

THE FALCON BULLETIN



ISSUE NO. 5

The OFFICIAL EVENT UPDATE of THE 48TH HIGHLANDERS of CANADA

MAY 2020

FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICERS DESK

Greetings Highlanders -

You are no doubt well aware of the impacts that COVID 19 has had on the Active Regiment - we've had to suspend all training and administration nights; field training exercises have been cancelled, recruiting has been put on hold, all summer training has been cancelled.

COVID 19 has also had an impact on the Regimental Family - the Old Comrades Meetings and the IODE Luncheon have been postponed; the Officer Association Dinner, Mackenzie Shoot and Act of Remembrance Parade were cancelled. The Cadet Annual Inspection has been cancelled. Fortissimo (the P&D participation at Parliament Hill in July) has been cancelled. Every aspect of the Regiment has been touched - actually more like grabbed by the throat and shaken - by COVID 19.

However, there is a benefit. The time that would have been spent conducting training and administration on Tuesday and Friday nights, and on the FTX weekends has been directed to other matters that also demand attention, but were never given sufficient time. The RSM, DCO, Adjt, OCs, DSM, PM and I have been able to direct our attention to some of these matters. But not just us - we've engaged with the Regimental Senate, and other various stake holders - the Old Comrades Association, the Continuing Sergeants Association and the Officers' Association.

With that in mind, I'd like to bring you up to speed on two matters.

1. Regimental Associations Restructuring

If you read the paragraphs above, you will see that I mentioned several branches of the Regimental Family:

- Old Comrades Association
- Continuing Sergeants Association
- Officers' Association
- IODE

There are more:

- The Pipe & Drums Association
- The Ladies Auxiliary

Each of these branches have several things in common - an executive (President, Treasurer, possibly a Secretary), but more significantly, despite the thousands of soldiers who have passed through The Regiment in the last 50 years, they suffer from declining membership, and ever decreasing numbers in attendance at major Regimental Events - Remembrance Day, Act of Remembrance Parade, Changes of CO and RSM.

I'm not poking anyone here, just noting the facts as they are. Many other organizations have the same challenge - Legions, Lions Clubs, and Shriners to mention a few.



To me this means that the Regimental Associations are not filling a need, or providing a service that our former members want, this is all the more interesting since the following on the Regimental Facebook site is in the thousands.

I see that although former Highlanders want to stay in touch with their mates, and know what is going on at the Regiment, participation in events, or attendance at large gatherings is not a priority any longer. And that's fair. However, it also means that the Regimental Associations need to change to better address the needs and desires of our former members. As the Commanding Officer, I have been requested to attend meetings by some of our Regimental Family Branches where they raised the topic of Regimental Associations, and expressed concern that the current structure is no longer viable.

Therefore, the Active Regiment under me and the Regimental Family under the HCol have put together a Team to review the current structure of the Regimental Associations, and to determine what a restructured Regimental Association should look like. This team is made up of senior members from the Regimental Family and current serving members - all have well established credentials, and have expressed an interest in working as part of this team. They are an eclectic mix who have been given a complex and challenging task. Team members are:

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

I would encourage you to reach out to the members of this team with any of your concerns and suggestions of how a restructured Regimental Association can become a vital component of the Regimental Family. What does it need to do, how can the Regimental Association be appealing to you? This goes for current serving soldiers as well as for former members.

You can reach the Regimental Association Restructuring Team at:

highlandersassociation21@icloud.com

I have literally served with thousands of you - yet I never see or hear from you. Let's change that.

2. Social Media

I believe that the Regimental brand is important. Many of us got into a scrap when we were younger, as a result of a real (or perceived) slag against our cap badge or the good name of our Regiment. Social media is a vital component of today's society. We need to make sure that our brand, our platforms, our messages and our content is current, interesting, and appealing.

To that end, we are also standing up a Team to figure out what our social media profile needs to look like - probably a new and updated website, a Facebook page and Instagram. We need to have a way to incorporate the FALCON. We need to have a virtual place where members and former members can connect. We need to tell the story of the Regiment, why we do what we do,

As we possibly transition to a virtual Regimental Association, our social media profile becomes more important. We need to be able to use whatever platform we select to pass on messages to all of you, so that the Regiment is not just your past, but part of your present and your future as well. There will be a link to Regimental merchandise, the Regimental Museum, and the 15th Battalion CEF Memorial Project

This team will have a slightly different flavour than the Regimental Association Restructuring Team - this one will be younger, more tech savvy, and given the task of putting our brand and our messages out for all to see.

Mr. Jaime Watt is the Executive Chairman of Navigator Ltd, a strategic communications firm, and a member of the Regimental Senate. He is part of this team, as is Col (Ret) Bill Jensen. Capt Javin Lau, along with several other members of the Active Regiment will also be part of this team. So too is Sasha Darling - she is on both Teams to ensure that there is synergy, coordination, sharing of knowledge and no duplication of effort.

This Team will identify and select the platform, and work to keep the content fresh, applicable and current so that social media will become the primary means of communications between the Regiment and Regimental Family.

These are exciting projects, and they will go a long way to keep the Regiment relevant to our serving soldiers, former members and hopefully, to the citizens of the Country that we serve.

I have given both Teams an aggressive timeline that will see the Restructured Regimental Association in place, and the new website and social media program up and running before the end of November, 2020.

We want to get this right, and I encourage you to become involved in the discussions. This is your Regiment. The decisions made will impact you. So, please contact the various team members with comments and suggestions on how to restructure the Regimental Association so that it is relevant to all of us, and so that we can keep the 48th Highlanders of Canada firmly in the public eye.

DILEAS GU BRATH

R.A. Alkema
LCol
CO

