

# THE RILEY

Volume 6 Issue 1



Winter 2010

## Late-Breaking News

### CHANGE OF COMMAND DATE ANNOUNCED

Mark **May 16<sup>th</sup>** on your calendar and get your Regimental blazers ready. Our change of command is most likely to be 16 May 2010, probably at Bayfront Park. More to follow soon!

## AFGHANISTAN

Our on-going conflict 10,000 miles away continues unabated. The RHLI, with another sizeable contingent already training to go, will again do us here at home proud yet leave us anxious until their return. We see the news of casualties but our deploying members remain intensely committed to their mission. It's our mission here at home to continue to support them.

A former Riley – now a member of the PPCLI - has been awarded one of our highest honours for valour:

### **Corporal Anthony J. R. Rotondi** Medal of Military Valour

*On May 6, 2008, a Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team patrol was ambushed in the Zharey district of Afghanistan. While exposed to intense enemy fire, Corporal Rotondi assisted two seriously injured fellow soldiers and relentlessly returned fire to allow first aid and casualty evacuation. Corporal Rotondi's bravery and perseverance in the face of a determined enemy were inspirational to those around him and helped save the lives of fellow soldiers.*

As any veteran knows, there is much more to the story than that. Cpl Rotondi – now MCpl - was jammed into a shallow nook in a wall down a narrow alley, and running low on ammunition, returning accurate fire (a Riley characteristic) while at the same time trying to perform first aid. Sadly, one of his compatriots died before the firefight abated enough to allow more extensive aid to arrive. MCpl Rotondi received his decoration from the Governor-General Michaëlle Jean November 13<sup>th</sup> at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Log into:

<http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/index.aspx?lang=eng> for the latest news.



## REGIMENTAL NEWS

With the new year well underway, your Regiment is back into the swing of things. An anticipated budget shortfall was quickly rectified by the chain of command and training plans are being carried out.

Exercises in February and March will pass on winter-living skills to our newer soldiers and refresh them for our longer-serving members. Such basic skills are absolutely essential to our soldiers, even in Afghanistan, where it can get extremely cold and snowy. And, we're Canucks!



## New Honoraries !

Your Regiment is fortunate to have a full complement of Honoraries once again. With the retirement (after 50 years!) of HCol Jim Forsyth, HLCol Herb Doyle stepped up in an acting capacity "pro tem". Now, former RHLI CO and former Commander of 31 Canadian Brigade Group Col Tom Marlor has been confirmed as our new Honorary Colonel, and Mr. Tim Hogarth, CEO of Pioneer Petroleum, is our new Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel.



**HCol Marlor** is well-known to most of us and needs little introduction. He started with the Regular Army but decided to return to his home town of Hamilton as a police officer. He joined the RHLI to continue his military career at the same time, rising to Commanding Officer in June 1989. He was appointed HLCol in March 2003 and retired in December 2004. His appointment as HCol took effect in May 2009.



**HLCol Hogarth** is new to the military, although he has long been acquainted since taking part in a special military Executrek 10 years ago where a group of CEOs were kitted out as recruits for a weekend in Meaford, living in the field and taking part in attacks. He is a strong community supporter personally and through Pioneer Petroleum. He and HCol Marlor were primarily responsible for the "Support Our Troops" Ticat event last summer. He's even been seen around the armoury taking lessons in drill from our Sgt. Chris Brooks and getting his Cadpat field kit into shape, and he is taking an active role in preparing for our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.

"The Riley" is the newsletter of The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Associate Members Group.

It is published on an occasional basis as a benefit of your Associate Membership.

Your contributions are eagerly sought! Contact the Editor at [tim.fletcher@sympatico.ca](mailto:tim.fletcher@sympatico.ca) or at The RHLI Officer's Mess, The HLCol John Weir Foote, vc, cd Armouries, 200 James St North, Hamilton, ON L8R 2L1

# Commendation for our DCO

The terrible tragedy still unfolding in Haiti following their massive earthquake is the latest in a series of natural disasters in that tragic land. Our DCO, **Major Dan Stepaniuk**, was there for six months with the United Nations in distinguished being recognized at a very high level.



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From our CO, LCol Sean McKee. : *“Please join me in congratulating our Deputy Commanding Officer, Major Dan Stepaniuk on being awarded the **CDS Commendation** for his efforts in planning and executing relief efforts in Haiti in 2008 following three hurricanes and the collapse of l-école La Promesse school. Well done Maj Stepaniuk!”*



**Major Stepaniuk** was Plans Operations Officer for **OP MINUSTAH** from June to December 2008. We followed his UN tasking in this newsletter at the time, learning of his role during the severe flooding and then when the girl’s school collapsed outside the capital of Port au Prince. He co-ordinated rescue efforts even to the extent of entering the ruined building looking for survivors, at great risk. He also frequently conducted armed patrols around the island with various UN soldiers contributing to OP MINUSTAH. He describes as one of the poorest nations on earth.

*Maj Stepaniuk takes a break from the frantic rescue efforts at L’ecole Promesse (in background).*

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## M · E · S · S   N · E · W · S

**Well...it’s...the...news...we’ve...all...been...waiting...for!** Your very generous contributions, (and the fund-raising and thriftiness of the Mess committee!) have resulted in a terrific collection of elegant new Mess furniture. The brown-on-brown sofas and chairs have made a huge improvement to the room as the photos show. Made of real and artificial leather (more durable than the old Naugahyde), the elegant items really showcase the new carpets, refinished floors and wall décor.

The items arrived in early January and the old ones were quickly retired after fifty-some-odd years of service. Steps are now underway to renovate the bar room. A new stove, fridge and dishwasher have all been installed in the last couple of months, and in the servery we have a new floor, wiring and lighting.



*Our PMC, Lt John Coomber, with one of the new sofas.*

New paint, tables and chairs are on the menu as soon as we can make it happen. In the Whitaker Room, new drapes and lighting are planned. Again, anything you wish to contribute towards these finishing steps will be most gratefully received. Our Mess is well on the way to its old grandeur and with your help it will be sooner rather than later. **Many thanks!**

## From the History files...

We received an email from the UK wondering about a plaque at Westerleigh School near St. Leonards-by-the-Sea, Hastings, East Sussex, now being demolished. The memorial honours H/Capt John Foote, VC, with the plaque, a framed citation, replica VC, photo, a Chaplain’s Corp badge and of course an RHLI cap badge. Our corres-



pondent, Dave Renno, tells us the new owner of the property managed to save both items.

They were presented on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993 by the Canadian High Commissioner and the local Bishop in front of the entire school. It turns out the RHLI were billeted in and around the school in 1941. The school eventually decided to honour our Padre, got the High Commission involved and up went the plaque. The items now reside in the cottage adjacent to the school as yet another RHLI memorial in foreign lands.

## THE DATE BOOK



**Spring Mess Dinner: 24 April 2010 – book it now!**  
**Change of Command – 16 May 2010**, likely at Bayfront Park (rain: at the armouries)

**Associate Mess Dues - Now Due!**

**2012 marks our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! Watch this space for news as plans are announced!**