



BIOGRAPHY SGT MIKE PIZZACALLA. CD



Mike Pizzacalla was born in Welland, Ontario, located in the Niagara wine region on 24 Jan 1960. He was recruited into the Infantry YTEP program @ CFRC St Catharines on Sep 25, 1983. Sgt Pizzacalla completed his Basic Training and Infantry TQ3 Training at CFB Petawawa on 29 Mar 84. As odd as this may sound Mike has never set foot on CFB Cornwallis grounds and likely never will.

Sgt Pizzacalla took his Oath of Allegiance on 25 Jul 84 @ CFRC London and began serving as an Infantryman with 1 RCR the very next day. While serving with 1 RCR he did his 1st tour of Cyprus during the winter of 1984/85. Upon returning from Cyprus Mike was fortunate enough to go on a 3-week exchange exercise with the Americans at Fort Ord, California, near Carmel and Cannery Row. He is proud to say that the Canadians kicked some American butt 2 out of 3 scenarios. They actually had to send in the Green Berets to claim their one victory. We also had the opportunity to show them how to live fire their own weapons. Some American Staff Sgt had to buy about 40 beers for the Canadian Troops that night.

During the summer of 1985 Sgt Pizzacalla embarked on his Basic Para course and was posted to the Airborne Regiment in September of 85. Upon arrival Mike was placed on a TQ4 Mortar course and was subsequently employed with Mortar Platoon. During his stint with the Airborne he completed a 2nd rotation in Cyprus with the Airborne Military police as a RP during the winter of 1986/87. There would be too many stories to tell of this tour considering their supervisor scheduled the RP's to work 76 days out of a 174-day tour. Sgt Pizzacalla was posted back to 1RCR during APS 1988. His last memorable exercise with 1 RCR was a 1-month NATO exercise in Denmark in the role of RRB, one of the better exercises he participated in.

Sgt Pizzacalla then took a voluntary occupational transfer to PERI in 1990. He endured two very busy postings in Gagetown and North Bay where a large majority of work was after hours and on weekends. He was employed in various positions such as Training, Express Coordinator, Assistant Pool Supervisor, Sports Coordinator and Sports Stores. Mike was highly engaged in community activities such as youth and masters swim coach, swim club vice president and president successively, swim official, swim meet organizer and board member with Swim New Brunswick. He also attempted swimming a few events at the 1994 World Masters Championship in Montreal with very little success. His losses were largely attributed to the female Brazilian swim team. It was extremely difficult to maintain focus when these ladies in thong bikinis would pass by as you were preparing for your race.

Sgt Pizzacalla became a Geomatics Technician in 1997 upon the demise of the PERI trade. This was the first course of its kind for MCE and students were happy to learn they were approved for spec pay from the beginning. Unfortunately some of the instructors became a bit disgruntled as they remained on the normal pay scale. As a Geo Tech Sgt Pizzacalla was employed with DP Sqn, Repro, DRS, SMM, CFMD, and the Client Centre amidst all the training. In 1999 and during his tenure with Repro Mike and WO Sid Turner were the only 2 Repro personnel from MCE to be sent on a Class 3 Repro course with the Royal Engineers in Hermitage UK. Both top candidates were running the press within one month of their return to MCE. Sgt Pizzacalla also took the opportunity to participate at the Royal Engineer Games in the Badminton Doubles event. Their doubles teams had a surprising finish, placing 4th overall. It was a great pleasure to share a little Canadian culture with our British friends. Mike was deployed on OP Palladium in Banja Luka, Bosnia in 2002 where he was able to enjoy the multi-national environment that the camp offered.

Sgt Mike Pizzacalla will retire from the CF on 2 Mar 09 after 25 plus years of loyal and dedicated service. Mike will be attending Algonquin College on the condensed Print Media course beginning 2 Sep 08. This course has been compressed from 2 years to 45 weeks with additional content added in. Upon completion of his course Mike intends to remain in Ottawa and has 3 local printing businesses that will be targeted for possible employment. Mike is a single proud father of 3 fine sons (Adam 19, Kyle 16 and Ryan 15). He has recently had the pleasure of working with his sons as volunteers for the Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest that turned out to be an unforgettable experience, so unforgettable that they will all participate again next year.