



# WEBNEWS

This Week's News From [www.rclbr50.ca](http://www.rclbr50.ca)



Ontario : Branch 50 - FRED GIES, Kitchener. 🇨🇦

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## Government of Canada Announces Funding for Cenotaph and Memorial Restoration Projects Across Canada



This week Veterans Affairs Canada announced funding for Cenotaph and Memorial Restoration projects in five cities across Canada. Chéticamp, NS, Kelowna, B.C., Trail, BC, Perth, ON, Minden, ON.

The Cenotaph/Monument Restoration Program helps communities across Canada to preserve the memory of those who have served our country. Through partnerships with community groups and local organizations, the cenotaphs and monuments honouring Veterans, war dead and significant events, are maintained with the standard of care and dignity that they deserve.

To learn more about the project or to apply for funding, call 1-877-604-8489 or visit [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

Sunday, December 02, 2007  
Trevor German, Webmaster  
Section: Veterans

## Early Bird Winners



Congratulations to this year's membership early bird winners, George Waechter, Brian Norris and Shirley Myer.

For those that have not renewed their membership yet, please be reminded

that the end of the month deadline is fast approaching.

Monday, December 03, 2007  
Membership  
Section: Membership

## Canada's new Leopards leap into Afghan theatre



Leopard C2  
main battle tank  
(medium MEXAS  
armour upgrade)

The boom that comes from a Leopard tank firing is a bone-shaking, deafening noise that can rattle even the most experienced soldiers if they aren't expecting it.

On Sunday, Canada's newest shipment of tanks, received this week, was tested against a craggy Afghan mountain in the desert west of Kandahar city. The new Leopard 2A6M created tidy, plate-shaped holes in paper targets, hitting bull's eyes from 500 metres.

Less accurately, they can fire at targets as far away as four kilometres.

"It's probably the most modern battle tank today in the world," said Maj. Trevor Gosselin, the officer in command of C Squadron, the battle group's tank squadron.

The test results led to yelps of delight and high-fives from tank crews as they worked through a cold wind. The new tanks are bigger, offer greater protection from bombs and landmines, and break down less often than the old Leopards -- which have no air-conditioning and are still in use in Afghanistan even after three decades of service.

"It's big, it's strong, it's aggressive and it's noisy," said Sgt. Dave Malenfant, a tank commander based in Valcartier, Que.

"When you go somewhere you know you have power. It's awesome," Malenfant said. "I'm glad that we bought these tanks. It save lives."

The new tanks are part of a loan of 20 from Germany through an agreement announced in April. Canada is also purchasing up to 100 used tanks from the Netherlands.

The type of war seen in Afghanistan has moved the previously sidelined tanks closer to centre stage. Before Canada became involved in heavy fighting in Afghanistan, tanks had not been used in any major way since the Korean War.

When Gen. Rick Hillier was still army commander in 2003, he said the Leopards were a "less relevant platform for the kinds of missions that we now undertake" and vowed to build Canada's future combat capability around a mobile gun system, according to Esprit de Corps, a Canadian military magazine.

Now chief of defence staff, Hillier says tanks are necessary and save lives.

"Tank use was on the decline because we didn't envision we'd need that capability," Gosselin said in Kandahar.

Last year's major battles in the Panjwaii district -- including Operation Medusa -- made it clear that tanks are required alongside infantry, engineers and artillery forces, Gosselin said.

"It took battles last summer for the realization to sink in that we needed armoured mobility and armoured machinery to deliver our infantry."

On the same day soldiers tested the powerful Leopard 2A6M tanks, a need for strong Canadian firepower was shown with another rocket attack aimed at the forward operating base in Panjwaii district.

There have been two rockets lobbed toward the post in the last three days.

No one has been hurt.

Monday, December 03, 2007  
Kelly Cryderman, Calgary Herald  
Section: Afghanistan

## New hope for 'lost Canadians'

OTTAWA -- The federal government has drafted legislation aimed at so-called "lost Canadians" -- tens of thousands of people, including some lifelong residents, whose nationality has been thrown into doubt by archaic citizenship laws.

"The government is ready to come out with concrete proposals to rectify [the problem]," says Joe Taylor, the son of a Canadian D-Day veteran, who, for

the past six years, has fought to regain the citizenship he lost several decades ago.

"I'm the son of a Canadian soldier who risked his life fighting for the country. And for Canada to not welcome the wives and children of those soldiers as citizens is disgusting," he says.

Taylor is one of many people, born outside the country, who learned in recent years that they are not citizens because of a series of obscure and discriminatory clauses in citizenship laws dating back to 1947.

In some cases, the prevailing law requires Canadians born outside the country -- the brides or the children of war veterans, or babies born in U.S. hospitals close to the Canadian border -- to actively reaffirm their citizenship after a certain period in order to keep it.

Many knew nothing of this.

In other cases, the law denies citizenship to children who were the second generation in a Canadian family born outside the country. In still other cases, children born out of wedlock to Canadian fathers and foreign mothers were denied.

The government says about 700 people have applied to have their citizenship restored, but a CBC investigation put the number of "lost Canadians" at 200,000.

Taylor was born to an English mother whose father was shipped to France to take part in the D-Day invasion.

His parents married several months later and, after the war, he and his mother moved to B.C. to join his father. They were declared citizens upon arrival.

He returned to England with his mother, but when he tried to move to Canada, he found he was no longer a citizen.

Monday, December 03, 2007  
Richard Foot, CanWest News Service  
Section: Veterans

## Did you hear, By Guylaine Chaine

BOOM, BOOM the war has begun,  
Say goodbye to your only son.

BOOM, BOOM the soldiers strikes,  
Fighting for their people's rights.

BOOM, BOOM the war is done,  
No more smiles from your son.

SHH, SHH the soldiers sleep,  
No one dares, but to weep.

SHH, SHH a child cries,  
To see his father where he lies.

SHH, SHH hear the peace,  
All of our fears are now released.

Guyline Chaîné is the 13-year-old,  
daughter of a CF member. She is  
proud of him and all the members in  
the CF.

She e-mails that she has composed  
this poem from her heart in honour of  
all soldiers from the past, present and  
future.

Monday, December 03, 2007  
Guyline Chaîne, Maple Leaf 10-37  
Section: Veterans

## 2007 Poppy Campaign Results



Thank you to all of Branch 50's  
members who supported the 2007  
Poppy Campaign, which benefits our  
veterans. The total raised by Branch  
50 this year is \$38,500.09, as of  
today's final receipts.

Tuesday, December 04, 2007  
Michael Fenton, Poppy Chairman  
Section: Poppy Campaign

## Write to the Troops But No Packages Please



OTTAWA -- Canadians have indicated  
a desire to do something for Canadian  
Forces members deployed on  
missions around the world. This  
outpouring of support and generosity  
is very much appreciated. Canadians  
should take note, however, that the  
CF re-supply system cannot handle

care packages addressed to "Any CF  
member" for a variety of reasons,  
including security and volume.

Postcards and letters addressed to  
"Any CF member" are acceptable but,  
unfortunately, parcels cannot be  
delivered and will be returned to  
sender. A list of mailing addresses as  
well as detailed postal information for  
CF operations is available on the <http://www.forces.gc.ca> website.

Family and friends of deployed military  
personnel are invited to explore the  
<http://www.canadapost.ca> website to  
learn about their program of postage-  
free mailings to deployed military  
members.

One way in which Canadians can  
express their support is by e-mail  
messages on the forces web site <http://www.forces.gc.ca>. The "Write to the  
troops" message board is one of the  
preferred methods to show support.

For a variety of other ways to show  
support to the troops, visit the  
Canadian Forces Personnel Support  
Agency's website at <http://www.cfpsa.com/supportoutroops>.

Wednesday, December 05, 2007  
DND/CF News  
Section: Afghanistan

## Wounded soldier gets back in his tank



*Webmasters Comment: We are  
reminded of those that paid the  
ultimate cost over there, but as the  
holiday season approaches, let us  
also remember the cost of the  
physically and mentally wounded.*

### Return to Afghanistan 'was about not leaving my buddies behind'

As Trooper Bryan Vallee was being  
flown away on a helicopter, just a half  
hour after being injured by a bomb

explosion that damaged his Leopard 1  
tank and lifted the floor beneath his  
feet, he decided to come back to the  
Afghan countryside as soon as  
possible.

Pulling Vallee, 22, back to the  
dangerous district he had just left was  
the thought of unaccomplished work,  
and the sense of "brotherhood" the  
Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal  
Canadians) tank gunner shared with  
his fellow soldiers.

"I thought, 'I gotta stay here some  
more and do my job,' " Vallee said,  
standing beside his tank on a recent  
cold, windy day. "It was about not  
leaving my buddies behind. I had been  
here for only three weeks and then,  
'Hey, I get to go home.' All the others,  
they have to spend the whole six  
months here -- maybe not getting  
injured -- but still it wouldn't be fair."

Several weeks later, on leave back at  
his base in Edmonton with his  
fractured foot still healing, he found  
the idea of returning to Afghanistan  
much more difficult.

"You get second thoughts with  
everything that happens at home and  
stuff that happens here," Vallee said.  
"You don't really want to leave  
everybody. And there my wife is, all  
alone. She doesn't have any family in  
Edmonton because she's from  
Quebec too."

In addition to the 73 soldiers who have  
died during the mission in  
Afghanistan, hundreds of men and  
women have been injured. Many of  
those choose to go -- or are sent --  
back to work after having already  
experienced the sting of an injury,  
great or small. In this theatre, most  
injuries come from the force of an  
improvised explosive device blast.

Even if soldiers don't have serious  
wounds, or heal well enough to return  
to service, it can still be a mental  
ordeal to go back to the desert after  
their vehicle has been blown apart.

"Their biggest challenge is to fight  
their fear," said Capt. Bernard  
Couillard, a doctor in the company of  
health professionals who treat  
Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

"They see their mission with a different  
perspective afterwards. They knew it  
was dangerous. Now they've

experienced that and they're more fearful of it."

The personnel who deal with the injured say there is a gamut of issues soldiers must deal with after being attacked, but most want to go back.

"I would say that most of them, they do understand it's their job. It's like firemen, they fight fire. And they do understand that firemen do sometimes get burned."

Lt. (Navy) Lyn Kingsley, a social work officer, said soldiers do not want to abandon their friends and co-workers to difficult circumstances and extra work. And Kandahar is the kind of place when soldiers' peers are their best therapists, she said.

"That's their family here," Kingsley said. "It's so much less isolating when they can allow themselves to say, 'I feel fear.'"

Worrisome to the doctors and mental health professionals is when the fallout continues. If nightmares, loss of appetite or flashbacks go on for weeks or months, they may recommend that the soldier be sent home for more specialized treatment.

Couillard said it is the military's priority to get the soldiers back to work as quickly as possible. Although the chain of command has generally listened to the doctors' recommendations, he said it can be a tricky balance.

"That's what is difficult in our position because we're working for both the military and the patient, and we're always stuck in between the two," he said. "I always fear that they will see me as the military doctor who works for the battle group."

Couillard tells injured soldiers, " 'Yes, I have a responsibility to preserve the operational force, but I have the responsibility to preserve your health. And I will never preserve the operational force at the expense of your health.' "

As for Vallee, even with his concerns about returning to his work at a forward operating base near Bazar-e-Panjwahi in volatile Panjwahi district, he had already told the Canadian Forces he would come back.

Shortly after he returned to

Afghanistan, he had to travel down the same stretch of road where his tank hit the IED.

"It was the same manoeuvre and everything. I was a bit nervous. But I guess you've got other things to think about. I've got to scan my yards to make sure nothing sneaks up on us."

Vallee has now been back at work for five weeks -- sometimes still in pain, sometimes showing a slight limp.

"I have mixed feelings. But at least we've got the new tank now and I'm much more confident in that than the old piece of s---," he said, referring to the replacement of the old Leopards with Leopard 2A6Ms.

"Life throws IEDs at you, I guess."

kcryderman@theherald.canwest.com

Wednesday, December 05, 2007  
 Kelly Cryderman, Calgary Herald  
 Section: Afghanistan

### The Queen's Own loses a Proud Old Soldier



**WINNIPEG: Norm Van Tassel loses bout with cancer after spending long, rewarding life in service to Canada and to his Veteran comrades.**

Veterans activist Norm Van Tassel died in the hospital on Monday afternoon, December 3.

Norm was undergoing emergency surgery performed after he was

operated on for cancer of the pancreas in the morning.

The proud old soldier wrote to Korea Vet News a few weeks ago regarding the "Turn Toward Busan" November 11 Memorial Day service. He had arranged for a Winnipeg radio station to read verbatim a long message of commendation for all Korean War Veterans all over the world that had been prepared by Kim Jung-bok, Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

At the end of his message, Norm confided that he had been diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas and would have to undergo surgery. It was almost as a post script.

Norm kept up his contacts with Veterans in many activities right through until he went into the Winnipeg hospital.

A few weeks before his death Norm and his wife Lynne visited sick and ailing veterans in the Poseidon Care Centre in Winnipeg. Here is what Norm wrote at that time:

*One of the sad things that we have not been doing is ensuring we visit those that are hospitalized and are in care. .... a few .. of our Korea Veterans who have had serious strokes over the past couple of years ... are starving to hear from their old comrades.*

Here are some highlights from the devoted Rifleman's life:

Born, Digby, Nova Scotia, December 18, 1934.

Left school at age 16 to become an Atlantic fisherman.

Left Digby in 1952 and joined the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Rifle Regiment in Toronto, Ontario.

Sailed for Korea in 1954 as a wireless operator with the advance party for the battalion which had been rebadged as the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

Served in the Canadian Army for 10 years.

Norm worked in corrections following his discharge, including a period devoted to youth corrections.

He subsequently founded and operated three group homes for troubled youths in Winnipeg and a

wilderness boys camp.

As a member of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping, the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Association he carried the torch for fellow Veterans always.

He served as president of Unit 17 of KVA Canada for three terms and later founded the Sergeant Tommy Prince Memorial Unit 46 of the KVA in Winnipeg. Mister Van Tassel also was founder and president of the LGen R.R. Crabbe Chapter of CAVUNP in Winnipeg. He also helped to found CAVUNP units in Brandon and Regina in Manitoba and in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Among his many notable achievements was his unswerving dedication to honour those who fell in the Korean War and on post armistice duty in Korea. He chaired a committee that successfully lobbied to have lakes and other geographic features in Manitoba named after the 37 Manitobans who lost their lives in Korea and 17 members of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery who were killed enroute to the Fort Lewis debarkation station in November, 1950.

He tirelessly pursued Veterans causes and kept alive the memory of all who served and of Canada's obligation never to forget them.

His accomplishments could fill pages and still not tell the story.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Star by the Korea Veterans Association of Canada, that organization's highest honour. He also was presented with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in recognition of his outstanding service to Canadian Veterans organizations and causes. He received the Veterans Affairs Minister's Commendation Award for the same high service.

Here is how soldier poet, Billy Willbond, MSM chose to remember him:

I write this through tears as he was an old and very good friend! Norm did so much for the Veterans' Movement in

Canada and he was a tower of strength through the long years we fought for the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal and the placing of the names of our fallen in the 7th book of remembrance. In Manitoba he was the mover and shaker to get recognition for Canadian veterans from the Korean War to Missions served in by Canadian Peacekeepers. He will be sorely missed by veterans all across this Great Nation! At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember Norm – He will be sorely missed, indeed.

*A Farewell to Norm, By Billy Willbond*

*I just heard some very un-nerving sad sad news this morn*

*About the passing of a good friend whom we all know as Norm*

*Norm was a veterans' advocate – he lived in the Peg*

*For veterans' rights and recognitions from Ottawa he'd beg!*

*He named peacekeeper lakes, built monuments and more*

*He advocated for recognition for the forgotten Korean War*

*Norm stepped on some toes but he did make his mark*

*He made sure Ottawa's bureaucrats didn't keep us in the dark*

*Norm's up on that cloud square now he has fought the good battle*

*Don't rest easy in Ottawa- don't think there' won't be more hassle*

*Norm's friends will continue to shake the bureaucratic rattle*

*Farewell my old friend, Rifleman Norman Van Tassel*

*William Willbond Canadian Soldier Poet*

*Saanichton BC 0900 hrs Tuesday 04 December 2007*

*RIP buddy*

Wednesday, December 05, 2007  
 Billy Willbond, Korean War Commemoration  
 Council of Canada  
 Section: Veterans

## Morag Thompson In Hospital



We are sorry to announce that Morag Thompson has been admitted to St. Mary's Hospital with pneumonia. She is currently in room 608.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you Morag!

Get well soon!

Thursday, December 06, 2007  
 Vivian Pedle, Sick and Visiting  
 Section: Sick and Visiting

## Evelyn Lobsinger is in Grand River Hospital



We are sorry to announce that Evelyn is now in Grand River Hospital.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you Evelyn.

Thursday, December 06, 2007  
 Vivian Peddle, Sick and Visiting  
 Section: Sick and Visiting

## Sue McQuabbie Suffers Work Injury



For those of you who have not already seen Sue hobbling around on her crutches, we can tell you that she had a little accident at work and unfortunately managed to break her ankle.

We will not discuss the details of the

accident here, but if you happen to receive a Christmas gift with a few toenails imbedded in the packaging please be understanding.

Keep smiling and laughing Sue.

Thursday, December 06, 2007  
Sick and Visiting  
Section: Sick and Visiting

**Murray Baker's wife**



Murray Baker's wife Wendy had knee surgery in mid November. She is recuperating at the home of her daughter and son in law Jeff and Tanya Posliff.

Thursday, December 06, 2007  
Vivian Peddle, sick and visiting  
Section: Sick and Visiting

**Government of Canada Supports Battle of Hong Kong Educational Materials**



Etobicoke, ON - The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, announced today on behalf of the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, a contribution of up to \$23,000 to the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, Ontario Region. The funds, provided through Veterans Affairs Canada's Community Engagement Partnership Fund, will support the development of educational tools about the Battle of Hong Kong.

"The Battle of Hong Kong is a story of struggle, sacrifice, and bravery," said Minister Thompson. "It is our responsibility to ensure that future generations know this story, and these learning tools will help make sure this happens."

A multimedia presentation will be designed to support volunteers and members of the organization as they present the Battle of Hong Kong story

to high school students and other groups across the country. To complement the multimedia presentation, is the development of a "seminar in a box," a tool designed to engage educators to use the presentation in their classrooms.

"These educational tools are beneficial resources that actively engage high school students and the public in remembrance," said Minister Flaherty. "On this 66th anniversary of the Invasion of Hong Kong, the Government of Canada is honoured to support the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association's mission to promote remembrance in the Greater Toronto Area and across Canada."

The Community Engagement Partnership Fund provides funding to non-profit groups, educational institutions and other organizations delivering remembrance activities and events. Administered through Veterans Affairs Canada's "Canada Remembers" program, contributions are made throughout the year and encompass both national and community-based projects.

Friday, December 07, 2007  
Veteran Affairs Canada  
Section: Veterans

**Branch 50 Bowling Team Takes 2nd Place in Zone Tournament**



RCL Branch 530 of Waterloo, hosted the Zone 5 Pin Bowling Tournament today.

The Branch 50 Team was comprised of the following bowlers:

- Gary Prosper,
- Terry Churchill,
- Mike Atkinson,
- Mitch Pape,
- Kevin Joseph, and
- David Phipps.

The Branch #121 team placed first, with the host Branch #530, coming in

third. All three teams will now advance to the District "C" 5 Pin Bowling Tournament scheduled for Saturday, March 1, 2008, which is being hosted by RCL Fred Gies Branch #50, Kitchener, at Victoria Bowl.

Great job comrades!

Saturday, December 08, 2007  
Kevin Klein, Team Captain  
Section: Sports

**Children's Party a Success**



Today the branch was overwhelmed with little people, most of them children. This years children's Christmas party was busier then ever as the children and grandchildren of our members were treated to a happy and exciting time.

Many of the children enjoyed singing with an assortment of songs provided by Randy Kuhn, burgers and hotdogs were consumed and of course it was a delight to see the little eyes light up as Santa arrived and distributed splendid gifts to all.

Thanks to all that participated by contributing their time and loose change to make this years event the best ever.

Saturday, December 08, 2007  
Trevor German, Webmaster  
Section: Entertainment