



The Powder Horn

In Pace Paratus

Summer/Fall 2008

LCol Moore I. Jackson CD, 30 January, 1921 – 1 June, 2008

Capt Charles McGregor



LCol Moore (Moose) Jackson, who died at Veterans' Wing of Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto on Sunday, June 1, 2008 in his 88th year, was a WWII veteran who served as Commanding Officer of The Queen's Own Rifles from 1963-1965.

Despite the fact his father had served with The Queen's Own in WWI and had lost a leg in battle, his great-great-uncle had been in The Queen's Own in the 1860s and a great-uncle had served with the Regiment in 1880, as a teenager in 1940, Moose joined the Royal Canadian Navy. It was done more or less on a "dare" from his future wife, high school girlfriend Margaret Gibbs. However, he was rejected by the navy, and later by the RCAF, because he was slightly colour blind.

He then decided to join The Queen's

Own Rifles and noted in memoirs which he wrote many years later, that "I probably should have joined this infantry unit first." It was destiny for him to join what he called "A very wonderful and proud Toronto Regiment," one in which he would lead men in battle during World War II and as their CO in the post war years. Eventually promoted from Rifleman to Lieutenant he spent quite a bit of time at the front lines after D-Day.

"My time in action was quite lengthy, some 11 months," he wrote in his memoirs, "serving through France, including Caen, Falaise Gap, Boulogne and Calais. Then through Belgium and Holland, including the Scheldt Estuary engagements (probably the most horrible conditions imaginable) up to Nijmegen, where we spent December and January in conditions and scenery like Muskoka."

While The Queen's Own was preparing for an attack in order to capture enemy positions on the approach to Calais, Lt Moore led a successful patrol from his company's pioneer platoon behind enemy lines to disable land mines in their path. As the Regimental History put it: "Little imagination is required to appreciate the hazards. The ground had to be prodded to locate many of the mines, then they had to be lifted and de-armed. The job called for a steady hand and nerves of steel."

When Lt Moore and the Queen's Own fought their way across the Rhine into Germany they liberated several pris-

oner-of-war and slave camps. "It is impossible to describe the conditions and the complete denigration of fellow humans!" he wrote later.

Named 29th CO of the Regiment in 1963 he was in command when The Queen's Own marched out of University Avenue Armouries for the last time as the grand 71-year-old building was doomed to be demolished and a military tradition dating back to 1895 was ended.

In the last half century of his lifetime he and Margaret had visited and vacationed in such places as Yugoslavia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand, Hawaii and many other U.S. states, plus all Canadian provinces as well as the islands – Bermuda, Antigua, Barbados, Bahamas, Montserrat, the UK and various countries on the Continent. The Jacksons saw a fair bit of the world, enjoying Moose's retirement from chartered accountancy at Dunwoody, where he had worked for many years and was a partner. They also visited Paris, which Moose Jackson had already seen as a WWII soldier, and made pilgrimages to attend WWII memorial services in France, Belgium and Holland.

LCol Jackson is survived by his daughter Susan, son Peter, three grand children and three great grandchildren. Margaret, died in 1999 and he was also predeceased by sister Dorothy and brother Alan (Peter), who also served with The Queen's Own Rifles in WW II.





Interesting and exciting times ahead

Honorary Colonel Paul F. Hughes CD

For the first time in many years there has been no summer concentration or other major training exercise for Canada's reserve forces, a situation offset by the conclusion of training for those troops, including a large group from The Queen's Own, who left for Afghanistan earlier this year. We wish them all Godspeed.

Elsewhere in Powder Horn you will read about the formation of The Queen's Own's Deployment Support Team for our soldiers overseas. We remain committed to caring for these loyal young Canadians and their families, both during and after deployment.

Meanwhile, we are focussing our efforts on the plans and preparations for the 150th anniversary celebrations to take place in 2010. As you will note from the Regimental Trust Fund's report on this page, there is a continuing need to seek additional funding for an event which will provide memories which will last for the rest of our lives. We need your financial support to ensure all of our targets are met.

Key among the 2010 celebrations, of course, will be the Royal Visit of our Colonel-in-Chief. Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra will visit her Regiment in Toronto and The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Associations in Calgary and Victoria. Her Toronto agenda will include the rededication ceremonies at the Regimental Cross of Sacrifice at St. Paul's Anglican Church as well as the Queen's Own Rifles Museum in Casa Loma. Additionally there will be a Regimental church parade and dinner and dance for all ranks and guests at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome our new Commanding Officer, LCol Rob Zeidler CD, succeeding LCol Martin Delaney CD, and new RSM, CWO Shaun Kelly, succeeding RSM/CWO Scott Patterson CD. There are greatly interesting and exciting times ahead for Canada's oldest and finest Regiment. I would urge you to continue to check in at the Regimental website at qor.com for information on a wide variety of activities and the latest news involving your Regiment.



Here's your opportunity to support the 150th Birthday Celebrations

Capt Adam Hermant, Trust Fund President

As the months race by and we come ever closer to the celebrations which will mark the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2010 the Regimental Trust Fund's regular appeal for funds becomes more urgent. We are facing innumerable, one-time-only expenses in our efforts to fulfil our pledge that the sesquicentennial will be a memorable and exciting twelve month celebration.

And we're seeing results! I'm delighted to report that our corporate fund-raising team has secured a substantial donation from Caldwell Partners, in an excellent start for this continuing capital campaign

We thank them, as we thank all those of you who have sent along cheques. We are greatly appreciative and we hope that you'll continue to support us by clipping the pledge form attached to the flyer enclosed with this issue of the Powder Horn and send it along to us with a cheque attached. To those who are reading this and haven't yet contributed to the financial campaign in support of the anniversary, we ask you to get on board with your fellow members of The Queen's Own's Regimental Family across Canada and abroad and send along your contribution without delay. Don't forget there are income tax credits for donations over \$10.00.

In the next issue of The Rifleman, due out early in 2009, we will present a calendar of events scheduled for different parts of the country, all designed to draw attention to the fact that Canada's oldest, continuously-serving

infantry regiment is celebrating its 150-year history. This will include details of the visit to Canada and her Regiment by our Colonel-in-Chief, HRH Princess Alexandra.

In support of this anniversary, The Regimental Trust Fund is underwriting the cost of publishing two books – a History of the Bands of the Queens' Own, 1860 to the Present Day and soon after the Birthday a Modern History of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (1950-2010.) These will serve to draw further attention to the past history of our fine Regiment and to remind the Canadian public that our soldiers wearing our cap badge have stood ready to serve their country since 1860.

Currently, almost two dozen of our Reserve Army soldiers are serving alongside Regular Force personnel in Afghanistan. They follow in the footsteps of as many as 20 more who have already been deployed in Kandahar, plus numerous others who have served in world hot spots from Bosnia to the Soudan in past years. They put themselves in harm's way because they're Queen's Own.

It's up to all of us to ensure that they are recognized for this and we can assure you that your contribution to the success of the 150th anniversary celebrations will guarantee this. We need your financial help. It's as simple as that.

"In The Habit of Giving."



Drummed on... & Doubled off...



Incoming RSM Shaun Kelly CD is "drummed on" to the parade square by BdsM John Missons.



In the Regimental tradition, outgoing RSM Scott Patterson CD doubles past the Regiment following the Change of RSM parade in May.



CWO Shaun Kelly CD receives the Regimental RSM's Sword from Honorary Colonel Paul F. Hughes CD at the Change of RSM Parade.



RSM Shaun Kelly CD, his wife Kathryn and former RSM Scott Patterson CD with the gift the outgoing RSM received in a ceremony in the QOR Sergeant's Mess following the parade.

IN MEMORIAM

Jack Adams
Sgt Norm Bastin
James Bolton
Lt David Cottrell

Donald Doner
George Farley
Lt Bill Houston
Terry G. Lale
Len Lockhart

MWO Peter Mitchell
Douglas Rogers
CWO Larry (Lloyd) Schultz
Bob Stiers
Sgt Jack Taylor



Is Afghanistan worth it? A brigadier general answers

BGen Dennis Tabbernor, Deputy Commanding General, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

I was recently asked if Afghanistan was worth the death of a Canadian soldier. It is a question that goes to the root of our nation's involvement in this vitally important region, a question made all the more poignant by the losses here that our nation has endured. Let me answer.

The terror of 9/11 was born and bred in the lawless vacuum that was Afghanistan, a shattered land of shattered lives left desperate after 30 years of war and corruption. Around this vacuum swirled the regional turbulence afflicting Iran, Pakistan, China, India and Russia. An Afghanistan left unstable and vulnerable to the inrush of these forces would prove an immense incubator for terrors beyond the compass of imagination.

So, as part of a coalition, we went to Afghanistan. If we fail here, if we leave Afghanistan without security forces, without sound governance, without the rule of law, without an infrastructure and an alternative to narcotics, we will invite back the forces that spawned 9/11.

I have been to Afghanistan every year since 2003; every year, I see improvement as the country, with the help of the international community, reawakens. Kabul is home to ten times the population I recall in 2003. Young women and girls are in school, an economy is growing and the people have a capable, principled army of which they are proud. In the growth of a police force and the admittedly, but perhaps understandably, more gradual birth of a system of governance, Afghans can see the dawn of a rule of law.

In April, 2007, I joined the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, a coalition comprising military personnel from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Albania, Germany, France and Romania, as well as contracted civilian advisers, all working together as mentors and trainers. Our mission is to partner with the government of Afghanistan and the international community to organize, train, equip, advise and mentor the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. As deputy commanding general for Afghan National Army Development, I am focused on development of the army.

Success for us is a national army that is professional and competent, literate, ethnically diverse, and capable of providing security throughout Afghanistan. The army comprises five ground manoeuvre corps and one air corps; by December, it will consist of 70,000 troops. Each region of the country is secured by one ground corps. In addition, we have trained and equipped three battalions of superbly capable commando soldiers. Equipment, from helicopters to rifles, has been donated by coalition countries.

I have seen little evidence of corruption in the army. Afghans come to their army already quite willing to fight.

Training occurs nationally and in each corps area. Beyond the basics any new soldier learns, commanders at all levels hone the ability to work in units and in co-operation with coalition forces. Growing leaders in the non-commissioned officer and officer ranks takes time, but pays off: Two corps are now able to plan and conduct complex missions with police and coalition forces. Of the security operations now in progress across the country, ANA forces are in the lead in all but a small minority. We are working with the army to improve their artillery force, which is based on old Soviet equipment. While the coalition now provides air support and aerial medical evacuation, the Afghan air component, as its capabilities increase, will begin assuming these missions.

With soldiers from all of Afghanistan's major ethnic groups—the Pashtun, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Turkmen — this is truly a national force. Their battlefield success attests to their competence: These are soldiers who want to close with and engage their enemy. Whenever that enemy has been foolish enough to stand and fight, they have lost. We do not see hundreds of Taliban forming up to attack. They know better. They poke around by the handful and most end up dead or captured.

Instead of fighting, insurgents are resorting to improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers; the growth of confidence among Afghans in their army is, in turn, prompting more tips that expose such threats. The spectacle of suicide bombs notwithstanding, violence is not the rule. Last year, 70 per cent of incidents occurred in 10 per cent of the nearly 400 districts. The commander of our Regional Command East, centred around Jalalabad, reported that more than 90 per cent of Afghans there enjoy a peaceful life; the violence shown by our media does not represent the lives of the vast majority of Afghans.

Instead, the lives of most Afghans are lived peacefully, with increasing access to basic services, the prospect of a representative and responsive government at the local, regional and national levels. The economy rewards honest work, and the possibility of education exists for their children.

Instead of a breeding ground for corruption and terror, their homeland is becoming, ever so slowly, but ever so surely, a nation of stability and dignity with something of value to offer its global neighbours.

Back to the question. There is nothing we do that is worth the life of an individual, but do I think it is important for me to be in Afghanistan and do I think my actions and the actions of other Canadians have made a difference here — the answer is, absolutely yes.

Courtesy, Globe and Mail, 29 April, 2008



Afghanistan-bound troops on the march on Heritage Day in Highland Creek

As you read this, 22 members of The Queen's Own Rifles are now deployed in Afghanistan. Of these 12 were among a group of 15 soldiers from 32 Canadian Brigade Group who were honoured at the annual Heritage Day Parade in Highland Creek, Ontario in mid-June.

The group halted at the saluting base along the parade route to be greeted and addressed by Honorary LCol Dick Cowling CD and Toronto Mayor David Miller, both of whom wished the troops "Godspeed" in their mission during the difficult days ahead. The troops — some of whom were accompanied by their families -- were hosted at a reception in the Highland Creek Legion following the parade.



For security reasons we have been asked not to identify any of the soldiers in this deployment group by name but it is important to recognize that some are currently on their second or third tours.

Members of The Queen's Own's Deployment Support Team, led by the DCO, Maj Allan Champion CD, were present at the post-parade reception. Maj Champion outlined the aims and objectives of the group and stressed

their determination to ensure that families of each of the deployed personnel will be looked after in their absence. Other members of the team include the Padre, Capt Daniel Saugh, Lt Ben Lee A/Adj, CWO/RSM Shaun Kelly CD, Cpl Julie McGibbon Sp Clerk, Sgt June Parris CD, Chief Clerk as well as other personnel from the Regimental Battalion Orderly Room at Moss Park Armoury.



Medal of Honour for Cpl Stephen Thomas

OTTAWA, May 27, 2008.—Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, announced today the awarding of 26 Decorations for Bravery. The recipients will be invited to receive their decorations at a ceremony to be held at Rideau Hall at a later date.

On the recommendation of the Canadian Decorations Advisory Committee (Bravery), the Governor General has awarded Medals of Bravery to the following recipients: Corporal Stephen Louis Thomas, MB, Mississauga, Corporal Piotr Krzysztof Burcew, MB, Repentigny, Quebec; Lieutenant Jason Edward Demaine, MB, CD, Ottawa, Ontario;

Corporal Adrian Roman Markowski, MB, Mississauga, Ontario.

On October 3, 2006, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, the five men saved the lives of their fellow soldiers and local Afghan civilians by unloading ammunition from a disabled burning vehicle following a suicide bomber attack. Despite having to cross through flames, they repeatedly returned to the vehicle to retrieve mission-essential cargo and high-explosive ammunition that posed a deadly threat to those nearby. They moved away from the scene just moments before the fire raged out of control, detonating the remaining rounds



Cpl Stephen Thomas, who has been named to receive the Medal of Honour for bravery in action in Afghanistan was presented with a framed copy of a congratulatory letter from the Colonel-in-Chief, Princess Alexandra.



D-Day + 64, 6 June 2008, Bernieres-sur-Mer



Two members of The Queen's Own who were officially commended for their bravery in Afghanistan were guests of honour at D-Day+64 ceremonies in Bernieres-sur-Mer in June. (Top Left) Cpl Stephen Thomas and Sgt Jamieson Murray place the Regimental flag at the memorial plaque at Le Maison Queen's Own. Cpl Thomas also placed a Queen's Own wreath during the service.



Governor General Michaëlle Jean introduces Canadian VC



OTTAWA—Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian military forces, unveiled the Canadian Victoria Cross at Rideau Hall on May 16, 2008, in the presence of the Prime Minister of Canada, parliamentarians, members of the Canadian Forces, veterans and other distinguished guests.

The Victoria Cross, awarded in recognition of the highest acts of valour, self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy, has long been regarded as the world's most coveted and prestigious military decoration. Available to members of British and Commonwealth countries, the VC was introduced in 1856 by Queen Victoria in 1856 to reward acts of valour during the Crimean War.

Five VCs have gone to members of The Queen's Own, with Sgt Aubrey Cosens being awarded his posthumously for bravery during WWII. The first Canadian to receive a VC was cavalry officer Lt Alexander Dunn, an Upper Canada College graduate from Toronto, for his actions at the Battle

of Balaclava on October 25, 1854 when he was 21 years of age serving in the British Army's 11th Hussars.

"The Victoria Cross is the highest degree of recognition one could hope to receive in the course of a lifetime," said the Governor General. "It was important to us that we create a design that would honour tradition and that we produce the Canadian Victoria Cross right here in Canada."

The Canadian Victoria Cross is almost identical to the original decoration. It bears the Canadian floral emblems and the motto on the obverse has been changed from "For Valour" to its Latin equivalent "Pro Valore". To keep a symbolic link to its past, the decoration was made by including a percentage of the gun metal used in the manufacture of the Commonwealth Victoria Cross. To make a similar link with a Canadian historic event, a percentage of the copper used to produce the Confederation Medal in 1867 was also included.

The Chancellery of Honours, at the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, the Department of National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, the Royal Canadian Mint, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom worked in partnership to produce the Canadian Victoria Cross.



Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Richard L. Cowling CD presents the Lord Strathcona Medal to MWO Bryton Que during the 2881 Scarborough Rifles Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps annual inspection. Looking on is the Cadet Corps CO Capt Shaun Bridge. The inspection was held at the Queen's Own's Dalton Armouries in Scarborough, the new home of the corps. Parading with the Cadet Corps was its recently-formed Bugle Band.

CANADIANS AT WAR – 2009 TOUR PLANS

"Canadians at War," hosted by The Queen's Own Rifles Association, is a 14 Day, World War I and II Military Tour to France and Belgium to take place between 28 May and 10 June, 2009. Tour organizers have lined up an impressive list of sites and individual tours, including WWII QOR battle-grounds such as Bernieres-sur-Mer, Anisy, Anguerny, Le Mesnil Patry, Carpiquet and Caen as well as the Canadian Cemetery at Beny-sur-Mer. Other sites will include The Juno

Beach Centre, Dieppe, Vimy Ridge, Arras, Ypres, Beaumont-Hamel, Passchendaele, Amiens and Paris.

For further information and prices contact Brian Budden at brianbudden@rogers.com/ 905 567 4975 or Dave Lavery at dlaver@torontohydro.com/ 905 831 7966. The tour operator offers a \$75 per person reduction in price if seats are booked by 26 September.



One soldier's life: From Korean war to the pulpit

LCol Thorold M. C. (Boom) Marsaw CD

(LCol "Boom" Marsaw, commissioned 2/Lt in The Queen's Own Rifles, was posted to Korea in 1954 where he commanded the Machine Gun Platoon and a platoon of ROK Army soldiers and later served as Liaison Officer to the ROK Army. He also served in Germany, Cyprus, India, Pakistan, Norway and Alaska. In April 1969, then Maj Marsaw serving with 1Br Corps, he was recalled to take command of the 1st Bn QOR of C, serving until it was rebadged as the 3rd Bn PPCLI. In 1977 LCol Marsaw retired to begin his service of 25 years as a Baptist pastor.)

When I first met LCol "Wild Bill" Matthews, he was sporting the badge of The Queen's Own Rifles. He had been awarded not one but two Military Crosses, for bravery during WWII and he proved to be some CO! What an impact he was to have on my life, my career. As I see it, one of the true measures of greatness in this world is the capacity to inspire others to reach for -- and achieve -- excellence. That's how Bill influenced me. It was he who launched me on the way to Regimental Command. There is just no doubt about it.

Colonel Bill was no stranger to his officers, especially junior officers. I had only been briefly at my new post before I was ushered into his office. "Where are you from, Boom?" he asked. "London, sir," I answered. "Hey you're practically home. (Camp Ipperwash was just an hour's drive away.) They call this part of the province western Ontario don't they? That's great because we need some good westerners in this outfit. You're going to command a platoon in D Company. It is made up of fellows from The Regina Rifles, a fine Regiment. They (and The Queen's Own) were the only guys in the whole of the Allied D-Day landing force to achieve their objective. They even went beyond and had to be hauled back. They've got a great reputation." He added that, "Oh, by the way we've got a track and field meet on this afternoon so you'd better unpack your running shoes. I'm sure the Company will be able to use you." And they did. That afternoon I won the 100, 220, and 440. All the practice I had keeping out of Mom's reach really paid off. It didn't hurt either in the matter of winning the respect of those in my new command. There is something about

working for the fastest guy in the Regiment. It was a great beginning for a relationship that lasted a life time.

From my earliest days with the Regiment it had always been my aspiration to achieve command. That opportunity came far sooner than I had anticipated when a posting to the British 1st Corps in 1970 was cut short and I was whisked



back home to take over the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. I was 38 years old and for a moment the youngest Battalion Commander in the Canadian Forces. Immediately after the handover parade I had the RSM assemble the troops in the mess hall. I don't remember much of what I said that day, hopefully all the right things, but most significantly I addressed the issue of faith. I realized that there were some who were concerned about "the old Bible thumper" taking command. I acknowledged that fact and suggested that they might be just a little concerned that there would be a church parade every Sunday. I assured them that would not happen. They all cheered. "Every other Sunday," I said. And they all booed. With that I assured them that I wasn't there to push my faith down their throats, but I simply hoped to prove that having the likes of me in command would make an encouraging difference.

I knew that I had very big shoes to fill. The Regiment was turning out some really fine leaders. The last two Commanding Officers were nothing short of outstanding and both went on to become Generals. (Kip Kirby and Herb Pitts MC). Not only did I inherit a fine unit, but also some really encouraging operational roles -- that of the Canadian Forces Mountain Warfare and Arctic Operations Battalion. The Queen's Own was Canada's contribution to Ace Mobile Force Land (AMFL). In practical terms that meant we were assigned to the defence of Norway.

CONTACT THE EDITOR

On these pages we reproduce articles excerpted from material submitted by readers of the Powder Horn which will be reproduced in the Modern History of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (1950-2010) which I am in the process of writing. Current or former members of The Queen's Own, or family members who would like to

offer memoirs or anecdotal accounts or photographs of service with "Canada's Oldest and Finest Infantry Regiment" are invited to do so. Send them by e-mail to Capt Charles D. McGregor at qorpubs@sympatico.ca or by Canada Post to 1152 Ashcroft Court, Oshawa, ON, L1K 2N9. Questions? Call 905 743 0259.

In WWII Norway had very quickly fallen to Hitler's Germany. AMFL was NATO's attempt at preventing it from happening again should the Russian war machine start to roll. The Alliance had committed itself to putting a Brigade on the ground in Norway at the first sign of a serious threat by the Warsaw Pact Nations. Canada's role was to have a Company there in 24 hours and an entire Battle Group in seven days. The Queen's Own were the major component of the Canadian contribution and I was in command. The overall size of the force was a Brigade Group. The other two Battalions were provided by Britain and Italy, the Germans supplied the Armoured Regiment, each Battalion brought its own Artillery and the Americans added a lot of the bits and pieces that make a force of this size work.

There were about 1200 in my command including a flight of six Huey helicopters. We had enough Skidoos to move one whole company, Armoured Personnel Carriers (M113s) sufficient for another and snowshoes for all. The choppers could do a pretty good job of moving a Rifle Company in two lifts and the better part of a battery of light guns in one. This entire Force was airlifted to Norway by the RCAF Transport Command.

It is important to realize that the Norwegian venture was only one of the many things an Infantry Battalion may face

in the passing year. Life in a Regiment is an unending chain of adventures. For instance the unit already knew it was going to Cyprus for a six month tour of duty the following year. Preparation for that was already in the back of our minds. But, between now and then it was train, train, train.

THE END OF AN ERA

On April 26th, 1970, we celebrated our Regiment's 110th birthday and on the next, paraded as the Third Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), The Princess Pats. The cartoon on the local newspaper's editorial page pictured the Officers' Mess bar with a collection of its distraught members. It was captioned, "Cut to ribbons...Wiped out...Totally annihilated...By our own side." The only consolation was that we were exchanging membership in the most decorated Regiment in Canadian history for membership in another wonderfully storied Unit.

(Editor's Note: This is a seriously abridged version of LCol Marsaw's original report, but it serves to give a taste of life in The Queen's Own Rifles in the years following the end of World War II. The full report will be published in the Modern History of The Queen's Own to commemorate the Regiment's 150th anniversary in 2010.)



"We marched every inch of the country, it seemed"

Rfn Les Kitson

Rfn Les Kitson of Hamilton recalls that he joined the military in October, 1966 and "I did my training in Calgary in the winter and spring of 1967 in Currie Barracks and in the Sarcee Indian Reservation. The winds were very cold. All we had was battledress and greatcoats to keep warm. No sleeping bags, only grey blankets to keep the snow off when we did night training. Before we went to the Battalion in Victoria we had gone from 100 guys to 20. After basic training we went to the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

In 1968 members of the 1st Bn were sent to Norway to participate in an international "war games" called Exercise Polar Express. Rfn Kitson was one of those chosen. He recalls that:

"We made a 20 hour flight in a Hercules to Barnafus, Norway, where we pitched tents, put up the kitchen, built our washroom and dug the holes for the potties. The CO said the mess will close when it gets dark. At this time of the year, it never gets dark! We were allowed to go downtown and drink their very weak beer. Norway was a no-alcohol country so when we went we usually took a bottle of rum or rye

with us. We went in trucks but the last one left for camp at 0200 so if you missed it, you had to walk. They had dances because there were so many countries there for the exercise -- Americans, British Royal Marines (who were the enemy), Norwegians, the Italian Alpine troops with the Robin Hood hat with the feather. Everyone wanted the Italian hats as souvenirs.

"The Ex lasted for ten days. We worked with other countries and it was a learning exercise for almost everyone. It also gave new members of the Battalion a chance to see what a unit is all about. We marched every inch of the country, it seemed. The area was full of fjords, meaning lots of mountains with water areas to land. Our CO was good. He recognized areas where the enemy would pick to land and moved our troops into defensive position where we waited for them to walk into our ambush. This Battalion was one of the proudest units I was ever in. I was so proud to wear the hat and badge with the maple leaf with "2" in the middle. We were a Rifle Regiment -- always ahead of everyone. I loved the sound of a bugle band. (I don't like the sound of bagpipes.)"



Wedding of HRH Princess Alexandra

The first notification, on the letterhead of Kensington Palace, W.8 (London), marked "Private and Confidential" was to Col James G.K. Strathy, OBE, ED, in March 1963. From Sir Philip Hay KCVO, the Private Secretary to HRH Princess Alexandra, Colonel-in-Chief of The Queen's Own Rifles, it began as follows:

"My Dear Jim. Princess Alexandra has asked me to write to you, as Colonel of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and to convey to you her ideas as to how her Regiments may best be represented at her wedding at Westminster Abbey on Wednesday, 24th April.

"I think I should make it clear at the outset that, while the Princess is most anxious that the maximum number of officers and other ranks from all her Regiments should take some part at her wedding, it is very well understood by Her Royal Highness that it may prove difficult, or indeed impossible for The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada to meet the various requirements set out below, which I repeat are only tentative suggestions and should by no means be interpreted as royal commands.

"In the case of your Regiment, the Princess is aware of the very special difficulties which are bound to arise because the whole of the Regiment is stationed outside the United Kingdom."

The letter continued, providing details for those who might be invited, including senior officers as official representatives, plus other members of The Queen's Own, some who would act as ushers and others to form part of an escort party lining the entranceway to Westminster Abbey's front doors, through which the wedding party would enter and exit.

As was his custom, Col Strathy acted with swift decisiveness, nominating the Commanding Officers of the Regiment's three battalions, along with their wives, to be The Queen's Own's senior representatives, along with four junior officers and two NCOs from the 1st Bn serving in Germany, to round out the official party, which would also include Col and Mrs. Strathy.

This resulted in LCol H.C.F. Elliot CD, CO of the 1st Bn stationed in Fort McLeod, at (Dellinghoffen) Germany, his wife Bessie; 2nd Bn CO LCol D.N. Osborne CD, and his wife Phyllis stationed at Currie Barracks, Calgary, and 3rd Bn CO LCol Glenn McIver CD, and his wife Jean, in Toronto, going into frantic overdrive to prepare themselves for this occasion of a lifetime for members of The Queen's Own, the marriage of their Colonel-in-Chief to the Hon. Angus Ogilvy, London-

born son of the twelfth Earl of Airlie, a Scot.

The last survivor of the four senior officers present at the wedding was LCol McIver, who died in March 2008, and who was survived by his wife, who had

written an interesting account of their trip to attend the wedding. The following is an extract from a lengthy hand-written document which Jean McIver had taken the time to compose as she and her husband took a short pre-wedding vacation before flying into London and "touching down on Sat. Apr 20/63 at 12:30 a.m. after a holiday of eight days on the continent."

She wrote, following a couple of days of sightseeing in London, that "Tuesday was the day of days. We were picked up by Canadian Army cars and driven to Kensington Palace, the home of our Princess. We were met at the door by an aide to Sir Philip Hay, who is secretary to Princess Marina (Princess Alexandra's mother) and Princess Alexandra. We entered the Dining Room and then Princess Marina's Drawing Room. These rooms impressed me very much, not because of their grandeur, for they were not pretentious but very, very home-like, just like any other bride's the day before the wedding, with unopened gifts in the Dining Room.

"Lady Hamilton, the Princess' Lady-in-Waiting made us all welcome and talked to each person present while we waited and drinks and canapés were served to us. There were about 20 people present, eight QOR people plus representatives from Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. The Princess was scheduled to stay for 15 minutes but stayed for 45. She arrived wearing a very chic green suit with her lovely hair done in a French roll. She was very charming and far prettier than her photos show. Angus was with her and is a very delightful person with a tremendous sense of humour and ready wit.

"When the Princess first entered the room we were presented to her singly. She spoke to us about Toronto. She has a great knowledge of the Regiment and its battalions. They both expressed delight at our coming so far and thanked us profusely. She expressed her desire to see us in the near future in Canada. We actually had the opportunity to speak to them three times for when the time came to leave they said goodbye to each one individually.



"An amusing incident occurred when Alexandra had finished saying goodbye to us. She proceeded to the next couple and walked behind us so she and Angus could get by easily. Glen moved me in front of him. This was very close to the centre of the floor and, at this point, Angus appeared and there we were alone in the centre of the room. He took my hand and it like one would in a French Minuet and said "Shall we dance this one alone?" And so our goodbyes ended with a laugh from all.

"London was all agog over the wedding and a great deal of fuss was made of it by the Press and Radio or TV. The day of the wedding LCol and Mrs Osborne and ourselves made quite an impression on the people in the lobby of the hotel when we came down and got into our chauffeur-driven Canadian cars.

"Westminster was a wonderful sight. The beauty of the Old Church with all of its lovely architecture cannot help but to impress us. We were ushered to our seats and were in plenty of time to see the arrival of all the dignitaries, the splendour and colour of the costumes of people from other countries as well as the beautiful fashions of the British Commonwealth people. Our spot in the Abbey was the Poet's Corner (under Keats and Milton and on top of

Hardy). This was one time when I had a desire to be seven feet tall to be able to see the whole of the Processional Aisle.

"The Abbey was equipped with closed circuit TV so it was possible to see the Royal Family and guests arriving at the Abbey and walking down the aisle. The TV showed the Princess leaving the Palace in her beautiful gown with her brother, and at various points along the route. We saw the Queen, Prince Philip and Charles arrive and be received and the darling little bridesmaids and pages, who were a little impatient to be on their way, and Princess Anne trying to keep them in order. Princess Margaret smiling and happy with Anthony Armstrong Jones and Angus and the best man as they waited also.

"As Alexandra entered the Abbey there was a hush as all strained to catch a glimpse of the radiant and beautiful bride, a fairytale Princess, stately and regal, her magnolia gown so simple in design yet magnificent. The train, held by a diamond tiara and made of lace, was a true work of art. The details of the gowns of the wedding party are by now familiar to most people through press and TV coverage, although nothing can capture the excitement and grandeur of actually being there."



1st Battalion QOR of C Bugle Bands at home ... and away

For the book "A History of the Bands of The Queen's Own, 1860 to the Present Day," to be published in September 2009, we're looking for memoirs and photographs from anyone who ever served in The Queen's Own Rifles Bugle or Regimental Bands. Are there any members of either of the two bands whose photographs are printed here reading this? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Anyone who was in the bands that went to Korea, Cyprus or Germany? Anyone

who was in the band that performed at the Edinburgh Festival? Anyone who can tell us about The Queen's Own at the Waterloo Music Festival? Or anywhere else? We'd be interested in hearing about your experiences as well as seeing good quality photos of you and your band. Contact: Capt Charles (Chick) McGregor at 1152 Ashcroft Court, Oshawa, ON, L1K 2N9, by email at qorpubs@sympatico.ca or by telephone at 905 743 0259. Do it NOW!



Bands of the 1st Bn QOR at Currie Barracks in 1956 (left) and in Germany when the Battalion was stationed at Fort McLeod in the early 1960s.

NEW, FROM LEW, A BOOK ABOUT MGEN MACKENZIE'S MILITARY EXPERIENCES

Add this to your Christmas list: "Soldiers Made Me Look Good. A Life in the Shadow of War." It's a new book by former Queen's Own Rifles officer MGen Lew MacKenzie CM, OOnt, MSC and bar, CD, which the publisher describes as a "straight-talking memoir."

Covering his years serving during the Cold War to his current role as retired general and public affairs speaker, commentator and writer, it also includes memoirs of his service in the 1st and 2nd Bns, QOR of C. Available 20 September, 2008, published by Douglas & McIntyre.



Reflections on a posting with 2QOR of C

Col. Neville (Robbie) Robinson CD

Having spent three years at the Royal Canadian School of Infantry in Camp Borden wearing RCIC badges, I was glad to be interviewed by Col. Peter Bingham as to my choice of “rebadging” among the Canadian Guards, the Black Watch (RHR) and The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. Having started my military career in 1941 in the King's Royal Rifle Corps (60th Rifles), I naturally opted for The Queen's Own, which turned out to be the best choice.

Soon after getting myself back into “Green and Black” I was posted to Korea as a replacement for Maurice Whiting, in 1954. The posting was for three months as 2QOR of C was rotating home in the spring. On arrival at the battalion I was posted as 2 I/C D Coy. which was a large (170) company containing all the troops taking their release on return to Canada. For some reason it was known as the “Jaggy Company” by the other rifle and support companies. It was commanded by Maj. Larry Harrington who used hearing aids for which he had trouble obtaining batteries and was constrained to save them by switching them off whenever possible! Every morning was OC's Orders where justice was dispensed. As the battalion reserve we manned the defensive positions in the Kansas Line during the numerous “Scram” Exercises and did a large amount of repair work to the bunkers and slit trenches.

Just as the Battalion was getting prepared to leave for Canada I was posted in to the HQ 1 COMWEL Division to replace Capt. Erwin Fleury as Staff Captain (Canadian) and OC to KATCOM (Korean Army Attached to Commonwealth Division) Defence Coy, a standard three-platoon rifle company.

The staff work was the standard stuff and I spent a lot of time with piles of paper, one of which was 125 copies of the nominal roll of 2QOR to get the battalion aboard the troopship at Inchon. I went down to see them off and say goodbye to friends like Ron “Awful” Werry, Charlie Belzile and Peter Nixon. The tragic death of Lt. Bill Vipond was on my desk and that Board of Inquiry took a while to get to Ottawa, going back and forth. Years later, in the 90s, my wife Brenda and I visited Pusan and laid poppies on the graves of the three 2QOR casualties in the impressive UN cemetery on the hillside overlooking Pusan harbour.

The extra three months in Korea was extended twice to 13 months as the powers-that-be vacillated about who was leaving and who was staying. Before I left I was awarded a Korean medal by the Korean Army Chief of Staff and it now hangs in the QOR museum at Casa Loma as, in those days, we were not authorized to wear foreign decorations for peacekeeping duties. Today it might be different.



MWO Peter Mitchell: First para-qualified QOR member?

LCol Grahame Baskerville CD

The QOR has now had an Airborne tasking for almost 25 years, and is the only Militia unit able to retain this tasking. Many Regular Force QOR members qualified as parachutists and served with distinction with the Airborne Regiment. Also within the Regular Force the QOR had members who had served in WW II with the 1st Cdn Parachute Battalion as well as British Airborne Forces. As a matter of Regimental historical detail it would be interesting to determine who was the first person wearing a QOR hat badge to qualify as a parachutist. Was it someone during WW II or was it later?

One of the earliest Regular Army paratroopers was MWO (Ret) Pete Mitchell. He enlisted (at age 17) in 1944 with the 2nd (Reserve) Bn QOR in Toronto. He joined the Regular Army in 1951 and went to Germany with the 1st Cdn Rifle Bn (QOR Coy) in 27 Bde. Sgt Mitchell, along with Sgt Fred Swan (also QOR) returned to Canada in 1952 and went to Rivers, Manitoba where they qualified as parachutists on Basic Para Course 164. They remained at Rivers as Para Instructors. Sgt Swan later re-badged to PPCLI to continue his parachuting and Pete Mitchell returned to 1 BN QOR in 1954 where he served in Calgary and Germany. He later

rebadged to PPCLI and retired in 1980. Hearsay evidence indicates that these two were the first to return to Canada for parachutist training. As Mitchell is ahead of Swan alphabetically, it is highly possible that Pete Mitchell may be the first QOR person to qualify as a parachutist. Are there others?

NOTE: In 1957 the 1st Bn QOR was selected to provide a platoon for nuclear weapons training at the United States Atomic Energy Commission Test site at Yucca Flats, Nevada. MWO Mitchell was selected to be the Platoon Sgt for this task which involved 40 members of the 1st Bn QOR working with US Army units and being subjected to six atomic blasts over a two month period with no protective clothing or shelter other than slit trenches. They were assured repeatedly that they had not been exposed to harmful levels of radiation and they accepted these assurances in good faith.

Like many of the others, Pete Mitchell developed cancer in later life and died in early summer, after much physical distress. The Canadian Atomic Veterans Association continues to pursue the Canadian government for compensation – so far without fair result.