

June 4, 2017 - LAV III Monument dedication ceremony in Wellington, PEI

By: Marcia Enman

On June 4th, a moving dedication ceremony for the LAV III Monument was held at the Royal Canadian Legion in Wellington.

Gilles Painchaud, of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch in Wellington, was the instigator of the project of having a LAV III Monument installed in the Evangeline area, more precisely on a lot owned by the Legion's Branch #17. He submitted a request to the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) III Program which recognizes the service and sacrifice of the Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan by providing full-size demilitarized replica LAV IIIs to qualifying communities throughout Canada. There were still some costs involved for the installation and the transportation of the monument from London, Ontario to Wellington, PEI, but the Wellington Branch and other partners of the project helped with the expenses.

The monument arrived at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch in Wellington a few months ago, and the great dedication ceremony was held last weekend. Several dignitaries were present, including members of the Canadian Armed Forces who served in Afghanistan, PEI Lieutenant Governor Frank J. Lewis, and the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning Sonny Gallant.

The ceremony began with an introductory statement by Veteran David Redmond, who is now a resident of Wellington, but more importantly who served in Afghanistan. After the official unveiling of the Monument, two plaques were also unveiled. One with the following inscription: *In recognition and memory of the efforts of approximately 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces personnel who served and the 162 Canadians who died in the cause of bringing peace and freedom to the people of Afghanistan.* On the second plaque are the pictures of the members that lost their lives during this conflict, including one of islander WO Frank Robert who served as a member of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

Wreaths were laid at the base of the Monument by various groups and Blaire Guptill of Summerside played the "Last Post". Debbie Rousselle Montgomery led the attending crowd to sing the "O Canada" and another hymn later on during the ceremony.



From left to right: Gilles Painchaud, leader of the project, Shawn Deane, Project Manager, LAV III Monument Program, David Redmond, an Afghanistan veteran who also spoke to the crowd, and David Gallant, President of the Wellington Legion, Branch 17.



Sergeant M.S. Murphy, Ian Curtis, from PEI Regiment, Owen Parkhouse from the Intelligence Service, Jeff Barrett, Squadron commander of the 36 Signal Regiment, and David Redmond of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. They all have served in Afghanistan.