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2021: Year in Review

The Royal Montreal Regiment



31 December 2021

Greetings,

The end of the year is typically 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... well, I'm not touching the latter, because I was sincerely hoping at this time last year that Covid would be gone from our lives by now!

We did have a brief seasonal respite from the pandemic in 2021, and life started to feel a bit like normal at various times when we were gathering outdoors without masks and enjoying each others company, but I get the feeling that we're all longing for a return to 'normal' routines.

As I put together the 2021 "Year in Review" it stuck me how quickly a 'normal' can develop. Every picture of an award being bestowed or a promotion being given in 2021 has all participants wearing a mask, where in the 2020 "Year in Review" the masks were somewhat of an anomaly. Of course the the actual events allowing promotions & awards in 2020 were mostly cancelled, so 2021 showed the progress that we can make of a bad situation. The RMR's spirit of "adapt and overcome" shone through in 2021, and the unit often skirted the

line of getting in trouble from the chain of command by pushing for in-person training, events, and activities. Personally, I felt the RMR's leadership team did a commendable job of focusing on doing 'what's right' versus the 'right thing'. I know it wasn't always easy for them, but the RMR showed up and got the job done, month after month.

Please take a few minutes and look over the accomplishments of the RMR Family over the past year. Each story and image is hyperlinked to the original article on the RMR website, so enjoy browsing through memory lane. If you have any suggestions for future Intercom stories, please send them my way.

Lastly, I hope that you will be able to join us for what I am really hoping is the last 'virtual' Levée Day to welcome the New Year together. It will be held on MS Teams at 11h00 EST and you can **register here**.

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 2022!

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 2021



VIRTUAL LEVÉE IN 2021

Due to the restrictions on gatherings imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the members of The Royal Montreal Regiment were not able to hold their annual Levée Day. Instead, the Honorary Colonel hosted a virtual reunion event, where approximately 25 people gathered in a "virtual mess" to exchange best wishes for the New Year. Serving and former members alike made the effort to meet online, including Master-Corporal Greg Biezing who joined us from an "undisclosed location" (hint: in a very dusty desert).

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is observed in February each year, and it is a time to honour Black Canadians, both past and present - and it is also a time to reflect and learn more about their distinguished service.

The Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR), by its nature as a 'city regiment', reflects the communities that it draws recruits from. In honour of Black History Month, the RMR Foundation published a series of profiles of some of the Black Canadians who have served (and continue to serve) in our ranks.

The first one featured was RSM Eddy Watkins, who was the RMR's first Black RSM, and he was quite likely the first Black soldier to be promoted to that position in the entire Canadian Army

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CDS Commendation for Major Dexter Ruiz-Lang

Congratulations for Major Dexter Ruiz-Lang last March, who was awarded the Chief of Defence Staff commendation for *"exceptional analytical ability and professionalism when deployed to Kyiv as Liaison Officer to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, April 2019 to January 2020."*



Ex HEAVY BALL 2021

The RMR deployed to CFB Valcartier at the end of March 2021 for a range exercise where on Saturday they got to fire the 84 mm Carl Gustaf Short-Range Anti-Armour Weapon-Medium (SRAAW-M) and the 66 mm M-72 Light Anti-armour Weapon (LAW) rocket launchers, along with the C9A2 light machine gun (LMG), and the C7A2 automatic rifle, which is the personal weapon used by the Canadian Armed Forces.

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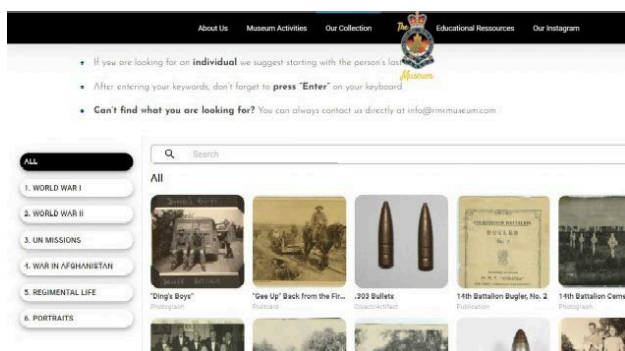
Command Team coin for RMR Veteran

Sergeant (ret'd) Nick Karkasoulis was awarded the RMR Command Team Coin in February 2021 by the CO, LCol John Shone, and the RSM, CWO Stephan Leroux in Farnham. Given in recognition of his volunteering to teach our soldiers the basics of winter survival techniques as a way of augmenting their Winter Warfare training. This was the third year in a row that



he has spent the weekend
instructing the troops.

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RMR Museum Collection Now Online

In April 2021 the RMR Museum put thousands of artefacts, photographs, and documents available online.

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LCol George Siket retires

At the end of April 2021 Lieutenant-Colonel George Siket added "retired" to his list of military achievements after he became a civilian for the first time in 36-years. In a 'Departure with Dignity' ceremony held as a hybrid in-person and virtual event, the highlights of his career and service to the RMR and the CAF were reviewed for all attendees. What came out loud and clear was his deep love of family, country, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Regiment.

Several mementoes were presented, including a Canadian flag that was flown over the RMR's armoury on 10 April 2021, which – not by coincidence – was LCol Siket's birthday!

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Promotions & Awards 2021

Normally in May each year the RMR holds their annual Church Parade at Saint Matthias and follow it up with promotions and awards for service rendered during the previous training year that ended on 31 March. Despite the Covid restrictions that meant the public was not able to attend, the RMR still managed to continue with awarding of well-deserved recognition and promotions to various members.

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FIVE MORE SERGEANTS AT THE RMR!

Five RMR members graduated from their Rifle Section Commanders' Course (RSCC) in Valcartier at the end of May, and four were immediately promoted to the rank of sergeant during their graduation parade. A hearty congratulations to the graduates for this significant step in their leadership journey. NCO's form the backbone of any effective fighting force and the RMR is pleased to see these talented soldiers driving themselves to accept the challenges set before them. Their experience and leadership will have a significant impact on all ranks of the regiment in operations, training, and ceremonial activities. .

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RMR Badging Ceremony held on the range in Farnham

At the end of August, in a light rain that gave the near perfect conditions for a gentle version of "RMR weather", the Regiment held a traditional ceremony on the Farnham rifle range where 16 new RMR soldiers were officially badged into the Regiment and promoted to the rank of Private. The Honorary Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) Colin Robinson, gave a brief history of the regimental cap badge and then individually replaced each soldier's generic 'cornflake' (Canadian Armed Forces cap badge) with the RMR's cap badge, telling each soldier *"Welcome to the family, we are proud of you. Just remember to never dishonour this badge, for I assure you that it will never dishonour you"*.

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RMR beats fundraising goal for helping homeless veterans

The volunteer participants completed 5K, 10k, 15k, 21.1k, or 26.1k runs on 18 September 2021.

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Polish Army medal for RMR Comrade Lech Kwasiborski

Sergeant (ret'd) Lech Kwasiborski, SC, CD, was awarded the Polish Army Medal 1999 (Silver) by the Polish Ambassador, Dr. Kurnicki, this summer in a ceremony held in Ottawa.

He received the medal for promoting Polish history and strengthening the bonds of friendship between Canada and Poland's armed forces.

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Career Advice for RMR Soldiers

At the end of August, after an "invigorating" morning spent conducting the Canadian Armed Forces 'Combat FORCE Test' (forced march, shuttle run in fighting order, sandbag lift, etc.), the soldiers of the RMR were invited to Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel David Bensadoun's property in Potton, Quebec for leadership training and a BBQ.

The leadership training was centred on lessons learned from some top business leaders in Quebec who volunteered their Sunday to share their expertise with the RMR's members. In his role as Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel, David Bensadoun understands all too well that we need our soldiers to succeed in their civilian occupations so they can continue to actively serve the Regiment throughout their working lives and eventually rise to senior leadership positions within the Canadian Army Reserves.

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Mayor Smith helps start the 2021 Poppy Campaign

The RMR Association (Branch 14, Royal Canadian Legion) kicked off the 2021 annual poppy campaign with the help of the Mayor of Westmount, Her Worship Christina Smith. She was pinned by the Chair of the RMR Association's 2021 Poppy Campaign, Comrade Georges Gohier, CD at the kiosk outside the IGA in Alexis-Nihon plaza, officially marking the start of the 2021 campaign in Westmount.

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CD for Capt Brooker

In October 2021, Capt Sybil Brooker was awarded her CD in front of a socially-distanced crowd just weeks before retiring from the Cadet Instructors Cadre. She was instrumental in developing both RMR Army Cadet Corps (2806 + 2862).

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Memorial Plaque Donated



The memorial tablet, dedicated to the memory of Lieutenant Jerry Gordon Pope, came from the Hatley United Church which had been deconsecrated and was being closed.

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Keeping the Remembrance Flame Burning

Corporal Kenton Townsend was invited by the management and staff of the Julius Richardson Rehabilitation Hospital to visit on Remembrance Day. The patients had expressed an interest in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the poppy campaign in Canada, and wanted to be able to still participate in a Remembrance ceremony. Drawing on his personal connection to the hospital, he volunteered to visit a number of patients, distributing poppies and commemorative materials produced by Veterans Affairs Canada.

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103 Years of Gratitude

The town of Sains-les-Marquion, France held their annual Remembrance Day service on 11 November 2021 where they specifically honoured the RMR who had liberated their town on 27 September 1918.

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Three New Junior Leaders Promoted

As part of the battalion review following the Westmount Remembrance Day service in November, the following members were promoted to Master-Corporal by the RMR's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone: Master-Corporal's Hollingdrake, Ruscito, and Vallieres.

The rank of Master-Corporal (MCpl) is an important stepping-stone on the career progression of an NCO, particularly in an Infantry regiment like the RMR, where MCpl's are typically employed as Section Second-in-Command (2ic), reporting to a Sergeant and responsible for the administration of eight to 10 soldiers, known as a "rifle section". More often than not, given the operational requirements of the Canadian Army, the MCpl ends up commanding the rifle section in the absence of the Sergeants who are pulled out for other taskings.

The first mark of a leader is someone who 'seeks and accepts responsibility', so Bravo to the Master-Corporals who have made the conscious decision to embark on a journey of leadership. It will be a journey marked by challenges, hard work, and little recognition – and we will never be able to progress without these young leaders putting their hands up and saying "I'll do it" – so, well done MCpl Hollingdrake, MCpl Ruscito, and MCpl Vallieres.

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Remembrance Day in Westmount

In keeping with Covid restrictions, the RMR marched to the cenotaph and led the Westmount ceremony, with the usual wreath laying and proper order of service being followed.

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Welcome to the Regiment, MWO Quesnel!

In November, Master-Warrant Officer James Quesnel was officially badged into the RMR by the Honorary Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) Colin Robinson. It was a homecoming of sorts, given that he had spent nearly four years with Pointe-Claire Cadet Corps 2806 (RMR), attaining the rank of Cadet Regimental Sergeant-Major before he joined the reserves. His extensive military career has seen him qualify on pretty much everything an Infanteer can, from machine-guns to driving light armoured vehicles, to everything in between. You can read about his civilian and military career at the link.

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RIP: LCol (ret'd) Art Cauty, CD

In early December 2021, the RMR Foundation had the sad duty to announce the death of Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Arthur Cauty, CD.

After transferring into the RMR from the Signals Corps in the mid 1960's, he rose in rank to serve as Commanding Officer of the regiment from 01 July 1970 until 12 November 1972.

He commanded the unit during the [October Crisis](#) which was one of the most challenging times in recent memory. You can read his obituary at the link below.

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Junior Ranks Club hockey dominance

Traditional Honorary Colonel's Christmas Parade started with the traditional JRC victory over the officers & NCO's...


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TOGETHER,
WE CAN BRING
AN END TO
HOMELESSNESS

The Royal Montreal Regiment
Thank you for your generous support !

Supper Experience at the Old Brewery Mission
December 2021

RMR Family Helps Serve Supper to Montreal's Homeless

Five members of the serving battalion and three members of the RMR Association served supper at the Old Brewery Mission (OBM) in early December, getting a first-hand experience of homelessness in Montreal.

The RMR family has been supporting the [OBM's Sentinels of the Streets program for homeless veterans](#) for a number of years now, donating time and money to help the cause. The serving battalion has been contributing through their 'RMR Workplace Charitable Campaign' as well as this autumn's 'RMR Fundraising Run', and the RMR Association (Branch 14, Royal Canadian Legion) has been a regular contributor through the donations received during the annual Poppy Campaign.

It is estimated that veterans make up approximately 5% of Montreal's homeless population. Homeless and at-risk veterans have unique needs related to chronic health problems, and

mental health or addiction issues. The Old Brewery Mission provides support services tailored specifically at veterans to help stabilize their situation and help them rebuild their lives.

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Levee Day 2022

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](#)



Promotion for MWO René Doucet

Congratulations to Master-Warrant Officer (MWO) René Doucet who was promoted by the RMR's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone, at the Regiment's Honorary Colonel's Christmas parade held on 11 December 2021.

MWO's may hold a number of appointments, including the position of Company Sergeant-Major, the most senior Non-Commissioned Member (NCM) in a company-sized Army unit or sub-unit.

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Promotion for Lieutenant Mokhtar Faiz

As part of the battalion review following the Westmount Remembrance Day service, Lieutenant Mokhtar Faiz was promoted to his current rank by the RMR's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Shone.

As a fully qualified Infantry Officer, Lieutenant Faiz will perform a wide range of duties, from commanding and leading soldiers as part of a team to occupying various staff positions involving planning, training, intelligence, logistics and personnel administration.

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NCO's and Officers serve holiday luncheon to the troops

After being forced to break with tradition last year due to Covid restrictions, the serving battalion of the RMR took a break from the serious business of soldiering and enjoyed each others company for the annual Christmas festivities, which includes a turkey shoot, a tug-of-war, a hockey tournament in the Westmount arena, and the traditional Christmas dinner where the leaders serve the troops and the "CO of the Day" is appointed to rule over the dinner, which was the traditional turkey dinner with all the fixings imaginable.

There were still Covid restrictions in place, however – the RMR Association (Branch 14, Royal Canadian Legion) members were not allowed to attend, masks had to be worn except when eating, and some of the traditional activities had to be curtailed.

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