

THE DRAGOON

2026

Royal Canadian Dragoons Battlefield & Honour Tour

to commemorate the

85th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands

Hosted by The Royal Canadian Dragoons Association with support from The Guild of The Royal Canadian Dragoons

An RCD Battlefield & Honour Tour is *'being considered'* for early May 2030 to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and reunite with our Dutch friends and family. We'll celebrate together, following the footsteps of Dragoons who liberated the Netherlands during the Second World War, and commemorate our fallen.

Several days may be added post-Netherlands to visit First World War battlefields, Beaumont-Hamel, Ypres (Menin Gate), Vimy Ridge, Amiens, and Moreuil Wood.

Maximum Tour Capacity: 40 pax

If interested contact: mtd.dragoon@hotmail.com to be added to the email list for updates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGES

2 Patron of the Association
4 President of the Association
6 Editor of *The Dragoon*

CHAPTER UPDATES

8 Newfoundland & Labrador
10 Atlantic
11 National Capital Region
13 Ottawa Valley
14 Kingston
16 Windsor, ON
17 British Columbia

FEATURE ARTICLES

18 RV26 – 12-14 June 2026, Alliston, Ontario
20 Germany 1985 – Converting Recce Squadron to Tanks
26 The Noble Centurion

BUSINESS

28 Business Arising: 2025 – 2026
30 The Last Trumpet Call: Farewell Friends





The Dragoon 2026

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

The RCD Association Membership Application Form can be found on page 31 or at https://dragoons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-Royal-Canadian-Dragoons-Association-Membership-App-2021v1.2.fillable.pdf.

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

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

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

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

Graphic design and layout: Esprit de Corps (www.espritdecorps.ca)

Cover Photo Credit

Recce Sqn, RCD during a road move in the Hohenfels Training Area, Germany in August 1982.

TOC Photo Credits

PHOTO PAGE 1 (TOC) – TOP: The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps has always had a long and proud relationship with the Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE). Here A Sqn, RCD, and a section of RCE are conducting a joint mine clearance exercise in the Gagetown Training Area in July 1964.

PHOTO PAGE 1 (TOC) – BOTTOM: Recce Sqn, RCD gun camp at the Bergen-Hohen Training Area, Germany in November 1981.

Publications Mail Agreement No.: 0040022009

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
RCD Association – Secretary
116 Heather Crescent
Almonte, Ontario K0A 1A0



PATRON OF THE ASSOCIATION MESSAGE

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



Gen (ret'd) Rick Hillier

ABOVE: This photo shows C Sqn, commanded by the then Major Rick Hillier, on Range 6 at the Bergen-Hohne training area in Germany in 1985. The interesting thing to note is that General Hillier was the first OC of the newly stood-up C Sqn described in Greg Taylor's Feature Article on page 20.

The RCD Association achieves its value from the membership and participation of those who are Dragoons, either serving or retired. Within this unique collection of great Canadians, from coast to coast to coast in our country, we get the opportunity to stay engaged as the years change who we are and what we do. A massive part of this is the opportunity to reconnect, to meet those with whom we have soldiered in the Regiment, and remind ourselves, through the telling of the many, many stories spanning all our lives both in Canada and around the world, that we had a hand in making this country our chosen home over all others.

Within the Association, we are reminded that our accomplishments are a huge part of what has built this Canada — built from Dragoons is not just an egotistical boast, but a truism. The tens of thousands of Dragoons and their families, who served Canada without fail, around the world in peace and in war, are the giants on whose shoulders we as Canadians now stand. Dragoons ran to the sound of guns, not away from them, and our nation prospered as a result. Remembering those who made that ultimate sacrifice, or who survived with brutal physical or mental images, is all part of what we, as an Association, do.

We also do more, in our support in many ways big and small, to keep our serving Regiment healthy, inspired and strong. The world this year is as violent and tumultuous as it has ever been, and it may get worse. Canada, to thrive, still needs Dragoons in order to survive, deter, fight and win. Those Dragoons need our support as we, now past our active service, need the support of our peers to remind us how awesome our lives are and have been. We can be proud of what we accomplished under the Springbok, as will those who now serve wearing the 'Springbok Bounding.'

I encourage all to help provide that support, in so many ways, by being a part of the Association. We are missing far too many of those who were so successful in







TOP LEFT: In 2007, General Rick Hillier, then Chief of Defence Staff, talks with engineers during a visit to the forward operating base in Ma'sum Gahr, Afghanistan. Photo by Cpl Simon Duchesne.

TOP RIGHT: Some members of the RCD Association attended the 10 April 2026 Cav Luncheon at RCMI in Toronto. Left to right: Rick Hillier, Marty Frank, and Dean Milner give a thumbs up. Further down the table are Tim Datchko and Tom Skelding.

ABOVE: While this photo from the 29-30 May 2026 RCAC Conference in Ottawa was largely comprised of 8CH(PL), given the cross pollination between our Regiments, many also wore the Springbok at some point in their career.

RIGHT: Serving Dragoons participate in Ex RUCKING BEAR 2026. The Association is hopeful younger Dragoons will join so the torch of helping others remains bright for generations to come.



their careers because of the dedication of the Dragoons they led and who now need their support. We are not seeing nearly enough of our younger Dragoons join and it behooves all of us to inspire more of them to do so and then to welcome them when they show up.

The Royal Canadian Dragoons manifests itself in people: men and women who wear the black beret, the Springbok badge and who serve Canada. I am proud to be the Patron of an Association that continues to extol that service and support those who carried that responsibility.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift



PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION MESSAGE

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



Capt (ret'd) Thomas Skelding

ABOVE: C Sqn RCD exercising the right of the Freedom of the City of Fredericton, NB on 11 August 1990 as part of the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps in 1990. C Sqn CO Maj Chris Glauninger, WO Tom Skelding Sqn Ops WO, and driver Tpr Joe McLeod.

Greetings from the RCD Association HQ co-located at FOB Holyrood, NL on the Avalon Peninsula.

The Regimental Association, spread across the country, is alive and doing well. We are organized in ten Chapters from NL to BC. The Association is a support group, if I can use that phrase, supporting the Regiment in all its endeavours and, equally importantly, supporting each other and the Dragoon family, wherever and whenever needed. The Association maintains and promotes the traditions, wellbeing, and esprit de corps of the Regiment.

There were many well-supported activities across the Association in 2025-2026 as reported through emails, websites, and other social media means. Of note was the large number of members and some non-members who attended RV26 in Alliston, ON. Eight of ten chapters were represented this year. A huge shout out to Louis Lucier, South Central Ontario Chapter, and his team who organized a fantastic weekend. Another shout out and thank you goes to the Guild who supported the Friday night Meet & Greet and the Regiment for providing the Kit Shop and two soldiers in ceremonial uniform for the Saturday night dinner. The location and host Chapter for the next biennial reunion is undecided at the moment. During the AGM it was discussed returning to the odd numbered years for our reunions. The reason being is to offset the RV from the Regimental Change of Command parade, which also occurs on the even numbered years, around the same time as our reunions. So, this may mean the next RV would not occur until June 2029. More to follow, so stay tuned!

Members of the Association can be found in attendance at Regimental celebrations, funerals and memorials for fallen members of both the Regiment and the Association, RCD Cadet parades, and at their own celebrations and ceremonies to honour the hist-



RIGHT: During the Leliefontein 2025 celebrations, the RCD Association Award for the Most Outstanding Trooper at the Regiment was presented to Tpr Lucas Vandermale by RCD Association President Tom Skelding, the Regimental Command team of RSM CWO Nickerson (far left) and CO LCol Summerfield (far right).

ory and traditions of our fine Regiment. These are great times to meet up with old "battle buddies," have a yarn, and just reconnect.

I attended the Leliefontein parade on 8 November 2025 and, on behalf of our Association, presented the RCD Association Award for the Most Outstanding Trooper at the Regiment to Tpr Lucas Vandermale. In addition to the trophy, Lucas was presented with a Life Membership and $100 gift certificate from the RCD Association.

During my travels I was able to meet up with Dragoons, have a coffee or a pint, enjoy a bit of social time, and see how folks are doing. Post Leliefontein 25, I joined the NCR Chapter for their annual Leliefontein gathering in Orleans. Considering that Windsor, ON is my hometown, I was able to combine a couple of family visits home with joining the Windsor Chapter at events such as an Afghanistan Memorial Ceremony and medal presentation to Tpr Stefan Jankowski's family (see page 16).

The Association is considering hosting another RCD Battlefield and Honour Tour to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands in May 2030. Details such as dates, itinerary, etc., still need to be worked out. This tour may also include a few extra days to visit several battlefields in Belgium and France (see the inside front cover for more information). More to follow in future issues and social media channels.

With the selection of the next Commanding Officer, its time to say goodbye to the old. On behalf of all Association members, a heartfelt thanks to outgoing CO LCol Chloeann Summerfield for your service to the Regiment and support to our Association. The RCD Association welcomes the new CO LCol Duane Fetzner and looks forward to seeing him at future Association activities.

Association members occupy many seats as Directors on the Guild, and I as your Association President sit on the Guild as the 1st Vice President. The Guild drives the path for support to the Regiment and Association.

The Association has a couple of volunteer positions that need to be filled, so if you are interested, reach out to your Chapter chairperson:

- Association webmaster; and
- Association representatives with the Regimental Family Advisory Committee (RFAC). We have one, but it would be nice for another 1 or 2 Association members to join this committee.

We, as an association, hope you will join us at some point, regardless of rank, trade, or amount of time served with the Royal Canadian Dragoons. We have many members and foster many relationships with our combat support and combat service support arms. The Association is proud of our shared history and heritage. We are always ready to welcome you! You can keep in touch through:

- Chapter activities;
- The biennial national reunion aka RV;
- *The Dragoon* journal;
- Email;
- Social media **https://www.facebook.com/groups/227946981121973**; and
- Most importantly … by becoming a member.

This 2026 edition will be Perry's last. Perry Wells has produced the 2020-22, 2023, 2024, 2025 and now the 2026 edition of *The Dragoon*. I know you will all agree that he has done a fantastic job. So, on behalf of the Association Membership, I send a big thank you to Perry for his contribution to our Association. If we want to keep our journal going into the future, we will need a new editor to do a handover with Perry and start working on the 2027 edition. If you are interested, please contact me at **rcdassoc.pres@gmail.com**.

Enjoy this 2026 edition of the combined *Dragoon*/*Springbok*. A lot of effort by a number of folks went into putting it together for your reading enjoyment. Thank you to all for your continued support and work. Again, a huge shout out and thank you to Perry Wells, our journal editor, for another superb edition. So please read on and enjoy.

Welcome Home! We still have a ton of memories to share. We may not have a bar, but we do serve friendship … It goes without saying that old Dragoons will have a good time wherever they get together.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift



EDITOR OF THE DRAGOON MESSAGE

LCol (ret'd) Perry Wells, CD



LCol (ret'd) Perry Wells

ABOVE: I chose this photo not to be outdone by General Hillier's cool tank photo on page 2 and Tom Skelding's on page 4. In this photo, I had just finished commanding a squadron of British Challenger tanks for the final attack during the Combined Arms Tactics Course on the Salisbury Plain in the fall of 1996.

Greetings from the Editor's desk as I put the finishing touches to the 2026 edition of *The Dragoon*. As I look over everything that has been submitted, I am amazed by how active and busy the Association and its members have been over the last 12+ months. Hopefully this has been captured in this edition of *The Dragoon*.

In addition to opening Messages by the Patron of the RCD Association, Gen (ret'd) Rick Hillier, and the Association President, Capt (ret'd) Tom Skelding, several of the Chapters provided a summary of their many and varied activities over the past year.

The main Feature Article this year is by LCol (ret'd) Greg Taylor entitled *Converting Recce Squadron to Tanks: Germany 1985*. And as it turned out, the newly formed C Squadron described in Greg's article was the squadron I joined as a brand-new Troop Leader when I arrived at the Regiment in the summer of 1985. At the time, I was not aware of all the behind the scenes work that took place to create C Squadron. I really enjoyed interacting with Greg to put this article together and learning about how he had the unique experience of commanding two squadrons at the same time.

There is an excellent poem by Dave Campagne entitled *The Noble Centurion: Ode to the "Agony Wagon"* celebrating the end of an era when the Centurion tank was replaced by the Leopard 1 main battle tank in the late 1970s. Rounding out the Feature Article section is a summary (with lots of photos) by MWO (ret'd) Louis Lucier of the very successful RV26 held in Alliston, Ontario from 12 to 14 June 2026. I would like to acknowledge and thank George Wallace, our unofficial Association photographer, for the excellent RV26 photographs. Closing out this edition is a review of the business side of the Association and the Last Post.

This is my fifth and final edition of *The Dragoon* and it is with mixed feelings that I asked Tom Skelding to find a new editor for the 2027 Edition. I still remember when the then-Association President, Denis Levesque, approached me in September 2021 to become the Editor of *The Dragoon*. After briefly thinking it over, I was honoured to



ABOVE: Greg Taylor (third from the left) contributed a great Feature Article on the conversion of Recce Sqn to a tank squadron in 1985. The other Recce Sqn officers are from left to right: Tim Datchko, Mike Kampman, Greg Taylor, Bill Brough, James Ostler, and Lowell Thomas (C/S 60). Missing – Glenn Leduc.

TOP RIGHT: RV26 Mixed Dining-In. Matt Robichaud (Ottawa Valley Chairman) presents a wine caddy and wine to Peter Atkinson (NCR Chairman).

BOTTOM: Families gather to watch a Centurion tank roll past during the 84th birthday celebrations of Base Gagetown on 18 May 1967.



have been asked and sent Denis the following (tongue-in-cheek) email accepting the position.

"As for your very interesting proposal of becoming the Editor of '*The Dragoon*.' After sum carefull consideirations and reflextion I wood be honered to takes it on. Lately, I has been werking on improvering my spellering and I thinks it is gettin' alot more gooder. Plus my grammer and punctuations is kuming along as well. So I thinks to myselves....it kant bee that bad. Shish, if Mike Rosterek kan does it....I am petty sure I can due it just as goodly as hymn. Heck, how hard can this editer thang bee anyways. So counts me inn to be the bestest editer EVER! of your little magazin." (***Editor's Note**: Mike Rostek was The Dragoon Editor before me.)*

And so began my journey to learn about the publishing industry. My first year was also the first year the Association began using the unique and considerable expertise of *Esprit de Corps* magazine to annually layout and publish the combined *Springbok/Dragoon*. Julie Simoneau has been my point of contact throughout, and she has done an outstanding job mentoring me in the finer details of transiting from a self-published journal to a more polished and professional publication.

I am indebted to everybody who has contributed over the years to make *The Dragoon* a first-rate journal that we can all be proud of. So, thank you. As always, people are encouraged to submit Letters to the Editor, articles, anecdotes, or book reviews for inclusion in future editions. Submissions can be sent to the Editor at the following email address: (**rcdassoc.editor@gmail.com**).

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift





CHAPTER UPDATE

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

By Tom Skelding

How's she gettin' on byes'?

Greetings from the Dragoons on the Rock. OPs are manned, the Eastern Flank is secure.

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

On Monday, 3 November 2025 we gathered at Tiny's Bar & Grill, in Paradise, for an afternoon lunch, a yarn, and to recognize and toast the Regiment for its gallant participation in the action at Leliefontein on 7 November 1900.

The Veterans Appreciation Dinner at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 50, Conception Bay South, in late November is always a grand time. Our small but mighty group gathered with our 'fire-team partners' to break bread, have a glass of wine or Black Horse, and tell a few tall tales. It's also an opportunity to mingle with fellow veterans from the community.

On 21 December 2025, we gathered along with members of the RCR Association NL Chapter at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 1, St. John's, to jointly toast the Regiments. Of course, we couldn't help but to ruffle the feathers of the RCR by giving them the official version of the historical occasion.

As the Senior Regiment, we also obtained bragging rights by our large number of Dragoons in attendance. All in all, another great day.

In March 2026, O'Donnell High School in Mount Pearl hosted a Veterans Appreciation Night at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 1, St. John's. Several NL Chapter members with their spouses attended for a great evening of entertainment, presentations, a wonderful meal and, of course, more stories.

We were saddened to lose Charles Hapgood in April this year. Charlie was given a send off in true Dragoon fashion.

As always, the Dragoon presence is evident at many non-Regimental events across the province, such as July 1st Memorial Day, Remembrance Day, Quilt of Valour presentations, Field of Honour Dedication in St. John's, to name a few.

With a few Dragoons from away visiting over the year, old friends renewed past relationships and new friends were made — all part of the great Dragoon family.





TOP LEFT: Veterans Appreciation Dinner. Left to right: Sean Stafford, Dave Lane, Winston Childs, Larry Mercer, and Tom Skelding.

ABOVE: The 4 Amigos gathered in St. John's on 18 March 2026. Left to right: Rob Kennedy, Joe White, Sheldon Clarke, and Tom Skelding.

We wish all Dragoons a safe, healthy and successful 2026. If ya come from away, drop on over, we'll fire up a scoff, tell a few lies, and find ya a nice cold Black Horse.

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

"Long may your big jib draw."

Audax et celer / Bold and Swift







TOP RIGHT: Regimental Birthday. Left to right: Tom Skelding, Larry Mercer, Joe White, Dave Lane, Larry Wiseman, Larry Skinner, Derrick Hanrahan, and Brad Sainsbury.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Larry Mercer (Jr) visiting on 12 December 2025. Left to right: Joe White, Tom Skelding, Dave Lane, Larry Mercer (Jr), and Larry Mercer (Sr).

ABOVE: Leliefontein lunch. Left to right: Sean Stafford, Winston Childs, Greg Preston, Larry Mercer, Joe White, Tom Skelding, Larry Skinner, and Ron Pender.



CHAPTER UPDATE
ATLANTIC REGION

By Dave MacLaren

On behalf of all members from the Atlantic Region Chapter, we wish you all good health and happiness, and all the best in another upcoming year**.**

Over the past 12 months, the Chapter carried on with our usually events. The Chapter continues to hold monthly luncheons at Mingler's Restaurant & Pub in Oromocto on the last Thursday of every month (*pictured*). These casual luncheons are always very well attended with lots of laughs and stories. On average we have about 25-30 regular members attend.

The Atlantic Chapter traditionally gathers three other times a year — at Leliefontein, the Regimental Birthday, and Leeuwarden. Over the 2025 fall timeframe it remained quiet. We had seven members attend a Leliefontein parade on 7 November held by C Sqn, RCD in Gagetown. It should be noted that this was the last event held in Gagetown by C Sqn before their move back to Petawawa. In December, as we do each year, we gathered and celebrated the Regimental birthday at Mingler's Pub on 18 December. At one point, we had 34 people show up.

During February the Chapter had the opportunity to host the Colonel of the Regiment along with the CO & RSM for a quick lunch get-together. The CO briefed attendees on the current and future activities of the Regiment. Moving into March we were invited to attend the annual Black Hatter Mess dinner hosted by the Armoured School. We had 14 members attend and it turned out to be a great evening. A big thanks to RSM Steve Slade for the invite and being such a great host. We also had one member make the journey to Alliston, Ontario to attend RV26 in June. An incredible amount of work by Louis Lucier to make this such a great event. Well done.

During the past year the Atlantic Chapter was supported by me (David MacLaren), Lance Wiebe, and John Bouwmeister. Thanks to Lance and John for your hard work and continued support.

As we move our calendar forward into the later summer months of 2026, we look forward to another Bennett Memorial Golf Tournament, which is held at the Gage Golf and Curling Club in Oromocto in August. This weekend never disappoints and is always very well attended, attracting many golfers from across Canada. This is always a great but busy weekend. It should be noted that this runs separate from our Chapter events.

Lastly, we look forward to this year's upcoming events and all the new stories it will bring. We are still actively recruiting new members and will continue to do so.

Once again, all the best from the Atlantic Region Chapter.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift





CHAPTER UPDATE

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

By Peter Atkinson

Over the years, Regimental life revolved around key events. Whether it was FALLEX, Gun Camp, winter warfare training, adventure training, Brigade sports days, support to courses at the Armoured School, going to Meaford to support reserve training, a spring exercise in Petawawa, Wainright or Gagetown, or pre-deployment training as another Squadron got ready for deployment; these events drove our lives. Then there were all the ceremonial events where we dressed up in our best uniform and paraded in all our finery. All of these experiences shaped our lives and forged the friendships that we still have today.

Now that we are retired, the members of the RCD Association have only those key ceremonial dates to remind us of our past. At each of these we get together, tip a glass, reminisce, and remember our fallen. To a man or woman, we would all do it over again in a heartbeat. As we look at the changing world, the changing political landscape and the resurgence of support for the military in our country, it brings a stirring to our hearts.







FROM TOP RIGHT: 1) Leliefontein lunch. Left to right: Mike McNorgan, Dyrald Cross, Wally Gallant, and Rick Hillier. 2) The gang gathered at the Blackburn Arms with special visitor Tom Skelding for the Leliefontein lunch. 3) The ladies kept a sharp eye on the guys from the corner booth during the Leliefontein lunch. Left to right: Franca Atkins, Joyce Hillier, Diana Atkinson, and Linda Barsauskus.



What can we do to help? The answer is to make sure that all Canadians do not forget the sacrifice of our soldiers that went before. We also need to encourage our politicians to follow through on their promises to re-equip and re-arm the military. For some of us we may be tempted to put up our hand and offer to help with training and mentoring all those new soldiers entering the ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces. Whatever you do, you can be proud of our past, proud of our Regiment and our accomplishments.

This past year the National Capital Chapter of the RCD Association was particularly active. Every time we got together there were at least 25-30 of us. It never gets old spending time with lifelong friends from our time in the Regiment.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1) Many attended the 20 December 2025 Regimental Birthday Christmas Brunch at the Orleans Legion. Left to right: Ross Ermel, Peter Atkinson, Diana Atkinson, Angie Ermel, Connie Cross, and Dyrald Cross. 2) The Orleans Legion has a Christmas Brunch every year and they are happy to host our neighbourhood Dragoons. Left to Right: Alan Bolster, Tom Burnie, Rita Seeley, Maureen Rousseau, and Rachel Forsyth. 3) We were pleased to have the Colonel of the Regiment Steve Cadden and Jen join us for the Regimental Birthday Christmas Brunch. 4) The 15 April 2026 Leeuwarden Lunch at the Blackburn Arms Pub. Left to right: Jim Atkins, Jim Follwell, Steve Young, Mike Ward, and Tom Burnie.5) Leeuwarden Lunch. Left to right: Mike Wionzek, Monica Wionzek, Maureen Rousseau, Rachel Forsyth, Nancy Follwell, Diana Atkinson, Terri Bolster, Alan Bolster, and Perry Wells. 6) Mark Hutchings, Ross Ermel and Chris Catry looking good at the Cav Luncheon at the RCMI, Toronto.













CHAPTER UPDATE

OTTAWA VALLEY

By Matt Robichaud

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

Since taking over from Bruce Prendergast a few years ago, I have tried to kickstart the Chapter. However, it has proven to be a daunting task. To that end, we have not had any formal functions to celebrate Regimental milestones, and we stopped holding monthly get-togethers until interest improves. If anyone would like help hosting an event, please reach out and I would be happy to assist.

TOP RIGHT: Bruce Prendergast visiting the Base Borden Military Museum.





LEFT AND RIGHT: The Borden museum includes an impressive monument of MGen Worthington and a plaque erected by the RCAC Association in honour of his wife, Clara, for her dedicated service to the Corps.



Bruce Prendergast and I travelled together to RV26 in Alliston in June. A huge thank you to Louis Lucier for hosting an excellent event. While there, Bruce and I visited the Base Borden Military Museum. If you have never been, you are missing an impressive collection. We also took a moment to pay our respects to General and Mrs. Worthington.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift



CHAPTER UPDATE

Kingston

By Gavin Cross

It has been a year of high intense activity in Kingston. The pace has been set by our leaders, our members and the historical and essential customs that the Chapter continues. The Chapter member base is geographically enormous and hails from the eastern edge of the province to the edges of Toronto, and north to the lakes of the Canadian Shield. A microcosm that reflects the character of the Regiment's constituent parts. The Kingston Chapter was very proud to support RV26, with past President Denis Levesque representing the Chapter during that important function.

Our location generally means that the Chapter is close to Corps and other related functions from outside the Association. As in past years, we had representation at the Ironsides Curling Bonspiel, the Henry Sampson Memorial Golf Tournament, the Corps BBQ, as well as supporting the Annual Honour Roll Ride on 6 June 2026.

Our annual end-of-summer Chapter BBQ celebrated its final year, 2025, at the home of Dean and Katrin Milner. For many years we were able to relax on the shores of Buck Haven, and I cannot recall a location that was more peaceful and welcoming. A great place to gather and shoot the breeze with good friends. Many thanks to the Milners as we change venue and allow them to enjoy being grandparents.

The Chapter activities included, but were not limited to, the Regimental birthday, Leliefontein, our local Remembrance Day tributes, monthly get-togethers at the Raxx Bar and Grill in Kingston, Regimental Change of Command, and RV26. Many of our members are very busy supporting the Regiment's on-going commitment in Latvia. We also supported the Remembrance Crosswalk opening in Kingston and enjoyed the day meeting new friends.

The Kingston Chapter is looking forward to our BBQ in September 2026, which is being held at the Nappanee Rod and Gun Club this year, where our members and families will be able to enjoy



RIGHT: The Kingston Chapter holds monthly luncheons at the Raxx Bar and Grill the first Thursday of the month. Left to right: John Moyer, Clive Milner, Ross Caruthers, Alec Murdock, Paul Ward, Bill Brough, Mark Popov, Kathy Nayduk, James Ostler, Dean Milner, Gavin Cross, Dave Henderson, Geoff Hall, and Dave Graham.



Chapter meeting, Merchant Tavern, Kingston, Ontario. Left to right: Dane Sonestenes, George Rice, Dean Milner, Denis Levesque, Kathy Nayduk, Kirk Thornton, Clive Milner, James Ostler, Terry Cotrell, Gavin Cross, Pierre Royer, Paul Ward, and Bill Brough.

some shooting. We will be returning to a combined RCD/RCR birthday at Fort Frontenac near the end of the year.

One of my personal goals for the Kingston and Area Chapter is to reach out to as many former and serving Dragoons, both near and far, and bring them back into the Regimental family. Our membership has grown by almost 10% through these efforts. It is vital to maintain a strong outreach program to our extended family of brothers and sisters.

Our membership is chock full of experience, memories and great people. Fellowship is our strength and community our calling. I remain proud to serve!

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift





ABOVE: On 25 October 2025, the City of Kingston unveiled two veterans' commemorative crosswalks. This initiative was sponsored by LCol (ret'd) Perry Metaxas (PPCLI) and Maj (ret'd) Chris Catry (RCD) and took over a year of planning. Left to right: Denis Levesque, Dave Henderson, Gavin Cross, Steve Tasnadi, Chris Catry, Perry Mataxis (PPCLI), and James Ostler.

RIGHT: Kingston Chapter representative Rob Kennedy attended the funeral for Sean Mahar near Hamilton, Ontario.

BOTTOM: The annual Kingston Chapter September 2025 BBQ at the waterfront home of Dean and Katrin Milner on Buck Lake, north of Kingston.

***Editor's Note**: Gavin Cross served 10 years with the Regiment before joining the Correctional Service of Canada in 1999, as a Correctional Officer. He recently retired from that position out of the Millhaven Institution, Kingston.*





CHAPTER UPDATE
WINDSOR, ON

On Sunday, 8 March 2026, the long-lost Afghanistan campaign medal of the late Trooper Stefan George Jankowski (RCD) was formally presented to his family at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 644 in Windsor, Ontario. Jankowski passed away in 2011 at the age of 25. His medal had been missing for nearly 15 years before being recovered out of province.

Trooper Jankowski served in Afghanistan with B Sqn, RCD Task Force 3/09 from September 2009 to May 2010 under LCol (ret'd) Mark Popov (RCD) and SSM (ret'd) Kevin Mathers (RCD). Mark was the master of ceremonies for the medal presentation.

Cpl (ret'd) Kathy Nayduk (RCD) did some of her early military training with Tpr Jankowski and presented the family with the Quilt of Valour, crafted by the Quilt of Valour – Canada Society, to honour those injured in service, visible and invisible alike.

Captain (ret'd) Thomas Skelding travelled from Newfoundland and Labrador to represent the RCD Association and present the family with an RCD Memorial Coin.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift

BOTTOM: A fine group of Dragoons along with Windsor Regiment and 1st Hussars who served in B Sqn TF3/09 came together for the medal presentation. Left to right: Scott Mulcaster, Thomas Skelding, Philip Badour, Elizabeth Bainbridge (RCD QM 1996-98), Mark Popov, Paul Bradford (RCD MO 1996-99), TG Rousseau (RCD Carpenter 1992-94), Hakim Ouzzif (1H w/B Sqn TF 3/09), Hunter Kersey (WR w/B Sqn TF 3/09), Steve Lanoue (WR w/B Sqn TF 3/09), Kathy Nayduk, Chris Saunders, and John Nayduk (WR RCD-BG 1994-95).



RIGHT: Tom Skelding presenting Tpr Jankowski's mother with an RCD Memorial Coin.





CHAPTER UPDATE

BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Bob Black

Things in the BC Chapter have been quiet. Our gatherings are constrained by geography and the cost of travel in BC. However, per usual, we have had our two annual get-togethers under the auspices of the Left Coast Lancers, joining our Black-hatter comrades from across the province.

Our first gathering at the North Saanich Yacht Club was held in November and we took the opportunity to celebrate Leliefontein with those from the other regiments. We managed to gather nine Dragoons: Paul Crober, Bob Black, Jack and Jean Dangerfield, Jonas Jonsson, Chuck Ewart, Paul Philcox, Derek Long, and Darrell Dean. A good time was held by all.

In March we gathered with our LCL comrades to celebrate Moreuil Wood, a battle important to both the RCD and LdSH(RC). We were honoured with the visit of our Colonel of the Regiment, MGen (ret'd) Steve Cadden. The COR gave us an honest and thought-provoking update on the situation with the Regiment and the Army in general. Clearly the Regiment, Army and Canadian Armed Forces are facing both exciting and challenging times ahead. Dragoons present at this gathering were John Richmond, Paul Crober, Bob Black, Darrell Dean, Jonas Jonsson, Paul Philcox, and Gene Lake.



ABOVE: In March 2026, we joined our Strathcona colleagues to help celebrate Moreuil Wood. Left to right: John Richmond, Paul Crober, Bob Black, Darrell Dean, Jonas Jonsson, Colonel of the Regiment MGen (ret'd) Steve Cadden, Paul Philcox, and Gene Lake.

BELOW: This photo was taken at the November 2025 gathering at the North Saanich Yacht Club to commemorate the Action at of Leliefontein. Left to right: Paul Crober, Bob Black, Jack and Jean Dangerfield, Jonas Jonsson, Chuck Ewart, Paul Philcox, Derek Long, and Darrell Dean.



The year has been relatively kind to our membership. Our only passing was Dietmar Raudzus who was attached to the Regiment in Lahr. Dietmar was a relatively new member of the Association and, unfortunately, we didn't have the opportunity to enjoy meeting him before he passed away.

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift



2026 RENDEZVOUS
BRINGING MEMBERS TOGETHER

By MWO (ret'd) Louis Lucier, CD

South Central Ontario Chapter member Louis Lucier planned and executed a weekend of events for members of the Royal Canadian Dragoons Association from 12–14 June 2026 at the Nottawasaga Inn Resort & Conference Centre in Alliston, Ontario, for the 52nd RCD Association Rendezvous 2026. Over 70 people travelled from across the country to attend.

The weekend began on Friday, 12 June, with a meet and greet that gave members an opportunity to re-connect, renew friendships, and welcome one another to the Rendezvous. The relaxed opening event set the tone for a weekend focused on camaraderie and the shared bonds of service.

On Saturday, 13 June, attendees had the afternoon to play a round of golf at the resort, enjoy the local area, spend time with friends, or visit the Base Borden Military Museum.

Saturday evening featured a Mixed Dining-In three-course dinner, bringing members together for an enjoyable evening of fellowship. During the dinner, Association President Tom Skelding delivered an excellent briefing and slide presentation on the Association's 2025 trip to Leeuwarden, Netherlands.

ABOVE: A full house for the RCD Association General Meeting on Saturday morning.







The presentation offered members a chance to hear about the visit, reflect on the Association's connections abroad, and share in the experiences of those who travelled. It was a highlight of the evening and added a meaningful historical and international dimension to the weekend.

Overall, the 52nd RCD Association Rendezvous provided a memorable opportunity for members to gather, socialize, and celebrate the enduring spirit of the Royal Canadian Dragoons Association.

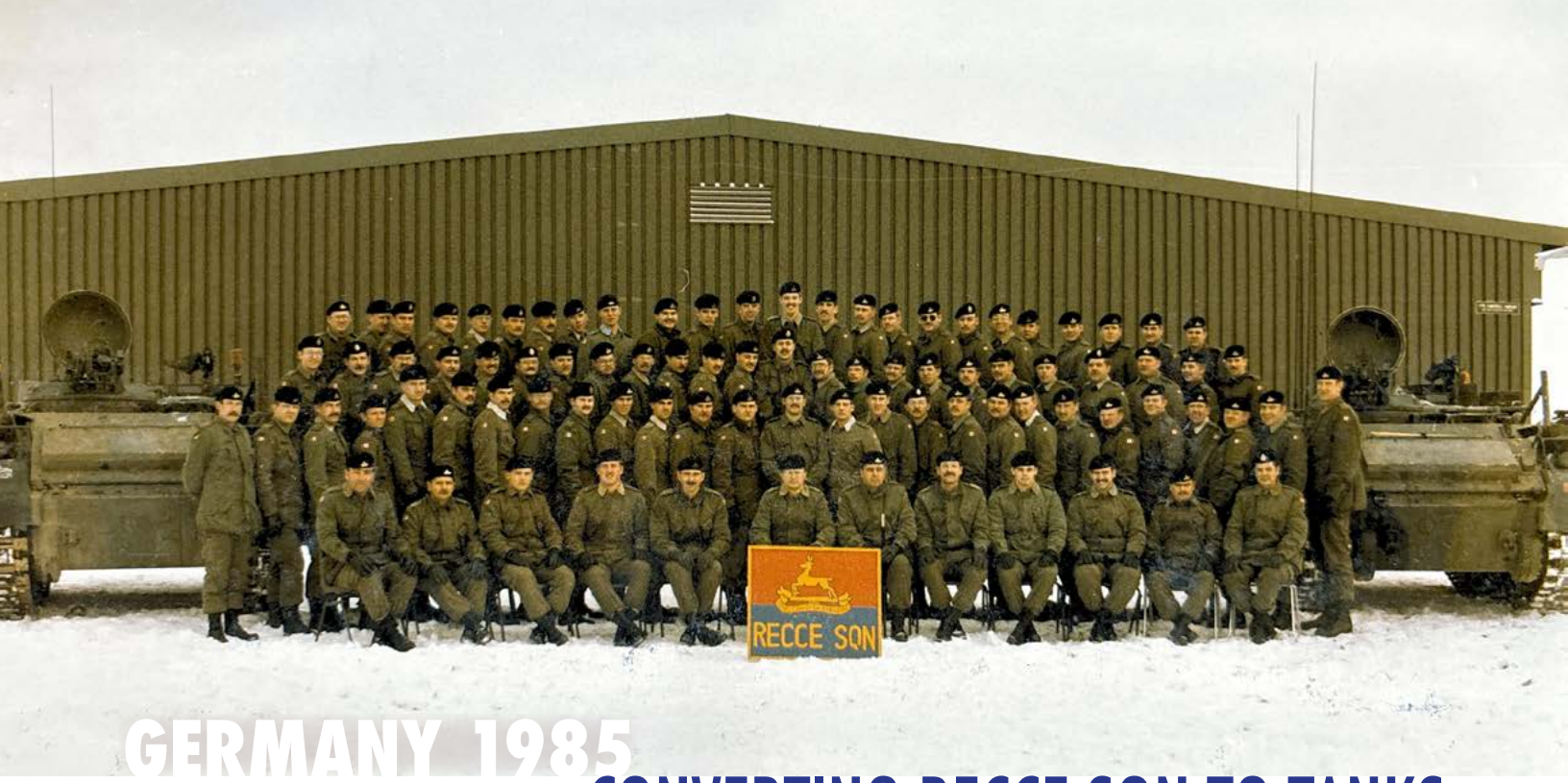
***Editor's Note**: The date and location of the next RCD Association Rendezvous is still to be determined. Details will be shared once known.*





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1) Meet and Greet. Left to right: Wally Galant, Tom Skelding, Randy Payne, and Dan Sicotte. Check out Tom's shirt. 2) Dave Chaloux and Louis Lucier during the RV26 Meet and Greet. Louis was the event organizer and host. 3) Tom Skelding provided a briefing on the Association's trip to the Netherlands in May 2025. 4) Saturday night's Mixed Dining-In. 5) Base Borden Military Museum. 6) Mixed Dining-In.





GERMANY 1985

CONVERTING RECCE SQN TO TANKS

By LCol (ret'd) Greg Taylor, CD

The conversion of Recce Squadron to tanks in the spring of 1985 is a small (and hopefully interesting) part of Regimental history, but one that's not mentioned in *Into Their Second Century*. A couple of years after the book was published, one of its authors, Mike McNorgan, learned from me about the conversion and asked that I provide him a short note for our archives. This article is based on that note.

I moved from commanding B Sqn to commanding the Brigade Recce Sqn in the summer of 1984. At my first meeting with the new CO, LCol Dave Graham, he assured me I took my orders operationally from the

ABOVE: Recce Sqn, RCD, 1985, Lahr, West Germany. Front Row (left to right): WO Mantel, Sgt Beaton, Lt Datchko, Lt Ostler, Capt Leduc, Maj Taylor, MWO Fougere, Capt Brough, Capt Thomas, Capt Kampman, WO Paquin, WO Berger.
2nd Row (left to right): Sgt Austin, Sgt Dedrick, Sgt Green, Sgt Brousseau, Tpr McTaggart, Cpl Head, MCpl McGee, MCpl Welton, Cpl Crate, Tpr Barette, Tpr Gallerio, MCpl Godden, Tpr Garrison, Tpr Christensen, Tpr Fleming, Cpl Crumback, Cpl Aucoin, Cpl Beaudry, Tpr Dumas, Cpl Bates, MCpl Hann, Sgt Boutilier, Sgt Hunt, Sgt Campbell, Sgt Hopkins, Sgt Saunders, Sgt Galas.
3rd Row (left to right): MCpl McLeod, Cpl MacDonald, MCpl Connors, MCpl Nolin, MCpl Dumas, Cpl Dupuis, Cpl Pereira, Cpl Racine, Cpl Fraser, Cpl Wilkie, Tpr Hodder, Cpl Lamer, Cpl Desjardins, Tpr Linington, Cpl Handgraaf, Cpl Dallaire, Tpr Buckley, Cpl Atkinson, Tpr Park, Cpl Busch, Cpl Bryan, Tpr Beno, Cpl Hebert, Cpl Bellingham.
4th Row (left to right): Cpl Poole, Cpl Slack, Cpl Sevigny, MCpl von Hollen, Tpr Clark, Cpl Ranger, Tpr Gray, Tpr Johnston, Tpr Nikolaidis, Tpr Nadeau, Tpr Cox, Cpl Manseau, Cpl Speck, Cpl Martel, Tpr Pierce, MCpl McGregor, Cpl Patterson, Pte Mondoux, Tpr Kuhn, Tpr Tammisto, Tpr Muranetz, Cpl Beirnes, Tpr Tremblay, Tpr Marier.
Missing: Tpr Caouette, Tpr Emery, MCpl Fortune, Cpl Gladwin, MCpl Kendall, Cpl Labonte, MCpl Norris, Cpl Pitts, Cpl Proctor, Tpr Ram, Tpr Walker, Cpl Yarrow.



ABOVE: Left to right: Cpl Bates, Maj Greg Taylor and SSM Bob Fougere on exercise.



RIGHT: A Lynx Command and Reconnaissance vehicle on the outskirts of a German village during FALLEX. (Library and Archives Canada. Item ID number: 4730780)

Brigade Commander, BGen Jack Dangerfield, and that as my CO his focus with me would be on Regimental matters, supporting my squadron administratively and logistically, and, only if necessary, providing me advice or top cover on how to deal with Brigade or the Commander. For all intents and purposes thereafter, I was treated by both the CO and 4 CMBG as an independent squadron.

The squadron was heavily impacted by postings in and out, and by internal moves from the tank squadrons. The only leadership continuity was my SSM on promotion from a troop, the Ops WO, and the Sigs MCpl who had more time in the squadron (starting his fourth year!) than anyone else. Otherwise, I had a fresh slate to build on. My 2IC was Capt Glenn Leduc; the other captain, Bill Brough, ran admin in garrison but was used as an LO in the field and did some special projects, such as running troop exercises at Munsingen. Both were posted in from ERE. Troop leaders were Lts Mike Kampman and Tim Datchko, who I brought from B Sqn, and James Ostler who came from A Sqn. My SSM was MWO Bob Fougere, on promotion, who unfortunately missed FALLEX to attend TQ7. He was ably replaced by WOs Benny Paquin (Ops WO) and Al Mantel (SQMS), the former being acting SSM though the two of them were virtually interchangeable depending on circumstances. The RHQ Recce Tp (Lt Lowell Thomas) trained with us from time to time, and for most of FALLEX I had a Reserve flyover scout troop. For the major fall training period I had four 5-car troops with Lynx command and reconnaissance vehicles, and a flyover artillery battery in direct support.

BGen Dangerfield was also posted in that summer. He arrived before his Change of Command, having asked the outgoing Commander if he could come over early to observe a II German Corps CPX the brigade was participating in as a precursor to the Corps Exercise that would end FALLEX. Shortly after the CPX started, it became quite clear to all that BGen Dangerfield was not just observing but participating. This was done discreetly, mostly through the COS LCol Larry Mintz, but sometimes BGen Dangerfield interacted directly with COs. At one point he took me aside to explain how he intended to employ Recce Sqn. There was no magic in what he said — it was straight out of our doctrine and manuals: the squadron was his resource, would focus on what was important to his battle planning, and would operate a day ahead of the brigade in terms of time and space. What was magical is that, in all my career, including the two years that followed as Chief of Staff of the Special Service Force in Petawawa, I never heard a Brigade Commander articulate his recce concept so clearly and strongly.

BGen Dangerfield's direction was in lockstep with my views on brigade recce, so we got off to a good start, and had an amazing year together. For example, on the II German Corps exercise, FLINKER IGEL II, we were one of two brigades in the Mountain Division simulating the Soviets com-



Part of 1 Troop, Recce Sqn preparing for a dismounted foot patrol during Exercise SNAKEBITE in 1985. Left to right: Tpr Nikolaidis, Cpl Pereira, and Cpl Racine.

ing through Austria to outflank NATO defences. BGen Dangerfield agreed to a request from the Div Commander to attach me, under operational control, to the Div Recce Battalion for the first three days of the exercise. This phase was very interesting and instructive.

When I went to the CO's Orders, I sat at the back for only a few minutes while he gave orders to his Company Commanders in German. I assumed the brevity was because, like Guderian at Sedan, he was saying 'just do it like the CPX'. But I was wrong: his orders to me were equally brief. He showed me a map which had the Divisional left and right boundaries, recce company boundaries that only extended out about 15km, a few circles around bridges, and a squiggly axis for his Leopard 1 company coming in obliquely from one flank. That was it – there was no line of departure, for example, because the 'Austrian' border was simulated by a river. His orders were "recce in sector," and "The Division doesn't realize it but, in your sector, these two bridges will take Leopard 2 thus are key to the advance, so find out what's there and, if you can capture them, so much the better." And that too was it.

"The Division doesn't realize it but, in your sector, these two bridges will take Leopard 2 thus are key to the advance, so find out what's there and, if you can capture them, so much the better."

My only question was, "What happens 15km out?" And he briefly explained that his Leopards were to drive in deep to provoke an enemy reaction which should provide information he needed to plan our next moves. After Orders were officially over, however, I asked if we could talk about command philosophy. I related that Canadian orders would be much more detailed. His response was brief and telling: he asked three questions: "You are a major? You have been trained in reconnaissance? You understand my orders?" When I answered "Yes" to all three, he then asked, "What more do you need?"

This was my first exposure to Auftragstaktik[1]. When I returned to the Squadron, I described this interchange and then gave my own orders exactly the same way. We operated very successfully for over a week on those very brief orders.

This very simple approach to operations was also facilitated by BGen Dangerfield's command style. He had explained his approach to me at our initial meeting. Before reporting to the Div Recce Battalion, I attended 4 CMBG Orders, and other than returning once to backbrief BGen Dangerfield on my divisional tasks, I never spoke to him again face-to-face that first week.

1 Auftragstaktik (commonly translated as mission command) is a decentralized military command philosophy developed by the Prussian Army in the 19th century. Under this doctrine, a senior commander provides subordinate leaders with a clearly defined objective, a specific timeframe, and the necessary resources, but explicitly grants them the autonomy to plan and execute the mission independently.



Sgt Hunt and Cpt Hebert (c/s 60A) awaiting orders. RHQ Recce Troop would from time to time train with Recce Sqn.

When I reverted to Brigade command, he would find me once a day on the Brigade net, mid-afternoon generally, and tell me what he needed the next day – e.g. "Is the enemy defending the major obstacle 25km to the north?" That was usually the extent of his direction.

The Squadron would then focus on the task, bypassing everything else to orient on what the Commander needed to know. We were very successful operating in this way. Near the end of the exercise, we actually got on to the II Corps vital ground before the Corps Reserve and, using long-range divisional assets coordinated by my DS battery, were able to destroy most of the Corps Airmobile Brigade as they were touching down on their landing zones.

"Near the end of the exercise, we actually got on to the II Corps vital ground before the Corps Reserve and, using long-range divisional assets coordinated by my DS battery, were able to destroy most of the Corps Airmobile Brigade as they were touching down on their landing zones."

All this background is important simply to set the stage for what occurred in April, when a very competent and successful Recce Sqn had to park its Lynx and convert to tanks.

In April 1985, we deployed near Ansbach for the annual SNAKEBITE exercise where 444 Sqn's Light Observation Helicopters (LOH) worked with U.S. attack helicopters, in those days Cobras. We were a training aid, simulating a Warsaw Pact advance, so my grouping included half A Sqn to represent the main body. Near the end of the week, OC A Sqn (Maj Lais Barsauskas) flew up for a few hours to see his troops. As he exited the helicopter, he took me aside and told me the CO had just announced 4 CMBG was being augmented in the summer — essentially a subunit for all the major units and smaller bits for the minor units. Good news, except that because it was simpler to rotate in a Recce Sqn, we were being converted — immediately — to a tank squadron! The CO had put close-hold on his principal staff and OCs until he'd spoken to me Monday when I returned to garrison, but Lais thought I deserved a heads-up. So, I had a few days to think through what would be required. Before my SSM left for Lahr with the road party, I told him to have the Squadron ready to parade right after PT on Monday.

When I detrained in Lahr on Saturday, I phoned the CO to report we were back and he, without mentioning a topic, asked that I come to his office first thing on Monday. There he explained the requirement. Since I'd had time to think this through, I was ready to take over C Sqn (forward) personnel, about 30 crewmen and techs ably led by Capt Josh Lacroix, and their 19 Leopards[2]. And, more importantly, I had a plan to phase

2 At the time, C Sqn was the flyover squadron from CFB Gagetown.



conversion a troop at a time. This was probably what the CO was expecting because there really was only one way to do it efficiently. The only sticking point was that I said something like, "Of course. I'll only Snowball[3] whatever vehicles are operational" and was told, "No, you'll have to get everything off the airfield!" Not the answer I wanted, and to this day I don't know if that was the CO talking or the direction he received from the Commander.

Then I went on Squadron Parade and announced what was going to happen. Recce soldiers pride themselves on being different from and obviously better than tankers, so my first priority was to cushion what some (including me!) might see as an almost mortal blow in order to maintain the morale of the squadron. So, I accentuated the positive and the challenge. All ranks responded extremely well, and I don't recall a single negative being expressed by anyone.

"We were a very good squadron, with very good people, and the roughly two-month conversion from recce to tanks went off without a hitch."

Immediately after parade I brought C Sqn (forward) into the fold and gathered all my leaders to run the plan by them and refine it where required. Capt Leduc ran the normal day-to-day; Capt Lacroix identified all the tank-qualified folks, forming SHQ and four troops by balancing rank, skills and experience, and running some basic refresher training to confirm we were operational; Capt Brough looked after the ever-decreasing Recce Sqn until it was finally just a file cabinet, stores, and vehicles parked against the fence (except that they still had to run so we could Snowball them — we moved the two squadrons off the airfield

3 In 4 CMBG during the Cold War, a "Snowball" was a 24/7 continuous emergency alert and recall system. Its purpose was to rapidly summon off-duty soldiers back to their unit lines to prepare for a combat deployment.

ABOVE: Recce Sqn leaguer overlooking a German village. BELOW: Maj Greg Taylor leads Recce Sqn during the Leliefontein 1984 roll-past.





twice I think). We were a very good squadron, with very good people, and the roughly two-month conversion from recce to tanks went off without a hitch.

At this point it occurred to me that, probably for the first time in our history, I was simultaneously commanding two RCD squadrons. For a brief moment, I actually considered messaging C Squadron, Gagetown to request they send all the squadron memorabilia over to us, but common sense prevailed and the message never got drafted.

In June, the OC of the incoming Recce Sqn arrived, and I spent several days during my rotation week giving him a handover, including a day conducting a helicopter and ground recce of our General Defence Plan (GDP) position. BGen Dangerfield had reviewed and revised the GDP, and I wanted to ensure the incoming OC understood the ground, and why the Commander had agreed to my request to reinforce the squadron with eight TOW mounted on APCs. The rest of the squadron rotated in after I returned to Canada, and once Bill Brough gave them the files, including the GDP, and Al Mantel signed over the vehicles and kit, our conversion was complete. A few weeks later the 'new' C Sqn said goodbye to its recce roots and deployed to Munsingen and Hohenfels as tankers!

ABOVE: Recce Sqn running resupply.

BELOW: Recce Sqn setting up for a night in the field.

***Editor's Note**: In the 1980s, Greg Taylor had two tours in West Germany with 4 CMBG. His first tour he commanded B Squadron RCD, then the Brigade Reconnaissance Squadron. In 1987, for his second tour, he rotated the 8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's) into West Germany from Canada. He had two staff tours in Headquarters Special Service Force, the G1 and G3 Ops as a captain, and Chief of Staff as a major. He also served four years in NDHQ in Joint and then Army force development. He retired in 1995 while an instructor at the Canadian Forces College, Toronto. Following retirement, he worked for Emergency Management Ontario and Ontario Power's Nuclear Security Department. He then went on to consult, most notably being senior writer/controller for Exercise FINAL DRIVE at CLFCSC Kingston, and for the first and several subsequent Task Force Kandahar exercises. He and his wife Bonnie live in Kingston, Ontario.*





THE NOBLE CENTURION
ODE TO THE "AGONY WAGON"

By Dave Campagne

I joined the Army in 1963 and, in particular, the RCAC. Post-training, I became a member of the Royal Canadian Dragoons in Gagetown. As per protocol, my first three weeks at the Regiment were spent in the mess hall doing dishes, pot walloping, and cleaning floors.

For many years I was part of a tank crew both in Canada and Europe. When the tank of the day was replaced, I wrote an ode to the Centurion. For those who remember, enjoy.

ABOVE: RCD Centurion tanks leaving the Gagetown hangar lines for the training area in the mid-1960s.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: 1) Leliefontein Parade, CFB Gagetown, 1965. CO's tank with LCol W.T.E. Finan (saluting); loader and driver unknown. Lance Bearer is Sgt Les Raymond. Guidon Party is MWO Harry Leroy Ayerst with Sgt Art Barrett as the escort in the left scout car. 2) RCD Centurion crew on exercise in the Gagetown training area during the mid 1960s. L/Cpl Ambrose Campbell (with microphone) and Tpr Ken Doucette observing.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM ROW, LEFT: Cpl Mason (Gunner) and MCpl Hall (Crew Commander) doing gun checks on their Centurion tank in January 1974. (Library and Archives Canada Item ID number: 4619712)





THE NOBLE CENTURION

She replaced the Sherman Tank
Which was the thing to do
It served us well in the top rank
But time for something new

Long and sleek with gun to match
Twenty pounder tank mark five
Gun went beyond the driver's hatch
The class of fifty-five

Twelve in line did form the heart
Three gallons to the mile
Just pump and flip and press to start
She'd sit there and just smile

Double clutch five speeds ahead
Enough to curl your hair
Twenty tops the speed we dread
Come catch us if you dare

The gyros and the range drum set
The target came to view
The tension was so great and yet
I fired and I knew

Sabot, HESH and Smoke as well
Were loaded in the breach
To give them all a taste of hell
Beyond where they could reach

For many years she served us well
But as for those before
No time for us to sit and dwell
She's gone forever more

This poem is dedicated to those who knew Her well, fondly called Her the "agony wagon" and wore the Black Beret.

BELOW MIDDLE: Officer cadets at Royal Canadian Armoured Corps School prepare ammunition for loading into a Centurion tank at the Meaford Tank Range, 3 August 1967. (Library and Archives Canada Item ID number: 4746855)

BELOW RIGHT: RCD Centurion tank hangar in Gagetown. Exercise RIM ROCK. The flyover troop listens as LCol Finan briefs them on their fate for the next few days in the training area.









BUSINESS ARISING 2025–2026

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

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

Once a Dragoon, always a Dragoon!

Audax et Celer / Bold and Swift

Royal Canadian Dragoon Association Board of Directors

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

- Lance Wiebe: New Brunswick
- Dan Sicotte: Quebec
- Louis Lucier: Ontario
- Sterling Mercer: Ontario

ABOVE: During RV26 in Alliston, Ontario (12-14 June 2026), Colonel of the Regiment, MGen (ret'd) Steve Cadden briefs the RCD Association General Meeting on the situation with the Regiment and the Army in general.

RIGHT: Just another fine day to be a Dragoon! LCol Chloeann Summerfield, MGen (ret'd) James (Jim) R. Ferron, LCol Duaine Fetzner, and Gen (ret'd) Walter Natynczyk on 4 June 2026 for the Change of Command Parade at Garrison Petawawa.

- Randy Payne: Ontario
- Stephen Wright: Alberta

CHAPTER CHAIRS

- Thomas Skelding: Newfoundland and Labrador
- Dave MacLaren: Atlantic (NB, NS and PEI)
- Karl Kramell: Quebec
- Peter Atkinson : National Capital Region (NCR)
- Matt Robichaud: Upper Ottawa Valley
- Gavin Cross: Kingston
- Rosemary Nash: South Central Ontario (interim Chapter Secretary)
- Kathy Nayduk: Windsor, ON
- Gerry Olsen: Alberta
- Robert Black: British Columbia

RCD ASSOCIATION ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

(current as of 31 August 2026)

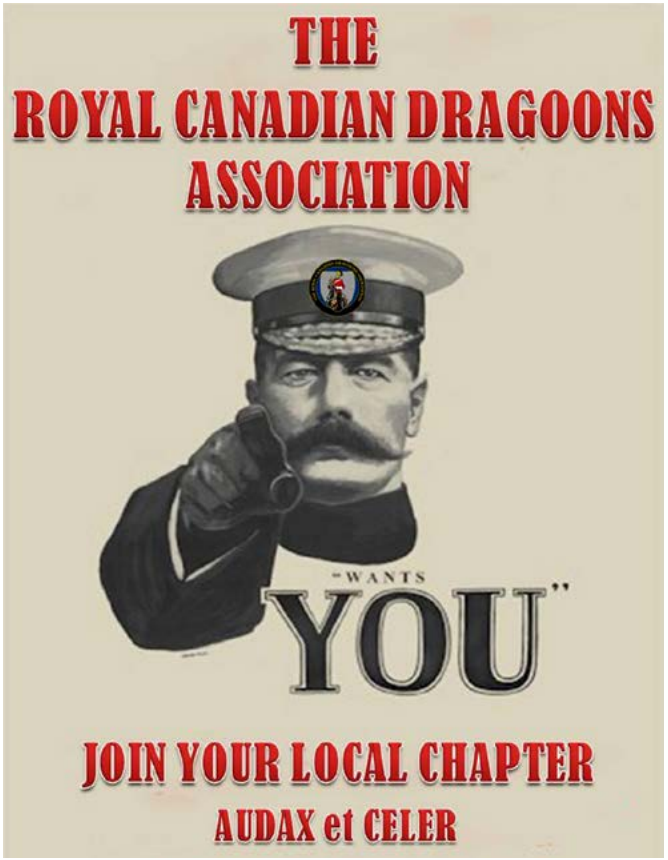
Chapter	Total
Outside Canada	3
British Columbia	32
Alberta	26
Windsor, Ontario	11
South Central Ontario	64
Upper Ottawa Valley	29
National Capital Region	66
Kingston	53
Quebec	7
Atlantic (NB, NS, PEI)	87
Newfoundland & Labrador	13
Grand Total	**391**

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





ABOVE: Larry Zaporzan, George Wallace, Chris LeBlanc, Jim Follwell and Tom Skelding enjoying a pre-lunch drink before the National Capital Region (NCR) 2025 Leliefontein celebration in Ottawa.





THE LAST TRUMPET CALL

FAREWELL FRIENDS

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

2025 (FROM 14 JULY 2025)

- Thomas Gordon CALLANDER
- Daryl E. SULLIVAN
- Eric Richard LUSK
- Howard Richard OWEN
- Roy John LYNK
- James Roy STEPHENSON
- Sheridan Lester PATTERSON
- Dennis ARSENAULT

2026 (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2026)

- Robert George MEATING
- Nickolas Andrew BRONSON
- Brian Robert BELL
- George A. PEPPERDINE
- Joseph Alexander Robert FOUGERE
- Gerald Valentine PITAWANAKWAT
- Louis Wayne "John" BOSH
- Frank SMITH
- Geoffrey Scott FRANKLIN
- Gontram "John" De CROMBRUGGHE
- Charles William HAPGOOD
- Sean MAHER
- John "Sonny" Francis LESLIE
- David DUNBAR
- Gary MARCHAND
- Matthew Gregory MACDONALD

ABOVE: Members of the NCR Chapter gathered for Capt Scotty Franklin's interment at the Beachwood National Military Cemetery on Friday, 3 July 2026. Left to right: Steve Young, Matt Robichaud (Ottawa Valley Chapter), Perry Wells, Mike Wionzek, Wally Bryan, Jim Ferron, Peter Atkinson, Georges Rousseau, Alan Bolster, and Jim Atkins. You can see Scotty jumping from a Lynx on the monitor to the right.

The ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS ASSOCIATION (founded in 1974)

Application for Membership

Applicant Name: _____

Spouse's/Partner's Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Tel: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail:_____

Membership Type as per The RCD Association By-Law No. 4: (☑ appropriate box)

o Regular (voting member) ☐ Life Member ☐ Annual (1 Jan - 31 Dec) Chapter: Select Preferred Chapter.

o Associate (non-voting)
- ☐ serving or former CAF members who were temp attached to the Regiment
- ☐ widows or widowers of Regular (LM/Annual) members
- ☐ widows or widowers of serving or former non-assoc members of the Regiment
- ☐ individuals who have a special interest in the Regiment

Membership Fees

o Life Member	$100.00
o Regular Annual/Associate (1 Jan - 31 Dec)	$ 20.00

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment Options:

a) Etransfer to: rcdassoc.dues@gmail.com
b) Cheque or Money Order payable to: The RCD Association
c) Mail your completed cheque or MO to: RCD Association Treasurer, 2044 Blessed Sacrament, Cornwall, ON, K6H 7N5

Application Submission Options:

a) Email application to: rcdassoc.admn@gmail.com
b) Mail your completed application to: RCD Association Membership, 81 Kennedy's Lane Ext, Holyrood, NL, A0A 2R0

Contact Information

- ☐ National Sec/Tres:
- ☐ Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter: Thomas Skelding, 81 Kennedy's Lane Ext, Holyrood, NL, A0A 2R0
- ☐ Atlantic Chapter: Lance Weibe, 46 Estabrooks Ave., Lincoln, NB, E3B 9K3
- ☐ Quebec Chapter: Karl Kramell, 483 rue Champlain, Hemmingford, QC, J0L 1H0
- ☐ National Capital Region Chapter: Peter Atkinson, 1343 Caserta Pl, Orleans, ON, K4A 3C1
- ☐ Ottawa Valley Chapter: Matt Robichaud, 251 Clemow Ave., Pembroke, ON, K8A 2E2
- ☐ Kingston ON Chapter: Gavin Cross, 30 Centre Street South. NAPANEE. ON, K7R 3E5
- ☐ South Central ON Chapter: Rosemary Nash, 184 Ravenscroft Road, Ajaz, ON, L1T 1Z7
- ☐ Windsor ON Chapter: Kathy Nayduk, 2131 Church St, Windsor, ON, N8X 1V8
- ☐ Alberta Chapter: Gerry Olsen, 10334-145 St, Edmonton, AB, T5N 2X7
- ☐ British Columbia: Bob Black, 8101 Lochside Dr, Saanichton, BC, V8M 1V1