

Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada

- the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders was formed in 1794.
 - Winnipeg's regiment formed in 1910, hard on the heels of the Boer War. Winnipeg was the city of their regimental birth. The Headquarters were at 202 Main St.
 - one year after the formation of the Winnipeg Regiment, we affiliated with the Scottish Camerons, in 1911.
- (There were no pipe bands in Winnipeg prior to 1900. Then Clan Stewart No. 92, Order of Scottish Clans, formed a band, and John Duke became their Pipe Major in 1907. After that, the pipe band for the Regiment was organized in 1910 by PM John Duke. He continued with them all through the First World War.)
- WW1 – Camerons were part of 16th Battalion Canadian Scottish, 27th City of Winnipeg Battalion
- formed 43rd and 79th Battalions, Cameron Highlanders of Canada – served France & Flanders.
 - 179th and 174th Battalions were also Camerons.

After the war, QOCH of Canada again became Canadian Militia.

-referred to as “bare-kneed barbarians”. They are Manitoba's only kilted Highland Regiment.

-25th anniversary was in 1935

-Pipe Major Donald McLeod – duty piper – his job was to raise you out of bed and then retreat at sundown.

-played at 4 formal church parades each year – First Pres. Church/Annual Inspection/Decoration Day parade/Armistice Day

-wore kilts and scarlets

WW2 – on Sept. 1, 1939, orders given to mobilize for active service.

-went to England at Christmas 1940.

-Queen Elizabeth and King George VI were very interested in pipe band.

-throughout the war, the pipe band was in much demand. They helped to keep up morale.

-The Dieppe Raid – Aug. 19, 1942 – “Operation Jubilee”

-Cameron's pipers played from a mile out at sea and on to the beach at Dieppe (River Scie)

-all members of the pipe band who took part in the operation were casualties. Piper Gunn was killed and PM Alex Graham was taken prisoner. **This was the last time in the history of the Canadian Highland regiments that pipers actually piped the troops into action.**

-only through the excellent co-operation of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force was it possible to bring back as many as they did. It was, indeed, a ‘Combined Operation’.

-Pipers: L/Cpl Graham, Gunn, Young, Smith. Decimated; cut to pieces, yet it still functioned as a disciplined group.

-505 Camerons set off in the morning of August 19/42. Next day, only 159 able-bodied men could be assembled.

-Back in Winnipeg, businesses and well-wishers and the City of Wpg found funds to re-equip the famous Cameron pipe band. Wounded pipers trained new ones. By November 1942, new pipes etc were being made. A ceremonial presentation was made on March 29, 1944.

-former Lord Selkirk Boy Scout Pipe Band, QOCH and Centennial Band member, Alec Young's father, Bill Young, had his pipes shot out from under his arm at Dieppe. Bill received 3 bullet wounds from which he recovered. The City of Winnipeg presented him with a new set of pipes which he used from D-Day through to Germany, that his son Alec

still owns. These were restored by Mark O'Rourke and are presently being played by a member of the McCombe family.

-after the band was restored to their former splendor, they went to London, Dec. 1942 to make a recording for rebroadcast to Canada.

-they returned to Dieppe on Sept. 3, 1944. Pipers paraded to the Canadian Cemetery for church service of Remembrance. The French had been caring for the graves.

Ten Boer – April 17, 1945. The band, under PM McLeod, put on a fine show for the local inhabitants. The pipers hadn't done much piping lately as they had their hands full as stretcher bearers – a risky business requiring coolness and courage.

-pipers played in Oldenburg for the Victory Parade on May 9, 1945. In June the battalion moved to ex-German naval quarters in Aurich. PM W. McLeod began teaching highland dancing to officers and men who wished to acquire this noble art.

-On Sept. 15/45, a dance competition was held!

-end of September, they travelled across Europe and left England Nov. 13th for home.

-the 2nd Battalion (Reserve) was formed in 1940 – a constant reminder to Winnipeggers of the overseas unit. They carried on the traditions of the Regiment. They were also formed to take care of matters at home. The Ladies Auxiliary of the QOCH and Camerons Rehabilitation Association were formed. Women knit +++ socks.

-after being a P.O.W., Alex Graham became Pipe Major in 1947.

-There is a stained glass window in the First Presbyterian Church, honouring the Camerons. On Feb. 6, 1966, the Rev. Bruce Miles officiated over this.

- the #2 Militia helped during the 1950 flood.

-March 1951, the Camerons and Pipe Band supplied the Honour Guard for the opening of the Provincial Legislature. Then on Oct. 18, Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visited. PM Graham and PS Roy Springett piped them to the Royal Alexander Hotel and Legislative Building.

-Lt Col Rutherford was in command from 1951-53 and was responsible for the Pipes and Drums being dressed as Camerons.

-headquarters moved to Minto Armouries in 1955.

-in 1959 the Pipes and Drums went to BC for the Centennial celebrations.

-there was a special ceremony in June 1960 to celebrate 50 years. The massed band was lead by former PM Bill McLeod. 700 Camerons came to celebrate and remember.

-on March 9, 1963 at Minto, the First Highland Pageant was held, co-sponsored by the Regiment and the St. Andrew's Society. This continued successfully until 1966. The Manitoba Highland Dancers Association (MHDA) participated as well.

-on May 27, 1967 there was a celebration of Canada's 100th birthday. "Trooping the Colour" – they paraded in their new green highland coatee, replacing the scarlet doublets which had been worn since 1910.

-on July 1st, 1967, the Queen appointed Prince Phillip to be Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment. That July he came for the Pan Am Games. The band was kept very busy for these celebrations. (Many of us remember standing in uniform in the stadium in the pouring rain with Prince Phillip!)

- in 1970 the pipes and drums played at Manitoba's centennial at Lower Fort Garry and for the Royal Family two weeks later.

-That August, 16 bandsmen went to Scotland to be in Edinburgh's Military Tattoo. During the five weeks they were away, LSBSPB's PM, Robert Fraser lead the band members who were still in Winnipeg. As a result, Senior Piper, Robyn McCombe was the first person to act as Pipe Major of the LSBSPB in Mr. Fraser's absence and took the band to Churchill to pipe for the Queen.

- in 1974 the band joined with other Winnipeg bands to form the Winnipeg Massed Pipe and Drum band to lead the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena.
- they played again for Prince Phillip in 1978.
- in the spring of 1979 the Regiment once again helping with the flooding in Winnipeg. And again for the 1997 "Flood of the Century".
- there was a 70th anniversary celebration in 1980.
- in 1981 the band played at the Calgary Stampede.
- in 2000 a petition was started by members of the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg to save the QOCH militia regiment. Thankfully they are still in existence and were able to celebrate 100 years in 2010.
- check out their website at
<http://thequeensowncameronhighlandersofcanada.net/index.html>

PIPE MAJORS

- John Duke from 1910 to 1919 when he returned to Winnipeg.
- John Coghill was PM in 1920 but moved to the Police Band in 1921.
- Lachlan Collie was from 1921-1929. He taught many of the men who formed the Police Band.
- Donald McLeod took over Sept. 1, 1929
- Alex Graham was PM from 1947 to 1967. In Oct. 1962, he was promoted to the rank of Pipe Major Warrant Officer, Class 1 – making him only the 2nd man to ever receive this distinction in the Canadian Army.

Bibliography

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