



**COLONEL-IN-CHIEF
REGIMENTAL DAY MESSAGE
MARCH 17, 2023**

My Dear Patricias,

It is with a very heavy heart that I write to you today on our Regimental birthday. One year has passed and we are still enduring the dreadful war initiated by President Putin in Ukraine. The courage and perseverance of President Zelensky and all his fellow Ukrainians leaves us breathless in admiration. That this small country has been able to resist with such determination the evil, intransigent forces opposing it, is nothing short of remarkable. As your Colonel-in-Chief, I ask you to reflect each and every day on how important it is that we defend freedom and that we, as part of the Canadian Armed Forces, must keep in mind how important it is for us to play our role against aggression.

Recently you may have watched the Academy Awards and seen a number of them go to a German film entitled “All Quiet on the Western Front”. This novel was written by the renowned German author Erich Maria Remarque after World War I in which he had fought. To three generations of Germans, it is THE book that explains why the first World War was such a slaughterhouse and accomplished nothing – no victory, no territorial gain and no betterment of life for either side. The film deserved all the awards it got, particularly for sound and cinematography as you are plunged right into the horrors of that period.

As you are aware, the Patricias were formed in 1914 by our founder Hamilton Galt who persuaded Princess Patricia, the daughter of the then Governor General the Duke of Connaught, to give her name to our beloved Regiment. It is for this reason we celebrate Regimental Day on March 17th to mark the birthday of our very first Colonel in Chief. The PPCLI was the last privately raised regiment in the then-British Empire and it is the outcome of one man’s patriotism and dream.

But if you watch the images in the film that are seen and interpreted by the German side, you realize what a devastating war this was. The relentless machinations of the politicians meant that hundreds of thousands of men were sacrificed in this juggernaut of a war which accomplished nothing and actually led into a second and even more devastating conflict, World War II.

I think it’s very valuable for us all as members of the Armed Forces to read novels and see films about the period in which we were formed and examine the ideals to which we hold allegiance. We, as Patricias, are “first in the field” and it shows that our distinction in courage and physical bravery are unmatched. But they also must never be empty words. They must never just be slogans.

When we think of being first in the field, we must think of serving our country and its ideals. It would be foolish not to attach the ideals of fighting for something to the cause of what we believe in which is democracy. We must always understand that what we are doing has a purpose. We need to reassure ourselves that what we are doing is for the common good. In these days of isolating mechanisms like social media and the solitude forced on us by Covid measures for the last three and a half years, it is easy to forget that we are one society and that our Armed Forces are a part of that society. We must always remember that we have a role to play not only in the defence of our ideals but also in bringing physical presence to the needs of our country when no one else is in a position to help.



All of the Patricias who are serving and have served understand that there is a purpose to that service and that purpose is a dedication and an understanding that discipline, training and unrelenting drive for doing one's best is the greatest accomplishment.

With examples in films and with the day-to-day knowledge of our own involvement in environmental crises like floods and fires in Canada, we as Patricias must hold our heads high and always be prepared, always answer the call to be "first in the field".

Yours faithfully,

Adrienne Clarkson
Colonel-in-Chief
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry