



THE DRAGOON

2025



The RCD return to Eenrum 80 years later



Dragoon RV 2026 to celebrate the 52nd Anniversary of the RCD Association

**Hosted by the South Central Ontario Chapter
12-14 June 2026**

**Nottawasaga Inn Resort & Conference Centre
(6015 Highway 89, Alliston, Ontario, L9R 1A4)**

**Ladies and Gentlemen
Come one, come all!**

**This event is open to all members, both past and present, who
have served with the RCD. Planning has already begun with the
intention of keeping it cost effective for all and to encourage
younger Dragoons to come out and take part.**

**More to follow (to include registration and payment options) in the
coming months from the South Central Ontario Chapter through
the Regimental website and RCD Association Facebook page.**

Hope to see everyone in Alliston in June 2026!

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The Dragoon 2025

The Dragoon is published annually on behalf of the Royal Canadian Dragoons Association.



The RCD Association Membership Application Form can be found at <https://dragoons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-Royal-Canadian-Dragoons-Association-Membership-App-2021v1.2.fillable.pdf>.

Submissions to *The Dragoon* are always welcome and may be sent in electronic format (MS Word) to the Editor at rcdassoc.editor@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is 1 May of each year. *The Dragoon* welcomes photos of all Regimental and Association activities, past and present. Where possible, photos should be the original or at least as high resolution as possible (300 dpi or higher, JPEG format). Do not embed photos in the article but send as separate attachments. Please include a detailed caption with each photo and the photographer's name. We regret that we cannot guarantee that all submitted articles or photos will be used.

Official website of The Royal Canadian Dragoons: <https://dragoons.ca/>

Official website of The RCD Association: <https://dragoons.ca/regiment-family/the-association/>

Regimental Kitshop: <https://dragoons.ca/regiment-family/kitshop/>

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Cover Photo Credits

TOP PHOTO: D Sqn, RCD passing in front of the Eenrum Town Hall (or Raadhuis) on 16 April 1945.

BOTTOM PHOTO: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour group in front of the Eenrum Town Hall on 6 May 2025.

PHOTO PAGE 1 (TOC): 3 May 2025. Left to right: Tom Skelding, Dave Chaloux, Lais Barsauskas, Rick Hillier, Joyce Hillier, Randy Keirstead, Wayne Dale, and Terry Phillips. For more information on this recent visit, part of the 80th anniversary celebrations marking the liberation of Leeuwarden in 1945, look for the commemorative logo (right).



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PATRON OF THE ASSOCIATION MESSAGE

**Gen (ret'd) Rick Hillier,
OC, CMM, ONL, MSC, CD**



Gen (ret'd) Rick Hillier

ABOVE: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Village of Mildam, 2 May 2025. D Sqn, RCD supported by B Sqn, fought to secure the bridgehead over De Tsjonger of Kuunder River at Mildam on 12 April 1945.

In May of this year, the 125th anniversary of the RCD coincided with the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands from both terrible Nazi brutality and the equally horrible winter of starvation (where the Nazis refused food shipments into the northwestern part of Holland in retaliation for Dutch resistance attacks on German troops) and a small group that represented a snapshot of what our Association is and the strength it brings.

Just under 40 of us, guided by our own intrepid Tom Skelding, met up at the Amsterdam airport on 1 May. Five Dragoons, fresh from the Regimental lines in Petawawa (trips paid by generous Canadians), inspired the rest of us with their enthusiasm, intelligence, dedication and positive outlook on life. In short, their youth! They were the very image, in so many ways, of those who fought to bring World War II to an end in Holland in the spring of 1945 and who we were there to remember and honour.

Others of us were post-WWII veterans. A few recently retired, others with many more years between them and the Springbok they once wore. Stories were told, some retold (after all, in these more mature years, the memory is not always what it used to be), and linkages found. Those stories were all about a life of service to Canada and Canadians. It mattered not if it was C Squadron, Gagetown; Recce Squadron, Germany; Headquarters Squadron in Petawawa; or anyplace else — the Springbok, and especially the people wearing it, unite us all.

Fully half of our small band were family members, with many being the spouses who had served beside us, without recognition, through good times and bad. One Dragoon brought along his thirteen-year-old daughter. This was surely a trip of a lifetime for her and her dad as through this experience, and perhaps for the very first time, this young girl began to understand what being part of our Regiment truly means. Lastly, we had two couples, from England, whose fathers had been Dragoons and part of the battle to finally win World War II, those 80 years ago. Many of us were Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Cyprus and/or Afghanistan vets, some with great challenges that made a trip like this all the more daunting.



Our trip was exhilarating. Welcomed by thousands of Dutch men, women and children. Fed, toasted and cheered at every turn. Guided, on an amazing combination of WWII-era restored vehicles through Friesland province along the same route where Dragoons led the 1st Canadian Army in those final days, final fights, and final battle casualties. Event after event exploded on us. Marching into Dokkum after sailing into the centre of the town on the famous amphibious DUKWs, moving through an enormous and welcoming crowd in Leeuwarden, participating in the moving National Ceremony of Remembrance at Holten Canadian War Cemetery where almost 1,500 Canadians, including 12 Dragoons, lie.

We realized just what an impact one regiment, composed of those like our small group, could have and how critical our Dragoons are today in a volatile and threatening world. We realized that, even after 80 years, the Dutch still remember and value that Regiment. They remember Don White, Wilfred Berry, Donald

BOTTOM LEFT: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Town of Burgum, 2 May 2025. Left to right: Doug Elliott, Chrissy Mathers, Lisa Elliott, and Kevin Mathers.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Telegram sent to Tpr Wilfred Berry's family notifying them of his death.



TOP LEFT: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Holten Canadian War Cemetery, 4 May 2025. Memorial Day ceremony. Wayne Dale with Lais Barsauskas and Rick Hillier laying the RCD wreath.

TOP MIDDLE: Tpr Don White on a Staghound scout car.

TOP RIGHT: A British DUKW carries American airborne troops and supplies across the River Waal at Nijmegen, 30 September 1944.

McDonald (who was just 19 when he was killed) and the others who served and sacrificed while wearing the Springbok. One of our commanders, while accepting the surrender of an arrogant German commander, was challenged to show his credentials. He looked left and right at the tired, unshaven, dirty and worn Dragoons and said simply, "These are my credentials."

The men and women who wear, or wore, the Springbok remain 'our credentials' and our connection is our RCD Association. You connect to all the above, and more, by belonging. If you belong, you gain more by being active in it. The RCD Association is yours and at the same time it's a national institution powered by one word: DRAGOON! It's my privilege to be the Patron of that institution.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 

M.P. 31 287 R.R. 10-11 (1914) H.Q. 1770-39-1935	
CANADIAN NATIONAL TELEGRAPHS	
IG	FILE H.Q. 405-B-38,300
CASUALTY (REPORT DELIVERY) OTTAWA	
TO:-	MISS SHIRLEY JEAN BERRY 51 ONTARIO ST ST CATHARINES ONT
17TH APRIL 1945	REGRET DEEPLY B204 TROOPER WILFRED ROBERT
GEOERGE BERRY HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY REPORTED KILLED IN ACTION TWELFTH APRIL 1945 STOP YOU SHOULD RECEIVE FURTHER DETAILS BY MAIL DIRECT FROM THE UNIT IN THE THEATRE OF WAR STOP TO PREVENT POSSIBLE AID TO OUR ENEMIES DO NOT DIVULGE DATE OF CASUALTY OR NAME OF UNIT	



PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

MESSAGE

**Capt (ret'd) Thomas Skelding,
MMM, CD**

The Regimental Association, that grand collection of former and serving Drag-
oons, which includes support trades and their 'fire-team partners' spread across the
country, is in good shape and doing well. We are organized into ten Chapters from NL
to BC, and we even have a few members outside of Canada. The Association exists to foster,
maintain and promote the traditions, well-being and esprit de corps of the Regiment.
We are a support group, if you will — supporting the Regiment in all its endeavours
and, equally importantly, supporting each other and the Dagoon family, wherever
needed.

Association activities in 2024-2025 were greatly supported by members and well
reported through emails, websites and social media. Members of the Association have
attended Regimental celebrations, funerals and memorials to fallen members of both
the Regiment and the Association, and RCD Cadet parades. They also held their own
celebrations and ceremonies to keep the history and traditions of the Regiment alive
and well.

The year 2025 marks the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands. The
Association-led Royal Canadian Dragoons Battlefield and Honour Tour was conducted
from 1-8 May with 39 participants following in the footsteps of our Dagoon forefathers
of 1945. Participants included 24 association members, spouses and one member's
daughter; five soldiers from the Regiment who were sponsored by the Association (1)
and Guild (4); and 10 family members of WWII Dragoons who fought and died in the
Netherlands. The Mayor of Petawawa Gary Serviss and his wife joined the tour group
from 3-5 May, participating in events with the group in Dokkum, marking Memorial



**Capt (ret'd) Thomas
Skelding**

**ABOVE: Capt Tom
Skelding (bottom right)
and fellow Dragoons, RCD
Battlefield and Honour
Tour, Liberation Day,
Leeuwarden, 5 May 2025.**



FAR LEFT: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Village of Eenrum, 6 May 2025. Tom Smith and Kathy Nayduk raising the RCD flag over the Eenrum village square after it was presented to the town.

LEFT: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Village of Burdaard, 3 May 2025. Tom Skelding presenting the village of Burdaard a Regimental history book and a framed print of Lt W.T. Buddell who died of his wounds on 16 April 1945 after being shot in the shoulder by a Nazi sniper the day before while liberating Burdaard. Photo by Lieuwe Bouma, Fotografie.

Day and Liberation Day. Our association members participated in commemorative events as wreath layers, wreath bearers, raising the Regimental flag and speaking at events. A great representation of the Regimental family, well done to all!

The Association is always ready to welcome new members. I urge you to contact the Chapter in your area and talk to them about becoming a member. Current members should pass the word to their buddies. I recommend that you visit the website (<https://dragoons.ca/>) and the National Association Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/227946981121973>) as often as possible. There is a wealth of information, such as Association and Regimental events, and it changes constantly.

A huge thank you to Perry Wells, our journal editor, for another superb edition. So please read on and enjoy.

Oh yes! I'd like to announce that the South-Central Ontario (SCO) Chapter of the RCD Association is hosting our biennial national reunion (aka RV 26). It will be held in Alliston, ON from 12 to 14 June 2026. Louis Lucier and team are in the planning stages to make it the highlight

of the 2026 social calendar. There will be more information in this edition, possibly even a registration sheet for you to send in (*see the inside front cover for details*).

We, as an association, hope you will join us at some point, regardless of rank, trade, or even amount of time served with the Royal Canadian Dragoons. We have many members and foster many relationships with our combat support and combat service support arms. We still have a ton of memories to share.

We may not have a bar, but we do serve friendship... It goes without saying that old Dragoons will have a good time wherever they get together.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 🚢

BELOW: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Hotel de Wereld, Wageningen, 1 May 2025. Hotel de Wereld was where German General Johannes Blaskowitz capitulated all German forces in the Netherlands to Canadian General Charles Foulkes on 5 May 1945. Each year, 5 May is celebrated as Liberation Day in the Netherlands to commemorate the end of German occupation.





EDITOR OF THE DRAGON MESSAGE

LCol (ret'd) Perry Wells, CD



LCol (ret'd) Perry Wells

Hello from the Editor's desk. It is a sunny day here in the nation's capital as I sit at my computer, putting the finishing touches to this, my fourth edition of *The Dragoon*, and contemplate a few opening remarks.

Reading through the articles commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the Liberation of the Netherlands, I was taken by the fact that 2025 marked several significant (and maybe some not so significant) anniversaries. Milestones such as:

- 250th anniversary of the Invasion of Québec during the American War of Independence. The invasion was ultimately unsuccessful, with a major battle fought on 31 December 1775 resulting in a decisive American defeat. Interestingly, it is also the 250th birthday of the U.S. Army.
- 80th anniversary of the United Nations.
- 75th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.
- 50th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.
- 30th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ABOVE: June 1996, IFOR, Rotation 0, 2 CAMNB (Canadian Multi-National Brigade) staff in front of the HQ building just outside the village of Ćoralići, Bosnia and Herzegovina. I chose this photo as it complements Jeff Barr's excellent feature article about his time as an UNMO in the Bihać Pocket in 1995 and the Senior Liaison Officer with 2 CAMNB in 1996. Jeff is seated in the front row, fourth from the right. Jim Ferron is also seated in the front row, tenth from the left. I'm standing in the second row, 13th from the left (just behind the Brigade Commander Bruce Jeffries (8CH(PL))). Ray Ruckpaul (8CH(PL) and RCD) can be seen in the back row, seventh from the left. (RIP my dear friend.) Missing from the photo is then Deputy Brigade Commander Rick Hillier.



LEFT: General (ret'd) Walter Natynczyk, pictured during a 2011 visit to the troops serving in Afghanistan, was named the recipient of the prestigious 2024 Vimy Award.

BELOW: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, Sexbierum, Friesland Province, Liberation Day, 5 May 2025. Dave Chaloux with reenactors from the Keep Them Rolling organization.

- 25th anniversary of the repatriation of Canada's Unknown Soldier.

And now some of the not so major events:

- 40th anniversary of when I joined the RCD in Lahr following phase training.
- 5th anniversary of Denis Levesque "badgering" me to become the Editor of *The Dragoon*.

As you make your way through this edition, you will notice that we pay homage to some of these milestones. The opening Messages by the Patron of the RCD Association, Gen (ret'd) Rick Hillier, and the Association President, Capt (ret'd) Tom Skelding, both cover in detail the May 2025 RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII and the Liberation of the Netherlands. There is also an outstanding Feature Article by British Col (ret'd) David Sneath whose father, Cpl John Sneath, was the B Sqn, RCD, Int NCO when the Regiment participated in the liberation of the Netherlands. David was part of the Netherlands' trip in May. See his article entitled *Victory in Europe – A Personal Story*.

LCol (ret'd) Jeff Barr submitted an excellent "prequel" article to Jim Ferron's piece last year about the 2023 Silver Cross Mother and the IFOR mission. In 1995, Jeff was in a unique position to see firsthand the transition from the end of the war in Bosnia to Rotation 0 of the IFOR mission. Having been there myself on Brigade staff, I found Jeff's article (*Bosnia On My Mind: The Bihać Pocket – A Look Back*) to be a superb synopsis of the events around the 30th anniversary of the end of the war in Bosnia.

MGen (ret'd) Jim Ferron was kind enough to submit another article for this year's *Draagoon* entitled *2024 Vimy Award Laureate – Gen Walt Natynczyk*, celebrating the amazing career of General Natynczyk. (Jim, that's two articles in two years. I hope that you keep the trend going in 2026.)

Also, I came across an interesting "sequel" (or addendum) to last year's *Draagoon* article about *The Military Achievements of the van Straubensee Family in The Royal Canadian Dragoons and the Canadian Army*. In the Cavalry and Guards Club (London, UK) summer 2025 newsletter (on pages 8 and 9), Thomas van Straubensee goes into further detail of his family's incredible military history by looking at their extensive collection of orders, decorations and campaign medals on display at the Club. I encourage all to read it at (https://issuu.com/rawlingsdesign/docs/the_cavalry_and_guards_club_-_summer_2025).

Be sure and check out the Chapters Update section to see what the other Chapters have been up to over the past 12+ months. And as always, closing out this edition is a summary of the business side of the Association and the Last Post.

I would be remiss if, on your behalf, I did not thank Julie Simoneau at *Esprit de Corps* magazine for her dedication and meticulous attention to detail putting this, her fourth edition of the *Springbok/Draagoon* together. A huge thank you from all of us.

I am indebted to everybody who contributed to this year's *Draagoon*. Thank you. As always, people are encouraged to submit Letters to the Editor, articles, anecdotes, or book reviews for inclusion in future editions. Submissions can be sent to me at the following email address (rcdassoc.editor@gmail.com).

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 🚢





CHAPTER UPDATE

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

By Tom Skelding

How ya gettin' on? Greetings from the East Coast Dragoons. The NL Chapter is on patrol securing the eastern flank from all enemies foreign and domestic.

The NL Chapter had a great year with the usual get-togethers to celebrate Regimental events in a true Dragoon fashion.

On a beautiful Thursday, 7 November 2024, we gathered for a lunch, a yarn, then a Toast to the Regiment for its success in the Action at Leliefontein, 7 November 1900.

The Veterans Appreciation Dinner at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 50, Conception Bay South, in late November was a grand occasion and a time for a few of us to gather with our 'fire team partners' for a meal, a pint or two, and of course another good yarn. As expected, we had the largest unit representation at this event.

The 21st of December is always a fun time to socialize with members of the RCR Association NL Chapter, at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 1, St. John's and to jointly toast our Regiments on our shared Regimental birthday. We couldn't help but to ruffle the feathers (pun intended) of the RCR by giving them the official version of that historical occasion. Being the Senior Regiment, we also ob-

tained bragging rights by the number of Dragoons in attendance as compared to our RCR brothers. All in all, another great day.

On the evening of 12 March 2025 several Chapter members attended a Veterans Appreciation night where the students of O'Donnell High School, St. John's hosted a dinner to show their appreciation to the military and veterans for their service.

A small group got together on 15 April 2025 for a lunch to recognize the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and, of course, the anniversary of the liberation of Leeuwarden, which holds a spot close to all Dragoons.

We were saddened this year to lose two Dragoons, Ron Pinsent and Phil Simon. They were given a send-off in true Dragoon style and have now gone to RV with their comrades in the leaguer up above. May they rest in peace.

A Dragoon presence is always evident, at events across the province such as Memorial Day, Remembrance Day, Quilt of Valour presentations, and a variety of other veteran-based functions.



TOP LEFT: The Leeuwarden 2025 get together on 15 April 2025. Left to right: Sean Stafford, Tom Skelding, Dave Lane, Larry Mercer, and Joe White.

TOP RIGHT: Leliefontein lunch get together on 7 November 2024. Left to right: Ron Pender, Winston Childs, Dave Lane, Tom Skelding, and Sean Stafford.

MIDDLE LEFT: A few NL Dragoons attending a Veterans Appreciation Dinner at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 50, Conception Bay South in late November 2024. Left to right: Sean Stafford, Winston Childs, Bill McCormick, Larry Mercer, Tom Skelding, and Kevin Hickey.

MIDDLE RIGHT: NL Dragoons at a Regimental Birthday beer call at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 1, St. John's. Left to right: Brad Sainsbury, Tom Skelding, Larry Skinner, Larry Mercer, Dave Lane, Larry Wiseman, Joe White, and Derrick Hanrahan.

BOTTOM LEFT: NL Dragoons at a Regimental Birthday beer call at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 1, St. John's. Left to right: Larry Mercer, Dave Lane, Larry Wiseman, Larry Skinner, Joe White, Brad Sainsbury, Derrick Hanrahan, and Tom Skelding.

We wish all Dragoons a safe, healthy and successful 2025. If ya come from away to NL, drop on over, we'll fire up a scoff, tell a few lies, have a nice India Pale Ale, and go listen to Larry Skinner and The Toutons playing at Erin's Pub.

Until then ... It's another fine day to be a Dragoon!

"Long may your big jib draw."

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 



CHAPTER UPDATE

ATLANTIC REGION

By Dave MacLaren

On behalf of all members from the Atlantic Region Chapter, we wish you all good health and happiness for the coming year.

Over the past 12 months, the Chapter marched on with our usual events. The Chapter continues to hold monthly luncheons at Mingler's Restaurant & Pub in Oromocto the last Thursday of every month. These informal get-togethers are always very well attended with lots of laughs and stories. On average, we have about 25-30 regular members show up.

The Atlantic Chapter traditionally gathers three other times a year for Leliefontein, the Regimental Birthday, and Leeuwarden. Over the 2024 fall time frame it remained quiet. We had four members attend a small Leliefontein parade held by C Sqn, RCD in Gagetown. In December, as we do each year, we gathered and celebrated the Regimental birthday at Mingler's Pub on 21 December. This was our largest attendance in many years; at one point we had 41 members and one dog. The rest of the winter remained quiet.

Moving into March 2025, we were invited to the annual Black Hat Mess Dinner that is hosted by the Armoured School. Ten members attended and it turned out to be a great evening. Big thanks to RSM Steve Slade (RCD) for the invite and being such an excellent host.

During the past year, the Atlantic Chapter continued to be run by three of us: myself (David MacLaren), Lance Wiebe, and John Bouwmeister. Thanks to Lance and John for all their hard work and tireless support. As always, we strive to support Association goals whenever and however we

can. Like all Chapters, we are actively recruiting new members and will continue to do so.

Currently, as we move forward into the summer months of 2025, we are excited about another Bennett Memorial Golf Tournament at the Gage Golf and Curling Club in Oromocto in August. This weekend never disappoints and is always very well attended, attracting on average 90 golfers from across Canada. A big thank you to Kevin Trainor for all his hard work over the years putting together this outstanding event on the social calendar.

As we look far into the future, we already have some members who are planning to attend RV26 at the Nottawasaga Inn Resort in Alliston, Ontario, located not far from Camp Borden, the weekend of 14 to 16 June 2026. I know Louis Lucier and his planning team from the South Central Ontario Chapter will be busy over the coming months.

Once again, all the best from everyone at the Atlantic Chapter.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift

The RCD Association Atlantic Region Chapter gets together for lunch every last Thursday of the month at Mingler's Restaurant & Pub in Oromocto, NB. All are welcome.





6TH ANNUAL BENNETT MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Article by Kevin Trainor

Photos by Cpl William Morry (RCD), RCAC School

We saw another excellent turnout on 10 August 2024 for the 6th Annual Bennett Memorial Golf Tournament! Wonderful to see some new attendees as well as the regulars at the Meet and Greet, which was held the Friday evening before our round. Once again, we had a weather concern as there were torrential downpours all morning and the course didn't look like it would open. But we had been through this before last year, and we knew Tim and Busher would not allow a bit of rain to ruin such a great gathering of old and new friends. And right on cue, the clouds began to recede. After getting the thumbs up from the course officials, we were able to move off the start line and have an outstanding day of golf, camaraderie, and laughs.

This year we were happy to welcome Rebecca Murphy and the folks at Post-Traumatic Growth Association (PTGA) to help organize. Her assistance with the organization and procurement of prizes was invaluable. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the following as well: Gage Golf and Curling Club – once again they provided an excellent venue and post-round barbecue! IRIS Optical – thanks to Elizabeth Cairns and her team for providing a fantastic gift basket and handing out water from their tent! TRS Solutions – thanks to Chris MacKay

and the folks at Total Response Solutions (TRS) for providing sponsorship and prizes! CannaConnect – thanks to Rob Kennedy and the folks at CannaConnect for their continued support and donation! CWO Steve Slade and the good people of the Armoured School for continued support! Last but certainly not least, MWO Jamie Peorie. Jamie has been a very reliable and valuable man to have on the ground, whether as a go-between with the course or to add input to the overall organization of the tourney.

After our highly competitive round was complete, we enjoyed refreshments and a delicious barbecue at the clubhouse. We were able to raise money throughout the day to make a very nice donation to the Canadian Cancer Society and homeless vets in the Fredericton area.

Prizes were handed out to the winners:

- Closest to the pin: RSM Steve Slade, who won a gift basket from IRIS Optical.
- Glenn Fee, who won a Bluetooth speaker from TRS Solutions.
- Winning team for the tournament: Derek Malling, Shawn Keenan, Scott Rocca and Mike Miller.

In closing, I would like to emphasize how greatly appreciated all the assistance is every year, it takes a team effort.

The 7th Annual Bennett Memorial is already booked for 9 August 2025 at the Gage Club again. Looking forward to seeing you all there. 🏌️



CHAPTER UPDATE

QUEBEC

By Karl Kramell

Bonjour à vous et salutations de la belle province. Greetings from an ever-shrinking number of Quebec-based RCD Association members. We keep losing members and not gaining any.

We are now down to five active members spread over a very large province. All are doing well despite our share of health issues. Michel Vezina and Luc Rousseau are both in good spirits. I was recently in contact with Yves Damphousse who lives north of Valcartier. Daniel Sicotte seems to be the healthiest in our Chapter. I'm trying to convince him to take over as the Chapter Chairman. Sadly, Jean Imbeault from Sherbrooke passed away on 18 September 2024.

Due to our reduced numbers, we partner with the Royal Canadian Hussars Association for social activities. One activity constant is our monthly breakfast the last Thursday of every month at Brasserie Manoir, 6810 Rue Saint-Jacques, Montreal. If you happen to be in the Montreal area, please feel free to join us, all are welcome. As other activities are planned, I will send out the details separately.

If you know of any former Dragoons who reside in Quebec, I would appreciate it if you could pass on their contact details. Any help tracking down new members would be greatly welcomed.

Have a safe and active summer and hope to see you at our next activity. De la belle province, nous vous souhaitons nos meilleurs souhaits cette année.

Au revoir et au prochain.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 



TOP PHOTO: Karl Kramell chatting with the Governor General, Mary Simon, at the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery during a recent (and emotional) tour of Canadian War Cemeteries in Belgium and the Netherlands. / **ABOVE PHOTO:** Early one Thursday morning in 1972, OC A Sqn, Maj Terry Seeley, wanted a photo with only the five Troopers from the Squadron dressed in their S3s. This was the result. Left to right (front) Tpr D.W. Winterburn, Maj K.R.T. Seeley, SSM T. Hall, Tpr B. Prendergast, (back row) Tpr J.S. Kerr, Tpr Y. Damphousse, and Tpr J.G. Nemith. Terry Seeley passed away on 12 February 2025. Photo submitted by Yves Damphousse.

CHAPTER UPDATE

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

By Peter Atkinson

Greetings from the nation's capital. In May 2025, we had several NCR Dragoons participating in the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands tour with our Association President Tom Skelding. The NCR Chapter currently has 64 members of which 30 are active participants in our various activities. Sadly, we lost a few friends to the big leaguer in the sky this year, among them Terry Seeley and Reg Turner, but we also gained some as we welcomed a few newcomers to the Chapter.

At the 2024 RCD Association RV in Kingston, Denis Levesque strong-armed me into accepting the role of NCR Chairperson, which I happily accepted. Along with that acceptance there was a commitment from Jim Atkins to continue as our Treasurer.

As a Chapter, we typically get together three times a year: at Leliefontein, the Regimental birthday, and Leeuwarden. We generally have somewhere between 25 to 30 attendees each time we get together. We also actively support the Corps events of the Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament and the Corps BBQ in Perth. Several of us went up to Petawawa for the Regimental Leeuwarden parade that was held at the Civic Center in the village of Petawawa. It was a great ceremony, made even better by the attendance of a Dutch contingent, including the mayor of Leeuwarden.



TOP PHOTO: We had a good turnout to celebrate Leliefontein last November. Left to right: Rick Hillier, Reg Turner, Alan Bolster, Mike McNorgan, Jim Atkins, Lais Barsauskas, George Wallace, Peter Atkinson, and Georges Rousseau.

ABOVE PHOTO: Leliefontein 2024 at the Connor's Irish Pub & Shararat Kitchen in Orléans. Left to right: Lais Barsauskas, George Wallace, Mike Ward (partially hidden), Georges Rousseau, Jim Ferron, Reg Turner, Alan Bolster, and Mike McNorgan. In the foreground: Andrew Lussier and Walter Gallant.



Last fall, for Leliefontein, we got together for lunch at Connor's Irish Pub & Shararat Kitchen in Orleans. On that day, we had 26 Dragoons present.

For the Regimental birthday we continued our tradition of having brunch with our spouses at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 632, in Orléans. Even though many were already travelling for Christmas, we had a great turnout of 32 Dragoons and their spouses.



For Leeuwarden this year we tried out a new pub, the Blackburn Arms, in the east end of Ottawa. We had 28 Dragoons present and we were joined by four of our ladies.

Last call for Steve Adams, Terry Seeley, Dave Meredith and Reg Turner.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: (1) Dragoons Christmas and birthday brunch at the Orléans Legion. Peter Atkinson giving the morning brief and the toast to the Regiment. / (2) NCR Chapter celebrating Christmas and Regimental birthday brunch. Left to right: Jim Follwell, Larry Zaporzan, Lais Barsauskas, Linda Barsauskas, and Suzan Zaporzan. / (3) Leeuwarden celebrations at the Blackburn Arms Pub. Left to right: Larry Zaporzan, Andy Lussier, Alan Bolster, Perry Wells, and Jim Follwell. / (4) Leeuwarden celebrations at the Blackburn Arms Pub. Left to right: Jim Ferron, Joyce Hillier, Diana Atkinson, Maureen Rousseau, and Christine Gallant.





CHAPTER UPDATE

OTTAWA VALLEY

By Matt Robichaud

Greetings from the Ottawa Valley Chapter.
Hope you are all doing well.

Since taking over the Chapter from Bruce Prendergast two years ago, I have tried to kick-start the Chapter. However, it has proven to be a daunting task. Since COVID hit us, it seems like the interest is no longer there. I am still trying to find volunteers to take the jobs of Treasurer and Secretary. In order for this to happen I need Members to participate.

We have been getting two or three members to attend our monthly luncheons the last Thursday of the month at Kelseys Original Roadhouse in Petawawa. It is somewhat disappointing because

BELOW: Left to right: Matt Robichaud, Chuck Hills, Gord Meighan, Tom Moran, and Roger Munger.



ABOVE: The Ottawa Valley Chapter gets together for lunch every last Thursday of the month at Kelseys Original Roadhouse in Petawawa. All are welcome. Left to right: Matt Robichaud, Randy Payne, Chuck Hills, and Bill Richards.

this Chapter should be one of the largest because of where we are. For the last couple years, we have not had any functions because of the low attendance. I understand that we all are busy, but it takes work to keep our Regimental family ties alive.

For everyone reading this who lives in the Ottawa Valley, I would encourage you to attend our monthly luncheons. You won't regret it. Come out and actively participate in your local Chapter. Your friends want to see you.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 



CHAPTER UPDATE

Kingston

By Denis Levesque

It is always a pleasure to be standing in Centennial Park, Kingston, ON, nestled on the beautiful banks of Lake Ontario. The Kingston and Region Chapter of the Royal Canadian Dragoons Association were proud to have supported and delivered the RCD Association Reunion RV24. So much effort was put into that event, it's nice to take a rest. MWO (ret'd) Louis Lucier will be heading up the next reunion at the Nottawasaga Inn Resort & Conference Centre in Alliston, ON from 12-14 June 2026. From all our members, "Good luck Louis."

I must go out on a limb here for a minute or two. We tend to interact a lot with the people in the Chapter but often forget those folks from outside the Association that also have an impact. Things such as the Ironsides Curling Bonspiel, the Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament and Corps BBQ. These three events are critical for maintaining connections across the Corps and they all happen in our Area of Operations (AOR). These

events are always well attended and well received; it's the people that put in hours of their own personal time that rarely get the recognition they so rightly deserve.

I can still remember my first Ironsides. I was a bus-boy in 1970, working at the Centennial Center in Petawawa. At that time, the bonspiel ran 24 hours a day for the weekend. A few years later it moved to Kingston, to eventually end up in Gananoque.

RIGHT: During a visit to Kingston by Association President, Tom Skelding, we met up at Buck Haven with the Colonel of the Regiment doing camera duty. You don't get away without a great conversation at this bar. Lots of room and lots of testimonials were shared, and yes, we spoke about you.



RIGHT: The Kingston Chapter recently started monthly luncheons at the Raxx Bar and Grill in Kingston on the first Thursday of the month. Left to right: Mark Popov, Denis Levesque, Richard Allinson, Gavin Cross, Dean Milner, John Moyer, Dave Henderson, Clive Milner, Paul Ward, Brandon Kew, Alec Murdoch, Dave Graham, James Ostler, Chris Sproule, and Kirk Thorton.



It usually runs in April each year under the very capable leadership of Capt Mike Richard (Ontario Regiment (RCAC)) from the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (CADTC), Kingston. Had he not taken over this event and recruited a team of very capable and dedicated volunteers, it would have been abandoned years ago, never to be seen again. Thank you Mike. You, my friend, are awesome!

I can go back 25 years on the Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament (HSMGT). In 2000, I remember attending my first HSMGT, only to learn that it had already been running since the

mid-1990s. Henry Sampson was a great RSM, but when he passed away in January 2000, the golf game had to continue. Over the years, the organizers and venue have changed. Currently, Bill Soros and Chris Catry are running the show at the

BELOW: The annual Kingston Chapter September 2024 BBQ at the waterfront home of Dean and Katrin Milner on Buck Lake, north of Kingston. From left to right: Dave Henderson, Viola Levesque, Brenda Horgan, Angie Roberts, Barb Henderson, Rob Kennedy, Clive Milner, Mike Babin, Sandy Ellesworth, Shirley Milner, Jason Ellsworth, Michelle Ostler, Katrin Milner, James Ostler, Nancy Follwell, Leonel Dubeau, Keith Kather, Sabine Gibson-Kather, Terry Hurwitch, Clive Addy, Gavin Cross, Marlene Addy, Andy Coxhead, Michelle Coxhead, James Follwell, Chris Catry, Pam Catry, Chis Renehan, Kate Renehan, Mario Desrochers, Steve Cadden, Gord Howse, Jennifer Cadden, Dean Milner, Dave Mural, Richard Allinson, Bonnie Allinson, Stephane Milner, and on the far right Marine and Lally visiting from France.



Garrison Golf and Curling Club at CFB Kingston. These two characters not only fill the course with great people, but they also entertain us with their charisma. Well done guys.

The Corps BBQ for 30+ years was known as the Milner BBQ. Clive and his clan of bandits held this prestigious event with friends of the Corps coming from across the country to Oak Haven, Kingston for a zesty taste of RCAC camaraderie. Following the sale of Clive and Shirley's property approximately 10 years ago, the Corps BBQ moved to the Royal Canadian Legion in Perth, Ontario, where Steve Cadden has turned it into the go-to social event of the summer.

So, if you happen to meet up with one, or all, of these fine folks, please thank them for being the glue that keeps the Corps together.

The Kingston and region summer BBQ held 21 September 2024 was attended by over 50 Chapter members. For the last several years, the BBQ has been held at the beautiful Buck Haven, the home of Dean and Katrin Milner. Buck Haven is nestled just off Highway 10 on a quiet bay on Buck Lake, about 30 minutes north of Kingston. I want to share a thought with you. As the BBQ was ongoing, I was so relaxed with the attendees and atmosphere, that I could not help but feel blessed to be a Dragoon. What a place to have a BBQ with Chapter members and friends of our fine Regiment.

As we do most years, the Chapter stayed local to celebrate Remembrance Day and pay tribute to our fallen in their own way and location. We shall remember them!

In December, the Kingston Chapters of the RCD and RCR Associations came together to celebrate our mutual Regimental birthday. This year the event was held on 14 December 2024 at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 560, in Kingston, with the RCR Chapter hosting. Many past and present members of both Regiments, along with family and friends, gathered for an evening of camaraderie and socializing. We received updates on both Regiments followed by toasts to both Regiments. Of note, the Senior Speaker for our Chapter, Dean

Milner gave an update on the Regiment and current operations. Overall, a great get together.

Like some of the other Chapters, we recently started monthly luncheons to fill the gap between Regimental events. We gather at the Raxx Bar and Grill in Kingston on the first Thursday of the month. We have been averaging 15 attendees and plan to keep this new tradition going for the foreseeable future.

The Kingston Chapter is alive and well. We're keeping busy, but enjoying our retirement at the same time, and look forward to yet another eventful year.

We may not have a bar like some associations, but we do serve friendship better than most!

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift

Editor's Note: On 26 August 2025, the chairmanship of the Kingston Chapter of the RCD Association transferred from Denis Levesque to Gavin Cross. For more years than we can count, Denis devoted countless hours and boundless energy enhancing our Regimental Association and for that we are eternally thankful. We wish him and Viola all the best. Gavin is a long time Kingston resident who retired from the Regiment in 1998 and went on to have a very successful career as a prison guard with Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) in the Kingston area. With a keen sense of what it means to be a Dragoon and to give back even in retirement, Gavin is the perfect choice to take over the Kingston Chapter. 🏠

BELOW: Denis Levesque and Gavin Cross celebrate the Kingston Chapter Change of Chairmanship on 26 August 2025 with a motorcycle ride around the Kingston area.



CHAPTER UPDATE

WINDSOR, ON

They say a photo is worth a thousand words, so here are three of the Windsor, ON Chapter that were taken in the last year.

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ABOVE LEFT: The Windsor, ON Chapter gathered with local RCR Association members in December 2024 to celebrate their joint Regimental birthdays. Left to right: Gord Rossignol, Phil Badour, Mark Popov, Konrad Rosenkranz-Galindo, Kathy Nayduk, and Scott Mulcaster. Just a few months after this photo was taken, on 9 March 2025, Captain (ret'd) Konrad Rosenkranz-Galindo passed away.

RIGHT: Rededication of the South African War Memorial, Jackson Park, Windsor, ON on 2 October 2024. Left to right: Tpr Regacho, Phil Badour, Tom Skelding, Gord Rossignol, Kathy Nayduk, Mark Popov, and Tpr Bartley.



BELOW: On 10 August 2024, members of the Windsor, ON Chapter met up for a luncheon. Watch the Chapter Facebook page for the details of when and where they meet each month. Left to right: Kathy Nayduk, Gord Rossignol, Konrad Rosenkranz-Galindo, and Dave Winterburn.





CHAPTER UPDATE

ALBERTA

By Gerry Olsen

Hello fellow Dragoon veterans! Once again, it has been a very quiet year for the Alberta Chapter of the Association of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. I did manage to meet up with MWO Robbie Tryhorn at a Computer Assisted Exercise (CAX) in Regina. Always fun to hang out with Robbie for a bit.

Late last year we were surprised to get a visit from retired Sgt Wayne Brown, who now works for the Gimli Air Museum as an SQ of sorts. Tom Falls joined us for a quick beer and some reminiscing. A great evening. My wife, Krista, and I were blessed to be able to meet up with Paul and Christa Keating up in St Albert while they were visiting Wayne and Linda Visneskie. Another evening of war stories and great laughs.

I also managed to squeeze in a quick visit with Doug Mcilvenna when I was down in Red Deer watching one of my grandsons play football. Yes, we are getting that old when our teenage grandchildren are playing school football! Ouch! Doug and Mel just celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary this year.

A new member to the Alberta Chapter this year is Mike Grover. Mike and Heather are happily retired in Moose Jaw and they just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary this past February. Welcome Mike and Heather.

In last year's article I mentioned that Mike Hogan was preparing to conduct a veterans' mess dinner for some senior veterans at the Kipnes Centre for Veterans in Edmonton. I went over to help set up the dinner with him and it was wonderful to see the veterans' faces light up when they saw what was being prepared for them. Sadly, I couldn't stay because of a prior commitment. It would have been great to be a part of it, and I am told it was a resounding success. Well done to Mike and his crew of volunteers on a great evening for some very deserving senior veterans. (*Editor's Note: For more info, see <https://www.capitalcare.net/files/PDFs/edmonton-sun-article-nov-11-2019.pdf>.)*

Alex Graf's Black Hatter Wing Night Wednesdays still take place in Fort Saskatchewan at The Bears Den Pub. If you ever want to spend an evening with the likes of Donny Head, Ray Labreque, Phil Friday, Rudy Borkovic, and Steve Januszewski to mention a few, that's the place. If you get there by 1800 hours you will be able to get a seat.

Fred Maurette, although he never served as a Dragoon, has made it a point to attend every Black Hatter event out here. He recently relocated from Quebec to Calgary, where he now works as a senior project manager for a corporate security firm.



Once again, this year Steve Januszewski is hosting his Black Hatter Reunion at his farm just outside Fort Saskatchewan. All are welcome. BYOB. Steve lays on burgers and dogs (for a small fee). Check out his Facebook page for full details.

Way up in the Cold Lake area there are several retired Dragoons who have taken up permanent residence. Walter and Ann Smith are now both retired, both their girls have graduated and moved on to university, leaving Walt and Ann to enjoy a quiet life in retirement. I remember when both those girls were born.

Gary and Tracey Naylor are still up there as well, enjoying the fishing and their little hobby farm. We have been trying to visit and enjoy their hospitality on the lake. Maybe this summer.

Down in Calgary, Major-General (ret'd) Bob "Bobby Clobber" Meating is still a major force in Calgary's volunteer network, so he is keeping busy. Also in the area is Randy Gray. Randy spends his time enjoying his Harley and touring now. Well deserved.

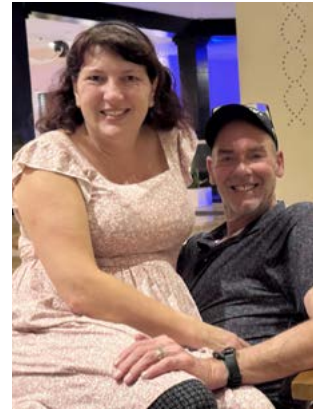
Folks like Steve and Debbie Wright are still

RIGHT: Steve and Debbie Wright enjoying a cruise during the fall of 2024.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: Ann and Walter Smith being awarded their Veteran Rocker on their retirement by Chris Smithers, Vice President of the Cold Lake unit of the Canadian Army Veteran (C.A.V.) Motorcycle Club. (Editor's Note: A "Veteran Rocker" refers to the patch worn on the back of a motorcycle vest or jacket, often in the shape of a rocker (a curved band) bearing the word "Canada". It is associated with the Canadian Army Veteran motorcycle club.)

living the retired life out in Wainwright, enjoying a life of cruises and visits to their many grandchildren. Also still in Wainwright are the usual suspects. Harold and Sheila Willis are enjoying the golfing life and doing





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: (1) Wayne Brown, Gerry Olsen and Tom Falls enjoying Saturday morning cartoons (see the TV reflected in the mirror). (2) Mike and Heather Grover at their 40th wedding anniversary. (3) Doug and Mel Mcilvenna at their 35th wedding anniversary. (4) Harold and Sheila Willis.

some travelling. Their oldest, Corey Willis, is a Dragoon who was recently posted from St Jean to the Armoured School where I know he will do great things. Harold is currently the acting President of the Royal Canadian Legion, Worthington Branch, Wainwright, soon to be the past president.

Between Harold and Sheila, they have committed to making the Wainwright Legion a more veteran-friendly place to be and by all accounts they have done a great job. The Legion is now amazing and has some awesome meals and events. If you get the chance, you must go check it out.

CWO (ret'd) Joe Ramsay is still haunting the streets of Wainwright. The last time I spoke with him he was driving a school bus. Picture that if you will.

MWO Jim Marshall recently retired in Wainwright, and he and Sarah will be staying in the area for the time being. Also "retired" in Wainwright and still offering sound advice at the ranges is Kevin "Chops" Lovett where he works at Range Control.

Other notables still in the Wainwright area are Maj Jamie Provost, Capt Ian Palacpac and Capt Tom Elliott. All making significant contributions to the training being conducted there and carrying on the fine name of The Regiment.

Dale Briggs still resides in Wainwright, where he is staying busy and making a good name for himself

at Range Control. Cpl Matty Bailey stayed in the area when he retired and now makes the big bucks working the rig service trucks. Good to see that he is doing well for himself.

Also, in Wainwright (sometimes) are retired WO Lee Boon and his wife Tammy. Lee still works part time as a role player for one of the companies supporting military training. Lee and Tammy spend most of their time on the road now.

Krista and I are doing great here in Edmonton, and we have started emulating folks like Steve and Debbie and Lee and Tammy. We like to spend our pensions travelling now. While I still work part-time for Calian, we travel when we can. I do miss the smell of a coffee in wet canvas mess tents, the odour of low hanging diesel on a foggy morning, the incredible meals we would get in those kitchen trailers, and the camaraderie of an armoured vehicle crew / troop.

I will close by putting it out there again for those of the Association who reside in the western three provinces. If you would like an event, Dave Blackburn, Doug Mcilvenna and I would willingly put something together. Just reach out and let one of us know!

That's it for this past year. The invitation is always open to come visit Edmonton and enjoy our western hospitality. Until next year.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 🚢



CHAPTER UPDATE

BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Bob Black

Greetings all Dragoons from beautiful British Columbia! As has always been the case, our ability to gather is made challenging by the wide dispersal of our members and the cost of travel on the coast. Nevertheless, there were several events worth mentioning.

In June 2024, a small contingent made the trek east (to the land beyond Hope) to attend the Association's 50th anniversary celebrations in Kingston. Darrell and Heather Dean, Jack and Jean Dangerfield, Bob Black, and Gene Lake represented our Chapter. It was a great gathering, and we reunited with many old friends and comrades, and lots of war stories and other tall tales were swapped. Kudos to the Kingston Chapter for organizing such an excellent event.

In November we assembled at the North Saanich Yacht Club to commemorate the Action at Leliefontein. We had about nine Dragoons attend and enjoyed an excellent lunch. Regrettably, some of our stalwarts were absent, as age and illness restricted their ability to travel. But those who were there had an excellent time trading old stories and enjoying the company of other Black Hatters on Vancouver Island (the Left Coast Lancers).

RIGHT: This photo was taken at the November 2024 gathering at the North Saanich Yacht Club to commemorate the Action at Leliefontein. Left to right: Gene Lake, Paul Crober, Derek Long, Chuck Ewart, Paul Philcox, Jack Dangerfield, Darrell Dean, Jean Dangerfield, and Heather Dean.

We met again in March 2025 with the Lancers to help the Strathcona members celebrate Moreuil Wood. Only four Dragoons attended (Bob Black, Paul Crober, Paul Philcox and Darrell Dean), again seeing the impact of age on our membership. We were treated to the presence of a Ferret Scout Car, courtesy of the Ashton Armoury Museum. Those of us who have served on the Ferrets will be able to sympathize with the restoration and maintenance challenges of keeping a 60-year-old vehicle running. Apparently, this visit had been seven years in the planning, but between COVID and mechanical challenges, it had not been possible until this year. Armour aficionados may quibble over some of the historical issues with the Ferret (turreted? In Canadian UN colours?), but we just appreciated the effort they took to bring it out to our lunch.

Unfortunately, not all was sweetness and light. In April 2024 we lost LCol (ret'd) David Sproule. Dave had been a steadfast member of the Association and the Left Coast Lancers. The last time





ABOVE: In March 2025, we joined our Strathcona colleagues to help celebrate Moreuil Wood. Left to right: Bob Black, Paul Crober, Darrell Dean, and Paul Philcox.

TOP RIGHT: The Ashton Armoury Museum Ferret scout car on display in March 2025. In the background, Bob Black, Darrell Dean, and Paul Crober. The Canadian Army bought the British-built Daimler Ferret scout car in 1954 and used them until 1981, primarily for reconnaissance and UN peacekeeping duties in places like Cyprus and the Middle East.



we saw Dave was at the Black Hat luncheon in March 2024. He was looking his usual cherubic self and seemed in good nick, so we were all surprised to hear of his death. Dave had such a collection of fascinating “war stories” and was always entertaining at our gatherings. There was a well-attended memorial service held at the BCD Armoury in Vancouver in June 2024. Four of us (Bob Black, Paul Crober, Derek Long and Chuck Ewart) attended to represent the Regiment and Association and pay our respects to an old friend. The BCR had one of their TAPVs parked on the Armoury floor and I think we were all quite surprised by the size — I initially mistook it for an olive drab bus. For us old sneak-and-peak recce folks, it stood in stark contrast to the Ferret shown



ABOVE: At the memorial service for Dave Sproule in June 2024 at the BCD Armoury in Vancouver. In the background is the TAPV. Left to right: Derek Long, Bob Black, Paul Crober, and Chuck Ewart.

BOTTOM LEFT: The last picture taken with Dave Sproule was in March 2024. Left to right: Gene Lake, John Olafson, Dave Sproule, Paul Crober, Bob Black, and Gary Del Villano.



in the other picture. But Davey had a rousing send off. RIP old comrade.

Our Chapter continues to hold at about 30 members. We welcomed a couple of new members, Danielle Simard and Stewart Berge, son of Fred Berge.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 



2024 VIMY AWARD LAUREATE

GEN WALT NATYNCZYK

By MGen (ret'd) Jim Ferron

The year 2024 was special for one of our own, General Walter Natynczyk, OC, CMM, MSC, CD. In recognition of his exemplary service to our great nation for close to 50 years, General Walt was awarded the Order of Canada and became the 2024 Laureate of the prestigious Vimy Award. But who is General Natynczyk and what does he stand for? In short, a Dragoon who cares deeply about the men and women who sacrifice so much to serve our country.

Here is a brief resume of a remarkable career: Commanding Officer of The Royal Canadian Dragoons (1997/98); Canadian Contingent Commander in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1998); Deputy Commanding General of the III U.S. Corps/Multi-National Corps in Baghdad, Iraq, during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (2004); Chief of the Defence Staff (2008-2012); President of the Canadian Space Agency (2013-2014);

ABOVE: In May 2015, General (ret'd) Walter Natynczyk, former Chief of the Defence Staff and then Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada, laid a wreath during a ceremony celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands at Grosbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands as part of Operation DISTINCTION. Photo by Cpl Jordan Lobb, Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Center.



ABOVE: Left to right: LCol (ret'd) Luc Petit (12^eRBC), BGen (ret'd) Dyrالد Cross, BGen (ret'd) Ross Ermel, General (ret'd) Walt Natynczyk, MGen (ret'd) Jim Ferron, and MGen (ret'd) Dean Milner during the 2024 Vimy Gala at the Canadian War Museum.

Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada (2014-2021); and Colonel Commandant of The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps (2021-2024). Over time, he has also supported numerous charities such as being a member of the board of the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans, a not-for-profit funded by Veterans Affairs Canada; acted as an advisor for the Homes for Heroes Foundation, an organization that builds small home villages for homeless veterans; and currently serves as the Honorary President of the Last Post Fund, a not-for-profit foundation that ensures disadvantaged Canadian Armed Forces veterans receive a respectful burial.

Many are the accolades surrounding General Natynczyk's career, but a favourite came from Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Romeo Dallaire. In a letter, Senator Dallaire characterized General Natynczyk's time as CDS as follows: "... his leadership philosophy priority of effort was establishing an atmosphere of cooperation with fellow colleagues and the government structures in Ottawa. It would be daunting in the best of circumstances under garrison conditions, but the Canadian Forces were at war and there was no time for him to sit and assess where he wanted to go with the Forces. *Au contraire*, he had to immediately provide his command presence on both the troops deployed and those back home providing essential support."

RIGHT: Then Chief of Defence Staff General Walt Natynczyk addressed the Royal Military College cadets during the end of year parade in May 2010.




Senator Dallaire went on to remark: "There was another side of General Natynczyk that provided depth to his tenure as CDS, and that was the confidence and love of his troops and their families toward 'Uncle Walt.' His very human, passionate and respectful characteristics made him a leader that brought forward the best of those who served under him, and the support of those families that were called upon to make such enormous sacrifices during the Afghanistan campaign."

General Walt has served his country admirably for close to 50 years — where his competence, leadership and selfless devotion to those "who serve" have been admired and respected by all. Throughout that time, his wife Leslie was at his side providing both the counsel and support that any great leader requires — truly a remarkable couple.

Due to his meritorious conduct, unquestionable integrity and absolute commitment to his nation, General (ret'd) Walter Natynczyk — a Dragoon — became the 2024 Laureate of the prestigious Vimy Award and was also awarded the Order of Canada.

Editor's Notes: *The Vimy Award is a prestigious Canadian honour recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the defence and security of Canada and the preservation of democratic values. Established in 1991, it is presented annually by the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) Institute. The award is named in honour of the Canadian soldiers who fought at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in World War I.*

Other notable RCAC recipients of the Vimy Award include:

- 2008 General (ret'd) Rick Hillier (RCD)
- 2020 Lieutenant-General (ret'd) J.O. Michel
Maisonnewe (12^eRBC) 



BOSNIA ON MY MIND

THE BIHAĆ POCKET: A LOOK BACK

By LCol (ret'd) Jeff Barr, RCD

“Jeff, we like you. You seem to be a good officer and a decent fellow. But make no mistake, we will chain you to the Una River bridge when the Serbs attack.”

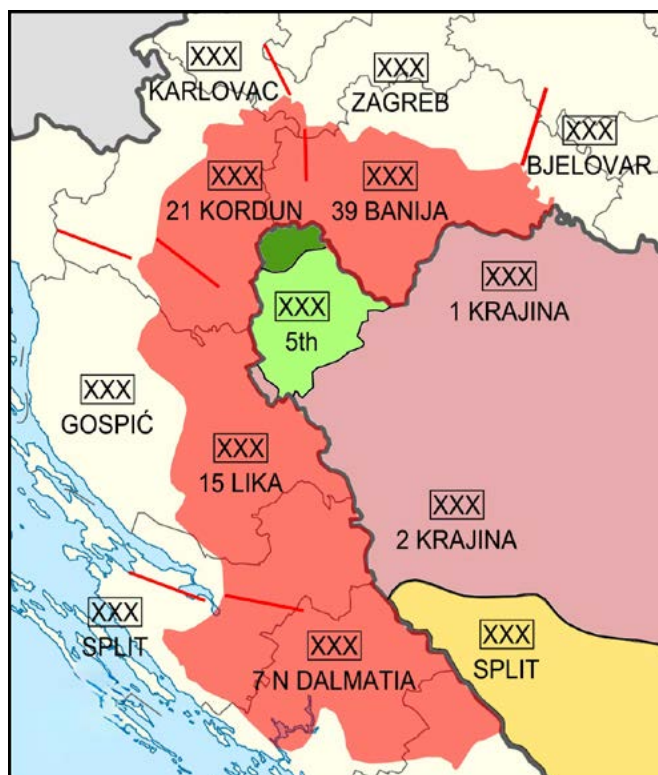
After hearing these stark words from the mouth of Lieutenant-Colonel “Nurko” Durvisovic, my Bosnian Army (ABiH) counterpart, I thought to myself: They don’t teach you this sort of stuff at the Armoured School!

ABOVE: Jeff Barr pointing to a TMA-4 minefield that he found and marked in the hills of Kljuc, Bosnia. This minefield was located not far from the eventual location of IFOR’s Camp Maple Leaf, which he later helped establish in Zgon.



ABOVE LEFT: Political entities in Northwest Bosnia 1994-95 (map is not to scale). The Bihac Pocket is located in the green sector. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

ABOVE RIGHT: Military dispositions in the Bihac Pocket circa 1995 (map is not to scale). The Pocket is marked in light green labeled "5th XXX." The Krajina Corps were Bosnian Serb Corps and not from the Croatian (Krajina) Serb areas. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



the Croatian (Krajina) Serbs to move through Bosnia to Serbia proper; and

- the ABiH would not hesitate to use me as a human shield when that attack came.

I reckoned that my fate would be much like that of Captain Pat Rechner, PPCLI, a UNMO on the Bosnian Serb side at Pale who, in May of 1995, had been captured, held hostage, and was chained to a key military ammo depot in order to deter NATO airstrikes against the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS).

If I mention that I was an UNMO during the war in Bosnia, I am usually met with the same stereotypical ignorance. Namely, that:

- UNMOs were redundant and not required, especially when employed alongside a professional (read NATO) UN battalion, as was the typical Canadian experience; and
- it was a straightforward monitoring job between an established buffer zone, and the hardest part was cooking your meals while conducting your observation and monitoring duties.

Let me clearly state here that this was *not* my reality during my UNMO tour in Bosnia.

It was July of 1995. I was a newly promoted Major and the massacre at the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica had just happened. I was a UN Military Observer (UNMO) trapped inside of the "Bihac Pocket," another so-called Bosnian UN safe area akin to Sarajevo, Mostar, Gorazde and Tuzla.

Nurko, the 5 Corps ABiH Senior Liaison Officer (LO), was indeed a rarity. He was an ex-LCol intelligence officer in the former Yugoslav Army, who also happened to be a Muslim. From his blunt warning to me, I deduced that:

- Nurko believed that a major coordinated attack from the warring factions facing Bihac was imminent;
- the Serb factions, prior to the expected Croatian/US-backed offensive (later conducted as Operation STORM), were looking to create an escape corridor through the Bihac Pocket for

In the case of the Bihać Sector, there was not a highly trained or equipped UN battalion. Ours was from Bangladesh, which consequently had limited duties and employment. As a result, UNMOs became most essential. We were also very fortunate to have a small yet highly professional UNMO team in Bihać, which operationally *de facto* ran the sector. In addition to myself, we had a Kiwi infantry Captain (Paddy), a Dutch Marine Captain (Rob), and a Spanish Marine Captain (Manuel). When I first arrived, I replaced a Nordic Major that had to be evacuated due to a psychological breakdown.

In the Bihać Pocket, we also had the pleasure to work overtly with a four-man team of British Joint Commission Officers (read Special Air Service). Some of them were ex-members of the UK armoured corps and we quickly established trust. When it was confirmed that many of our duties were redundant, we agreed to split up the workload to cover more ground.

Without being overly dramatic, my duties as a UNMO in wartime Bosnia required much resilience and all my interpersonal and military skills just to survive. Did I mention that I was unarmed? Not something to which an armoured type is accustomed. I often announced to the locals that I was armed with only my smile. Also, I made a concerted effort to learn as much of the Serbo-Croat language as possible and my go-to phrase was: “*Ja sam Jeff, ja sam vojni promatrac, nema puska*” or “My name is Jeff, I am a military observer, and I have no weapons.”

The overall situation in the ever expanding/contracting Bihać Pocket in northwest Bosnia was desperate and extremely complex with four separate warring faction groups in play: the Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croats inside of the Pocket; the Bosnian Serbs to the East and North; the Krajina Serbs to the West and South in Croatia; and a unique, breakaway Muslim group called “The Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia” that was based out of

Velika Kladuša under the leadership of Fikret Abdic, a warlord who sympathized and sided with the Bosnian Serbs, mostly for economic reasons.

A court in Croatia eventually convicted Abdic as a war criminal in 2002 and sentenced him to 20 years in jail. In addition to his crimes of promoting torture and sexual assault, he illegally “detained” the members of the Velika Kladuša UNMO team often for weeks at a time, making them largely ineffective. As can only happen in the former Yugoslavia, upon his early release from jail in 2016, he was elected municipal mayor of Velika Kladuša and remained mayor until 2024!

Suffice it to say that there were no static lines or established buffer zones in our area of operations. Daily artillery and/or mortar shelling was normal, and it rained down on Bihać from the high ground on all sides from the Serb factions. Our UNMO

“Suffice it to say that there were no static lines or established buffer zones in our area of operations. Daily artillery and/or mortar shelling was normal, and it rained down on Bihać from the high ground on all sides from the Serb factions.”

team headquarters and accommodation was the only house “offered” and was rented to us by a Bosnian Serb owner, who had married a local Muslim woman. The down-

town team house was close to the ABiH military buildings and was located within the 90 percent beaten zone of the artillery shelling. I quickly learned and perfected the essential survival skills of listening closely for the pop of the distant guns, detecting the whistling and crackling for direction and time of flight, and taking shelter on the correct side of houses or in basements when explosions were within 200 meters. I also quickly learned that mortar bomblets were the most terrifying as they made no whistling/crackling noises due to their vertical trajectory and were silent until the sudden explosions. I prayed real hard *not* to be bracketed. For luck, I often collected small shell and bomb-let fragments that landed within 50 meters of my location. To this day, I still have a small plastic bag of these rusty good luck charms in my home.

My official daily UNMO duties included shelling investigations and damage assessments, report-



LEFT: As Bihać UNMO Team Leader, Jeff Barr sent daily reports via tactical satellite.

ing troop movements, investigating mass graves, witnessing daily civilian and military body counts in local morgues, organizing and conducting body and prisoner-of-war (POW) exchanges (on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or in support of them, if it was safe for them to be operating in the Pocket), mapping new minefields (there were an estimated one million mines laid in the northwest part of Bosnia alone), confirming checkpoints, meeting with local civilian officials, and village patrolling when it was secure to do so. These duties often involved the precarious crossing of faction front lines to personally attend meetings to organize exchanges. I always tried to conduct these crossings in the mornings because we could better see the inter-boundary minefields and booby traps in daylight. Also, meetings held later in the day or at night proved extremely dangerous when the local soldiers were drunk and often took sniper shots and even firing some direct-fire anti-aircraft gun and 76mm Pack Howitzer shots at our white UN vehicles for sport. Driving extremely fast in open/exposed ground was a must. Speaking of alcohol, homemade Slivovitz (plum brandy) and/or Rakija (any fruit brandy) flowed freely at most military faction meetings. I will freely admit that I gained the best cooperation and did some of my finest work after all parties had imbibed. For professional and survival reasons, I ensured that I was *never* drunk but in order to gain added agreements from the factions, I often let on that I was well lubed!

"I also quickly learned that mortar bomblets were the most terrifying as they made no whistling/crackling noises due to their vertical trajectory and were silent until the sudden explosions."

The body exchanges could be particularly gruesome. My first week in sector saw me conducting a large body exchange of 80 dead combatants between the VRS and ABiH in the town of Ripač, a few kilometers southeast of Bihać. These exchanges were typically disproportionate with many more Bosnian Muslim casualties involved. In this case, the trade was 70 Muslims for 10 Serbs. There was a constant lack of UN-supplied body bags and many of the bodies lay in the open, often covered only with white sheets in the hot summer sun. I will never forget the sights or the smells. I also quickly learned that money was involved with many of these exchanges. Families on both sides would pay an agreed fee to the opposition in order to get their loved one's remains back. Later in my UNMO tour, one of the body exchanges was abruptly halted when it was angrily discovered that a valuable body was missing. It was rescheduled a few days later once the faction found the correct body that

the family had purchased.

A few words on trust, impartiality and integrity. My

professional relationship with the UN local interpreters was absolutely critical. I spent much time gaining their trust and incorporating them fully into my UNMO team. In my case, it paid off in spades as there were numerous occasions where they literally saved my life and I was able, in a few cases, to repay the favour. I am proud to say that I was able to persuade many of them — despite being offered more pay from other countries — to join the Canadian NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) when they arrived in the Bihać Sector in January of 1996. One in particular, Aida Salfic, was the Canadian Commanding Officer's interpreter for many subsequent NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) missions.

Impartiality and integrity were a must. The example that I like to cite for this was the numerous times that I was approached to be a "mule." The black market was a reality in wartime Bosnia. In



LEFT: Bruce Henwood learning to walk again.

RIGHT: Jeff Barr as Sanski Most UNMO Team Leader with Bart, a Belgian teammate.



of movement, I was occasionally approached by a local to be a mule and carry money and goods from their outside families and/or supporters over the borders into the Pocket for an attractive mule fee of 10,000 DM. I *never* did this. I knew that if I did this once, even if it was for a small number of supplies, word would get out and I would be forever compromised as a UN representative, and very likely be blackmailed.

Gasoline was also very expensive and scarce, as most of it was sent to the front lines for military use. As such, our UN pickup trucks were often the only vehicles on the road. Official UN policy was not to show favour by transporting any locals whatsoever. However, we bent these rules when it came to carrying civilian casualties to hospitals. We justified this by trying to equally help all wounded civilians with ambulatory needs regardless of the warring faction. This greatly enhanced our UNMO credibility amongst the civilian population. And by necessity, I became quite adept at first aid, and this began my personal connection with the skill. From my military retirement in 2015 until 2019, I taught first aid through the Canadian Red Cross to over 3,500 Kingstonians, including doctors, nurses and first responders. I like to think of it as paying it forward.

On 27 September 1995, I received some very bad news via a phone call from Peter Atkinson, the

the Bihać Pocket, food was very scarce and most of it went to the combatants. The preferred currency was Deutschmarks (DM), and it often cost 500 DM for a five-kilogram bag of flour. Because of my UN freedom

“My professional relationship with the UN local interpreters was absolutely critical. I spent much time gaining their trust and incorporating them fully into my UNMO team.”

UN G3 Ops in Zagreb. He told me that my fellow UNMO Team Leader and friend, Bruce Henwood, 8CH(PL), had been seriously injured when his vehicle struck an antitank mine in an unmarked minefield in the area of Ogulin, Croatia. As he was being transported to the U.S. Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) at Zagreb for life-saving surgery, I was launched, as the closest Canadian, to cross from Bosnia into Croatia and gather his belongings and meet with his team. Through incredible personal courage, Bruce survived but lost both of his lower legs to amputation. He was later awarded a

Land Force Commendation for his actions as Team Leader Ogulin and a Meritorious Service Medal for his support to the CAF

wounded warriors' compensation and support plans. Additionally, I was able to inform the citation for the Canadian Medal of Bravery for Major Toby Bridge, UK, The King's Royal Hussars. He was instrumental in saving both Bruce's life and that of a fellow Dutch UNMO, Harry Weidra, when he cleared them out of the minefield, did first aid, and ran a long distance to secure help. I was extremely pleased when Toby joined my UNMO team in Bihać soon after the disbandment of the Ogulin Team.

From mid-October to December 1995, post-Operation STORM and the signing and implementation of the Dayton Accords, I was posted from Team Leader Bihać to become the Team Leader of the newly established Sanski Most team, consisting of 10 captains/majors. During this time, we investigated and resolved endless ceasefire violations along the Highway M-15 corridor to Prejidor and organized several large-scale body and POW



ABOVE LEFT: Jeff Barr (front row, centre) as 2 CAMNB Senior LO with other liaison officers, interpreters and drivers at the Ćoralići HQ. Maj Bob Dixon (12eRBC), who replaced Jeff as the LO to 5 Corps ABiH in May 1996 and eventually became the 5 CAMNB Senior LO, is beside Jeff on the right.

ABOVE RIGHT: Jeff Barr as 2 CAMNB Senior LO with his trusty driver Jay McLaren (RCR).



from 2 CMBG in Petawawa, including Jim Ferron. Soon, the secret was officially revealed and Canada announced that they would be contributing the command, recce, and support elements for an IFOR multinational brigade group (2 CAMNB). My first thought was that 1,600 Canadian soldiers were coming to replace little old *me* — the sole Canadian in the sector. I was totally honoured.

exchanges. Sadly, I also had to personally witness the uncovering of a large mass grave under the rubble of Vrhpolje bridge over the Sana River. Approximately 37 people were discovered there shot with their hands bound by wire. A UK Sky News crew also recorded this grim event. The bridge had been demolished on 17 September 1995 by the VRS in order to delay the ABiH advances towards Sanski Most. Later, in 1996, more mass graves were discovered by UK and Hungarian IFOR military engineers that were rebuilding the bridge. Since then, the UN has found three separate pits with an estimated total of 150 bodies. In 2013, the BBC reported on another large mass grave of 360 people, including women and children, excavated near Tomasica, not far from Sanski Most. Again, they don't teach you this kind of stuff at the Armoured School.

During this time, I also hosted several "secret" visits and recces from senior Canadian UN staff from Zagreb, including Stu Beare, and later others

"In those days, there was no such thing as Skype or FaceTime! She would get a five-minute call from me weekly that would often end abruptly when shelling got close. She would have to wait another week to hear my voice and confirm that I was okay."

After some "gentle" persuasion from Jim Ferron, the 2 CAMNB chief of staff, I agreed to stay on for a further six months in Bosnia and was employed as the Faction LO to 5 Corps, ABiH — an obvious fit. In this capacity, I made use of all my extensive wartime connections and did everything in my power to make the transition for Canadian troops to be both safe and productive. Towards the end of the tour and under sad circumstances, I became the Senior LO for 2 CAMNB as my outstanding boss, Howie Kochanski (2 RCHA), was seriously injured in a car accident while on leave in Canada.

Happily, this IFOR Rotation 0 included many great Dragoon friends. The Recce Squadron included Lowell Thomas, Officer Commanding, and Denis "Badger" Levesque, Squadron Sergeant Major and fellow jumper. Perry Wells (current Editor of *The Dragoon*) was the G3 Ops at brigade group headquarters. And a key mentor that I readily leaned on was Rick Hillier, the Deputy Commander of

RIGHT: Jeff Barr with a few friendlies in Bihać City.

2 CAMNB. Having many members of the Regiment around me during my post-war transition definitely eased my journey.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank my close army buddies Rick Fawcett (Signals), Mark Osbourne (RCR), and Rick Lott (2 RCHA) for their much-needed support. And last but not least, I am in great debt to my awesome IFOR driver, Private Jay McLaren (RCR), who eventually rose in rank to become a Chief Warrant Officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The RCD IFOR mission is the subject for other articles, and I hereby challenge members of the Regimental family to write them. Also, I would highly recommend for background that you read Bruce Wallace's *Blood and Pain* article in *Maclean's*, Vol. 109, No. 5, pp. 20-23, dated 29 January 1996. I had the privilege of escorting him around 2 CAMNB's sector for four days to help him gain ground truth and assist him with his understanding of the Canadian mission and tasks.


War does change people and those that have experienced it know of what I speak. I was very lucky to come out of Bosnia relatively unscathed and I credit that mostly to outstanding support from my family, including my in-laws. Most of them were either serving or retired officers in the Canadian Armed Forces and could relate somewhat to my situation.

That being said, I drew tremendous strength from my wife, Dawn, who was my rock. As an UNMO, the civilian phone lines in Bihać City were always down and the only UN phone that I could use for long-distance calls was in Ćoralići, a 50-kilometre drive from Bihać. In those days, there was no such thing as Skype or FaceTime! She would get a five-minute call from me weekly that would often end abruptly when shelling got close. She would have to wait another week to hear my voice and confirm that I was okay. Did I mention that she was pregnant during most of this? Our third child, Mitchell, was born in January of 1996 while I was away in Bosnia. Family resilience was absolutely



critical, and I am forever grateful for Dawn's fortitude during this chaotic time.

Editor's Notes: LCol (ret'd) Jeff Barr retired in 2015 after proudly wearing the Springbok for 32 years. As OC Recce Sqn, 1997-99, he oversaw the delivery, training and tactical employment of the Coyote vehicle and surveillance systems to the RCD. He was the Army's Collective Training Officer for five years during the main Kandahar operational rotations. From 2010-13, he served as the Director of the Army Lessons Learned Centre. He then deployed on a 15-month tour on Op PROTEUS as Project Manager to the Palestinian Authority's Security Force and Civil Defence. Jeff is a member of the BC Chapter.

Maj (ret'd) Bruce Henwood, MSM, CD, served in the RCD at Lahr, West Germany, as the LdSH (RC) CANLOAN officer in 1981/82 and wore the Springbok as the Regimental Transport Officer in 1986-87. He is a Life Member of the RCD Association and was recently named to be a member of the RMC Wall of Honour. 



VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY

A PERSONAL STORY

By Judge Col (ret'd) David Sneath

My father, John Sneath, was born on 31 August 1921 and turned 18 just four days before World War II broke out. His parents (my grandparents) lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where his father was a senior partner in what was then Price Waterhouse & Co., now PwC. Although my grandfather was in England on 3 September 1939, he was able to return to Argentina and take up work as a clerk in the Union Telegraph Company.

ABOVE: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour. On 3 May 2025 a working Staghound crewed by serving Dragons leads the commemorative parade through Kollum, Friesland Province, the Netherlands. WO Guy Lachaine (right side of the turret), Cpl Andrew Rainforth (turret left side), Cpl Evan Cassie-Stone driving, and Cpl Katherine Prenevost as the bow gunner.



LEFT: Tpr John Sneath enlisted in Toronto in April 1941. He was in the Ontario Regiment for basic training before being posted to the RCD. This is not a particularly flattering photo of him, but it conveys the portly raw recruit civilian soldier image.



RIGHT: In contrast, this photo of Sneath, taken in late 1943 in the UK shortly before deployment to Sicily, conveys the transition to a rugged, trained soldier.

By March 1941, the Germans had occupied much of Europe and other ex-pats were returning to the UK to enlist. I have little doubt that my un-warrior-like father was sent north to Canada to enlist by my grandfather who had been awarded the MC in the Great War following command of his battalion at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. My grandmother, therefore, sailed with my father and his younger brother on an American ship, the SS *Uruguay*, to New York City. The thinking being that since the USA had not yet entered the war, U.S.-flagged ships would not attract the attention of a German U-boat.

From New York, they travelled by train to Toronto where my father enlisted in the Canadian Army and his brother went to Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, to complete his secondary education. After initial training with the Ontario Regiment, my father was posted to the Royal Canadian Dragoons and qualified as a driver. In November 1941, the Regiment entrained to Halifax

and sailed across the North Atlantic to Liverpool where my father would have experienced the effects of serious bomb damage for the first time.

The Regiment spent the next two years in England training in armoured reconnaissance, mainly in the south of England. This all suited my father as he had a much-loved spinster aunt living in style in Hendon, North London, where he could spend his leave and entertain chums. He almost certainly went AWOL on the occasion of his 21st birthday on 31 August 1943 as he was subsequently confined to barracks for two days and forfeited a day's pay.

The RCD finally deployed on operations in December 1943 when they embarked for Sicily before crossing into Italy to join that campaign as part of the 8th Army. Their battle honours include the Liri Valley (or the Fourth Battle of Monte Cassino) in May 1944, the Lamone Crossing in December that year, and the Gothic Line. That honour reflected the campaign to breach it, part of which my father missed as he had been sent back to the UK in July for officer selection on the basis of his British 'public-school' education. Having failed selection, he returned to Italy in October to B Squadron as a Corporal to find the Regiment dismounted in an infantry role in foul weather.



RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, May 2025. David Sneath standing next to a Dingo armoured car (above), the type in which his father would have performed his role as the Sqn Int NCO and proudly marching with the veterans in Dokkum (right), a town liberated by his father's B Sqn, RCD in April 1945.

The Regiment spent Christmas 1944 in the field under mortar and shell fire, but was withdrawn from the line in early January and began to re-equip and re-train for its original reconnaissance role in order to reinforce the 1st Canadian Army in Europe. In early March 1945, the RCD sailed in Landing Ships (Tank) from Livorno to Marseilles before making the long drive north to Belgium.

The ORBAT and vehicle establishment were RHQ and HQ Sqn with a variety of vehicles including five cars with 3" mortars and the usual echelon support. The four Sabre Sqns comprised of Sqn HQ and five troops were each equipped with two U.S.-made Staghound armoured cars and two Daimler Dingo scout cars as well as a heavy troop armed with two 75mm guns mounted on half-tracks to give close support. The Staghound was armed with a 37mm cannon and weighed 14 tons whereas the Dingos only carried a Bren gun but had the speed to recce forward. Of these vehicles, my father, as the B Sqn Intelligence NCO, rode in a Dingo and,

"The RCD finally deployed on operations in December 1943 when they embarked for Sicily before crossing into Italy to join that campaign as part of the 8th Army."



although he remained a Corporal, satisfied a demanding Squadron Commander, Major Jean-Paul Gautier. Known as J-P in the Regiment well into the 1980s, he became a one star and Colonel of the Regiment.

By early April 1945, Antwerp and the Scheldt Estuary had been taken, enabling shorter supply lines into Holland and Germany. Western Holland was occupied by two German Army Corps defending Amsterdam and The Hague, and the plan was to isolate them by cutting off their access to Germany through northern Holland and the eastern borderlands. The Dragoons were Corps troops assigned to the 1st Canadian Corps (1 Can Corps), but from time to time were also assigned to 2 Can Corps.

Our Battlefield and Honour Tour in early May 2025 started back to front with lunch in the



ABOVE: Dutch resistance fighters photographed on 15 April 1945 aboard a Dingo scout car of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

RIGHT: Map showing the movements of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Corps into the Netherlands in 1945. Map drawn by Mike Bechthold.



Capitulation Room at the Hotel Wereld, Wageningen, where LGen Charles Foulkes, Comd 1 Can Corps, took the German surrender of Holland from General Johannes Blaskowitz on 5 May 1945, following the ceasefire at 0800 hours that morning on the 21st Army Group front. Embedded in the tiles of the hotel's gentlemen's washroom is a photograph of a soldier from the British 49th (West Riding) Division showing the Polar Bear shoulder flash acquired upon its formation in Iceland, which more recently became that of 49 Brigade at Chilwell, Nottinghamshire, in which I served as a Colonel in the 1990s. Troops of that Division had liberated Wageningen while under command of 1 Can Corps.

Whilst A Sqn was detached to 3rd Canadian Infantry Division to recce crossings over the IJssel River, the rest entered Germany at Emmerich before crossing back into Holland and engaging the enemy for the first time in Lettele. There D Sqn sustained the Regiment's first casualties lost to artillery but won its first MC and two MMs in a dismounted action by Tp Ldr Lt Jones and Tp Sgt Westwood followed by Sgt William Abbott directing fire from an exposed position on his vehicle.

On 4 May 2025 our group visited the town for lunch hosted by the Mayor and to attend an Act of Remembrance at the memorial on the site of the

field burial of two of the casualties. The memorial included two rows of four concrete blocks, each taken from a nearby V1 launch site.

On 10 April 1945 my father's B Sqn pushed north taking 46 prisoners; they no doubt kept him busy as the Sqn Int NCO. By then, resistance was crumbling, and the game was on. One B Sqn officer, Lt Harry Walker (whose daughter Deborah was part of the tour), wrote at the time:

The Regiment, so long deprived of its birthright, was at long last enjoying the thrill of the chase, which is an armoured car unit's consummation. Scout cars scampered after the scurrying Hun while Staghounds monitored their advance. Ahead – to right and left – dashed the Daimlers as they sought the Wehrmacht in their den and drove them out to where the armoured cars had lumbered forward to await the first appearance of the flushed quarry.

The 12th of April was a busy day as the Sqn sought crossing points over the many canals



LEFT: A soldier of the British 49th (West Riding) Division showing the Polar Bear shoulder flash acquired upon its formation in Iceland during the VE-Day celebrations in Holland on 7 May 1945.

BELOW: The Dutch celebrate the arrival of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and the "Polar Bears" (the 49th (West Riding) Yorkshire Infantry Division) in Hilversum on 7 May 1945.

barring their way north. Actions that day saw Cpl Lewis Conway of B Sqn winning the MM armed with a Thompson sub-machine gun in another dismounted action and WOII Reginald Deeming of D Sqn awarded the DCM for leading an assault on a prepared position as well as for previous acts of bravery in Italy.

A notable casualty was Tpr Wilfred Berry, Lt Richard Charles Kerrigan's driver in D Sqn, who died when a panzerfaust struck his vehicle outside Wolvega. On 2 May 2025, our party visited the site of Berry's field burial where, in 1945, the village had turned out for a funeral service conducted by the CO. In September 1945, the neighbouring village of Oldeholtspade dedicated a memorial to him which we attended on 2 May 2025 for a memorial service and wreath laying. Another relative that day was Warren Baker, grandson of Lt Kerrigan, who was honoured to stand guard by the memorial dedicated to Tpr Berry's sacrifice and to that of the long-suffering inhabitants between 1940 and 1945.

On 3 May 2025 we joined a remarkable convoy of period vehicles led by five DUKWs as we made our way to Dokkum. There we did not dismount; instead, we disembarked after our amphibians had 'swum' along local canals to reach the town in good and dry order! We were feted by huge crowds before marching up the street through which my father's Sqn had entered the town

80 years earlier. Our motley parade was led by a Dutch pipe band and a working Staghound crewed by serving Dragoons.

Other Liberation 80 events included a Dutch National Memorial Day remembrance service at the Holten Canadian War Cemetery on 4 May 2025 in the presence of Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and the Governor General of Canada Mary Simon. Princess Margriet was born in Ottawa on 19 January 1943 while her mother, Princess Juliana, was in exile during World War II.

The Holten site, located in a forest, was chosen for being the closest to a Canadian landscape and contains the Dragoon casualties whose bodies were re-interred there after the war. They include another four whose B Sqn Staghound was destroyed by a sea mine embedded in a road on the last day of hostilities, 4 May 1945. The ceremony was marked by schoolchildren laying a rose on each of




RIGHT: RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour. Cpl Andrew Rainforth (left, whose trip was sponsored by the RCD Association), Councillor Hanneke Zonderland, and Warren Baker (right) were the wreath bearers/layers for the RCD wreath at the Tpr Wilfred Berry Memorial in Oldeholtspade on 2 May 2025. Warren, a civilian, who joined the tour from 1-6 May, is the grandson of Lt Richard Charles Kerrigan. His grandfather, Lt Kerrigan, was Tpr Berry's crew commander in the Staghound that was hit by a German panzerfaust, a single shot portable German antitank weapon that was widely used in the Second World War, on 16 April 1945 at the spot where the memorial now stands. Lt Kerrigan was slightly wounded on that day along with the remainder of the crew.



over 1,650 graves and the (accurate) dropping of poppies from a low flying helicopter.

Liberation Day on 5 May saw us back on the DUKWs in a 150-strong period vehicle convoy for a 7-hour drive through the polder and its towns and villages packed with well-wishers, many waving frantically. Our final destination was Leeuwarden and a big party in the main city square, complete with rock bands. But the star of the show was 100-year-old veteran Jim Parks, late of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. For the rest, they had to make do with old baby boomer off-cuts like me, but I returned home with a far better understand-

ing of my father's war in Holland and am very proud of his part in it as a citizen soldier.

Editor's Note: Retired British Colonel David Sneath was born in June 1948. He was qualified as a barrister in 1971. Two years earlier, he was commissioned into the Territorial Army and went on to practice law in Nottingham while serving as a reservist in the 3rd Battalion The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. He commanded the Battalion from 1991 to 1994 and became an Employment Judge in early 1992. From 1994 to 1999, he served as a Staff Colonel at 49 Brigade and 3 Division. In 1998, he was promoted to Regional Employment Judge in a leadership role. In 2006, he served for five months as the British embed in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Multinational Corps Iraq. He retired in 2015. 



LEFT: Celebrating the end of the war in April 1945.

BELOW: Hundreds gathered at the Holten Canadian War Cemetery on May 4, 2025 to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands. Courtesy of the Governor General of Canada's office.





BUSINESS ARISING 2024-2025

The RCD Association is dedicated to fostering, maintaining and promoting the traditions, well-being and esprit de corps of the Regiment. We are composed of retired and serving members of the Regiment and those who have served with and supported the RCD at home and abroad.

The aim of the Association is two-fold: firstly, a portal where past and present Dragoons and their families can reach out to each other to re-establish old friendships; and secondly, to keep current on Regimental activities.

Once a Dragoon, always a Dragoon!

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift 

Royal Canadian Dragoon Association Board of Directors

(as of 28 January 2025)

OFFICERS

- **President:** Thomas Skelding
- **1st Vice President:** Bill Richards
- **2nd Vice President:** Peter Atkinson
- **Secretary:** Vacant
- **Treasurer:** Sylvie Charron
- **Editor of the Newsletter:** Perry Wells

DIRECTORS

- Lance Wiebe: New Brunswick

ABOVE: Riding through the streets of Franeker in military vehicles in celebration of Liberation Day on 5 May 2025 were Rick Hillier, Warren Bake, Tom Skelding, Doug Elliott, Dave Chaloux, Lais and Linda Barsauskas, Nathan and Erinn Kehler.

- Dan Sicotte: Quebec
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- Randy Payne: Kingston
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- Denis Levesque: Kingston
- Vacant: South Central Ontario
- Kathy Nayduk: Windsor, ON
- Gerry Olsen: Alberta
- Robert Black: British Columbia

RCD ASSOCIATION ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

(current as of 31 May 2025)

Chapter	Total
Outside Canada	3
British Columbia	30
Alberta	24
Windsor, Ontario	7
South Central Ontario	64
Upper Ottawa Valley	30
National Capital Region	64
Kingston	52
Quebec	7
Atlantic (NB, NS, PEI)	93
Newfoundland & Labrador	10
Grand Total	384

Everyone is encouraged to reach out to theDragoons (either retired, serving, or friends of the Regiment) living in your area and urge them to join the Association. For more information, go to the Regimental website (<https://dragoons.ca/regiment-family/the-association/>).

THE ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET (as at 30 June 2025)

ASSET	
Current Assets	
Bank	38,224.67
Investments (GICs)	46,397.27
Total Current Assets	<u>84,603.94</u>
TOTAL ASSET	<u>\$84,603.94</u>
LIABILITY	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	282.50
Total Current Liabilities	<u>282.50</u>
TOTAL LIABILITY	<u>\$282.50</u>
NET ASSETS	
Beginning of Period	89,059.77
Change in Net Assets	<u>-4,738.33</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>84,321.44</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$84,603.94</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025)

REVENUE	
Revenue	
Membership Fees	<u>1,150.00</u>
Total Revenue	<u>1,150.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$1,150.00</u>
EXPENSE	
General & Admin Expenses	
Courier & Postage	667.48
The Dragoon	1,463.72
Travel & Entertainment	3,757.13
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$5,888.33</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	<u>-\$4,738.33</u>

RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour, City of Lettele, 4 May 2025. RCD Association members standing on the site where Tpr Steve Michlosky, D Sqn, was buried on 9 April 1945. He was buried in the garden in front of the house where the group is standing. Left to right: Walter Galant, Lais Barsauskas, Nathan Kehler, Kevin Mathers, Randy Keirstead, Doug Elliott, Kathy Nayduk, Wayne Dale, Mark Popov, Dave Chaloux, Tom Skelding, Mrs. Doortje Kleine Koerkamp-Roesink.



THE LAST TRUMPET CALL

FAREWELL FRIENDS

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."*

2024 (SINCE 1 JUNE 2024)

- Mike SULLIVAN
- David Vincent MEREDITH
- Gordon WOOLLARD
- Donald Joseph McKENNA
- David G. MELLOTT
- Robert George FOSTER
- Ronald Charles MOORE
- Robert CABLE
- John G. BARTLETT

2025 (AS OF 17 JUNE 2025)

- Frederick BIERHORST
- Kenneth Ross BLACK
- Ronald Robert Boyd PINSENT
- Frank E. AUSTIN
- Alan Richard TURNER
- Donald B. Leory SLAGHT
- John Joseph MEERS
- Daniel FARR
- Douglas Lyle BLAND
- Kenneth Terry SEELEY
- Perry Ernest RINGER
- J.W. "Jim" CHAMBERLAIN

- P. Wade BOND
- Thomas PARR
- Konrad ROSEN-KRANZ-GALINDO
- Steve ADAMS
- John BEVERIDGE
- Gary Del VILLANO
- Gregory F. BARR
- Philip Joseph SIMON
- Ronald "Ron" Thomas WHITE
- Elmer Wallace CHARETTE
- Curtis Eugene GORMLEY
- Brian Charles DYMOND



Trooper Steve Michlosky in battle dress proudly wearing the Springbok, England 1943.