

Pickering War hero appointed to Order of Canada



Jan de Vries has received several accolades and awards through the years and now he can add Order of Canada to that list.

Mr. de Vries was one of 57 Canadians appointed to the Order of Canada as Members by Governor General Michaëlle Jean on Feb. 20. The Second World War veteran called it quite an honour.

"I didn't know quite how to handle that, it's a heck of a big honour," he said. "You just continue on and do what you've always done."

He said he was notified four months ago that his name had been put forward, he was sworn to secrecy.

"Who knows if it's going to happen or not," he said.

Mr. de Vries was honoured for his extensive and prolonged volunteer service. He is the president of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (and has been for the past 12 years), he regularly speaks to students, cadets and veterans, he was instrumental in the building of the Juno Beach Centre, and he supports the Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care.

"I do what I like to do and to be considered like that is quite

an honour," he said.

When asked why he thought he had been selected, he said he just does what he enjoys and thinks is important.

"A lot of people don't do things like that," he said. "I just feel these kinds of things need support."

He was at the Tony Stacey Centre the morning after the official announcement and he said he has a date booked to speak to a group of students in March. Despite his busy volunteer schedule, he'll make the time to travel to Ottawa for the official ceremony where he'll receive a lapel pin and a medal.

But for the man who enlisted in the battalion when he was just 19 years old and who fought on D-Day in the Battle of Normandy when he was just 20 years old, he has other medals that hold more meaning for him.

"I consider my wartime medals the most important," he said.

Since the announcement was made Tuesday, Mr. de Vries said he's received several calls and e-mails.

"All of a sudden I'm quite popular," he said.

Mr. de Vries thinks his wife Joanne was more excited than he was when they heard the news.

"When you go through a war, you tend to take things more in stride," he said.

He adds the Order of Canada to other honours he's received. In 2004, Mr. de Vries was bestowed France's highest honour for his actions on D-Day. He received the Legion of Honour from French President Jacques Chirac at the ceremony in France to commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day. Several Canadians received the honour, but Mr. de Vries was the only one presented his in France.

In 2005, he was honoured with a special citation at the City of Pickering's Civic Awards.

Branch Honours Their Own!

Corporal Jason Taylor was in town visiting with his folks after a 6 1/2 month tour in Afghanistan. While in the Branch on Saturday February 24th, he was presented with a Legion jacket, shirt and hat as our thanks for putting himself in harms ways to protect our freedom.



L to r: Colin Taylor, Sgt at Arms, Cpl Jason Taylor, Mike O'Hara, President

To ALL MEMBERS OF BRANCH 322

As a father and a proud member of this Branch I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the heartfelt outpouring of respect and support accorded to my son Cpl. Jason Taylor and to all of his fellow comrades in arms who stand in harms way on a daily basis for us. This instills in me the true feeling that we the members of this Branch still remain the friendly Branch with a huge heart. Once again with sincere thanks to you all I know this meant allot to my son and I am sure it will mean a lot to his comrades in arms when he tells them.

COLIN TAYLOR
A PROUD FATHER

Thanks To



Health Rite Pharmacy

75 Bayly Street West, Ajax

When I went to the IDA Health Rite Pharmacy to purchase two new walkers, I received a pleasant surprise. Ross Roadknight, the store manager gave me such a good price that I was able to get three walkers for the price of two.

These walkers are on loan to our veterans, seniors and members of the community on a short term basis should the need arise. With Ross's generosity, we now are able to reach more individuals.

Once again, on behalf of the Branch my sincere thanks.

Reg Sherren
Poppy Chairman

