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THE QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES OF CANADA CHAPTER  
Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire

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A History of the First Fifty Years



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The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Chapter, I.O.D.E., under the guidance of Lady Pellatt, was organized by Mrs. Arthur Van Koughnet, Honorary Organizing Secretary, National Chapter of Canada, on February 4th, 1908, with the following Charter members:-

Lady Pellatt	Mrs. A. G. Peuchen	Mrs. F. K. Winnett
Mrs. P. L. Mason	Mrs. R. C. Levesconte	Mrs. E. C. Cayley
Mrs. Robert Rennie	Mrs. George Royce	Mrs. J. A. Cooper
Mrs. J. M. Davison		

The Chapter adopted as their motto that of the Regiment - "In Pace Paratus".

Some months later, Lady Roberts was appointed as Honorary Regent.

It was decided to call a meeting of the wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters over 14 years of age of the officers, ex-officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Regiment on March 11th in the Armouries. This meeting was addressed by Mrs. Van Koughnet who spoke of the aims and objects of the Order. The roll was signed by 49, and various committees were formed to carry on the work of the Chapter.

The first large fund raising entertainment undertaken by the members was in November, 1908, when a Grand Olla Podrida was held in the Armouries. (This can be described as a "mixture of gayeties" - many forms of dancing; games, fortune telling, raffles, a Tea room, etc.) This event was under the guidance of the Regent, Lady Pellatt, with assistance from the Sergeants of the Regiment, and proved a great success both socially and financially. With a substantial sum to their credit the members were able to devote their energy to assisting the men of the Regiment, which must primarily be the object of a military Chapter.

By the end of the first year of being organized the Chapter had 143 members, and by February, 1913, 212 members' names were on the roll.

In order to encourage rifle shooting, it was decided to donate a Ross rifle for competition among the Tyros. This was so much appreciated that it became an annual donation, and later the Chapter undertook to also present annually a Ross rifle to the Queen's Own Rifles Cadets, and to the Upper Canada College Cadets. The members of the Chapter were also of assistance to the Regiment at the time of the celebration of its 50th Anniversary in June, 1910. Many of the members took part in the historical pageants which were held for one week at the Exhibition grounds, which illustrated events in Canadian history, the War of 1812 - Rebellion of 1837 - and the Landing of the United Empire Loyalists.

The ladies enthusiastically formed the Queen's Own Rifles Ladies' Rifles Club in 1909, which however successful, had to be disbanded in 1911.



In 1910 The Queen's Own Rifles Chapter in conjunction with the Royal Grenadiers and the 48th Highlanders Chapters, erected tablets in the churches at Battleford and Vanda in memory of those who fell during the North-West Rebellion. A tombstone was also erected over the grave in Bisley churchyard of the late Colour Sergeant Greet, a member of the Bisley team, who died while in England with the team.

At the Annual meeting of the Chapter in February, 1910, a resolution was passed commending Sir Henry Pellatt in providing for the proposed visit of the Regiment to England. This event had National and Imperial significance and would do much to further esprit de corps amongst the soldiers of the Empire.

In May, 1911, the men of the Regiment gave a fine entertainment in the Armouries with lantern slides illustrating their recent visit to England and the participation of the Regiment in the English manoeuvres. The Chapter assisted by taking charge of the refreshment booths.

The retirement of Lady Pellatt as Regent of the Chapter in 1911 was an occasion of great regret, and recognition of her work and leadership was made at the Annual meeting. Two years later in 1913 a Life Membership in the Chapter was presented to Lady Pellatt, and a beautiful gold and enamel badge of the Order, suitably inscribed - "To Lady Pellatt, a Life Membership, Queen's Own Rifles Chapter." The first flag of the Chapter was also presented to Lady Pellatt, which she graciously accepted, on consideration that it be used for decorative purposes whenever needed, and that it be known as "Lady Pellatt's flag".

The general meetings of the Chapter were lively and interesting, and it is to be noted that the minutes of their meetings were explicit in detail and colourful in wording. On reading these minutes one has the feeling that vision and direct approach made team work amongst Chapter members pleasant and profitable. Many papers were read at these meetings, on such interesting subjects as "Women's Work", "A Voyage to Canada in 1815", "The Influence of Women on the History of Canada", etc. These papers were compiled and ready by members of the Chapter.

In May, 1912, the Queen's Own Rifles Chapter was called upon, along with the Royal Grenadiers and the 48th Highlanders Chapters, to assist at a Band concert of the three Regiments to raise money in aid of the families of the bandsmen who lost their lives on the Titanic. The Queen's Own Rifles Chapter, as well, donated \$50 to the Titanic Relief Fund.

In 1913 the Chapter furnished a tent to be used by the Reading Camp Association as a night school and reading room in a Northern Ontario lumber camp. They also agreed to provide annually \$100 for the maintenance of a cot in the I.O.D.E. Preventorium for Children (now known as the I.O.D.E. Children's Hospital). Christmas parties were given for the children of men of the Regiment, when toys, candy and clothing were distributed. Financial help was given also to many families of men serving with the Regiment. That year Chapter fees had been raised from 50¢ to \$1.00 per member.



The sewing club in connection with the Chapter met once a month during the winters, and made useful garments to be distributed to various charitable institutions. It was also a source of gratification to the members to know that flowers sent to any member of the Chapter who had been ill were greatly appreciated.

By means of Musicales, Concerts, Lectures, and Talent Teas the members enthusiastically joined in the work of raising money for the Chapter. An illustration of the creative ideas of the members and the delightful way of recording such events for posterity in the minutes, can be summed up in a description of a large and important event - "The Fair of All Nations", and the participation of two members of the Chapter as Fortune Tellers, staffing a booth for three nights, and quote from the minutes, - "quite suitably chaperoned"!

There was no lack of interest in the Chapter meetings, and a varied program was offered to include speakers, and musical entertainment often contributed by Chapter members. Of great interest was an address at a meeting in 1913, given by a settlement worker, who spoke of the work with New Canadians, and mentioned classes in English being held three nights a week for six hundred New Canadians. An interesting side note - apparently the Treasurer had some difficulty collecting fees during these early days!

The Queen's Own Rifles Chapter took an active interest in all aspects of the work of the Order, especially in Rose Day, and was represented at a special meeting of the I.O.D.E. called to discuss the formation of a Municipal Chapter of Toronto in 1912. These were important formative years for the Chapter, and such names as Lady Roberts, Lady Pellatt, Mrs. Melville White, Mrs. Wallace Barrett, Mrs. Ambrose Small, and others, contributed in no small way to its progress.

Then came the war years, and the work of the Chapter had really begun. Such names as St. Julien, Somme, Vimy and Paschendaele were being added to Salisbury and Valcartier. Expenses mounted higher and higher! Members worked harder to replenish the treasury. During the First World War, 4000 visits were made to soldiers' families; 8,538 pairs of socks, and many hundreds of sweaters, were knit; 66,978 sewn articles, such as pyjamas, children's clothing, etc., were contributed to the Red Cross. \$17,776 were donated to Prisoners of War Fund; \$1500 for Christmas stockings for men overseas; and upkeep of 4 beds at Shorncliffe Hospital in England. Annual donation of \$100 for upkeep of a cot at the Preventorium; \$120 for new Drums for the 35 Battalion; and the annual presentation of a Ross rifle. Flowers were placed each week on the General Mercer Memorial Tablet, and \$200 donated to the I.O.D.E. First War Memorial.

The years following the war, 1920 to 1925, were very active and the members carried on their relief and help to members of the Regiment. I.O.D.E. commitments were also met; Christmas presents to patients at Christie St. Hospital, gifts to the Buglers' Mess; and the redecorating of the Sergeants' Mess. The Chapter now entered new fields of Educational work for the I.O.D.E. They took an active interest in two adopted schools, one at Kapuskasing, and one at White



Fox, Sask., and a prize was awarded for the best essay on the flag. Work continued for the Red Cross, City relief, and the Navy League. Fees were raised to \$1.50, and there was a membership of 133 - all paid up! In 1922 a permanent light was installed by the Chapter over the memorial Tablet to General Mercer which hangs under the Gallery in the Armouries, and arrangements were made to have it lighted on all Battalion parade nights. Talent Teas were popular, as well as Theatre nights, and the patronage of such notables as General Sir William Otter, Maj. General Sir Henry Pellatt, Brig. General Robert Rennie, was sought and gladly given. The decorating of the graves of deceased members of the Regiment was an annual event.

The death of Lady Pellatt in 1924 was deeply felt by the members, and a memorial in the form of entrance gates to the Girl Guide Camp at King, Ontario, were erected in her name. Lady Pellatt had been the first Girl Guide Commissioner in Canada. In 1924 the Sergeants' Mess presented the Chapter with a beautiful silver Loving Cup in appreciation of the help given them by Chapter members. A large Band Concert was held that year, proceeds of which purchased new uniforms for the Queen's Own Rifles Band, and members of the Chapter staffed the refreshment booths.

During the following years, 1925 to 1932, and at the beginning of a long, financial depression, the members continued their welfare work. In 1926, \$2000 was raised for the endowment of the cot at the Preventorium, always to be known thereafter as "The Queen's Own Rifles Cot". Donations were made to the I.O.D.E. National War Memorial; welfare work at Christie St. Hospital, Neighborhood Workers, and the Hospital for Sick Children; new curtains were purchased for the windows in the Buglers' Mess. In 1932, \$700 was contributed to the Queen's Own Rifles Regimental Memorial, the Cross of Sacrifice, at St. Paul's Church, Toronto. Speakers, or entertainment, continued as usual at Chapter meetings. A successful Theatre night at the Victoria Theatre, bridges, and a Birthday Tea, helped to raise the necessary funds.

From 1933 to 1939, this welfare and relief work continued. 43 pairs of boots were provided to the men of the Regiment to enable them to participate in parades; Christmas parties for children, and relief work among immigrants. The death of a beloved Regent, Mrs. J. D. Allen, was deeply regretted, and the Grace C. Allen Memorial Fund was started. Talent Teas continued, as well as raffles, bridges, and box lunch meetings were popular. In 1937 the first reception for New Canadians was held at the City Hall under the auspices of the I.O.D.E., and the Standard of the Queen's Own Rifles Chapter was present. A huge Carnival in the Armouries raised \$1,168 for the work of the Chapter.

1939-1949. Another War, and another all-out effort on the part of the Chapter members, which illustrated the meaning of their adopted motto "In Pace Paratus" - in peace prepared. During these War years the Chapter contributed vast amounts of clothing, knitting and sewing, cigarettes and candy, to the men on active service, and to the I.O.D.E. By now there were three Battalions of the Queen's Own Rifles, and the welfare work was tripled. Visits were made to men in hospital; bereaved families of Q.O.R men were visited and received flowers;



I.O.D.E. War Memorial obligations were met. Chapter members attended weekly sewing meetings, held raffles, bingoes, parties for families of service personnel. Supported the Poppy Fund and Rose Tag Day, sent Christmas gifts to children in the adopted northern school, met Troop trains, worked with the Unit Auxiliaries.

Several Chapter meetings were held in the suite of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Albert Mathews. These were delightful occasions, and enjoyed by all the members. At one such meeting 21 new members were received into the Chapter, and Lt.-Col. Baptist Johnston spoke on the history of the Regiment. Memorial services for deceased members of the Regiment were held in the Armouries, with Bishop Renison as the speaker. In 1941, a quilt, made by Chapter members, had been presented to Her Majesty the Queen, by Lt.-Col. H. C. Mackendrick, on behalf of the Chapter, to be raffled for one of Her Majesty's charities.

In 1947 a new Standard was presented to the Chapter by Brigadier and Mrs. J. G. Spragge, and Canon Wilkinson, now Bishop of Toronto, conducted the service of dedication. A very successful Bazaar was held by the Chapter and \$1.712 raised towards welfare work.

1949-1958. Luncheon meetings were started and proved very enjoyable to all members. Fees were raised to \$3.00 in 1949, and again to \$4.00 in 1957. Donations were made to the Regiment in appreciation of their co-operation and support over the years, and these gifts were greatly appreciated. Christmas, 1951 - gifts of candies, crackers, nuts, etc., were sent to the Q.O.R. Company in West Germany. These troops were part of the first Nato Forces stationed in Europe. In 1953 a picture of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, was presented to the Odeon Danforth Theatre. Also in 1953, Her Majesty Queen Mary, Colonel-in-Chief of the Queen's Own Rifles Regiment, died, and the Chapter cancelled all activities for the period of Court mourning. The Book of Remembrance in St. Paul's Church had been brought up to date and the Chapter presented a new Book Mark to separate the names of the deceased members of the Regiment of two World Wars. The Book Mark was in Rifle green embroidered with the Queen's Own Rifles Regimental Crest. The Chapter supported enthusiastically all I.O.D.E. projects, and the Chapter Standard was present at Annual I.O.D.E. Church services, Memorial services at Strachan Ave. Burial Grounds, and Citizenship ceremonies at the City Hall. At the two annual memorial services held by the Regiment in St. Paul's Church the Chapter is privileged to place a wreath on the Cross of Sacrifice. The Chapter assisted in a drive for used clothing to help relief work amongst the victims of Hurricane Hazel, and the Winnipeg Flood. The newly formed Queen's Own Rifles Auxiliary in Calgary, received a \$100 donation from the Chapter towards a Christmas party for men of the Battalion, and in 1955 a Christmas present in the form of excellent prints of the Battle of Cut Knife Creek, North-West Rebellion, were made to the Officers' Mess of the two out-of-town Battalions, and similar prints were presented to the Sergeants' Mess and the Men's Canteen. Again at Christmas in 1956 a picture of a Canadian scene was sent to the Regiment stationed at Gordon Head, and excellent hard-covered books to the Regiment at Calgary. The Chapter served as hostesses at a Citizenship Reception



at the City Hall, and a special tea for New Canadians held at the International Institute. The Chapter made donations of magazines to the British Sailors' Society, and were delighted to have the Field Secretary of the British Sailors' Society (Canada), and also the padre of the Regiment, Captain the Reverend Richard Newsham, speak of this work at one of their meetings.

In 1956 a new scroll for the Standard was purchased and engraved. In 1956 and 1957 two very successful Film Nights were held in the Armouries, to which the Officers and their wives and friends were invited. Two of the I.O.D.E. films were shown, as part of the programs. In January, 1957, the Toronto Scottish Regiment Chapter was formed, and at the Bestowel ceremony held at Municipal Headquarters, the Queen's Own Rifles Chapter presented the new Chapter with a beautiful Membership Book, suitably inscribed. During the summer of 1957 members of the Chapter helped to staff the Immigrant Welcome Centre at the Union Station and Malton Airport, and assisted in the Emergency Housing Registry at the Union Station. A bequest of \$300 from the late Mrs. A. E. Kirkpatrick, a former Regent, and Life Member of the Chapter, was made to the Chapter, and two beautiful coffee urns were purchased with the money and inscribed as a suitable memorial. Many Chapter members have served as officers of the National Chapter of Canada, and the Municipal Chapter of Toronto, and some have received Life Memberships in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the Order.

The present members of the Queen's Own Rifles Chapter look back with pride and wonder on the achievements of those early members, and to those who followed in their steps through peace and war, to peace again. Theirs was a high standard of effort, co-operation, and loyalty to the Regiment and to the I.O.D.E.

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January, 1958  
Historian: Mrs. H.C.W. Gill