

# **The Royal Canadian Legion from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu supports the "Material Assistance Program to Afghanistan"**

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On the last Saturday of October, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, branch 79 Richelieu of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu held a spaghetti supper to the public where all the profits were to be used to support the humanitarian aid programme of our Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. The chief coordinator of the evening was Comrade Pierre Garneau.

## **Many thanks to all the volunteers**

The kitchen staff at Saint-Jean Garrison prepared the spaghetti supper and six of our soldiers who had already served in Afghanistan were our heroes in serving the meals to the public at the tables in their field uniforms. I here want to mention Majors Rhéaume and Héту, Master Warrant Officer Courcy, Warrant Officer Sauvé, Sergeant Archambault, Master Seaman Tanchyk and Master Corporal Darte.

Is there any need to tell you that this team was fully supported in front of the stove by the great chef Andre Marion and his staff of volunteers: Robert Leclerc, Priscilla Marion, Yvon Valley and our military cook Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> class Jacobson. Another team, those who took care of the set-up, the table cleaning before during and after the meal, and I'm talking about the comrades Jean-Paul Bertrand, Maurice Boucher, Pierre (Pete) Gaudreault, Florent Tremblay, Germain Gagnon and Pierre Potvin

## **An unparalleled success**

That night, we served nearly 300 meals! It was a success, thanks to comrade Michel Fecteau and the generosity of many sponsors who were kind enough to support the organization that evening by various donations.

In the same spirit, here are three other examples of generosity which is good to hear about; the bartenders on duty that evening at the branch gave all their tips from the time we started serving our first plate of spaghetti at 4:00 p.m. The day of the fundraising campaign, forty-one soldiers from the "PAT Platoon" of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School (CFLRS) attended the dinner, and in addition, made a donation of over \$200, an amount that they had collected among their group. Finally, the Officer Cadets course 10029F from the CFLRS raised a total of \$400, which was generously donated to the cause of Afghanistan

## **For our soldiers in Afghanistan**

So much generosity inflated the amount of the cheque that we were to hand over. Last year, a similar organization allowed us to donate \$3000 to our soldiers in Afghanistan. We had hoped this year to add another thousand! Well, we ended up with an amount well over that. It is the amount of **\$6090** that we will return to the "*Material Assistance Program to Afghanistan*"; a program completely managed by our soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan.

The next time you are watching a Canadian television news report from our troops in Afghanistan and you see our soldiers distributing schoolbags to children around them in the street, say to yourselves that this beautiful gesture was made possible thanks to a few dollars that you gave to the spaghetti supper and the fundraising campaign held last October 27!

## **Funds to help Afghans**

The "*Material Assistance Program to Afghanistan*" allows our troops deployed to perform various humanitarian actions. But what will our soldiers do with the money we send them? It is already assured that the money will help them respond to local needs such as:

- buying locally pens, notebooks and school bags for young Afghan boys and girls;
- obtain bars of soap to be distributed in the streets;
- join a non-governmental organization for the purchase of educational materials to help blind and deaf children in the Kandahar province. These are "small services" that make our soldiers attract the local people, demonstrating to the Afghan people that beneath the military uniform there is human goodness that is ready to help them.

### **And the progress?**

Major progress, there are, but regrettably, these are things the media often do not speak about! It is to be known that we are not in Afghanistan to kill the Talibans. We are there to secure the country which, since 1992, has been destroyed by a civil war. Judge for yourself the good effects of the presence of Peacekeepers who come from 34 different countries:

- 83% of the population now has access to health services
- 82% of the road network is now secure
- 52% of the roads were paved
- 10 regional airports were put back in function
- 1000 schools have been rebuilt or repaired
- 3 and a half million boys and one and a half million girls have returned to school
- 45000 local teachers were hired.



The presentation of the check to the commander of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruits School took place during the reception which followed the Remembrance Day parade. So that the final check exceeded the barrier of \$6000, the members of branch 79 Richelieu and their guests put back their hands in their pockets and gathered another \$170.00 for a total of **\$6090.00**. On the picture from left to right: Major Dany Hétu, Chief Warrant Officer Richard Gaudreau, Major Sylvain Rhéaume, Comrades André Marion, President Normand Maurice, Veteran WW2 Jean-Paul Bertrand et Organizer Pierre Garneau.