

CoTR Update - December 2024

Dragoons and members of the Regimental Family,



The Regiment

It has already been 6 months since I was appointed as Colonel of our Regiment, and I thought that an update was due on how the Regiment fares. I am happy to report that our new Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major hit the ground running in June and as expected, the Regiment continues to be well led.

I have taken the opportunity to visit the Regiment three times over the past few months to orient myself on activities, equipment and the sense of morale around the Regiment. I will update you on the people, the equipment, the training and the historical remembrance as I have seen it.

The Regiment has a great proportion of young soldiers and officers. Despite the well-publicized difficulties which the CAF has experienced in recruiting, the Armour School has been providing a steady stream of troopers and subalterns. Many are being deployed within 18 months of arriving at the Regiment, and as a result are highly motivated and excited about their military profession. This high deployment ratio is certainly different from what I experienced so many years ago as Commanding Officer and is great to see.

With so many personnel having only recently reached their basic training milestones, there are many tactical lessons being learned when the Regiment goes to the field or uses the new simulation systems. While the lessons may appear to be basic, they are learning the true fundamentals of tactical manoeuvre on the battlefield, and so it is really encouraging to see the progress.

As the Regiment prepares to deploy B Squadron in the summer of 2025, and A Squadron early in 2026, they have focussed their manning around these two deployments to maximize the ability of troops to get relevant tactical training. Consequently, D Squadron as an entity has been stood down temporarily, and the personnel have been redistributed amongst A, B and HQ Sqn, and RHQ. This has allowed for true structural manning – as an example, a cavalry troop of 6 cars.

The Regimental holdings of “A” vehicles is not expansive, and they have only recently received an influx of LAV 6 vehicles to allow for pre deployment training of B Squadron.

There is a solid learning curve as our troopers get qualified on LAV 6 – most received Primary Combat Function (PCF) qualifications on the Tactical Armoured Patrol Vehicle (TAPV) as part of basic training.

The use of simulators has evolved to the point where individual crew skills can be exercised in a squadron context – with each station being crewed by a driver, gunner and crew commander. This has greatly improved the level of fidelity a squadron can achieve in simulation and improves the crew experience. My observations of A Squadron in simulation showed a great learning environment and high morale.

C Squadron, still located in Gagetown, has deployed its Leopard 2 vehicles to Latvia, and is reconfiguring from a tank to a cavalry squadron. They are expected to begin platform testing on the new LRSS (LAV Recce Surveillance System) in January of 2025. This new vehicle platform – long delayed but still promising significant surveillance capabilities, will be an

exciting addition to the Armour Corps, and C Squadron are looking forward to putting the prototypes to the test.

HQ Sqn and RHQ continue to do their utmost to train themselves while supporting and directing training of the sabre squadrons. Their ingenuity in overcoming shortages of vehicles, equipment and commodities continues to impress, as does the quality and professionalism of our crewmen and support trades.

In short, while the CAF and the Army continue to struggle with funding and equipment issues, I found the Regiment to be motivated, eager to deploy, and working hard to master the tools that they have to hand. Overall, a truly impressive Regiment and group of soldiers.

The 124th Commemoration of the Battle at Leliefontein was held on a beautiful sunny morning, where the Regiment had an exemplary turnout on parade. The parade was preceded by a combined and mixed dinner, which was well attended and enjoyable for all, with the usual excellent meal provided by Ullrichs'. A special thanks to the members of the Old Guard, who continue to come back to the Regiment every year and show their support. Capt (Ret'd) Ken Pichie was driven off of the parade square in fine style, and we were pleased that the 2024 Laureate of the Vimy Award, Gen (Ret'd) Walt Natynczyk and Leslie continue to find the time to come back to their Regiment and show their support and renew old acquaintances.

The Guild

The Guild continues to support the Regiment and is looking for ways to maximize deployment support to families as we begin a busy deployment cycle. There is always room for contributions – either financial or through volunteering time and expertise, so those who have a little time or money are strongly encouraged to reach out to us through the guild website at www.dragoons.ca. Our patron, Marjolaine Hudon, organized an exceptional fundraising luncheon at the Rideau Club in October to raise money to help the Guild with its ongoing mission to support the members of the Regimental family. The luncheon featured addresses by Gen Rick Hillier and retired Ambassador Nadir Patel, and was an excellent event. Our patron wishes to extend her best wishes to the entire Regimental family, and we in turn wish her well in her new position as head of RBC Operations in the Province of Quebec.



The Association

The RCD Association continues planning for the commemorative trip to Leeuwarden in May 2025, where they will remember the contributions of Dragoons 80 years ago. Our Regimental Alumni are always encouraged to support Association activities, where you will rediscover the comradeship that makes service in our Regiment so special.

Well Wishes and Upcoming events

We celebrate our 141st birthday as Dragoons on the 21st of December this year, a significant age which causes one to reflect on the service and sacrifice which our Regimental Family has given, and continues to give. I truly hope that all take pride in their relationship with our proud Regiment, and take advantage of the genuine goodwill and camaraderie available to those who have the time and inclination to participate in our events. The image to the right is the CO's Christmas Card from 1898, a cool piece of history indeed. A few dates for you to mark on your upcoming calendars:



21 December 2024 – our 141st birthday

20-22 March 2025- IRONSIDES Bonspiel in Gananoque

4 April 2025 – Annual Cavalry Luncheon at the RCMI in Toronto

15 April 2025– 80th Commemoration of the liberation of Leeuwarden

18 July 2025 – Henry Sampson Golf Tournament in Kingston

19 July 2025 – RCAC BBQ in Perth

Bold and Swift

SM Cadden, President

Steve Cadden, MGen (Ret'd)

Colonel of the Regiment & President of the Guild

