



# ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS SPRINGBOK 2025





## REGIMENT HONOURED BY LEEUWARDEN FOOTBALL CLUB



Dutch football club SC Cambuur unveiled a commemorative kit recognizing the Regiment's role in liberating Leeuwarden during the Second World War. The jersey features a Maple Leaf pattern across the front and the RCD insignia on the back. It was presented to the Commanding Officer during the Leeuwarden parade in Petawawa, underscoring the lasting bond between the Regiment and the city.

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# COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT ADDRESS

MGen (ret'd) Stephen Cadden



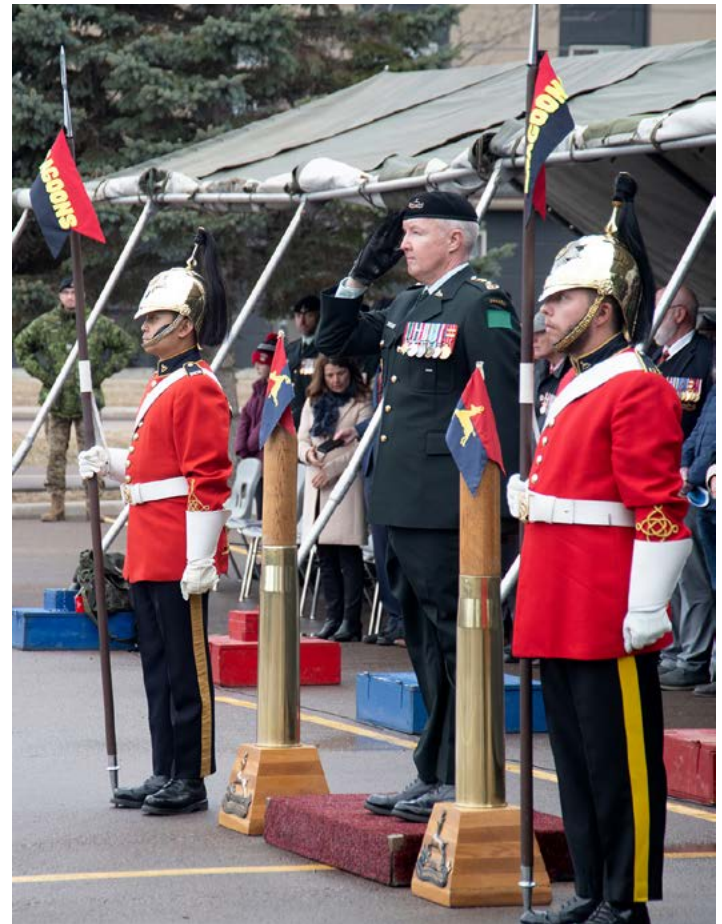
ABOVE: MGen (ret'd) Dean Milner, Colonel Commandant Col James Lockyer and MGen (ret'd) Stephen Cadden perform the Change of Colonel of the Regiment Signing Ceremony. This took place in Garrison Petawawa on June 26, 2024. Photo by Pte Jennifer Froome.

**It has been a challenging year** for our Regiment, a year like every other, and a year like no other. The perennial challenges remain: a shortage of vehicles and equipment, intended structural reforms, the competing demands of individual and collective training, and TD restrictions. Added to this list are the preliminary actions for returning C Squadron to Petawawa, a complex activity requiring significant effort. But there are tangible signs of relief on the horizon: increased pay and compensation, intended equipment purchases (including new AFVs), an acknowledgement of the need for effective combat reconnaissance in Army warfighting plans, and a commitment by the government to quickly invest in the CAF. The key to capitalizing on the desire for a stronger army will rest, as ever, on three key pillars: strong leadership, solid staff support, and highly trained professional units.

For the Regiment, we must take advantage of every training opportunity, and ensure that when the promised equipment arrives, and training opportunities arise, we are ready to seize them. In addition to mandated training standards, this means maintaining a high standard of physical fitness, mental resilience, and strong family bases which enable the readiness required to deploy. Our Regiment has a sense of history, pride and unity which will contribute meaningfully to this readiness.

There have been numerous activities over the past year which have shown just how strong our unit is: The memorial service conducted after the tragic loss of Cpl Meers, showing a truly united, respectful Regiment which cares deeply for its





members. The evident sense of historical connection between Dragoons, our veterans and a delegation from the town of Leeuwarden. The tangible pride shown by members of our affiliated cadet corps when they are awarded their Springbok cap badges. The sense of authority conveyed by our Colonel in Chief the King, as he inspects an honour guard of his Dragoons. The countless hours devoted by members of our Guild, as they support the greater Regimental family. The involvement of prominent Canadians like our Patron, Marjolaine Hudon, who devotes time to our Regiment despite the heavy demands on her schedule. The disparate elements of Regimental morale and esprit de corps are shown countless times throughout the year, in large and small activities.

But the true worth of Dragoons will always be shown by our soldiers on the battlefield. The Regiment begins its annual journey of renewal as the Annual Posting Season moves friends and families to new locations, while returning old comrades and sending us new Dragoons. My visits to Petawawa over the past year have shown me that the individual soldier in our Regiment is just as professional as Dragoons of the past. Our country will depend on these soldiers in times of crisis, which is why we will strive to support and enable them. We have one of the strongest regiments in the Army and will continue to keep it that way.

*Bold and Swift!* 🐎

**ABOVE LEFT:** Incoming Colonel of the Regiment MGen (ret'd) Stephen Cadden addresses those gathered for the Change of Colonel of the Regiment Signing Ceremony in Garrison Petawawa on 26 June 2024. Photo by Pte Jennifer Froome.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The Royal Canadian Dragoons hosted a parade in the town of Petawawa to commemorate 80 years of the liberation of Leeuwarden, Netherlands. The parade was presided over by MGen Stephen Cadden on April 15, 2025.

**LEFT:** MGen Cadden addresses the members on parade.







# SENIOR SERVING DRAGOON

## ADDRESS

Col Christopher Renahan, CD



**ABOVE:** Members from B Squadron, The Royal Canadian Dragoons participate in a live fire range on March 26, 2025 at Juliette Tower in the Petawawa training area.

### Dragoons,

It is a pleasure to be able to address the Regimental Family in the capacity as Senior Serving Dragoon. It is not a position I ever expected to find myself in, but I count myself as very lucky to be in a position where I can still have a tangible connection to the Regiment. Our ability to annually produce a high-quality product *Springbok* will hopefully go some way to continue that connection to you as well and is a great vehicle to ensure we are all aware of the latest achievements and accomplishments of our Regiment.

I have also been able to serve as the Regimental Colonel for a number of years, which has given me the ability to remain connected to Dragoons far and wide, while also working with the Corps Director on issues of importance to the Corps. From my position, I can tell you that the Regiment continues to be led and served by excellent leaders at all levels. Dragoons also continue to serve the Army and Canada, and can be found in units, headquarters, and foreign capitals across the world.

You will see in this edition that the pace of operations and training is as high as it ever was. The focus has been on the preparation of A and B Squadrons for succes-





sive deployments to Operation REASSURANCE in Latvia as the Multinational Brigade Reconnaissance Squadron. This has involved the familiar gradual ramping up of training, culminating in Combat Team-level live-fire training to ensure the deploying Squadrons are ready for their upcoming task. This is also done against a background of constant individual training, taskings, and Immediate Reaction Unit tasks. I can assure the demands on the Regiment and its soldiers are as high as ever, and they never fail to live up to these demands.

And it is not without difficulties. The Regiment has faced equipment shortages that have challenged our ability to fully show what we are able to do as a manoeuvre unit and have had to make do with a mixed fleet of vehicles not optimized for the tasks we are asked to complete. But I believe that a page has been turned, and the Regiment and Corps are poised for a period of growth and modernization that has not been seen in a long time. The Corps Director has worked tirelessly with the Army to create a value proposition that ensures the Armour Corps remains a critical component of the Army's capabilities. And by now you should be aware of the vision and level of ambition that is being set for a complete modernization of the Canadian Army. This will see unprecedented growth, reorganization, and new or improved capabilities across the spectrum. The Regiment will be well served by this modernization and will see it receive new equipment that enables our Armoured Cavalry role, situated in an Army that is better equipped, prepared, and organized for the strategic challenges we can be expected to face.

So, it is with an optimistic perspective that I look to the future. And I am further buoyed by knowing that the dedicated and professional members of the Regiment will continue to do us proud. I can assure you that they are well prepared to capitalize on the investments to come, which will only further contribute to our Regiment's accomplishments and contributions that will continue our proud and distinguished history.

*Bold and Swift!* 🇨🇦

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**PHOTOS THIS PAGE:** Members of the Royal Canadian Dragoons conduct live fire ranges and participate in a danger close, all arms call for fire with 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in November 2024. Photos by Cpl Larry Stiver, CFB Petawawa Garrison Imaging.







# COMMANDING OFFICER

## ADDRESS

LCol Chloeann Summerfield, CD



### Dragoons and members of the Regimental Family,

As I reflect on the past year, I am deeply proud of the extraordinary dedication and professionalism shown by both the members and friends of the Regiment. With deep appreciation, we acknowledge the commitment and effort that the Regiment's former command team — LCol Nick Forsyth and CWO Chris LeBlanc — invested as they handed the leadership torch to CWO John Nickerson and me.

It has been a particularly dynamic year for the Dragoons, one in which the strength and resilience of our members have been deeply apparent. Having committed many of our troops in support of expeditionary operational deployments, the summer of 2024 marked the return of many from Op REASSURANCE in Latvia, Op UNIFIER, and Op UNION in Eastern Europe. The diverse nature of these missions highlights the exceptional versatility of our soldiers and officers, who returned to the Regiment with invaluable experience to share with the wider RCD team. These efforts, along with the continued hefty training schedule within the unit this year, have ensured that our cavalry squadrons are well prepared for a year where we will see two back-to-back deployments on Op REASSURANCE, under a newly developed Multinational Brigade – Latvia Headquarters. With A and B Squadrons focused on Latvia, C Squadron has been instrumental in supporting Canadian Army-level trials and discussions for the acquisition of a new armoured vehicle for the RCAC. With this, I am encouraged by the energy with which the CA and RCAC are working to develop and implement new structures, strategies, and capabilities to operate in the evolving, pan-domain battlespace.

This year, the Regiment also celebrated several historic, ceremonial, and significant events. Amongst many, we were thrilled to welcome our new Colonel of the Regiment (CoTR), MGen (ret'd) Stephen Cadden, who was appointed to the position in June 2024. MGen (ret'd) Cadden follows the outstanding service of MGen (ret'd)





Dean Milner, whose dedication to all Dragoons as the CoTR has been outstanding. We bid farewell to BGen (ret'd) Steven Graham, who leaves the position of Senior Serving Dragoon, marking the end of an impactful career. The unit participated in an exceptional ceremony marking the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Leeuwarden, where we strengthened our historical ties and bond with the Town of Leeuwarden. Several Dragoons also had the honour of representing the Regiment for a trip of a lifetime in the Netherlands. Finally, we were honoured to showcase the shiny brass and silver of our scarlet uniforms for the May 2025 Royal Visit of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla, providing a ceremonial quarter guard for the arrival and departure of His Majesty's first visit as King of Canada and Colonel-in-Chief of the RCD.



This year, not without our challenges, the Regiment grieved the tragic passing of Cpl John Meers. The unity of the Regiment shone through as we remember the strength and resilience of John, and of the impact that he had on the unit.



Over the coming months, we will continue to refine our technical and tactical skills, and we look forward to navigating the challenges and many opportunities that lie ahead. The dedication of our soldiers and leaders ensures that the Regiment remains a pillar of strength within the CA, and a valuable capability in Canada's defence against global threats.

***Bold and Swift!*** 🇨🇦



**FROM TOP RIGHT:** Live-fire training in a Leopard 2A4. / LCol Summerfield addresses the Regiment. / Dragoons take part in Ex RUCKING BEAR, a 13-kilometre march in full fighting order. / The Royal Canadian Dragoons lay a wreath during a Remembrance Day ceremony.





# REGIMENTAL SERGEANT-MAJOR ADDRESS

CWO John Nickerson



**ABOVE: RSM CWO Nickerson hands over the parade to the CO, LCol Summerfield, during the celebrations marking the Battle of Leliefontein.**

## Dragoons and Regimental Family,

It is with great humility that I get to address you as your Regimental Sergeant Major. I would like to start by acknowledging the efforts of my predecessors and the magnificent work they undertook to set the Regiment up for success and specifically CWO Chris Leblanc. As we conducted our changeover in August 2024, the passion and dedication that they applied in their leadership of the Regiment was evident. We would not have been able to continue to progress without these efforts.

As I write this address, it is hard to believe that almost a year has passed since myself and the CO have started our journey as a command team. Looking back at the year, there has been a significant amount of transformation and refocus of energy within the Regiment. Some of these included an increased focus on medium reconnaissance skills. This saw the soldiers of the Regiment getting back to skills such as mission command and independence. We have seen the stand down of D Sqn, which saw those soldiers shifted into both A & B Sqn to prepare for upcoming deployments to Latvia. C Sqn has had to retrain from a Heavy Cavalry Squadron to a Light Cavalry Squadron, again assessing our soldier skills and ability to adjust to





army requirements. The soldiers of the Regiment remain operationally focused and maintained a targeted effort in achieving readiness to meet the requirements of the Canadian Army.

Even with all these dynamic shifts for our soldiers they continued to foster a spirit of competition and achievement. The soldiers of the Regiment displayed grit and determination to achieve a second place in the major unit standings of IRON WARRIOR. This did not dissuade the soldiers of the Regiment in regaining the top spot in the Brigade, when the soldiers and officers competed in Ex OLYMPIAN BEAR. This saw participation in numerous events, competing against two Brigade units and some of the lodger units here in Petawawa. As the dust settled, the Regiment was able to take home the victory as top unit in the Brigade. To remain at the top, members competed in CHIMO MUDDER and again took home the top spot in the Brigade.

Along with all the team events we saw many individual accomplishments. We have had members achieve the platinum standard on the FORCE evaluation, which represent less than 2% of the CAF. Several members were awarded honours and recognition

over the past year. Some were inducted as members of military merit, while others received CDS commendations, CJOC commendations, CDA commendations, and recognition by other elements such as the RCAF. I could continue to go on about all the achievements members of the Regiment attain; this is a testament to the strength of the members of the Regiment and the level of commitment they display everyday they wear the uniform.

The members of the Regiment continue to work hard, day in and day out, to meet the challenges ahead. The world is an uncertain place and one thing I can say with confidence is that our members will continue to work hard and be ready when they are called. I am still dumbfounded by the passion and determination that the Regiment shows every day, and look forward to continuing to serve the members of the Regiment as they achieve the greatness of which they are so capable.

***Bold and Swift!*** 🚢

**ABOVE:** CO LCol Summerfield and RSM CWO Nickerson under the watchful eye of MCpl Haines (yellow jacket) conduct a cold plunge during Ex WINTER DRAGOON.





# PATRON OF THE REGIMENT

## ADDRESS

Marjolaine Hudon



**ABOVE:** Patron of the Regiment Marjolaine Hudon poses with MGen Steve Cadden, Gen Rick Hillier, Nadir Patel, LCol Chloëann Summerfield during a Guild of the Royal Canadian Regiment fundraising luncheon.

**As your Patron,** I am extremely proud of the work of the women and men of The Royal Canadian Dragoons on domestic and international missions.

This year, the Regiment commemorated an important event in its history – the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of Leeuwarden. The celebration marked a moment of deep significance for the Regimental Family honouring Dragoons and the important bond that continues to exist to this day between the Regiment and the community of Leeuwarden.

Your Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Chloëann Summerfield, as well as Colonel of the Regiment Major-General (ret'd) Stephen Cadden have kept me apprised of your many accomplishments throughout the year. Whenever I receive these updates, I feel such a sense of pride for the role that Canada continues to play on the global stage. I am also reminded of the sacrifices and efforts made by Dragoons and others in serving our country so selflessly.

I recognize that deploying on operations is the motivation for most, if not all, of our soldiers. I have followed with interest the activities which B Squadron and other Canadian military members have been undertaking in Latvia.





In my position as Patron of the Regiment, I understand what it takes for a soldier to deploy — the intense training exercises, briefings and preparation that go into ensuring soldiers are ready to deploy. I am also keenly aware of the many sacrifices made by their friends and families in helping them to prepare. A heartfelt thank you to you and your loved ones.

Last Fall, I was pleased, along with RBC, to support a Guild fundraising luncheon. Members of the business community, and other Friends of the Regiment, came together to hear from General Rick Hillier and Nadir Patel for a conversation about global instability and the impact on our economy, our soldiers and Canadian businesses. This event helped raise the profile of the Regiment amongst business leaders who might not be aware of the Regiment, its proud history, and its contribution to ongoing operations. It also helped raise much needed funds to support members of the Regimental Family.

I am truly honoured to be your Patron. I will continue my efforts to help Canadians learn more about the work of the Dragoons, the Regiment's impact as well as the Canadian military.

Thank you for your continued dedication to Canada and to our allies. We are privileged to count on all of you, individuals who are deeply committed to the well-being of everyone in our society.

***Bold and Swift!*** 

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**TOP LEFT: Mme Marjolaine Hudon, Patron of the Regiment, gives her address at a fundraising luncheon.**



Always at the forefront of our Patron's mind is the welfare and morale of soldiers, both in garrison and in the field.





# CHANGE IN COMMAND

## A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE REGIMENT

On 26 June 2024, the Regiment witnessed a significant milestone with a Change of Command ceremony, marking the transition of leadership from LCol Nicholas Forsyth to LCol Chloeann Summerfield. The event was extremely well attended, demonstrating our strong connections to the Regimental Family. This also marked the first official event for newly appointed Commandant of the Royal Canadian Armour Corps, Col Lockyer. The formal parade showcased the Regiment's discipline and unity. LCol Forsyth, who has led the Regiment with distinction, handed over the command to LCol Summerfield, who brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to the role. The transition was marked by the symbolic passing of the Guidon, a tradition that signifies the continuity and enduring spirit of the Regiment.

In his farewell address, LCol Forsyth expressed his gratitude to the soldiers and officers for their unwavering support and dedication. He reflected on the achievements and challenges faced during his tenure, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and resilience.

LCol Summerfield emphasized the importance of innovation, training, and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. Her enthusiasm and strategic outlook promise to steer the Regiment towards new heights of excellence.

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**ABOVE:** Outgoing Commanding Officer LCol Nicholas Forsyth, Reviewing Officer Col Jay MacKeen and incoming Commanding Officer LCol Chloeann Summerfield perform the Change of Command Signing Ceremony in Garrison Petawawa on 26 June 2024. Photo by Pte Jennifer Froome.





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Royal Canadian Dragoons Change of Command parade in Garrison Petawawa on 26 June 2024. / Incoming CO LCol Chloëann Summerfield takes control of the battalion. / Outgoing CoTR MGen (ret'd) Dean Milner departs the ceremony in an armoured vehicle. All photos by Pte Jennifer Froome.

The ceremony also celebrated the change of Colonel of the Regiment, with MGen (retired) Dean Milner handing over MGen (retired) Stephen Cadden. This transition highlights the Regiment's rich history. MGen Milner's dedication to the soldiers of this Regiment cannot be understated. MGen Cadden, known for his exemplary service and leadership, was welcomed back by the Regiment.

The event concluded with a reception, allowing attendees to mingle and celebrate the new chapter in the Regiment's history. The presence of distinguished guests, including veterans and family members, added to the ceremony's significance, making it a memorable occasion for all. This occasion not only marked a transition in leadership but also reinforced the Regiment's commitment to excellence and its enduring legacy.

***Bold and Swift!*** 







# CHANGE OF APPOINTMENT CHANGE OF RSM

On 9 August 2024, the Royal Canadian Dragoons held a Change of Appointment ceremony, marking the transition of leadership from CWO Chris LeBlanc to CWO John Nickerson. This significant event underscored the Regiment's commitment to excellence and its enduring traditions. The transition was symbolized by the passing of the regimental pace stick, a tradition that signifies the continuity of leadership and the Regiment's unwavering spirit.

In his farewell address, CWO LeBlanc expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the soldiers and officers for their support and dedication throughout his tenure.

CWO Nickerson thanked everyone for the opportunity to lead the soldiers of this Regiment. He emphasized the importance of family, tradition, and innovation. His guidance, expertise, and ex-

perience will be the guiding light for the soldiers of this unit.

Attendees included several past RSMs, distinguished guests, and the greater Regimental Family, further highlighting the connections of our rich history with ensuring we continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of Canadians.

*Bold and Swift!* 

ABOVE: Incoming RSM CWO Nickerson (left), CO RCD LCol Summerfield (centre), and outgoing RSM CWO LeBlanc.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CWO Nickerson inspects the troops prior to assuming duties as Regimental Sergeant Major of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. / The Guidon Party proudly joins the outgoing and incoming RSMs in a ceremonial photo. / CWO Nickerson returns the Regimental Guidon to TQMS MWO Barnett, symbolizing the completion of the Change of Appointment. / The CO addresses the incoming RSM during the Change of Appointment ceremony.









# B



# SQUADRON

## Road to REASSURANCE 25-02

By Lt Brandon Cowan,  
B Sqn

**As part of their preparation** for Operation REASSURANCE 25-02, the Regiment underwent an intense and transformative training cycle throughout the fall months. Their objective was clear: rebuild from the ground up, refine essential skills, and adapt to evolving mission requirements while transitioning the Sqn into their new role of Brigade Recce within the Canadian-led Multinational Brigade Latvia (MNB-LVA). This training cycle was a comprehensive blend of re-establishing core tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) while tackling both familiar and unfamiliar challenges.

The fall training period was less about maintaining existing skills and more about re-establishing B Sqn as a fully capable subunit after being

stood down the previous year to facilitate deployments. The process involved integrating new members, recalibrating the Sqn's structure, and reinforcing a cohesive operational mindset. With the changing nature of their task as Cavalry, B Sqn had to learn and master a diverse range of TTPs that were crucial to their new mission set, particularly in the role of Brigade Recce. In addition to re-acquainting themselves with the core principles of reconnaissance, the Regiment had to adapt quickly to evolving and complex scenarios, some of which required rethinking traditional approaches.

Throughout the fall training cycle, as part of Ex WALKING DRAGOON and Ex CHARGING DRAGOON, B Sqn faced a variety of operational





Tracers light up the night sky. The live-fire exercise tested the Sqn in realistic, high-intensity combat scenarios.

scenarios that tested their ability to adapt and execute across multiple domains. The Sqn's training was diverse, across the Armd Cav spectrum of tasks, including offensive, defensive, stability, and enabling operations. They quickly refreshed specialized skills including Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance, involving both detection and response protocols for CBRN threats.

Later in the year, the Regiment reached a major milestone in their preparation for Op REASSURANCE 25-02: the completion of Troop (Level 3) and Squadron (Level 4) live fire as part of Ex SABOT DRAGOON and Ex MAPLE RESOLVE, respectively, both conducted in the Petawawa Range and Training Area (RTA). These exercises were crucial for certifying their Sqn's operational readiness and ensuring that their tactics, skills, and teamwork were up to standard for deployment. The live-fire traces tested the Sqn in more realistic, high-intensity combat scenarios, pushing their individual and collective abilities to the limit.

In the winter, B Sqn was integrated into Ex UNIFIED BEAR. This large-scale virtual exercise provided an opportunity to integrate with other units

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**B Sqn had an intense fall training period as it was transitioning to the new role of Brigade Recce and in preparation for deployment on Operation REASSURANCE as part of Canada's contribution to NATO Multinational Brigade-Latvia.**

and experience the challenges of working as part of a larger formation.

Overall, the training cycle was a period of intense growth and preparation. Rebuilding from the ground up, they faced a variety of challenges, from mastering essential TTPs to adapting to new roles and tasks. Their preparation culminated in a successful Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE, cementing their readiness for Op REASSURANCE 25-02.

***Bold and Swift!*** 🚀







# INVALUABLE TRAINING

## FALL 2024

**With the Regiment tasked** with force generating two sequential medium cavalry squadrons in support of Canada's commitment to the NATO mission in Latvia with Operation REASSURANCE Rotations 25-02 and 26-01, on top of forming the Immediate Response Unit beginning in spring 2025, an intensive training cycle throughout the fall of 2024 was required to prepare for these demanding operational commitments. The aim of this training cycle was designed to build competence, resilience and teamwork, ensuring our Dragoons were prepared for any challenge.

### INDIVIDUAL TRAINING: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

The fall training cycle began with a focus on individual skills development, ensuring soldiers were equipped with the necessary competencies for upcoming deployments. This phase included a series of courses covering Primary Combat Functions and specialized training, ranging from Direct Fire Gunnery — essential for the deterrence mission in Latvia — to Wildland Firefighter Training — pre-

paring troops to respond to domestic emergencies. The highlight of this phase was A Squadron's two-week field deployment, which provided armoured junior leadership qualifications for soldiers across the Regiment, enabling their progression to Master Corporal. This period established a solid foundation upon which the Regiment could build collective operational effectiveness.

### COLLECTIVE TRAINING: STRENGTHENING TEAMS

Following individual training, the Regiment transitioned to collective training to forge cohesive teams capable of operating in high-tempo environments. Exercise WALKING DRAGON focused on Squadron-level field exercises designed to build strong crews and troops, the cornerstone of future operational success.

### REGIMENTAL TRAINING: PREPARING FOR DEPLOYMENT

The next phase saw the Regiment scale up to full Regimental training with Exercise CHARGING DRAGON. This two-week deployment integrated B Squadron, HQ Squadron, and RHQ into the Petawawa Training Area, while A Squadron

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**ABOVE: MWO Monaghan (SSM HQ) leading sustainment PD with A and B Sqns' echelons.**





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:** Members of A Squadron, Royal Canadian Dragoons conduct live-fire ranges and participate in a danger close, all arms call for fire with 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in the Garrison Petawawa training area. / B Sqn soldiers conducting a rehearsal of concept drill in the Petawawa RTA during Exercise CHARGING DRAGOON. / HQ Sqn conducting sustainment operations in the Petawawa RTA. / WO Herlinger (Tn WO) oversees the conduct of a delivery point.

leveraged simulation technology to maximize training opportunities in a resource-constrained environment. RHQ developed a complex and dynamic exercise that exposed B Squadron to a variety of tactical scenarios spanning all phases of war. The exercise culminated with B Squadron executing reconnaissance tasks while maintaining extended lines of communication and responding to a CBRN event in full mission protective posture (Dress State 4), reinforcing adaptability and mission readiness under realistic conditions.

### **LIVE-FIRE VALIDATION: EXERCISE SABOT DRAGOON**

With individual skills honed and teams solidified, the fall training cycle concluded with the ultimate test: Exercise SABOT DRAGOON, an austere



troop-level live-fire exercise. A and B Squadrons, supported by D Battery, 2 RCHA, advanced through the Petawawa Training Area in the role of Brigade Reconnaissance. For the first time in recent history, soldiers of the Regiment experienced danger close live-fire from 155mm HE rounds, delivered with precision by D Battery as close as 250 meters to forward RCD call signs under armour. This battlefield inoculation provided invaluable exposure to the effects of indirect fire, deepening soldiers' tactical understanding and reinforcing their confidence in joint-fires coordination.

### **READY FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

The Regiment's progressive fall training cycle ensured our soldiers are fully prepared for the demands of both international and domestic operations. Whether deployed overseas on Op REASSURANCE or responding to emergencies at home, the Dragoons stand ready — bold, swift, and mission-focused. This fall's training has not only refined our combat effectiveness but also strengthened the bonds of teamwork and leadership that will carry the Regiment through the challenges of 2025 and beyond.

*Bold and Swift!* 🚀







# REGIMENTAL SPIRIT

## FALL 2024

Capt Kieren Luckhurst  
2IC A Sqn

During the week of 6-9 November 2024, the Royal Canadian Dragoons recognized the 124<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Leliefontein. The Regiment commemorates this battle each year to reflect on past achievements and recognize unit history. The Battle of Leliefontein in 1900 saw three Dragoons — Lt Turner, Lt Cockburn and Sgt Holland — awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions. Their virtues of endurance, perseverance and determination are traits that Dragoons continue to embody and uphold.

The commemoration began with a unit Sports Day on 6 November, allowing Dragoons to demonstrate their camaraderie and competitiveness. Dragoons took part in ice hockey, floor hockey, basketball and volleyball.

On the evening of 8 November, the Regiment held a Mixed Dining-In event, where Officers, Senior NCOs and guests were able to enjoy good food, good drink and good company. Dragoons and

guests were in high spirits thanks to the professionalism of the Normandy Officer Mess staff, Ulrich's Caterers, the 2 CMBG piper, and Centurion and Holland Room organizers. This dinner allowed serving and retired Dragoons alike to reconnect with one another and their families.

The Leliefontein Parade was held on 9 November. The parade ground was highlighted by several of the Regiment's vehicles and a striking group of Scarlet Guard and Lancers. During the parade, the Regiment used the opportunity to recognize the achievements of its soldiers and present awards to outstanding individuals. The Regiment paid homage to retiring Dragoons with a roll past, featuring the venerable Coyote leading the fleet, followed by the Old Guard and Cadet Corps. The parade was capped with a post-parade reception, allowing serving and retired Dragoons to socialize and celebrate our shared history.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

On 11 November 2024, the Regiment participated in Remembrance Day ceremonies across the region, with contingents in Pembroke, Deep River

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**ABOVE: Members of the Royal Canadian Dragoons during the Battle of Leliefontein Parade on November 9, 2024.**





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: Ex RUCKING BEAR started with a 13-kilometre march in full fighting order. / Dragoons practice for the upcoming Battle of Leliefontein Parade. / The Regiment commemorating the 124<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Leliefontein. / Royal Canadian Dragoons march through the streets as part of the events honouring the fallen on Remembrance Day. / Dragoons thrive when faced with challenges and remain focused to the end, even on a 13-kilometre march in full fighting order.**

and Eganville. On this somber day, Dragoons took the time to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice, reflecting on their answer to the call to duty and their heroism to keep Canada and good people around the world free from tyranny. After completion of the parade, Dragoons visited local Legions, building relationships and strengthening community ties with families and veterans.

### EX OLYMPIAN BEAR

The Regiment participated in Ex OLYMPIAN BEAR, an annual Brigade sporting event from 4-6 December, with the aim to foster unit competitiveness and build a more cohesive Brigade. The week started with Ex RUCKING BEAR, a 13km march in full fighting order. This offered various challenges to Dragoons, but they remained fo-



cused and motivated to finish. Switching tracks, the Dragoons played hard and well against other units in a variety of sports. Dragoons formed teams for hockey, volleyball, soccer, basketball, tug of war, military fitness, powerlifting, combatives and electronic sports. Their skills were displayed with RCD teams placing top three in over half of the sports. The closing ceremonies featured the first-place awards in each respective sport, with the Royal Canadian Dragoons and 1 RCR being tied for first in the Brigade. During an edge-of-your-seat moment, the Brigade Commander, Col Kristopher Reeves, announced that the unit taking home the Unit Morale Award (and thus claim first







**LEFT: Giving back to the kids and families is an important tradition for the Regiment.**

place within the Bde) was the Royal Canadian Dragoons. Ex OLYMPIAN BEAR allowed

the Regiment to blow off steam, have fun and prove once again that the Regiment has top-calibre soldiers and athletes.

### EX RESILIENT DRAGON

In December, the Regiment began to wind down from an active and intense year and took the opportunity to emphasize the morale and welfare of its members. On 2 December, the Regiment hosted Ex RESILIENT DRAGON, a collection of briefs to arm soldiers with knowledge and improve their ability to recover from challenges experienced in life. Briefs on personal conduct, financial planning and personal wellbeing were held, reminding everyone that no one is ever alone in the Regiment. The Dragoons are fortunate to have the resources, services and people available to leverage during difficult times.

### SILLY WEEK

As time crept closer to the holiday season and a well-deserved break, Dragoons downed tools, holding several events to commemorate the hard

work throughout the year. On 7 December, the Regiment hosted the Kids Christmas Party, complete with games, equipment showcases, activities and a visit from Santa. The Soldiers' Dinner was run by the Officers and Senior NCOs, in appreciation of all NCMs for their outstanding work throughout the year. Fine food and drink were served, and Dragoons of all ranks enjoyed the opportunity to roll their sleeves down and enjoy their company.

The following day was the RCD hockey tournament and At-Home. The hockey tournament began with the Officer / Snr NCO game, that unfortunately resulted in the Officers holding on to the second-place trophy, displayed in the Centurion Room. The Officers will be ready for revenge in 2025. The Trooper – Corporal / Master Corporal game was no less vicious. The hockey tournament was a great opportunity for the entire Regiment to close out the year. Later that evening, the Snr NCOs hosted the Officers for the annual At-Home, where Officer / NCO teams were able to relax and enjoy an evening together.

On 13 December, with the hangar cleaned, vehicles parked and festivities over, the CO and RSM addressed the Regiment, thanking all for their commitment in making the year a success, closing out 2024 for the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

***Bold and Swift!*** 

**BELOW: Ex OLYMPIAN BEAR saw the Dragoons play hard and well against other units in a variety of sports, with RCD teams placing top three in over half of the sports. In the end, the Dragoons finished first overall.**







# OFFICER & NCO MESS



## 2024-2025

By MWO Chatel  
Sgt Holland Room PMC

**The Centurion (Cent) Room** and the Sgt Holland Room (SHR) had a busy and vibrant social calendar over the past year, fostering camaraderie, tradition, and esprit de corps across all ranks of the Regiment.

The year began during the Annual Posting Season (APS) with traditional mug-outs and “shinings,” — lively ceremonies that welcome new members and bid farewell to those departing. These events set a positive tone for the year, reinforcing continuity and cohesion within the Regiment. The Cent Room kicked off its own activities with “Links and Drinks,” a best-ball golf scramble at the Petawawa Golf Course. Capt Taylor Janzen served as OPI and, according to rumour, launched a golf ball that is still rolling somewhere in Petawawa.

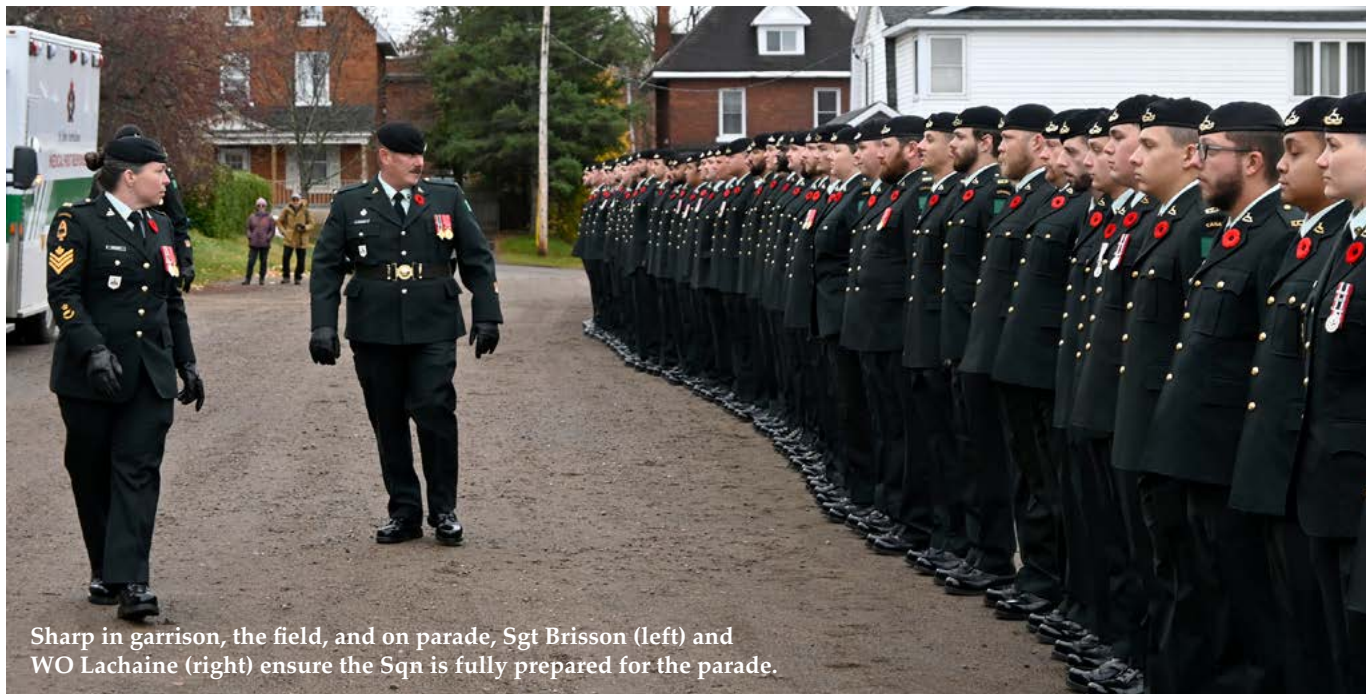
A major highlight was the Leliefontein Officer and NCO Combined Mixed Dining-In, which was held at the Normandy Officers Mess. Featuring fine food from Ulrich’s and exceptional company, the event brought together current serving members, those on ERE, and retirees. Organized jointly with the Cent Room, the evening blended tradition, speeches, and camaraderie, showcasing the enduring spirit of the Regiment.

Throughout the spring, the Regiment also held numerous Depart With Dignity (DWD) ceremonies and promotions, celebrating members’ accomplishments. These events were complemented by the RSM’s Thursday coffee

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**ABOVE:** The Regiment held a Mixed Dining-In event in honour of the 124<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Leliefontein.





Sharp in garrison, the field, and on parade, Sgt Brisson (left) and WO Lachaine (right) ensure the Sqn is fully prepared for the parade.

sessions — perhaps not always to his exacting taste, but they are an excellent forum for informal communication and connection.

On 6 December 2024, the Officers hosted the annual Subbies Carolling at the Normandy Officers Mess. With themed costumes, excellent food, and enthusiastic singing, the Subalterns delivered a performance so spirited that even the Grinch would have joined in. The event was a light-hearted success that strengthened bonds among the junior officers.

The festive season concluded with the annual At-Home event on 12 December 2024, where NCOs hosted the Officers in the Sgt Holland Room. A potluck-style meal, CAV-themed games, trivia, and the traditional grog ensured an evening of laughter, shared stories, and strong inter-rank camaraderie.

As the year came to a close, the combined efforts of the Cent Room and SHR teams had clearly strengthened the Regiment's social fabric. A special thanks goes to the NOM staff, out-of-town

attendees, and particularly to WO Jay Mitchell, VPMC of the SHR, whose dedication and attention to detail ensured every event met the highest standards. These gatherings, both formal and festive, continue to reinforce the unity, pride, and shared traditions that define the Regiment.

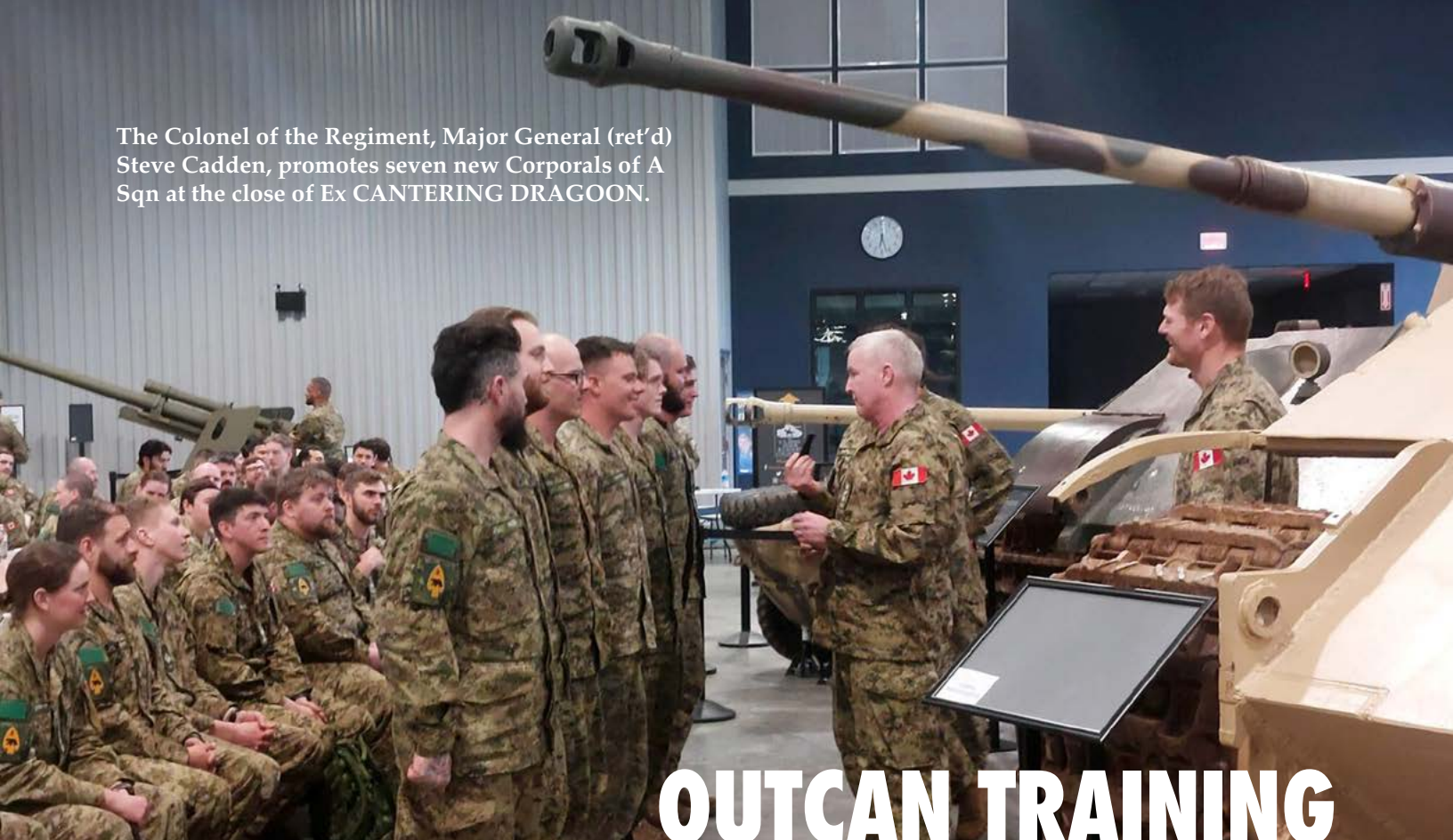
***Bold and Swift!*** 🚢



**LEFT: The Guidon Party demonstrates the trust, care, and importance placed in NCOs within the Regiment.**



The Colonel of the Regiment, Major General (ret'd) Steve Cadden, promotes seven new Corporals of A Sqn at the close of Ex CANTERING DRAGOON.



# OUTCAN TRAINING



## A SQUADRON

### Ex CANTERING DRAGOON

By Capt Cole Davis  
BC A Sqn

From 20 February to 1 March 2025, A Squadron, alongside contingents from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, the Ontario Regiment, the Governor General's Horse Guard, and the Queen's York Rangers, deployed to Fort Moore, Georgia, for Exercise CANTERING DRAGOON.

The exercise opened with a long day of travel from Canada to the United States, followed by a mess event where Dragoons and fellow Canadian soldiers gathered to watch the final game of the NHL's "Four Nations Face-Off" hockey tournament. Broadcast live across the U.S., the game saw Canada defeat the host nation in a thrilling victory, a fitting start to the exercise.

Training centered on medium cavalry operations. We utilized U.S. Army simulators to train on a variety of tasks, including advance to contact, reconnaissance tasks, delays, and counterattacks. Officers, NCOs, and NCMs sharpened their communication skills, manoeuvre warfare tactics, and battle procedures. They demonstrated readiness by overcoming challenges and quickly forming a cohesive unit in a combined arms environment. Members leveraged every available asset, indirect fire, close air support, and MUAS integration, while adapting to new vehicles and weapon platforms.

Much of the exercise's success stemmed from the participants' ability to build effective small teams, display tactical proficiency, and unite as





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SSM A, MWO Chatel, and BC A, Capt Davis, conduct an impromptu professional development session during the exercise. / An A Sqn driver's workspace during the exercise! / A Sqn in front of the U.S. Army Armor and Cavalry Collection, Fort Moore, Georgia.

one cohesive organization. Beyond honing tactical skills, members also strengthened their crew, troop, and squadron cohesion.

The exercise concluded with a visit to the U.S. Army Armor and Cavalry Collection (museum), where participants reflected on the legacy of those who came before them. This experience reinforced both the purpose of their training and the objectives they had set out to achieve. The final day closed with regimental leadership recognizing the team's hard work and pursuit of excellence at a barbecue generously provided by Emerald Touch BBQ. Members received well-deserved promotions and awards, capped by a visit from the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General (ret'd) Cadden,

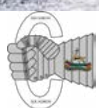
who shared his wisdom and reminded all to cherish these fleeting opportunities.

***Bold and Swift!*** 

**BELOW:** A bank of U.S. Army simulators at Fort Moore. OUTCAN training provided access to capabilities not currently held by the CAF, enabling full Sqn participation from the OC down to the driver of a junior call sign.







## C SQUADRON

From Heavy to Medium Cavalry

**C Squadron is no stranger** to change. In 2012, C Squadron rapidly transitioned from its reconnaissance role to tanks. This past year marked another period of significant change. The Squadron returned to Canada in June 2024 from a highly successful tour on Op REASSURANCE in Latvia, which served as Canada's first deployment of tanks since Afghanistan. This return coincided with the Canadian Army's centralization of the Leopard 2 fleet in Edmonton, activating the conversion of the Squadron from Heavy to Medium Cavalry, aligning with the remainder of the Regiment.

This conversion resulted in the first major wave of our 12e Régiment blindé du Canada (12e RBC) team members returning under

the command of their parent unit, while the Squadron faced the challenge of transitioning to focus on new tasks and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) as a Medium Armoured Cavalry Squadron. Making matters more interesting, C Squadron was up against the imminent task of supporting the Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Durability (RAMD) trials of the anticipated LAV 6.0 Recce vehicle (LRSS) on behalf of the RCAC and the Canadian Army. Time was of the essence.

The first step in the transition consisted of qualifying all personnel on the LAV 6.0 platform. Despite resource shortages and the time constraints associated with the task, the Squadron saw personnel successfully qualified in record time.





**LEFT: Members of C Squadron have been using the Leopard 2A4 Main Battle Tank (MBT) since 2012, both in Canada and overseas with such deployments as Op UNIFIER and Op RECONNAISSANCE. After the move of the Leopards to Edmonton, the Regiment has switched gears from a heavy to medium cavalry.**

**BELOW: C Squadron is conducting the Reliability, Availability, Maintainability, and Durability (RAMD) trials of the incoming LAV 6.0 Recce platform with an RQ MCpl Experience-Based Training (EBT) course.**

The next step involved professional development (PD) on medium armoured cavalry TTPs. Professional Development at the Squadron and Troop levels helped build a comprehensive understanding of how to shoot, move, and communicate while operating on a wheeled platform. The ability of our soldiers to transition so rapidly to both a new vehicle and new TTPs highlights the agility, and professionalism, and resilience of the team.

Despite the hard work by both C Squadron and the personnel who supported the development of the project, the project ultimately did not meet the Canadian Army's requirements. The experience, however, served to introduce the former tankers to the world of medium armoured cavalry, while also helping the project staff to better understand the application of capabilities to an armoured unit.

This period of change, however reminiscent of our past experiences, marked a bittersweet end to another important and very successful era for the Regiment. We look upon the shift away from the Leopard 2 as an opportunity for us to modernize and integrate new capabilities for the Canadian

Army. The Leopard 2 fleet will remain a valued part of our Regimental history. We are very proud of the many teams, wearing either the RCD or the 12e RBC cap badge, who came together over the years with professionalism, and demonstrated exceptional tactical and technical competence. As some things continue to change, C Sqn's work ethic, dedication, reputation, and camaraderie, the qualities they have come to be known for, are sure to continue as they carry this torch into a new season of transition.

***Bold and Swift!*** 🚀







# CAV CUP 2025

## PROVING THEIR METTLE

**In May of this year**, the Royal Canadian Dragoons hosted the CAV Cup 2025 — a demanding military skills competition showcasing soldier readiness, endurance, and teamwork. Participants faced a wide range of challenges, including land navigation, CBRN drills, vehicle maintenance, first aid, AFV recognition, and signals communication. Each event tested tactical skill, problem-solving, and composure under pressure.

Over the multi-day competition, soldiers covered more than 50 kilometres across tough terrain while completing Individual Battle Task Standards (IBTS), directly contributing to operational

**ABOVE:** Participants in the CAV Cup strategize on the best approach to overcome the next scenario in the competition.

**BELOW:** Racing to the finish line.







CLOCKWISE FROM THE TOP: The CAV Cup tests participants' mettle in a multi-day team skills competition. The winning team hoists the CAV Cup, flanked by the CO and RSM. / A team is greeted at the finish line by the RSM and CO. / CBRN recce survey. / Search and detain drill.

readiness. Despite fatigue and difficult conditions, morale remained high, with teams displaying exceptional cooperation and determination.

The CAV Cup underscored both individual proficiency and collective strength. Teams overcame complex scenarios through communication, leadership, and grit — reinforcing the Regiment's culture of excellence. The 2025 CAV Cup was a resounding success, highlighting the professionalism, adaptability, and fighting spirit that define the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

*Bold and Swift!* 🇨🇦







# IN MEMORIAM

## CPL JOHN MEERS

**It is with great sadness** that the Regiment learned of the sudden passing of Cpl John Meers on 28 January 2025, an admired member of A Squadron. A proud Dragoon since 2019, Cpl Meers' career within the Regiment included a deployment on Operation REASSURANCE in 2023, and crew experience on all in-service armoured vehicle fleets.

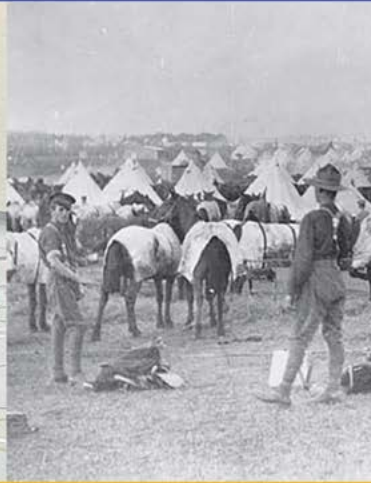
Cpl Meers was a dedicated, respected, and valuable team member, and a friend to many within the Regiment. His keen sense of humour, thoughtfulness, and insight will be greatly missed. Our thoughts continue to be with his close friends, and his family.

*Lest we forget.* 🇨🇦





# The Guild of the Ro



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GUILD



MGen (ret'd) Steve Cadden

### Dragoons and Friends of Dragoons,

You have made the past year both successful and impactful for the entire Regimental Family. There have been significant donations of time, money and friendship, and as a result we remain strong, united and supported. It is difficult to be Bold and Swift without a solid base from which to launch: the Guild of the RCD strives to buttress the foundation upon which our Dragoon Family survives. Thanks to the efforts of the members of the Guild, and our supporters, we are able to support our Regimental Family as they serve Canada, whether in or out of uniform. Our focus has been, and will remain, the support of a Regimental Family with an elevated quality of life, keen awareness of our history and heritage, and firm connection to Canadians.

It is worth noting the ways in which Dragoons continue to support both the Regiment and the Corps. Retired Dragoons hold key positions in the RCAC Association, organizing the Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament, the Corps BBQ in Perth, and activities across the country. They serve in senior positions in business and the public service, and are leaders in their communities. They actively support our Regimental Association or serve with the Guild, and organize activities throughout the year. Donations to the Guild remain strong, and as a result we are able to run Quality of Life programs that provide a tangible show of support to serving members — one that is the envy of other Regimental Associations. And, of course, we strive to support the next generation of Dragoons, some of which will come from our affiliated Cadet Corps.



# Royal Canadian Dragoons



The following sections outline the work your Guild has done over the past year on behalf of our Regimental Family. I invite you to join the Guild, or consider starting or increasing donations, so that we can continue to support the soldiers and families upon whom Canada relies on in time of conflict. There have been welcome announcements of significant investments in the Canadian Armed Forces in the upcoming years; while this is undoubtedly good news, for those who continue to serve it will mean increased tempo and efforts. We will continue to ask much of those in uniform, so the challenge for the Guild will be to continue to recognize and support those efforts.

*Bold and Swift!* 

**TOP RIGHT:** The Guild offers support to those wearing the uniform as well as the family members that support them. They achieve this by raising funds and awareness, organizing events, and supporting current and former serving members through a number of initiatives. Pictured, having fun during a family event.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Steve Cadden was handed the presidency of the Guild from Dean Milner in 2024.







# STRONGER TOGETHER

## THE RFAC UNITES

ABOVE: The Guild's support of the Dragoons Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion helped with the cost of decorations for the reunion dinner (above) as well as other weekend events.

### HOW THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL (RFAC) IS UNITING THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

After a brief hiatus, the Regimental Family Advisory Council (RFAC) is growing anew as a powerful voice for the families, veterans, and serving members of The Royal Canadian Dragoons. Grounded in pride and connection, the RFAC's mission is simple: to ensure every member of our Regimental Family feels heard, supported, and included.

As a standing advisory council of the RCD Guild, the RFAC helps guide charitable projects, support family-focused initiatives, and strengthen engagement across the Regimental Family. The Council listens, gathers ideas, builds proposals, and tracks outcomes to ensure every effort makes a meaningful difference.

The Council's makeup reflects our community's diversity: two Co-Chairs, two serving members,

two Association members, and at least one family / spouse / youth representative. A Guild Director also participates as an advisor, and other volunteers join as needed. We want to encourage voices from all ranks, backgrounds, and regions across the Regimental Family.

### LOOKING BACK: HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

In June 2024, the Guild of the RCD generously supported the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Reunion — RV24 — in Kingston. Thanks to that support, organizers delivered a first-class gathering that welcomed both familiar faces and new family members. The Guild's contributions sponsored the Meet & Greet Reception, a special Spouses' Gathering during the AGM, and stunning ballroom decorations for the reunion dinner. Even more powerful was the presence of serving soldiers:

- Two members ran the Regimental Kit Shop, engaging with attendees all weekend.



**RIGHT: The Guild supported the Dragoons Association's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion that took place in June 2024 in Kingston, Ontario.**

- Two others brought the spirit of the Regiment to life during the Scarlet Party and dinner.
- Four soldiers were hosted for the full weekend — creating living connections between our past, present, and future.

As well, we have engaged the Regimental Rear Party to help coordinate the support to the families of deploying soldiers with the great help of Katelyn VanRyswyk and the unit staff.

### THE RFAC IN ACTION

To better serve the community, the RFAC is rolling out an annual engagement plan with quarterly goals based off the Guild's business year (1 Oct to 30 Sep). We encourage and need your participation during these initiatives to create the best possible programs for the Regimental Family:

- Q1: Kickoff message + idea collection
- Q2: Project updates + mini surveys
- Q3: Town Halls + Family Feedback Campaign
- Q4: Recognition + Year-End Reflections

We will also be initiating some new activities to reinforce our ability to share and connect. Current activities and ideas include:

- Updated RFAC Terms of Reference — making participation easier
- Ongoing Family Deployment Support (learning events, emergency contacts magnet)
- Veteran & Spouse Representative recruitment
- Partnerships with MFRC and Guild Committees
- 2025 Christmas Ornament Fundraiser to help the Guild fund future projects
- Mini Pulse Surveys — short seasonal check-ins to stay in touch with family need
- A monthly story series, which includes sharing personal connections to the Regiment, called "Our Family, Our Story"

### MEET YOUR RFAC TEAM

- Jim Follwell — Communications, Marketing & Guild Advisor



- Marsha Reid — Serving Dragoons Representative
- Veletia Richards and Dainna Datchko — Co-Chairs
- Katelyn VanRyswyk — Family Representative
- Tom Skelding — Veteran Representative

### ATTENTION

"Families, veterans, serving members: We want to hear from *YOU!* Share your ideas, join events, and help us grow our family connection. Let's make memories together!"

- The RFAC is looking for involvement to help us make a difference and whether you're a new spouse, a posted member, or a proud veteran, your voice matters. There are many ways to get involved — like sharing your ideas or stories, attending events, volunteering and/or supporting a program, and giving us feedback so we can improve our impact.
- Together, we're building something lasting — a strong, connected Regimental Family. We can be reached by emailing us at [RFAC@rcdguild.ca](mailto:RFAC@rcdguild.ca) or visiting us at [www.rcdguild.ca/family](http://www.rcdguild.ca/family).
- "We're proud to be part of something that brings the Regimental Family together." 🚢





# QUALITY OF LIFE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

ABOVE: C/WO Sandra Asianzu (centre) of 2332 RCACC received a bursary in 2025. The award was presented by Jim Follwell on behalf of the Guild.

### QUALITY OF LIFE PROGRAMS

The Quality of Life (QOL) portfolio of the Guild of The Royal Canadian Dragoons is quite extensive. The projects and activities touch the entirety of the Regimental Family and provides critical support to all, whether in a time of need or starting a new chapter in life. It also helps support our future, to find ways to develop leadership and other valuable life skills for youth through our affiliated Cadet Corps.

### DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

When members deploy, the stress is not localized to just the member that is leaving, but it impacts the entire immediate and extended family. We have worked hard to find ways to support Regimental Family members during this stressful and demanding time.

One small way we have done this is through the purchasing and distribution of deployment teddy bears. These bears are a small token of support that a deploying member can give to their children to keep that connection strong and remind them that they are loved and cherished no matter how far they are. To date there have been 106 bears distributed with more yet to come. We have also developed a deployment support group for the families of our deployed soldiers, with activities and gatherings planned to help them stay connected.

The program started with some small things and funding, and looks forward to the innovative ideas that family members and the RFAC will continue to provide so the Guild can develop additional opportunities to support the Regimental Family.





### REGIMENTAL FAMILY ASSISTANCE

This project is the unsung hero of our Quality of Life Programs. It is designed to support Regimental Family members during a difficult time. We have used this program to support the Royal Canadian Chaplain Services, which provides support to Regimental Family members in need throughout the year, especially during the holidays when some can experience a period of crisis. We have also supported members when an unforeseen tragic event occurs that affects their lives, to both support them during the immediate aftermath and assist with long-term recovery.

There are many more wonderful things that this program supports that cannot be listed due to privacy, but it has a direct impact on making a difference in the lives of members of the Regimental Family.

### SUPPORT TO OUR FALLEN

Our Support to Our Fallen project continues to stand ready by providing support to the family of those who pass. We do this by maintaining several Regimental memorial kits across the country, which is all done in close cooperation with our Association Chapters. This kit, which includes a Regimental flag that is presented to the family, is made available to the family of our passing Regimental Family members as a tribute to their service to the Regiment and country.

Where practical, we also support the family in other ways by cooperating with the family and promoting the presence of the Regimental Family and by making



**ABOVE LEFT:** The Guild strives to support the next generation of Dragoons, including our affiliated Cadet Corps.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** An award for long service was presented to WO Burgess by the Guild for his more than 25 years of service.

sure our community knows about our collective loss. We also use this project to support other remembrance activities such as the rededication of the South African War Memorial in Windsor, Ontario with a Regimental Scarlet Guard presence.

Activities such as these provide family support during a tough time and hopefully helps to remind them that they are not alone.

### LELIEFONTEIN EDUCATIONAL BURSARIES

Annually, the Guild of The Royal Canadian Dragoons awards bursaries to Regimental Family members and their descendants. This year we saw a fantastic list of applicants for consideration by the selection committee. In total we were able to support six people who are achieving greatness and taking that next step in life through the distribution of \$11,000 across the successful applicants. Unfortunately, not all the recipients could attend the Leliefontein parade to receive their bursaries, but we ensured that all received the support they needed to launch their future.

### VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

This is awarded annually to a member of the Regimental Family that shows outstanding dedication to





**LEFT:** Each year, the Guild awards a \$1,000 bursary to a Cadet from each of the three affiliated units, a show of support for the next phase of their lives.

to expand the Guild's support to the Cadet Corps and look forward to our continued partnerships.

## IMPROVEMENT IN REGIMENTAL LINES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

This QOL project has continued to positively impact the lives of the soldiers of the Regiment. It has supported improvements to the Regimental gym, allowing the soldiers to maintain a healthy lifestyle and achieve fitness goals. There were also continued improvements to the Regimental canteen, which resulted in improved food quality and a place for soldiers to take a well-deserved break.

We also supported the purchase of equipment to establish a new combative area which has allowed soldiers to explore new and challenging opportunities for self-defence. In addition, this tangible support project from the Guild provided our personnel living in base single accommodations with air conditioning, which permitted soldiers to also get some relief from environmental stressors. This project also supported many minor improvements in the Regimental lines, which helped our soldiers to stay productive and improve their quality of life.

*Bold and Swift!* 



supporting their local community. There are so many members of the Regimental Family that are active in their community, and it is hard to narrow this down. This is a testament to the quality of the people that make up the Regimental Family.

This year it was awarded to Cpl Harvey, who is currently serving at the Regiment, for his dedication in the development of support for the local sporting community.

## SUPPORT TO CADETS

The Guild has been active in supporting our three affiliated Cadet units through all of its charitable programs. This included having Cadets attend the Leliefontein Parade in Petawawa as well as several other engagements with the three Corps and members of the Regimental Family.

The Guild was extremely honoured to award three bursaries of \$1,000 each to one member from each of the affiliated Cadet Corps. This year, the bursaries were awarded to:

- C/WO Asianzu (2332 RCACC)
- C/CWO Callaghan (2870 RCACC)
- C/MWO Lepenskie (137 RCACC)

This small token of support from the Regimental Family will help these young leaders launch into their next phase of life. In the coming year, we are looking

**RIGHT:** Cpl Matthew Harvey was selected as this year's recipient of the Volunteer and Community Service Award. LCol Summerfield, MGen Cadden and CWO Nickerson presented Cpl Harvey with the \$1,000 cheque.





ABOVE: ???????????

ABOVE: The Scarlet Guard welcomes His Royal Highness King Charles III, the Royal Canadian Dragoon's Colonel-in-Chief, on arrival in Canada in May 2025.

# HISTORY & HERITAGE

## PRESERVING OUR PAST

### IN SUPPORT OF THE GUILD

The History & Heritage (H&H) Committee delivers activities that support the Guild's objective to promote, protect, preserve and further the traditions and heritage of The Royal Canadian Dragoons. The committee has two main functions:

- Overseeing the collection, preserving, and promotion of Regimental historical artifacts; and
- Sustaining and promoting artifacts demonstrating Regimental heritage traditions.

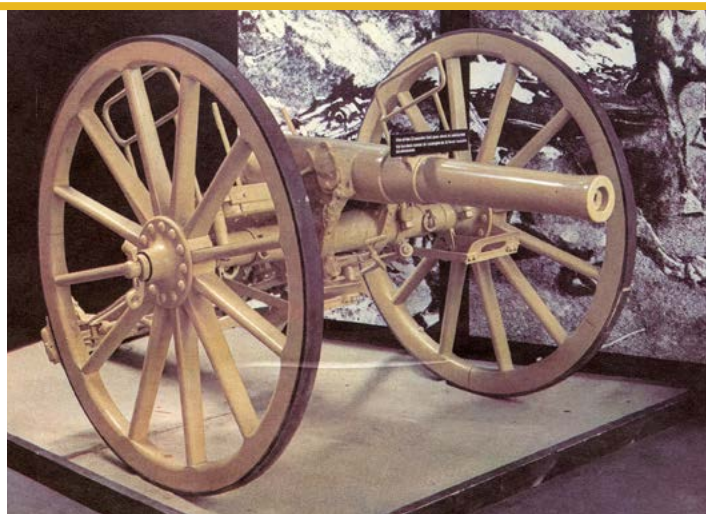
The committee is responsible for Regimental History & Heritage business planning, managing our archives, museum, and Guild property; the procurement and maintenance of ceremonial

uniforms, heritage vehicles, recording monuments and memorials, Dragoon Park; and any other special history and heritage-related projects for the Guild.

### ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACTS

Our Regimental collection, located in Petawawa and managed by the Guild, contains a large variety of objects consisting of archival material, Regimental memorials, silverware, historical uniforms, medals, original art, weapons, military equipment, musical instruments, plus many other types of artifacts. We are also working with the Corps Association to establish a living archives site that can be viewed online — standby for more information as it develops.





**ABOVE LEFT:** Seeing the Scarlets on parade always exudes a sense of pride in the history and honours of the Regiment.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** A 12-pounder gun used at the Battle of Leliefontein was saved by the Royal Canadian Dragoons. It is now cared for by the History & Heritage (H&H) Committee.

## MUSEUM DISPLAYS

The RCD Gallery within the Garrison Petawawa Military Museum is the focal point for the display and collection of Regimental artifacts. The H&H Committee continues to investigate and work on a concept plan to refurbish and update the RCD Gallery at the Garrison Petawawa Military Museum with new display cabinetry, story boards and artifacts. The concept plan will also include the consolidation of our Guidons into new display cabinets. We are hoping to capture each stage of this project online so you can follow along — standby for more on our website.

Additionally, the H&H Committee is working with the Raising Awareness team to develop additional historical displays to further expand our ability to promote the history of the Regiment.

## SCARLET GUARD

The maintenance of our ceremonial uniforms is an ongoing requirement to display our heritage in living colour. We continue to purchase new uniforms and accoutrements in order to field a ceremonial guard in support of Regimental events and activities. With the support of the Regiment, we are constantly taking stock of our needs to meet this important requirement that brings so much pride to the Regimental Family and Canada.

## HISTORICAL VEHICLES

The Historical Vehicle Troop (HVT) is a group of dedicated volunteers who continue to work hard in their

spare time to keep the Staghound armoured car, Ferret scout car and Coyote AFV in running condition while also maintaining the Leliefontein gun. In July 2024, the HVT participated in the Aquino Tank Weekend, hosted by The Canadian Tank Museum at Oshawa, Ontario, where they showcased our Staghound and Coyote.

## MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND PLAQUES

The H&H Committee, particularly Tom Skelding, has been very successful in capturing 103 monuments, memorials, and plaques that are directly or indirectly related to the RCD. All these have been recorded in a database with many more to be added. The long-term goal is to have the locations of memorials and monuments that recognize The Royal Canadian Dragoons available on the Guild's website.

## LAST POST & HONOUR ROLL

The RCD's Last Post and Honour Roll is maintained and updated by H&H and can be found on the Guild's website at <https://dragoons.ca/regiment-family/our-fallen-honour-roll/>

To find out more about the Regiment's History & Heritage visit <https://dragoons.ca/history-heritage-initiatives/>

*Bold and Swift!* 





# COMMUNICATIONS

## CREATING AWARENESS

**ABOVE:** We are working hard to ensure that our message gets out to as many people as possible.

**This past year** has seen the Guild continue to refine and enhance its ability to connect with Canadians and improve our communications across the Regimental Family. Through the continued efforts of our communications and marketing teams, the Family has aligned multiple platforms to share information, recognize people and share stories. The Awareness team has also continued to market itself across multiple platforms and venues, including the start of mobile historical displays and supporting many online initiatives to better inform the Regimental Family and Canadians. We have also continued our support to family-oriented events such as our contingents at the Spartan Races, BBQ, special event gatherings and other activities that bring meaning and visibility to the Regimental Family.

Your Awareness team has been working hard to ensure that we get our message out to as many people as we can, whether you are a web, social media or even traditional email user. Having said this, our website at [www.dragoons.ca](http://www.dragoons.ca) remains the cornerstone

of our communications strategy but with your help, we will continue to work hard at integrating more capabilities and methods to reach out across the Regimental Family. We need your help though to keep our lists up to date so you get the information you want/need — please help us keep you informed!

We have also been working hard to better market ourselves through the distribution of brochures, pins, sponsorships and briefing packages to inform Canadians about the Regimental Family and the Regiment. Moving forward, we are also planning more growth on the website and social media. We encourage everyone to visit our sites often. We are looking for suggestions and articles to add to our Regimental Family story so don't be shy, share with us today! We can also help you inform the Regimental Family of your news, stories or questions to improve how we communicate and support the Regimental Family, but we need your help to create this awareness.

***Bold and Swift!*** 





# CORPORATE UPDATE

## CONTINUING TO EVOLVE

ABOVE: Supporting family through a variety of situations, including deployments and departures.

### THE GUILD'S CORPORATE UPDATE

Your Guild has continued to evolve, update, and mold the key background corporate activities it oversees to better support the Regimental Family in delivering our main charitable activities of Quality of Life, Heritage and History, and Raising Awareness.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As with any organization, we have seen some changes to the makeup of our Board as Directors Marty Frank and Rick Cameron left the fold for a well-deserved break. We were also very happy to welcome Steve Graham into the corporation as the Director of Strategy & Business Planning. We are also actively discussing the Board's overall organization and how we might improve the delivery of our charitable programs. If you are interested, we do have some open director positions.

### GOVERNANCE

Over the past year, we have made good progress in updating our corporate governance structure with the approval of updated bylaws to keep in lockstep with regulations and the key functions that the Guild must perform to be effective. As a natural follow-on, we have initiated a full review of our Policy and Guidance Manual as a natural next step — this will realize a full update on the how we are working.

Additionally, we have successfully implemented a corporate network for better internal records and information management of our documents with everything going online. Our next step is to implement the management cycle of our records so that all are reviewed and updated regularly to best meet the evolving needs of the Regimental Family.





ABOVE: The Guild is proud of its support of activities through enduring fundraising efforts like the Wall of Recognition.

TOP AND LOWER RIGHT: The Guild's numerous programs, initiatives and social events support the Regimental Family, from assisting when a member departs or through the distribution of deployment teddy bears, so children of deployed members can feel the connection to their parent while away.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

This year we have been analyzing our core services to make the charity run compliant with federal law and our bylaw with a particular focus on getting the best value for money so we can prioritize more money on our charitable programs. This effort will continue to ensure we are always maximizing funds for programs.

## FUNDRAISING

Connected with awareness efforts in raising the Regimental Family's profile, we have successfully re-energized our fundraising efforts this last year. While there is still much work to do, we are on the right trail with a dedicated fundraising team of volunteers. Over the last year, we successfully executed one fundraising event in Ottawa with General Rick Hillier. This event was very well received, with great connections being made and several valuable lessons learned to inform our path moving forward. We are planning a similar event for Fall/Winter 2025-2026 as

well as the Springbok Invitational Golf Tournament in September in Ottawa.

As we continue to grow the team, we are excited to focus our efforts to support core activities through enduring fundraising efforts like the Wall of Recognition, Y007 pay deductions for serving members, and our CanadaHelps platform that offers a Y007-like monthly donation platform. Feel free to contact us for a way you can help support your Guild by giving or volunteering.

## VOLUNTEERS

We have been very successful in getting some very high-quality volunteers over the past year to help deliver our projects and activities across the corporation. We will continue to highlight the worthiness of helping our Regimental Family through joining our team and volunteering in a Guild area that interests you. Your substantial contribution can start with only a phone call or an email.

*Bold and Swift!* 





# LIBERATING LEEUWARDEN

## RCD HISTORY COMES ALIVE

ABOVE: The SC Cambuur sporting the commemorative jersey with maple leaves and the RCD Springbok's prominence on it (inset).

**The Dutch town of Leeuwarden will always have a special significance to the Royal Canadian Dragoons. This year, a select group of serving soldiers travelled to the Netherlands to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Leeuwarden and Friesland.**

**As is tradition** on and around every 15<sup>th</sup> of April, this year we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of the Town of Leeuwarden and Province of Friesland in the Netherlands in 1945. While celebrations occurred in various locations in both Canada and the Netherlands, the highlights included an RCD night by the Leeuwarden Football Club SC Cambuur, the ceremony in Petawawa on 15 April, and a six-day tour in the Netherlands during VE-Day.

In the months leading to this celebration, the SC Cambuur professional football team from Leeuwarden reached out to us with a plan to celebrate the Regiment and its role in liberating the Netherlands in April 1945. The team held a special tribute night dedicated to the Regiment and, most notably, produced a commemorative football uniform that was designed in recognition of the scarlet uniform of the RCD. The team also made these jerseys available for





**ABOVE PHOTOS:** The RCD on parade in Petawawa.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Leeuwarden Mayor Sybrand van Haersma Buma presents LCol Summerfield inspecting the troops.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Leeuwarden Mayor presents the CO with an SC Cambuur commemorative jersey during the Petawawa celebration to hang in Regimental lines.

purchase. These became such a big hit in both nations, a second run was required. Perhaps we can continue this as part of our “new” tradition?

The event in Petawawa was especially noteworthy as the Regiment was hosted in downtown Petawawa for the parade and flag raising on 15 April. As usual, the Regiment was extremely well turned out and met all expectations of the crowd. There was an excellent turnout by the local schools, and we were privileged to also have the mayors and official representatives from both Petawawa and Leeuwarden in attendance. The Mayor of Leeuwarden, Sybrand van Haersma Buma, also presented the Regiment with one of the commemorative football jerseys; it is now on display in Regimental lines. We also wish to thank Mayor Seviss, his Council and the entire Petawawa community for their outstanding support for this celebration, including the reception afterwards.

was an amazing trip to the Netherlands by a diverse group of Regimental Family members. Over six days in the beginning of May, the trip was organized to correspond with VE-Day celebrations. With the incredible planning and coordination of Tom Skelding and support from our hosts in Leeuwarden and Friesland, this milestone trip retraced the Regiment’s steps through the Netherlands in April 1945 and visited key locations throughout the region.

As part of the trip, the Guild was very happy to sponsor four soldiers from the Regiment while the Association sponsored another soldier. To help you follow along the journey, below is a summary with







**ABOVE:** German commander General Johannes Blaskowitz (center right) surrenders the Netherlands to Canadian Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes (center left) by signing the capitulation of German forces at Hotel de Wereld in Wageningen on 5 May 1945.



**TOP RIGHT:** In September 1944, Operation MARKET GARDEN began when British, Canadian, Polish and American airborne paratroopers boarded troop transport planes in England. Pictured are members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne jumping into German-held areas in the town of Nijmegen, Netherlands.



**LOWER RIGHT:** The charred remains of vehicles on the Arnhem Bridge, September 1944.

me learn more about the Royal Canadian Dragoons and their history in World War II. It was an amazing and eye-opening journey that I will never forget."

insights from two serving NCOs who participated in the trip. We encourage other participants and our Dutch hosts to also consider sharing their stories for future postings on our website.

*"My trip to the Netherlands was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It helped me learn more about the Royal Canadian Dragoons and their history in World War II. It was an amazing and eye-opening journey that I will never forget."*

~ SGT Robert Larocque

## RETRACING THE REGIMENT AND CELEBRATING THE NETHERLANDS' FREEDOM IN APRIL 1945 WITH WO GUY LACHAINE AND SGT ROBERT LAROCQUE

WO Guy Lachaine remarked: "I embarked on an unforgettable journey that spanned several days, each filled with moments of history, honour, and personal reflection."

Sgt Robert Larocque observed: "My trip to the Netherlands was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It helped

Day 1 began with early flights and a palpable excitement. After arriving in the Netherlands,

everyone met up, and we set off on our adventure. Arriving at our designated lunch stop at the historic Hotel de Wereld in Wageningen meant a promising start to our story. This hotel dining room is where

Canadian Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes negotiated and signed the terms of the German surrender in the Netherlands. Later in the day, the group was drawn into the solemn narrative of the Hotel Hartenstein at Oosterbeek. As General Urquart's Division HQ during Operation MARKET GARDEN, it is now the Airborne Museum and a testament to the importance of the operation. It is where, in September 1944, echoes of heroism resonated through the halls of the villa before the Allied forces drove to the Arnhem Bridge. This evoked memories of the film *A Bridge Too Far*, a





fitting reminder of past sacrifices. Finally, we arrived at our hotel in Leeuwarden for the night.

**ABOVE: MCpl Katherine Prenovost and LCol (ret'd) Mark Popov lay a wreath at the Canadian War Graves monument.**

Day 2 started with WO Lachaine spending over an hour in conversation with a hotel employee where he commented: "I discovered that even routine moments could reveal profound insights. This conversation set the tone for a day of exploration and remembrance."

*"I embarked on an unforgettable journey that spanned several days, each filled with moments of history, honour, and personal reflection."*

*~ WO Guy Lachaine*

As a start to touring Friesland, the group visited the town of Frederiksoord and enjoyed a coffee break at Hotel Frederiksoord (the site of RHQ on 12/13 Apr 1945). Next was a stop in Oldeberkoop for a presentation at the site where Tpr WRG Berry was buried on 13 Apr 1945, and the site of RHQ and D Sqn on 13/14 Apr 1945. Next was Oldeholtspade for a memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony at the town's me-

morial to Tpr Wilfred Berry, who was killed in action on 12 Apr 1945.

WO Lachaine observed that the monument and ceremony stirred a deep sense of duty when Cpl Rainforth and Warren Baker (the grandson of Lt Richard Kerrigan who was crew commander of the Staghound) laid a wreath in tribute before visiting Mildam where D Sqn fought to secure the bridgehead on 12/13 Apr 1945.

Next was a visit to Drachten, a village that was liberated by B Sqn on 14 Apr 1945, before ending the day in Burgum. This was especially meaningful to the



## Dokkum 1945



## Dokkum 2025



ABOVE: The Buddell Family laid a wreath in memory of Lt William Buddell who died in April 1945 of wounds in Burdaard.

MONTAGE AT LEFT: Then and now in Dokkum. While the angle is a bit different, you can pick out the same building behind the Staghound in 1945.

group as we entered in SWW vehicles and drove to the town square for a reception.

Sgt Larocque also noted: "The Netherlands is a beautiful country. Everywhere we went, the scenery was amazing with the small towns full of charm. The people were very friendly and kind. In every town we stopped in, both children and adults would come up to us, wanting to take pictures with us and express their heartfelt thanks for what Canadian soldiers did in the war."

The group also had the honour of raising both the Canadian flag and the Dragoon flag in Fierljepschans Burgum, a symbolic act that connected past valour with the present. Later, the group traveled by SWW vehicles to arrive at a church cemetery with a Commonwealth War Graves section. MCpl Prenovost and

Mark Popov placed another wreath in remembrance of five heroes, deepening our resolve to honour their legacy with our gracious hosts.

On Day 3, the group retraced the Regiment's steps with a group called "Keep Them Rolling." This group had more than 90 vintage World War II vehicles, many of them running. These people are dedicated to tracing the footstep of 1945 and keeping the memories alive.

WO Lachaine luckily found himself entrusted with commanding the Staghound across roughly 100 kilometers. Sgt Larocque got to experience the DUKW where he noted: "It was incredible to ride through the towns and then go right into a canal with the same vehicle. Cruising through quaint villages and historic towns, every mile felt imbued with meaning."





**ABOVE:** Liberation Day on 5 May 2025 at Oldehove Festival Grounds in Leeuwarden. From left to right: Petawawa Mayor Garry Serviss, Rick Hillier, Cpl Evan Cassie-Stone, Cpl Andrew Rainforth, Femke de Walle, 100-yr-old SWW Veteran Jim Parks (Royal Winnipeg Rifles), Marco Kalmijn, MCpl Katherine Prenovost, Sgt Rob Larocque, WO Guy Lachaine stand on stage in front of a crowd of 95,000.

**RIGHT:** Sgt Rob Larocque and Tom Skelding present a Regimental Flag at the town monument in Lettele.



During the group's stop in Burdaard, Mr. William Buddell and his son William Thomas Buddell laid a wreath at the town memorial to commemorate Lt William Buddell, their uncle and great-uncle respectively, who died of wounds from a sniper attack on 16 Apr 1945.

In Kollumerpomp, the overwhelming welcome from locals made everyone feel as though they were reliving the liberation — a poignant reminder of the resilience and unity that defines community. The day's journey finished in Dokkum that was liberated by B Sqn on 14 Apr 45, where the group met with both the town's mayor and the mayor from Petawawa. In an





unforgettable moment, WO Lachaine led the group into the heart of the town, an act that symbolically bridged military tradition and civic honour before retracing the route back to HQ. The day finished back in Leeuwarden with a walk to the main area of the liberation celebration on 15 Apr 45 and a visit to the RCD liberation plaque at the old city hall.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Some of the contingent, including the serving soldiers, on parade in historical vehicles.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** A photo showing the welcoming crowd during the Liberation Day parade in Leeuwarden.

Day 4 was a study in contrasting ceremonies as the group attended the Memorial Day services in Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Lettele and Leeuwarden. Twelve Dragoons are buried amongst many soldiers in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery. The ceremony's precision and emotion were magnified by a breathtaking moment — a helicopter dropping thousands of poppies over the gathering. This visual

spectacle stirred a deep emotional reverence within WO Lachaine.

The group then went to Lettele for a memorial service and wreath laying near the site where three Dragoons died on 9 Apr 1945. Sgt Laroche was honoured to be chosen to assist Tom Skelding in presenting the RCD flag to the town of Lettele during a special ceremony: "It felt very meaningful to represent the RCD and to see how much the people of Lettele appreciated it."

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Dutch resistance fighters aboard a Dingo scout car of The Royal Canadian Dragoons celebrating the liberation of Leeuwarden on 15 April 1945.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** The Canadian serving contingent on Memorial Day, 4 May 2025 at Holten Canadian War Cemetery. L-R: Sgt Rob Laroche, WO Guy Lachaine, Cpl Evan Cassie-Stone, MCpl Katherine Prenovost, Cpl Andrew Rainforth.





**MONTAGE AT RIGHT:** Speeches from the balcony during the official Liberation Ceremony which took place in the town hall square on 9 May 1945 and speeches from same town hall on 5 May 2025 with Dave Chaloux representing the Regimental Family.

day was capped by a memorable selfie, with Jim Parks in attendance and a sea of faces behind us, each one a testament to shared remembrance.

Day 5, Dutch Liberation Day, was nothing short of surreal as we were part of the Liberation Day parade throughout Leeuwarden and Friesland province in three groups. WO Lachaine experienced a ride in a DUKW alongside five stern yet inspiring soldiers, a ride that turned into an impromptu celebration of life and history. Sgt Laroche observed that, "While on parade it was amazing to see the looks on the Dutch faces when they realized that there were active soldiers on the truck. They stood there waving and when we drove by and saw us, they got so excited asking for high fives and waving extra hard so we would notice them. It was an experience I will never forget."

In a joint procession, we entered the city via the Groningerstraatweg, just as the Regiment did 80 years ago on 15 April 1945 when they entered the city. It was so exciting and emotional,







**ABOVE LEFT:** The people of the Netherlands celebrate the arrival of Canadians soldiers and the liberation of their country from German occupation in April 1945.



**TOP RIGHT:** A Support Troop section, commanded by Sgt Bill Oakley, are mobbed in their M3 Scout car by newly liberated Dutch in Leeuwarden on 15 April 1945.

**LOWER RIGHT:** The Dutch people swarmed the streets to celebrate the end of the war, April 1945.



the group found themselves waving more energetically than ever; every stop drew crowds of onlookers who believed we were performers, only to be met with warmer smiles and heartfelt questions once they learned our true identities.

Lwdn11 - Speeches from the balcony during the official Liberation Ceremony which took place in the town hall square on 9 May 1945 and speeches from same town hall on 5 May 2025 with Dave Chaloux representing the Regimental Family.


On the final day of the tour, the group embraced the last moments of the tour with a series of symbolic acts while following the Regiment's path during the final days of the campaign. The first was a stop in Oostmahorn, at the site where B Sqn fought off a German amphibious assault that cost the lives of two of our soldiers. Next was a trip to Groningen Province and a stop for lunch in Eenrum that had been liberated by D Sqn. Our final stop for the day was a visit to Victory Museum 1940-1945 in Grootegast. It was particularly significant as it had opened its doors just for us — an intimate, curated experience that allowed for quiet reflection.

The next morning saw the group depart for Amsterdam for a free day before jetting home on Day 8. Everyone departed with fond and vivid memories of the trip. WO Lachaine summed it up: "I carried away

with me the vivid memories of a tour that was both an homage to history and a celebration of life."

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

WO Lachaine: "This journey has not only etched itself into my memory but has also reminded me of the timeless connection between past sacrifices and present freedoms. Each day was a blend of personal challenge, communal celebration, and the honour of walking through a landscape steeped in profound history. Thank you for the great experience filled with memories that will last a lifetime; and I will return. I am hoping to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> with my wife so that she too can understand the importance of what the Dragoons did there."

Sgt Robert Laroche: "This trip was much more than just sightseeing. It was about remembering history, honouring soldiers, and seeing the strong connection between Canada and the Netherlands. I learned a lot about the war and saw how thankful the Dutch people are for what Canada did. I will always remember the kindness of the people, the beauty of the country, and the special moments I shared with others." 





# GUARD

## KING CHARLES III VISIT

From 26 to 27 May 2025, Canada had the honour of welcoming Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla for an historic Royal Visit. This marked His Majesty's first official trip to Canada since his Coronation, an important occasion that reaffirmed Canada's identity and sovereignty as a constitutional monarchy while strengthening the bond between the Crown and Canadians.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons played a prominent ceremonial role throughout the visit, serving as the Arrival and Departure Guard at Ottawa International Airport. Weeks of preparation went into ensuring a flawless performance, from preparing scarlet uniforms and polishing helmets to conducting parade practices with lances.

When Their Majesties arrived and departed, the Guard provided both the first and last impression of Canada's Armed Forces. Their professionalism stood out, earning praise across all levels of leadership. The efforts of Sergeant Nash and his team were commended not only by their CO and RSM, but also by the Brigade Commander, Division Commander, Commander of the Canadian Army, and the Chief of the Defence Staff.

The Dragoons' contribution reflected the pride, discipline, and dedication of Canada's soldiers, marking the Royal Visit as both a national and Regimental success.

*Bold and Swift!* 🏹





# A FINAL WORD

## SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

ABOVE: The Regiment stands strong with the support of the Guild.

As a **not-for-profit** registered charitable organization, the Guild fully understands the importance in focusing on our core mandate of supporting the Regimental Family. We continue to work towards a balanced, self-sustaining financial model, but we still need your continued support.

We have a good vision, solid corporate guiding documentation and are well poised to support the Regimental Family, with your continued help. The events marking the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for our liberating of Leeuwarden in 2025 (both at home and in the Netherlands) were testaments to the collective pride we all share in this Regiment and its history. While the Leliefontein 125<sup>th</sup> events have been adjusted due to Regimental deployments, our celebrations still promise to hold a special place in our hearts and souls.

The next milestone will be the Regiment's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2033 — a momentous event that your Guild has already started the initial planning for. Should you be interested, your assistance is

always welcome as a member of the planning committee. For more information or to volunteer, please reach out to Jim Follwell at [coordinator@dragoons.ca](mailto:coordinator@dragoons.ca).

Lastly, on behalf of the entire Regimental Family, we would like to convey our heartfelt thanks the team of volunteers who have been doing outstanding work supporting the Regimental Family. Please visit our website at [www.dragoons.ca](http://www.dragoons.ca) and consider supporting your Guild.

**Bold and Swift!** 

RIGHT: The bond of the Regiment is strong, now and forever.  
*Audax et Celer!*

