

PRESIDENT OF THE GUILD OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020/2021

INTRODUCTION

This is my first annual report. I took over from Peter Atkinson as the President of the Guild at the April Board Meeting. It was a challenging start to the year with COVID still restricting us from having a meeting in person with Directors, but Peter and I did manage to conduct a solid handover and the changeover Guild meeting in person at the Regiment. Peter and his team focused on putting the final touches on governance documents and making sure that our business plan was well established and ready for handover. As I emphasized during the April Guild Meeting, Peter did excellent work as the President and he was thanked by all at the conclusion of the meeting and during the changeover of the Colonel of the Regiment ceremony in June. Tom Burnie and BJ Forsyth were also recognized for their outstanding contributions to the Guild over there many years as key directors on the board. Two very capable Dragoons, Bill Fulton and Jim Ferron, took over the Governance and Business Planning teams respectively in April.

The tempo of the Regiment has been high and it started off with the deployment of the CO and RSM, and soldiers from the Regiment to Latvia in January. The A/CO John Maertz remained as the Secretary Treasurer until June 2021 and he was an excellent director on the Guild for his two year tenure. A number of key activities were delayed once again this year due to COVID. Our Leliefontein celebrations in November of this year did take place, albeit with less invites due to COVID. The presentation of the new Guidon has been delayed and will likely be presented in June 2022. The RCD Association Reunion was cancelled and is scheduled to be held June 2022. The trip to Leeuwarden by a group of retired Dragoons was cancelled again this year although the Dutch have asked us to come in April 2022. Planning for this event is moving forward well with five soldiers from the Regiment being added to the group of Dragoons attending.

My intent for the Guild is to continue to support the Regimental Family as my main focus and also to better communicate to all Dragoons what the Guild does for them. We finalized a Guild narrative and we are developing a new website that will be more interactive for all Dragoons and and our donors. A Communication strategy is much needed and we have developed a team led by Jim Follwell that focuses on how we continually update our Regimental family on our supporting activities. We also need to focus on our marketing and developing a donation engine that better supports the Guild financially.

The Guild delivers the Guild Charitable Program (GCP) for the benefit of the Regimental Family. We select our programs and projects with care, but only the Regimental Family can assess how well we are doing in the delivery of the GCP. I have received feedback from the CO and RSM, but we do not yet have a good battle rhythm with our Regimental Family Advisory Group, and this will become a major focus this year. We have focused on quality of life and the Guild has made some timely contributions to soldiers and Regimental Family in need, but we can do better with a well informed Advisory Committee. The CO and RSM have provided an OC and SSM to assist the Guild and we are putting together a team to provide the required feedback to better support the Regimental family. This committee needs to be represented by all across the Regimental Family.

GUILD OBJECTS - A REMINDER

As a point of reference for all, the Guild Objects are repeated here as a reminder of why the Guild exists:

Object 1 - to promote, protect, preserve and further the traditions and heritage of the Royal Canadian Dragoons as part of the Canadian Armed Forces:

- a. by displaying Regimental artifacts to members of the RCD and the public;
- b. by collecting and preserving artifacts relevant to the history of the Regiment, and funding the operations of the Regiment's archives;
- c. by holding or participating in ceremonies and educational activities to mark important events in the history of the Regiment;
- d. by fostering liaisons with civilian authorities at all levels in order to establish, maintain and operate museums, exhibitions or demonstrations of items of regimental historical significance, memorabilia, artifacts or property;
- e. by collecting, disseminating and publishing information concerning the Regiment, of interest and relevance to members of the Regimental Family and the public at large.

Object 2 - To promote the well-being, morale and quality of life of the Regimental Family by funding, supporting and undertaking projects that assist cadets and current and former soldiers and their families, including:

- a. Executing projects that assist the families of injured soldiers and activities to support the families of deployed soldiers;
- b. Making materials and resources available that connect and support soldiers of the Regiment and their families;
- c. Maintaining and managing the memorials and places of remembrance dedicated to Dragoons;
- d. Providing support and financial assistance for the Regiment's current and former soldiers, and their families to pursue post-secondary education.

Object 3 - to promote public awareness of the Regiment including:

- a. communicating the activities of the RCD to the public at large;
- b. strengthening the links between the RCD and the communities that surround and support it.

CHANGES TO BOARD PERSONNEL

We had several Board members who completed their tenure on the Board - Tom Bernie, BJ Forsyth, and Sean Curley. We thank them all for their dedication and service to the Guild and the Regimental family. We welcomed to the board three new Directors: Steve Boire, Jim Ferron and Bill Fulton. We are currently recruiting a replacement for Sean Curley.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUSINESS PLANNING

The Guild's current Strategic Plan covers the period 2019 to 2024. It describes the process to achieve the Guild's mission and realize its vision along with a summary of the objectives and activities approved by the Canadian Revenue Agency. The Strategic Plan plots the Guild's route to a successful future in relation to its charitable programme, but does not

provide specific details on projects and programmes, which is the purview of the Guild's Business Plan. During FY 20/21, the Business Plan provided Committee Chairpersons and those designated as "spend authorities" the parameters by which they could pursue their Committee's objectives. It should be noted that the budget for FY 21/22 and planning for the FY 22/23 Business Plan were both initiated by the release of the Guild's "Call Letter" on 1 October 2021. During this past year the Director responsible for both the Strategic and Business Plans, Bryan Forsyth, retired from the Guild after a sustained period of devotion to the well-being of the Regimental Family. The Guild and all members of the Regimental Family wish to extend our most sincere thanks and appreciation to Bryan for a job well done. The mantle will now be taken up by the team of Jim Ferron and Marty Frank ... we wish them luck as they develop the "way ahead" for future years.

CFO FINANCIAL REPORT

In the previous fiscal year, we acknowledged the coronavirus would likely have a material effect across the Guild's business lines. The impact has been clear as the Guild struggled to maintain revenue from general donors and was unable to raise revenue through episodic fundraising activities. As the Guild's CFO noted in the previous fiscal year, it is very likely that a portion of the Guild's legacy donors have weighed the impact of the coronavirus against their own financial arrangements and have temporarily paused their planned donation activities. If it were not for two generous families (the Lake and Bell families) and the lack of program spending, the Guild would have been required to tap into its long-term investments to meet its financial obligations. If the Guild's revenue stream continues to slow, it may put a strain on our cash holdings or force the Guild to dip into liquidity reserves and long-term investments.

As of 30 September 2021, cash on hand is \$195,000 and total balance sheet assets are \$1,694,000. Cash donations from all sources are recorded at \$204,000 compared to \$57,000 for fiscal year 2020.

Revenues from all sources is \$231,000 against a budgeted \$151,000.

Budget - As of 30 September 2021, the Guild expended across all business lines \$73,000 versus the budgeted \$146,500. The areas where the Guild significantly under expended versus budget is program spending; \$26,000 against a \$91,000 budget. Given the fiscal challenges inflicted by the coronavirus in the previous fiscal year, the Guild's ability to deliver its core programs to the Regimental Family was not abated; however, in fiscal year 2021, program spending materially deviated from plan.

Net fiscal year operating profit before year-end adjustments is \$158,000.

REPORT ON INVESTMENTS

The Guild has continued its long-term investments with Manulife Securities Inc. managed by Jeff Hull. From 30 September 2020 to 13 December 2021 the value of the Guild's long-term investments has increased from \$1,505,928.22 to a total value of \$1,794,805.96 Canadian dollars. There's about \$140K of direct cash and equivalents (excluding the mutual funds internal cash equivalents). Canadian account is approx. 77.5% invested, 22.5% cash and equivalents. USD account is 98.5% invested and 1.5% in cash. Our major headwinds were the fluctuation in the US dollar. In March 18th of 2020 the USD was \$1.44 to the CAD dollar. December 13th 2021 USD traded at \$1.28 to the CAD dollar. This represents 16 cent shift in currency. A headwind we had to push against to lift our position of growth to \$288,877.00 CAD.

The Guild continues to evaluate its long-term investment strategy under the investment leadership of Jeff Hull. Concurrent to achieving its strategic objectives of reaching a short term goal of 2 million Canadian dollars. Our long term position is to continue to develop and deliver a sustainable position in our portfolio to add continued fiscal prudence and managed growth.

GOVERNANCE

The Guild believes in the importance of transparency in its governance and business operations. Moreover, the Board of Directors has a legal responsibility for the administration and management of the Guild - a federally incorporated registered charity.

The Guild continues to learn from experience, keep abreast of changing legal and regulatory requirements, and to advance the charitable needs of the Regimental Family. It continues to develop its governance processes to ensure compliance with the law and to effectively manage its charitable programs and business operations. The Guild is a “soliciting charity” and as such is required to have an annual independent financial review by a Public Accountant, and that is being done.

In addition to ongoing housekeeping issues such as ensuring documentation is up to date and finalization of the “New Directors’ Orientation Package”, the Governance Director will be reviewing all archived documents to ensure relevance, currency, and accuracy. Following the move of the Regiment to the new HQ building it became apparent that the management, control and archiving of Guild property is an essential requirement. To that end, the Governance Director has drafted Terms of Reference for the Guild Property Manager and the Guild Archivist which will continue to be refined over time. The most significant ongoing Governance initiative, however, is the preparation of a proposed amendment to the current definition of the Regimental Family as laid out in By-Law No.1 paragraph 1.13. The intent is to reflect a broader, more inclusive target audience to meet current and future demands and realities. The Guild recognizes and accepts that there is risk that CRA may not approve the proposed amendment and might examine other aspects of Guild Governance. It is anticipated that following submission of appropriate documentation CRA will require a year or longer to consider the amendment.

The figure below illustrates the Guild governance structure which is available on the Guild website through the “Guild Documents” link. The Corporate Foundation section leads from Guild formation in 1980 (Letters Patent) cascading through various sections to Operating Documents such as the Strategic Plan, Annual Business Plan and the Records of Decision from Board meetings and the Annual Members’ Meetings. Guild information can be viewed by anyone of at any time.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The Guild History & Heritage Committee supports the guild to promote, protect, preserver and further the traditions and heritage of The Royal Canadian Dragoons. The H&H Committee is chaired by Thomas Skelding who also oversees the Heritage function, while MWO John Nickerson oversees the History function and is also the Co- Chairman. The committee is responsible for H&H business planning, regimental archives, ceremonial uniforms, heritage vehicles, monuments & memorials, Dragoon Park. The committee assists with the Springbok/Dragoon production, war diary and annual historical reports, as well as any special history & heritage related projects for the Guild.

In spite of the pandemic, H&H has had a normal year. The largest task was the relocation of the regimental archives and artifacts from B-102 to the new Regimental HQ. This

was accomplished under the direction and guidance of MWO Nickerson and Dave Muralt. The Guild maintains our scarlet ceremonial uniforms. Due to wear and tear there is an ongoing requirement for upkeep and we continue to purchase new uniforms and accoutrements. When not in the field on training exercises or courses members of the Historical Vehicle Troop are busy keeping the Staghound and Ferrett scout car in running condition. Seventy-nine monuments, memorials, plaques etc directly or indirectly related to the RCD have been recorded in a database with many more. Staff work continues with the New Brunswick Military Heritage Museum to repatriate the RCD First World War Memorial and other regimental artifacts back to the Home Station.

We have started a project with Nathan Kehler (former Dragoon) to develop a digital historical map of our Dragoon operations in the Netherlands with a focus on Leeuwarden. This will come out in time for our Leeuwarden 2022.

INTO THEIR SECOND CENTURY - AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS 1983-2018

The next edition of our Regimental history was published in April of 2020. "Into Their Second Century - an Illustrated History of The Royal Canadian Dragoons 1983-2018" by Michael McNorgan and Allan Halfper is now available through the RCD Kit shop in Petawawa for the price of \$35 a copy. An initial distribution has been completed to serving Regimental members, ERE and RCD Association members. This was a huge undertaking that began in 2012. We produced 2000 copies of the book at a cost of approximately \$100K and hope to sell the bulk of the copies over the next few years. In the future an E-Book version will be produced but not until the current stock of hard copy books has been depleted.

BURSARY UPDATE

At Leliefontein 2021 \$10,000 in education bursaries were awarded to the following individuals: \$6000 to Mr Cicinski and \$4000 to Mr. Poirier. A \$1000 Volunteer and Community Service Award was awarded to MCpl Guzman.

QUALITY OF LIFE UPDATE

FAMILY SUPPORT - When needed the Guild has provided financial assistance to Regimental Family members in need when public funds were not available in a timely fashion. Over \$5000 dollars were dispersed last year, which includes funerals.

SUPPORT TO REGIMENTAL ACCOUTREMENTS - The Guild continues to support new soldiers and officers with accoutrements when arriving at the Regiment. In fact, nine new soldiers, who arrived moments before the Christmas Holiday were able to receive their accoutrements prior to going on leave.

DEPLOYMENT BEARS - The Guild continues to maintain Deployment Bears in order to support both planned and unforeseen deployments. It further retains \$160 worth of gift certificates for the purchase of additional bears if required.

GUILD CEREMONIAL TROOP - The Guild has supported several Regimental funerals with our funeral kits and lance bearers. This is being done in conjunction with the RCD Association.

INJURED AND SPECIAL NEEDS FUND - The Guild recognizes the added costs incurred by Regimental Family members who support injured and Special Needs individuals. This project is currently under development and identifies deserving Regimental Families that need financial support to offset the costs not covered by public programs.

NEW GYMNASIUM SUPPORT - The Guild donated 20K (15K potentially more) to the Regiment to support the purchase of new weights and equipment for the Gym. I have seen the gym and it has some excellent equipment, and it is much appreciated by the troops. They still need some more equipment and we will likely support.

SPRINGBOK/DRAGOON - The next edition of the SPRINGBOK/DRAGOON will be published immediately after the June 22 change of command. It will encompass the period 2020-21 and 2021-22 which essentially covers the period of our current CO.

RCD CADET CORPS UPDATE

The Guild continues to support three affiliated cadet corps in the Ottawa region. Due to the pandemic support was limited this year. Exercises were the key activities supported.

LEEUWARDEN 2022

I mentioned in my introduction that the RCD Association had organized a trip of roughly 40 retired Dragoons to go to Leeuwarden to participate in the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands in April 2022. We have added five soldiers from the Regiment. The five soldiers are supported by the Guild and RCD Association. This group will represent the Regiment and will be sponsored in part by the Guild. Dragoons going are paying for their own airfare and accommodations and the Guild purchased the appropriate gifts and presentations that will be presented on behalf of the Regiment (flags, coins plaques and miniature Staghounds). The trip will include visits to all the key towns that the Dragoons liberated, and it will culminate in a civic ceremony and parade in Leeuwarden itself. Peter and Tom volunteered again to organize, and it will be a great trip.

GUILD PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

1. Improved communication to all Dragoons
2. Support the Regimental Family
3. Marketing and branding the Guild and the Guild Charitable Program
4. Fundraising and recognition of our donors
5. Refinement of our Regimental Family Advisory Committee

CONCLUSION

The Guild is a tremendous organization to support the Regiment and Regimental Family. Due to the wisdom of early days and continued efforts the Guild is in great shape to sustain our objectives. We are working to better market what the Guild does to all Canadians and to ensure that our brand is recognizable and respected by all. It is an honour to serve as the new President of the Guild. Through your support we can ensure the Regimental Family continues to thrive and serve all Dragoons and their families. It is another fine day to be a Dragoon.

Dean Milner
Major General (retired)
President of the Guild of The Royal Canadian Dragoons
16 December 2021