

Goudreault Park

Dedication ceremony honours fallen soldier

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TEMISKAMING SHORES – With a driving rain steadily falling Saturday afternoon, friends, family members, local dignitaries and supporters gathered to honour the sacrifice of Sergeant Martin Goudreault. The lookout park on Highway 11, across from the Ministry of Transportation office and facing north toward the Little Claybelt, was dedicated on October 15 in memory of Sgt Goudreault, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2010. “It is a privilege to be here today for this dedication to honour our son,” said Sgt Goudreault’s father, Aurel, to a crowd of about 70. With his wife Micheline by his side, Mr. Goudreault choked back tears as he talked briefly about Sgt Goudreault. “Martin was a generous and loving man,” he said. “He was a career soldier. Always giving a hundred per cent of himself.” Sgt Goudreault was just 35 when he was killed in action in the Panjwayi District of Afghanistan on June 6, 2010. It was his third tour of duty in Afghanistan. He was a 15-year veteran of 1 Combat Engineer Regiment, First Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group.



*“He did make the world a better place.”
Maj Nils French, DCO 1 CER*

FELLOW SOLDIERS

Attending the ceremony from Edmonton were Deputy Commanding Officer of 1 Combat Engineer Regiment Major Nils French, along with Squadron Sergeant Major, MWO Michel Mazerolle from 13 Armoured Squadron. Major French knew Sgt Goudreault and spoke of his abilities as a soldier and qualities as a man. Major French was training at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, New Brunswick, “when I was new to the forces and Marty was a part of that, introducing me to the army and all that was important.” He said that one day he had to leave the field to go to the base and Sgt Goudreault picked him up in a jeep. “It was a rainy day, very much like today,” said Major French. “And this isn’t something that officers should do when they’re driving anywhere with anyone, but I fell asleep. And as soon as Sgt Goudreault noticed that he woke me up and pulled the jeep over and he had me along the side of the road in the rain and in the mud doing pushups so I’d wake up. “I still remember that,” he said as the crowd chuckled at the image. “That’s the, I guess, tough soldier side that he was able to draw from,” said Major French. “But he had a, I guess, more sensitive, compassionate side as well,” he noted. He said a commanding officer’s secretary told him just recently that Sgt Goudreault was one of only two people who had ever hugged her to say goodbye before heading off to a posting. “So he had that full range,” said Major French. “From being hard when he needed to be hard, and being lighthearted and compassionate and friendly when he needed to be that, and that’s something that a soldier needs to be able to do.”



A plaque at the newly-named Sgt Martin Goudreault Memorial Park will serve as a permanent reminder of Sgt Goudreault’s sacrifice in Afghanistan. Taking part in the official unveiling October 15 was, from the left, MWO Michel Mazerolle, Aurel & Micheline Goudreault, and Maj Nils French. (Staff photo by Steven Larocque)

LEGACY

Major French told the crowd that there are “possibly hundreds of soldiers” who learned valuable lessons from Sgt Goudreault over the years. “And I can also tell you that the nature of his job, as a combat engineer... he will have saved many lives of his fellow soldiers over the course of those many deployments.” He said that through Sgt Goudreault’s deployments in places like the Balkans and Afghanistan, “he did make the world a better place.” He said that with the park named in his honour, along with his legacy back at the regiment “where we do think of him often in our own special ways,” he assured those gathered on Saturday that Sgt Goudreault “will be remembered.” Sgt Goudreault’s father echoed those sentiments of remembrance. “Martin was very proud to be a Canadian soldier,” said Mr. Goudreault. “His name will never be forgotten.” He thanked Jim Graydon, “who was inspired to honour our son this way, and for all his hard work and commitment to make this happen.” He also thanked his niece, Lise Lachapelle, “for all her involvement and hard work,” as well as the community who gave generously to the project.

