

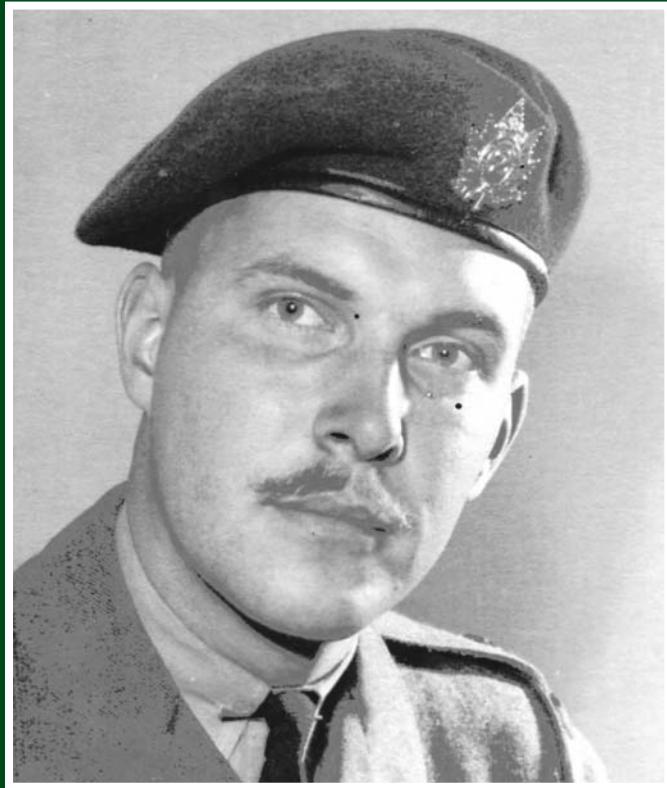


# The Powder Horn

In Pace Paratus

Fall 2012/Winter 2013

## 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion in Germany



2nd Lt Arthur C. Whealy, 1951



In the "Ratskeller," Germany, 1953



1st Canadian Rifle Battalion, Edinburgh Barracks, Hannover, Germany, April, 1952.



Published by The Trust Fund  
The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada





# 61 years ago 1st Canadian Rifle Bn sailed to Germany

It has been 61 years since the 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion sailed for foreign shores and NATO service in Germany and The Honourable Arthur C. Whealy, who died recently, was the last of eight officers from The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada's 1st (Reserve) Battalion who had volunteered to join the new battalion when it was formed. 57 other ranks from the reserve unit also joined, along with 120 new recruits. Following its formation the battalion mustered at Camp Valcartier, QC, for six months training. In October, 1CRB paraded to the Plains of Abraham where it was inspected by Princess Elizabeth during the first major tour of Canada by Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, one which would last 33 days and visit all parts of the country.

The 1st Canadian Rifles were created from five reserve regiments to be part of the 27th Canadian Infantry Brigade which was being assembled to be the first Canadian formation to join NATO in Europe. In addition to The Queen's Own Rifles, the battalion was recruited from the Victoria Rifles (which became A Company), Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (B Coy), Royal Winnipeg Rifles (C Coy) and Regina Rifles (D Coy), with the greatest number coming from The Queen's Own Rifles, which became Support Coy.

A graduate of Canada's Royal Military College, Lt Whealy was the son of Canadian World War One air ace Arthur Treloar Whealy, DSC & Bar, DFC, who was credited with 27 victories while serving with the British Royal Naval Air Service and, later, with the Royal Air Force.

Lt Whealy recalled that 1CRB formation was authorized on 5 May, 1951, and in transferring from reserve to active status, "everyone had to re-qualify in their nominal rank. I joined in the rank of 2/Lt and was promoted lieutenant in the summer of 1952, in Germany. The battalion only existed from 5 May, 1951 until 16 October, 1963, a period of 28 months. I was a member of it for all but 26 days of its life." Original regimental cap badges and shoulder flashes were worn with a grey patch in the shape of shield with a black horn on it worn on the left shoulder of the khaki battledress tunic.

Of the eight Queen's Own officers who volunteered, all but three were posted into 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion – Maj W.R. (Bill) Weir and Lts Healy, P.B.L. (Pete) MacKinnon, M. deC (Mike) O'Grady and M.B. (Mike) Symons. The others were dispersed to different regiments.

The 27th Brigade consisted of three infantry battalions (called PANDA, as in Pacific and Atlantic.) In addition to 1st Canadian Rifles, were 1st Canadian Infantry and 1st Canadian Highland Battalions, each drawing its per-

sonnel from rifles, line infantry or highland militia regiments. As an independent brigade, in addition to the infantry regiments, its complement included an armoured squadron, an artillery troop and contingents from supporting services. Brigade commander was Brig Geoffrey Walsh, DSO, who had served in Sicily and Italy in World War Two and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for "Gallant and Distinguished Services" in Sicily.

Upon arrival in Hannover, 1CRB and 1CHB were quartered in a former German artillery housing now renamed Edinburgh Barracks. For administrative purposes the 27th Brigade was attached to British 11th Armoured Division, part of the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR). Following a series of shakedown exercises, the battalion was considered to be operational and training became more intensive and continued in this fashion for the duration their stay in Germany. Live firing exercises were conducted at Putlos on the Baltic seacoast and the British Army's 45 square mile training facility at Sennelager became a regular visitation area, for as many as four weeks at a time. Lt Whealy's responsibilities varied and included periods as anti-tank officer, battalion intelligence officer and as 2/IC of the mortar platoon.

Lt Whealy remembered that, "When the brigade was first authorized, the terms of enlistment specified that married men would serve 12 months overseas, while unmarried men would serve for two years, before rotation. As a result, after the first year many of the senior officers and NCOs rotated out and replacements moved in to take their places. Junior officers, as I was, for the most part stayed put." Queen's Own Rifles replacements included Maj H.F.C. (Hank) Elliot, who later would command 1st Bn of the regular force in Germany and would eventually be named Honorary Colonel of 3rd Bn of the reserve force.

The commanding officers of 1CRB were LCol E.W. Cutbill, DSO, ED and LCol J.M. Delamere, MBE, CD. Acting commanding officer Maj C.P. MacPherson brought the battalion back to Canada in November, 1953 and it was on the voyage aboard SS Columbia that members of 1st Canadian Rifles learned their unit had been redesignated as 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

Upon its arrival, the battalion's members went on furlough, reassembling at Calgary's Currie Barracks, the 1st Canadian Rifles Battalion now being part of their history.

# The Honourable Arthur C. Whealy, QC (July 30, 1929 - Sept 1, 2012.)

At St. Michael's Hospital, peacefully, surrounded by family. Retired judge of the Superior Court of Justice. Predeceased by his wife Anna Bokor (1987). Son of the late Arthur Treloar Whealy, DSO and bar, DFC, and Margaret Carrick. Survived by daughters Lise and Victoria, grandson Alan (Caitlin) and former wife Elizabeth Richardson-Whealy. Also survived by his siblings Peggy (Erskine Duncan), Rosemary, and Michael (Wendy), plus 11 nieces and nephews and their families. Educated at Upper Canada College, RMC (#2953), and Dalhousie Law School (LL.B. '58). Commissioned as a regular army officer in the First Canadian Rifle Battalion in 1951 and continued in the military when 1CRB was designated as 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada in 1953. Former

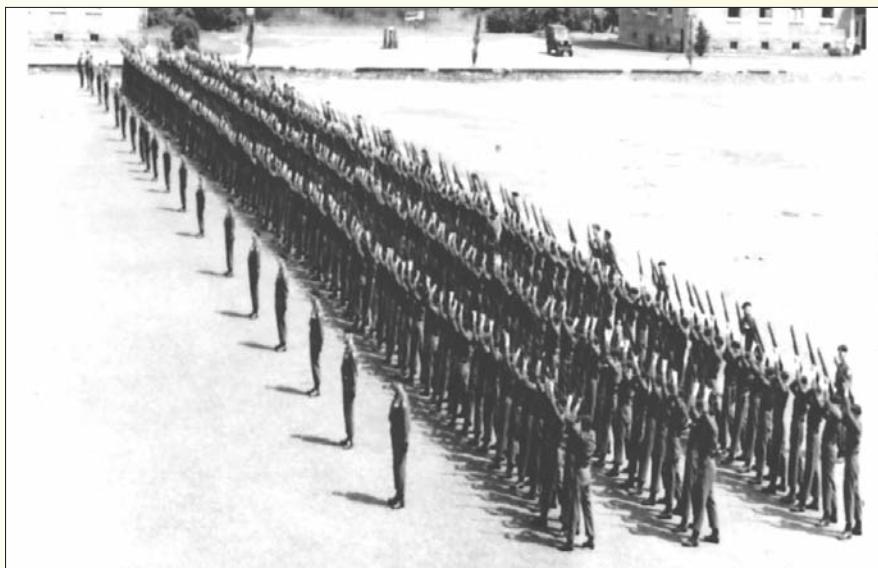
President of the Criminal Lawyers Assoc.; former director of the Advocates Society; and former counsel with the Dept of Justice (Ottawa). After a decade in private practice, he was appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (1980), where he served for 25 years. Jurist, photographer, birder and soldier; member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute and Royal Canadian Legion (Fort York Branch.) He will be fondly remembered for his fairness, optimism, humour, and generosity of spirit. He will be deeply missed. Donations made to the Queen's Own Rifles Trust fund, c/o QOR of C, 145 Queen St. E, Toronto.  
(or at [www.QOR.com/association/association.html](http://www.QOR.com/association/association.html)) would be appreciated.

## FRONT PAGE

(Top left): The Honourable Arthur C. Whealy, former Superior Court Judge, was a member of 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion from 1951-1953.

(Top right): A timeout for 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion officers in the "Ratskeller," at Putlos, Germany. (L. to R.) (Standing) LCol J.M. Delamere, MBE; Maj W.R. Weir; Maj A.E. Mills; Maj H.C.F. (Hank) Elliot; Maj J.J. Osbourne.

(Bottom) 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion formed up on the parade square in Hannover Germany during celebrations for the 92nd birthday of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada in April, 1952.



## THIS PAGE

(Top): Lt Arthur Whealy, second-in-command of 1st Canadian Rifles Battalion mortar platoon on the gunnery range at Putlos, Germany in 1953.

(Bottom) Practice at the dress rehearsal for a feu de joie to be fired by members of 1st Canadian Rifle Battalion during 92nd birthday celebrations for The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada at Edinburgh Barracks, in Hannover, Germany, April, 1952.



# Traditions are maintained by members of the Calgary Association

By Shirley and Bill Major

Photography by Karen Titus

The Calgary Branch of the QOR of C celebrated the regiment's 152nd birthday on April 20th, 2012 with a luncheon at the Carriage House Inn and the well-attended party, as always, was most enjoyable. Following tradition, under the command of Clay Hodder the rifle was marched on by Sergeant-of-Arms John Creswell.

President Bob Titus during his opening remarks welcomed everyone in attendance, making special mention of the following out of town members and guests: Lt. Governor of Alberta Don Ethell and her honour Linda Ethell, Edmonton, Gill King, Langley, BC, Joe Morin, Moose Jaw, SK, Jerry and Deanna Smith, High River AB, Francis Vermette, Dauphin, MB and Norm and Cathy Walker, Cowley AB.

Toast were made to The Queen, by John Hearn, The

Regiment, by Jerry Smith, The Colonel-in-Chief, by Joe Morin, to absent friends and loved ones, by John Creswell.

A QOR of C Plaque was presented to George Carstead with grateful thanks for his many years of service reminding the membership of luncheon dates and encouraging our attendance to same!

The monthly luncheons resumed at RCL 264 on September 5th and will continue as usual on the first Wednesday of every month until June 2013. We gather at 11:00 to 11:30 in the games room or dance floor area. Again a reminder for any of the regimental family who are in town and who would like to join us, all are welcome to do so. Please notify Arlene Albrecht at 403-253-8808 or Jean Pendlebury at 403-259-0092.



Kathy and Norm Walker, Joe Morin, Francis Vermette, Bill and Shirley Major.



Dorothy and Marion Mascaro.



Clay and Louise Hodder (always on the job); Jean Pendlebury, Arlene Albrecht.



## Traditions are maintained by members of the Calgary Association



George Carstead, Lucy Aucoin, Jeannie & Pat Eckenswiller, George Carrigan's hair, Terry Carrigan, Helen Carstead.



Clay Hodder.



Ken Barrett, Jerry and Deanna Smith.



Alberta LtGov Don Ethell and Linda Ethell.



(L to R, seated)  
Doug and  
Marlene Kumick,  
Frank and  
Sheryn  
Weinberger.



Joe Morin, Dorothy Taylor (widow of "Jungle Jim" Taylor), Francis Vermette



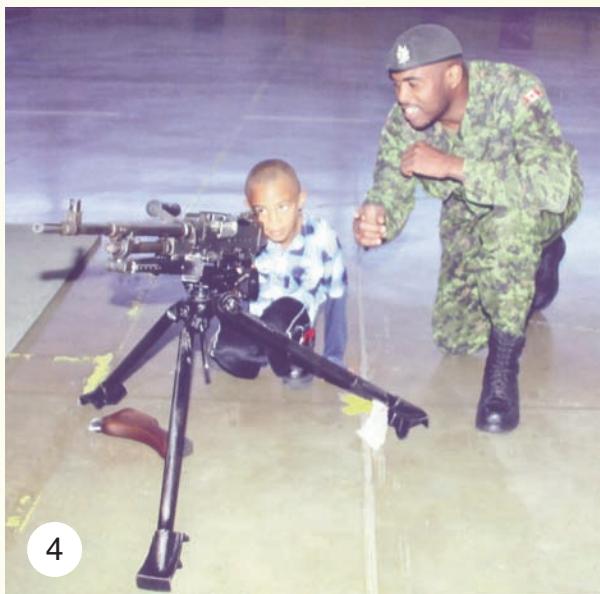
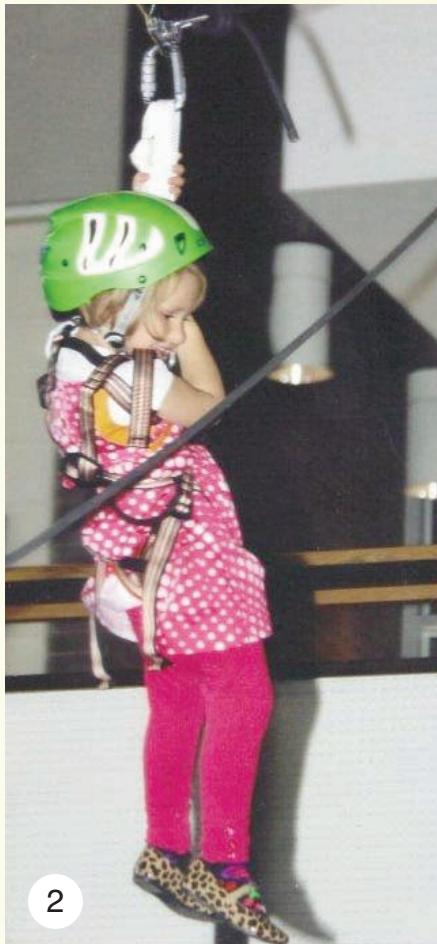
Bob Titus demonstrates the "Grip and Grin" technique in making a presentation to George Carstead.



Bob and Shirley Titus.

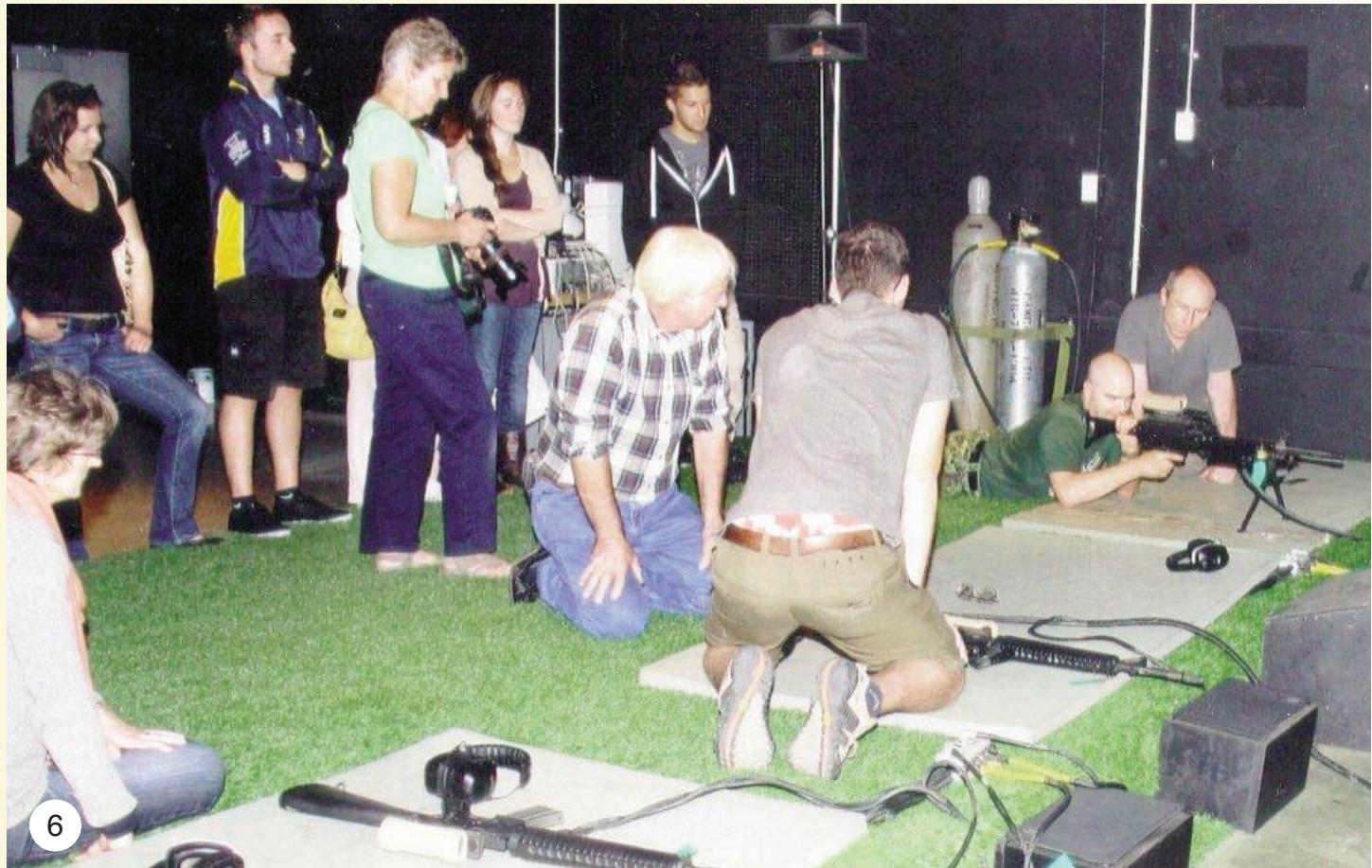


# Family Day at Moss Park Armoury





# Family Day at Moss Park Armoury



Some of the guests at Family Day in September got into the swing of things.

(1) Zain Hing tried the para jump (2) Georgia Pampe, 3, and (3) Hayden Callahan, 6, were taken up (and down again) by the zip line. Others got weapons training. (4) Dandre, 6, from his dad, Rfn Ian Holness (5) Elena, from her husband, Rfn Dmitri Galamiyev. (6) In the Small Arms Training area, Sgt Dave Hodgson had an interested audience as he demonstrated various weapons. (7) D-Day veteran Jack Martin checked out the food being dished out by association members and gave it an "A" grading.





## Bob Firlotte receives the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal

On Friday, September 7th, I was honoured to present the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal to Major Robert B. Firlotte (Retired). A member of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion during the Second World War, Bob also served with the Queen's Own Rifles in

Korea and has been an active volunteer with the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 258 in Highland Creek. Mr. Firlotte also celebrated his 95th birthday on August 30, 2012. Congratulations Bob!

John McKay, MP. (Scarborough-Guildwood.)



Attending the presentation of the medal from The Queen's Own Rifles were (l to r) Cpl Baron Hordo, CWO Mark Shannon, Lt Rolland Llewellyn-Thomas; Sgt Jason Green and MCpl Kelsey Hing. Also present were Bob's wife Doris and his grandson Christopher Firlotte.

## Check out the updated version of The Queen's Own Buffs website

Peter White of our allied regiment, The Queen's Own Buffs, advises that their regimental website at [www.thequeensownbuffs.com](http://www.thequeensownbuffs.com) has now been updated. For your interest it includes photos of the recent regimental reunion at Canterbury and, on the Photo Page, pictures taken at the 440th Anniversary celebrations and the parade at the Tower of London. Sound tracks of the Last Post and Reveille are on the Regimental Marches page.  
[www.thequeensownbuffs.com](http://www.thequeensownbuffs.com)

In addition to a link to The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada site at [qor.com](http://qor.com), the following links are also included on the website.

[The Queen's Own Buffs](#); [The Buffs](#); [The PWRR](#); [Photo Album](#); [Albuhera 2011](#); [Canterbury Reunion 2012](#).

### IN MEMORIAM

David Arksey  
Roy Aylesworth  
Scott Kerr Bricker  
Wally Budgell  
Stan Chernish

Donald R. Dale  
Jan de Vries  
George Ede  
Bryan Goutouski  
Darrell Hensrud

Steven Petzing  
Art Steele  
Clayton Stones  
Jim Tran  
Arthur Whealy



## Canadian Scottish Honorary Colonel has a Queen's Own Rifles connection

The appointment of LCol Richard Talbot, CD, of British Columbia to the position of Honorary Colonel of The Canadian Scottish Regiment "is a well-deserved honour for a great friend of our regiment," said Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Honorary Colonel Paul. F Hughes, CD.

"In 1967 Captain Talbot was posted as a British Army Exchange Officer to 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada while they were stationed at Work Point Barracks in Esquimalt, BC, and has been a staunch friend of our regiment ever since," Col Hughes said.

British-born, educated in New Zealand and the UK, in 1962 Talbot was commissioned from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into his county regiment, The Queen's Own Buffs, (Royal Kent Regiment.) He saw active service in British Guiana, Hong Kong (the Kowloon Riots) and Borneo. "The Buffs and The Queen's Own Rifles have been allied regiments since 1914, so this new appointment is of considerable significance to us," Col Hughes said.

In 1969, upon the conclusion of his posting to Canada, LCol Talbot resigned his British Army commission and moved to Sidney, BC. In 1970 he joined The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) as a Major, graduated from the Militia Staff Course in Kingston and was appointed Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the then Lieutenant Governor of BC, Colonel The Honourable Jack Nicholson. Promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, he commanded The Canadian Scottish from 1972-1976 and in his last year of command the regiment won the Sir Casimir Gzowski Trophy for the most efficient militia infantry regiment in Canada.



LCol Richard Talbot, CD

"This appointment is particularly appreciated at this time since 2012 is the 100th anniversary of the founding of The Canadian Scottish and the Colonel-in-Chief HRH Princess Alexandra will be attending our official centennial celebrations on the weekend 19th/22nd October," LCol Talbot said.

The Queen's Own Rifles and The Canadian Scottish shared HRH Princess Alexandra KG, GCVO as Colonel-in-Chief for many years and LCol Talbot, who was an usher at her wedding to the Hon. Angus Ogilvy, Earl of Airlie at Westminster Abbey in 1963, renewed acquaintances during his association with The Queen's Own when the princess visited both regiments in 1967. He was able to repeat that in 2010 when the princess visited The Queen's Own during its 150th anniversary celebrations.

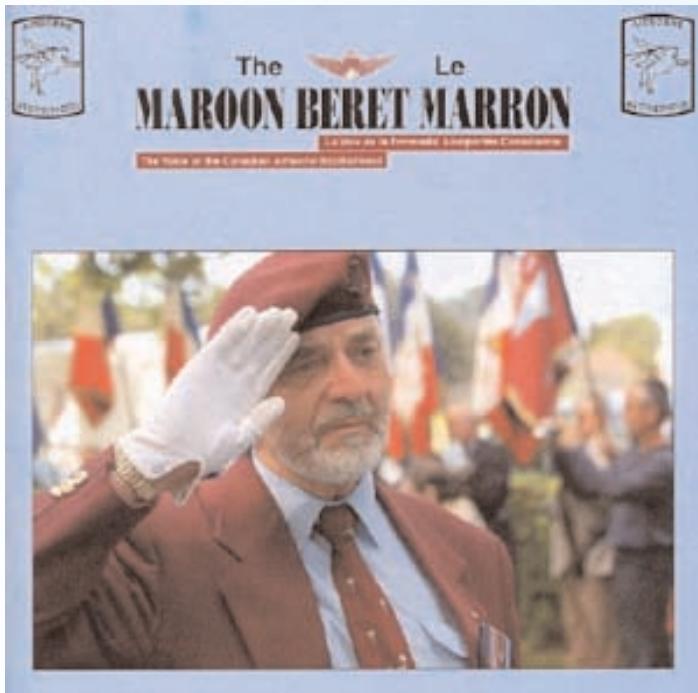


HRH Princess Alexandra chats with Capt Ham Whitty and LCol Richard Talbot during The Queen's Own's 150th anniversary celebrations. Both are former members of the PWRR.

In 1961 The Buffs, (Royal East Kent Regiment) amalgamated with The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment to form The Queen's Own Buffs (Royal Kent Regiment.) In 1966 The Queen's Own Buffs amalgamated with three other regiments to form The Queen's Regiment. In 1992 the Queen's Regiment was amalgamated with the Royal Hampshire Regiment to form the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR).



# JAN de VRIES C.M. C de LH (January 24, 1924 - May 27, 2012)



Jan de Vries, a D-Day veteran of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, Member of the Order of Canada and Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur (France) passed away at Ajax Pickering Hospital on 27 May, 2012. Born in Leeuwarden, Friesland in the Netherlands, he was predeceased by parents Romke and Rinske, his brother Harry (Hendrik), nephew John and niece Lucille. Devoted husband of Joanne (nee Nicoll). Dear father of

John de Vries, Lorraine (Ken) Rolston, Janice (Selwyn) Hamilton-Dicker, Peter (Tracy) de Vries and of Joanne's children Ron (Jane) Burridge, Andrea (Jason) Yoshida; grandfather of 15; great-grandfather of two, uncle of John Reid and Harry de Vries. Jan came to Canada in 1930 and attended school in East York and Scarborough. He enlisted in the army in 1943, parachuted into Normandy on D-Day, fought in the Battle of the Bulge in the Belgian Ardennes, in Holland along the Maas River, parachuted over the Rhine River into Germany and through Germany to Wismar on the Baltic. Following his return to Canada he graduated from Army Trade school. He began his career in construction as a carpenter rising to foreman, construction superintendent, site manager. He was with Cadillac Fairview and Daniels Group Inc for many years, retiring in 2000. Beginning in 1995 he served as President of 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Association. Jan was instrumental in the creation of the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy and was the leader of a group who raised enough money to purchase the Victoria Cross awarded to Cpl Fred Topham of 1CanPara and to ensure it remained in Canada. He was a tireless volunteer for a broad range of community, educational, and memorial activities. He had a great love of the outdoors, particularly hiking and he and Joanne made many such trips, well into his later years. He was an indomitable individual and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He was a staunch friend of The Queen's Own Rifles and he and Joanne attended as many of their events, including funerals of WWII veterans, as possible.

## Stephen Petzing

PETZING, Stephen John Major Stephen Petzing was born in Bristol, England on 10th March 1938, and died in Victoria, B.C. on 23rd July 2012. He is survived by his wife, Rusty; their three children, Jeremy (Dragana), Thomas (Kelly) and Rachel (Neil); his three much-loved grandchildren, Ava, Hazel and Oscar and his sister, Jane. After nearly twenty years' service in the British

Army (Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment), during which time, in 1969, he served as a regimental exchange officer with 1st Bn Queen's Own Rifles, Stephen, Rusty and their young family moved in 1975 to Victoria, where Stephen worked in an eclectic range of jobs. A keen, all-round sportsman, Stephen was active and well-respected in B.C.'s amateur sports community.

## D-Day Veteran William James Tran

Queen's Own Rifles D-Day veteran Jim Tran died at the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, in his 92nd year. Beloved husband of Sheila (Craik) Tran. Loving father of Sheila (Richard) Smith of Collingwood, Pauline Aitken (Ivor Jones) of West Hill and father-in-law of Ed Aitken of

Dresden. Lovingly remembered by grandchildren Sharon, Samantha, Kirk (Ishu), Kyle, Kristina (Peter) and great-grandchildren Olivia, Saira, Lauren and Griffen. Predeceased by sister Margaret Ralph and brother George. He was a longtime member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch No. 63.



# Reserve and Regular Force troops trained in Arizona's heat

By Master Corporal Adam R. Winnicki

Whenever I am offered an opportunity to do training in the United States, I jump at the chance. When it's conducted by 3rd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment with The United States Marine Corps it's an opportunity that I cannot miss. This year's realization was with 3 RCR's Oscar Company, where I and seven other members of the Queen's Own Rifles were able to train in Yuma, Arizona.

Our preparations started late March, where we left the cold climates of Petawawa for the hot deserts of Yuma. Members of 3RCR and RCD (Royal Canadian Dragoons) were sent down to assist in training for The Weapons and Tactics Instructors(WTI) Course. Our home for the next five weeks was FOB Laguna, a makeshift Forward Operating Base located in U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground. Conditions were identical to those of Afghanistan, and with Yuma's terrain and heat it reminded me of my deployment overseas in 2008.

Oscar Company's intent was to complete company level live-fire ranges, so we began with PWTs (Personal Wireless Telecommunications) and section level training. Our gun camps allowed us to handle many different weapon systems from pistol, shot-guns and M203s to 84mm, 50 cal and 60mm mortar. Following that, we spent four days of close quarters battle training in an excellent but difficult urban compound called West LA. On the forth day of Urban Ops we traded our notional rounds for paintballs. Facing off with a challenging enemy force, which included Major Hill, OC of Oscar Coy. We put our skills to the test and I can say we kept them on their toes by giving them a good fight.

In between all the great weapons training we were getting ready for Helicopter Operations. For the past few years mechanized training was the name of the game for the Canadian Infantry. For this exercise our LAVs and Coyotes were swapped for Hueys, Sea Stallions and Ospreys. In preparation before riding these U.S. Marine Corps aircraft, we practiced on and off drills and fast roping (a method of insertion using 60ft rope suspended from a helicopter). The 3RCR HIs (Helicopter Insertion Instructors) built a one of a kind fast roping rig on top of two sea containers. This made for a tremendous tool for dry training before the real thing.



From Left to Right: TOP: Cpl Dan Falco, Cpl Denis Abazovic, Cpl Alex Zimin BOTTOM: Cpl Max Olszewski, Cpl Matt Langille, MCpl Adam Winnicki, Cpl Jeff Brooks

Some soldiers have never been in a Griffin let alone in an actual helicopter, so it was a real pleasure to ride in the monstrous Sea Stallions and the astonishing Osprey, which is an engineering marvel by its ability to take off and land like a helicopter but has the speed and maneuverability of an airplane. An insertion onto an objective is just a single phase on the infantry's big picture, the real job begin when our boots are on the ground. This is where I found the true value of coming down to the states... the live fire ranges. When it comes to live fire, whether it's section, platoon or even company-size, all ranks have something to learn. Commanding troops in a live scenario adds a degree of control, responsibility and trust in individual skills. It brings you as close to fighting a real enemy as it comes, something we do not do often enough in both regular and reserve forces.

Every soldier on this exercise has seen the importance and effectiveness of Air Mobile Operations. Being able to insert at, on or near your objective adds speed, surprise and maximum firepower to any mission. This can only enhance Canada's excellent reputation as a world class fighting force.



# The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Trust Fund

## To all Riflemen and Friends of the Regiment

**Please consider making a donation to The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Trust Fund**

We have made it convenient and easy for you by establishing a "Donate Now" button on the website at [qor.com](http://qor.com) which can be used to forward funds to us for use in defraying the many expenses we undertake for the Regiment each year, all of which are supported through your Trust Fund and not through public funding. These include:

- Regimental dress uniforms, accoutrements and support for the Unit, The Regimental Band and Bugles;
- Lease costs and maintenance related to the Regimental Museum at Casa Loma;
- Maintenance of The Book of Remembrance, Cross of Sacrifice and other memorials;
- Support of the Regimental Headquarters;
- Preparation and distribution of Regimental publications including The Rifleman and the Powder Horn; and last but not least
- Writing and publication of an updated Regimental History.

We can appreciate that many of you are on fixed incomes and others may be facing financial challenges. We ask only that you give whatever you can afford. As a suggestion, you could leave a lasting gift to your Regiment, by establishing a legacy gift as a bequest in your Will.

Please make out your cheque made payable to: The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Trust Fund.

\$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$150  \$200  \$250 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Trust Fund  
4981 Highway 7 East, Unit 12A  
Markham, ON, L3R1N1

Thank you again for your support. It is genuinely appreciated.

Adam Hermant, President

**In Pace Paratus**

*"Standing on Guard Since 1860"*

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL FIND AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF MATERIAL WHICH WILL APPEAR IN THE UPDATED REGIMENTAL HISTORY BOOK, WHICH I AM NOW WRITING. THE BOOK, TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT YEAR, WILL FOLLOW THE ACTIVITES OF THE QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES OF CANADA FROM 1950 INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. FOR INFORMATION ON THE BOOK I CAN BE REACHED AT 905 743 0259 OR AT [mcc@sympatico.ca](mailto:mcc@sympatico.ca).

Charles McGregor.



## Skirmishers Carry Long Rifles; Pioneers, Double-Edged Axes

*Major (Ret'd) Erik Simundson, OMM, CD, joined The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada as a rifleman, rose to the rank of major and served as the regiment's deputy commanding. He was also awarded the Order of Military Merit (OMM), the second highest order administered by the Governor General-in-Council, on behalf of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. During his military career Maj Simundson took a continuing keen interest in the activities of the pioneers and skirmishers and did much to encourage extraordinarily high levels of deportment and drill competency which attracted much attention when they paraded with the regiment. In this chapter, and those that follow, he provides some history.*

The history behind such famous regiments as The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry is a reflection of the connection that Canada had with the British military over the many years its troops were garrisoned in this country. This, coupled with the development of superior weapons technology in the 19th century and the benefits of using it to disperse troops over a wider front, increased their ability to cover a greater amount of territory while being more effective in skirmishes and all-out battles with the enemy.

Previously, firepower was limited by smooth bore musketry, which was notoriously inaccurate at long range, and for effectiveness required massed infantry moving as a body, closing with its enemy and firing. However, the thick clouds of smoke which eddied over the battlefield from burnt gunpowder not only reduced that effectiveness, it also was a poor use of manpower and ammunition. In time, advancements in technology and tactics learned by the British in the Indian Wars of the 18th Century, including the development of "rifled" musket barrels which markedly improved both range and accuracy, brought weaponry onto the field that allowed for greater movement and range, an increased tactical advantage. For the first time battlefield strategists employed dispersed soldiers, working in open order, who were expected to think for themselves within the mission. Thus was created the skirmisher, "The Thinking Rifleman," who made carefully considered decisions in order to achieve success. These were men who were taught to make best use of natural cover and to harass the enemy with carefully aimed rifle shots. They employed tactics and strategies which were unorthodox for the time but which soon resulted in considerable success on the field of battle.

The use of skirmishers in North America came to prominence during the Seven Years War



*Captain Erik Simundson, CD, at Winchester.*

## CHAPTER A

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and the American Revolution, in which the modern rifle began to make a significant contribution to warfare. Many of the American colonists in both wars were frontiersmen or backwoodsmen whose tactics were based on firing from cover rather than in the open field engagements of the day, which were capabilities learned largely by their experiences fighting native warriors. The skirmishers consistently played a valuable role on the battlefield in disrupting enemy formations by causing casualties before the main battle. Historians have told us that in medieval warfare they typically acted as light infantry, wearing minimal armour, armed with javelins and bows. They were tasked to run ahead of the main battle force, releasing a volley of arrows, or javelins, and withdrawing before the opposing main forces met in battle, in the hopes that their enemy was now thrown into disarray. Due to their mobility, skirmishers were also valuable for reconnaissance, particularly in wooded areas.

With the creation of the Canadian militia by the Militia Act of 1855 senior officers were encouraged to form rifle corps, often referred to as “cavalry on foot,” a more economical option when compared to the costs involved in forming and manning a traditional mounted cavalry corps. For centuries, infantry regiments had deployed advance, flank, and rear guards in order to prevent ambush; as military tactics developed, these guards became ever more vital to the successful execution of such tactics, as the British Army’s 60th and 95th Rifles had discovered during the campaigns of the Peninsular War of the early 1800s.

The actions of No. 4 Company of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada at the Battle of Ridgeway in 1866 provide further support for this. The tactics of the young soldiers included the deployment of advanced guards as frontline response, operating as skirmishers, moving in file and using accurate fire to suppress and affect the enemy. Armed with American-made repeating Spencer rifles, No. 4 Company’s rifleman, many of them university students now thrust unexpectedly into battle, acquitted themselves admirably, winning the firefight and making a profound impact on the attacking Fenians. At the head of the column of No. 4 Company were the pioneers – soldiers who were selected because of their trades background.

Pioneers in the ranks of The Queen’s Own Rifles were easily identifiable in the field in their durable black leather aprons worn to protect their uniforms. They were also generally all heavily bearded, a concession granted by their superior officers in view of the fact pioneers were often exposed for lengthy periods to extreme weather conditions with little or no protection from the elements. Their personal weapons were short swords with a sawtooth back, carried in leather scabbards. These skilled troops were generally formed into small groups, typically consisting of one corporal and ten pioneers, all having access to a variety of tools such as single and double-edged axes, shovels, sledgehammers and crowbars to eliminate any impediments or to build bridges and fortifications to ease the way of the troops marching behind them. In camp, pioneers would also supervise other soldiers engaged in any number of construction projects, bringing their skills and tools to jobs of work which required them. Since the establishment of the regiment’s first Pioneer Corps in 1867, these hardy individuals have become a mainstay of regimental parades. The pioneering tradition continues today in such regiments as The Winnipeg Rifles, The Royal Canadian Regiment, The Rifles and The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in the British Army, as well as in La Légion étrangère, the legendary French Foreign Legion.



## Pioneers, Skirmishers Have Led The Queen's Own Since 1867

The corporal and ten rifleman who formed the first Pioneer Corps in 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada in 1867, immediately became part of a regimental tradition which has continued into the 21st century. As with the regimental bands, and subsequently with its skirmisher platoons, they have been prominent marching at quick time in the van of regimental parades. Pioneers in black leather aprons carrying sawtooth-backed swords or double edged axes; skirmishers marching with their long rifles at the trail, slings loosened in traditional rifles fashion; the military and bugle bands leading a regiment which on some previous occasions had seen almost 1,000 men on parade.

In war, the role of the pioneers has remained constant. It is their responsibility to be far enough in advance of the column of following troops to clear a way for them by removing obstacles or to build bridges and perform any and all other necessary construction tasks. In time the skirmishers' role was eventually superseded, initially by the use of light infantry and then, beginning in the Boer War, with the British Army's Lovat Scouts, continuing in World War One with sharpshooters, soon commonly known as snipers, operating in the trenches. In World War Two, snipers were given freedom to roam to seek targets of opportunity, acting singly, or in pairs.

Each company of The Queen's Own Rifles had two riflemen designated as snipers and in A Company on D-Day, Riflemen Bill Bettridge and Bert Shepherd formed Major Ellie Dalton's sniper team. Like many who joined The Queen's Own Rifles to get into the war as soon as they were old



*Rifleman Bill Bettridge (L) and other Queen's Own snipers seen during a training session in England. At the far right is Rifleman Ernest Cranfield, shot while held prisoner near Caen in 1944.*

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enough, Bettridge was one of those teen-aged boys in 1941, barely out of high school when he swore his oath of allegiance to the King. A year later he was in England, training with the regiment. He had gone hunting with his father many times prior to the war, “and I was a pretty good shot,” he remembered, “good enough that I was selected to be a sniper and given a Lee Enfield rifle with a telescopic sight on it. At the rifle butts one day Captain Dick Medland taped a shilling to the target bullseye and



*British General Sir David Ramsbottom, GCB, CBE, former Colonel Commandant of the Royal Green Jackets (L) with LCol C.E. (Ed) Rayment, CD, Commanding Officer, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, and Col Jack Lake, CD, at Niagara-on-the Lake in 1996.*

challenged us all to try and hit it, and I put a hole right through the centre. That surprised everyone, including me!” He remembered that, “My first partner was wounded at Carpiquet and Ernest Cranfield was one of those shot at Caen by Hitler Jugend kids from the S.S. Panzer Division. I had others who were wounded or killed, so eventually I spent a lot of time alone,” he said. “Our intelligence officer never knew where I was and I would get back to the company and he'd say 'What have you got for me this time, Bill?' Eventually it was decided to form a 30-man scout and sniper platoon, with ten snipers and 20 scouts, and after that we did a lot of patrol work and reconnaissance work, very similar to what the regiment's skirmishers must have done in the 1860s, I guess.”

For many years, Major (Ret'd) Erik Simundson OMM, CD, had much to do with keeping the tradition of pioneers and skirmishers alive within the ranks of The Queen's Own Rifles. Maj Simundson, who had joined The Queen's Own as a rifleman and eventually became deputy commanding officer, recalled that, “A renaissance occurred around the regiment's 100th anniversary in 1960 when

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WOII J.S. (Syd) Byatt organized and trained a pioneers section under Sergeant Mike Holland to lead battalion parades. He also organized a skirmisher section of one sergeant and six riflemen who carried the “three-band” .577 Snider Enfield rifle as used by The Queen’s Own in the 1860s. The skirmishers marched with the pioneers as well as mounting guard and standing vigil, rifles reversed, heads bowed, at each corner of the Cross of Sacrifice at St. Paul’s Church on occasions such as Remembrance Day.” Maj Simundson added that, “Forming a pioneers and skirmishers platoon proved to be hugely popular within the ranks and there was considerable interest in joining. Members were carefully selected according to their skills in drill as well as their deportment. Only once a potential pioneer or skirmisher had shown to have proven himself, was he invited to join.” The uniform for the pioneers was traditional rifle green patrol dress tunic, with snake hook belt, leggings, black trousers and black fur “envelope” busby with short red and black horsehair plume. Completing the kit was a cartridge pouch and sword bayonet in leather scabbard. Skirmishers were similarly attired with the exception that the headwear was a rifle green cloth shako with a green wool “ball” plume.

During the regiment’s 100th anniversary in 1960, and the years following, the regimental pioneers and skirmishers did much to raise the profile of The Queen’s Own Rifles in the public eye, travelling, often with the bugle band, to ceremonies and events throughout Ontario and upstate New York as well as in the UK and to Normandy, Belgium and Holland on D-Day and VE-Day remembrances. At the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Ridgeway, in 1966, their first volley was fired in salute to nine members of The Queen’s Own Rifles who had fought and died or were fatally wounded there in the 1866 battle against Fenian raiders.

On the 125th anniversary of the same battle, in 1991, the pioneers and skirmishers participated in a reenactment of the battle which was staged on the same battlefield in Ridgeway where those nine were either killed in action or wounded and who died later. A camp was set up with tents and cooking facilities which was open to the public who toured the tent lines and saw how the troops lived in the field in the 1860s. Five years later, to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the battle, the pioneers and skirmishers deployed to Niagara-on-the-Lake, accompanied by the band and bugles. A group of 30, under direction of then Captain Simundson, put on an outstanding show for guest of honour, British General Sir David Ramsbottom, GCB, CBE, former Colonel Commandant of the Royal Green Jackets. Later that year, again at Niagara-on-the-Lake, members competed in a musketry competition, an event which involved range practices from the 1860s, including individual shooting at various ranges as well as a tactical demonstration at Butler’s Barracks.

On 22 July of that year, a long-standing vision of WOII Byatt was realized as the skirmishers paraded at Old Fort Henry in Kingston, Ontario, alongside the Fort Henry Guard, The Queen’s Own Rifles band and bugles and the Canadian Guards ceremonial band from Ottawa. Throughout the day, the skirmishers of The Queen’s Own Rifles took over sentry duty at the fort, which dates back to the 1830s and was garrisoned by British Army personnel until 1870. The skirmishers and band performed their drill at the rifles pace which drew enthusiastic rounds of applause from the many spectators, particularly following the volleys from the skirmishers’ long rifles.

The tradition of pioneers and skirmishers continued within The Queen’s Own throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. For many years, on Remembrance Day skirmishers and pioneers in uniform often have marked the occasion by visiting and chatting with the veterans at Sunnybrook Hospital or Runnymede Healthcare Centre in Toronto. Major Adam Saunders, who was present as a skirmisher on many of these occasions, recalled that it was the customary for one of the group to read aloud “In Flanders Fields,” the famous poem written by John McCrae, a former member of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada. The skirmishers also had a continuously busy schedule making appearances at a wide variety of events in the Greater Toronto Area, where on each occasion they delighted (most

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of ) those in attendance by settling their rifles onto their shoulders and firing a volley into the air. Sadly the practice was banned in early 2000, on military orders, on the basis the weapons were “not in the current Canadian Forces inventory,” much to the disappointment of the skirmishers.

During the regiment’s 150th anniversary celebrations in 2010 several members were detailed to be present in Victoria and Calgary to participate in events organized by regimental associations there to mark the significant occasion. These included skirmishers Sgt Bryan Burns and MCpl Darnel Leader, pioneer MCpl Chris Abate and, from the band, buglers Sgt Emily Kenny and Sgt Jonas Feldman and drummer Rfn Kusmin Balasuriya. Their presence added greatly to the festivities, serving to remind those who live by the motto “Once in the Queen’s Own, Always in the Queen’s Own,” that the spirit of their famous old regiment is kept alive in many ways by the young men who wear the skirmisher and pioneer uniforms.

The long and illustrious history of the pioneers and skirmishers of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada is one which will grow and continue and flourish throughout the 21st century, thanks to those stalwarts who have taken the time and interest to ensure that this unique element of rifle regiments remains constant.



*Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada Skirmishers, led by Sgt Bryan Burns (L) enter Moss Park Armoury.*



## Skirmishers Rattled Windows During “Green Jackets Week”

It was ‘Sneaky Pete’ that attracted his attention. Lieutenant Colonel Peter Chamberlain, commander of the depot of the British Army’s Light Division at Winchester, Hampshire, was in such admiration of the drills performed by The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada’s skirmishers that he invited them to England to perform during Royal Green Jackets Week in 1984. LCol Chamberlain, a guest at the centenary celebrations for the Royal Winnipeg Rifles in Manitoba in 1983, saw The Queen’s Own’s skirmishers present their unique display to a greatly appreciative audience there. He buttonholed skirmisher Captain Erik Simundson to raise the possibility that the group might be present at their Peninsula Barracks the following year, “to demonstrate their ‘Sneaky Pete’ skills.” Simundson immediately and enthusiastically agreed, “in full knowledge” he said later, “that, while we had the kit, training and knowledge, unfortunately we lacked the means to get there.” It soon became apparent that no help in providing financing or transportation would be forthcoming from the Department of National Defence. However, through the efforts of Honorary Colonel H.E. (Ellie) Dalton, DSO, and other members of the Regimental Trust, funds were provided for the trip, as well as for new uniforms for the group. And so the planning began. All those involved felt that this promised to be an outstanding opportunity for representatives of Canada’s oldest continuously-serving infantry regiment to prove themselves by performing in the city where Sir John Moore’s troops had paraded in rifle green before leaving to fight and win glory in the Peninsula War.

Capt Simundson, who was to command the mission, preceded the main body to Winchester by a week, and with the assistance of the depot’s quartermaster, LCol John Lane, acquired the necessary black powder and caps, which, “for safety’s sake” were not permitted to be shipped from Canada by air. Once the troops were on the ground with their muskets, drill training was commenced – in the barracks prisoners’ exercise yard, as it happened – under Skirmisher Colour Sergeant John O’Connor. Practice volleys rattled the windows of the nearby courthouse where judges were sitting during the Winchester Assizes, apparently without creating serious panic amongst the jurists or accused. Mike McGarrigle, the former Regimental Sergeant Major of The Queen’s Own, now The Light Infantry’s RSM, took particular interest in the drills and musketry practice of his old regiment and warned Capt Simundson that he fully expected to see an outstanding performance. “This had better be good,” the RSM said drily, “because I still have to live here when you go home.” Happily, the three shows proved to be resounding successes. Major Simundson’s 2012 account follows.

“The company headquarters entered the square through the arches of Long Block to a bugle fanfare. Bugler Phil ten Kortenaar sounded ‘Advance’ and the skirmisher company marched on in fours, rifles at the trail, and performed a series of manoeuvres in accordance with Militia General Orders as well as the Field Exercise and Evolutions of Infantry, dated 1862 – all at a rifles pace. Following a demonstration of sword bayonet drills the company reformed and halted at the left edge of the parade square in preparation for a display on modes of firing. After the company advanced, extended, and commenced firing, all on bugle calls, it was halted and ordered to form a square where a volley was delivered and then the skirmish line was reformed.

“The bugle calls ‘Retire’ and ‘Fire’ were sounded, and the company withdrew to its original position and then delivered a fire by files rapidly down its front. Three rounds were fired by each rifleman, in such rapid order that the first files were firing before the last files had fired, producing a machine-gun-like effect. The last manoeuvre was the fire of a final volley. Interestingly, an anomaly in the weather caused the normally thick pall of smoke, which normally drifts away in the wind, to rapidly

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idly descend to the ground – something I had never seen before and I was truly amazed by this,” Maj Simundson said. “Perhaps the audience thought it was part of our show. In any event, they immediately broke into wild applause. With mission accomplished, the company then marched off to the music of ‘The Buffs’ and ‘The Maple Leaf Forever,’ our Regimental Marches, played with spirit by the 1st Battalion Royal Green Jackets band. Everything, including the selection of music, had worked extraordinarily well.” In addition to BBC television and radio and local media coverage, “*Soldier*” – “The Magazine of the British Army” – published a well-illustrated article, including photographs taken during one of the performances which were featured prominently in the magazine.

Maj Simundson added that, “In celebration of their success, the owner of the India Arms, the pub the riflemen had adopted during their stay in Winchester, threw an impromptu and belated Canada Day celebration on 4 July to which our bugler responded with a rousing performance, one which was doubtless enhanced by the libations provided that night. A final show was given the next day at Winchester’s Saint Cross cricket ground, on grass rather than pavement, although the cricket field was as flat and as smooth as the parade square.



*The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada skirmishers were featured in a layout in “*Soldier*” – “*The Magazine of the British Army*” – during “Green Jackets Week” at Winchester in 1984.*

“It had been a most interesting and rewarding trip for everyone,” Maj Simundson said, “most particularly for young soldiers from Canada who, for the most part, were quite unaware of the history of rifle regiments other than their own, and of the fact that they were being hosted by regiments which could trace their beginnings to the 1700s and which had fought under General Wolfe at Quebec.”

Finally it was time to leave, and 30 barrack boxes, 30 secure containers of rifles and 90 pieces of luggage, along with 30 rifleman were headed for the airport. “As our transport moved out, as a final gesture of respect, Light Division and Royal Green Jackets soldiers across the street at the Westgate pub spilled out onto the road, raising their glasses in toast to the skirmishers of The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada. It was an emotional moment for all,” Maj Simundson said.



## The Queen's Own Lost the Political Correctness Battle

In 1977, from 24 May until Labour Day, a guard was mounted by skirmishers of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada at Casa Loma, the home built in 1911 by Sir Henry Pellatt, a former commanding officer of the regiment. One corporal and six riflemen stood as sentries at the castle gates, seven days a week, no matter the weather. Beginning with the following year, students employed under the Ontario government's Youth Experience Program were hired to fill the Casa Loma guard ranks and from 1978-1983, the expanded guard mounted sentries at Casa Loma and Queen's Park as well as at the entrance of the Lieutenant Governor's apartment in Ontario's Legislative Assembly building. During this time the guards who were on duty created considerable interest and admiration, and many photographs were taken by visitors as the guards stood staunchly at their posts. Ontario Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Pauline McGibbon, who referred to the sentries as members of "Her Guard" was particularly fond of the idea of having young men in the uniforms of The Queen's Own Rifles on duty at Queen's Park. Each year, in thanks for their service, with the end of summer and the dissolution of the guard for the year, she hosted a reception for the members in her Vice Regal apartment. It would appear the "fondness" for the skirmishers on guard extended to female visitors. Rifleman Eddy Tonus, on guard at Casa Loma, said he'd been slipped a couple of telephone numbers, "one from a woman in Missouri and one from a woman in Quebec." Visitors also liked to have their photographs taken with the guards, including youngsters, who often "poke you to see if you're real," Rfn Tonus told a *Globe and Mail* reporter. The regiment's participation in the program ended in 1983 when there was a complaint about the fact there were no women standing guard and a *Toronto Star* editorial trumpeted that, the next year, the program "should reflect 1984 values, not those of 1884." Commanding officer of The Queen's Own was LCol William J. Barnard CD. In response to the newspaper's editorial stance he retorted that the skirmishers represented the historical guard of the 1860s which would not have included women then and wouldn't in 1984. And so ended an initiative which had generated considerable positive response among the public and tourists, an early victim of the political correctness which, as the years passed, was to bedevil many another who were merely trying to do something of interest to the public.



*Rifleman Eddy Tonus, a member of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Skirmishers, stands resolutely on guard at Casa Loma, despite his female temptress.*  
(*Globe and Mail* photo)