

# THE DRAGON

THE NATIONAL VOICE OF THE OLD COMRADES



2018









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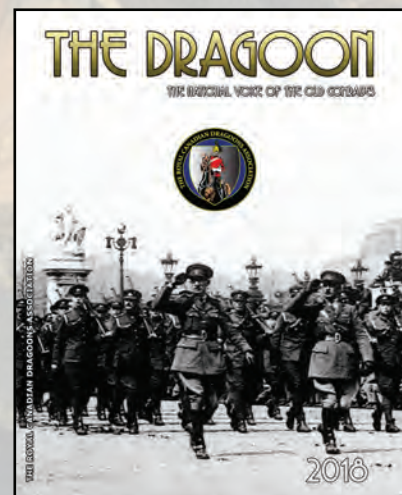
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**General Rick Hillier (retired)**  
**OC, CMM, ONL, MSC, CD**  
Patron of the RCD Association

### THE COVER



London Victory Parade 1919

### BACKGROUND IMAGE

German Prisoners - circa 1919

Frederick Varley

Oil on canvas (Canadian War Museum)

# From the Editor

## Bann Price

Greetings and welcome to the 2018 edition of The Dragoon, the National Voice of the Old Comrades. By the time you are reading this we will have celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the fighting in World War One so you will notice a bit of a theme for this edition.

The usual suspects have contributed to The Dragoon – Chapter Chairs have reported on the goings on in their regions and there is the report, from the National Capital Chapter, on the excellent “Gathering of Dragons” which took place in June. Tom Urbanowski and David Sproule have continued their series of remembrances, which bring Regimental History a little closer to the present day, and

So enjoy this edition. It is my last as Editor and I hope it pleases. The Dragoon is a reflection of the service to the Regiment of members of the Association and I am grateful to all of the contributors over the past few years who have made it the success that it is. I am also grateful to Cpl Kevin Langille, who has lent his artistic and organizational talents to The Dragoon. I urge you all to continue to support the new Editor so that we may continue to communicate with our membership in this way.

Cheers,

Bann





# From the President

## Denis Levesque

Dragoons, Ladies and Gents

We are the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) Association. Many of us are aging but still fascinated by what we have accomplished over the years and take pride in being a Dragoon. We have lived many joyful memories of this fine Regiment. We continue to enjoy the spirit of fun, laughter and cohesion, felt by many since 1883. There are many of us that still take pride in visiting our fine Regiment during special occasions. We are so proud of our currently serving Soldiers, WO's and Sgts and Officers and their accomplishment. This edition of the Dragoon is again combined with the springbok, this is significant, not only do we get a caption of what the soldiers are currently doing, but the soldiers of the Regiment also have a snap shot of what our chapters are doing across our fine country. Please read on and enjoy the full spectrum of our serving and retired combined Springbok and Dragoon. We as an association hope you will join us at some point, regardless of rank, amount of service served, or even trade. We have many members and fostered many relationships with our combat supporting and combat service supporting arms. We still have a ton of memories to share. Regardless of positions held. I believe we could push the Assn further. We have so many soldiers who have retired from the Bosnia and Afghanistan campaign. I think our readers would love to have articles from those historical events in our history. Please if you would like to contribute an article, please contact Bann Price our editor, or drop me a line and I will put you in touch with Bann. We as an Assn would love to read factual articles of our recent history. Articles can be of anything. A good old story of humor, or even an adventurous event. We are all interested in events that show our pride in our Regiment.



Oh yes! I would like to announce that the Ottawa Valley Chapter of the RCD Association is in the planning stages of the Assn by annual Gathering of the Dragoons, to be held in Petawawa/Pembroke area June 2020. The committee are into developing strategies to make this event a memorable one. I'm not one to let the cat out of the bag, so we shall have to wait for the next edition for further details. This will truly be a special event for all.

I would like to take the opportunity to address those people who just happened to pick up this edition of the Springbok and Dragoon. You might be just asking yourself who are these Dragoons anyway. Well we are an association of retired and serving members of Canada's Senior Armoured Regiment and we can be found in regional Chapters across the country. We are a friendly bunch, always willing to welcome new faces to our humble group, always willing to lend a hand and always willing to talk about the Regiment and its service to our country. The Association exists to foster, maintain and promote the traditions, the wellbeing and the esprit de corps of the Regiment. However, the individual Chapters hold many welcoming events throughout the year. Summer BBQs, lunches and dinners corresponding with major Regimental celebrations such as the Leliefontein weekend, the Regimental Birthday, Leeuwarden, Remembrance Day or whatever reason comes to mind at the time are the real reasons the Association exists - keeping people in touch. The Association was formed in 1974 with Brigadier EAC (Ned) Amy, acting in his capacity as Colonel of the Regiment, serving as the first President and convening the first meeting of the Association in the Armouries of the Royal Canadian Hussars in Montreal on the 26th of October of that year. The Royal Canadian Dragoons Association was granted Letters Patent effective 15 June, 1976, and the Chapters began forming in their regions shortly afterwards. Membership in the Association is through the individual Chapters and for a minimal price, brings with it subscriptions to the Association's annual newsletter "The Dragoon", and as an added bonus we are now combined with the "Springbok" the serving member's annual newsletter. Individual Chapters also produce annual newsletters so there are many opportunities to keep in touch. As a result, the Association is doing well but it is always ready to welcome new members and I urge you to contact the Chapter representative found below and talk to them about becoming a member. There are lots of opportunities to keep up with the Regiment and with the Old Comrades and I urge you become a member and keep in touch with all of your old friends

# The Last Trumpet Call

2018

Iris Christine "Chris" WHITE

Robert M. SCRIVEN

E.C.H. "Rick" LATHAM

Robie Malcolm HANCOCK

V. Norm WOOD

Freeman Thomas SHUPE

Leszejk STRUZIŁ

Mau D'AMOUR

Donald George ABBS

Andrew James REID

Terry DALLAIRE

Carl Wilfred OAKLEY

Elsa KRAMELL

Ginette VEZINA

"They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, not the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,  
We will remember them."



# ATLANTIC



Greetings from the Atlantic Chapter. First off let me tell you that our monthly luncheons which are held every last Thursday of the month at Minglers Pub in Oromocto are always well attended. It is nice to see old friends come together to share a meal and to tell some great stories. Pictures have been posted on Face Book in both the Chapters and RCD Association pages. If you are ever in the area please drop in.

We also had our Chapters Annual Dinner/Dance on 11 August 18 and this year it was held at the Oromocto Legion Branch 93. The Ladies auxiliary did a great job with the food and the service. Again this year we considered cancelling because of low numbers but in the end decided to take the financial loss which was not so bad due to the generous donations made by some of the members. We had approx 36 attending the function. Everyone who attended were very happy with the food and entertainment. I am sure that Denis Arsenault had more than one steak. The CO, RSM also attended the dinner and passed on some info on how the Regiment and Soldiers are doing.

A big thank you to our Treasurer Lance Wiebe and Secretary John Bouwmeister for all the hard work they do to help me keep the Chapter alive.

Well that is it for now. Hopefully I will have more to talk about in our next newsletter.

Yours truly,

Matt Robichaud

Audax et Celer - Bold and Swift



# QUEBEC



Bonjour a tous et salutations de la belle province. Greetings from our small group of nine loyal Dragoons scattered all over the province and aging. As normal, late again, the rush is on for submission to the editor by last week.

I'm back again after an absent of about two years as the Chapter Chairman. About two years ago I had to back off on my assignments due to the heavy work load in taking care of my aging Mother. It was a full time job and required all my attention. Mother passed away last May at the age of 101, bless her soul. This year we lost two very loyal supporters of the association, Ginette Vezina, (Michel's wife) and my Mother. Both attended and supported most regimental and association functions wherever they took place. If we could drive there we were there same as for Michel and Ginette. RIP Elsa and Ginette. I thank Michel for taking my place for the last couple of years.

Not very much to report this year, all is quiet at the front as it was a turmoil year for Michel and I. We continue with our monthly breakfast every last Thursday of the month at Pub PJ at 6910 rue Saint Jacques, Montreal, QC. With our brothers of the Royal Canadian Hussars Association. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join us and enjoy the camaraderie over a coffee or

breakfast. We hear many war stories, mainly from our new generation of soldiers that served in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti and cold war Veterans. We have no WWII Veterans attending anymore but do have one Korean Veteran attending with his wife. I missed talking to our chapter membership by phone this year but will eventually catch up.

I wish to thank the Ottawa Chapter for the splendid "Gathering of Dragoons" last June in Gatineau/Hull. It was an excellent affair, Good to see so many elderly, greying old friends again. The whole weekend was a success enjoyed by everyone. Looking forward to 2020.

If you know of any former/retired RCD residing in Quebec I would appreciate if you could pass their names and or phone number. Any help from our membership would be appreciated.

That's about it. In closing, we wish everyone good health, a good Fall and a mild Winter and hope to see many at our monthly breakfast and next Leliefontaine celebrations.

Du la belle province, nous vous souhaitons nos meilleur souhait pour cette nouvelle annee 2019. Au revoir et a la prochain.

AUDAX ET CELER





30th Anniversary of D Day-Paris (1974)





# NATIONAL CAPITAL



It's been a busy year for the NCR Chapter of the Association. On July 29th of 2017, several members made the trek to Perth to re-connect with old friends at the annual RCAC barbeque at the Perth Legion.

On September 8th, Ross Carruthers, Bob Hart, and Walt Conrad dropped in to visit Alf Rasmussen at the Perley and Rideau Veterans Home. Alf was presented with a Regimental plaque in recognition of his long and valued service to the Association. Leliefontein was observed on the 27th of October by a small gathering at the Ottawa Officers' Mess, and on December 15th we gathered once again to mark the Regimental birthday.

Leeuwarden Day was observed on April 13th. We were able to join the monthly Armoured Corps gathering at the Mess which is held on the second Friday of each month. This allowed for a greater attendance and an opportunity to connect with serving members of the Regiment. We were also honoured to have in attendance His Excellency Henk van der Zwan, the Ambassador of The Kingdom of The Netherlands. The Ambassador spoke of the close bonds between Holland and Canada, and proposed the toast to the Regiment. Jim Ferron replied on behalf of the Association.

On a sadder note, we lost one of our few remaining World

War II veterans with the passing of Mau D'Amour in June.

The highlight of this past year has certainly been the hosting of the bi-annual Gathering of Dragoons 2018. This featured a meet and greet at the Sheraton Hotel in Gatineau, and various events on Saturday, including golf. In the evening, we boarded the Ottawa River Queen for a memorable cruise and dinner. It was a very successful event with over 160 persons in attendance. Our thanks go to the organizing committee headed up by Peter Atkinson, ably assisted by Chris Chance, Bob Hart, Bill Fulton, Bryan Forsyth, Phil Whitehead, Rachel Provost-Forsyth, and Daniel Heppell.







# OTTAWA VALLEY



GREETINGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY CHAPTER (OVC) on behalf of all members we wish you and your family happiness, good health and prosperity over the upcoming year.

Our own agenda was business as usual, conducting our spring and fall general meetings. In the fall our annual Oktoberfest was changed to an Association BBQ, which went over very well. I will elaborate more on this in the following narrative.

Leeward was celebrated in the traditional manner and it was great to see so many distinguished guests turn out for the event. This year the event also included the changing of the Colonel of the Regiment from Major-General Matt Macdonald to Brigadier General Peter Atkinson. The occasion commenced with a mixed dinner in the previous evening and after approximately 14 inches of snow overnight the parade was held in the RCD hanger. Good call.

The Ottawa Valley Chapter would like to acknowledge the dedication and unwavering support of Bann Price as the National President/ Editor of the Dragoon and John Moyer as the Secretary/Treasurer for the National Chapter. Both of these gentlemen have held the position for countless years, KUDOS to both of you.

Now filling the void is Denis Levesque as the President and Tim Datchko as the Secretary/Treasurer. Welcome aboard, we look forward to your stewardship and guidance.

As I stated above our annual Oktoberfest was replaced with an Association BBQ, which was held at the Holland Room, in the RCD Lines. This event was again a huge success. The Entertainment Chairman, Roger Munger although he couldn't attend due to a family emergency did an outstanding job of having everything co-ordinated.

We hosted approximately 38 people including the Regimental 2 i/c, Major Johnson, the RSM CWO Hebert and lovely wife Belinda. Unfortunately the CO and Ms Tammy Richard missed out on a fantastic evening to socialize with the Association.

Birgith Munger, for over a decade has provided the members of the Association with an outstanding German cuisine. With this year's switch to a BBQ, she generously donated her time to help out in Rogers's absence, thus ensuring the success of the event. On behalf of all members of the Ottawa Valley Chapter we thank Birgith for her loyalty, dedication and hard



work over the years. It is outstanding members like both Roger and Birgith that makes the Association an identity to be a part of.

Kalvin Mitchell, our Secretary/Treasurer strapped on an apron and was the chef for the evening. Well done Kal the bratwursts & hamburgers were cooked to perfection. Special thanks to WO MacDonald for bartending for us.

Gordie Meighan, once again packed up all his musical equipment and provided us with some good old German tunes. Well done to all.

It was the luck of the draw, but the scheduling of the BBQ coincided with Chuck and Fran Hills visit to the valley from Calgary. As some of you may recall Chuck was not only a member of the Chapter but served for a number of years as our Secretary/Treasurer before moving west. It was great to catch up on old times and thanks for the update on Dragoons out west. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Before I leave this subject, I would like to thank the Regt'l 2 I/C & RSM for once again taking the time to attend, in light of their hectic schedule and for the CO and RSM allowing us to utilize the Regimental facilities. Without their continued support, activities such as this may not be possible.

The Leliefontein parade in November was once again a memorable one. Gen (Ret'd) Clive Milner led the "Old Guard" on the march past. This is always a highlight for us as the "Old Guard" to be involved in the celebrations. As we marched past the Dias giving an "yes right" to the Colonel of the Regiment, we once again got a rousing cheer.

Sterling Mercer and I had the pleasure of breaking bread and chatting with a number of the soldiers at the Soldiers Christmas Dinner. We, as the association are extremely proud of our serving Dragoons and appreciate every opportunity to interact with them. In our conversations the soldiers were very enthusiastic and proud of the many accomplishments over the past year. The moral within the Regiment is very high. Thanks to everyone who shared their stories of current Regimental activities with us.

Again this year The Dragoon and Springbok will be combined and in the opinion of so many Dragoons "it is an excellent publication". Therefore, to all those involved in the production of this publication well done.

Once again Muggsie has been tremendous in her support of the Association. Thank you so much for all that you do.

In closing, the support of the Regiment over the past year has been outstanding, both LCol (CO) Fraser Auld and CWO (RSM) Jim Hebert have gratefully open the doors to all Regimental activities and welcomed the association with open arms. Tanks.

Audax et celer,

Bold and Swift

Bruce Prendergast RCD OVC Chairman

## Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Winter training 1954

# KINGSTON AND REGION



Greeting everyone from the Limestone city and the wonderful surrounding region. It has been a relatively quite year for our Chapter, but rest assured many of our members remain very active both domestically and within the community.

Over the summer months our members enjoyed the company of the Corps attending the annual BBQ in Perth hosted in large part by Clive Addy and the weather delayed Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament in Smith Falls expertly organized by Bill Soros. In addition three of our members, Mark Hutchings, Chris Sproule and myself, have been actively involved in the Hill 70 Memorial Project. Although not directly linked to the RCD this outstanding effort to recognize a significant battle in our Canadian military history and the soldiers from the Canadian Corps with an appropriate monument and park, stands today because of the dedication and determination that is characteristic of our Regiment.

Once again our end of summer BBQ in September was a complete success. Beautiful weather and great company added to the enjoyment of all. Thanks to Skip for helping out with the BBQ and ensuring that yours truly did not burn the burgers and sausages too bad. A truly wonderful way to catch up on the adventures our members had over the summer.

Late October brought cooler weather and while a few of our members ventured to Petawawa for the Leliefontein celebration we held our gathering at the ANAF. After a short ceremony to toast the Regiment and our Fallen, the attendees enjoyed each other's company reminiscing and sharing stories. We wrapped up 2017 with our joint birthday celebration along with the local chapter of the RCR Association. This year they hosted and thanks once again to the efforts of Jeff Barr and Doug Elliot it was a great success.

That is the summary of our events for the year; however, several of our members had great results in IRONSIDES, the Corps bonspiel held here in Kingston. This is a great event that captures the family spirit of the Corps. As the Regiment was not able to provide a team due to operational commitments it was up to us old comrades to fly the flag.

Our small but active chapter enjoys good consistent attendance to our events. We look forward to the upcoming Gathering this June in Ottawa and another fine year here in Kingston.





# PEACEKEEPERS ON CYPRUS

a personal story

by Angus Scully

Taken from:

The Vancouver Island Military Museum Newsletter

Spring 2018

John Pierce, a long-time museum volunteer and docent, is famous for his dry wit and anecdotes. After he retired from the Royal Canadian Dragoons, John wrote for the RCD Association News. Here is one of his stories from 1983.

In the middle of a quick recce of the C Sqn Orderly Room, looking for tid-bits of info, I was caught by Major Bob Meating and hustled into his office for a quick look at the “RCD in Cyprus” scrap book. There, on a back page was a picture that should have been lost years ago. It was none other than yours truly, as a young SQMS (with hair even) standing in a swimming pool, fully clothed, with a case of “Smirnoff” under one arm, looking extremely foolish. I won’t tell you the story behind the picture. Bob didn’t believe it so I’m sure you wouldn’t.

Now the pool itself is a different case. Because of it, Capt John Long and I became two of the most wanted men in Cyprus. With a serious water shortage during the hot season, the pool could not be drained and refilled often enough to keep it reasonably unpolluted, so our RCEME personnel designed and built a filter, but the main component, a pump, was just not there. A truly confident John Long said. “My SQ will get one,” and that infamous day was under way.

There was no pump available through normal channels, so Chopper Borden and I hopped into my  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton (affectionately dubbed “The Swan” by some jealous soul) and headed for the “Brit” camps.

That day I concocted and told some of the best lies of my army career. I told more heart rending tear-jerkers than Another World comes up with in a week, the last and best being told to a British colonel in charge of military fire-fighters in Cyprus. It worked, because when “The Swan” pulled into camp that evening, tagging merrily along behind was a trailermounted fire pump. I had borrowed it for three days.

Six months later it was still pumping water through the filter and John Long and I were casting furtive glances at any Brit MP. But we sure enjoyed that pool. As for the picture, I’m still admitting nothing.

Good shooting.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA



I've noticed an interesting phenomenon since retiring to the West Coast; many people say they want to, but many don't! It's hard to leave friends behind in the Center and the East but more so to try and find affordable accommodation west of the Rockies. The honest truth is that those who have family property, won the lottery or invested in property before the prices went right off the edge, are our main source of membership. The young retirees stand fast. So, you will notice that those you will be viewing are many of the same faces that have just moved on another three hundred and sixty-five days.

Sadly, missing in action this year was Fred Berge, the recent recipient of a new hip joint and then also the recipient of a few broken ribs due to a fall. Also MIA following some serious health issues, Richard [Dick] Kitcher, sadly who has been seconded to an exclusive retirement home in Duncan, BC.

Thankfully there are former members of the RCD, LdSH, FGH, 12e RBC, BCR, RCIC, RC SIGS, RCEME LOG and PERI Branch who were former members of the regiments or provided the support elements that join in the celebrations of Leliefontein and Moreuil Wood. Our twice annual lunches manage to gather about thirty to thirty-five attendees. What I'm leading up to is that

fact that you will see pictures of people who were Strath's, Dragoons, perhaps Hussars, a Garry, or a member of the 12e [Rubber Boot's] or all of the above, several times.

Our comradeship is our Corps experiences with whomever we served. Not uncommon for most of us to wear more than one regimental badge. This leads me to the next paragraph, The Canadian Cavalry Brigade [Seeley] Lunch.

In April this year members of our group gathered at the North Sannich Yacht Club to celebrate the Centennial of the action at Moreuil Wood in March 1918. A number of our members attending made the trip to France to join the festivities, returning, then joining the festivities here.

Our organizers [David Scandrett and Dave Letson] produced a beautiful Cavalry Brigade cake so you can just imagine the sugar high a bunch of senior citizens got into following carafes of donated wine. Many start lines were crossed and tales of events between report lines and the final objective were hashed and rehashed. One of our members attending was Robert W. MacKay whose father participated in the C Squadron LdSH charge at Moreuil Wood. It was a beautiful day and





*Gary Del Villano, Robert MacKay, Dave Sproule and Jim Ellard discuss the advantage of lances over sabres when approaching the objective.*



*There's not a calorie in it!*



*Dave Scandrett and Dave Letson perform the cutting of the cake.*



*Our 2018 Corps Group*





*Darrell Dean, Jean and Jack Dangerfield*



*Gene and Claudette Lake reminiscing on the antics of former comrades.*



*Peter Jarvis and Paul Philcox discussing protocols on exchange postings.*



we got to see many old acquaintances and their lovely wives. I think the pictures interspersed with this short article more than adequately pass the message.

Three members [Gary DelVillano, Jack and Jean Dangerfield and Darrell and Heather Dean] of the Wet Coast Chapter will make their way back to the Center for the Association reunion in June 2018. News of their behavior will be the subject of the 2019 report.

All of us on the Wet Coast wish all Dragoons and their families the very best.

Bold and Swift  
Darrell Dean

## Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Leliefontein Parade 1970



*Paul Crober, Dave Sproule and Gene Lake show off the variety of Corps ties available.*

# In Retrospect

By Thomas Urbanowsky.



1957, Part 1

A year of Great Expectations and Readjustments.

The Regiment was on a move and with the new Commanding Officer, (LCol. A.L.Brady) in full “Charge” things were certainly in full flight. 56 RECCE Sqn now in Egypt, A Sqn in Fort Anne, Werl West Germany serving with NATO within the British Sector, and The Regiment was to be stationed in West Germany as part of NATO as of November 1957.

The commencement of postings IN and OUT of The Regiment and the Inner-Sqn posting and readjustments of personnel who did not wish or could not be posted to Germany and would remain with the formation of new Armour Regiment, The 8th Canadian Hussars.

On my return from leave I found myself being posted from B Sqn to HQ Sqn, Intercomm Troop, part of Signal Troop and RHQ. Shortly thereafter I was on a Ferret Scout Car drivers course, it seems that the Commanding Officer wanted a recce troop controlled

through and by RHQ for the Regiment, and thus a 7 car troop was created, manned by personnel within the Regiment.

As with all things in play, the career and trades courses were still required and conducted, all in preparation for the Spring Regimental “Shake-out-Training” and thus for the full participation in late Summer for the Divisional Exercises in Camp Gagetown NB.

The formation of the Recce Troop and its initial training started in March, crews and patrol sections selected and field training commenced. Our patrol of two cars were commanded by Cpl’s Fisher and Hills. My illustrious Crew Commander was no other than Cpl (Lush) Hills, who’s repertoire on weekends was to Home-Brew copious quantities, eat pickled eggs and consume onion sandwiches. Monday morning OPs (Observation Posts) and Route Recce training were one of extreme personal survival for the driver as the noble C.C. would delight in dropping a few personal “Bombs” within the confines of the cars turret and confine the “Driver” to the gaseous fumes which could peel the paint right off



the turret wall. There was no escaping from the driver's seat, other than sticking one's head out of the port hatch, if one could open it in time.

Halfway thru our training the Troop received a new Troop Officer, Capt. Bradish-Ellaims, a British Exchange Officer from The 4/7th Dragoons Guards and I was assigned as his driver. All went well with the recce training and our return to Camp. The following week my troop Officer called me and asked me to drive him to the town of "Pembroke". Take me to the "Automobile-Garage", I wish to purchase an automobile, after a short selection process, he was in possession of a brand new Chrysler New Yorker, Hunter Green, WOW. The following week we were off to Pembroke again, "I wish to purchase some "Spirits" says my Capt., "Yes Sir" Main Street, cross the bridge, right hand side, corner store, knew it well, (Kataba wine 47b, screw cap @ \$ 2.49.) Concluding his selection, the store staff bring out 2 x cases of "Spirits", 1x case of Scotch and 1x case of selected Gin, Vodka, Cognac etc. Place these in the "BOOT" for me please while I complete the required Forms with the Manager, Yes Sir, the "BOOT"? Ah yes, the rear compartment. The Trunk says the Manager to me, but of course, I knew it all the time. I was still in awe as we drove back to Camp in a Chrysler New Yorker, Hunter Green with 2 cases of "Spirits" in the "BOOT".

The Recce Troop did not last all that long as things got readjusted and cars were assigned to Sqn's, I was back to Intercomm Troop and assigned as a driver for the Regimental Medical Officer for the upcoming Divisional Exercise. With The Regiments completion of Spring training Exercises and the final adjustment of equipment and personnel, the preparation of movement to Camp Gagetown NB for the Divisional Training Exercises commenced. Advance Parties departed, followed by Tank Trains and road movement of "B" Vehicle convoys lasting up to three days of travel prior to arrival in the Gagetown training area. The RHQ – Signals Troop group departure of which I was part off, with my Medical Officer, nice man of Jamaican birth and British trained, at 0300 hrs. was not to his liking but remained amiable throughout the 3 day trip.

After our arrival at our HQ Sqn Bivouac camp site, and after two days of settling in, the MO was off to visit all

of the Medical facilities within the area to co-ord his required tasks. On our late arrival back to the camp site, the MO asked me if there were any laundry facilities and would I do his laundry for him, after a short pause, I replied, Sir, I am your driver, but not your batman, fine says he. I am off to my Bivi. The following morning my troop Cpl tells me to report to the Sqn Orderly room, the SSM wants to see you. Our HQ Sqn SSM, WO II Jimmy Gell, short, squat with a gruff-gravelly voice looks at me, so, you don't want to do the Medical Officers laundry, do you? No Sir, fine, I have just the job for you, back to your troop, return your vehicle kit and report to the mess tent in the morning. After two weeks of wallopings pots and pans and begging for mercy. A Salvation. The OC of C Sqn requires a scout car driver immediately.

And thus I was saved, the only scout car driver with Dish-Pan-Hands, a clean start. The OC of C Sqn, Maj Patton was very impressed with my clean turn out. At the conclusion of the Divisional Exercise period, The Regiment cleaned up its equipment, one Sqn of tanks turned over to A Sqn of the 8th Hussars, and prepared for its return to Petawawa Ont.

On arrival in Petawawa, and after a very short leave period things started to really move at an accelerated pace. Equipment cleaned, maintained, kit and stores checked and turned in. Once this phase was completed, The Regiment turned all of its stock to the new Armour Regiment, The 8th Canadian Hussars, in Camp Petawawa.

The final phase of preparations and schedule of movement of Families and Regimental personnel completed, The Royal Canadian Dragoons bid Farewell to Camp Petawawa as the bulk of the Regiment sailed from Quebec City on the 10th of October aboard "The Empress-of-France" bound for the port of Rotterdam Holland arriving on the 20th October 1957.

Disembarking at the Port of Rotterdam and boarding the train which was to take us to Germany was an experience in itself, after the full "Luxury" aboard The Empress-of-France crossing. Boarding an old dark green-gray line of train cars with Families, Children, Troops and "Box-Lunches" to a full days travel to Germany was

for the most part interesting and exhausting .

Upon our arrival in Germany, at a “Dispersal Site”, the Movement Personnel processed Married Personnel and Families first, boarding awaiting busses, followed by Officers, Sr. NCO’s. The “Single Troops” who were hauled away in whatever was left available. Our arrival in the City of Iserlohn-Westfalen to an old WWII German Army Camp, “Seitzlist Kasern”. The Barrack Blocks, were bleak, cold and in need of much “House-Keeping”. This was to become our Home for the next Two Years, and renamed as “FORT BEAUSEJOUR”, The Home Base for The Royal Canadian Dragoons and the future Canadian Armour Regiments that followed until 1970.



## WHEN I WAS A YOUNG TROOP

I’m older now. My body is frail  
My mind wanders to the past.  
I’m not a soldier anymore.  
Haven’t been for years.  
Yet I still remember!  
I can see it so clear some days.  
Like I was a young trooper.  
Full of life, full of vigour.  
Waiting to do my part.  
Enjoying every moment.  
Clear eyed, passionate.  
Learning, doing, overcoming.  
I miss those days sometimes.  
I miss the closeness of friends.  
My friends who’d take a bullet for me.  
As I would for them.  
I miss the action.  
But not the waiting!  
I miss the being part of something.  
Something way bigger than myself.

These memories will never fade.  
I’m a Dragoon! Always will be till I die.  
Best times and worst times.  
The laughter and the horrors.  
The saving and the slaughter.  
Keeping the peace or going to war.  
The comradeship and the tears.  
All of it.  
Every memory a part of who I am.  
Every scar a story.

But the best times far outweigh the worst.  
And it still brings a smile to my face!  
I am a Dragoon.  
Broken but not bowed.  
And I’ll always keep my head up proud.

Best job I ever had!!

Matt Staley

Audax Et Celer!!



# MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS FOR A LIFETIME

I have served in three Regiments, the RCD, the LdSH(RC) and the BCR (DCO). I loved being a soldier in all of them not the least of which is that many of the friends that I made while serving remain friends and we continue to see each other through our regimental association activities or maintain contact through email correspondence. One of the developments out here in BC is that because of numbers, we are more of a Black Hat organization supporting and honouring each others histories and heritage. Most of us have served in more than one regiment anyway. Most recently we gathered to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Moreuil Wood and thanks to Dave Letson, FGH, the luncheon honoured the contribution of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade because we all were there, RCD, Strathcona's and Fort Garry's. It was a fine lunch and we lifted our glasses to the memory of those that came before and who built the traditions that we continue to remember even after a century.

My Dad was a soldier in WW1 serving as a Vickers gunner, a runner and signaller in the Canadian Machine Gun Corps and served in the 3rd Canadian Division from 1916 until he was demobilized in the spring of 1919. He remained a Private soldier throughout his time overseas. I know from his letters that he was glad to be a civilian as he had had enough of the army, his fill of bully beef and plum jam and although glad to be home, felt great sadness from losing many friends and family. In the 1920s he served in a militia Artillery unit and later in the RCAF both auxiliary and Active force. But what remained important to him was that he had been in the Canadian Machine Gun Corps and was a member of that association for the remainder of his life. He died in 1977 at the age of 80 and only recently in a White Owl cigar box I found his membership card, dated 1977, in the Canadian Machine Gun (Overseas) Association. (Can you imagine White Owl cigars - smoking them with great pleasure in the car while my brother and I gagged in the back seat). I had no idea that all those years as a kid in Ontario and BC that the one thing he needed to belong to was the CMGC Association. You just can't forget the time you served with your buddies from long ago. They called each

other "chums", a word we rarely hear nowadays.

The above photo is one I took with my iPhone and is a segment from a panorama photo of the CMGC Association veterans gathered at High Park in Toronto dated May, 22, 1939 and they had just served as part of the Guard for the Royal Visit. In addition to their blazer and flannels, they wore a maroon beret with the MG badge and here they

are carrying the Corps flag, "the Maroon Arrow". They all wore the maroon arrow sewn over their division patches and it was a proud and distinctive badge - sort of like wearing Jump Wings I expect. Of course we all know the arrow as the map symbol for an MG. In the photo there are probably 150 veterans. I do know that they used to have their annual association reunion at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. I'm sure these functions were a time of merriment, high-jinks and reflection. For many years we had a Royal York Hotel highball glass on a kitchen shelf and I never gave it much thought. Many years after Dad died I learned the story as told to me by my older brother.

It was during the Great Depression and Dad, without a job and little money, had to attend the Corps Association reunion at that same hotel. Our home was in Port Credit (now in Mississauga) several miles west of Toronto and so at the end of reunion, Dad had to make his way home but without any means or transportation. No problem apparently for with that Royal York Hotel Glass, a bottle of Scotch and a stolen hotel chair, Dad set out for home. It seems he would walk until he needed a rest, he'd then sit down on the chair, pour himself a drink, rest and then repeat. I remember the chair too - it was a bentwood chair painted gold and not a part of my folks regular bedroom furniture. I love that story. None of the reunions I have ever attended have presented such a challenge.

David Sproule  
Victoria  
May 4, 2018



RCD officers at Boissou Court, spring of 1918

At 11 o'clock in the morning on the 11th of November 1918, World War One fighting came to an end. The Armistice meant that the years of bloodshed and sacrifice were over and that, as the year came to a close, the army would be turning its planning process to returning the troops to homes and loved ones. For The Royal Canadian Dragoons, it could not come too soon as it had been a difficult year.

The beginning of 1918 marked a major shift in the fighting armies. For the Germans, the Russian Revolution meant that their troops on the eastern front could be moved back to the west and confront the Allies. For the Allies, the Americans had finally entered the war but were not yet in any significant strength. The French Army was still recovering from the series of mutinies which had reduced their effectiveness, leaving the British Army doing most of the fighting on the western front. And it was against the British 5th Army, to which the Royal Canadian Dragoons were assigned, that the Germans began their last big push.

The Regiment started 1918 in the trenches in an old, familiar position around St Quentin. It was initially a quiet time, with amusement being provided by participating in raids across the front line with the one on the German "Lily" trench being particularly successful and earning the Regiment, which participated as a whole, a number of decorations. It was the calm before the storm, however, as the major German Army offensive was launched on the 21st of March against the 5th Army. The Regiment, as part of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade of the 3rd Cavalry Division, was in reserve at the time but quickly found itself in the thick of the fighting.

The German attack was highly successful, and The Regiment, found itself fighting both dismounted and mounted once again, this time in a series of rearguard actions covering the retreat of the British infantry. Engaged almost non-stop for a period of 10 days, the Cavalry Brigade finally bivouacked on the 29th of March only to be called back to action the next day. The strategic position of Moreuil Ridge was being threatened



and the Germans had already occupied a key location on the ridge called Moreuil Wood. The 3rd Division was ordered to restore the ridge and the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, the Dragoons, Strathconas and Fort Garrys, were the first on the scene and immediately went into action. The Dragoons led the charge across open ground and up a slope into concentrated machine gun fire from the wood. The charge led them right into the Morueil Wood and the resulting hand to hand combat with swords and bayonets eventually overcame the German resistance. Similar fighting by the Strathconas and the Fort Garrys secured the wood until the remainder of the Cavalry Division came up and fought off the German counter attacks. The Regiment suffered 95 members killed, wounded or missing in the 90 minutes of the fight. And it was not quite over as, two days later, the Cavalry Brigade and the Dragoons took part in an attack, this time dismounted, on Rifle Wood. These were critical actions in the blunting of the German offensive and the Regiment fought superbly throughout.

The German advance eventually petered out as they outran their supplies and after a relatively quiet summer of refitting and training, the Cavalry Brigade, this time under the wing of the Canadian Corps went back into action. The Corps was spearheading the Allied offensive which would end only with the Armistice on the 11th of November. The advance started on the 8th of August

and the Regiment fought through a number of actions until the 8th of October when they rode through the town of Le Cateau, the first Allied troops to enter the town since August of 1914. It was their last action of the war. The Cavalry Brigade remained in Belgium during the winter months and moved to England in April 1919 where the Dragoons received their new Guidon. In May of 1919, the Regiment came home.



RCD officers at time of the armistice





## Mimico's Norm Wood recalls action with Dragoons in Korean War

### Norm Wood Remembrance Day

Norm Wood sits in his Judson Street living room surrounded by memorabilia from his 30-year military career and pulls a small, paperback-sized banner out of a well-worn envelope.

More than 70 years ago, his mother had hung that same delicate silk banner in the front window of the Wood family home at 16 Wesley St. in Mimico – the five maple leaves adorned upon its front representative of the husband, three sons and one daughter she'd kissed goodbye as each, in turn, enlisted to serve in the military during the Second World War.

"My mother was just distraught all the time back then," Wood, now 90, recalled. "Every time the mailman came to the door, mum would run and hide because she didn't want to get a card saying one of her sons had been killed overseas."

Wood's father, Douglas, "got the ball rolling" in 1940 with his enlistment, followed by older brothers Len and Frank in 1941 and 1942, respectively, sister Evelyn in 1943, and finally Wood himself, just three days after his 18th birthday in 1944.

While Wood's father and sister remained in Canada during the war – Douglas at the air force base in Dunnville and Evelyn at Rideau Military Hospital in Ottawa – his brother Len served his time in the Hebrides and down around Burma with the Air Force, and Frank fought overseas with the Armoured Corps in France, Italy and Germany.

Wood, meanwhile, was set to join Frank with the Calgary Regiment in Italy shortly after completing his training at Camp Borden in 1944, but was pulled off his train to Montreal before he could embark.

"It was quite a disappointment. I wanted to be over with



Frank, who was going to claim me, but that was killed because they said they didn't want two brothers killed at the same time, which could have possibly happened, because Frank had it pretty rough over there in Italy."

Instead, Wood was sent back to Camp Borden, where, much to his chagrin, he recalls being assigned the menial tasks of white-washing rocks and scrubbing pots and pans – not exactly what the eager young soldier had in mind when he enlisted.

However, a chance encounter with General Frank Worthington (aka "the father of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps") in the kitchens one day got Wood's military career back on track.

"He looked at me and he says 'Aren't you trained in Armoured Corps? What the hell are you doing washing pots? You should be back in the Armoured Corps school,'" Wood laughed.

While Wood never succeeded in joining his brothers overseas during the war (both returned safely and retired from the service shortly thereafter), he quickly came to find that the military life suited him, so he stayed on in the service.

Following postings in Fort Churchill, Manitoba and Whitehorse, Yukon, among others, Wood was sent to fight in the Korean War in 1954, just months after marrying his first wife, Dorothea.

"It was not very nice over there, that's for sure. We were at what they called the sharp end, going through the Imjin River in North Korea," Wood remembered. "Our tanks were supposed to wield off any attack from the Chinese...so we'd sit in the mountains and fire away."

Wood, who sustained a shoulder injury in Korea, received an Ambassador of Peace medal from the Korean government in honour of his service. But when asked if he wanted to participate in a revisit program for vets to return to Korea, he politely declined.

"I hear it's pretty nice over there right now, but I didn't want to go back," he said, noting that he lost friends in the fighting. "I had enough the first time."

Still, Wood's military career continued as his family

grew – son Douglas was born in 1955, daughter Patricia in 1957 and son Donald in 1961. The children were just 12, 10 and six when their mother died.

Wood retired from the Canadian Forces in 1974 after 30 years of service.

Every Remembrance Day, he tries to get down to the Legion on Eighth Street with his wife Mildred to pay his last respects to fallen soldiers – especially those from his Royal Canadian Dragoons.

"I feel it's my duty to do it. It's all we can do, but it means a lot. Every year around Nov. 11, I get feeling sad about it. You feel bad because you're the only one still around. I have them dying off on me weekly these days," he lamented.

"To me, Remembrance Day is a day when you get thinking about your fallen comrades – and I got all kinds of them."

At 90, Wood is the sole surviving maple leaf from that family banner his mother hung proudly in their window what feels like, to him, a lifetime ago.

## Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Reunion RCD 4 Nov 1955 (Petawawa Ont)



# Gathering of Dragoons

## 2018









# SECRETARY/TREASURER'S SITREP 2017

Greetings fellow Dragoons. After the very successful annual reunion which took place in Gatineau in June of this year, it is now time for me as your Secretary/Treasurer to provide an update with respect to current membership in the RCD Association, as well as a brief financial update. Keep in mind that these numbers are accurate as of September 2018, and may have changed in collaboration with the various Chapters as annual dues or Life Memberships are received.

## Member Status

The chart below contains the current information regarding member status that has been collated from the existing RCD Association database:

## Financial Summary

Chapter Name	Members	Annual Dues Not Current	2018 Annual Dues Paid	Life Member
Alberta Chapter	51	37	5	9
Atlantic Region Chapter	133	21	39	73
British Columbia Chapter	23	7	6	10
Kingston Chapter	50	19	1	30
National Capital Region Chapter	79	13	19	47
Ottawa Valley Chapter	42	21	2	19
Outside Canada	4			4
Quebec Chapter	9	1	1	7
South Central Ontario Chapter	111	45	13	53
<b>Totals</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>252</b>

The RCD Association is in very good financial shape as follows:

Current Chequing Account: \$23,060.48 (effective 17 September 2018)

Guaranteed Investment Certificates:

- GIC \$8,000 @ 2% maturing 22 Oct 2019
- GIC \$22,000 @1.35% maturing 30 March 2020
- GIC \$25,000 @1.50% guaranteed (up to a maximum 12% linked to TSX market performance) maturing 10 Aug 2021



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# GUILD DONORS 2017

Guild activities depend upon donors from all parts of the Regimental family and friends both individuals and corporations. Unfortunately, space in this magazine does not permit us to thank all who gave, so we have published the names of those who donated \$100 or more. Many others have generously given and we certainly thank all donors.

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### THE WELL DRESSED DRAGOON

From *Military Uniforms in Canada, 1665-1970* by Jack L. Summers and Rene Chartrand

The original equipment of the Cavalry School Corps consisted of a white buff leather pouch belt with black pouch, and white sword slings and sword-knots. The sword issued to the troopers appears to be the 1882-pattern British cavalry sword. Their carbine was the Snider-Enfield, although Turnbull complained bitterly about this weapon as it was useless beyond 400 metres. On dispatch to the Northwest Rebellion, A Troop was armed with the Winchester Model 1876 carbine. It was vastly superior to the Snider, but Turnbull continued to press for the new Martini-Henry cavalry carbine.

When the corps was re-designated Canadian Dragoons in 1892, and subsequently The Royal Canadian Dragoons, the dress was changed completely to that of dragoon pattern: scarlet cavalry tunic with dark-blue collar, cuffs, and shoulder-straps. The collar was trimmed top and bottom with yellow cord, the yellow cord of the cuffs formed an Austrian knot, and the shoulder-straps were edged with yellow. Blue cloth edged the front of the tunic, which closed with eight brass regimental buttons. Dark-blue overalls and pantaloons were trimmed down the outside seam with a single wide yellow stripe.

The granting of the title Royal also was accompanied by authorization of unit badges of the Royal Cypher surmounted by the Imperial Crown.<sup>10</sup> A white Canadian-pattern helmet with brass spike, chin chain, and helmet plate was worn in full dress. The band on the dark-blue pillbox forage cap was yellow cloth for the men and gold lace for officers and senior NCOs.

In keeping with the recommendations of the General Officer Commanding the Militia, the pouch belt, waist-belt, sword slings and gauntlets were of brown leather, which did not require cleaning with messy pipeclay. Black Wellington boots with steel jack spurs were worn in mounted orders of dress. For drill and service dress the men were issued a red serge five-buttoned frock with blue collar and shoulder-straps, and plain cuffs.

At the same time the corps finally received the Martini-Henry carbine. It also carried the 1882- and 1885-pattern British cavalry sword with steel scabbard. Lances were carried on some occasions, although this was not normally a weapon for dragoons.

The plate depicts a field officer of The Royal Canadian Dragoons in full-dress mounted order in 1897. The heavy gold braiding on the cuffs is indicative of his senior rank. In the background is an officer in the dark-blue patrol jacket trimmed with black mohair tapes and braid.

During one engagement in South Africa, the stealthy approach of a party of Boers was signalled by unusual activity among a herd of nervous springbok. Heeding the warning of the graceful animals, the detachment stood to in time to beat off a determined enemy attack. To perpetuate this event, authority was granted to adopt the springbok as an official badge of the regiment, in addition to the Royal Cypher.<sup>15</sup> The bounding springbok is still worn by the regiment as the cap and collar badges of The Royal Canadian Dragoons.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1914, the regiment replaced the white helmet by the brass dragoon helmet with black plume. Once again, white buff-leather belts and slings made their appearance to differentiate between service dress and the full dress reserved for ceremonial parades.