

The Can Scot

The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) Regimental Association
PO Box 44180 RPO GORGE, Victoria, BC V9A 7K1
August 2024

Victoria Day Parade The Regimental and Association Pipes and Drums approaching saluting dais 20 May 2024



Important Dates and Articles

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Deadline for October 2024 Newsletter – Tuesday, October 15th

Executive Roster 2024-2025		
Patrick Bulmer	President / Association Pipes and Drums	250-472-0875
Stan Willow	Vice President	
Lee Tucker	Secretary Treasurer	250-308-4843
Ron Cullen	Past President	250-592-4123
Directors:		
CWO B. Fairall	Regimental Sergeant Major	
Jim Dumont	Director	250-477-1346
Steven Hayward	Social Director	778-351-3376
Hank Lowe	Endowment Fund	250-592-2898
Charles Middleton	Membership / Editor "The Can Scot"	250-893-7954
Thomas Mercer	Nanaimo Branch Representative	

President's Report – Patrick Bulmer

As September approaches, the Regimental Association's Executive and Directors prepare for a busy 2024/25.

The Association had its annual 59th Reunion in Nanaimo last June. It was a great success with the major organization of the Nanaimo branch—special thanks to all who attended and Gord and Maureen Thompson for their hard work. Carole Amo made her unique gift bags, which are always appreciated. Our WW2 Veteran Nick Janicki was the host and he laid the Wreath on Sunday.

Nick has been invited to attend the Operation Market Garden Ceremonies in September in the Netherlands. Nick will also be attending the Ceremonies next year to mark the 80 years since the Liberation of the Netherlands in World War Two. There are plans for members of the Regimental Family to attend. The Regimental Association Pipes and Drums, with Regimental Pipes and Drums members, plan to participate in the Ceremonies in Deventer on Remembrance Day, May 4, 2025. A parade on May 5, 2025, in Wageningen and a visit to Wagenborgen on May 6, 2025, to lay a wreath and walk about the town. More to follow.

Please note our Bursary's new Terms of Reference and the application form.

Since the Bursary was initiated, many deserving serving members and senior cadets have benefited. The CSR Heritage Foundation administers the funds on behalf of the Association and can give tax receipts to those who wish to donate. Please contact us if you want to donate.

Please attend the posted luncheon dates and come out to support your Association in all its activities and functions. Your involvement is the only way we can continue.

We have very few WW2 Veterans left. We will continue to support them, but we will focus on reaching out and supporting our Veterans who served in other conflicts and peacekeeping.

I want to thank Hank Lowe for his many years of service to the Regimental Association. He is moving, and we would like to give our best wishes to Hank and Phyllis. We will continue to keep in touch.

Deas Gu Cath

Patrick Bulmer

Lunch Dates 2024-25- Jim Dumont

The first lunch this fall will be on Saturday, September 14. This year, the Red Poppy Restaurant is open from 11:00 to 5:00 PM on Saturday, so they do not have a special opening for us. This will be the 24th year that we have been gathering for lunch, and everyone who attends enjoys getting together with other members of our large Regimental Family. It is also great when we have some members that travel from up island, the mainland and even sometimes from eastern Canada to join us.

Charles Middleton, Membership Chair, will notify the membership by email about a week before every luncheon. If you don't have an email and would like to be reminded by phone, please let me know, and someone will call about a week ahead to remind you. If you have an email and Charles does not have your address, this would be a good time to send him your address and be on his list for all important announcements.

The lunches are held in the Lounge of the Trafalgar/Pro Patria Legion at 411 Gorge Road East. You have to enter the building through the parking lot on Dunedin Street. It is also a great time for those who do not like driving at night to get out for a few social hours. We ask that you try to notify Charles, reply to this email, or myself, jadu@shaw.ca or 250-477-1346 no later than the Thursday before the luncheon so that we can reserve the appropriate number of tables.

We had a fairly good attendance last year but would still like the numbers to increase this year. It would be nice to see 50-60 persons or more in attendance. With our large family, that should be easy to achieve. These lunches are a great time for you to meet members of the Regimental Family. Last year we averaged about 21.8 persons but that was helped a lot when the Pipe Band performed. All components of the Regimental Family, plus friends and relatives are welcome to attend. The Legion is now licenced to allow children into the premises while the restaurant is open, so you can now bring your children, grandchildren and others.

The Legion is opens at 11:00 AM so we will start ordering lunch about 11:30 AM and after. The company is great, the food and refreshments are great, and the prices are great.

All the luncheons are held on Saturday and the dates for the 2024-2025 period are as follows: September 14, October 5, November 2, December 7, January 4, February 1, March 8, April 5, and May 3. Once again, we are hoping to have the Association Band provide a short program at the December and June Lunches.

60 Annual Reunion

The Canadian Scottish (Princess Mary's) Regimental Association's 60 Annual Reunion will be held in Victoria, B.C, on June 6,7,8, 2025.

Details to follow.

Please let me know if you would like to volunteer at patwbulmer@gmail.com

Holland Trip Association Pipes and Drum with Friends - Stan Willow

To keep the info flowing, we met last week with Capt Wouter (Dutch Army). The intent is to be in Holland for these events. C Scot R WWII veteran Nick Janicki plans on attending. He fought at Wagenborgen in B Coy, and his brother is buried at Groesbeck cemetery.

The following events are the key days in Holland for the band and us.

Events

4 May

Groesbeek Cemetery Wreath Laying, (CSR members) 1100 (TBC), 30 min distance from Deventer Remembrance Day Ceremony in Deventer 1900 for 2000

5 May

Liberation Day in Wageningen (time TBC) 60min distance from Deventer
afternoon band performance in the town square

6 May

Day trip by CSR to Wagenborgen for a wreath-laying and walk about the village (I hope to have a battlefield guidebook ready for that event.), 90min distance from Deventer

The band will travel for one week from April 30 to May 8

I suggest we all take advantage of the bus for the movement between Deventer and the other towns to ease any parking and missed rendezvous.

Accommodation in Wagenborgen is limited as it is a village. The recommendation is that we stay in Deventer 3 to 6 May and commute from there. Note the band plans on going direct to Amsterdam after the visit for a day in that city before departing.

Accommodation can be arranged through the band travel agent, so we are all in one place. If not, there is plenty of accommodation in the town and its environs.

After the end of the Wagenborgen visit, the official part is over, and we are free to extend our travel or return home.

Stanley Willow
250-744-6786
irms2@telus.net

Command Team Message August 2024

Firstly, I would like to thank the editor of the Can Scot for the opportunity to address the Regimental Family in this excellent publication. I greatly appreciate the time and effort that goes into producing this regimental gem. Secondly, I'd like to thank each component of the Regimental Family for their outstanding support during the change of command parade and in the few months since that time. It is an honour to command the regiment, and I am fortunate to have such a strong Regimental Family in support. I'm looking forward to working together over the next few years.

The reserve summer training (RST) cycle is coming to end, and we continue to support individual and collective readiness for domestic and international operations. With two officers deployed on Op IMPACT and several soldiers preparing to deploy on Op REASSURANCE, The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) stands ready to do what our nation asks at home and abroad.

On June 14th, 2024, Sgt Jesse Hunt, Sgt Erik Carveth and Sgt Jesse Woods, supported by Sgt (Ret'd) Denis Byrne, summited North America's highest mountain peak, Denali (formerly Mt McKinley), located in Alaska near the Arctic Circle. With a summit elevation of 6,190 metres (20,310 feet), it is the tallest mountain in the world measured base to peak on land, and summiting Denali is a significant physical, mental, and technical accomplishment.

All of us in the Regimental Family are proud of the team for their extraordinary accomplishment. Many of the skills required for this adventure, including expertise in communications, first-aid and survival were learned from their training in our regiment.



Standing on the top of North America

L-R: Sgt Jesse Woods, Sgt Erik Carveth and Sgt Jesse Hunt

This summer also saw successes with our cadets. I was honoured to review our 2422 corps in Nanaimo and was quite happy to see their pipe band! It was no doubt a great deal of work and passion for the staff to activate. Well done! Unfortunately, I could not attend either 1726 or 2136 ACRs but I understand they went very well. Lastly, I am proud of C/CWO James Vernon from 1726 for his appointment as Camp RSM at the Rocky Mountain Cadet Camp. Bravo Zulu, C/CWO Vernon!

Moving into the fall, training will continue to hone individual and small unit tactics, with emphasis on Adapted Dispersed Operations based on experiences learned from the ongoing war in Ukraine, including basic Unmanned

Aerial Vehicle (UAV) training. As always, the regiment continues its support of 39 CBG and 3rd Division Reserve Summer Training (RST) with instructors and students for individual courses and collective training activities in preparation for the 2024 Division Training Event, Exercise Western Sabre at CFB Wainwright. With 30 participants, the regiment sent the largest contingent of soldiers from 39 CBG. They will participate in live-fire field ranges, including all-arms platoon/troop groups, company groups and combat teams. The exercise will include soldiers from all 3 reserve brigades of 3rd Div as well as elements of 1 CMBG. It will expose our soldiers to mechanized, armoured elements and aviation assets that we have not trained with in recent years.

This summer saw another busy schedule for the Pipes and Drums, beginning on the May long weekend with the Victoria Highland Games and Military Music Festival. The Pipes and Drums performed during the Fortissimo Show on May 18th along with the Naden Band of the RCN and the 3rd Marine Air Wing Band.



On May 20th, the Regimental Pipes and Drums, supported by the Regimental Association Pipes and Drums participated in the annual Victoria Day Parade as part of the CAF contingent.

The Regimental Pipes and Drums once again participated in the Okanagan Military Tattoo (OMT) in Vernon, BC over the weekend of 24-26 May. This allowed the P&D to maintain and foster the ongoing relationship with the event organizers and provided an opportunity to perform on a large scale, with bands from 39 CBG, the CAF and the civilian Pipes and Drums community.

As part of the ongoing annual Ceremonial Guard in Ottawa, two members of the P&D, Cpl Emma Yeo and Drummer Lachlan Barry served as part of the musical contingent. Cpl Yeo was attached to the Ceremonial Guard Pipes and Drums, while Drummer Barry was attached to the Brass and Reed band.



Cpl Yeo is front row, second from the left.



Drummer Barry located left file, fourth rank.

In June, Pipe Major Roger McGuire, pipers Wade Calder and Chris Chiarot, drummers Jen Calder, Siobhain Brouwer and Dennis Atkinson of the Pipes and Drums represented the regiment at the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo in Halifax.

In August, Cpl Liam Diamond and Piper Anders Murray-Hemphill of the Pipes and Drums on Attached Postings to the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry (SNIY) in Edinburgh, Scotland, will be performing in the Royal Edinburgh Tattoo, no doubt an experience they won't soon forget.

Some notable events that took place at or just before Stand Down:



LCol Proctor and the Padre, Capt (Retd) Gerard Barabash,

Presented Victoria based personnel with their new Sentinel Patches



Col Lerch is presented the CFMWS Fitness Award by Col Raesler for achieving the Platinum level on the Force Fit Test.



LCol Proctor's mug out.



On behalf of the Officers, NCOs and NCMs of the regiment, then Maj Lerch presents LCol Proctor with a set of mini-Regimental Colours and a desk-top claymore letter opener.

As the summer ends, we look forward to another training cycle, preparing our soldiers, NCOs, and officers for overseas service.

Regimental training will focus on warfighting, and rightfully so, as we continue to deploy soldiers in ever-increasing numbers and frequency to conflict zones. The world is getting more dangerous - events in Ukraine, Israel and the Middle East continue to demonstrate this. The regiment, its officers, NCOs and soldiers understand that our country will make demands of us. With a steady focus on challenging training and the support of the Regimental Family, we will be Ready for the Fray.

Deas Gu Cath

LCol Slade Lerch, MMM, CD
CO

CWO Brad Fairall, CD
RSM

Up-Island Branch Gord Thomson

In May, we attended the B Coy year-end BBQ. During this event, Gord Degau, Director of the Up-Island Branch, presented Cpl Jules Galarneau with a \$1000 bursary on behalf of the Heritage Fund.

On June 7,8,9, we hosted the 59th Annual Reunion, and all had a great time.

At this time, we would like to extend a special thank you to the people who helped make this reunion a success. Thank you to Denis Byrne for his superb presentation and display of some of his mountain climbing gear at the Friday Meet and Greet. Denis provided a slide show on the 3 Can Scots who were en route to the summit of Mt. Denali.

Also, a special thank you to Colin Hart, who provided detailed written instructions for "Operation Neptune," which were the Naval instructions for getting the Infantry to their designated landing sites on D-Day "Operation Overlord". Colin also provided photographs of the various landing sites taken through a submarine periscope. What is interesting to note is how clear the images are of buildings, terrain, foliage, shore defences and obstacles. You can count the windows on each building and compare the size of trees and rocks at each landing site. This information would have been most useful to Command staff at all levels. Very impressive!

Another special thank you to Bruce Heathcote for organizing two walks on Saturday morning for reunion attendees. Bruce narrated a walk around Buttertubs Marsh, primarily a bird sanctuary within city limits. We received lots of positive feedback.

In addition, thank you to Captain McKenzie for his support. Thank you to Cpl. Almond and MCpl. Ortloff for bartending on Friday night and MCpl Almondinger and MCpl Ortloff for running the Small Arms Trainer (SAT) Saturday afternoon.

Top Shot on the SAT was Dora Burton who claimed her prize after dinner at Branch 10 Legion.

Attached are two photographs of two Association members checking out the small arms trainer.

The first photo is 100-year-old Nick Janicki, a World War 2 Veteran operating the C6 medium machine gun.



The second photo is of Ignace Bentein who is the owner of the farm where the 16th Battalion and the 10th Battalion advanced through a cloud of Chlorine gas during the Battle of St Julien / Kitchener Wood.



Captain Wouter Veldhoen, currently serving in the Dutch army visited Victoria and Nanaimo early August while on leave. Wouter is a friend of the Regiment. In 2011 he flew to Vancouver Island where he interviewed 18 WW2 CSR Veterans for his Masters Thesis.

Marc Marchand President of the Up-Island Branch CSRA.

Comox Valley army cadet selected as regimental sergeant major - F/Sgt Margarette Campollo

James Vernon will be working at the Rocky Mountain Cadet training centre near Cochrane, Atla.



Chief Warrant Officer James Vernon of 1726 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps in Comox, B.C., smiles during a rock-climbing activity while visiting Expedition Team Leader platoons during their 12-day expedition. F/Sgt Margarette Campollo, Cadet Correspondent

James Vernon has had a busy week. He took part in an assessment of over 70 youth from across Canada, which helped him rise to the top of the pack and earn him an appointment at the Mountain Cadet training centre.

In his last summer of the cadet program, Vernon demonstrated leadership and commitment to the program. After coming out at the forefront of the cadet training, he will now have a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of leaders from across Canada. The program specializes in expedition and drill and ceremonial.

Vernon completed the Canadian Forces basic parachutist course last summer, and he credits the program with helping him obtain leadership skills.

“My experience doing Basic Para last year made me a better person; it really pushed me mentally and physically. Plus, I got to jump out of planes,” said Vernon.

Vernon advocates for the cadet program, stating that commitment will get you far.

“The program has so much to offer and the more you put into it, the more you can gain from it. If you work hard, you’ll be rewarded with experiences you can’t get anywhere else.”

Vernon thanks the cadet program for bringing him lifelong friendships with people he would not have otherwise met. Cadets of varying backgrounds are brought together to have common values, challenges and successes.

Away from cadets, Vernon volunteers at a local retirement community, working with seniors with dementia. He recently graduated high school and hopes to attend the Royal Military College.

Former CSCOTR Bryan Gardner reviews the BMQ graduation parade with his son on graduation.



Bryan Gardner reviewing BMQ graduates



Dylan and Bryan Gardner

Bryan Gardner joined the Canadian Scottish in 1992 and served until 1996, then again from 2003 to 2004. He works as the Reserve SM at the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (CADTC). His son Dylan joined the Canadian Scottish in March of this year.

Last Post

Maj (Ret'd) Christopher DELACOMBE, aged 81, died peacefully at home on 25th June.

The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) Endowment Fund
The Canadian Scottish Remembers – Action at Kitchener's Wood – Awarding of Honorary
Distinction (Part 3 of 3)
LCol (ret'd) D.C. Egan

Effective the 15 September 1934, GSO 63 specified the detail of a “special shoulder badge” for the 1st Bn of The Canadian Scottish as follows:

“In brass—within the annulus inscribed “CANADIAN SCOTTISH” an oak leaf with acorn.”

(Canada, Minister of National Defence, 1934)

Honorary Distinctions

While it is unknown if the British Honours Committee (BHC) resolved whether the Oak Leaf and Acorn device represented a special battle honour, commemorative device, or honorary distinction, and, following World War II, the terms Battle Honour and Honorary Distinction were often used interchangeably, current interpretation is unequivocal.

Para 28 of 33-2-14 CFP A-AD-200-000/AG-000 [Ch 2008-05-15] (CFP 200, 2008) states:

Honorary Distinctions. There are two categories of “honorary distinctions”:

a. Type 1. This type of distinction is accorded in rare and exceptional circumstances to authorized honour-bearing units as a mark of special favour, as seen from the perspective of total war. These distinctions authorize a unit the right to wear on the uniform or emblazon on the Colour special commemorative badges or devices. For example:

(1) The shoulder badges of the Calgary Highlanders and The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) include oak leaves marking the actions of the 10th and 16th Battalions, Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF), which they perpetuate, in Kitchener's Wood (an oak forest) on the night of 22/23 April 1915...

(Canada, Department of National Defence [DND], 1999, p. 3-2-14)

The only other Type 1 honorary distinction is the motto “UBIQUE” awarded to the Artillery Branch, and Military Branch of the CF for past and future actions (Canada, DND, 1999, p.3-2-14).

b. Type 2 honorary distinctions originated during WW 2, and several have been awarded to individual regiments and flying squadrons that significantly reinforced another wartime combatant unit. The honorary distinction is principally the badge of the reinforced unit emblazoned on the reinforcing unit's colours (Canada, DND, 1999, pp 3-2-15).

Hence, for the action at Kitchener's Wood the perpetuating units of the 10th Bn, Calgary Highlanders, and 16th Bn, Canadian Scottish Regiment, are deemed to hold an “**honorary distinction**”.

Evolution of Shoulder Badges

In 1934 General Service Order 68 granted authority to the 1st Bns of Canadian Scottish Regiment, Calgary

Highlanders, and Winnipeg Light Infantry to wear a “special shoulder badge” that included an oak leaf and acorn device symbolic of the action by the 10th and 16th Bns at Kitchener’s Wood. In the case of the CSR and CH this device was inserted between the units’ full names, while the WLI had its initials superimposed on it. For reasons not known, a short time later, the Calgary Highlanders changed to a shoulder badge similar to the WLI; that is, a brass oak leaf with the letters CH superimposed.

With the introduction of battle dress in 1939, regiments moved to embroidered cloth shoulder badges. The CSR adopted a red badge with the unit title in blue lettering, and 1st Bn badge incorporated a facsimile of the oak leaf and acorn embroidered in brown and green. The brass badge continued to be worn on full dress and officer’s service dress.

During WW 2 it was decided that individual shoulder titles worn on officer’s service dress were a drain on resources and ordered that all officers should wear plain brass CANADA badges. A CH anecdote has it that the CO of the CSR refused and was told he would be returned to Canada if he persisted. He persisted and the matter was quietly dropped. The authenticity of this story and the identity of the CO are not known (http://www.calgaryhighlanders.com/history/traditions/regimental_dress/oakleaf.htm).

Following the war and the reduction of the CSR to a single Bn regiment, the 1st Bn shoulder badge became the regimental shoulder badge. The cloth version continued to be worn on Battle dress and arm brassards when “bush” dress was introduced, while the 1934 brass badge continued to be worn on other dress orders.

In the late 1960s, “unification” of the Canadian Army (CA), Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) into a single Canadian Forces (CF) occurred and a common green service dress adopted. This uniform did not have shoulder epaulettes and distinctive element and unit titles were replaced with a cloth CANADA badge worn on the sleeve at the shoulder seam. Both the CH and the CSR adopted a cloth version of the oak leaf and acorn device. The WLI had been amalgamated with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (RWpGR) in 1955, who had abandoned the practice. The CSR adopted a badge in the size and style of the 2nd Bn PPCLI Presidential Citation worn on the upper arm below the CANADA badge. Gradually, land force elements, as the army was known, adopted embroidered cloth shoulder badge with the unit’s name for the CF uniform, which replaced the CANADA badge. The CSR badge incorporated the oak leaf and acorn device.

In 1989, Distinctive Element Uniforms (DEUs) were reintroduced for the erstwhile army, navy, and air force, complete with shoulder epaulettes for the land element. This enabled regiments, and units, to return to metal shoulder titles. Initially, ORs of the CSR wore a three-quarter sized brass and enamel badge on the DEU uniforms, pending procurement of the 1934 pattern Canadian Scottish shoulder title with oak leaf and acorn device. At the same time, a camouflage smock was introduced as a Garrison Dress and the cloth red/blue battledress badge of 1939 was adopted. This uniform what short lived and so this badge is no longer worn on any order of dress.

Today, the “honorary distinction” of the authorized 1934 brass pattern special shoulder badge incorporating the oak leaf and acorn device commemorating the action of the 16th Bn at Kitchener’s Wood is worn by all ranks of the Canadian Scottish Regiment on full dress, service dress and, in the three-quarter sized pattern, officer’s mess dress, and has now been worn continuously for approximately 90 years as a fitting tribute to this action and the soldiers involved.

In memory of the action at Kitchener' Wood, the Endowment Fund is seeking sponsorship into the Book of Memory of the below named 16th Bn soldiers Killed in Action at this historic event.

Capt. Merritt, Cecil

Capt. Geddes, George

Lt. Lindsay, Arthur

Lt/ Picton-Ward, Espine

28903 Pte. Blott, Charles MacGregor

28714 Pte. Bridges, William Henry

28409 Cpl. Bryant, Frederick

29199 Pte. Cameron, Donald

Sponsors will receive a certificate with the sponsored soldier's particulars of service, including place of birth, date and place of enlistment, time, and location of death, and where memorialized if they died on active service. A donation (minimum \$25.00, suggested donation \$50.00) will secure sponsorship. Sponsors may wish to make their donation perpetual on an annual basis, for example on the anniversary of the soldier's death or Remembrance Day, or through a monthly allocation (This can be accommodated through Canadahelps.org

Please return your completed nomination form identifying the soldier you wish to remember with your donation by mailing to: Treasurer, CSR Endowment Fund, 4746 Beaver Rd, Victoria, BC, V9E 2J7.

Help us remember those who served with the Regiment in peace and war and to support the Regiment into the future.

Deas du Cath

[Please contact us at cscotrendowment@gmail.com to learn other ways you can support the Regimental Family through gifts to The Endowment Fund]

The following soldiers have recently been sponsored for entry into the Book of Memory.

29298 Pte. Aitken, Henry	16th Bn	KIA	France	23-04-15
29305 Pte. Bean, Louis	16th Bn	KIA	France	23-04-15
47329 Pte. Bel, Frank	16th Bn	KIA	France	23-04 15
51043 Pte. Avery, George	16th Bn	KIA	France	22-04-15

- Remembered by K. Wilson

THE BATTLE FOR THE KILT-Colonel (Ret'd) Richard D. B. Talbot C.D., P.J.M

In 1987 I had just taken up my new position as Managing Director of The St George's Club in Bermuda when Major Dave Grubb, CScotR, contacted me, who advised that he had been retained to update Reg Roy's "Ready For The Fray" and could I please provide him with details of my time as CO CScotR (1972 – 1976). This was no simple ask as this was the early days of computer word processing and I was still a beginner. Worse I had brought no CScotR documents with me. They had all been left in the loving care of Sgt. "Mother" Coss! As a result, I regret his request between my new responsibilities, lack of source material, and procrastination, which never left my pending tray! However, although Dave Grubb did briefly refer to it in his update, there is one story that needs to be told in full as it had a long-lasting impact not just on the regiment but on all Canadian kilted regiments - and that is - "The battle for the kilt". When I was appointed CO in 1972 the regiment was still wearing battle dress in barracks and bush dress in the field. Fortunately, the horror of Unification and the green uniform had not yet reached the Militia although we all knew it was imminent! Training-wise, we were now evolving from our 20-year role as Civil Defence (aka "Ropes & Ladders") back into an infantry role. A steep learning curve for our SNCOs and senior officers! Also, for the sake of this story, it must be remembered that there was no internet and that all external communications were by snail mail, landline or fax. Further there were no computers. The invaluable "Mother" Coss and her daughter typed everything with carbon copies in the Orderly Room.

The Initial Skirmish

I took over from Lt-Col Mike Heppell in September and had hardly got my feet wet when the first tsunami of Unifications crept up on us. Prior to my appointment, Mike had received notification that we were to nominate one member to receive the newly introduced Medal of Military Merit (MMM). After conducting due diligence and consulting the Area Commander, he selected Pipe Major Frank (aka "Dink") Knight. Frank was a natural choice. He was one of four brothers, all of whom fought in Normandy. Three served with CScotR, while in 1943, Frank had been posted from Pipe Major 2nd Bn CScotR to the Toronto Scottish Regiment as their Pipe Major. Frank eventually returned and had been our Pipe Major since 1956 and was regarded as one of Canada's finest pipers. More importantly to our story, he had an unparalleled connection with Pipe Majors across Canada. Frank was delighted with his nomination even more so when he discovered he was the only piper so nominated. However, his delight did not last long! One Saturday morning, after I had taken over, he literally "steamed" into my office white with rage. "You can stuff your medal!". I immediately sensed he was unhappy and asked him to sit down and explain! The psychic "Mother" Coss miraculously produced two coffees. He handed over his Rideau Hall Investiture instructions. His dress was to be the new (not yet issued to us) green uniform, complete with a "flat hat" and trousers! "NO EXCEPTIONS!". I agreed that this was totally unacceptable for a Pipe Major. It had long been believed that one of Cpl Hellyer's goals of Unification was to abolish the kilt so here was the first proof. As we discussed further, Frank advised me that, within the regular force, the Ottawa RCAF Pipe Band, the official Federal Government ceremonial pipe band, had raised an official complaint against the abolition of the kilt, and he gathered from his "buddy", their Pipe Major, that they were making some headway. I, therefore, instructed him to phone his buddy (at our expense – phone calls were expensive!) and find out what they were proposing. A week later, he came back beaming with faxed copies of their proposed alterations ("cutaways") to the new tunic. I therefore instructed him to draw his full green uniform (including "flat hat" & trousers!) from CFB Esquimalt and to deliver the tunic to Cpl Joe Kruk (our in-house tailor) for alteration as per the Ottawa Pipe Band proposed design. My next concern was the threatening "No exceptions!". Clearly, as a single kilted recipient, he was liable to be turned away. I therefore phoned the COs of our

“sister” 16th Bn. founding regiments (Seaforths, Camerons and Argylls) told them of my plans and asked if they would support us with their MMM recipients similarly dressed. They all agreed. To make a long story shorter, in December all four MMM recipients duly arrived fully kilted at Rideau Hall and marched in together. According to Frank there was some consternation amongst Trudeau, his cabinet and senior NDHQ staff but the Minister of Veterans’ Affairs, “Dan” MacDonald immediately got up and came over to them and said – very loudly – “how wonderful to see the kilt still being worn!”. This initial fray did cost me the first of my three “Ministerial Inquiries” but thanks to the preponderance of CScotR staff officers at both District and Area HQs it was skillfully “staffed to death”!

The Main Battle

Almost immediately afterwards, a Federal Election was called, and all kilted regiments agreed that it was imperative that the issue of retaining the kilt was our #1 priority. I therefore wrote to all the federal candidates on Vancouver Island, reminding them of the importance of CScotR to their constituency and asking them, if elected, what their position on kilt retention would be. I only received one reply, from the Conservative candidate Major Alan McKinnon RCA. He wholeheartedly endorsed retention and stated he would do everything possible to retain the kilt. He went on to win Victoria and was as good as his word. He later became Minister of Defence and, later, Minister of Veterans Affairs. He remained a staunch friend of the regiment, an active associate member of our officers’ mess and, as minister, a guest speaker at our Game Dinner. Unfortunately, the response from the Liberal candidate and sitting MP, Captain David Groos RCN was not so supportive. David was a family friend and a client (I managed the Groos family real estate portfolio). He never ever spoke to me about my letter but I promptly received my second “Ministerial Inquiry”! Again, the CScotR staff team at District & Area successfully “staffed it” off the table! To be fair to David our friendship continued and I did not lose his family’s portfolio. My guess is that he was already working on restoring the RCN traditions also lost to Unification.

Footnote

When our green uniforms eventually arrived, Cpl Joe Kruk made a small fortune cutting them away. He retired shortly afterwards! However, we had not realized that our regimental shoulder titles, including our revered oakleaf and acorn, had also been abolished and replaced by a simple “Canada” flash. I discussed this with the Board of Trustees. Fred Cabeldu told an amusing story. In 1944, in a pre-D-Day inspection, General Montgomery, infamous for his “eagle eye”, spotted the oakleaf and acorn on the shoulder flash and ordered him to remove it. Fred tried to explain its history but was abruptly told, “Remove it, or you are back on the next ship to Canada!” Fred immediately contacted Colonel H. M. Urquhart at RHQ Victoria, who expressed an explanatory letter to Monty’s HQ, and nothing was heard of it again! The Trustees then agreed with (and funded) my suggestion that we manufacture a miniature oakleaf and acorn on a green cloth background and wear it under the “Canada” flash. It was not of brilliant quality, but we wore it until our shoulder flashes with oakleaf and acorn were returned. Fortunately, no inspecting officer was as “eagle-eyed” as Monty, and I avoided Fred’s predicament!