



The Royal Canadian Dragoons
Worthington Barracks
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13 January 2025

Dear Dragoons and members of the Regimental Family,

It is a great privilege to write to you for the first time since being appointed Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of The Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) over the Summer of 2024. We recognize and appreciate the remarkable work and unwavering commitment of our predecessors, LCol Nick Forsyth and CWO Chris Leblanc, whose efforts positioned us to continue to face our future challenges with strength and confidence. It is a great honour for us to share with you the activities and accomplishments of the Regiment over the past months, reflecting the dedication, skill, and professionalism of our soldiers and leaders.

Having committed many of our troops in support of operational deployments over the course of the last year, the Summer marked a return for many within the Regiment. In June 2024, D Sqn and C Sqn returned from Op REASSURANCE, where they served as the Recce Tp and Tank Sqn respectively in the Canadian-led enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group (BG). A particularly proud moment for the Regiment was C Sqn's performance in the Canadian Army Trophy (CAT) tank gunnery competition at the Adazi Training Grounds in Latvia, where they won top prize. Competing against eight crews from seven other NATO nations, their precision and speed in gunnery were unmatched, a true testament to their training and commitment. After a thirty-three year hiatus, this internationally renowned competition, organized and conducted by C Sqn included a dismounted run to mount vehicles, static shoots, and an obstacle-ridden battle run. Well done C Squadron! The Regiment also saw the return of several members who were deployed in support of Op UNIFIER, and finally, the return of all soldiers and officers deployed on Op UNION in August 2024, an important mission that contributes to Canada's efforts in Eastern Europe, supporting Global Affairs Canada (GAC) initiatives. The RCD provided invaluable task force leadership and staff on this mission, leading two successful rotations to the region.

Following their redeployment to Canada from Latvia, C Sqn began the transition from heavy to light cavalry following the Canadian Army's (CA) directive to centralize the Leopard fleet under the command of the LdSH(RC). Although this significant milestone marks the end of a very successful era within the Regiment, we look upon the shift away from Leopard 2 as an opportunity for us to modernize and integrate new capabilities for the CA. The Leopard 2 fleet will remain a valued part of our Regimental history, and we are very proud of the many teams, wearing either the RCD or the 12e RBC cap badge who came together over the years with professionalism, and demonstrated such a high level of tactical and technical competency. C Sqn leadership has carefully managed the transition, ensuring that all training and resource adjustments, as well as the provision of support to all members has been expertly handled. C Sqn now embarks on critical work associated with the trialing and testing (RAMD) of the new LRSS (Light Reconnaissance Surveillance System), a sophisticated platform that will enhance the lethality of the CA in our defense and deterrence missions on the global scale.

The Fall of 2024 was a period of intensive training and professional growth. The Regiment conducted progressive individual and collective training serials, including Ex WALKING DRAGOON and Ex CHARGING DRAGOON, two dry training exercises conducted in the Petawawa Range and

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Training Area that focused on building crew, troop, and finally squadron level skills. The squadrons worked tirelessly at all levels under a deployed Regimental HQ to share and perfect reconnaissance TTPs, challenged through the breadth of cavalry tasks. These skills were tested in a culminating troop level live fire exercise, Ex SABOT DRAGOON that demanded effective command, control, and gunnery skills at the crew and troop levels. Witnessing the growth of tactical and technical skills among our junior soldiers and leaders during this period was truly inspiring. None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of HQ Sqn, who worked tirelessly to decrease our Vehicles Off Road (VOR) and set the conditions to meet and exceed our training goals. Throughout this period, the Regiment ran twenty-one separate serials of primary combat function courses, such as driver and gunner courses, MUAS operator, and standard first aid, granting a total of 377 qualifications to our members. Additionally, there are seventeen newly appointed MCpls within the Regiment following the conduct of two RQ MCpl courses. This incredible accomplishment is testament to the professionalism and dedication of the Regiment's junior leaders, and the organization of our Regimental Headquarters Operations team.

The efforts during the Fall training period have ensured that our cavalry squadrons are well-prepared for future deployments. B Sqn is set to deploy to Latvia in June 2025 for a six-month rotation (Op REASSURANCE 25-02). The sqn will report directly to the Commander of the Multinational Brigade – Latvia as the brigade cavalry sqn and will be equipped primarily with LAV 6.0 vehicles. They will be relieved in Latvia by A Sqn in December 2025 (Op REASSURANCE 26-01). Further pre-deployment training up to brigade level over the coming months will validate all requirements for this important mission.

To enable these extensive activities, the Regiment undertook significant restructuring measures. In September 2024, we collapsed D Sqn in order to support the training and mounting efforts of A and B Sqns and tasked several members in support of formation deployment mounting efforts. All brigade units are working closely together to ensure our successful deployments and the achievement of shared objectives.

Over the past few months, the Regiment actively participated in several brigade-wide events, showcasing our competitive spirit and camaraderie. Early in the Fall, all junior leaders participated in Ex WALKING BEAR, a brigade-wide professional development seminar that fostered collaboration and understanding of brigade capabilities through focussed discussions on the roles and responsibilities of each unit. This was a valuable opportunity for us to engage with our brigade partners. Further, our strength and mental resilience were demonstrated during Ex IRON WARRIOR in August 2024, the annual two-day sporting challenge that saw the RCD team place second overall in the major unit category. Very impressive by all participants! Nearing the holiday season, over 350 Dragoons participated in Ex RUCKING BEAR, a 13km ruck march, organized this year by the RCD, which saw over 2000 brigade soldiers test their resilience on an early (and chilly!) December morning. The RCD also demonstrated our athleticism and competitive spirit during the brigade-wide sporting competition, Ex OLYMPIAN BEAR (this year held prior to the winter break). The RCD took first place overall within 2 CMBG, winning both the basketball and volleyball team competitions. Cpl Prenovost won top female competitor in the Military Fitness Competition, and the Regiment earned the spectator award, awarded to the unit who demonstrates the highest level of camaraderie and team spirit. Congratulations to all competitors and spectators! No easy feat given our competition.

The Regiment also celebrated several historic and ceremonial events. We were thrilled to welcome our new Colonel of Regiment (CoTR), MGen (ret'd) Stephen Cadden, who was appointed to the position in June 2024. MGen (ret'd) Cadden follows the outstanding service of MGen (ret'd) Dean Milner, whose dedication to all Dragoons as the CoTR has been outstanding. Further, we commemorated the 124th Anniversary of the Action at Leliefontein by holding a mixed and combined mess dinner in concert with a

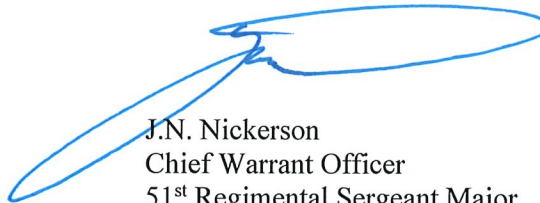
Regimental parade held at Worthington Barracks in Petawawa. The parade took place on an unusually sunny and warm Saturday morning, and was well attended by currently serving members, retired Dragoons, extended regimental family, and a spirited cadre of Dragoon cadets. We were privileged to be joined by our Senior Serving Dragoon, BGen Steven Graham as the reviewing officer, and received an inspirational address from our new CoTR, who highlighted the strength and impact of our Dragoons. It is with this in mind that we acknowledge the remarkable achievements of Gen (ret'd) Walt Natynczyk, who was the 2024 laureate of the Vimy Award, awarded for his significant and outstanding contributions to Canadian security and defence. Gen (ret'd) Natynczyk was also appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada on 18 December 2024. Amongst the many awards and recognitions at all levels presented to currently serving Dragoons over the last few months, we recognize the appointment of MWO Whitehead to the rank of Member of the Order of Military Merit, presented this past Fall by the Governor General of Canada.

As we prepare for upcoming deployments and adapt to changes within the CA and the RCAC, we remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence and readiness. The dedication of our soldiers and leaders ensures that the Regiment remains a pillar of strength within the CA. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we will navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, reinforcing the legacy and future of The Royal Canadian Dragoons. We look forward to the next opportunity for the greater Regimental Dragoon family to connect, notably our Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Leeuwarden which will take place on 15 April 2025 in concert with the Town of Petawawa. All details will be shared when available.

Bold and Swift!



C.M. Summerfield
Lieutenant-Colonel
60th Commanding Officer
The Royal Canadian Dragoons



J.N. Nickerson
Chief Warrant Officer
51st Regimental Sergeant Major
The Royal Canadian Dragoons