



---

**COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT  
QUARTERLY UPDATE  
MONDAY, 7 APRIL 2025**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. I hope this update finds you all well and ready to welcome spring to wherever you are living.
2. This quarterly update will go to the RHQ controlled Regimental Senate lists, serving, and retired. As in the past if you find other Senate members who do not get these updates, please get their contact details and notify RHQ at [rhqppcli@forces.gc.ca](mailto:rhqppcli@forces.gc.ca).

**POINTS OF REPORTAGE**

**3. Broad issues at Defence.**

a. Whilst we have a good defence policy “Our North, Strong and Free” with ambitious plans to modernize the Canadian Armed Forces, success will hinge on overcoming chronic underfunding, recruitment and retention challenges, and an historically inefficient procurement system. At the February Conference of Defence Associations Canada’s Defence Minister, Bill Blair, indicated that we are now being forced to stand up to these challenges, particularly in a changing global landscape. National defence has often been an afterthought in Canadian elections but not now. More recently, President Trump’s annexation threats and forceful comments about Canada’s low level of defence spending have up-ended the notion that there are no votes in defence. The outcome of this month’s federal election, our current challenging relationship with the United States, and the Trump initiated tariff wars will certainly have an impact on the Canadian Armed Forces. One can only hope that will be in a positive way.

b. The Canadian Army Commander, LGen Mike Wright, has initiated a wholesale transformation initiative, called Force 2025, which aims to review and modernize the Army’s structures to meet current and projected operational requirements in the face of growing demands for troops and equipment both overseas and at home. He has further stated that the army we have now is not the army that we need for the future.

**4. The Regiment – Serving Component.** The following are of note:

a. Col of the Regiment. Several points are worth bringing to your attention. First, as was mentioned in my 17 January update, in November a PPCLI Camp Flag was presented to Mr. John Townson who is related to Dorthy Gault, the wife of our founder Hamilton Gault. Please see the photo below in which the camp flag is shown now hanging in the



Hatch Beauchamp church in England. In the front you will also see a plaque commemorating the visit of members of the Regiment in 2015.



Secondly, it should be noted that in the November – December period George Couture, one of our few remaining WW II and Korean War veterans, turned 100 years of age and Colonel (Ret'd) Dick Cowling, a former CO 3 PPCLI and Commander Canadian Airborne Regiment turned 90. Our congratulations and best wishes are extended to both of these fine gentlemen. Thirdly, Major (Ret'd) Bruce Stock, a member of our PPCLI SW Ontario Branch, wrote a letter to the flag during the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Canadian Flag. It received CBC nation wide publicity as it described the flag's significance to Canadians. Bruce Stock had had been present on that historic 15 February 1965 day when the flag was first raised on Parliament Hill as the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency Major General George Vanier PC, DSO, MC, CD. Well done, Bruce!

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6648510>

Fourthly, LGen Mike Wright (PPCLI) recently took the time, whilst visiting Canadian Army soldiers in England, to visit Simon Gault in Rye, East Sussex. A descendent of our founder, Alex is keen to give a warm welcome to Patricias visiting the UK.



CWO Robin, Simon Gault, LGen Wright, and Capt Tsui

Last, I had the opportunity on 14-15 March to participate in both the presentation of two well deserved King Charles III Coronation medals and then to raise a toast to the Regiment with fellow Calgary Branch Association members. It was an honour to do both and great to see not only the National Association President, Greg Ferguson, but also Presidents of both the Calgary Branch, Scott Langford, and Edmonton Branch, Herb Kenny. See photo below.



Herb Kenny, Col of the Regt, Scott Langford, and Greg Ferguson



b. 1 PPCLI – The battalion has returned from Op UNIFIER, had leave and are now into their traditional battalion structure. Recently, they completed a great few days of Regimental Day celebrations with the battalion’s “Strong Patricia” powerlifting challenge and the traditional broom-i-loo match. As they move towards the summer the Battalion will conduct a Basic Reconnaissance Patroller course; deploy in May to the Rocky Mountains for Ex PATRICIA AVALANCHE 25, a battalion patrolling exercise in mountainous terrain; conduct Battle Procedure for Op CADENCE (where the Battalion will support G7 security efforts in Kananaskis); do individual training and an 18 km ruck march; deploy to Op CADENCE for G7 security tasks; and finally at the end of June prepare for and then conduct a change of command between LCol Cole Petersen and LCol Mark Litzenberger.

c. 2 PPCLI – The battalion continues to have a rifle company and elements of Combat Support Company deployed to Latvia with the LDSH (RC) Battle Group. They will return in June. The battalion itself is now confirmed as the lead unit for Op UNIFIER 25-02 which is both a training and security mission, primarily in Poland, England, and Ukraine. Since my last report the battalion has completed a company level winter exercise focused on basic cold weather operations, snowmobile operator, and winter mobility including snow shoeing and using the new trial skis; range training to bring all of their army reserve transfers up to regular force qualification levels; and the unit operated as a lower control to enable some Brigade level planning processes. From now until early July the unit will focus on training to prepare for the Op UNIFIER task with deployment primarily in the July period. The rear party commander will be Maj Laarakkers, OC “C” Coy who is currently deployed on Op Reassurance in Latvia.

d. 3 PPCLI – In January the battalion participated in the 1 CMBG Exercise Strong Contender which is the Brigade’s annual sports/skills competition. Their teams placed first in ice hockey, indoor soccer, tactical athlete, powerlifting, shooting and military skills. Well done 3 PPCLI! This is great for unit camaraderie and cohesion. Since January the unit has also carried out the handover of the Global Response Task Force (ready status) to 3 R22eR and assumed the Canadian Army Light Infantry Battalion surge role. Other activities included a battalion eight-day patrol exercise, live firing of mortar, TOW and 84 mm ranges and participation in Ex VIGILANT RAM activities to prepare for unit support to the upcoming G7 Summit in Kananaskis, AB. Following their Spring break the battalion will provide support to the Advanced Tactical Aviation course in Cold Lake, conduct routine PCF courses and deploy to Op CADENCE in the Kananaskis area for the G7 Summit.

e. French Grey Battalion Gagetown – The battalion celebrated Regimental Day at the Infantry School with a social event that included Sgt Brad Lowes leveraging his experience at the PPCLI Museum to deliver a highly informative brief of “little known” Regimental facts and history. It also included a sampling of “Hammies Own” special edition dark Alberta Rhum and the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary whisky, in addition to the Regimental Toast. The infantry school also mourned the unexpected passing of PPCLI member Cpl Travis Williamson and sent a Patricia heavy contingent to Black Diamond,





Alberta to participate in the funeral activities on 11 March. Lastly, the Infantry School will mark a change of command with the handover between LCol Jeremy Brooks (PPCLI) and LCol Dan Hogan (PPCLI) on 4 June. Regimental influence at the Infantry School will remain strong with a cadre of exceptional junior officers and NCOs in addition to the Commandant, RSM, and Chief Instructor all being Patricias.

**5. PPCLI Association.** The Association has experienced a very active and encouraging start to 2025. The President, Greg Ferguson, has been fortunate to have traveled to a number of activities outside his home branch in SW Ontario to join fellow Patricias across the country both for formal activities and to socialize at others. It has never ceased to amaze him how we can go decades without seeing someone and the moment we see them again the years disappear and it was like just yesterday that you saw them. In October 2024 the Association launched The Patrician Whisky as a 110th Fundraising initiative. As of 15 March 2025 they have recognized \$15,920 in proceeds and this number continues to grow with ongoing purchases. The president has requested that branches outside of Alberta find a veteran centric charity to support. Provided that charity is the one supported by the majority of its membership, funds will be sent to the branch for distribution to it from these proceeds. Some examples of where funds are going to be used are: Veterans Housing unit in Victoria; Veterans Coffee in Fraser Valley; and Christmas Hampers for veterans and serving members in need in Manitoba. By using the funds in this manner it helps to show Patricias and members of the broader community that the PPCLI Association and Regiment have a footprint from coast to coast to coast.

On 15 March 2025 at The Military Museums in Calgary the Association launched their latest fundraising initiative. This project, again, is in Partnership with Burwood Distillery who at the Association's request developed a "Dark Rhum" in honour of our Founder. As this is meant to honour Hamilton Gault the funds raised will be split 50/50 with the Hamilton Gault Memorial Fund. The name "Hammie's Own" Rhum was selected. The choice in spelling Hammie is historically accurate. Many documents in both the Regimental Archives and some personal collections are signed "Hammie G" over his official title. On launch day Burwood sold over 150 bottles representing \$1500 raised in the first 6 hours. For those interested in a keepsake box for The Patrician Whisky or Hammie's Own Rhum please reach out to the Regimental Kit Shop where you can make a purchase of these boxes being made by members of the Regiment in Edmonton.

The Association has also been very active in ensuring members of the PPCLI Association were recognized for their exceptional service - to the Association, their community, and Canada. Those honored with the King Charles III Coronation Medal beyond those I named in my 17 January 2025 Colonel of the Regiment Update included: Major Steven Zivkow – Regimental Major and Ms. Josie (Nevi) Nevin-Pugh – Regimental Archivist. In total the PPCLI Association received nine medals for presentation. Congratulations to all those who have received this prestigious recognition from the Association or through other organizations.

The Association President is also issuing a challenge for Association Members to find a fellow Patricia (or more than one) and get them to join the Association. Greg Ferguson



will personally present the member of the Association who brings in the most new members this year (2025) with Bottle 010 of Hammie's Own.

Lastly, the Association's 77th Annual General Meeting will take place in Halifax, 23-24 May 2025 and, yes, there will be a Better 'Ole. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Simply see the Association website ([PPCLI Association Website | Once a Patricia, Always a Patricia](#)) and get yourself registered.

**6. Hamilton Gault Memorial Fund (HGMF).** The HGMF has partnered with the PPCLI Association for the Hammie's Own Rhum fundraiser, and the proceeds will be shared. The HGMF is also sponsoring the "Into the Summit" expedition to raise funds in support of mental health and well-being. The expedition will take place on 13 April 2025 when participants will descend into the Rat's Nest Cave near Canmore, AB. Doing so, these adventurers will raise vital funds for and awareness about post-traumatic stress disorder and its devastating effects on individuals and families. Success of this fundraiser will depend on donations made to help participants reach their fundraising goals. There are several participants who have a clear connection to the Regiment. Alex Gault is one of the organizers and a HGMF Trustee. Christian Stenner is the expedition leader and a former CO of 2554 (PPCLI) Cadet Corps. Jeanelle Narayan is the current CO of 2554 (PPCLI) Cadet Corps and Cpl Andrew Mullet is a staff member of our PPCLI museum. All participants are worthy of your support. You can find details of the event, the participants, and how to donate on the Into the Summit website:

<https://www.canmorecavetours.com/into-the-summit>.

HGMF is also supporting two initiatives being organized by Paul Hale. These are the Mike Levy Commemoration Battlefield tour which will recognize the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong in South Korea. It will take place 19-27 April 2026. More detail will be provided when a Special Travel International (STI) brochure is published. Secondly, a Balkans 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration. The aim of this second activity is "to commemorate the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's contribution to peacekeeping and stability operations in the Balkans". The intent being "to facilitate multiple events across Canada in 2026/27 and a return to the Balkans in 2027". These will provide Balkan veterans and their families the opportunity to be acknowledged and to celebrate their achievements and sacrifices. This latter is a complex activity for which Paul Hale has created a strong team of volunteers to assist with planning and execution, but more are needed. If you have time and the interest, please contact Paul to offer your support.

**7. Regimental History Volume V.** The Regiment has moved ahead with establishing a writing team to create and publish Volume V of our Regimental History. The book will be entitled "PPCLI Book of Remembrance – The Korean War 1950-1953". It will include the Roll of Honour and other key sections such as information on each of the fallen, cemeteries and memorials for the fallen, honours and awards, and a war diary summary. Blair Neatby, Stephen Newman, and James Morgan are hard at work on this project.

**8. Canadian Infantry Association.** As mentioned in my last update this association became dormant as a result of COVID and a revitalization team was put in place to begin



the process of bringing it back to life. A new website has been created and anyone who has served or is currently serving in the infantry is encouraged to become a member regardless of rank. There is no membership fee. All you have to do is go to: <http://www.ducimus.army> click on the 'Join Us' icon and then complete the sign-up form. The website should provide answers to any questions you might have including what the objectives of the Canadian Infantry Association (CIA) are. To this point only some 17 Patricias have become members, so I encourage you to do so.

## **CONCLUSION**

9. In conclusion our Battalions are keeping busy participating in either operations or active and challenging training. The Association and HGMF also continue to do outstanding work promoting comradery and supporting the Regimental family. We are very fortunate to be blessed with the many volunteers it takes to look after and promote the affairs of our Regiment. My thanks to all of you. Lastly, for those serving or retired who can attend I look forward to seeing you at the Association's AGM in Halifax, NS 23-24 May 2025.

VP

Ray Romes  
Brigadier-General (Retired)  
Colonel of the Regiment  
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry