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Kelownian presents tune to Canadian troops

By [Barry Gerding - Kelowna Capital News](#)

Published: July 15, 2011 1:00 AM

The inspiration to write a song can come to a songwriter in a variety of ways.

Dennis Leclair's inspiration to write a song that commemorates Canadian troops came while watching a news report three years ago about the 100th soldier being killed in Afghanistan.

"Just watching the display of the faces of our fallen heroes over there, with a mundane elevator music in the background...I just felt we should have a song that is supportive and wishing our troops to come home safe," Leclair recalled.

He is no stranger to the military as his cousin has just finished his third deployment tour to Afghanistan while his father was a Second World War vet and his grandfather a First World War survivor.

So two days after seeing the TV news report, Leclair had written the lyrics to his song and was in the studio of local music producer Bob Gablehouse recording it, backed up by the 60-student member Anne McClymont Elementary School choir.

Heather Davis, a retired captain in the Canadian Forces with an extensive music background, was approached by Leclair to compose a band arrangement for his song.

"It did not take long for me to realize that (Leclair) had written a song that would open a dialogue, bridge a gap—however you want to put it—between the public and the military," Davis said.

Davis wrote the music and the Naden Band of Maritime Forces Pacific were recruited to record it.

The recording became the focal point of a commemorative CD that Leclair released with the idea of it being a fundraiser for programs that support Canadian troops and their families, retired veterans and military support staff.

Leclair says his goal is to distribute 450,000



Prime Minister Stephen Harper holds a copy of the commemorative CD, To Our Canadian Troops, with its Kelowna songwriter, Dennis Leclair.

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complimentary CDs to all Canadian Forces troops worldwide.

“The profits from this project go directly to the Military Families Fund, Soldier On and Hospital Comfort funds, which assist military family members with accessing critical support services during these stressful times,” Leclair said.

Backed by a military band, Leclair has performed the song at two prestigious events—the 2009 Gala of Hope fundraiser in Toronto and a performance at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

He also sang his song at the Canada Day festivities in Prospera Place on July 1, 2009, backed by the Kelowna Community Band and the anniversary celebrations for the B.C. Dragoons.

His next gig has Leclair, who is a counsellor in Kelowna when he’s not involved with his “heart and soul” musical project, playing the song on stage with an acoustic guitar and an accompanying video.

He will perform at the National Festival For Heroes Concert for the Troops taking place Aug. 6 in Saskatoon.

“It’s an honour for me to play there but there will be about 10,000 people in attendance, so it’s not exactly a small crowd. For me, it will be a little bit intimidating and exciting to play the song for them,” Leclair said.

Others performing at the music festival will include Glass Tiger, country singer Julian Austin and blues-rock guitarist George Leach.

To order a CD, go to the website www.toourcanadiantroops.ca.

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