEOPARD