



## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PWOR

### **The Princess of Wales' Own Regiment: A Glimpse at 150 years, 1863-2013**

#### **BEGINNINGS**

1. Shortly after the War of 1812, the fencible and provisional units in which many Canadians had served were disbanded, and the Sedentary Militia (the name tells all), which remained, languished to a degree. Training diminished to near zero and the units became more social foci than operational capabilities.
2. The Militia Act of 1855, however, changed and revitalized the system. Militia General Order (MGO) No. 1, issued 16 August 1855 did not dispense with the old principle of universal military service, but did create a special volunteer force, the “Active Militia” (technically the Non-Permanent Active Militia, or NPAM). The old Sedentary Militia remained as a back-up to the Active Militia, but was only to be called upon in the most extreme emergency.
3. Kingston was one of the traditional garrison towns of Canada. By January 1863, Kingston had seven of these new Volunteer Militia Rifle Companies. Despite the fact that a rifle battalion normally comprised six companies, these seven were combined on 16 January 1863, as the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion Volunteer Militia Rifles. The commanding officer of the Kingston No. 1 Rifle Company, LCol David Shaw, who was also Brigade Major of Military District 3 (MD3), became the first commanding officer of the newly-formed battalion. Locally prominent, he owned a wholesale dry goods business.
4. By 1864, the 14<sup>th</sup> was housed where the present Nicol Hall of Queen's University stands, in a structure 250 feet by 80 feet. That drill hall later briefly served as a skating rink for Queen's University, before collapsing from snow loads in 1896.

#### **A NEW NAME**

5. Princess Alexandra of Denmark had married HRH Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) on 10 March 1863. This widely celebrated event was still in people's mind when Canada again faced possible invasion.
6. In late 1864 the 14<sup>th</sup> was called out (activated) in anticipation of conflict with US-based Fenians saw some portions of the battalion serving in the Niagara area till May 1865. Called out again on 2 June 1866, in anticipation of Fenian invasion, the unit was rapidly transported by rail to Cornwall, where it was brigaded with three British regiments. Three companies of the 14th formed a mobile force held at the railway station where a special train waited to move them at a moment's notice. Whether the Fenians were dissuaded by this show of force, or had not intended operating there in any event is not known, but the 14<sup>th</sup> was back in Kingston just over two weeks later.
7. Sir John A. Macdonald championed the renaming of the battalion because of its exemplary performance during the Fenian crisis. On 9 January 1868 the Duke of Buckingham sent a despatch to Viscount Monck with the approval of the change, but it was not implemented until 3 July 1868, when the unit became the “14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Princess of Wales' Own Rifles”. Its name has seen minor variations on that ever since, becoming the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Princess of Wales' Own Rifles in 1900, and



the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment in 1921.

### **KINGSTON AND KINGSTON'S OWN**

8. For the traditional garrison towns of Canada during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Active Militia units were important in both the social structure and the development of the cities themselves. Hence the hierarchy in the units often echoed that of the town.

9. The second commanding officer, LCol John Patton, who had taken over command from David Shaw in 1865, was a Commissioner of the Trust and Loan Company of Upper Canada.

10. The third and fourth CO's of the regiment, LCol D. Callaghan and LCol John Kerr, both had militia service which solidly predated 1863, as they had been the CO's of two of the seven volunteer militia companies that were merged to form the 14<sup>th</sup> (the PWOR) in 1863, specifically Kingston #3 and Kingston #5 companies.

11. LCol John Kerr, who was the 4<sup>th</sup> CO (from 1877-1886), also managed the Kingston Gas and Light Company, which was the only significant public utility. He owned and lived in Kerr House, the same historic house now owned and occupied by the current Honorary Colonel. Curiously, Kerr had bought the house in 1854 from the brother of the first CO, LCol Shaw.

12. LCol John S. Skinner, the 6<sup>th</sup> CO, commanded from 1898-1903. He served in the Regiment from 1880 until 1903, and was mayor of Kingston in 1897, and became CO in January 1898. LCol Robert E. Kent, an RMC grad who was a banker, was elected mayor in 1901, and became CO in January 1903. Indeed, nine mayors of Kingston served as officers in the PWOR. The table below has the details of the nine.

**Table 1: Mayors of Kingston who were PWOR officers, with dates**

<u>Name and Rank</u>	<u>in PWOR</u>	<u>Mayor</u>	<u>CO</u>
Capt Henry Cunningham	1863-1867	1873	NA
Maj Edward Herbert Smythe	1869-1884	1885	NA
Lt (Asst Surgeon) John Herald MD	1896-1905	1894	NA
LCol John S. Skinner	1880-1903	1897	1898-1903
LCol Robert E. Kent	1891-1909	1901	1903-1909
Maj John McD. Mowat	1899-1910	1906-7	NA
Maj Robert D. Sutherland	1889-1900, 1914-20	1915	NA
LCol William H Craig	1899-1915	1928-30	NA
Maj C. Leroy Boyd	1940-1947	1944-45	NA

**Note: Five of the nine were mayor while serving as officers in the PWOR.**

13. Today, Kingston is a small city with two universities, Queen's and the Royal Military College of Canada. Thus its proportion of residents with doctorates is exceptionally high. The PWOR still mirrors the broader community. The three most recent commanding officers and the current DCO all have doctorates and are all university faculty, three in the humanities and the fourth a prominent surgeon active in academic medicine. The regiment remains deeply intertwined in the life of Kingston, and of its institutions.



### **THE PWOR AND CANADA'S MAJOR CRISES, 1870-1902**

14. The Active Militia did more than train in their drill halls. In 1870, the new government of Canada again anticipated the possibility of Fenian invasion. Canada was still defended by the British Army (until 1871), but half of the PWOR was called to active service for local deployment in this last Fenian crisis. Some 60 members of the regiment received the medal for that campaign. That same year the first Northwest Rebellion occurred, but only a few PWOR members volunteered for the Anglo-Canadian force that deployed to Manitoba to control the uprising. The group included Capt W.H Herkimer, who served in the PWOR from 1866 to 1876.

15. In the spring of 1885, the return of Louis Riel triggered the second Northwest Rebellion. The Active Militia provided the vast majority of the 5,000 men who volunteered. Of these 3,000 were from Eastern Canada, while some 2000 were from Manitoba or further west. In that campaign the militia lost 23 killed and 103 injured. Frontenac County had provided a company to the expedition, some of whom were PWOR, but, with Kingston denuded of regulars, the rest of the PWOR was called up to garrison Fort Henry and Tete du Pont Barracks (now Fort Frontenac), plus the martello towers of Kingston. LCol Kerr postponed retirement to stay on for the duration of the crisis. The Fort Frontenac task ended in June, but garrisoning Fort Henry persisted for some months more.

16. In 1886, rumours of a new NW Rebellion resulted in a PWOR Company again garrisoning Ft Henry for six months (Mar-Sept). In January 1886, LCol H. R. Smith had taken over command of the PWOR from John Kerr. Smith had commanded the "Midland" Battalion (including the other PWOR volunteers) in the deployment to the West during the 1885 Rebellion. He served as CO of the PWOR for 12 years, until 1898, and was also a distinguished civil servant who became the Sergeant-of-Arms of the House of Commons. His family house in Kingston is now the main entrance and lobby of the Donald Gordon Conference Centre of Queen's University.

17. In October 1899, war broke out in South Africa, and on October 14, the call went out across Canada to provide a 1,000 man expeditionary force. The force sailed from Quebec only 16 days later, on October 30. 21 of those who volunteered were active members of the PWOR, and others were former PWOR members. One former PWOR officer, Capt W. B. Carruthers, was so keen to go that he resigned his commission and served as a sergeant in order to be included. "South Africa, 1900" appears on the battle honours of the PWOR. It is one of 21 battle honours of the regiment, of which 11 are currently emblazoned on the colours.

### **FIRST WORLD WAR**

18. On August 6, 1914, the PWOR was alerted to the outbreak of war, and immediately tasked to provide three companies of guards and picquets to secure vital points around Kingston. By January 1915, the PWOR was running the POW and Internment Camp at Fort Henry, providing 182 soldiers as a camp guard. The fort was used to house German, Austrian and Turkish POW's as well as some Canadian residents interned under the War Measures Act, including a number of Ukrainians. This tasking persisted till October 1917. It was also training men for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). From 8 August 1914 to 30 October 1917, 1,214 PWOR men went through the ranks of these two groups. 89 PWOR officers served during WWI, with somewhere between 60 and 70 going overseas, as did many hundreds of other ranks. But more than three score did not return.



19. When the war began, the Minister of Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Hughes, had decided that, rather than just activating existing units, a completely new army of numbered battalions for the CEF would be recruited, heavily fed by the existing Active Militia.

20. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, from Eastern Ontario, raised almost instantly in early August 1914, was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division that sailed from Quebec in early October. The PWOR had contributed three officers and 59 men to “E” Company, including the Company Commander, Capt. L.F. Goodwin, and Lts. G.T. Richardson and C.W. Day (both killed in action).

**WWI vignette 1: Capt Leo Goodwin was an Austrian born, British educated chemist and chemical engineer. He had come to Kingston from Britain to teach at Queen’s University. He had previously served in the Territorial Army (the reserve army) in Britain, and joined the PWOR in Kingston in 1910. But his name then was Guttman, and while overseas with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion CEF he changed it to “Goodwin” because he felt that Guttman was too Germanic. After serving some time in France, Goodwin was seconded to the War Office in the UK because of his special expertise in the manufacture of high explosives. After the war, LCol Goodwin served as CO of the PWOR from 1926-1929, replacing LCol Ernest B. Sparks, a Kingston dentist who was CO from 1923-1926, and who, during the Great War had gone overseas as a dental officer, serving in Egypt, France and Belgium.**

21. But the battalion most based upon the PWOR was in the second contingent, raised in October 1914. This was the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion CEF, raised out of the PWOR Armouries on Montreal St. At that time the Commanding Officer of the PWOR was LCol William St. Pierre Hughes. LCol Hughes was the elder brother of Sam Hughes, and, when the war broke out, was the Inspector of Penitentiaries. He became the CO of the 21<sup>st</sup>, and the PWOR provided 13 officers and 106 men to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Later, many more from the PWOR followed as reinforcements. The 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion became part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, which became the first infantry brigade of the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. The 21<sup>st</sup> sailed for Britain from Montreal on May 6, 1915, on the S.S. Metagama, arriving in Devonport on May 15.

22. The 21<sup>st</sup> arrived in France on September 15, 1915. Unlike most numbered battalions, the 21<sup>st</sup> was never broken up to reinforce other units. It fought through the rest of the war to the very end intact, as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. While the PWOR contributed significantly to later battalions such as the 39<sup>th</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>, 109<sup>th</sup>, 146<sup>th</sup> and 253<sup>rd</sup>, as well as to various artillery, cavalry and service units, in general the higher numbered battalions were broken up to provide reinforcements to the existing 12 brigades (48 battalions) of the CEF in France or Belgium.

23. Of all the infantry battalions raised in Eastern Ontario, only the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> served in France intact. It is for this reason that the PWOR perpetuates the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and is the successor unit. It also perpetuates the 59<sup>th</sup> and 253<sup>rd</sup>. LCol Hughes went on from command of the 21<sup>st</sup> to promotion and eventual command of the 10<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade CEF. Another PWOR officer, Capt. Henry (Harry) E. Pense, who had joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion as a lieutenant when the battalion was formed, rose during the war to command the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion as a LCol, and then, in February 1920, became CO of the PWOR. His family were founders of the British Whig newspaper in Kingston.

24. The horrific struggles on the Western Front explain the majority of the battle honours of the PWOR. Emblazoned on the colours are the following honours from WWI: Somme 1916 '18; Flers-Courcelette; Arras 1917 '18; Vimy 1917; Hill 70; Passchendaele; Amiens; Cambrai 1918; Pursuit to Mons; France and Flanders 1915-18. Also granted, but not emblazoned, are Mont Sorrel, Thiepval,



Ancre Heights, Ypres 1917, Scarpe 1918, Drocourt-Queant, Hindenburg Line, and Canal du Nord.

**WWI Vignette 2: Alf Jarrett, of Kingston, was a member of the PWOR when he joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion CEF as a private. He rose to Company Sergeant Major of “A” Company. In the memorable advance to the Courcelette Sugar Refinery on September 15, 1916, Jarrett received wounds that finished his front line service. Soon after he left the Canadian trenches a shrapnel burst injured his head, right leg and right arm, and a German bullet struck the left side of his chest. But that bullet, which might well have killed him, was stopped by the “A” company roll book that CSM Jarrett always carried in his left breast pocket. It is a substantial hard-cover book made by Gale and Polden Ltd, of Aldershot, with the words COMPANY ROLL BOOK stamped into the leather. The bullet penetrated the stiff cover of the book, making a neat hole where the second “O” in the word “Book” had been, and became imbedded in the underlying pages. (Adapted from the report in the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion newsletter). Alf Jarrett returned to the PWOR and served postwar as a Company Sergeant Major (CSM).**

**WWI Vignette 3: The Vimy Cross: The Vimy Cross occupies a place of honour in a huge niche in the wall of the PWOR drill hall, surrounded by battle honours. It is a central feature of the Kingston Armouries. After the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge, the officers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion suggested that a cross should be built to commemorate their comrades who had fallen in that battle. An extremely large artefact, the Vimy Cross is the largest, and the last remaining of the three wooden crosses erected temporarily near Vimy. Made by Pte. George Williams, an experienced woodworker, of wood salvaged from the battlefield, it was placed a month after the battle to mark the graves of the fallen from the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion who were then buried in a temporary cemetery near the village of Thelus, just next to the contested ground. Later, LCol Pense, the CO of the 21<sup>st</sup>, and by 1920 the CO of the PWOR, from which he had come, arranged for the Vimy Cross to be moved to the grounds of RMC in Kingston. Eventually it was decided to move it to its place of honour in the Kingston Armouries from which the 21<sup>st</sup> had come.**



The Princess of Wales' Own Regiment



#### Vignette 4: The 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion HQ Dugout



The 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion HQ Dugout in France. On the left is Capt Emmet A. McCusker (Medical Officer). The cigarette he is smoking is not his biggest risk. Behind and to the right of him is the Adjutant, Maj (later LCol) Henry (Harry) Pense, from the PWOR, who later commanded the 21<sup>st</sup>, and, from 1920, the PWOR. Next is Capt. Henry Gilman, and the figure front right is Maj (Acting LCol) Thomas Elmitt, the acting CO, pouring himself a well-needed brandy. In late October 1917, Elmitt left the 21<sup>st</sup> to take up a command role in the Canadian Forestry Corps in Britain.

### SECOND WORLD WAR

25. Prior to the Second World War, in 1936, the designation (M.G.) was added to the name of the regiment, and the PWOR became the machine gun battalion for the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade. From August 1939 until June 1940, the PWOR also provided four officers and 60 men to the task of guarding internees and German POW's (Air and Marine only) at Fort Henry.

26. Then in June 1940, the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders (SD&G), known as the Glens, were mobilized for service in the 9<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division, and



the PWOR was tasked to provide “A” Company of that regiment. When the SD&G landed in Normandy on D-Day, that regiment and two of its companies were commanded by PWOR officers, as was the 9th CIB, to which that regiment belonged.

27. In May 1942, the PWOR was ordered to mobilize a 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, PWOR (M.G.) This battalion was moved, first to Sherbrooke, and then to Debert, NS, but that battalion was never sent overseas, and was disbanded on 15 October 1943.

28. The PWOR contingent with the SD&G, however, saw some of the worst fighting of the war.

**WWII Vignette 5: Two PWOR Officers balk at bad orders, and are sacked: On April 20, 1932, G.H. Christiansen joined the PWOR, and two and a half months later, so did D.G. (Ben) Cunningham. On July 25, 1944, 49 days after D-Day, LCol Christainsen was the commanding officer of the SD&G Highlanders, at that moment the reserve battalion for the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, commanded by BGen Cunningham. That morning the North Novas has become bogged down with heavy casualties trying to take Tilly-la-Campagne, as part of Operation Spring. Both Christiansen and Cunningham had gone forward to do reconnaissance and to discuss the situation with the North Nova CO, LCol Petch. All three agreed that throwing further men at that objective under the immediate conditions was futile. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Divison CO, MGen Rod Keller, bearing orders from LGen Simonds, felt otherwise. All three men were warned that if they did not agree to proceed, they would lose their jobs. They still all refused. That action saved the Glens but cost them all their jobs. However, by 16:00 that day, the unit was stood down, and no daylight attack occurred. By that evening, the revolt against Simonds' orders had spread, including even BGen Young (6<sup>th</sup> Brigade) and his boss MGen Charles Foulkes, bringing Operation Spring to a close. (This is a precis of a much longer text by Dr. Terry Copp).**

### THE PWOR COLOURS, AS REISSUED IN 2002

29. The regimental colour centres upon the coronet and cipher of Princess Alexandra of Denmark, who married HRH Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1863, and after whom the regiment is named. However, the four coroneted ciphers in the corners, the letter “D”, are for Diana, Princess of Wales, who, from 1985 to 1996, was Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment, and who visited the regiment in 1991.

30. The battle honours emblazoned are a portion of the WWI honours from the 21<sup>st</sup>, plus South Africa. Some change will soon occur to accommodate one of the two war of 1812 honours recently accorded. The crest of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders at the bottom, with the notation 1944-1945, reflects the role of the PWOR in the Glens in the period from D-Day to the end of WWII.

31. The motto of the regiment, Nunquam Cede, translates as “Never Yield”.

The Princess of Wales' Own Regiment



## **EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS SINCE WWII**

32. While six PWOR officers and some men did volunteer for the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade for Korea, and others later for various other CF roles abroad, it was to be Afghanistan that has had the greatest impact. As of 2010, more than one third of the regiment had seen some service in the Afghanistan theatre, service which earned the Regiment the Battle Honour “Afghanistan”.

33. Because Canadians are so exposed to US television and print media, many Canadians think that reserve (militia) units are often activated and sent abroad intact, in the same way that US National Guard units are. They are often unaware that Canadian reservists only go abroad if they apply and successfully compete individually for the vacant slots in proposed missions, and that only a fraction of those reservists applicants get such expeditionary contracts. In that light, it is extraordinary that so many from the PWOR have competed, succeeded, and served in that theatre.

## **DUTIES AT HOME**

34. The PWOR is part of the 33rd Canadian Brigade Group, an army reserve formation distributed across eastern Ontario. Its current key tasking is the provision of a Territorial Battalion Group (TBG) of about 600 soldiers with their equipment and transport, for emergency use anywhere in the Kingston-Cornwall-Ottawa triangle. The TBG is expected to assemble within a day, followed by up to two days of mission-specific training, if necessary, and then be employed on the mission, with the ability to sustain itself for 72 hours without outside assistance. For 2013, the lead unit for the TBG is the PWOR, so that the CO, PWOR will also command the TBG, should it be activated.

## **THE PWOR CAP BADGE**

35. The cap badge of the PWOR is unusual in many ways. First, it has two mottos on it, one in German, Ich Dien (I Serve) and one in Latin, Nunquam Cede (Never Yield). The latter is really the motto of the regiment, while the former is actually the motto of the Prince of Wales, and the three curved feathers are part of the badge of the Prince of Wales. It is because the cap badge has symbols of the Prince of Wales, not the Princess of Wales, that it was deemed heraldically unsuited to be in the centre of the Regimental Colour, which instead has the cipher and symbol of Alexandra of Denmark, the Princess of Wales after whom the Regiment was named.

36. The German motto was adopted by Edward, Prince of Wales (the Black Prince) after the battle of Crecy, 1346, where the Prince was so impressed by the futile but brave cavalry charge of John the Blind, King of Bohemia (who was killed) that he adopted the blind king's motto and (modified) symbols as a tribute to his fallen adversary.

## **BEFORE THE BEGINNING: BATTLE HONOURS FOR THE WAR OF 1812**

37. While the seven rifle companies of Kingston which were amalgamated in 1863 to form the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion were part of the Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM) as created by the militia act of 1855, they did have antecedent companies in the sedentary and embodied militia units of this area, some dating back to the 1780's. During the War of 1812, these antecedent militia units contributed men to the three seasonal campaigns on the Niagara frontier. In recognition of this fact, and because of heightened awareness of the War of 1812 resulting from the commemoration of its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the battle honours “Niagara” and “Defence of Canada 1812-1815” have been accorded to the PWOR.