

# THE FALCON BULLETIN



ISSUE NO. 8

The OFFICIAL EVENT UPDATE of the 48<sup>TH</sup> HIGHLANDERS of CANADA

OCTOBER 2020

## FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICERS DESK

### ***Greetings Highlanders -***

You'll recall that back in May, the FALCON Staff issued a Bulletin on my behalf announcing that we were undertaking two major Regimental projects:

- Restructuring the Regimental Association; and
- Updating our Social Media profile.

In the past four and half months, significant progress has been made - enough so that I want to bring you up to speed on where we stand, the next steps, and the expected timeline for implementation.

Let me start by noting that the work of both teams has been closely integrated between the Regimental Family and the Active Unit. The teams were both comprised of members of the Active Unit and members of the Regimental Family to ensure that the needs of all 48th Highlanders - past and present were met.

### **Regimental Association Restructuring**

This team comprised of:

- BGen (Ret) Young
- Col (Ret) Elms
- Maj Morische (DCO)
- Capt Darling
- Ms. Sasha Darling (Member of the Regt Senate)

They contacted members of the various branches of the Regimental Family, spoke to former serving and current serving members of the Regiment, conducted polls and asked for feedback about what a Regimental Association needs to do, should do, and what role it needs to fill.

Once this investigation phase was complete, they started looking at the structure, what structures other Regimental Associations use, and what would fit the 48th Highlanders of Canada.

The recommendation that they have come up with is a Regimental Association that in many



ways resembles an "Alumni Group". By this, the Team means that rather than a number of smaller, selective branches (OCA / P&D Association / Continuing Sergeants' Association / Ladies Auxiliary / Officers' Association), the best way forward is for everyone to join the 48th Highlanders Association. Just as we all wear (or wore) the same cap badge when we served, so we should all be members of the same association when our service is complete.

The other major implication of this proposed restructuring is that the new Association will not be tied to "bricks and mortar" meetings.

For many, many years (from shortly after WWI to into the 2000's) the Regimental Association had a building to call home - initially on Church Street, then on King Street, and finally on Leslie Street. Although the OCA still has a home in the WO & Sgt Mess, traditional "in-person gatherings" have become less and less important, to the point where today almost none of the current branches of the Regimental Family meet outside of key events (Remembrance Day, Act of Remembrance Parade, Changes of CO and RSM, Mess Dinners). Another factor is that most of the current and former members do not live in downtown Toronto any longer. So, instead of meeting in person, many of us stay in contact by other means - Facebook, and Instagram. The Team envisions that most, if not all, of the business of the Regimental Association will be conducted on-line.

Of course, Association members will always be welcome to support the traditional regimental events, throughout the year, that have particular interest and value to them - I'm thinking specifically of the OCA Drill Team & Colour Party, CSA and P&D support.

The Team also reported that there is widespread consensus to form the single new Regimental Association during their presentation to me, the HCol and the Regimental Senate.

As they were instrumental in developing the new structure, I have asked BGen Young and Col Elms to remain as members of an Interim Association Executive

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for a period of one year during which we will transition from the current association structure to the new one. The Interim Executive will mirror the composition of the proposed new Association Executive and its other members will be identified later.

I recognize that there may be a need for questions and answers by members of the Regimental Family. I had anticipated holding a Regimental Town Hall meeting at Moss Park Armoury to provide details of the new Regimental Association structure and governance. However, with COVID restrictions on the size of gatherings still in place, that is not going to be possible. Accordingly, the Team and I are looking to hosting this meeting over ZOOM.

But before we do so, we are going to send out a link to a simple survey asking if there is a need to have an online meeting. Do you - the members of the Regimental Association feel the need for a meeting to discuss this restructuring? I'm thinking that if 66% of the survey respondents indicate that there is no need to have a meeting, then we will just move forward and implement the new Regimental Association effective 01 January, 2021. If the responses indicate that the ZOOM Meeting is warranted, then the Team will provide their report and recommendations prior to the ZOOM meeting.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to either Col Elms or BGen Young.

## **Social Media**

This team comprised of:

- Col (Ret) Bill Jensen
- Capt Javin Lau
- Mr. Hunter Knifton (Navigator)
- Mr. Spencer Daniel (Navigator)
- Ms. Sasha Darling (Member of the Regt Senate)

For those of you who don't know, Mr. Jaime Watt is a member of the Regimental Senate. He is also the Principal of Navigator, a strategic communications company. He offered the expertise of his company to assist this group in working their way through the challenges that I put before them.

It quickly became apparent that the Social Media Team should have been named the Regimental Communications Team. Similar to what happens on operations, they experienced "mission creep" - taking on more and more as new factors came to light.

As they worked through the problems, they realized that their work needed to include the website and the FALCON, in addition to various social media platforms.

Similar to the Regimental Association Restructuring Team, this team also made a presentation to me, the HCol and the Regimental Senate. They have recommended

that the Regimental website be redeveloped - not updated, but totally redeveloped. They also recommended that we make better use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, along with making the FALCON an electronic only publication - you'll note that my FALCON Bulletins are already digital only.

The work on redeveloping the website is underway. I'm hopeful that we will have the new website in place by 01 January, 2021. We are also looking to move forward with only one Regimental Facebook Site, along with the Instagram site and a new Twitter account. Some of these changes may be able to be implemented prior to 01 Jan 21.

## **Conclusion and Your Help**

As you've no doubt noticed by now, the efforts of these two teams are converging, and for both to be effective, they need each other. As we move forward, I see these two teams eventually merging into one.

I had originally identified 30 November as the date we wanted to have the new Regimental Association structure to be in place, and for the new communications platforms to be in place. This was an aggressive timeline - especially given the restrictions of COVID. However, huge progress has been made - to use an infantry term, "we are well down the trace". I'd like to express my thanks and appreciation to all members of both Teams - your work has been outstanding. The Regiment will function better due to your efforts.

To everyone else - as these systems and platforms go live, I truly hope that you'll join the new 48th Highlanders Association, and that you'll provide your name and email address so that we can build on the list we already have.

I have engaged with the HCol and the Regt Trust, and can confirm that there will be no dues or costs to individuals to belong to the 48th Highlanders Association.

I'm also hoping that you'll invite any former members of the Regiment and the Regimental Family, that you are in contact with, to get back in touch with us as well, so that we can keep you up to speed with what is going on in your Regiment, and with the people you soldiered with.

## ***DILEAS GU BRATH***

***R.A. Alkema***  
***Lieutenant-Colonel***  
***Commanding Officer***  
***48th Highlanders of Canada*** 