

2020: Year in Review

The Royal Montreal Regiment



31 December 2020

Greetings,

The end of the year is a good time to reflect upon what has been accomplished in the previous year, as well as to evaluate the predictions of what would come... OK, I doubt there is anyone reading this now who would have been able to predict a year ago what we've gone through this year - how many of you would have laughed at me if I had suggested at this time last year that we'd all be wearing masks everytime we stepped outside our houses??

I will now attempt to write this 'end of year' update without using the two most overused words of 2020: 'unprecedented' or 'pivot', and I'm up for the challenge! When you browse through the collection of stories from 2020 below, you'll note that the year started off normally enough: training exercises, winter warfare courses, Basic Military Qualification courses, Cadet activities, and Legion social events all taking place in the first couple of months. All of these activities involving lots of folks crowded together in either messes, 5-man tents, vehicles, or on the parade square... and the pictures almost seem surreal now, like looking back to a different time. But we will get back there, sooner than we might think.

Looking back now with the perspective of 9-10 months, what is most remarkable to me is how quickly the leaders in the RMR family reacted. The CO first issued a warning order in March for all ranks to get ready to help, and even though the tasks themselves were entirely unknown, large numbers of RMR's volunteered regardless. The Cadet CO's quickly changed their training methods and even organized virtual Annual Cadet Review parades held online and which were hugely successful, as they allowed the cadets to have some semblance of normalcy and completion of their training year.

Many RMR soldiers, NCO's, and officers were involved in assisting our country's most vulnerable citizens in the Spring and Summer of 2020, enduring difficult and distressing conditions and, of course - like every soldier in the history of the world before them - long periods of boredom as they had to be completely isolated in quarantine for weeks at a time.

Of course, *'Adapt and Overcome'* is one of the mottos that RMR soldiers live by. Life does go on, the jobs still need to be done. Hats off to Comrades Sue Guerin and Georges Gohier for leading a remarkably successful Poppy Campaign in what can only be described as extraordinarily challenging circumstances. And a big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped them accomplish it, because thanks to you, the charities that depend on the RMR Association will be able to continue operations because of the selflessness of these volunteers.

What continues to inspire me everyday is the amazing people in the Regiment. I first wore the RMR cap badge 35-years ago, as a Cadet with #2806 Pointe-Claire (RMR), and I was in awe with the sense of privilege at being allowed to wear the badge. I distinctly remember being a teenager and attending a Junior NCO's course held over the Christmas break in the RMR's armoury. The favourite saying of the RMR NCO instructors at the time was "*RMR sets the standard*", and that has always stuck with me. While clearly I am biased, I like to think that the members of the Regiment and the entire regimental family are still doing their best to "set the standard" and that we will continue to do so for a long time to come.

On behalf of Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel David Bensadoun, the Regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone, and the Regimental Sergeant-Major, Chief-Warrant Officer Stephan Leroux, please accept our best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Looking forward to seeing you soon in 2021!

Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense.



LCol (ret'd) Colin Robinson, CD
Honorary Colonel
The Royal Montreal Regiment

Please read the collection of stories from 2020

Ex BRASS MONKEY 2020

On the first training exercise of 2020, soldiers from the RMR spent the weekend on private land belonging to Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel David Bensadoun in Potton, learning winter survival & warfare skills. They were taught the basics of winter survival by a former NCO of the Regiment, Sergeant (ret'd) Nick Karkasoulis and his son Tassos: siting & constructing a sturdy improvised shelter, various camp fire methods, setting snares, skinning animals, and cooking over a campfire.

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RSM Leroux promoted

In a short ceremony held on CO's parade on 21 January 2020, the RMR's Regimental Sergeant-Major, Chief Warrant Officer Stephan Leroux was promoted to his current rank.

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"Visitor of the Year"

On 28 January 2020, In a dignified but lighthearted ceremony held within the armoury, the RMR Museum presented their "Visitor of the Year Award" to Corporal Hunter Yeung who was the most frequent visitor throughout 2019. The museum is undergoing a complete renovation and a new permanent exhibition installed. Make a point to visit in 2021!

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GPE 3: WINTER WARFARE EXERCISE

On the weekend of 7-9 February 2020, RMR troops went to Valcartier for a GPE company exercise. After a short night on base, the exercise started with a sunny and very cold day as the company conducted its rehearsals. The rifle company was made up of four platoons, one each from the RMR, the Black Watch, 4 and 6 R22eR.

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Cadets visit RMR

All four of the affiliated cadet units spent a day training together at the RMR in February 2020, finishing their training day off with a mess dinner in the RMR officers' mess.

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Guitars for Vets fundraiser

The WO's & Sgts' Mess hosted an intimate concert on 22 February 2020 to raise funds and awareness for Guitars for Vets.

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Spring Break for Air Cadets

72 cadets of 1 West Montreal Squadron departed for their March Break trip to Sherbrooke. Over the next few days the cadets went skiing & snowboarding at Owl's Head Ski Resort, slept over at the Sherbrooke Hussars in the heart of the city, visited the Museum of Science and Nature of Sherbrooke, headed to O-Volt Trampoline and Wall Climbing park, and finished the trip with a visit to the property of RMR Hon LCol Bensadoun near Owl's Head Ski Resort to launch their rockets.

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LE MUSÉE DU RMR FAIT PEAU NEUVE!!!

AUTOMNE 2020

www.rmrmuseum.com

LE MUSÉE DU RMR FAIT PEAU NEUVE!

Malgré la relative tranquillité du Musée du Royal Montreal Regiment ces derniers mois, les employés s'activent et les projets vont bon train ! En effet, le Musée vous prépare une toute nouvelle exposition permanente qui présentera l'histoire de la famille du RMR depuis ses tout débuts.

L'exposition s'intitulera *Le Royal Montreal Regiment : des Canadiens ordinaires qui accomplissent l'extraordinaire.*

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BASIC TRAINING WITH THE RMR: SERIES OF THREE VIDEOS

Basic Military Qualification (BMQ) is the first course that transforms civilians into soldiers. Major Maciej Jonasz of the RMR has produced a series of three videos that profiles both candidates and instructors to provide an overview of the challenges.

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CO'S LETTER TO ALL RANKS REGARDING COVID 19

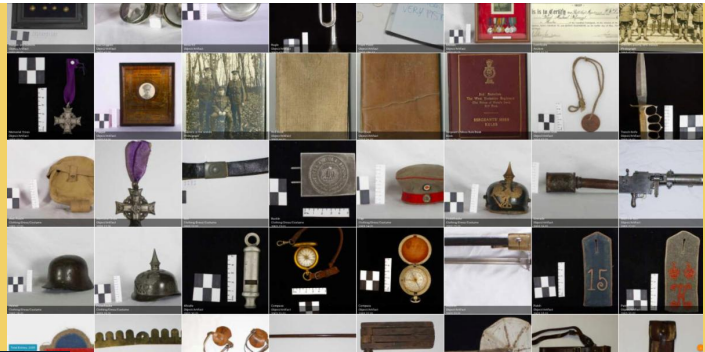
At the end of March 2020, the Commanding officer of the RMR, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone published the first letter regarding Covid 19 to all ranks RMR. This was about a week into the "2-week lockdown" that had been announced in Quebec...

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VIRTUAL MUSEUM!

In April, Melanie Presseau-Dumais gave us a promising update: rmmuseum.com/our-collection/

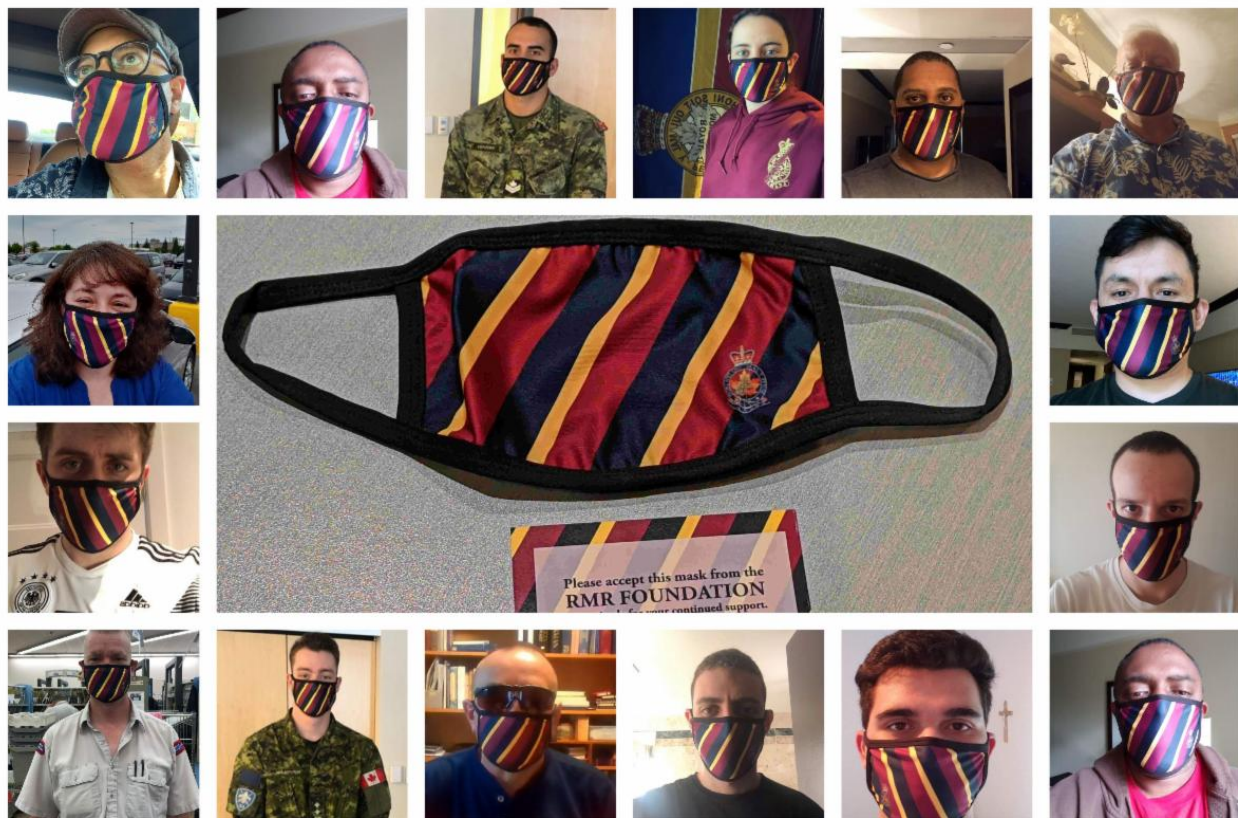
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RIP: Sergeant Yozef Butera

In early May 2020 the Regiment was stunned by the loss of a much loved member of the RMR family. Sergeant Butera was an example of great leadership. He was considered a great colleague and friend, and was well respected by all ranks. Yozef Butera had released from Canadian Armed Forces in December 2019 to pursue a civilian career in Toronto. Lest We Forget.

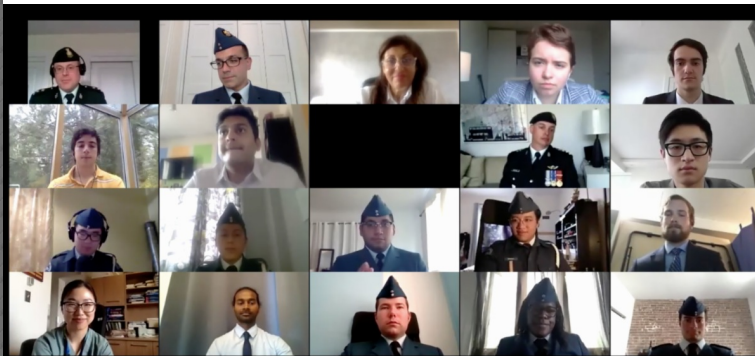
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Pandemic Fashion: RMR Regimental Face Masks

In mid-June 2020, the RMR Foundation began distributing reusable face coverings decorated in the regimental colours. Free masks were delivered to the armoury for issue to all serving members, and masks were mailed to all members of the RMR Association (Branch 14) and/or to anyone who has made a donation to the RMR Foundation in the past two years.

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Virtual Cadet Parades

With the Covid reality, our cadet units adapted quickly to finish their training year with some semblance of normalcy.

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Promotion to Major

In a small ceremony that was certainly a 'sign of the times', the RMR's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone promoted Major Dexter Ruiz-Lang, Officer Commanding 'B' Coy, in a physically distanced fashion on the parade square on Monday 08 June 2020.

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Welcome to the Regiment!

RMR soldiers who successfully passed their Infantry Qualification over the summer were badged into the regiment by the Honoraries and the Commanding Officer during Ex BACK BREAKER 2020, which was held on civilian land belonging to Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel David Bensadoun. Upon their successful completion of their Infantry Soldier qualification course, recruits become soldiers. They are promoted to Private (receiving their first hook), they have their generic Canadian Armed Forces cap badge (colloquially known as the "cornflake") removed, and they are presented with the cap badge of the RMR in front of the serving battalion. Despite the social-distancing parameters imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, the training went smoothly – with face masks being prevalent and plenty of hand sanitizer available throughout.

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Nos soldats dans les rues



New JMS module

In October 2020, Je Me Souviens (JMS), a Canada Company educational program created in collaboration with the RMR Foundation and le R22eR, launched "*The October Crisis 1970*", a virtual exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of a controversial period in Canadian history.

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Helping the homeless

Led by the RMR's Padre, Capt Rici Be, the RMR's 2020 workplace charitable campaign committee worked to assist homeless veterans in Montreal, raising more than \$1,000 in total.

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Random Acts of Kindness

In October 2020 the RMR Museum was contacted by a Jill Scahill, a volunteer at St. John's Parish, where our RMR comrade Clarence Denman was buried in 1915. She had been cleaning his gravesite and was intrigued at how a young Canadian ended up buried in West Yorkshire, UK, so she wrote the RMR Museum looking for more information on. She reported that she "*put a plant on Clarence's grave & speak to him every time I go to the graveyard*". Inspired by this story and noting how close it was to Remembrance Day, LCol(ret'd) Rick Garber, worked his connections with the Yorkshire Regiment and a Mr. Stuart Kilminster, late of the PWO, volunteered to place a wreath on Private Denman's grave and recite the Act of Remembrance.

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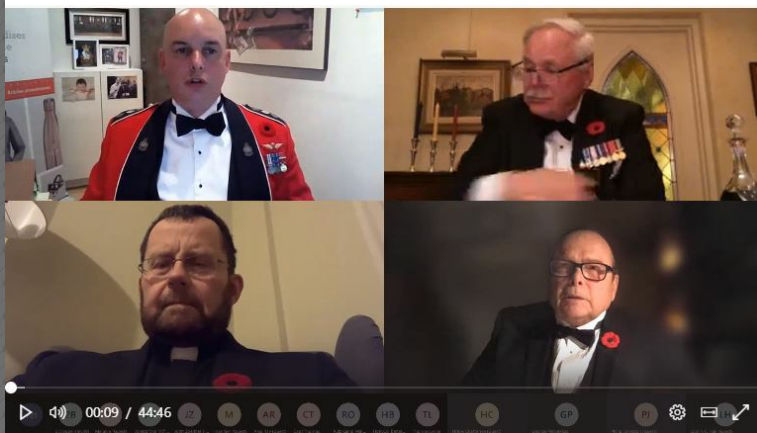


RMR Association's 2020 Poppy Campaign a Success!

The challenges for the 2020 Poppy Campaign were considerable: a short campaign because of where the last Friday in October fell this year, two of three kiosk locations were unavailable due to physical distancing restrictions, and many branch members who normally give generously of their time were unable to volunteer this year due to being in a high risk category for Covid-19.

Despite this, the RMR Association (Branch 14) has confirmed that despite the challenges of operating a Poppy Campaign during the Covid 19 pandemic, it still managed to raise 72% of the amount raised last year, which had been one of the best ever. Innovating early to adapt to the new realities imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, such as adopting newer technologies faster than they normally would have, like a 'Tap n' Go' contactless payment system that accepts debit and credit cards, encouraging cheques to be mailed to the branch instead of in-person donations, and launching poppybymail.ca.

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100th Anniversary Officers' Mess Dinner

In order not to miss the occasion due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the RMR's Honorary Colonel hosted a virtual event instead.

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Exercise CASTOR MÉCANISÉ 2020 held in Valcartier

Article written by 2Lt Faiz: As part of our task as mechanized infantry this year, the RMR sent a platoon to be attached to the 2nd Battalion Royal 22nd Regiment's B Company for the Castor Mécanisé ex. The goal of this ex is to build up and train soldiers for a live fire platoon attack with LAV's (Light Armoured Vehicles). Spending a week in Valcartier in LAV's and conducting live-fire ranges was a welcome change of pace for the RMR's soldiers.

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Levee Day 2021

Due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the RMR will not be able to hold their annual Levée Day. Instead, the Honorary Colonel will host a virtual reunion event, where all are welcome to exchange best wishes for the New Year.

[Register here](#)



Former Honorary Colonel Andrew Molson appointed to Order of Canada

The RMR congratulates former Honorary Colonel Andrew Molson for being named a Member of the Order of Canada *"For his commitment to business, and for his philanthropy in support of Montréal's education, arts and health sectors"*. He served the RMR as Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel and then Honorary Colonel for a dozen years starting in 2007.



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Foundation

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