

THE ROYAL 22^e RÉGIMENT IS A CENTURY OLD

Researched and written by: Pierre Sénécal, R22eR



I am honoured and delighted to present the Royal 22^e Régiment which, as of 2014, has been serving Canada for one hundred years. My Regiment was formed on October 21, 1914, in order to provide French-Canadians with a French language unit in which they could better support Canada against the Germans. The 22nd (French-Canadian) Battalion was created with the help of the newspaper *La Presse*, based in Montreal, and a meeting between Prime Minister Borden and a few members of the French-Canadian elite, which included Doctor Arthur Mignault and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Liberal opposition leader. During the recruitment campaign for the 22nd, 23rd and 24th infantry battalions, the 22nd Battalion was reserved for French-speaking Canadians. Colonel Frédéric Mondelet Gaudet, a gunner and an alumnus of the Royal Military College in Kingston, was the Battalion's first commanding officer.



Arthur Mignault

The recruits gathered at Fort St-Jean, where they received either a Ross rifle or, at a lack of rifles, broom sticks. The 22nd Battalion trained in St-Jean until it was transferred to Amherst, Nova Scotia, in March 1915. The schedule included marching, weapon training and trench-life training. On May 20, 1915, the Battalion was transported to England aboard Her Majesty's Ship *Saxonia*. On September 15, 1915, after staying in barracks in East Sandling and undergoing monotonous training, it was sent to the trenches of the First World War. With the pride and patriotism of the beginning, and still bearing its beaver badge, the Royal 22^e Régiment became the largest unit of the Canadian Army.

Nowadays, the Regiment is comprised of three regular force battalions, two reserve force battalions, a regimental band, a board of general officers (general officers serving the regiment), a board of directors, the *Association du Royal 22^e Régiment*, the *Fondation général Vanier*, a regimental museum, the *Société du patrimoine de la Citadelle*, and a magazine entitled *La Citadelle*. In keeping with the British traditions, the Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment has always been the Head of the Commonwealth since the reign of King George VI. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has therefore been the Colonel-in-Chief of our regiment since 1952. I was privileged to present the Queen with the regimental statuette, during a private meeting at Buckingham Palace, to mark more than 30 years of service. In keeping with the same traditions, the board of general officers chooses a veteran of the Regiment to serve as Regimental Colonel for a fixed period of time. The selection is recommended to the Chief of the Defence Staff and approved by the Minister of National Defence. Traditionally, a retired general of the Regiment is asked to play this important role within the Royal 22^e Régiment.

Since 1920, except for the years during the Second World War, we are the only regiment to be housed in the Citadel, in Québec City, right beside the occasional residence of the Governor General. We are always very proud to say that the Citadel, an essential

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component of Canada's cultural heritage, is our Regimental Home. This location guarantees a permanent gathering place for regimental activities. Of course, these privileges come with responsibilities. The battalion quartered in the Citadel must ensure that this Canadian historic treasure stays in good condition and must look after the comfort of the Governor General when he is present. In the summer, this battalion also participates in the ceremonial Changing of the Guard and is assigned to guarding the residence of the Governor General. The battalion commander must reside in the Citadel and is de facto the aide-de-camp to His Excellency.

The Citadel houses our institutions and regimental values. The secretariat of the Board of Directors is in the Citadel. Its President, a senior officer, is responsible for regimental affairs such as: *esprit de corps*, traditions, institutions, historical aspects, archives, and cultural heritage; essentially everything that does not fall under the jurisdiction of military operations, according to the military hierarchy. The regimental chapel, a former British powder magazine, is part of this cultural heritage and is used for weddings, funerals and other ceremonies. Regimental Colours no longer in use are also kept in the chapel. Beside

the chapel is the Memorial, which contains the graves of General Vanier and his wife, as well as ashes of General Triquet, VC, Second World War, behind a plaque in his honour. Behind two other commemorative plaques, we have recovered some of the soil from the burial sites of the two Victoria Cross recipients of our Regiment, during the First World War, Corporal Keable and Captain Brillant. It is in the Memorial that we keep the Book of Remembrance containing the names of all of our glorious soldiers who perished in the course of action: 1074 in the First World War, 382 in the Second World War, 110 in the Korean War, 9 under the UN and NATO flags, and 15 in Afghanistan. Every day, the duty sergeant turns a



Paul Triquet, VC

page of this book given by the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief. The Memorial is embellished by 22 stained-glass windows, of which 19 represent the units that contributed to the creation of the 22^e. Our regimental museum, currently undergoing major renovations, will leave its present location, in the old French powder magazine and the English jail, and will be relocated in the blockhouses in the eastern part of the Citadel. Mess facilities (officers, senior non-commissioned officers, and junior ranks) are located within the Citadel, in the original buildings where are concealed so many memories, that have survived through oral traditions, but not necessarily true.



Baptiste

The centre of our home is the parade ground. This is where changes of command take place, where the troops march past to the Regimental March "Vive la Canadienne", where several historical ceremonies are held and where the members of the Regiment are proud to gather. As it was customary for the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, with which we were affiliated in 1927, our regimental goat, Baptiste, joins our troops in these demonstrations. The three coloured regimental flag flies at the entrance – blue found on the patches worn by the 2nd Division during the First World War, red found on the

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patches worn by 1st Division during the Second World War, and gold, a colour that represents our glorious soldiers who served with both of these units. The flag is flown at half mast on the day of the funeral of a serving or retired member. Servicemen also pay tribute to veterans with a salute when they pass in front of the Vimy Cross, which is erected on the old Brook Battery, beside the chapel. At the base of the Cross, three 18-pounder cartridge cases are buried. The names of the soldiers we lost during the First World War, as well as documents signed by veterans, are found in the first case. The second case contains badges, coins and wood from the original cross. As for the third one, it contains wood ashes from the remains of the original cross. Finally, an important component of our Regiment is *La Citadelle*, a magazine that enables members to share news about regimental life, whether they live in cities where the different battalions are serving, or in regions where there are branches of the Association, such as Montréal, Québec, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Rimouski, Ottawa-Gatineau and Moncton. In all these places, our pride and *esprit de corps* strengthens the foundations of the Regiment.



This *esprit de corps* was present in the early beginnings, when the Regiment was fighting in the trenches of the First World War, first in Belgium and then in France. Between 1915 and 1918, 5 584 soldiers served with the Battalion, which means it renewed its troops at least five times. Servicemen of the 22nd Battalion received 153 decorations between 1916 and 1919, mostly from Great Britain, but also from France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, and Portugal. Heroic actions brought them glory in many battles, for instance the Battle of Courcellette, in France, from September 15 to 17, 1916. Major Thomas Tremblay, former second in command to Gaudet, had taken command and had asked the commander of the 5th Brigade to provide shock troops for this great assault of the Battle of the Somme. Tremblay wrote: "Even if this is a slaughter, the morale is excellent and we are determined to prove that the 'Canayens' are not quitters." The Battalion lost more than 300 men.



Joseph Kaeble, VC August 8, Lieutenant Jean Brillant, from Rimouski, showed courage in three assaults and became the second recipient of



Jean Brillant, VC the Victoria Cross. During the battle of Chérisy, on August 26, 1918, the battalion's officers were all injured or killed (the future General Vanier lost a leg). This battle marked the end of First World War operations for the 22nd Battalion. According to official records, the 22nd

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Regiment, when it returned to Canada, became part of the Permanent Militia and set up its headquarters in the Citadel on April 1, 1920. King George V awarded the title of "Royal" to the 22nd Regiment on June 1, 1921. The unit was therefore named "Royal 22nd Regiment" before changing its name to "Royal 22^e Régiment" in June 1928. It earned 18 battle honours, of which 9 were embroidered on its Regimental Colours.

During the inter-war period, the Regiment trained in Valcartier and provided security troops, as well as ceremonial guards, to several foreign dignitaries, such as King George VI, who had been the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief since 1938. In the same period, the Regiment had only 189 members, including the regimental band. It would take until August 1939, when a campaign started against Hitler in Europe, before the Regiment would be able to recruit more members. On December 10, 1939, the Regiment left for England. It served in the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division and settled in Cove (Hants), in the Guillemont Barracks, where the wait was long and difficult.

On July 10, 1942, the Regiment landed in Pachino, Sicily (Italy). A few days later, on July 18, it took part in its first Second World War battle, in Piazza Armerina, where 8 soldiers were killed and 26 were injured. Until the fall of 1943, it fought in the heat and rain of Southern Italy. Then, in mid-December, it arrived in the region of Casa Berardi. Captain Triquet, from Cabano, stopped a German counter-attack with only a handful of men after his rallying cry "They will not pass." He was awarded the Victoria Cross for this achievement. In February 1944, the Regiment was charged with defensive and resupplying duties. In the midst of a resupplying mission, Corporal Armand Hébert's mule stepped on a landmine. Hébert lost his two legs, his left arm and part of his right elbow, making him the soldier of our Regiment who suffered the worst injuries in the war. In spite of this, he got married and had children before his death in 1990. In May 1944, the Regiment participated in the breaching of the Hitler Line. On July 3, it attended a private audience with Pope Pius XII. Then, on September 14, it waded across the Marano. This was the deadliest day of the war, with 31 dead and 61 injured. Later in September, the men of the 22^e paid the price in blood for the capture of San Fortunato. On March 16, 1945, the Regiment left Italy for Marseille, France. An unusual event occurred: members of the French-Canadian 22e could not communicate orally, for security reasons, with local communities before their arrival in Belgium. The Second World War operations of the Regiment ended in the region of Apeldoorn, Netherlands. Three commanders succeeded one another during the war: Lieutenant-Colonels Paul Bernatchez, Jean-Victor Allard (future Chief of the Defence Staff) and Gilles Turcot. The Regiment arrived in Halifax on October 1, 1945. For the whole duration of the war, the Auxiliaries and the Ladies of the Regiment, vital elements of regimental life who stayed in Canada, supported the *esprit de corps*. Another battalion, made up of



General J.V. Allard

volunteers, was called to serve in the Pacific War, but was not deployed because Japan capitulated after the atomic bomb, in August 1945. During the Second World War, members

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of the Regiment received 90 decorations. Later, the Regiment earned 25 battle honours, of which 10 were embroidered on its Regimental Colours.



The Regiment regained possession of the Citadel in 1946 and settled down in the post-war routine. Training continued in Valcartier while the Regiment recovered regimental items that had been left everywhere in 1939, year of the departure to England. One of the tasks assigned to the Regiment was civil duties, such as fighting forest fires and floods in Red River, Manitoba. We must also point out the personal achievement of Captain Guy D'Artois who saved Canon J.H. Turner, severely wounded at Moffet Inlet, far north from Hudson Bay. D'Artois was awarded the George Medal by the Governor General, Viscount Alexander of Tunis, for his courage and determination. D'Artois, who served in the Maquis, in France, was a good paratrooper. Consequently, in January 1950, he became a key member of the Royal 22^e Régiment's paratrooper unit. Then, the Korean War started and the creation of a second battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Jacques Dextraze (future Chief of the Defence Staff) was quite chaotic. This was the first battalion to serve in Korea, essentially a war of patrol duties, but the defence of Hill 355 proved to be a hard fought defensive battle against the large and determined Chinese army. While the R22^eR (paratroopers) was renamed First Battalion of the R22^eR (1R22^eR) and replaced the 2R22^eR in Korea, a third battalion was created (3R22^eR) to ensure the continuation of the mission. It was this third battalion that was last deployed in Korea. Although the Regiment lost 110 members, the *esprit de corps* was always present while these three battalions fought under the UN flag. The Regiment's members won 40 decorations during the conflict. The "Korea" battle honour was embroidered on the Regimental Colours.

In the years following 1953, the Regiment's three battalions served, each in turn, under the NATO and UN flags. I would also like to mention that in 1953, the 1R22^eR became the Canadian Airborne Regiment. The 2R22^eR served in Germany under NATO command and

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the 3R22^eR went to Korea with UN forces. From 1953 to 1993, with the exception of the period from 1960 to 1963, members of the Regiment were always present in Germany. During the same period, the Regiment deployed units in Cyprus and served with UN forces. The 1R22^eR was the first to assist with this peacekeeping mission in 1964. As for the 2R22^eR and the 3R22^eR, they were each deployed five times in Cyprus, for six months each time. The 1st Commando, all of its members being "Beavers", went to Cyprus on three occasions. The three battalions also served, each in turn, under UN command in former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995, and in Haiti from 1996 to 2010. A unit of the 1R22^eR fought in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. As for the 1st Commando, we find them in Somalia in 1992. A sub-unit of the 3R22^eR was also sent to East Timor in 1999. The Regiment was very active in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the 1R22^eR was deployed from 1999 to 2000, the 3R22^eR from 2001 to 2002, and the 2R22^eR in 2002. The war in Afghanistan required a lot of efforts by Canada and all the Regiment's battalions served in this conflict. The 3R22^eR was in Afghanistan in 2004, and from 2007 to 2008, while the 2R22^eR was there in 2009, and the 1R22^eR from 2010 to 2011. To conclude, I would like to add, to this impressive list of major operations, that members of the Regiment also participated in several minor operations under the NATO and UN flags all across the world. For its part, the Regimental Band played during several ceremonies and even went to Korea. They also served along ceremonial guards and participated in the changing of the guard ceremonies at the Citadel, during the summer, in addition to a tremendous amount of other commitments.

It is also very important to add that the two battalions of the Reserve were very active during the long period that followed the Korean War, and that many members filled the ranks of regular units. Reservists were ready to serve and competent because they had received instruction regarding the everyday operations of regular troops.

In 2014, the Regiment will reach a century of service. The three battalions are still present at the Citadel and in Valcartier, while the two units of reservists have strengthened their presence in their respective communities, the 4R22^eR in Laval and the 6R22^eR in Saint-Hyacinthe. Just like in the years when all the units got together in Québec City, the Regiment's *esprit de corps* is still driven by competitions and deployments of all sorts, and believe me, the units really compete with one another. In conclusion, I will quote the last sentence of *Le Royal 22e Régiment 1914-1999*, a book written by the historian Serge Bernier: "Sacrifice, tenacity and devotion contributed to the success of the Royal 22^e Régiment, a Regiment made to fight for great and noble causes." On behalf of the three recipients of the Victoria Cross in our Regiment, *je me souviens*.

Pierre Sénécal, R22^eR
Friend of the Canadian War Museum

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- g. The Royal 22e Regiment (colloquially known in English as the "Van Doos") on the web:
 - i. www.R22eR.com
 - ii. www.lacitadelle.qc.ca
- h. Finally, you should visit the Citadel in Quebec City.