



Colonel René J.D. Gervais, CD

Colonel Gervais was born in Quebec City, Quebec, on April 20, 1957. He joined the Canadian Forces (CF) on August 2, 1973. He studied at the *Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean*, Quebec, from 1973 to 1976, and then at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1978.

Transferred to Chilliwack, British Columbia, he completed his military engineer officer's training and was posted to *5<sup>e</sup> Régiment du Génie de Combat* in Valcartier, Quebec, in December 1978. There he was employed as Training Officer and then Troop Commander until September 1980 when he was sent to Cyprus as a troop commander in the United Nations force deployed there.

In July 1981, he was posted to Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg, Manitoba, as Engineering Officer in the Construction Engineering Section. He was promoted to the rank of captain in 1982 and became Requirements Officer in 1983. He attended the Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College in Kingston, Ontario, from August to December 1984, and was then posted to 4 Combat Engineer Regiment in Lahr, Federal Republic of Germany, as Operations Officer. Promoted to the rank of major in 1986, he became the Base Construction Engineering Officer of CFB Lahr.

In July 1988, he was transferred to Mobile Command Headquarters in St-Hubert, Quebec, as Staff Officer Field Engineer Organizations and Equipment. The following year he was given the position of Staff Officer Field Engineer Operations and Training.

In February 1990, he volunteered for UN duty, as an observer with the United Nations Organization in Central America (ONUCA), and was posted to Honduras. In August 1991, he was transferred to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, as Executive Assistant to the Canadian Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee in Permanent Session. He attended staff college at the *Collège interarmées de Défense* in Paris, France, as a member of the International Division, from September 1993 to June 1994. In January 1994, he received a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from Boston University, thus completing a programme of studies that he had begun during his tour in Brussels.

In July 1994, he was transferred to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa as a staff officer in the Directorate of Force Development. Promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in April 1995, he was posted to the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Infrastructure and Environment) as Staff Officer Coordination. In August 1996, he became Director Land Force

Readiness 6 (Infrastructure and Environment) for the Chief of the Land Staff. In August 1999, he was posted to Washington, D.C., to attend the Inter-American Defense College.

In July 2000, he returned to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa as a staff officer in the Directorate of Western Hemisphere Policy. In October 2000, he received a second Masters degree, this time in Public Administration from the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. This was the culmination of four years of part-time study.

On promotion to the rank of colonel in July 2001, he was appointed Commander of the Second Area Support Group (2 ASG) in Land Forces Central Area (LFCA) and posted to Toronto, Ontario, to stand up this new formation. In April 2002 he returned to Ottawa to take over the position of Director Military Engineering Operations/J3 Engineer Operations and the appointment of Branch Advisor, Canadian Military Engineers. In November 2002, he received a third Masters degree, again through part-time study, this time in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada.

In August 2004, he was appointed Canadian Defence Attaché to Mexico, with cross-accreditations to Belize, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. In August 2007, he was appointed Canadian Defence Attaché to Colombia, with cross-accreditations to Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. He returned to Ottawa in August 2010 to take over the position of Director Strategic Readiness on the Strategic Joint Staff. In June 2011, he became the Director Plans Western Hemisphere, also on the Strategic Joint Staff.

Colonel Gervais has received the Canadian Forces' Decoration with two clasps, the Special Service Medal with NATO Bar, the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal, and UN medals for tours in Cyprus (UNFICYP 1980-81) and Central America (ONUCA 1990-91, 2 tours). In July 2007, he was awarded the Mexican Navy Medal of Naval Distinction in recognition of his services as Defence Attaché to Mexico. In July 2010, he was decorated with the Colombian Armed Forces' Order of Military Merit 'General José María Córdova' in the rank of Commander, and was awarded the Colombian Navy Medal for Distinguished Service, both in recognition of his services as Defence Attaché to Colombia.

Colonel Gervais is married to Sylvie Beaulé of Loretteville, Quebec. They have a son, Thomas, and a daughter, Maelle.