



# WEBNEWS

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



Ontario : Branch 50 - FRED GIES, Kitchener. 🍁

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## In-House Pool League Standings



The current standings for Branch 50's In-House Pool League as of Monday, January 14, 2008 are:

For the Men:

Peter W. in 1st place with 41 points, Mike in 2nd place with 40 points, and Nick in 3rd with 34 points.

For the Ladies:

Bev in 1st place with 33 points, Mary in 2nd with 29 points, and Gloria in 3rd with 28 points.

Don't forget to sign up for our monthly mixed pool tournaments, which will be held on the last Saturday of every month.

Monday, January 14, 2008  
Jerry Prince, Sports Officer  
Section: Sports

## Scientists create beating animal heart in lab



**Breakthrough could one day lead to growing of organs for transplant**

TORONTO

Researchers have brought a dead animal heart back to life in the lab by repopulating it with healthy cells, a feat they believe may someday allow

them to grow new hearts and other organs for people desperate for transplants.

In a paper published online yesterday in Nature Medicine, researchers at the University of Minnesota describe the process of revitalizing the heart of a euthanized laboratory rat, which begins with washing out the interior cells to leave just the outer shell of the organ.

The scientists then injected the empty sac with heart cells from newborn rats. Within days, the cells had multiplied to flesh out the heart, which began beating on its own.

"We've taken organs from cadavers, removed all the cells, put cells back in and been able to reanimate what was previously a dead organ," said molecular biologist Doris Taylor, director of the Center for Cardiovascular Repair at the University of Minnesota.

"What that means, we hope, is that one day if you need a new organ we'll be able to take your cells, transplant them into this framework or scaffold and build you an organ that works for you," she said from Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Taylor's team has created these "bioartificial" organs with hearts from dozens of rats and close to a dozen pigs, using a special detergent to destroy and clear out the dead cells, while leaving the outer structure intact.

What surprised and delighted the researchers was what happened once they injected the baby rat cells into the empty sac of the heart.

"The cells began to reorganize in the wall of that heart," she said. "The ones that were going to make blood vessels moved to the spot where the blood vessels had been and relined the blood vessels, and the ones that were going to make muscle lined up in the wall and started to make new muscle."

"And what it says is a couple of things. It says that this scaffold has a lot more information than we thought and that the cells know how to respond to that in some way."

Co-investigator Dr. Harald Ott, a former research associate at the Minnesota cardiovascular repair

centre who is now at Massachusetts General Hospital, said the research team used "nature's own building blocks to build a new organ."

"When we saw the first contractions, we were speechless."

Dr. Marc Ruel, director of cardiac surgery lab research at the Heart Institute at the University of Ottawa, called the work a "really important breakthrough."

"I think it's the first proof of principle that we can actually get the stem cells to become functional contractile cardiac cells that will actually generate a blood pressure," said Ruel, who was not involved in the research.

But he cautioned there are still many obstacles to overcome before the technique could be applied to humans.

Monday, January 14, 2008  
The Canadian Press  
Section: Miscellaneous

### Branch 50 vs Preston 126 Ladies Pool Tournament Results



We had a great turnout on Saturday, January 12, 2008, for the re-match of the Branch 50 Ladies vs the Preston Ladies. The final standings were:

Mary German & Janice Goldbeck in First Place, Kathy & Ginny Polai in Second, with Bev Waters & Darlene in Third. All winning teams were from Branch 50 this year. A fun time was had by all and we look forward to another challenge between these two teams in the months ahead.

A special thank you to Judy Littlefield for arranging and running the tournament, as well as for arranging the lunch with Marj Gardiner.

Thanks to the ladies who participated, and the members who came out to cheer them on.

Tuesday, January 15, 2008  
Jerry Prince, Sports Officer  
Section: Sports

### New Seniors Chairman Acclaimed



On Sunday, January 13th, 2008, the Seniors called for nominations to fill the vacant position of Chairman. Pat Wyman, Zone 'C2' Seniors Officer, presided over the meeting as Acting Chairman. Jean Davidson was the only nominee for the vacant position resulting in her becoming the new Chairman by acclamation. Jean is currently Honours & Awards Chairman on the Branch 50 Executive-At-Large. Congratulations Jean, I'm sure you will do a great job?

Tuesday, January 15, 2008  
Gloria McKibbin, PRO  
Section: Seniors

### Canadian Soldier Killed - One Other Wounded in Afghanistan



OTTAWA –At approximately 7:15 a.m. local time (in Kandahar) on January 15th, one Canadian soldier was killed when the armoured vehicle he was in struck a suspected Improvised Explosive Device (IED). One Canadian soldier was also injured.

The identity of the deceased soldier is Trooper Richard Renaud, 26 years old, of the 12e Régiment blindé du Canada based in Valcartier, Québec.

The incident occurred during a

presence patrol in the Arghandab District, approximately 10 km North of Kandahar city. The injured soldier was evacuated to the Multinational Medical Unit at Kandahar Airfield. The injured soldier is in good condition, has notified his family and is expected to be released from the hospital shortly.

The thoughts and prayers of the men and women of the Canadian Forces go out to the family and friends of Trooper Renaud.

From THE STAR

MONTREAL, ALMA, QUE. -- He was new to his regiment, a young man on his first overseas mission who was expecting his first child.

Nevertheless, when Trooper Richard Renaud left for Afghanistan, he was taking on one of the more challenging tasks among the 2,500 Canadian troops stationed in the country's volatile south.

Trooper Renaud, who died yesterday morning when a makeshift mine struck his Coyote vehicle, was a member of his armoured regiment's reconnaissance squadron.

His unit, 12e Régiment blindé du Canada, is the armoured wing of the land forces at CFB Valcartier, Que.

As a Coyote driver, Trooper Renaud was on a squadron that repeatedly went on scouting missions "outside the wire," beyond the relative safety of the Kandahar airfield.

The reconnaissance squadron acts as the eyes and ears of the Canadian military, probing hostile areas in their lightly armoured vehicles.

Trooper Renaud died while the squadron was on patrol north of Kandahar city.

The 26-year-old grew up in Alma, a small industrial town 220 kilometres north of Quebec City.

He was recently married and his wife is expecting a child, according to Alma residents close to the family. He also leaves behind a four-year-old stepson, along with his father, mother and sister.

His mother, Johanne Tremblay, was reported to be devastated by the loss of her only son. "Richard left us doing

something he loved. We will miss him dearly," Trooper Renaud's family said in a statement last night.

Ms. Tremblay works as a cook in a well known local tavern founded by former Montreal Canadiens hockey star Mario Tremblay (no relation). The mood there was grim last night.

"We are about 40 employees here and a number of them have a member of their family in the army. We never think it will happen to us and the next thing you know someone close to us loses a family member. It's hard on the families," said one waitress.

Military personnel from nearby CFB Bagotville met with the soldier's grieving parents yesterday. "Of course it's never easy to get news like this," said Lieutenant Alexandre Munoz, who spoke to Trooper Renaud's parents. "It's time for them to absorb the news and to let them breathe."

Trooper Renaud enrolled in October of 2004. At the time, it had been three years since the Canadian military had been in Afghanistan and seven Canadian soldiers had died, but it would be another year before the army redeployed to the more dangerous areas around Kandahar where it would engage in direct combat with the Taliban.

Trooper Renaud was the 77th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

"I can certify that his life was not given in vain, and that his contribution in Afghanistan made a difference," Colonel Eric Tremblay, head of the 5th Mechanized Brigade, the parent unit of Trooper Renaud's regiment, said in a statement.

"Trooper Renaud made the ultimate sacrifice while working to bring security, democracy and self-reliance to the people of Afghanistan, all the while protecting Canada's values and security," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a statement. "As we mourn the loss of Trooper Renaud we think of his courage, commitment and bravery."

His death came on the same day that visitations were held in Rimouski, Que., for another fallen Valcartier soldier, Corporal Éric Labbé, of the Royal 22nd Regiment, who died two weeks ago in a vehicle accident that

also killed Warrant Officer Hani Massouh.

Tuesday, January 15, 2008  
DND  
Section: Afghanistan

**90th Anniversary: Armistice 1918**



Comrades;

2008 marks the 90th Anniversary of the end of the First World War. In commemoration of this event, the Dominion Command Supply Department has produced three items that mark this historic anniversary. Follow the link below to see a flyer illustrating these items, as well as a number of our most popular "We Support Our Troops" products.

The flyer contains volume discount prices available to branches, as well as the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Prices (MSRP) designed to allow branches to raise funds for your operations.

Check out the flyer and call the order desk toll-free at 1-888-301-2257 for more information or to place an order.

Fraternally,  
Dominion Command Supply  
Department

Wednesday, January 16, 2008  
Dominion Bulletin Board  
Section: RCL

**War Amps Documentary Featuring Calgary Woman Wins Top Award At U.S. Film Festival**



SUBJECT: Accolade Film Festival in La Jolla, California

DATELINE: OTTAWA, January 10, 2008

War Amps CEO Cliff Chadderton has been notified that a War Amps documentary that tells the moving story of a young Alberta woman who

was born missing both arms has won the Award of Excellence at the Accolade Film Festival in La Jolla, California.

Annae's Journey shows how Annae Jones of Calgary, with the assistance of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program, has overcome her amputations to lead a successful life. The 30-minute documentary, produced by Mr. Chadderton, has also received the Special Jury Award at the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival in Houston, Texas, the Gold Award at Chicago's Intercom Festival and the Silver Screen Award at the 2007 U.S. International Film and Video Festival in Hollywood, California.

The documentary has aired in Canada nationally on Discovery Civilization as well as on community channels.

The Accolade Competition honours outstanding achievement in film, television and videography. "The judging standards are high and winning means the craft and creativity exhibited by your film is outstanding and stands above other productions," said Awards Chairperson Thomas Baker in a letter to The War Amps announcing the Award.

Like all War Amps productions, Annae's Journey was produced in-house and funded by corporate donations. It can be purchased at a cost-recovery price of \$11 through E-ZEE ACCESS

Wednesday, January 16, 2008  
The War Amps  
Section: Veterans

### Out of Hospital



We are happy to announce that Bill Weido is now out of hospital and that Ron Cuthbert may be home as early as thursday or friday.

Wednesday, January 16, 2008  
For Vivian Peddle, Sick and Visiting  
Section: Sick and Visiting

### High court won't take up damage claim by disabled vets



OTTAWA - The country's top court has refused to take another look at a multi-billion-dollar damage claim by mentally disabled military veterans who say Ottawa mismanaged their pension benefits.

In a decision released without comment Thursday, the Supreme Court of Canada rejected a request by the vets for permission to argue their case one more time.

The high court had previously ruled, in 2003, that the federal government acted lawfully in passing a 1990 law that barred retroactive compensation to the veterans, most of whom served in the Second World War.

Their lawyers later persuaded an Ontario Superior Court judge that the ruling applied only to accumulated interest, not to other potential damages.

The judge awarded \$4.6 billion in a class-action suit launched on behalf of thousands who suffered mental trauma during their wartime service.

But the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned the award last year in a judgment that left the vets empty-handed.

The latest decision by a three-judge Supreme Court panel may deal a fatal blow to any hope of winning compensation through the courts, although the vets will likely continue a political lobbying campaign to put pressure on the Conservative government to meet their demands

Thursday, January 17, 2008  
THE CANADIAN PRESS  
Section: Veterans

### U.S. criticism riles NATO allies



#### Pentagon steps in to avert diplomatic row over Gates' claim that troops can't handle insurgency

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon rushed yesterday to avert a diplomatic row with Canada and its allies over the quality of NATO forces operating in southern Afghanistan, backing away from sharp criticisms U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates appeared to make about the abilities of allied troops now battling Taliban insurgents.

But even as the Pentagon praised Canadian forces for their performance, U.S. officials also made clear they were concerned about the quality of military training teams that NATO nations, including Canada, have supplied to the Afghan mission.

Canada and its key allies in the volatile south, Britain and the Netherlands, were quick to defend the quality of their training of Afghan forces, before taking Mr. Gates at his word that he was quoted out of context by a U.S. newspaper.

"I'll admit I was a bit taken aback when I saw them," Defence Minister Peter MacKay said of the remarks that moved him to call the Pentagon.

Mr. MacKay received a reply late in the afternoon.

"(Mr. Gates) called me just moments ago and said, 'look everything I said to you yesterday about respect and admiration and appreciation for what Canadian Forces are doing in Afghanistan is true'," Mr. MacKay told reporters.

"He expressed regret and embarrassment about those comments being in any way reflected towards our troops."

Mr. MacKay said he accepted Mr. Gates' explanation that he was quoted "out of context."

In an interview with Canwest News Service, Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said Mr. Gates in no way intended to question the performance of troops from Canada or any other NATO ally.

"He has never criticized the Canadians or any other troop-contributing nation for their performance, their commitment to this vitally important mission in Afghanistan," Mr. Morrell said.

"The secretary has actually gone to great lengths, and has routinely praised troop-contributing nations, particularly the Canadians. He is well aware of the extraordinary sacrifice the Canadian military has made. The losses they have suffered have been tragic. They are significant. He is mindful of them. He appreciates their service, their sacrifice."

The Pentagon's clarification came after Mr. Gates ignited a controversy within NATO with remarks published yesterday from an interview with the Los Angeles Times.

The U.S. defence secretary said he believed forces deployed in southern Afghanistan did not know how to combat a guerrilla insurgency. He also drew contrasts between the success of American troops fighting in eastern Afghanistan and the escalating violence in the country's south.

Mr. Gates did not mention any country by name. Canadian, British and Dutch troops provide the bulk of combat forces in southern Afghanistan.

"Any notion that this criticism was directed at any nation in particular is misguided and misfounded," Mr. Morrell said.

However, Mr. Gates' remarks landed like a thud in NATO capitals and diplomatic missions, and were keenly felt by the British and Dutch.

"We have long experience in counter-insurgency. Gates, for whom we have high regard, is right to be concerned that NATO troops should have the right training. We are confident that ours do," said the British High Commission in Ottawa.

"We can all learn from one another, no doubt. Even more important is that we should work well together."

Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop immediately demanded an explanation from the U.S. Embassy in The Hague and from Pentagon officials in Washington over "the strong criticism about the NATO troops in southern Afghanistan," said Karel de Beer, the Netherlands' ambassador to Canada.

In his interview with the Times, Mr. Gates said "most of the European forces, NATO forces, are not trained in counter-insurgency," but for more conventional battles designed to confront past Soviet threats to western Europe.

"Our (American) guys in the east, under Gen. Rodriguez, are doing a terrific job. They've got the (counter-insurgency) thing down pat," Mr. Gates said. "But I think our allies over there, this is not something they have any experience with."

Mr. Gates' remarks, the Pentagon said, were directed at NATO as a whole and the need for the alliance to adapt to the new reality of fighting insurgent groups.

In particular, Mr. Gates has concerns about the quality of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams, also known as OMLTS, that help train Afghan security forces to fight the Taliban.

About 150 Canadian Forces members, primarily from Land Forces Quebec area, are deployed to Canadian-led Operational Mentor Liaison Teams, according to a Defence Department news release in August.

On Mr. Gates' last trip to Afghanistan, he "heard from commanders that some of the OMLTS that had shown up recently, you know, these operational mentor liaison teams, teams had diminished in quality, that they were not as well trained as some of those that had come before," Mr. Morrell said.

"It has been a herculean task to get OMLTS to Afghanistan as it is. We are still woefully short of what is needed, but we have seen a drop-off in the quality. The whole point there is, the

alliance has not been geared towards this. But we really need to be mindful of making sure that the trainers we are sending to train the Afghans to deal with something that they are going to have to deal with, which is this insurgency, be skilled and proficient in what we are asking them to teach."

Mr. MacKay agreed that the training of Afghan army personnel should focus more on fighting an insurgency. He said Mr. Gates first raised his concerns during last month's meeting in Edinburgh of nations with troops in southern Afghanistan. But Mr. MacKay said Canada is "ahead of the curve" in its training of Afghan soldiers.

"I think we have it right," said Mr. MacKay. "Clearly, we have to prepare ourselves for the changing face of warfare, and counter-insurgency is not something we are just encountering in Afghanistan."

Mr. Gates' remarks caused a flurry of activity in Ottawa, including requests for an explanation from U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins.

Mr. Wilkins released a statement last night in which he praised Canadian troops as "heroes" and said that his country "greatly appreciates the sacrifices Canadian troops and other NATO allies are making in southern Afghanistan," a message that he said is regularly conveyed by President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Mr. Gates.

Retired colonel Mike Capstick, who served as the commander of the Canadian military's Strategic Advisory Team in Afghanistan in 2005-06, said it was the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan after the initial defeat of the Taliban that created the current situation in the south. He noted that the U.S. government decided at the time to leave behind only 100 special forces troops in Helmand province in the south and a small number of regular forces in Kandahar.

"It's absolute total frigging hypocrisy to hear this from a secretary of defence of a country which left less than 500 boots on the ground in Kandahar between 2001 and 2005, creating the vacuum that allowed the current situation to develop," Col. Capstick said.

"There's no other way to describe it."

Thursday, January 17, 2008  
Sheldon Alberts, Mike Blanchfield and David  
Pugliese, The Ottawa Citizen  
Section: Afghanistan

## Calgary reservists to join Afghan mission



As Calgary soldiers prepare to leave one of the city's biggest single military deployments in at least a half-century, Calgarians are being urged to show support for their local soldiers.

There are 115 Calgary soldiers bound for Afghanistan in the coming weeks.

They will join about 2,400 other Canadian soldiers in Kandahar in February.

More than half of this city's deploying soldiers are members of the Calgary Highlanders, a local infantry reserve unit.

"This is the largest Highlanders deployment since the Second World War," said retired lieutenant Barry Agnew, curator of the Calgary Highlanders Museum and Archives.

"History begins today."

The entire city is behind the soldiers, said Mayor Dave Bronconnier.

"It's an important mission."

Calgary soldiers will participate in an official send-off ceremony today and the Calgary Herald is inviting readers to visit [calgaryherald.com](http://calgaryherald.com) to share messages of support.

Thursday, January 17, 2008  
Calgary Herald  
Section: Afghanistan

## Gates sings Canada's praises



### U.S. defence secretary tries to mend fences after criticism of NATO forces in Afghanistan

U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates said yesterday he made a special effort to reassure Canada after he criticized shortcomings in the NATO efforts in Afghanistan in a American newspaper.

"I did reach out to the Canadian defence minister yesterday. They had suffered a loss near Kandahar, I think the day before, and I wanted to make sure they understood our respect for their contribution and how much of an impact they are making," Mr. Gates told a news conference in Washington one day after the Pentagon moved to avert a diplomatic row with its allies after an interview he gave to the Los Angeles Times, which quoted him as being critical of NATO's ability to fight a counterinsurgency.

Mr. Gates praised Canada by name, along with its other major allies for their "valour and sacrifice" in fighting on the front lines of the Taliban insurgency in southern Afghanistan. His list also included Britain, the Netherlands and Denmark.

"The transatlantic alliance is in Afghanistan together," said Mr. Gates.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper also responded to the controversy yesterday, saying the comments made by Mr. Gates should not be misinterpreted.

"Officials from the United States at all levels have always conveyed their appreciation and confidence in Canadian Forces and I've heard that from both military and non-military sources and I believe Secretary Gates conveyed that to Minister MacKay yesterday. So there should be no

misinterpretation of those comments vis à vis Canada," the prime minister told a news conference in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Harper also said the American contribution to the mission in Afghanistan has been "significant" and "we need to see NATO as a whole step up to the plate."

Mr. Gates had already made a round of telephone calls to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, as well as his alliance counterparts -- including Defence Minister Peter MacKay -- on Tuesday to give them advance notice of the Pentagon's attempt to deploy an additional 3,200 marines to the south in a bid to counter the expected spring offensive by the Taliban.

By chance, that was the same day that Canada suffered its 77th military fatality in Afghanistan, so Mr. Gates was also able to offer his condolences.

But once the imbroglio over the Times story erupted Wednesday, Mr. Gates was on the phone again to Mr. MacKay to reassure him that none of his remarks was directed toward Canada.

Mr. MacKay said Mr. Gates told him he had been quoted out of context, but expressed "regret and embarrassment" over the report.

Mr. MacKay said he was originally "taken aback" by the report, but that he accepted Mr. Gates' explanation.

Mr. Gates reiterated that NATO as a whole has had a lot to learn about fighting counterinsurgencies.

He said he has aired his views on NATO's shortcomings in the past, including at the recent gathering in Edinburgh, Scotland, of countries fighting in the south. The U.S. is urging its allies to seek counterinsurgency training in Kabul with American forces, he added.

"We have to acknowledge the reality that the alliance as a whole has not trained for counterinsurgency operations even though individual countries have considerable expertise," he said.

Friday, January 18, 2008  
Mike Blanchfield, The Ottawa Citizen

Section: Afghanistan