



THE FALCON

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021



JOURNAL OF THE 48TH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA



ON THE COVER:

The 48th on parade at Varsity Stadium, during the Regiment's Centenary Year (1991), about to receive New Colours

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK:

Welcome to our second Virtual Falcon. Special thanks to all contributors: the CO, HCOL, RSM and many other serving members of the Active Battalion, also to Maj Brian McCue, CO of the SAC Cdt Corps, and to the following retired members – BGEN Greg Young, Col Geordie Elms and Maj George Pearce. Without all of your efforts and assistance, this Falcon would not have been possible.

BRAVO ZULU for all that each of you contributed!

DILEAS,

SG, CAPT (RET), EDITOR



A screen grab from the 48th Highlanders Virtual Act of Remembrance, 25 April 2021 [click here to see the video on YouTube.](#)



A screen grab from 48th Highlanders of Canada Pipes and Drums Virtual Toronto Maple Leafs Home Opener 2021, [click here to see the video on YouTube.](#)

SPRING 2021 - FEATURING:

- *The COs Message*
 - *Condolence Msg to Col in Chief*
 - *Active BN Exercises*
 - *Promotions and Awards*
 - *CO Ruck March Reflections*
 - *Saint Andrews Cadets*
 - *Norm Gogo turns 100!*
 - *MSGs From Holland*
 - *New Regt Assoc Update*
 - *Revisiting the Regt Centenary three Decades later*
 - *Update on 15th BN Hill 60 Monument*
 - *Profile of a Famous Highlander*
 - *A Personal Reflection on our Regiment*
 - *Remembering the 1st BN*
- And - much more about the Regiment - past and present.**

This issue of The FALCON produced by:



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If you would like to contribute to future issues, please e-mail your stories and pictures to:
falcon_newsletter@hotmail.com

Thank you to all those who made submissions to this issue.



PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE – PROVIDED BY A. Bernard, Maj B. McCue, BGen G. Young, Geordie Beal, Capt J. Lau, Capt. P. Vandertoorn, Capt. J. Malcolm, Lt B. Fernandez, Col G. Elms, HCol J. MacIntyre

A Message from the Commanding Officer

Greetings Highlanders.

I have issued a number of CO Messages to the Regiment, several blogs for the website, and several FALCON Bulletins this fall and winter all with the aim of keeping you up to date with what is going on in our Regiment. With that in mind, I'm going to try and keep my comments in this FALCON Newsletter short, but there are a few things I need to mention.

The first thing I want to address is the ongoing issues of misconduct in the CAF. The serving soldiers, NCOS and officers have already heard this from me, but the rest of the Regimental Family has not. You'll all have heard or read about the significant issues and problems that have occurred in the CAF recently – sexual misconduct by senior leaders, racist misconduct, and other forms of hateful misconduct. This isn't our culture. It has no place in the CAF; it has no place in the 48th Highlanders. You'll also have heard by now that the CAF is taking steps to deal with this problem:

- An independent external comprehensive review on harassment and sexual misconduct headed by Mde Louise Arbour; and
- Establishment of the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture led by LGen Carignan.
- At the Regiment, my expectation is that we continue to treat each other with respect – remember the key points:
- Treat everyone like they are members of your immediate family; and
- Do the right thing even when no one is watching.

If we continue to do these two things, we won't have the types of problems listed above, and the 48th Highlanders will remain a Regiment where everyone is valued, respected, feel that they belong, and are safe.

The Active Battalion has completed a full training year with COVID-19 restrictions in place. In the finest military tradition of "great coats on – great coats off", we have been doing a mix of in-person training at MPA, and remote / virtual training using a variety of electronic platforms. While we are still training, and are prepared to deploy soldiers if the need arises, it has been a challenging year for all the soldiers, NCOs, and officers. Infantry soldiers join to shoot, train in the field, go on course, and conduct tactical tasks with their Sections and Platoons. It's hard to practice field skills, Section Attacks, and tactical movement virtually.

- That said, we have accomplished a number of worthwhile activities:
- We have maintained contact with the soldiers, NCOs, and officers. At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the Regiment was 229 all ranks. When I submitted my SITREP in May, the C Clk reported that we are 230 all ranks. After 15 months of training restrictions, very limited field training, no Regimental ceremonial events, no Mess activity the Regiment is exactly where we were when the pandemic struck. I consider that a success, especially as no Recruiting Attraction events have been held as a result of COVID. This is largely a result of the work of the Sect Comds, Pl Comds and Pl 2ICs. The Recruiting Team has also done excellent work keeping in touch with the applicants in process.
 - We have continued to prepare soldiers for courses. There are 24 soldiers who are, or will shortly be on their Infantry qualification course, there are six Cpls on the Infantry Section Commanders Course, two MCpls on their Sgt qualification course, two 2Lts on their Infantry Platoon Commander Course and three OCdts on their Basic Military Officer Qualification – Army course. The Regiment continues to develop



Captain Darling and the CO in the field

- the personnel we have on strength, and is using the time we have to prepare and strengthen for when we can resume "normal" activities.
- We continue to maintain our key Regimental events. Similar to last year, we conducted the Act of Remembrance Ceremony virtually. We pre-recorded this event and watched the video as a Regiment on Sunday 25 April, 2021. Capt Lau and his team did an excellent job of recording this event, and specifically the significance of why this is so important to the Regiment. Several days earlier, on 23 April, we conducted Regimental History training for the Regiment with Col Beal and RSM leading the sessions. These two events were well received, and reinforced to everyone that we are part of something bigger, that the Regiment encompasses more than those who are serving, but that through our shared bonds, we are part of fabric that stretches back to 1891, and that we share the same beliefs, ethics, and values of service to the Country, comradeship, and helping those less fortunate than we are.
 - We have been able to conduct some field training. We conducted a one-day Advance to Contact FTX in November, complete with a visit from the Commander and Brigade Sergeant Major. We shot the Personal Weapons Test in April, and conducted a navigation FTX in May. While we are still limited to individual training, I am looking forward to the easing of training restrictions in the fall, and getting back to tactical training.

The Ruck March Challenge concluded on 09 May. You may have seen details about this in my blogs and on the Regimental social media platforms (Facebook & Instagram), but it's worth repeating. I was impressed with how much this event resonated with the Regiment and the Regimental Family. We had over 120 individuals participate – soldiers, NCOs, officers, retired members, the Cadets, the Honouraries, and even an IODE rep. This far exceeded my expectations. In total, we marched over 18,794 kms. Congratulations go out to MCpl Wang as the "Top Rucker". MCpl Wang marched an extraordinary 936 kms. Honorable mentions go out to Pte Di Grado with 897 kms. 4 Pl, B Coy won the team competition having marched 4,872 kms. Well done to everyone who participated in this epic event.

A couple of notable announcements:

- Col MacIntyre has been confirmed as the Honorary Colonel of the 48th Highlanders for a period of three years.
- Maj Morische has been confirmed as the CO (Designate) of the 48th Highlanders. The Change of Command will take place in October, 2021
- There are a number of notable members of the Regiment who are completing their service to the Regiment, the Crown and our Country. In no particular order they are:
- Pipe Major Iain Lang who will be retiring from the CAF after 34 years



CO, HCol, RSM (COVID Spacing)

- of service, and 15 years as the Pipe Major. MWO Lang and his wife will be retiring to Nova Scotia at some point in 2021. His exact retirement date is still to be confirmed
- WO Peter Ross who will be retiring from the CAF in July 2021 after 44 years for service. WO Ross is best known as the long serving WO & Sgt Mess PMC, his vast experience as a CQMS and as a Driver Instructor at the BSL.
 - Band SM John Murray who will be retiring from the CAF in July after 40 years of service. He has been a key part of the Military Band for years, and was vital in keeping this part of the Regiment together when the Mil Band was reduced to nil strength, and transitioned to a volunteer band. He is best known as the Bugler sounding the Officers Call, on parades, and playing Last Post and Reveille during countless Acts of Remembrance.
 - Capt Bill Darling who will also be retiring from the CAF in July 2021 after 40 years of service. Capt Darling was the RSM from 1999-2002. He subsequently went on to be RSM 32 CBG BSL, Bde SM 32 CBG, 4 Div Reserve SM, Army Reserve Training SM at CADTC. He then CFR'd and returned to the Regt as OC Admin Coy and OC Trg Coy.

Gentlemen – thanks for the hard work and dedication through the decades of your service. You have exuded the DILEAS Spirit for many, many years. Enjoy your retirements – they are well deserved, and we look forward to seeing you at dinners and Regimental events for many years to come.

The Unit has gone on three FTXs this spring – a range day in April, and a series of navigation, personal skills testing and ranges (both the annual Personal Weapons Test and Pairs Live Fire & Movement ranges) in May and June. There will be articles and photos on these FTX later in the FALCON, so I won't get into details, other than to say that it was very good to see soldiers in the field doing soldier activities using soldier equipment. Everyone who attended had a great time – there were lots of smiles, lots of laughing, lots of training. Infantry soldiers join because of the training and the challenges – remote / virtual training doesn't compare to doing the real thing in the field with the other soldiers. It was great to get out and train.

Changing gears, a bit - if you haven't already joined the Regimental Association, I'd encourage you to do this. There is no cost to join. Just go to the website (www.48thhighlanders.ca), go to Join Us, click on Association and enter your name and email address. This will keep you in touch with your Regiment both now, and after your uniformed service is complete.

I'll also put out my plug for Recruiting - If you know of any Canadian who meets the enrollment criteria, and is looking to serve the Nation, or are looking for something challenging and exciting to do, please point them in our direction, or give their contact information to the Orderly Room. We are looking to grow the Regiment, so your neighbours teenage children, the teenagers on the street – anyone who meets the recruiting criteria is welcome to join our Family.

In closing, I'd like to say thanks to the serving soldiers, NCOs and officers for the hard work through this past training year. We've had fits and spurts of in-person training coupled with months of remote

training. The fact that the Regiment is still as strong as were at the start of this pandemic is a testament to your dedication, leadership, and hard work. I'd also like to thank the Regimental Family your ongoing support and assistance. To those going on course, all the best - work hard and be successful. To those who are instructing, pass on all of your skill and experience to those entrusted to you. To those on task, work hard. To everyone, do your best to represent the Regiment. I hope you will be able to spend some time with family and friends this summer. Take some time to rest and recharge, and be ready to come back in September, ready for another training year.

All the best Highlanders. Stay safe. Stay Healthy.

DILEAS GU BRATH

R.A. ALKEMA
LIEUTENANT COLONEL
COMMANDING OFFICER

A Special Message to and from the Colonel-In-Chief - April 9, 2021

May It Please Your Majesty –

On behalf of the soldiers, Non-Commissioned Members, Officers of the 48th Highlanders of Canada, and all members of the Regimental Family, please accept our deepest condolences on the passing of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

We will keep you and your family in our thoughts and prayers during this time of loss and mourning. May he rest in peace.

DILEAS GU BRATH

R.A. ALKEMA
LIEUTENANT COLONEL
COMMANDING OFFICER
48TH HIGHLANDERS OF
CANADA

Dear Lieutenant Colonel Alkema,

Thank you for your thoughtful message of condolence on behalf of the 48th Highlanders of Canada.

I will ensure it is laid before Her Majesty in due course.

*Kind regards,
Poppy*

POPPY WHITWORTH | PSO
OPERATIONS CO-ORDINATOR
CORRESPONDENCE,
ANNIVERSARIES AND
PSO RECORDS | PRIVATE
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

ACTIVE BATTALION

SPRING EXERCISES

Written by Capt van der Toorn

With submissions by: MCpl MacLachlan, Cpl Forte, Cpl Navarro, Cpl Micallef, Hldr Hamilton, Pte(B) Downes, Pte(B) Cheung, Pte(B) Jackson



16-18 APRIL 2021 – EX HIGHLAND SKIRMISHER II - PWT 3

Force Health Protection measures continue to influence the training the Unit can lay on.

“This was a unique bit of training”

says Cpl Forte,

“we went up to Borden very early Saturday and we were home that evening”

which did mean a stupid-early o’clock rev for many.

“Still, it was great to get back behind the rifle.”

Cpl Micallef agrees,

“It was nice to finally be back putting rounds down range with the Unit after so long”.

For many, it had been about a year, so this was a great opportunity to kick some of the rust off their marksmanship principles while also meeting the CO’s intent of increasing IBTS qualifications.



“Ultimately, everyone was successful in shooting”

Cpl Forte continues,

“and it was great to see all my friends in person again.”

Sunday it was back to online training – no one’s favourite but valuable and necessary. As with so much during the pandemic, we can’t do what we want, we do what we can.

14-16 MAY 2021 – EX HIGHLAND HUSTLE I – NAV, IBTS AND PWT3

Just off Basic, Pte(B) Downes wasn’t sure what to expect. *“Having just finished my BMQ at Borden I felt at least slightly prepared for what was to come and was looking forward to the first Ex with my Unit since enlisting. I was expecting a 5k+ march from the unload point to the Biv site as per my BMQ, but happily surprised that we were dropped right at our Biv. Being awoken for the first time by the 48th Piper (MCpl Weir-McPherson) was a nice start to Saturday morning, never change that!”.*

Indeed, Ex HH I found the 48th back in CFB Borden, bivouacking at F Biv for our first night in the field since November 2020. *“As all soldiers are aware”* observes Hldr Hamilton *“nav is probably one of the most common skill fades experienced by troops. Mix in a decrease of in-person training due to a Pandemic and you’ve got a recipe for a pretty good ‘Soup Sandwich’.*” Reinforcing this point is Cpl Forte, *“the skill fade in navigation proved to not be just a thing of myth. Hijinks ensued. Our section got slightly lost, but thankfully we were able to correct it and save ourselves any more embarrassing moments”.* Hldr Hamilton also saw that things were soon put right *“with the hands-on mentorship and a little bit of patience shown by the Section leaders, ‘skill fade’ did just that – fade - and we as troops quickly found ourselves back in the saddle: finding grids, re-sectioning when off-course and using a variety of nav skills thought to be forgotten.”* Even experienced troops found the nav refresher useful after the layoff. *“Being able to brush up on my navigation via map & compass is never a negative experience if I feel I can learn something, which I always do”* says Cpl Navarro, adding *“though the experience may seem less ‘fun’ at the time.”*

Under a clear blue sky, these navigation skills were used to move the PTA, in sections, to the IBTS component of Ex HH I, which were stands consisting of C6, C9, M203, M72, Shotgun and others – “the stations after every nav leg was a cool idea” thought Pte(B) Downes “although they were mainly for trained personnel only”. Untrained troops also found value in visiting the stands: “I got to do things I haven’t done before” says Pte(B) Cheung, “things like snap shooting, handling the C9, as well as learning some of the hand signals used for navigation. As a Pte(B), I feel that these field Ex’s have provided a lot of valuable information that will greatly aid me when I do my DPI course next month.”

With RST, courses and taskings starting, some soldiers needed to step up into unfamiliar territory, including MCpl MacLachlan, who noted “for many including myself, this Ex had opportunities to receive

exposure to new and unfamiliar roles. Some Highlanders had the opportunity to lead a section for the very first time, where they were able to mentor Junior members during navigation assessments.” Echoing that sentiment, Cpl Navarro felt that “one new experience I welcomed was being in a leadership role with actual troops, having the Pre-DP1 folks enriched the training experience.” However, leadership comes with responsibility and “I did feel at times that the skill & knowledge gap turned the experience more into ensuring an engaging and comprehensive learning experience for the Pre-DP1 troopers than for us, though contributing to that delivery was rewarding in a different way”.

At the stands, there was great pleasure at being able to handle support weapons once again, like old friends. “I enjoyed re-familiarizing myself with all the weapons” remarked Cpl Forte, “I hadn’t had much of a chance to, with in person training being limited, so it was a nice refresher.” Upon arrival at the M203 stand, Cpl Novak, no-doubt speaking for many, simply said “WHOOOW!” With challenging terrain and timings, some stands had to be collapsed and “at the end of the day a few groups were pushed through stands at the biv because they didn’t make it during the day” recalls Cpl Micallef.

Sunday was a PWT3 range for those still needing it, and snap-shooting drills for those who didn’t. Even on a static range, opportunities to demonstrate leadership present themselves. “The following day was a PWT3, and I had the opportunity to be in charge of the targets for the shoot” recalls Cpl Forte. “Having to coordinate Highlanders to set up everything quickly, and raise and lower targets precisely when needed, was a great experience for me - I got to show some leadership!”

An efficient range made room for more interesting applications. “Despite the relaxed atmosphere, I was motivated to complete my qualification” remembers Cpl Navarro, “in part due

to the ‘carrot’ that was the snap shooting component scheduled to occur at the end of the day, time and ammo permitting.” With dry training and rehearsals led by MCpl Dekking, “This felt like a great additional component as it geared my recently polished skills towards contexts more rooted in reality.” Adds Cpl Micallef “I know a lot of guys that were there that weekend never had an opportunity to do that on a range”.

Overall, says Hldr Hamilton “It was clear to all Highlanders in attendance, that our leadership had created a well thought out FTX. It not only challenged us as soldiers, it made us uncomfortable in the unknown, and through our discomfort, we regained skills which aided us to overcome and adapt and in turn lead to success”.



ACTIVE BATTALION

04-06 JUNE – EX HIGHLAND HUSTLE II – NAV, IBTS AND PAIRS LIVE

“Water boiled in the canteens” remarked one Pte, and indeed it was hot - for August on Mars let alone early June in Borden. But that Highlander Spirit was much in evidence: “having a sense of humour is always a benefit on an exercise like this - humour, and the ability to knock back liter after liter of water.” Also in evidence was a noticeable increase in navigational skills. “Saturday nav went much better than in May, I think people were getting back into the groove and we reached our destinations with pretty high accuracy and effectiveness” according to Pte (B) Downes, and from Cpl Forte:

“despite the heat and seemingly endless distances covered, our section’s navigation skills were top notch.”



“The stands at every nav leg were also pretty cool this time” according to Pte Downes, and consisted of ETHAR, run by our Engineer colleagues, VCP/PW run by Sgt Kowalenko, and OP run by Lt Fernandes and MCpl MacLachlan who reported:

“I helped lead a stand where I was able to mentor Highlanders on basic soldier skills including camouflage and concealment, judging distance and employing various types of optics in a tactical environment.”

For Pte(B) Jackson, on his first Ex with the 48th, the effort was well received,

“I was fortunate to participate in my first exercise with the Regiment, Ex HIGHLAND HUSTLE II. On this exercise myself and my section were able to develop our core field craft skills such as navigation, camouflage & concealment, and obstacle crossing. I believe this not only helps better prepare Highlanders for success on career courses, but also develops a strong esprit de corps for the Regiment.”



For Hldr Hamilton, the VCP/PW stand stood out. “For me, I found it to be the most engaging. The stand followed an almost 5km ruck, where at 0800hrs the temperature was already 27 degrees. The intent of this stand was to provide soldiers with the skills to successfully set up a VCP, and then search and detain suspicious vehicles and occupants. Once Sgt Kowalenko felt both lessons had been grasped, we were then allowed to run a mock scenario, using real vehicles and drivers. From start to finish this proved to be engaging on every level and for a hands-on learner like myself, only cemented the teachings deeper into my memory bank.”

Many thought that the Engineers put on a good show.

“I think one of the most interesting things about the June Ex was the ETHAR stand and learning about the different kinds of explosives and the procedures around it”.

Pte(B) Cheung went on to say what many felt, that “one thing I found challenging was the heat. I didn’t anticipate it to be this bad. But now I know how to take heat into consideration the next time I go into the field.” At least it wasn’t raining, eh? Except for that 20 minutes at 0300hrs on Sunday morning, which did nothing to lower the fire index as it turned out.

After supper, there was a rehearsal for the Sunday pairs live range, followed by night nav iterations. “Once again, our section proved quite adept at nav” according to Cpl Forte “and we reached our points with ease. I personally led us back to the biv site, and we all got into our sleeping bags. I fell asleep in roughly 3 seconds.”

“The morning came early” with MCpl Brown piping rev at 0600hrs “and the 48th prepared for a pairs live fire. During COVID, this isn’t something many of us have had the chance to do recently” Cpl Forte points out. In fact, it had been well over a year, so safety was paramount. “We finished off with Live Fire Pairs” says Hldr Hamilton, “this is a set of training where we as soldiers could work



with our Fire Team Partners and nail down a crucial pillar within the Infantry structure, ‘Shoot, Move and Com-municate’.” Pte(B) Jackson feels that “this weekend exercise was a valuable learning experience for my section, and great experiences such as having bagpipes for morning reveille are memories we won’t soon forget.”

Unfortunately, the heat index rose to EXTREME PLUS by 1145hrs and check fire was called as per Borden Range Control SOPs. As a result, not everyone was able to shoot, but a Highlander can always find the silver lining.

“I was unable to shoot during the June FTX Range day” says Cpl Navarro “however the TOETs were very helpful in ensuring safety was maintained.”

Summing up the spring 2021 Ex’s, Cpl Navarro “found that training in this context with our Unit made for a great bonding experience with my fellow soldiers, though that may be skewed by the nature of the many months of uncertain social restrictions we’ve experienced so far.” Cpl Forte feels that

“this FTX was a fantastic way to end the training year!” and many I spoke with agreed.



HONOURS, PROMOTIONS AND AWARDS

PROMOTIONS AND AWARDS 2021



CAPT TO MAJ

Laurella

LT TO CAPT

van der Toorn
Malcolm

CWO TO CAPT

Kwok

OC DT TO 2LT

Belaglazov
Khan

MCPL TO SGT

Turner, B
Thomas

PTE/CPL TO MCPL

Bender

PTE TO CPL

Brown	Bennett
Bennel	Illes
Micallef	Spratt
Li	Navarro
Fuentes	Finn
	Williams

RECRUIT TO PTE

Pte DiGrado
Pte Macheachern
Pte Walker
Pte Price (Chevron only)

CANADIAN FORCES DECORATION

Sgt Haley: CD 1

SOUTH AFRICA TROPHY

4 Platoon, B Coy (Pre DP1)

CARPENTER AWARD

Master Corporal Blair

EATON AWARDS

Lt Fernandes – Jr Officer
Sgt Kowalenko – Sr NCO
MCpl Zasidko – Jr NCO

JTFC COIN

Corporal Mayer
Corporal Ro

BRIGADE GROUP COMMENDATION

Cpl Berto
MWO Lang

COs COMMENDATION

Band Sergeant Major Murray
Corporal Navarro
Corporal Forte

AINSWORTH DYER AWARD

Hldr Hamilton

OP LASER CERTIFICATE

MCpl Wang

TOP RUCKER

MCpl Wang - 936 kms

CERTIFICATE

BSM Murray
WO Ross



Hldr Navarro promoted to Corporal



MCpl Thomas being promoted to Sergeant



Bennett and Li Promotion



Recruits receiving their Pte Chevron and their Balmorals



CWO Kwok promoted to Captain



Lt Malcolm promoted to Captain



MCpl Zasidko receiving the Eaton Jr NCO award



MCpl Blair receiving the Carpenter award



Hldr Hamilton receiving the Cpl Ainsworth Dyer Award

Hldr Hamilton's reflection on receiving the Dyer Award:

There are 3 members of the CAF that have inspired my journey as a soldier and this is dating back to 2014 when I originally made effects to join the Reg Force, however back then, things were all done on paper and my application was lost. These 3 individuals are, MCpl (Ret) Jody Mitic, Cpt (Ret) Rob Semrau and Cpl Ainsworth Dyer. To me at least, these three men embodied what it meant to be a Canadian Solider, all owning different assets of the word. It's not a card I play often, because I am a true believer that skill, dedication, passion and drive go so much further then ones skin color. But I would be remiss to not admit that Cpl Dyer's face was what solidified to me that skin color was just that, a color and that the notion of, "Black people don't do this", was just that, a notion. I take the first time I saw Cpl Dyer's memorial photo in the back of head and remind myself daily, "Because I can, I must."

Winning an award named and inspired after him, humbles me deeply and though my career is so far from being over. To have a full circle moment that includes his honor, I only hope that I continue to drive my mind and body, earning the right to have been a recipient of the Dyer Award.

DILEAS GU BRATH.

HAMILTON, J.

More photos of promotions & awards can be found online at 48thhighlanders.ca, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/48thhighlanders) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/48thhighlanders)

WALKING WITH THE GHOSTS
OF THE 15TH BN CEF / 1ST BN
48 HIGHRS

by LCol Alkema

Back in October 2020, when the COVID-19 Pandemic was only 6-months old, Army Reserve soldiers in the GTA were allowed to conduct some limited in-person training.

After a spring and summer of very limited training, and the indication of more of the same throughout the fall, we were looking for ways to engage the soldiers, build fitness, cohesion, camaraderie, and Regimental esprit-de-corps.

At that time, Lt Brian Fernandes hit on the idea of a Ruck March Challenge. The various Pls in the Regt would be challenged to see which of them could march the furthest as a Team. As we were approaching 11 November, our Regiment’s past was on my mind. I recalled that the 15th Bn marched into Germany as part of the British Army of Occupation in late 1918 before being repatriated home and demobilized on 09 May 1919.

Looking at Blue DILEAS with Google Maps open it was fairly easy to determine that the Bn marched more than 350kms in their trip from Somain, France to Engelskirchen, Germany, and subsequently back to England, Halifax and ultimately Toronto before being demobilized.

- We decided that the Ruck March would have the following criteria:
- Be 350kms in distance – this was the Gold Level. There was a lower distance of 250kms which was the Silver Level
 - Was a weighted march with a minimum weight of 50lb which was to be carried in a rucksack or day pack.
 - The distance would be tracked using STRAVA – an online app which tracked distance, time, elevations, and other miscellaneous data.
 - Was open to the Active Regiment, Cadets, Former Members, and members of the Regimental Family.

As CO, I knew that I had to participate – and not on the periphery. I needed to be fully engaged, with the result that I marched over 700km. Assuming that a soldier marches at 6kms / hour that equates to about 120 hours, which gave me lots of time to think – and most of the officers and NCOs know, most of my thinking is about the 48th Highlanders.

So, here are 48 thoughts that I’d like to share with you:

1. Those guys in the 15th Bn (the Great War) and 1st Bn (Second World War) were a bunch of hard and tough soldiers. I wore polypropylene long johns, excellent boots, and went back to a warm home, a shower, and dry clothes when I was done. They wore wool – long johns, uniforms, great coats. Their marches ended in the trenches, in a drafty barn, or a field bivouac. They did this in the heat of summer and the cold of winter for years on end. I’m much more aware of, and impressed by, how fit, tough (both mentally and physically) and resilient those soldiers were.

2. 700 kms is a long way – but broken into bite sized pieces, it’s

achievable. A good life lesson – even for me. Every task can be broken down into smaller, manageable pieces.

3. I’m very proud of all participants – those who completed the 350kms, and those who did what they could, given their circumstances, to help their Pls in the competition. There were over 120 participants.

4. This challenge really resonated with the soldiers – past, present, and future. Former soldiers and NCOs marched. CADETS marched. The Honouraries marched. Even the IODE had a marcher. This event really resonated with, and bonded, the Regiment and the Regimental Family.

5. There are some really good people in Orangeville and area. Multiple times vehicles stopped, and I was asked if I needed a ride. When I told them that I was on a training march, I was thanked for my service and wished a good day.

6. Speaking of really good people – Ruth (my wife) is the best thing that ever happened to me. She’s been supportive of me since we met. During the Ruck March Challenge, she tolerated me getting out of bed at 0430 during the competition with the Linc & Weld R. She tolerated me coming home late for dinner to get a march in. She tolerated after dinner ruck marches. She tolerated all my winter kit in the basement. She put up with Saturday and Sunday marches when I should have been doing some work around the house. Thanks Babe – I love you.

7. It’s mid-May as I write this. We spent a day on the range at the end of April, completed our Regimental History weekend that same month, and just finished a navigation / IBTS / ranges FTX. I’ve noticed that there are some MCpls in the Regiment who remind me of a young MCpl Alkema – they love the Regiment, and the soldiers. They are interested in our history, and they want the soldiers to be keen, trained, and professional. They are skilled, and they are the future of our Regiment. I know who you are, I see what you do. Keep up the good work.

8. The participants marched regardless of the weather – beautiful sunny days, snowstorms, rain, cold, wind. During the day and at night. MCpl Boyden has completed some of his marches at midnight. I had some excellent marches walking on crunchy snow on a crisp and clear winter morning. I also had good marches on damp rainy evenings.

9. We used STRAVA as our tracking app. All marches had to be logged on STRAVA to count. This was a great tool – it let you add comments and photos. Even better was the ability to “follow” other marchers and see how they were doing. You could give a “thumbs up” or leave them a comment. We did this for 6 months, with 120 participants.



In all that time, I only saw positive comments. All the participants were supportive, recognizing the effort that we were all making, encouraging, and cheering each other on. Not once did I see a negative comment. It was great to see the support members of the Regiment had for each other.

10. The Army teaches “the 10 Principles of Leadership”, and the most important is “Lead by Example”. We saw this in action during the Ruck March Challenge. There were some very impressive marches, and weeks of marches by NCOs. Teams of MCpls went out and marched together. Not to be outdone, so did teams of Jr Officers. MCpl Wang consistently went out for long marches at least once a week. One didn’t

have to look too close to see that a number of NCOs and officers who did lead their soldiers by example in this event. Well done.

11. Marching in the rain and snow isn’t much fun. Those soldiers in the 15th Bn and 1st Bn were tough.

12. We have some smart and creative soldiers in the Regiment. Cpl Morrell figured out a route that spelled “48th”, and posted a photo of the STRAVA Screen Shot for us all to see. Might be the most complex route in the Challenge – I just marched in straight lines....

13. There was no need for a lot of cold weather kit. Marching for a couple of hours with a 50 lb ruck will keep you warm. I still swear by my old British Army wool sweater, and American jacket liner.

14. Thanks to BGen Young for the use of the trigger mitts. They were the right gloves for the event – especially in Jan and Feb. I’ll get them back to you after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

15. I invited our 12-year-old son to join me, with the goal of marching 250kms. He started out full of enthusiasm - every time I did a 5Km route, he’d join me. We had some excellent conversations, and I really enjoyed that we got to spend this time together. He did more than 75kms. Then winter hit in earnest, and it wasn’t fun anymore. He stopped coming along, I missed him, and my 5 km routes weren’t as fun any longer.

16. The phone calls I received during my marches were a nice mental diversion, and they made the time (and kms) go by quickly.

17. I did all of my kms on sidewalks, bike paths and the gravel shoulders of roads – nice easy walking. According to “Blue DILEAS”, the 15th Bn did a lot of their marching on Belgian cobble stones. I can only imagine marching all day on cobblestone roads wearing hobnailed boots. Blue DILEAS talks that this happened on the march into Germany. Man, those guys were tough.

18. I remember the forced marches we did on my GMT-R / GMT-B / TQ 1 Inf Crse which culminated in a 25-Mile Route March done at night.



I recall how we used get a 10-minute break after 50 minutes of marching. As my Ruck March Challenge distances got longer, I found myself taking a 5-minute break every hour. Dropping my ruck for just a few minutes every hour meant that I was able to go much further than if I didn’t take a break.

19. Similar to the previous item, when I started the Ruck March Challenge, I would constantly check my “minutes per km” on STRAVA. I found that I was trying to go faster and faster. Similar to what the 1st Bn found in England (see Red DILEAS, pg 160), for anything over 5kms, I found that marching at a “Highland Pace” got me to finish my distance at the same time as if I’d pushed real hard.

20. I mentioned that I marched about 120 hours; or about three work weeks using a 40-hour work week. That’s a lot of time that I was away from the kids, especially because I had to do this outside of my regular work and my army time. This came out of my “free time”. But they never complained about my absences. In fact, they’ve never complained about the time I’ve spent with the Regiment. We talk about our service, but I often forget that the time I give to the Regiment comes out of the time I could have spent with them. Thanks “Blessings”! I appreciate how much you’ve given up supporting me.

21. The Regiment has some excellent Sr NCOs. For example, Sgt Kowalenko is excellent at coordinating with Ops to ensure all our newly enrolled soldiers get loaded on BMQ and DP 1 Courses.

22. There were times when I met the “good idea fairy” (as the DCO likes to say) on my marches, and just had to call the RSM, DCO, Ops O or an OC. Thanks for taking calls when those ideas came to mind.

23. There was a time when I hated ruck marches – on my TQ 1 Course, Thursday morning Ruck March PT in 1 RCR along the Thames River in London, and the 13 km BFT. Sgt Kowalenko and I still talk about the Friday night 13km BFT in the freezing cold rainstorm when I was OC B Coy – that might be the worst Friday night training I ever did. But throughout the Ruck March Challenge, I come to enjoy them to the point that they are going to be part of my fitness program long after the Ruck March Challenge is done.

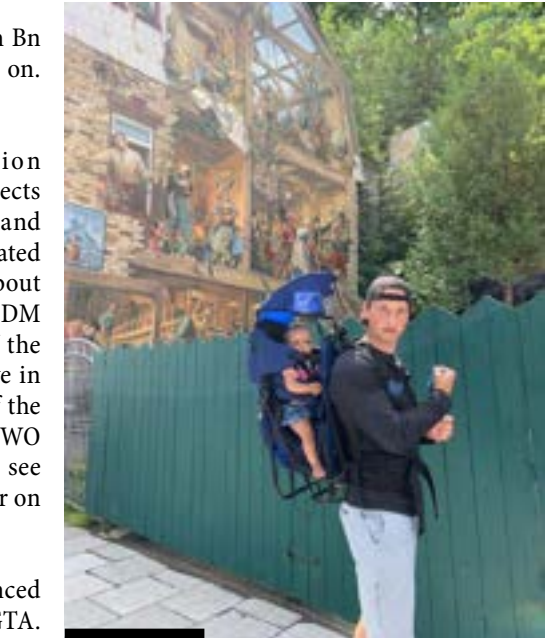
ACTIVE BATTALION



MWO Hanson and IODE member Kirsty Armit



Cpl Navarro



MCpl Boyden

24. The Regiment is fortunate to have a good team of leaders. We have some great MCpls and Sgts, but I'm specifically thinking about the BHQ pers and the key leaders – DCO / Ops O / OCs / RSM / CSMs / PMaj / DMaj / Ops WO / C Clk / Adj / Padre. I know your jobs. I know how hard you work, and I know that I'm not always easy to work for. Thanks for what you do – the Regiment is fortunate to have you, and you do great work. Thanks for your efforts

25. Regardless of how much you ruck march, it is hard on the body. No matter how much you stretch, change your socks, look after your feet, keep your boots clean and well oiled (polished) parts of your body are going to break or hurt. I heard of major blisters, pulled hamstrings, joint pain. Thankfully the most significant injury to me was a couple of lost toenails.

26. Not many people in Orangeville walk in the winter, meaning that the bike paths aren't cleared of snow and ice. I stopped grumbling about that in my head when I got to thinking about the soldiers of the 15th Bn and 1 Bn and the paths and trails they walked on. Those guys were tough.

27. The Regimental Association Restructuring and Website / Social Media projects have been worthwhile. MWO Dave Boggiss and Cpl Jim Tate – both retired members participated in the Ruck March Challenge, and heard about it through social media. I got a Facebook DM message from MCpl Mark Willis (Ret) out of the blue. It turns out that both Dave and Mark live in Calgary – so we now have a Calgary Branch of the Regimental Association. I'm thinking that WO Bill Kingston (Ret) is out that way too. I can see the "Calgary Branch" getting together for a beer on Remembrance Day or something similar.

28. 32 CBG and the Regiment experienced a far lower rate of COVID-19 cases than the GTA. This shows that our soldiers used the PPE and the drills that were put in place during this persistent COVID-19 environment, and made me think about the soldiers in the 15th Bn who lived in a persistent gas environment for years. A different threat, but similar PPE. We are closer to our past than we sometimes think.

29. Contrary to my observation of Point 5, there are people at the other end of the spectrum. I almost got run over 3 times by distracted drivers who were on their phones while making left turns as I was in the crosswalks with a green light. Good thing I still have my "army voice" as the kids call it. And I think that dodging a couple of cars is easier than dodging an artillery barrage.

30. Humping a ruck on sidewalks and road shoulders is far easier than humping a ruck in the field. I know this as a fact; I've done lots of both.

31. When I was preparing my ruck for the challenge, I used 50 lbs of gravel put into 5 sandbags, which I then wrapped in gun-tape. The first couple of times my shoulder and back got sore, but a funny thing happened – the more I marched, and longer my marches got, the lighter my ruck felt. Sometime in January it got to the point where I hardly noticed the ruck as I was marching.

32. There were a lot of people who thought I was crazy. They'd shake their heads as I passed them, or passed by them. And I overheard more than a couple of comments: "Do you see that guy? That's nuts."

33. The Regiment is fortunate to have some very smart and dedicated young officers. They are keen to learn their trade, and strive to be good Platoon Commanders, Company 2ICs and OCs. They work hard and are open to suggestions, recommendations, and direction. More importantly, they are learning to work with their NCOs, and use the knowledge, skill, and experience that those NCOs have.

34. My appreciation of the sacrifices that our veterans made so that I can live in a great country was constantly reinforced. Did I mention that those soldiers were tough?

35. I've had some excellent mentors as an NCO and as an officer. Many were from our Regiment, and many were from other Regiments. Some were from other armies. I'm not going to list them here; the list would be too long. Also, if I name one, I'd have to name them all - for sure I'd forget to mention one of them. But thank you to each and every one of them for helping me throughout my time in uniform. You are not forgotten to me.

36. Our Regimental Family is just that – a family. One's time with the 48th Highlanders doesn't end when uniformed service ends, it just takes on a different tone. We still wear the same cap badge; we still love the same Regiment. We are extremely fortunate to have the Regimental Association that works for the betterment of the Regiment, and supports the soldiers who are serving. I see the adage of "Once a Highlander,



Always a Highlander" in action on a constant basis.

37. Cell phones don't work in the cold. I had a couple of times where my cell phone died because the battery got too cold. Those resulted in a couple of "free" kms that didn't get clocked on my weekly distance in Strava. It made me wonder if we are relying too much on devices that use batteries. I also learned that touch screens don't work in the rain. Lesson – don't put your devices in an outer pocket.

38. Man, those soldiers from the 15th Bn and 1st Bn were tough.

39. I never realized how many hills there are in the Orangeville area. Every route that I took had several significant hills. It made me think constantly about the 1 Bn climbing the hills in Italy – especially the guys that I knew: Herb Pike, Gord Outhwaite, Wally Moore, and the rest guys from the CSA when I was a young Sgt.

40. COVID has impacted the training that I wanted the Regiment to do. It cancelled an OUTCAN with 48 IBCT, it cancelled a significant collective training FTX that we were putting together, it has cancelled or postponed several training events that we're intending to do with 1 RCR. That said, the StAR task to 1 RCR is a great task for us. CO 1 RCR wants this to work as much as we do. I expect that good things will develop with this relationship as we come out of COVID and training opportunities open up.

41. As the CO, I've been blessed to have two excellent RSM's - RSM Kwok and RSM Reesor. Both have their own unique skills and traits. Both are dedicated to the soldiers and to the Regiment. Both are hardworking and committed. I know the time and effort they put in. And both have talked me off the ledge a few times when I've gotten frustrated. Thanks to the both of you.

42. I was pleasantly surprised by how well the Regimental History training and Act of Remembrance Event were received. Soldiers always enjoy learning about the Regiment that they belong to. But seeing how deeply these two events resonated with them, and how they have embraced our past was gratifying. Seeing how much the soldiers feel pride in our past makes me feel good about our future.

43. We have an excellent group of MCpls. This group might be the most "depth" we have in the Regiment. And they are in every trade we have. Several are already qualified to Sgt. Several more are on the road to being qualified Sgt. In a couple of years, the Regiment will have a very strong, very deep and every experienced WO & Sgts' Mess. They truly will be the backbone of the Regiment for the foreseeable future. I'm excited about this. Couple this with the young officers I mentioned earlier, and our future looks good. Now all we need are some more soldiers....

44. Speaking of RSMs, the Regiment has had a long run of very successful RSMs going back for thirty years:

CWO Barnes . . . 1981 - 1984 . . . Toronto Militia District Sergeant Major. Retired as a CWO.

CWO Goldman. . . 1984 - 1991 . . . First RSM 48 Highrs to CFR. Worked at the BSL and the G1 Branch at the HQ. Retired as a Capt

CWO McGuffin . . . 1991 - 1996 Possibly the best qualified RSM we ever had – Adv Anti Armour / MG / Comms / AVGP / BPara / Dvr Wh. One of the first reservists to deploy to Germany. Deployed to the Arctic. And incidentally, the scariest WO I ever saw. Retired as a CWO.

CWO Gillie 1996 - 1999 CFR. CO 25 Fd Amb. Retired as a Maj

CWO Darling. 1999 - 2002 32 CBG SM / 4 Div Res SM / CADTC Res SM. CFR - now a Capt with the Regt

CWO Alkema. 2002 - 2006 CFR. CO

CWO MacIntyre . . . 2006 - 2010 RSM 32 CBG BSL. Retired as a CWO

CWO Joseph 2010 - 2013 CFR. ADC to LG of ON

CWO Murphy. 2013 - 2017 Now RSM of his fourth Unit (Lorne Scots / 32 CBG BSL / 48 Highrs / 2 IR R C); and 4 Div MCO Career Mgr.

CWO Kwok 2017 - 2020 CFR. Coy 2IC at 32 CBG BSL

This is an impressive run of very successful RSMs that speaks to the strength of the NCOs in the Regiment.

45. I've been very, very fortunate to be part of the 48th Highlanders. I love the "relaxed formality" of our Highland Regiment. I can't imagine having stayed this long in any other Regiment. I have spent my entire adult life here. I have made my best friends here. The Regiment has shaped me into who I am. I'm very blessed to have found my home with the 48th Highlanders of Canada.

46. Being the CO of our Regiment is the best job I've ever had in the Army. I used to say that my time as a Military Advisor in Sierra Leone was the best job I ever had, but that lasted about three weeks into being the CO. This is absolutely the best job that I've ever had in the Army – by far!

47. The Regiment that I grew up in, that I've loved, that I've sweated for, and worked for is in good hands going forward. The officers, NCOs and soldiers share our history, our traditions, our culture. They understand and believe in our ethos and our values. When I was a young soldier, I saw the looks in our veteran's eyes – wondering if I, and my generation would be capable of living up to our Regiment's past, or if we'd mess it up. I must admit that I've had some similar thoughts in the past. But not anymore – I'm confident that our Regiment will continue to be proud, strong, and effective as we move into the future.

48. Thanks to the ghosts of our Regiment who let me march with them. They gave me lots of time to think as I marched in their shadow.

DILEAS GU BRATH

RA ALKEMA
LCOL
CO

ACTIVE BATTALION

ACTIVE BATTALION

THE 48TH RUCK MARCH CHALLENGE SUMMARY FROM THE RSM

On 13 November 1918, two days after the Armistice to end WWI, the 15th Battalion CEF marched out of Somain, France and headed for Germany as part of the Allied Army of Occupation. Subsequently, after much marching, the Bn was demobilized in Toronto on Friday, 09 May, 1919. In all, from Armistice Day, to departing Europe, the 15th Battalion marched more than 350km across Belgium, France and Germany.

During this period of restricted in person training, and to keep resiliency of our current Highlanders robust, we embarked on a Unit wide Ruck March Challenge to march 350 total kms between 13 Nov 2020 and 9 May 2021. In total 122 Highlanders participated with 27 reaching the 350km goal and 4 reaching a mark of 250 kms. There were participants from all subunits including the P&D, Cadets, retired Highlanders and the IODE and they were rucking in all parts of Canada, the US and Europe. Important to note is that this challenge was done with the safety of all participants in mind: no soldier was injured and no soldiers spread Covid-19.

MCpl Wang was our top rucker reaching an astounding total of 935.71 kms. Congratulations MCpl! She was closely followed by Pte Di Grado who rucked 896.99 kms. The CO came in third reaching a total of 712.12 kms. Other notable achievements include Retired Doug Ross (brother of WO Peter Ross) who rucked 661.63 kms and came in fourth, Cadet Sgt Zaslov who rucked 366.18 kms (16th place), IODE member



MCpl Wang



Pte Di Grado



(48th Cadet) Sgt Zaslov

Kirsty Armit (spouse of MWO Hanson) who rucked beside him the entire time and reached 447.04 kms (8th place) and HLCOL Darling who rucked 362.85 kms (19th place).

The top Platoon was 4 Platoon from B Coy. These are our young Pre DP1 Highlanders. They collectively rucked 4,871.88 kms. 2 Platoon from A Coy was close behind with 4,142.86 kms. Overall, the 122 Highlanders who took part rucked over 18,794 kms.

MCpl Wang will receive the top prize and serious bragging rights. All marchers who reached the 350km goal will receive a Gold certificate of completion and those who reached 250kms will receive a Silver certificate of completion.

Special thanks goes to Lt Fernandes for spearheading this challenge and managing all of the posts and data collection.

Well done to all who participated. You are all truly Dileas.

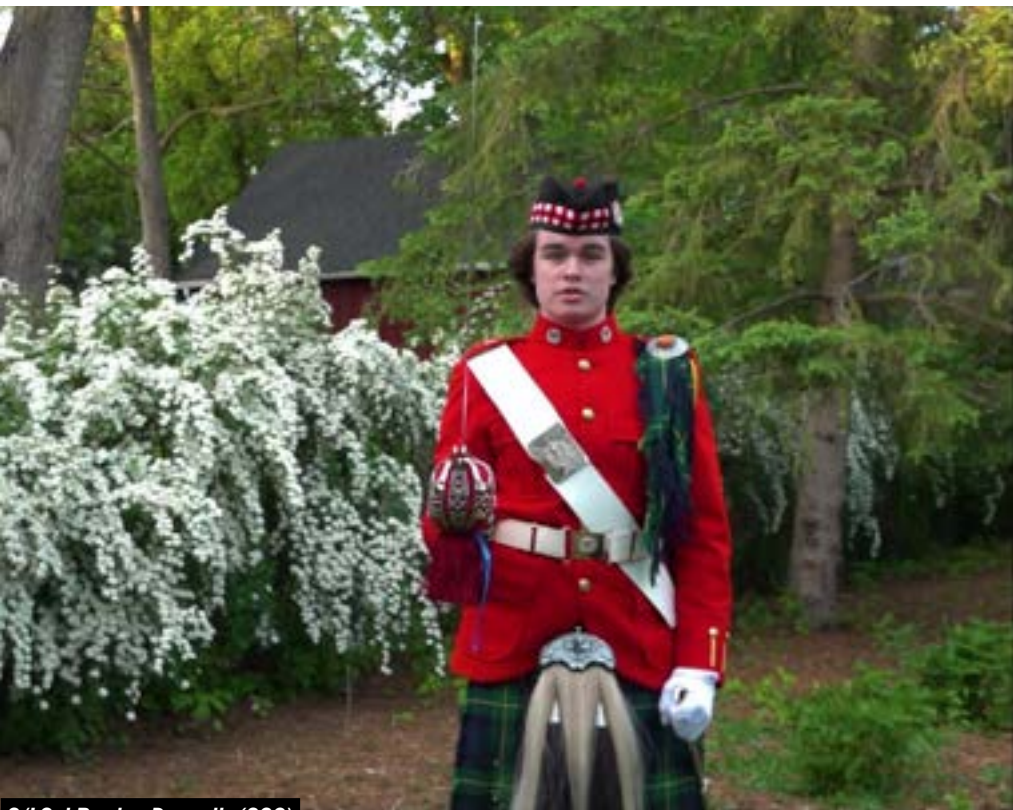
DGB
RSM



SAC CADETS CLOSING OF 2021

The #142 St. Andrew's College Highland Cadet Corps ended its 116th year on a rather sombre note, trading the usual end of year ceremonial parades for a Virtual Cadet Review. Despite the 'stop and go' training year, Cadet LCOL Braden Donnelly (CO) and Cadet Major Caden McHenry (Adjt), pictured here, carried on with steadfast commitment and determination to ensure that a meaningful program took place for their Cadets. Congratulations to all ranks of the #142 SAC Highlanders for their success during this very troubling year. We certainly look forward to getting back into the field and onto the parade square next fall.

MAJOR BRIAN MCCUE
COMMANDING OFFICER



C/LCOL Braden Donnelly (CCO)



C/Maj Caden McHenry (Adjt)



INTERESTED IN BUYING
SOME 48TH KIT?

If you want to see what Dufferin
Apparel is offering make sure you
use this password to see our kit:

club48

[Click here to get there.](#)

SAINT ANDREWS CADETS

A HIGHLANDER REACHES A MAJOR MILESTONE

NORM GOGO CELEBRATES HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

John MacIntyre, HCol

On June 16, I had the pleasure of participating in the 100th birthday celebration for Norm Gogo, one of our World War II veterans, in Penetanguishene, Ontario. It was organized by the Lions and Legion in Midland/Penetang (as they did last year for his 99th). Monika Hopkins, the president of the Midland Lions Club, was the driving force behind making this an impressive event, both in scale and community participation. Most inspiring of all was Norm. He must be one of the most vibrant centenarians in the world. This was a drive by event, that had dozens of vehicles, in addition to his neighbours (he still lives on his own) being out in their yards for a couple of blocks. As I drove up, he had a huge smile, with two thumbs up, and his ongoing attachment to the 48th Highlanders was clear.

At 5:30 dozens of vehicles gathered in the arena parking lot, to prepare for the drive by parade. The Midland town crier opened with best wishes from the Queen, the Acting Chief of Defense Staff and CAF Chief, MP Bruce Stanton, and Midland Mayor Strathearn. There was then a flyover of a C130 Search and Rescue Aircraft from 424 Squadron 8 Wing Trenton, followed by video greetings to Norm from the Acting Chief of Defense Staff, Lt. General Wayne Eyre, and CAF Chief Warrant Officer Gilles Gregoire.

The drive-by parade was led by a Lions vehicle that presented him with a basket of mail greetings from around the world. Next were several classic cars, followed by fire trucks and then the VIPs, led by four Toronto firefighters on motorcycles, followed by me representing the 48th Highlanders. I was able to get out of the car (to a piper playing Highland Laddie) and present him with a certificate, and a gift bottle of Drambuie. He is also getting an engraved mug from the Sergeants' Mess. (Al Kowalenko and his wife, Wilhelmina, were planning to attend but unfortunately Al was hit by Covid last week and they were not there, but plan to come up to see Norm later in the summer).

The VIP included Norm's sister who turns 98 this year, the Mayor of Penetang, the local MPP, and Chester Graham from the Branch 80 Midland Legion who did a special presentation on behalf of the families of the Netherlands. (Norm went over a few years ago).

The rest of the parade included many of Norm's local friends from the community. It was inspiring to see, and I think he was genuinely surprised, and very pleased. He has an incredible amount of energy and enthusiasm and seems closer to 70 years old than 100.

This link provides some more background about Norm Gogo:

<https://www.crestwood.on.ca/ohp/gogo-norman/>



Norm receiving a plaque from HCol John MacIntyre



OUR FRIENDS IN HOLLAND

ARTICLE FROM HIGHLAND EXPRESS NO. 82

Newsletter of the 48th Highlanders of Holland Pipes & Drums

ORIGINAL:

HERDENKING HOLTEN 13 APRIL 2020

In verband met de afgekondigde maatregelen waren wij genoodzaakt om onze herdenking in Holten af te gelasten. Dit besluit is ons zwaar gevallen, maar wij hadden helaas geen andere keus. Echter, op 13 april heeft een kleine delegatie van onze band alsnog bloemen gelegd op de Canadese begraafplaats in Holten. Onze Pipe Major Dik Singel heeft daar het Lament gespeeld en John Fundter en Johan Veen hebben een krans gelegd bij het graf van Donald Alexander MacKenzie en rozen geplaatst bij alle graven van de omgekomen leden van het regiment 48th Highlanders of Canada. Onze beschermheer Fred de Graaf droeg de Binyons lines "For the Fallen" voor.

Tevens heeft de burgemeester van Voorst een krans gelegd bij het herdenkingsmonument van Operation Cannonsnot.

Op deze manier zijn onze bevrijders van de 48th Highlanders of Canada -binnen de beperkte mogelijkheden- toch herdacht.

TRANSLATION (by Captain van der Toorn):

Commemoration Holten 13 April 2020

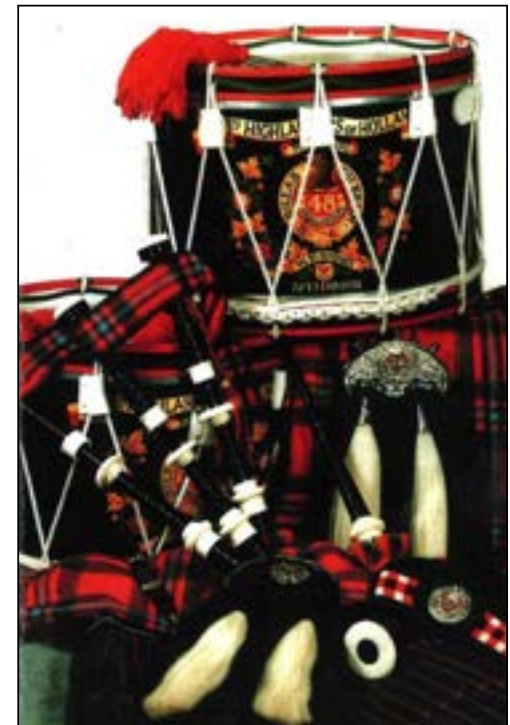
In accordance with the public health measures in place, it was necessary for us to cancel our usual commemoration at Holten Canadian War Cemetery. Because it was the 75th anniversary of the liberation, this decision hit us hard, but unfortunately, we had no choice. However, on 13 April a small delegation of the 48th Highlanders of Holland band laid flowers at Holten while our Pipe Major Dik Singel played the Lament (Flowers of the Forest), and John Fundter and Johan Veen laid a wreath at the grave of Donald Alexander Mackenzie. Roses were placed at every grave marking a fallen 48th Highlanders of Canada soldier and our patron, Fred de Graaf, read Lawrence Binyan's For The Fallen.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of Voorst laid a wreath at the monument for Operation Cannonsnot.

In this manner our liberators from the 48th Highlanders of Canada were commemorated, within the constraints that are in place.



Commemoration at the spot on the Wilp side of the IJssel where the 48th Highlanders of Canada made their crossing 11 April 1945)



Dear 48th Highlanders of Canada Regiment,

Our deepest condolences with the loss of your beloved Herb Pike.

We wish you all the straight in these sad days.

On behalf of the 48th Highlanders of Holland Pipes and Drums

DM Jan Scholten
PM Dik Singel
Chairman Tonnie van Amelsfoort



Pipe Major Dik Singel plays the Lament on the dijk in Wilp where 19 white crosses were erected at the temporary burial place for 48th Highlanders of Canada soldiers that fell during Operation Cannonsnot

THE NEW 48TH HIGHLANDERS
REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION WILL
FORMALLY STAND UP ON OUR
130TH REGIMENTAL BIRTHDAY.

The last 18 months has presented a number of challenges for all Highlanders...As the Commanding Officer has noted elsewhere here there are still many unknowns as we approach the 130th Anniversary/Change of Command Weekend. For the formal launch of the new Association we had hoped to conduct some kind stand up social event in the second week of October. The interim executive continues to explore options. As soon as we know what option turns out to fall within the ‘art of the possible’ we will let you know. In the meantime....

If you haven’t already done so...It’s time to join the new 48th Highlanders Regimental Association!

Normally there are two ways information will flow to you. The first is through the blog/emails that by now you should all be receiving. These notices and information such as this issue of the “Falcon” will also be posted on the Association Facebook page.

In October all members will be asked to join the Founding General Meeting of the 48th Highlanders Association. Your interim executive is working on plans and options for the launch dependant on when and what restrictions are lifted.

The business part that formal launch - the Founding General Meeting and the business you will be asked to conduct will take place virtually (a combination of online meeting and email voting. This allows all members (so far we are over 500 and growing) the chance to participate vice the traditional small number who traditionally attend these types of business meetings. The instructions will go out to all registered members of the Association by email in the week following Labour Day.

Note: To vote at the founding meeting in October you must have registered on the website no later than 15 September 2021.



Your Interim Association Executive

- Sgt Guy Bowie (Retd)
- Sgt Adam Bernard (Retd)
- Capt Tom Birchall (Retd)
- MCpl George Boast
- Col Geordie Elms (Retd)
- BGen Greg Young (Retd)

If you have questions or suggestions send them to:

ASSOCIATION@48THHIGHLANDERS.CA

There are two steps to joining the Association:

1. If you haven’t done so go to www.48thhighlanders.ca and register/login and fill out your profile. Make sure you enter the email address you want used in future correspondence.

2. If you use Facebook go to the 48th Highlanders Regimental Association Group page, answer the three question and join. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/843575856446772>

Once you are into the group you will find the new Interim Constitution listed under “FILES”. Once you have done that you are a member!

DILEAS GU BRATH

COMMANDING OFFICER’S MESSAGE (1991)



To all members of
the Regimental Family

*“You cannot look forward with hope if
you cannot look backward with pride.”*

Since the last edition of The Falcon almost two years ago, The Regiment has not only had a great opportunity to look backward with pride but also has grown steadily so that today it can continue to look forward with confident hope.

The Centennial of our Regiment in 1991 was a year that few Highlanders will ever forget. To view and to march with The Regiment on the occasion of its

100th Year was an honour and a source of pride for all members of the Family. The hard work of all elements of The Regiment paid off handsomely with the successful Reunion weekend in May of '91. The Colours Parade was the highlight of the Centennial as The Regiment paraded in Full Dress before 18,000 people in Varsity Stadium. It was a night to rekindle old memories, to display pride in our common heritage and to have our confidence in The Regiment’s future reassured. It was a show to behold and every Highlander on parade that night can say with pride that he marched with the 48th on the 100th.

Although the Centennial occupied centre stage, throughout the year and into 1992, the Active Battalion continued to meet its military commitments in the professional manner that has become our trademark. On every course, posting, attachment, exercise and concentration The 48th made its presence felt. Officer strength grew dramatically, NCO strength and depth remained solid and the strength of the ORs although slow has been steady. Despite lack of direction from higher echelons preoccupied with the state of the military, The 48th continued to stress the basic individual and sub unit skills necessary to create good infantrymen and a good infantry Unit. This was our simple goal and we have been successful in achieving it.

At this point in the early summer of 1992, The Regiment’s future direction looks uncertain. But as we look at ourselves before summer standdown we have reason to be confident. We have been inspected as never before this year and have come out highly rated on every occasion; we have met and exceeded our quota of recruits for the summer as strength continues to increase; and we have performed our military tasks above expectations. The 48th is the most solid infantry Unit in the garrison bar none.

I cannot acknowledge the efforts of every individual, so as CO I commend all members of The Regiment collectively for their contributions over the past two years. I also task you to set your sights on the year ahead as it will be every bit as challenging and demanding as the one you have just finished. Again, look to your Regiment for direction and give it the consistent dedication that has come to be expected of you. This has been and remains our formula for success.

I wish all members of The Regiment success over the summer and I know that wherever you serve you will be a credit to yourselves and the Unit. Until we RV at CAC in Petawawa, good luck and good hunting. Dileas.

G. Young
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer



THE FALCON

(1991)

THE JOURNAL OF THE 48TH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA

EDITORIAL—The Tradition that Remains

Tradition — that is what remains after you have considered all else about the 48th Highlanders of Canada. From the rudimentary vision of the Scottish immigrants who founded the Unit to the sense of pride that we instil in our newest recruits when we present them with their first balmoral and cap badge, tradition is at the centre of what we are and what we will always be.

We began as a concept created from the Highland notions of spirit, loyalty and duty. It was a tradition brought to Canada by those whose ancestors had nurtured it on the clan battlefields against both each other and outside invaders over centuries of conflict. Over the last one hundred years, thousands of members of our Regimental Family have taken up this great tradition and molded it into something that is clearly our own.

Names like Davidson, Elms, Darling, Haldenby, Turner, Outhwaite, Jackson, Lowndes, Ruthvan, Pearce, Brown, Harding and White come to mind. They represent the several generations of Highlanders who have, at various times and places and in many different ranks and positions, given meaning to these traditions through the loyalty and courage of their actions.

The articles in this, the Centenary volume of the Falcon, reflect the great things that the members of our Regimental Family are doing now and have done in the past, in short, their service to Canada.

The future of our unit seems of late to be very uncertain, more so than it must ever have seemed to our founding fathers. Yet the traditions that we have come to represent will carry us through whatever challenges we encounter. We will always remain what "a century of faithful service" has proven us to be — strong in our sense of duty and consistently excellent in our performance.

Dileas Gu Brath

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SNAP SHOTS



A section from #1 platoon of A Coy completes an assault boat practice landing.



Live Fire ...

100th ...



Field exercises ...

However, it should be said upfront that this was the toughest test the Regiment faced in many years.

These programs, which have been used to ... as well as several other units



... and battlecraft training — preparing for CAC 92



Pre. Tim Van der Ster of B Coy gets a feel for the tiller bar during winter indoctrination training.

CENTENARY



Major Brown and the Commanding Officer discuss rehearsal details for the New Colours parade.



The consecration of the New Colours.



Number 2 guard—the old comrades on parade at Varsity Stadium.



Captains Turner and Paterson rehearse the final trooping of the Old Colours.



The Commanding Officer accompanies General De Chastelain C.D.S., during his inspection of the colours parade.

SNAP SHOTS



"Farewell" — CWO Goldman speaks to the Regiment for the last time before his retirement as the RSM.



WO Darling stands sentry on the Regimental Monument during the Annual Remembrance Day Parade.



"At ease" — drummers relax during a break at the Regiment's Centennial Dinner.



General De Chastelain attends the 48th Highlanders 1991 Ball.



Major White and Pipe Major Dewar toast the conclusion of a year of formal Centennial celebrations.

REVISITING THE REGIMENTAL CENTENARY 30 YEARS AFTER



On route to St. Andrews Church, Oct 20 1991



Laying up of the Colours, Oct 20 1991



Captain Turner



Consecration of the New Colours at Varsity Stadium



Consecration of the New Colours at Varsity Stadium



Consecration of the New Colours at Varsity Stadium

REVISITING THE REGIMENTAL CENTENARY 30 YEARS AFTER



St Andrews Ball, 29 Nov 1991



Maple Leaf opening, Fall 1991



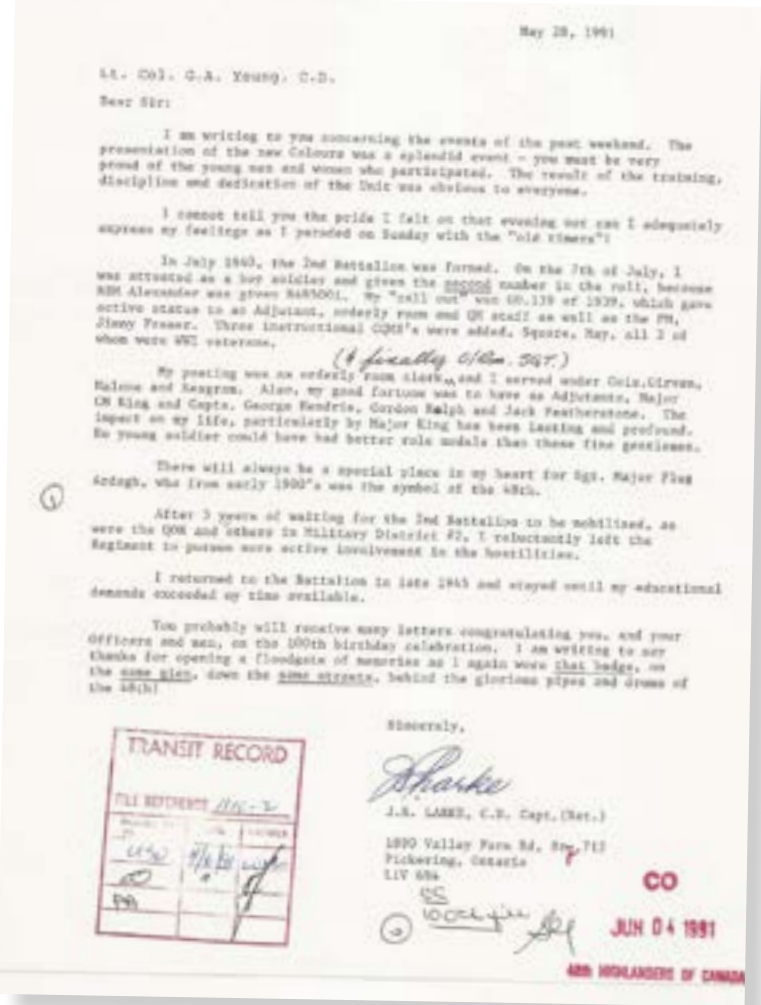
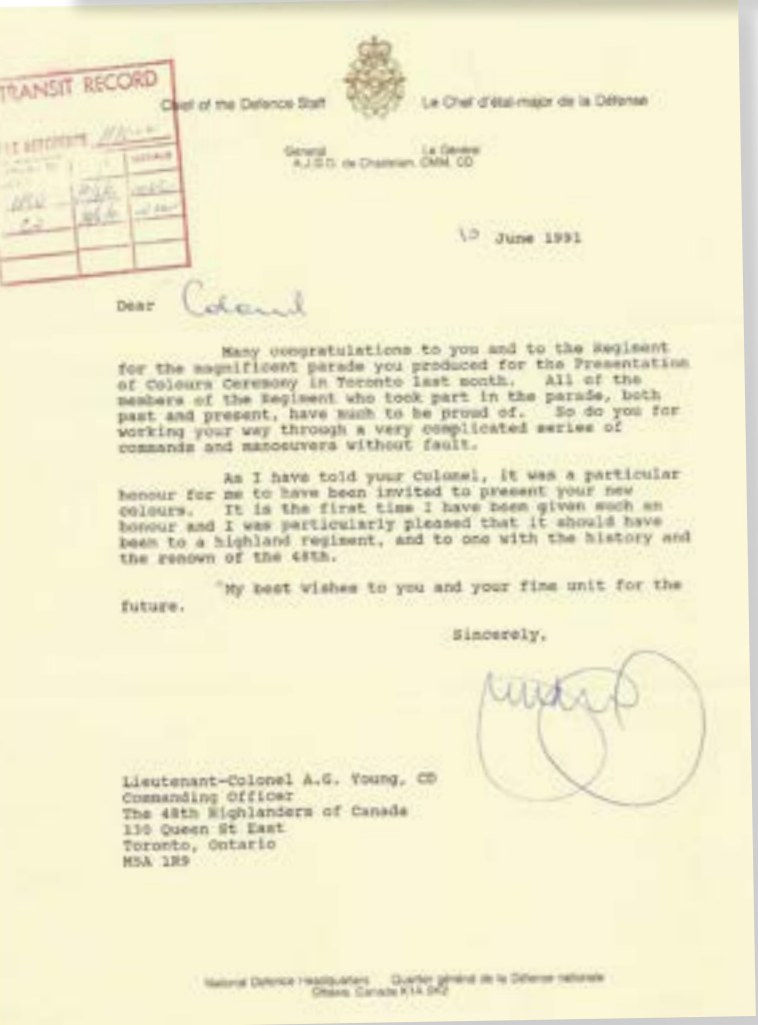
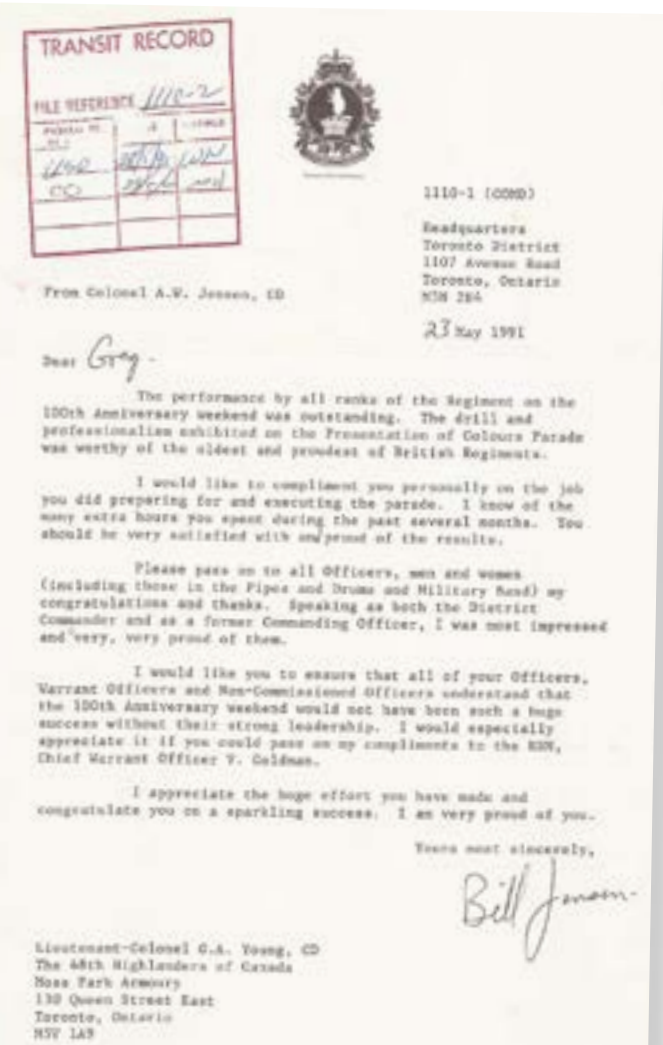
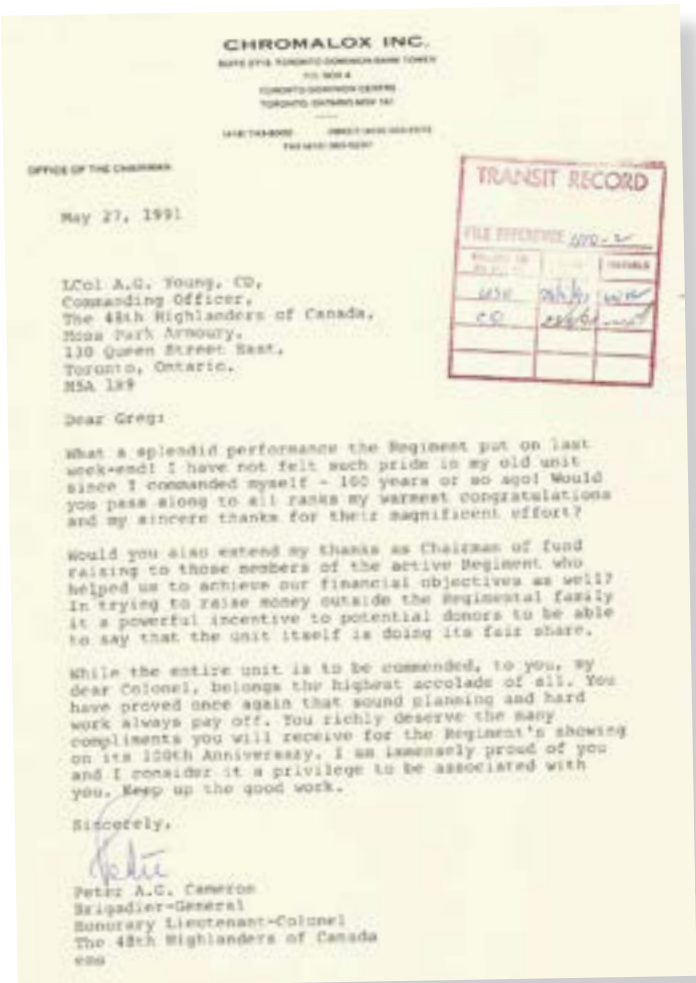
Consecration of the New Colours at Varsity Stadium

BRIGADIER GENERAL YOUNG REFLECTS ON WHAT WE DID DURING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REGIMENT

“While looking back through my album of that year, I was struck again at just how many ceremonial events were done in that one year. All the usual annual ceremonial events like the April Church Parade, the Royal Winter Fair Guard, the season opener at Maple Leaf Gardens, both the Sergeants & Officers Annual Mess Dinners, the 48th (St Andrew’s) 100th Ball and Remembrance Day. Then in addition, consider all the additional high level one-of-a-kind ceremonial events: multiple Friday night parades dedicated to rehearsing components of the upcoming Trooping; two full weekends of Trooping rehearsals in May at CFB Downsview followed by the third weekend for the Trooping, Reunion, reunion Dinner and reunion Parade to the memorial; the Change of RSMs Parade and the Laying up of Old Colours Parade.

Then you have to keep in mind that all those ceremonial events were done in one year and not one single military course, activity, FTX, training weekend, etc was cancelled or rescheduled. In fact as we began that year, I recall telling the Battalion that the Army was not going to cut us any slack or excuse us from any training or tasks just because we were having a birthday!”

- Pipes & Drums 100th Ball 16 Feb 1991
- Back-to-back Trooping rehearsals 3-5 and 10-12 May 1991
- Reunion, reunion 100th Dinner, Trooping and remembrance Parade 16-19 May 1991
- C of RSM 16 Oct 1991
- 100th Annual Sgt's Mess Dinner 18 Oct 1991
- Laying Up of Old Colours 20 Oct 1991
- Maple Leaf Gardens Oct 1991 (?)
- Remembrance Day Parade 10 Nov 1991
- 48th Highlanders 100th Ball (St Andrew's) 29 Nov 1991
- Royal Winter Fair 100 man guard 5 Dec 1991



OUR REGIMENT

by Major (Ret) G.L. Pearce CD

Comments and opinions expressed in the following historical record are those of the author exclusively.

The Beginning

One hundred and thirty years ago in 1891, a group of distinguished citizens from the four Scottish Societies in Toronto assembled to consider raising a regiment like the great Highland regiments of the British Army. The idea was met with great enthusiasm and the official organizing committee for the project was established.

The first order of business was to obtain permission from the Canadian Government to proceed but it was rejected on the first submission. However determination and perseverance eventually gained political approval. There followed the choice of a commanding officer. Among the prominent candidates was one John Irvine Davidson who held the rank of Captain in another militia regiment. Captain Davidson had graciously declined the nomination for Mayor of Toronto seven times due to the burden of other executive business responsibilities. The committee, however, was impressed by the background of their favourite and was possibly influenced by the popular adage.“If you want a job done properly, give it to a busy man.” John Davidson became the first commanding officer of the new regiment in the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

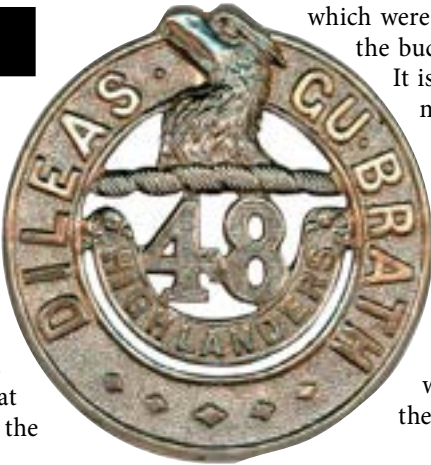
There followed three imperatives to address (a) title (b) tartan and (c) badge. “The Queen’s Highlanders” was the choice of Lt. Col. Davidson but this title did not receive approval, possibly due to the risk of awarding a royal label to an untried regiment before its time.

The Davidson tartan and the falcon crest(1) from the Davidson clan badge were readily adopted in honour of the regiment’s first C.O. but the design of the regimental badge would create some unnecessary criticism based on inaccurate assumptions.

The Ministry of Militia and Defence maintained a complete list of all militia regiments in numerical order . The number 48, assigned to the The Lennox and Addington Regiment, became vacant when that unit was reduced to nil strength and disbanded. The committee accepted the number 48 and the government attached the label “Highlanders” to conveniently identify the type of regiment in the militia list.

Badges, Bugles, Drummers and Pipers

The regimental cap badge is circular in shape configured by a buckled belt inscribed with the Gaelic motto Dileas Gu Brath (Faithful Forever). The belt encircles a falcon heralddically “couped” (i.e. showing head and neck) resting on a wreath of six twists. Below the wreath are the numerals 48 and below the numerals a curved scroll inscribed “Highlanders”. This was the approved design until a message was received from the Department of Ceremonial that the use of a “garter” on a regimental badge was a violation. The buckled belt was construed to be a garter and a garter in heraldry is restricted to the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Britain’s highest order of chivalry. The badge had to be altered or replaced. This was not a popular decision, nor was the result. For some time the replaced badge was issued and its image was published officially with all other regimental and corps badges of the Canadian Army in 1964.(2)The “official” wording described the regimental badge “within an annulus” (ring) but omits the mention of five meaningless diamonds



which were added only to fill the space left by the removal of the buckle. The falcon is described as “resting on a bar”. It is resting on a wreath, a familiar heraldic device on many coats-of-arms and badges which came from the apparel of the ancient knights. Highlanders who had been issued with the original “buckle badge” prized it and continued to wear it with impunity. Eventually a statement was issued by the Ministry advising that “a garter cannot be construed as such unless it is inscribed with the motto of The Most Noble Order of the Garter: Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense. Therefore the buckled belt, which never was a garter, was restored to its original design and the regimental badge regained its place of honour.

In the early history of the British Army from which many of our traditions originated, the drum was the instrument of coordinating commands for drill on parade and for emphasis in changing direction and formations in the field.

Over time the army became increasingly deployed beyond their own shores and the drum became increasingly cumbersome to carry over rough terrain.

With good reason it was replaced by the bugle and it followed logically that any change in the instrument of the drummers would go to the drummers.

For this reason there are no “buglers”, designated as such, in Highland and Guards regiments. Drummers henceforth sounded the bugle calls for every duty, activity and function for every hour of the day.

Drummers were on strength of the regiment before pipers were officially admitted so they wore the regimental tartan. Officers of the Highland Regiments sometimes came with a piper who, as a privileged servant, wore the tartaned kilt of his master. Sometimes these “civilian”pipers were allowed to join the ranks on special parades and the skirl of the pipes soon became a welcome boost to regimental morale and pride. When the army decided to permit pipers to enlist, they brought a plethora of different tartans which conflicted with the “oneness” of uniform dress. As a solution all pipers would wear the same tartan but it was to be a tartan other than the regimental one which established the tradition of remembering the different garb of the first pipers to be enrolled. Many years later the 48th pipers chose the Stewart of Fingask tartan for the kilt and plaid.

Dress uniforms are extremely important to a regiment and come at high cost which is not borne by the government. The government pays for the basics such as service dress, battle dress, boots , helmets and weapons. Ceremonial dress and accouterments for the Primary Reserve must be paid from private funds. The first “full dress” scarlet doublets were made in Scotland which were delivered with blue facings (collar and cuffs). Facings are of different colours for different regiments but blue is reserved for “Royal” regiments such as the Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment and The Guards Regiments of the Household Division. The blue facings were accepted without complaint by the 48th and without objection from higher authority so they have remained in place ever since.

Accomplishments and Honours

The regiment at full strength in full dress scarlet doublets and feathered bonnets presented a magnificent sight in 1895 but when the 48th Highlanders Team won the Bayonet Championship of the British Forces at the famous Islington Tournament in England in 1897, it was an outstanding victory gained by a Canadian Militia regiment competing

with soldiers of famous regiments of the British Empire both Regular and Territorial.

One of the aims of British MGen Lord Dundonald as GOC of the Canadian Militia was realized in 1904 when the King’s approval was granted for the first alliance between a British and Canadian regiment. The 48th Highlanders became a sister regiment to the famous Gordon Highlanders which set in train no fewer than 16 more official alliances of Canadian and British regiments before 1914.

The Regiment’s initial battle honour South Africa 1899-1900 was the first of fifty, 21 in World War 1, 27 in World War 2 and the theatre honour for

Afghanistan, Canada’s longest war, 2001-2014. (3) No account of regimental history is complete without reference to the vital

contribution and permanent influence of military music which provides the uplifting spirit for all ranks in enhancing their pride of membership.

Pipe Major James Robb Fraser was invited to be Pipe Major in 1913 when he was a corporal piper serving with the Gordon Highlanders. He was recommended by the Pipe Major of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada who had served with the Gordons and knew of Fraser ’s exceptional service which included The Punjab Frontier in India, Dargai in 1897, and Egypt in 1898 all before South Africa from 1899 to 1902. Fraser was the longest serving 48th Pipe Major, 39 years from 1913 to 1952. He was Quartermaster for the Pipes and Drums, custodian of most of the company quarters in University Ave. Armouries, teacher par excellence of the pipers and, with flawless dexterity, producer of all music for the pipes hand-written for each individual piper. He taught Archie Dewar and Ross Stewart who both became successive Pipe Majors. His fame made him a legend in North America. When he retired he was invited by the Commanding Officer to take the salute as the entire regiment marched past in tribute to him. Capt John Slatter is also a name to remember. After studies in the British Army Training School of Military Music, he became euphonium soloist with the band of the 1st Life Guards in 1882 and in 1884 he joined the Victor Herbert Orchestra in New York. He served in several US bands and orchestras including the Detroit Symphony and the famous band of John Philip Sousa. His brother Arthur served in the band of the Grenadier Guards. Soon after the regimental band of the 48h Highlanders was formed Capt Slatter was appointed Bandmaster in 1896 serving 48 years with distinction to 1944.

There is no greater record in peace time to equal the pride felt by soldiers and civilians alike than the public appearance of the regimental bands.

Occasions such as Remembrance Day ceremonies, principal place in the annual Santa Claus Parade in Toronto, the bands marching on ice at Maple Leaf Gardens annually for the season’s hockey opener, Trooping the Colour in celebration of the Queen’s Birthday to capacity audiences in Varsity and Exhibition Stadiums where His Excellency Field Marshall Earl Alexander of Tunis , our last British Governor General, took the salute in 1951 followed in 1956 by the Rt. Hon Vincent Massey, our first Canadian Governor General. The Trooping for Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh provided the occasion in Toronto to honour our Colonel-in-Chief in person immediately following Her Majesty’s presentation of new colours in Ottawa in 1959. (4)

The Wembley Military Musical Pageant in 1981, for years the largest assembly of massed bands in the world, included the Pipes and Drums



Col-in Chief presents New Colours to the Regt, 1959

and Military Band of the 48th Highlanders, the Regimental Band of the Royal Regiment of Canada and the Pipes and Drums of the Toronto Scottish Regiment. Their presence marked the only time that bands beyond the United Kingdom were invited to participate with all the bands of the British Army.

The Royal Salute in 1984 in celebration of Ontario’s bicentenary was again graced by the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. A composite 200 person guard of honour, fifty from each of the four Ontario regiments which have The Queen as Captain-General or Colonel-in-Chief, led a cast of 1,382. This was the largest Canadian military musical pageant ever staged entirely by soldiers of the Primary Reserve. On arrival of the Sovereign, the bands struck the first notes of the Royal Anthem inspiring the audience of 65,000 to sing the words of God Save The Queen with loyal and affectionate gusto. The production was televised live by CTV coast to coast in Canada and by ITV in the United Kingdom

The Student Militia Program

The subject of the Student Militia Training Plan was reported by the writer in detail in a previous edition of The Falcon and should not need further embellishment. However one summary statement will serve as a reminder.

The SMTP stands as the most successful, productive and cost-effective program ever, for addressing the increase and retention of trained soldiers for the Primary Reserve as well as motivation for enlistment in the Regular Force. Its discontinuance is most regrettable.

HIGHLANDER PROFILES



The Student Militia Summer Course - 1968 - look carefully for then Sgts Young, Barnes and Gilbert

The inexplicable reason for such a drastic and illogical decision is to the detriment of a nation’s defence policy, often described as “In Peace Prepared”. Herewith, a partial list of the Regiment’s SMTP Honour Roll as proof positive of its value to Canada. Each of the following began basic training as students in the rank of Private.

Most have been awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for service, or more:

Aiken, MWO Roger	Iversen, LCol JCCZ
Barnes, RSM M.A.P.	Jackson, LCol Brian
Boggis, MWO David	Kerr, Capt John
Boyden, Capt Bruce	Kerr, Lt Ken
Buller, Lt Robert	Kowalenko, Sgt Al
Casey, Sgt Ronald	McVety, MWO Mark
Catennaci, Sgt Peter	Redmon, Major John
Dodd, Sgt John	Sershall, L/Sgt Wayne
Elms, LCol Geordie	Short, MWO Ron
Gilbert, Capt Stephen	Goldman, RSM, Victor
Young, BGen A.Greg	

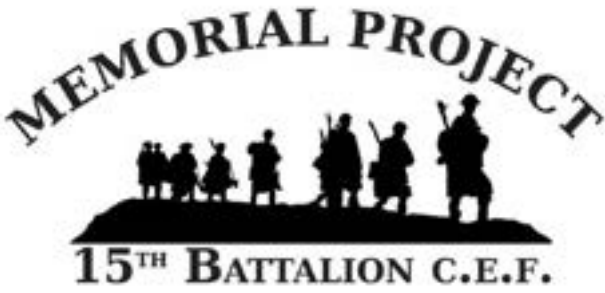
The 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project

How many words and phrases, hymns and poems, bugle calls and marches remind us of Remembrance Day once a year on November 11th?

Lest we forget, In Flanders Fields, The Last Post, O Valiant Hearts are a few.

But the creation, realization and preservation of the 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project has eclipsed any other act of remembrance for its unique concept, immediate acceptance by many people who care , and its inspirational effect of encouraging further investigation and discovery. Until now, the complete identity of unknown and missing soldiers killed in action long ago has been regarded as impossible for 183 years.

Three 48th Highlanders who began their military training at age 16 in the SMTP found that their interest in regimental history spawned an ingenious idea with astonishing results. Under the leadership of



- South Africa -No Limit
WW1 -10 WW2 -10
Korea -2
Emblazoned Battle Honours are also found on The Queen’s pipe banner, drum major’ssash, the drum shells and the Regimental Monument in Queen’s Park Toronto.
- 4
Ensigns: Ottawa 1959 -:2Lt (later Major) J.A. Brown and 2Lt (later Major) K.G. McVittie

BGen A.Greg Young, with Captains Victor Goldman and Stephen Gilbert great success occurred.

Large war memorials are seen the world over to mark expansive cemeteries where the fallen lie in the thousands. The difference is that the 15th Battalion Project identifies the forward point of advance of 48th Highlanders’ battles in Belgium and France that are worthy of emblazonment

on the Regimental Colour for heroism under fire.

These markers are memorials in themselves , just large enough to allow a plaque of information and a single wreath. They will not be found on your motorist’s road map. They are in place because a 48th team of three cared to make a difference by overseas travel, at their own expense, to negotiate the installation of these symbols with civil authorities, land owners, farmers and residents, all of whom responded with gratitude and enthusiasm. As an example, the citizens of Canal du Nord (one of the most crucial battles of many) instantly declared that an annual boat race will be held on the Canal to honour the memory of those Canadians whose footsteps marked the restoration of freedom from tyranny on the land of our French allies. Phase 1 of the project saw 10 monuments established and the project continues as an ongoing venture enhancing and inspiring expanded exploration and discovery of unknown and missing soldiers by involving such organizations as the British Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Canada owes official recognition to three 48th Highlanders who made remembrance more meaningful by doing much more than reciting “We will remember them” once a year on November 11th. And for the new generation of soldiers there is no better advice than to reflect, consider and inwardly digest the words of our motto: DILEAS GU BRATH - FAITHFUL FOREVER.

Deeds speak and three Highlanders, conjoined with many others before them, have proved it with distinction and good will in international relations.

FOOTNOTES

- 1
Crest : The uppermost heraldic device on a coat-of-arms or badge
- 2
The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army
Prepared by the Army Historical Section
Volume 1 of the Canadian Army List-1964
- 3
Emblazoned Battle Honours are limited

PROFILE OF A FAMOUS HIGHLANDER



RSM (CWO) WP (BILL) ELMS,
MSM,CD
43 YEARS IN UNIFORM AND A
LIFETIME HIGHLANDER
(PART 1 - 1935-1955)

Canadian Forces Reserves
Command Chief Warrant Officer 1976-78
Central Militia Area Sergeant Major 1973-78
Toronto Militia District Sergeant Major 1970-73
Regimental Sergeant Major 48th Highlanders 1961-1970
Drum Major 1955-1961
1st Battalion, 48th Highlanders 1939-1945
48th Highlanders Bugle Band 1935-39



“It seems it was only a few years ago that I stood for the first time in the ranks of a serving battalion at an age very close to that of the youngest of you parading tonight. The time, the place, and even the uniforms were different. However, there was something present that is present now. As a new recruit I had not yet become aware of it, even as some of you here may not yet have become aware of it. I am speaking of something that you are not issued with, you cannot buy, nor can you be awarded it. It is the spirit of the Regiment.”

RSM BILL ELMS
22 FEBRUARY 1970

Those words were spoken on parade on the night he retired as RSM of the 48th Highlanders of Canada. As it turned out he would serve another eight years on extra regimental duty before taking off the uniform for the last time. The badge of the 48th Highlanders of Canada was the only one he wore in 43 years in uniform. The falcon from it along with the the regimental motto in English are also found in his personal arms granted by the Canadian Heraldry Authority in 1996.

In stitching together this first part of Bill Elms’ story it became clear to me that while the Sprit of the Regiment can’t be issued or bought, it can’t be taught or inherited either. In the Highlanders we frequently describe the unique nature of our Regiment in terms of family. I also realized that his story was more than the story of the Elms family’s three generations and 130 years service in our Regiment.

This is the first of two articles that tell the story of Bill Elms. It largely covers the period before I was born. However growing up within the Regiment I did come to know most of the people mentioned that were what today might be called “influencers” in his life both in and outside the Highlanders that contributed to the man and the Highlander he was.

1920-1939 - GROWING UP IN TORONTO DURING THE DEPRESSION

William Proctor Elms was born on 15 September 1920 to CSM George Elms and Lena Elms at 6 Irwin Avenue in what is today downtown Toronto. George came to Toronto from Newfoundland at the age of 16. Having apprenticed as a printer his first job was at at MacLean-Hunter. In



1910 he walked into University Avenue Armouries to join the Queen’s Own and on the way in the door he was grabbed

by Sgt “Plug” Ardagh who asked him “Where are you going?”....and the first Elms joined the Highlanders. As he worked in a job that was considered essential to the war effort, his First World War service was as a Sgt-Instructor with the home battalion and the Canada Defence Force (CDF). In 1953 Capt George Elms retired as CO of the 48th Highlanders Cadet Corps after 43 years active service with the Regiment. As a CSM in

1930 he and the other CSMs including Ralph, Jamieson and Stephen sat in



the front of the church when then RSM Fred Gledhill married Margaret Tormey. In 1974 my grandfather pointed that out to me in a picture that hung at the top of the stairs at “34” when I told him that his grandson was about to marry Fred’s granddaughter.

By 1923 in addition to Bill and his older sister Eileen, the Elms family also included Bill’s grandmother and aunt who had arrived from Newfoundland. About the time George became one of the original teachers at Danforth Technical School and the family moved to 34 Hazelwood Avenue near Pape and Danforth. Attending Earl Grey School and Danforth Technical School. Bill



PROFILE OF A FAMOUS HIGHLANDER

was active in Boy Scouts and the Boys Brigade. It was with the Boys Brigade Company at St Barnabas Anglican Church where he learned to play the bugle and the side drum that led him to follow his father into the Highlanders. In 1935 he was taken on-strength by the 48th Highlanders Bugle Band as a “Boy Bugler”.

As a boy Bill developed three passions that would stay with him throughout his life as a Highlander. At the age of ten a neighbour who lived a few doors down on Hazelwood Avenue gave him a campaign belt containing a variety of First World War badges. He began a lifelong study of military insignia, weapons and equipment. His personal collection grew to a point where in the 1950s he was forced to “thin out” his collection and only concentrate on Canadian badges. That passion led him to be more than a collector. He studied and read the history behind the badges and his passion for the study of Canadian military history was a lifelong avocation with him.

His Dad and RSM Frank Jamieson, who also lived on. Hazlewood Ave taught him to shoot, he learned and loved to shoot. In 1936 at the age 16 he won the McGregor Shoot as the top rifle shot in the active unit besting many of the Regiment’s top marksmen including names such as Emslie, Ashling, Jamieson and his father George. From that Day until he retired in 1979 he was consistently the Regiment’s top shot and he genuinely loved being able to teach others the skills that could make anyone a better shot. As RSM on range weekends it was not unusual to see him lay down beside a young Highlander who was having trouble achieving a consistent grouping and quietly coach him towards a six or four inch group. During the Fall “turkey shoot season” he would zero his rifles in the farmer’s field behind the family cottage on East Moore Lake and go from shoot to shoot. In the Fall he and WO2 George Kelly along with a few other Highlanders would go deer hunting. On an October day in 1965 I came home from school to find a deer and bear hanging in our garage waiting for John King (Pipes and Drums room bartender to come and butcher them. My mom was not impressed by a large dint in the roof of his car. He didn’t hunt birds. He was not really a gun collector although he appreciated a well made rifle. He bought them to shoot or if there was a 48th connection that might see them used in the Regimental Museum.

1939 - 1945 - 1ST BATTALION 48TH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA (CASF)

Bill graduated from Danforth Technical School in June 1939. He and his friend Frank Dowe (also a member of the Bugle Band) rode their bikes from Toronto to Haliburton where George and Lena had bought a piece of property on East Moore Lake that reminded him of the area in Newfoundland where he was born. His plan was to come back after summer ended and look for a job as a draftsman. By Thanksgiving he and 700 other Highlanders had signed on for the Canadian Active Service Force (CASF) and had marched into temporary barracks at the Canadian National Exhibition’s Horse Palace.

CSM George Elms and future RSM George Stephen both taught



at “Tech” and remained with what would soon be organized as the 2nd Battalion and became part of “Maybin’s Academy” whose task was to train future officers as reinforcements to feed the overseas unit when called for. George later served as Sergeant Major of the University of Toronto Canadian Officers Training Corps (COTC) and with the Toronto Rotary Highlanders Cadet Corps which later became the 48th Highlanders Cadet Corps.

Bill along with Frank Dowe and another friend (and bugler) Bill Thompson, joined the new unit destined to become 1st Battalion, 48th Highlanders (CASF). Frank Jamieson from down the street was tapped by Lt-Col Haldenby to go as RSM of the new overseas battalion. The Bugle Band was disbanded and those who could pass the medical requirements were folded into the Pipes & Drums. On 11 November 1939 the 48th buglers played the Last Post and the Rouse at the Remembrance Day ceremony at Toronto City Hall. The five who played that day (Cpl Cam Fraser, Buglers Frank Dowe, Sammy Campbell, Ralph Seggie and Bill Elms) left in December when the Battalion sailed for England. Cam Fraser became the lead drummer of the 1st Battalion Pipes & Drums. He was a mentor to Bill and they remained life-long friends after the war. Cam left the band to be commissioned.

In November, as the 1st Battalion prepared to move from the temporary barracks at the CNE Horse Palace that had been its home for three months the minimum age for enlistment in the Canadian Active Service Force (CASF) was raised from 18 to 19. That meant a number of Highlanders had to come off strength and wait in Canada. It also left Dmr Bill Elms as the youngest member of the unit to go overseas when they boarded the train for Halifax on 17 December 1939 aboard the troopship Riena del Pacifico. His bunk mate on the crossing and when they reached Aldershot’s Corunna Barracks was his “big brother” Pte Bill DeHarte.

The pipe band practiced and played for parades but they all had primary jobs in the battalion. Generally they were employed in Support Company and Battalion Headquarters (to allow them to form into a band when needed), and as stretcher bearers, signallers or drivers. Bill was a driver and a Lewis Gunner. For a while he and Frank “the Jeep” Down drove a water truck. Eventually Frank went off and trained as a storeman-clerk and was commissioned in the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. Later Bill was attached to 1st Canadian Division Headquarters and was posted for a while as the guard bugler at Prime Minister Churchill’s country residence at Chartwell.

As the 1st Canadian Division assembled around the Salisbury



PROFILE OF A FAMOUS HIGHLANDER



Plain, the Highlanders moved into barracks in Aldershot not realizing it would be their home for the next three and a half years. In May 1940 plans for “OP ANGLE” that would have sent 1st Canadian Division to relieve the pressure on UK troops withdrawing at Dunkirk were aborted. On 13 June however the

48th did go to France as part of an operation that saw the 1st Brigade arrive at Brest, load their kit and personnel on a train and head out. After it was learned the Germans entered Paris the trains carrying the units of 1st Brigade were ordered to as quickly as possible turn around and head back to Brest. It turned out the train carrying the 48th had been directed onto the wrong track and a decision was made to take them to St Malo. There were no more boats expected. The 48th main-body was shoe-horned into the last boat. The road party that comprised the Carrier and Transport platoons missed that rendezvous. At first it looked as if both groups might be reported as “missing and believed to be POWs”. However they did make it back on 19 June catching a small boat that brought them across the Channel to Falmouth. The unit’s new vehicles that had been to delivered before the operation were lost.

In July 1940 the Highlanders moved thirty miles down the road to Newdgate as part of the evolution of 7 Anglo-Canadian Corps. Maj-Gen George Pearkes, VC became Commander 1st Canadian Division. In 1941 Bill Elms was sent to be his Driver/Bodyguard and bugler. Mrs Pearkes used to knit socks for him and the other members of the staff. When Pearkes was sent home in August 1942 to command Pacific Command he asked Bill where he would like to go. Bill asked to go back to the Highlanders.

As part of the final reorganization of the 1st Battalion, 48th Highlanders the pipe band packed away their kilts. Most of their kit had been lost in the June 1940 foray into France but by Spring 1943 they had been able to replace the instruments, the kilts, belts and other equipment only arrived as the Highlanders were preparing to leave Italy for Northwest Europe in early 1945.

They were allowed to take their instruments but would serve mainly as stretcher bearers and drivers. Bill became Lt-Col Johnston’s second driver. Normally Pte Berry drove the CO’s carrier and Bill drove his car/jeep. When they formed a band as they did at Campobasso they wore tropical drill - shorts and balmorals. Pipers and buglers played at the graves of Highlanders who had to be buried as the 48th fought their way through Sicily and Italy. On 22nd July after the battalion’s first major action, Bill buried his childhood friend Dmr Bill Thompson in a temporary grave at the foot of Monte Assoro.

By mid November 1944 when they went into reserve and rest near Rimini

following the battles of the Gothic Line he had suffered the severe effects of Malaria - nine times and was eventually sent to England for rest and rehabilitation.

While he was there Ken Wells, a 48th piper who had been taken out of the unit when he was discovered to be under age, used to come and sign Bill out and take him to the pub.

Somehow when he was transferred between trains enroute to the convalescent hospital the Railway Transport Officer didn’t turn over the paperwork and Pte Elms was listed as missing. By early 1945 his mother received notice from the Ministry of Defence that he was AWOL and considered to have deserted. His pay allotments and benefits were cancelled. His mother Lena began a voracious campaign telling them that he was in fact still writing to her but to no avail. When RQMS Tommy Church arrived back in the neighbourhood and went to see Bill’s parents, him mother said “I guess you have heard the terrible news about Bill being accused of desertion?” who Tommy replied...”Well, I visited him last week at the hospital in Kingsbridge and I’m pretty sure he is still there”. Everything was reversed and George and Lena received an apology from the Minister. Bill was home by VE Day.



1945 - 1955 - FAMILY, CIVILIAN LIFE AND RETURN TO THE REGIMENT

Bill returned to Toronto in March 1945 and transferred to the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. He went to work for General Steel Wares as a draftsman and would work for them for the next 22 years moving through a variety of positions in operations, administration and sales management until he left the company in 1968.

1 October 1945 was a significant date in the history of the Highlanders. On that rainy day 1st Battalion, 48th Highlanders returned to Toronto. They de-trained at Union Station and marched past City Hall and into University Avenue Armouries to be dismissed for the last time by Lt-Col Jim Counsell. It is easy to pick out Dmr Bill Elms in the overhead shot of the Pipes and Drums leading the wartime unit down University Avenue. He is the only one without a drum - just a bugle. There was a good reason for that. He was getting married that afternoon and as soon as the order to “Dismiss” was given he had to quickly change and rush to Manor Road United Church in North Toronto to marry Norma Morrison - a champion highland dancer he first met before the war at a highland games. During the war they started out as penpals and after Bill came home they began dating. Within a few months they were engaged. They were piped in to the reception by two members of the Toronto Girls Pipe Band. Norma



HIGHLANDER PROFILES

had played the pipes in that band and also served as Drum Major.

After a short honeymoon in Rochester, Bill was back in time to be on parade with his bugle when the Regimental Colours were ceremonially returned to the newly reconstituted 48th Highlanders of Canada at Varsity Stadium on 7 November 1945. With the help of his best friends, George Baker and Joe Riley the newlyweds moved out of his parents house into a basement apartment on Pitman Avenue.

After six years away many Highlanders came home and decided that it was time to re-establish (or more accurately establish) their lives, careers and families. After the war the Regiment went through many changes. Bill stayed with the Pipes & Drums. In the reconstituted band he became the lead drummer and bugler...and he was still the top shot in the Regiment.

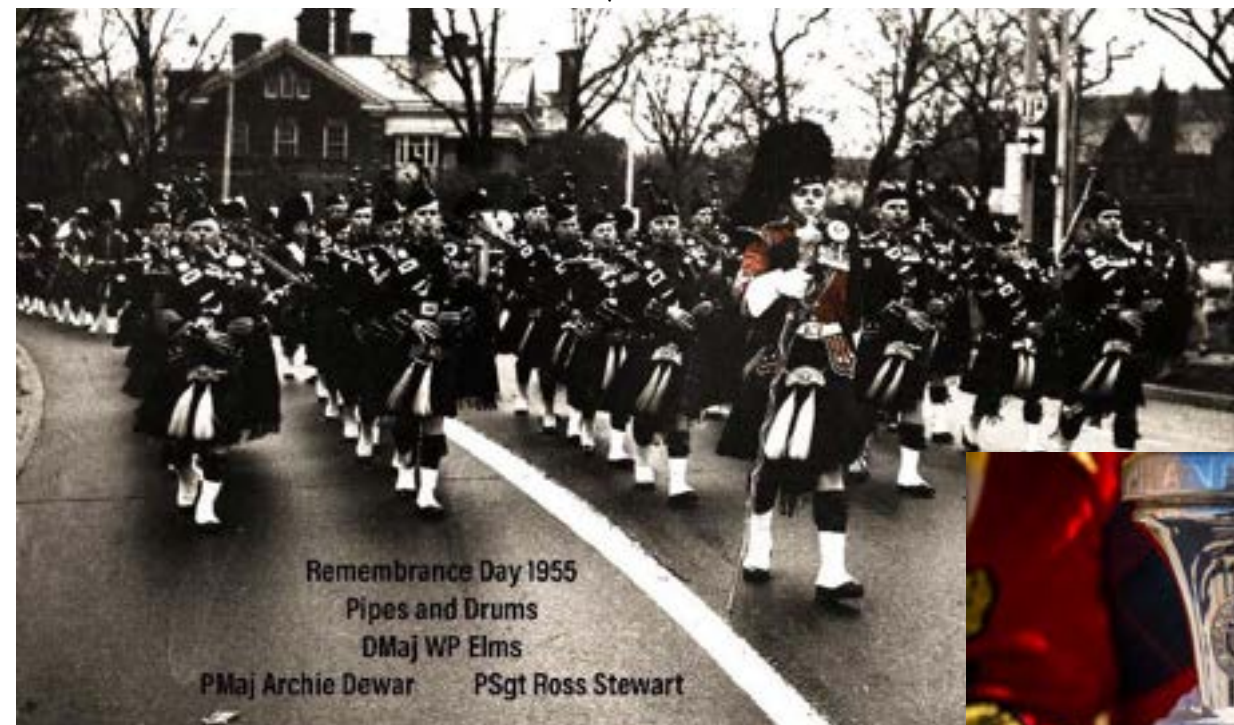
Capt George Elms was the Commanding Officer of the new 48th Highlanders Cadet Corps which had its roots in the Toronto Rotary Highlanders. After 43 years as a Highlander, George retired. He continued to volunteer as a shooting and hunter safety instructor for the Corps and for the Air Cadet corps at Danforth Tech. The property on East Moore Lake now had a small cabin on it, and Bill was recruited to help as it developed to a family cottage. Using a chisel and black printer's ink George carved a 48th badge into the rock face that looks onto the lake.

Bill's work at General Steel Wares and the pipe band kept him busy. Norma carried on with Highland Dancing and won several championships across North America. They moved to a new house on Balliol Street in North Toronto. Sons Georgie and Billy were born in



1953 and 1955. Both were christened by the wartime 48th Padre - Stewart East at Islington United Church. Norma gave up dancing after the two boys were born but kept on teaching and judging.

In January 1955 he became the Drum Major of the 48th Highlanders Pipes and Drums. During the 1950s and 1960s under Archie Dewar's tenure as Pipe Major, the 48th Highlanders Pipe Band was one of the top competing bands in Canada winning six North American Championships. During this era pipers and drummers were Infantrymen who had a second (or third) trade qualification. At Niagara they did courses and were tested to upgrade their trade qualifications. Bill was the first in the Canadian Army (Regular or Reserve) to qualify as a Group 3 Drum Major. In 1955 he did consider an offer from Maj-Gen Rowley (Colonel of The Regiment) to become Drum Major of the newly formed 4th Battalion, Regiment of Canadian Guards being formed at Camp Ipperwash. He had just become, and loved being the Drum Major of the 48th Highlanders. He could never leave the Highlanders and so turned them down. He would continue to wear Davidson tartan for another 25 years.



THE 15TH BATALLION CEF MEMORIAL PROJECT

HILL 60 MEMORIAL SITE APPROVED

by Brigadier General (ret) G. Young OMM, MSM, CD
Chairman 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project

It was entirely fitting that on the day that Lieutenant Colonel William Marshall DSO was KIA at Hill 60 on May 19, 1916 that on May 19, 2021 I received official confirmation from Ieper City Council that the proposal for a memorial to him and the 15th Battalion at Hill 60 had finally been approved.

This will be the 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project's eleventh memorial in Europe and the process to secure a site at Hill 60 began in 2016. The City of Ieper owns the site selected at Hill 60 and as The Memorial Project and The City had jointly worked together in 2010 to erect the 15th Battalion memorial at Observatory Ridge (Mount Sorrel), approval seemed to be a strong possibility. However, when the proposal was submitted in 2016 it was deferred by City Council as they were being inundated with similar requests during the Great War Centenary and decided to defer all requests until 2019. It was resubmitted in 2019 but not supported by some members of Council who felt the Ieper area as a whole already enough Great War memorials. Following the 2020 municipal elections I was pleasantly surprised to receive communications that the new Mayor and Council might be receptive to the memorial. The proposal was resubmitted, presented to Council by our strong Belgian Project Team members and supporters and was approved. Patience, perseverance, hard work and good friends 'on-the-ground' secured the objective.

By way of brief historical background, during The Great War 1914-1918 the Ypres salient in general, and Hill 60 south of Zillebeke in particular, was arguably regarded as one of the deadliest sections of The Western Front. Hill 60 was not a natural terrain feature. It was 750' long and 150' high spoil heap made from the diggings of a cutting for the Ypres-Comines railway in 1854. The hill formed a low rise on the crest of Ypres ridge and was named after the contour which marked its boundary. The ground had been captured by the Germans from the French in 1914 and remained in German hands until 1917. Because it was higher ground in a relatively flat landscape, Hill 60 had great strategic importance. The elevated ground gave the Germans excellent line of site down onto the Allied trenches and the opposing front line trenches were quite close to each other. Trench tours in the Hill 60 sector were routine, tedious and extremely deadly with routine shelling by artillery and especially trench mortars. Because of the stagnant positions, mining was a frequent activity at Hill 60 and readers may be familiar with 2010 movie 'Beneath Hill 60' depicting the actions of Australian tunnellers. In fact, 15th Battalion Captain Norman Perry, who had been a mining engineer before the war, survived 2nd Ypres in 1915 because he had been seconded to the British engineers at Hill 60 and was responsible for the detonation of a mine under the German front line that caused heavy casualties.

The Ypres salient area was well known to the Canadians and the men

of the 15th Battalion as there had been the large and costly battles at 2nd Ypres in April 1915 and at Mount Sorrel in June the following year. But between July 1915 and June 1916 there was a long period of front line trench tours first in the Ploegsteert -Messines Road sector from June 1915 to July 1916 and finally at The Bluff and Railway Cut area at Hill 60 throughout June 1916.

The high ground at Hill 60 gave German snipers an excellent vantage point and records show that the 15th Battalion suffered a significant number of casualties from snipers. One of those casualties was Lieutenant Colonel Marshall who was hit in the head by a sniper when he was crossing a gap in the line near the railway cutting on May 19, 1916. He died while being evacuated and was buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery.



Hill 60 is relatively undisturbed - craters, bunkers, etc and is one of the most visited Great War sites in Belgium. The new memorial will be erected on the site of Section 39 of the front line trench in front of Hill 60 where Marshall was KIA and it will be similar in structure to the 15th Battalion memorial on Observatory Ridge but with the addition of a display panel similar to those at the 15th Battalion memorial at Vimy in Ecurie.

The main bronze dedication plaque and the display panel will tell the story of the 15th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall and Canadian tunnellers at Hill 60. Final design and text work is ongoing as is work to secure contractors for the bronze plaque, brick structure and display panel. Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, a date for dedication has yet to be determined.

The Hill 60 memorial is likely the last of the memorials the 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project will erect in Belgium and France. The first memorials erected in 2010 at St Julien, Gravenstafel ridge and The Crow's Nest were followed in pairs almost annually at Festubert, Observatory ridge (Mount Sorrel), Benifontaine (Hill 70), Courcellette (Somme), Warvillers (Amiens), Marquion (C anal du Nord) and Ecurie (Vimy). These memorials form a commemoration trail - possibly to be named 'The Dileas Trail' -that mark the footsteps of the 15th Battalion and The Canadian Corps along the Western Front from 1915 to 1918.

4 HIGHLANDERS WHO HAVE SERVED WITH HONOUR



Pipe Major Iain Lang who will be retiring from the CAF after 34 years of service, and 15 years as the Pipe Major. MWO Lang and his wife will be retiring to Nova Scotia at some point in 2021. His exact retirement date is still to be confirmed



WO Peter Ross who will be retiring from the CAF in July 2021 after 44 years for service. WO Ross is best known as the long serving WO & Sgt Mess PMC, his vast experience as a CQMS and as a Driver Instructor at the BSL.



Band SM John Murray who will be retiring from the CAF in July after 40 years of service. He has been a key part of the Military Band for years, and was vital in keeping this part of the Regiment together when the Mil Band was reduced to nil strength, and transitioned to a volunteer band. He is best known as the Bugler sounding the Officers Call, on parades, and playing Last Post and Reveille during countless Acts of Remembrance.



Capt Bill Darling who will also be retiring from the CAF in July 2021 after 40 years of service. Capt Darling was the RSM from 1999-2002. He subsequently went on to be RSM 32 CBG BSL, Bde SM 32 CBG, 4 Div Reserve SM, Army Reserve Training SM at CADTC. He then CFR'd and returned to the Regt as OC Admin Coy and OC Trg Coy.

THE 1ST BN COMPLETES ITS FINAL TASK IN EUROPE AND, FIVE MONTHS LATER RETURNS HOME TO CANADA



LEFT: Leading surrendered German Troops, Rotterdam, 10 May 1945.
Highlanders in a captured German staff car lead German troops on foot to the concentration area near Rotterdam. On 9 May at the Hague, the 48th learned that they were the jailers to surrendering German troops. They set the Germans to build their own concentration camp and police themselves within the barbed wire.

BELOW: The 48th return home to Toronto, 1 October 1945.
With the pipes and drums in the lead, Lieutenant-Colonel J.R.O. Counsell, DSO, leads his regiment home past Union Station. Thousands turned out to greet them, many seeing loved ones for the first time since they had departed almost six years before in December 1939.

