



*LCdr Gerry Pash*

## Honours and awards

# Take the time to nominate someone

The commanding officer of 296 Air Cadet Squadron appeared before then Governor General Jules Léger on Oct. 26, 1977 to receive the insignia as a Member of the Order of Canada. Maj Glenn Drinkwater was recognized for his extensive community service. The citation for his award declares “A fireman who has given countless hours to scouting, air cadets, the Order of St. John, the YMCA, his church, and the mentally handicapped, thus making the community of Cambridge a better place for both young and old.”

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Glenn Drinkwater was just 35 years of age when he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada. The Order was relatively new and still evolving. The award, in the category of “Voluntary Service”, was clearly for more than his activity as a member of the CF Cadet Instructors List. Furthermore, it is likely that several members of the community supported his nomination. Thirty

years later the process to gain recognition for a deserving member of the community is the same as it was in 1977. Someone must take the time to produce a nomination.

André Levesque at the Directorate of History and Heritage is responsible for administering the orders, decorations and medals program for CF members. He confirmed that officers in the Cadet Instructors Cadre (CIC) are equally eligible for the long list of Canadian honours and awards.

From his perspective, there is no bias against CIC officers with regards to honours and awards. All CF members, Regular and Reserve, are eligible and compete under the same criteria.

An example is the Order of Military Merit (OMM) that is presented each year to one-tenth of one percent of the total number of members in the CF during the previous year. Awards are allocated based on the total number of personnel (Regular and Reserve Force) in the chain of command of seven recommending authorities. The recommending authorities include the former Deputy Chief of Staff Group, Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS), Chief of Maritime Staff (CMS), Chief of Land Staff (CLS), Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Assistant Deputy Minister Human Resources

(Military) and Assistant Deputy Minister (Materiel).

Nominations for most CIC members would be forwarded through the respective regional commander to the environmental chief responsible for the region. Thus, Pacific and Atlantic Region nominations would go to the CMS, Eastern and Central Region nominations would go to the CLS, and Prairie Region nominations would go to the CAS for vetting and selection. Nominations of officers employed at Director Cadets would go to the VCDS.

Each recommending authority can select as many reservists as they choose within their allocations. For example, every OMM appointment within a group could conceivably be given to a reservist. It is also worth noting that recipients of the OMM usually have more than 20 years of service at a minimum. Also, the award is not only related to what the recipient does in a military career, since criteria include activity in the community at large and broader citizenship activities.

“It is impossible to say how many nominees are CIC officers,” says Mr. Levesque. “It would not be unreasonable that among the small number of long-serving members of the more than 7000 CIC officers that some would qualify for the award.”

But, they must first be nominated at the local level through the chain of command, and the nomination must make it through all levels to the recommending authority.” It is also difficult to specifically identify Reserve recipients (CIC or Primary Reserve) because the OMM is a “total force” award.

“The lack of recognition and awards is not specific to CIC officers,” says Mr. Levesque. All levels of the CF are examining what is required to increase nominations for various awards. The Meritorious Service Decoration (Meritorious Service Cross and Meritorious Service Medal) is one example of a national award that is 'under utilized'. There is no annual numerical limit for it and criteria are quite wide. Still, it does require someone to be nominated.

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It is true that some CIC officers contribute a significant part of their lives to the Cadet Program. The statistics on Canadian Forces' Decorations (CDs) provides one indication. In 2005, 22 out of 42 third clasps to the CD went to CIC officers. In 2004, the number was 24 out of 51 and in 2003 it was 14 out of 25. Yet if there is any value in the premise that awards contribute to retention, one might question why the average CIC officer leaves after only 5.4 years—less than half the time required for the initial award of a CD.

Are Cadet Program instructors receiving their due rewards? This writer can only offer that in recent years more than one instructor in British Columbia has received the Chief of Maritime Staff Commendation, the Formation Commander “Bravo

Zulu” Certificate, The Order of St. John and the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation in addition to the CD.

Establishing and nurturing national awards is neither simple nor easy. On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Order of Canada, Maxwell Cohen, the 1000<sup>th</sup> member of the Order, was commissioned to write an essay. Here is an excerpt from “A Round Table from Sea to Sea”:

“The medal is a message—not a mark for remote supermen, but the stamp of the home-grown family of adjudged merit. Of course there is always the danger that the 'merit' system plays half true and half false. Choices must be made and if it is asked why 'x' and not 'y', it is not easy for the wisest Advisory Council to inform the Governor General...that no mistakes in judgement have been made.”

The most difficult work of the honours and awards process is that of the selection committee. The easiest part is generally the most neglected—someone must first observe that someone else has performed an exemplary deed or contributed in a superior fashion over a sustained period of time. The nominator must do the homework and write up a submission and then 'sell' it to the chain of command. Being a nominator is itself a selfless deed, as it requires setting one's own ego aside and gratefully working for someone else's glory, knowing that the effort may not bring success.

If members of a group do not provide nominations, no member of the group will be recognized. The question as to whether Cadet Program instructors are receiving a fair share of the available recognition can only be answered when people at all levels of the program put forth nominations. \*

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## CIC award of excellence

Regional Cadet Instructors School (Eastern) created a CIC award of excellence in 2005, not only to celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but also to honour CIC officers.

The award is presented annually to a CIC officer who is innovative and takes the initiative to apply the concepts he/she has learned at the school to their work in the field. The innovation or initiative must have a positive impact on a component of the Cadet Program, or the Cadet Program as a whole. The award is intended as an incentive to excel.

This year, Capt Jean-Guy Boudreau, an instructor with 2768 Army Cadet Corps in Grande-Rivière, Que., became the award's first recipient. In our next issue, we will carry an article on the project for which he received the award.



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Capt Jean-Guy Boudreau, centre, receives the first CIC Award of Excellence from Maj Yves Leblanc, commanding officer of Regional Cadet Instructors School (Eastern), left, and LCol Marcel Chevarie, the former commanding officer of Regional Cadet Support Unit (Eastern).