

## **THE COLOURS OF THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF CANADA**

The College has had Colours since 1919, with the current Stand presented on 29 September, 2001, to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the College in 1876. The original Stand of Colours, presented by HRH The Prince Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1919, was laid up in 1942 when the College was closed for Cadet service, and they were not replaced until 1961, 13 years after the College was re-opened in 1948.

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Flags have been used from the earliest time to identify individuals, tribes, cities, states and military groups. Flags/totems were used to mark the place of leaders on a battlefield, to form the rallying point; or in camp to show the presence of a unit, and especially of its commander. The presence of Roman Eagles, horse tails in Armies of the Great Khans, and flags of the colour or crest of a leader during medieval times, allowed both friends and enemies to see from a distance who was present.

By the seventeenth century, the British Army had regularized the use of Colours with every company of infantry and every troop of cavalry authorized to have its own colour in addition to the Regimental ones. Whereas Company Colours did not last long (except in the case of Regiments of Foot Guards), Regimental Colours became symbols of the Regiment itself, carried into battle in the centre of the line, closely guarded by the Ensigns (a rank equivalent to Second Lieutenant) with an armed escort of specially chosen Non-commissioned Officers (the Colour-Sergeants). Where the Colours stood, the Regiment stood, to the last man; loss of a Colour was the worst outcome possible, for it reflected defeat and disgrace to the Regiment.

The design of a Stand of Colours is based on a Sovereign's Colour (the Union Flag of Great Britain and Ireland, replaced in Canada by the National Flag after 1965) with a Regimental Colour of the same colour as the facings on the tunic of the full dress of the Regiment. In 1858, the size of the existing Colours of the British Army was reduced from 6' x 6'6" to 3' x 3'9" plus a two-inch gold fringe, and the Colour pike was then surmounted by a lion and crown (the crest of England).

Within Canada, Infantry battalions (other than Rifle Regiments) and Military Colleges are entitled to carry Colours. Armoured Regiments normally carry a Guidon or Standard. Artillery Regiments do not have Colours, but their guns are treated with the same reverence and respect. Flying squadrons with over 25 years of service are entitled to a Standard. In the Navy, the latest 'Sovereign's Colour', based on the former Maritime Command Flag with the addition of the Sovereign's badge, has become the Colour of the RCN. Each Colour, Guidon, and Standard has its own design, developed over time – again, the purpose is identification.

Traditionally, Colours are recognized as a unit's most prized possession. They are presented by the Sovereign, the Governor-General, a Lieutenant-Governor, or by a distinguished person nominated to act on their behalf. In general, the Battle Honours of the unit are displayed on the Regimental Colour (although there are exceptions to this practice – Guards Regiments display these honorary distinctions on both Colours, and Rifle Regiments show them on their drums or badge).

Colours, Standards and Guidons are consecrated at the time of their presentation, highlighting to all involved with them the duty to take pride in the ideals and traditions symbolized by the act of consecration. On retirement or replacement, Colours are 'laid-up' in public view in churches, museums, and other public buildings which include Rideau Hall, the National Military Cemetery quiet room, and other significant buildings.

Whilst in use, they are placed in areas where they may be protected (normally in the Officers' Mess although there now are exceptions). When uncased at a parade, they have an armed escort and are honoured by being saluted on arrival and departure by the parade, when they pass-by other troops or spectators, or when individuals or formed bodies of troops pass by the Colours. They are not saluted when carried at a funeral, however, where they are draped in black and the casket takes precedence. They are not normally saluted when in a display case, although may be displayed in an area which has been designated a 'Saluting Area'.

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The Royal Military College of Canada was presented its first Stand of Colours by HRH The Prince Edward, Prince of Wales on 25 October, 1919, during his visit to Canada to thank the people of the Dominion of Canada for their significant contributions during the Great War. Laid up in St George's Cathedral in Kingston, Ontario, in 1942 when the College was closed as a Cadet College for the duration of the Second War, this Stand remains on public display to this date, framed and mounted on the North wall of the Cathedral, behind the RMC Gallery.

This Stand was based in part on the design used by Canadian Infantry Regiments of the time, but somewhat modified:

- The King's Colour is a flag of the Great Union, in silk, fringed in gold, with a red roundel superimposed on the centre of the St George's Cross. The roundel is surmounted by a Crown over the initials RMC in italics in gold, with the word 'CANADA' underneath. The 'M' is slightly larger than the other two initials; and
- The College Colour is silk, in royal blue (as the College is 'Royal' and Royal Blue is the facing colour of the College uniform), fringed in gold, with the College Crest superimposed on a red roundel which is in turn surmounted by a Crown. The crest of a mailed fist on a silver torse holding a branch with three gold maple leaves, is separated from the Crown by a blue ribbon showing the words of the College motto 'TRUTH, DUTY, VALOUR' in silver, the whole, except the Crown, surrounded by autumnal maple leaves as is the custom for Infantry colours in Canada. Below is a scroll of red showing the words 'ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE CANADA' in gold.

The presentation is described in an article in the first issue of the *RMC Review* (May 1920) written by No.1394 Gentleman Cadet (GC) S.W. Williams, who wrote, in part:

“ Perhaps the most important event in the whole College history was the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in October, 1919. It is indeed a great honor (sic) to be visited by the heir to the British throne and all that he stands for, and to receive our colors (sic) from his own hand. Those colors stand for the part played in the war by the graduates and ex-cadets of the Royal Military College; for all those who died in carrying out the motto “Truth, Duty, Valour”; and for the glorious part the College shall play in the future of Canada. The remembrance of her glorious traditions will always be an inspiration to the College in peacetime, and will ensure the same gallant behaviour in her sons in any future war.

At 11:30 His Royal Highness arrived at the College and was received by the Commandant and Staff. The battalion of Gentlemen Cadets was drawn up on the square to receive him and give him the Royal Salute. The Prince then inspected the battalion after which a hollow square was formed and three drums were placed in the centre. The two senior Company Sergeants-Major, (*No. 1306 GC A*) Dunbar and (*No. 1353 GC H.A.*) McDougall, marched out carrying the colors which were to be presented by the Prince. These were unfurled by the Company Commanders, and laid against the drums. The colors were consecrated by Dean Starr, and after the service of consecration, were handed to His Royal Highness, who presented them to the C.S.M.'s. He then said a few words to the cadets about the part played by the College in the war, and his confidence in their strong loyalty to the King. He concluded by proposing three cheers for the King which was followed by the Commandant calling for three cheers for His Royal Highness.”

The Commandant was No. 151 Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Cameron Macdonell, KCB, CMG, DSO, Commander of First Canadian Division in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the Great War, and through that service was known to the Prince. The Company Commanders were No. 621 Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Constantine, DSO, (later (1925-30) Commandant of the College), and No. 600 Lieutenant-Colonel E.J.C. Schmidlin, MC (who held the appointment of Senior Professor (now Principal) of the College from 1926-1933). Dean Starr (Major the Very Reverend G.L. Starr, Rector of St George’s Cathedral and the Dean of Ontario, a former officer of the Princess of Wales Own Regiment and their Chaplain), was also the Chaplain to RMC. Two other senior Ex-Cadets were present as part of the official party – No. 246 Major General Sir Henry Burstall, KCB, KCMG (formerly GOC 2<sup>nd</sup> Cdn Div, CEF and at the time Quartermaster General of the Army), and No. 186 Major General A.V.S. Williams, CMG (formerly the Adjutant-General of the Army and first Camp Commander of Camp Valcartier in 1914; at the time of the parade he was the District Officer Commanding Military District No 3 in Kingston).

There exists a note from the 344<sup>th</sup> Meeting (24 September, 1951) of the Personnel Members Committee (whose principal members were the Chief of Naval Personnel, the Adjutant-General, and the Air Member for Personnel) that “RMC did have King’s and Regimental Colours . . . . However, the designs of those Colours contained heraldic errors and had never received Royal approval nor were they prepared by or referred to the College of Arms.” A subsequent belief within the Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) that they were designed based upon those of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, presented by King George V in 1913 is incorrect as the Sandhurst Colours are of the traditional British design of the period, and differ from the 1919 Colours in a number of ways. It is highly probable that the Commandant, having secured agreement from The Prince of Wales to visit the College and present Colours, had the Stand designed and produced in Ottawa as a matter of urgency – he became the Commandant in the summer of 1919 and the visit was in October. In a 7 March 2011 letter from the College of Arms, it is noted that “Examination of the Colours after the presentation revealed that the designs were heraldically incorrect and thus the designs were not submitted for Royal approval.”

The Colours remained in use until 1942, carried by Cadet Sergeants on Ceremonial Parades and when Guards of Honour were furnished by the College. It is believed the Colours were displayed in the Cadet Dining Room in MacKenzie Building; certainly they were displayed behind the Head Table in Yeo Hall once that building was opened in 1936. There was a precedent for the Cadets being responsible for the safety of Colours – King George V presented, on 7 November 1918, a banner (of the design of the Great Union) to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, in the Forecourt of Buckingham Palace ‘and it was His Majesty’s wish that it should be known as the King George Vth’s Banner and be carried by the Champion Company of the College.’ This

Banner was regarded as a Colour and was accorded the same compliments. It was carried on all ceremonial parades under arms, and when not carried it was hung in the dining-hall opposite the tables of the Champion Company.

On 20 June, 1942, the College was closed to Cadet service. and the last Class of 1942 graduated. The Guests of Honour at the Parade were His Excellency, the Rt Hon Major General the Earl of Athlone, the Governor General, and Her Royal Highness, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. Received by the Cadet Battalion in the morning, His Excellency inspected the Battalion, and following the march pasts watched the whole Battalion march “off the Square in slow time behind the Colours while the band played ‘Auld Lang Syne. In past years when this ceremony was carried out by the Graduating Class, the remainder of the Cadets stood fast, presenting arms to the Colours and their Seniors as they moved off the Square, and perhaps the full significance of the day was evident for the first time when the last file moved out of sight through the doors of the Educational (Currie) Building leaving the Square forsaken by Cadets.”

There were various other events, including a P.T. display after luncheon. Within “twenty minutes from the conclusion of the P.T. display again saw the Battalion on parade with its Colours. This time to lay up the Colours which had been in service since the presentation by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales in October 1919. The press, and possibly some of the spectators, were under the impression that the Colours were to be deposited for safe-keeping during the temporary closing of the College, but actually, worn and tattered after nearly twenty-three years of service, they have been laid up for good.”

Marched into town to St George’s Cathedral, they were laid up in the presence of His Excellency and The Princess Alice in accordance with the service for depositing Colours. The Commandant, No. H2727 Major General H.F.H. Hertzberg, CMG, DSO, MC, sought admittance to the Cathedral for the purpose of laying-up the Colours, receiving them from the Battalion Sergeant-Major, No. 2747 GC N.B. Corbett, and handing them to the Venerable Archdeacon J.H.H Coleman, the Vicar of St George’s, who in turn handed them to the Right Reverend John Lyons, Bishop of Ontario who laid them on the altar with the King’s Colour uppermost. The Service continued, and at its conclusion, the Battalion marched back to the College “with the Colour party in its usual position but with empty Colour belts.”

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Despite the hope expressed in *The Review* of December, 1942, that “It may not be premature to give some consideration now to the provision of a new set and what could be more fitting than to have the provision of the new Colours coincide with the re-opening of the College,” it was not until 2 June, 1961 that new Colours were presented, in this case by His Excellency the Rt Hon. General Georges P. Vanier, PC, DSO, MC, CD, the Governor-General, on the Square at RMC. The Commandant was No. 2265 Brigadier W.A.B. Anderson, OBE, CD, and the Minister of National Defence, Chancellor and President of the College, The Hon. Douglas Harkness, PC, GM, ED, MP. On receipt of the Colours, the Commandant had them placed in the Cadet Dining Room, behind the Head Table, as had been the practice with the 1919 Colours (as the Battalion Sergeant Major of the Class which entered in 1932, Brig Anderson was well aware of the custom).

This Stand, designed by the College of Arms and approved by HM The Queen, follows the design of a Canadian Infantry Regiment of the time, but again there are differences:

- The Sovereign’s (or Queen’s) Colour consists of the Great Union, in silk with a gold fringe, bearing in the centre a double circle inscribed with the designation

‘CANADIAN SERVICES COLLEGES’ surrounding the Royal cypher, ‘EIIR’, also in gold, the whole surmounted by a Crown;

- The College Colour is in Royal Blue silk with a gold fringe, with a double circle in scarlet with the wording ‘ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF CANADA’ in gold. In the centre of the circle the RMC Crest (which is blazoned ‘On a wreath of the College colours Argent (silver) and Gules (red) an Arm embowed, gauntleted and holding a sprig of three maple leaves Vert (green).’ Outside the circle, there is a wreath of twelve gold maple leaves reaching to a Crown, having on the ribbon ties of the maple leaves at the bottom, a scroll inscribed with the motto, in black on white, ‘TRUTH, DUTY, VALOUR.’

The design is different in three ways:

- The Queen’s Colour was the same for all three Military Colleges as all were officially known as ‘Canadian Services Colleges’. The presentations to College militaire royal de Saint-Jean and Royal Roads were made by the Governor General on 14 October, 1961 and 25 May, 1962, respectively
- The College Colours for each College show gold maple leaves surrounding the badge – a difference from the normal Canadian custom of using autumnal-coloured leaves, which had been used on the 1919 Colour. The design of the Colours recommended by the Canadian Joint Staff, London was to be of an Infantry pattern, however, it was decided that in the case of the Canadian Services Colleges the leaves would be shown in gold, as confirmed in a letter of 20 November 1958 to Garter Principal King of Arms from Major General George Kitching, CBE, DSO, CD, Chairman of the Canadian Joint Staff, London.
- there are no Battle Honours displayed as none have been granted to the College, as no unit or sub-unit from the College has participated in operations, despite participation by individual Ex-Cadets over time, world-wide, originally in the Forces of the Empire and then of Canada.

As noted previously, Canada adopted its new National Flag in February 1965, and the decision was made to replace existing Queen’s Colours, over time, ensuring that any new Queen’s Colours would use the Canadian Flag. By October 1968, Lieutenant-Colonel N.A. Buckingham, CD, the Director of Ceremonial at National Defence Headquarters had obtained approval from The Queen for a new Queen’s Colour for RMC – a Canadian Flag in silk, with a gold fringe, showing a double circle surmounted by a crown on the maple leaf with the wording ‘ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF CANADA’ with a small gold maple leaf at the bottom of the double circle separating the words ‘Royal’ and ‘Canada’. This new Queen’s Colour was presented to the College on the Square on 30 May, 1969, by His Excellency, The Rt Hon. Roland Michener, PC, CC, CMM, CD, the Governor General. Marched off to the tune of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ it was subsequently laid up in the RMC Museum in Fort Frederick by the Commandant, No. 2576 Commodore William P. Hayes, CD, ADC in the presence of No. 2420 General F.R. Sharp, DFC, CD, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS).

On the occasion of the Centennial celebrations of the College in 1976, a high point was a presentation of a new Queen’s Colour, identical to that presented in 1969. The Parade was held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on 13 May, 1976, in the presence of a large number of dignitaries including the Minister of National Defence, the Hon. James Richardson, PC, MP, the Chancellor and President of the College; the CDS, Admiral Robert Falls, CMM, CD; the Deputy Minister of National Defence, No. RCNC 193 Commander (Retd) C.R. (Buzz) Nixon, CD; and the Commandant, No. 2816 Brigadier-General W.W. Turner, CD, ADC. After the 1969 Queen’s Colour was saluted and marched off the Hill into retirement, His Excellency The Rt Hon. Jules Leger, PC, CC, CMM, CD presented the new Colour having received it from the Deputy Cadet Wing Commander, No. 10903 GC P.R. Amyotte, the commander of the Escort for the Colour. This was again a difference in that the role of a senior

officer in the actual presentation, holding the Colour to assist the Presenting Officer, had been given to a Senior Cadet – in 1969, that role had been played by No. S109 Major W.J. McLeod, MC, CD.

On 17 October, 1976, a parade was held on the Square during which the College was granted the Freedom of Pittsburgh Township. During the parade, the 1969 Colour was handed over to the Rector and Churchwardens of St Mark's Church, Barriefield, by BGen Turner to commemorate St Mark's long service to the Garrison where Gentleman Cadets had attended services over the years – a 1932 photograph shows the Cadet Battalion at the Church, in full dress, the two lines stretching from the West Door to the road. The Colour is displayed in a case on the south side of the Nave, with a plaque reading "This Queen's Colour was deposited with St Mark's Church, Barriefield, for its display and safekeeping by the Royal Military College of Canada, 17 October, 1976. May it forever serve as an inspiration for patriotic service and sacrifice for those who see it."

In preparation for the 2001 celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the College in 1876, the Commandant, No. 8850 Rear Admiral D.C. Morse, CMM, CD, ADC, petitioned for the grant of a new set of Colours, and this Stand was presented by the Hon. Peter Milliken, MP for Kingston and the Islands, and The Speaker of the House of Commons, on the Square on 29 September, 2001, Ex-Cadet Weekend. On the marching-off the old Colours into retirement, the Cadet Colour party handed the Colours to five Ex-Cadets from the Class of 1976, which Class had formed part of the 1976 Parade on Parliament Hill as shown above. These individuals were Nos. 10962 Bruce Lazenby, 10966 Mike Maisonneuve, 11115 Ross Matthews, 10982 Chuck Oliviero, and 11027 Ken Watkin.

In the development of the new Colours, the College wished them to be bilingual, the only previous Canadian example being those of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. The double circles show 'ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE MILITAIRE ROYAL' with 'CANADA' at the foot. The Motto on the College Colour is shown in black lettering on a white background in both languages as well – 'TRUTH, DUTY, VALOUR' over 'VERITE, DEVOIR, VAILLANCE' superimposed on the ribbon ties at the bottom of the wreath of gold maple leaves surrounding the College crest, the whole surmounted by a Crown. Equally new, the Service of Consecration was a multi-faith occasion, representative of the broad diversity found within the College and Cadet Wing.

During the process of development, the DHH noted that they had a set of colours which had been made in the middle 1980s "to replace the Colours which had been stolen in 1984" only to be told by the author of this monograph that he had been the Commandant at the time and the Colours had not been stolen. The actual genesis of those colours was a conversation between the Commandant and Colonel Buckingham who had been the Guest of Honour at a RMC Band Mess Dinner – his role as Director of Ceremonial included responsibility for Bands as well as the Colours for the CF, and he had come to speak to the largest volunteer Band of the CF. On the Saturday morning following the Dinner, in conversation he responded to the suggestion that a new Stand of Colours could be needed in the next five years with the offer to produce them now, and they were made pending an occasion for their presentation. The Commandants that followed immediately did not look for an occasion, and the existence of the set was unknown to later Commandants.

The new Queen's Colour replaced that presented in 1976; the new College Colour replaced that presented in 1961. Both of these old Colours were laid up in City Hall on 21 October, 2001, not far from the original 1919 Colours laid up in St George's Cathedral. The Parade Commander was No. 22186 OCdt France Lapare and after admittance of the Colours to City Hall having been sought and granted, they were paraded to the Memorial Chamber. The Commandant handed them over to No. 6090 The Very Reverend Colonel (Retd) George Bruce, CD, the Dean of Ontario and Rector of St George's, who in turn handed them to Her Worship, Isobel Turner, the Mayor of Kingston, for

safekeeping in the Memorial Chamber. Framed by the College, they are displayed in a place of honour on either side of the dais, facing the entrance doors.

On receipt of the 2001 Colours, they were displayed in the Cadet Dining Room in Yeo Hall as had been the custom, so that each Cadet had to pass by them three times a day. They were moved to the first floor of Currie Building in 2006 into a "Saluting Area", a departure from custom as Colours are normally not saluted whilst in a display case. The basis for the move was to ensure that more members of the College were aware of their existence, now more in public view, as part of an intended development of the entrance of Currie Building and its two upper stories into a memorial area.

3572 MGen (Retd) F.J. Norman CSJ, CD  
17 May, 2016

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Material provided by No. 8850 RAdm (Retd) David Morse, CMM, CD, 13 Apr, 2011

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