

Lieutenant-Colonel Doré turns the page after three years with 34 CER

Alexandra Ventura-Giroux
Servir Newspaper



Major André Desrochers and Major Daniel Doran present the unit pennant to Lieutenant-Colonel Benoit Doré (centre), Outgoing Commanding Officer of 34 Combat Engineer Regiment (34 CER), at the unit's Change of Command Parade.

Photo: Cpl Poirier-Joyal

Having taken up his position in September 2012, Outgoing Commanding Officer of 34 Combat Engineer Regiment (34 CER) Lieutenant-Colonel Benoit Doré reviews his major accomplishments during his time in command, which officially came to an end on Sunday, 13 September 2015.

Servir: The Regiment's move from the Hillside Armoury in Westmount to the Montreal Garrison was one of the major challenges under your command. How did it go?

LCol Doré: It began in February 2014 and ended the following month. It must be remembered that the Armoury on Hillside Avenue in Westmount was over 60 years old and no longer met current safety standards. The move was managed by the 2nd Canadian Division Support Group (2 CDSG).

Unit members took care of the materiel aspect, making numerous return trips between Westmount and the Montreal Garrison in our vehicles to complete the operation, which was a major success. Once the process was complete, we all celebrated the closing of the Hillside Armoury by holding a mess dinner.

How was the arrival in your new premises?

These were the Montreal Garrison's former kitchens. For offices we are well situated, but our storage space is a bit tight.

How have you maintained the links uniting your Regiment with the Montreal community?

Each year we hold our Remembrance Day Parade in the streets of the Lachine borough. We hope to keep up this tradition for many years to come.

If you had to draw up a short list of your key successes, what would be on it?

I believe I have managed to establish better readiness for our reservists in terms of exercises. Among other things, we have set up a training cell, led by an officer, and advance parties whose members go out ahead on the ground to scout out the situation.

Your Regiment has members spread out over a vast area, including a detachment located in Rouyn-Noranda. How did you involve members from that region in your operations?

We have 51 members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) among our ranks in Rouyn-Noranda. Following a procedural restructure

in 2012, it was decided that some positions were no longer needed at that location. So it was critical to have a detachment commander to ensure the success of our mission. I therefore arranged to have a Major posted there to fill the position.

We must also note the ongoing support of Brigadier-General Luis De Sousa, former Commander of 34 Canadian Brigade Group and today Deputy Commander of 2 Cdn Div, who made it possible to bring our men by charter flight from Rouyn-Noranda so that they could take part in exercises alongside our Montreal troops.

Speaking of training, how have you developed this aspect with your reservists?

We have drawn up a training plan extending over three years. Through this initiative, we have further specialized members' learning with specific themes. For example, the first year was devoted to bridging, the art of building bridges. In the second year we focus on explosives, and in the third we review the concepts from the first two phases in order to consolidate knowledge.

How do you see the future of your unit?

I see on the horizon the next generation of leaders in the CAF. They are young, and they have innovative ideas. It is also a matter of letting our members develop both in Montreal and at the Rouyn-Noranda Detachment to keep everything working.

If you had a few words about your successor, Lieutenant-Colonel Pierre St-Laurent, what would they be?

We have known each other for some twenty years. We both served early in our careers with 5 Combat Engineer Regiment. He is a good coach who, rather than adopting a strict approach, prefers to stress a person's positive points. LCol St-Laurent also has ties with 34 CER, which took part in the building of the footbridge in d'Aiguebelle national park, in the Abitibi region, in 1990.

In closing, can you tell us what awaits you professionally?

Certainly. I will soon be transferred to Kingston to become an instructor for Army officer courses. I will teach candidates from 2nd Canadian Division, along with seven other Lieutenant-Colonels.