



107th REGIMENTAL BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, PC, CC, CMM, COM, CD, LLD
Colonel-in-Chief,
Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry

My Dear Patricias,

As we are now into the second year of the COVID-19 epidemic, we must realize as a regiment that we are living through a very historic time. We are watching as our country comes out of lockdown and as we tentatively hope for some return to normal life. I was greatly relieved to receive my two shots of vaccination because it made me feel that I was protecting others. To me, that is what vaccination means: the chance that I will not infect anybody else!

This has been a momentous year for the Canadian Armed Forces, and therefore for us as Patricias.

It was 107 years ago on August 4th, 1914 that the German troops went into Belgium. That was the first battle of World War I. The heavily fortified city of Liege was assaulted by the most powerful weapons that the Germans had in their arsenal - enormous siege cannons - and they had captured the city by August 15th. Rumors of war had been circulating since the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June.



The war began at last. And Hamilton Gault, our founder, offered to raise, at his own expense, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the last privately raised regiment in the British Empire. He went from Montreal to Ottawa to speak with the-then Governor General, the Duke of Connaught to ask if he could name the regiment for his daughter Princess Patricia.

Permission was granted by the Governor General and the regiment was born. Gault offered the Canadian government \$100,000 (\$3,000,000 in today's dollars!) to help raise and equip an infantry battalion for overseas duty. Patricia was delighted to have the regiment raised in her name. On the 10th of August 1914 through a charter embodied in a report of the committee of the Privy Council of Canada, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry came into being. Princess Patricia, the first Colonel-in-Chief, then designed and made by hand the regimental flag.

Hamilton Gault had served in the Boer War and had attained the rank of captain then. When the regiment came into being, he was promoted to major and appointed second in command of his regiment. The military secretary to the Governor General, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Farquhar who had supported Gault, became its commanding officer. They decided that they wanted to recruit men who had already seen military action, but who were not attached to any militia units in order to hasten the regiment's departure for Europe. 3,000 applicants were recruited within eight days and shortly after, a full complement of 1,098 had been selected. This is what we are honouring today in our regimental birthday. This is the courage, this is the foresight, this is the dedication. This is what the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry stands for.



Today we are watching what is happening in Afghanistan where we were deployed on so many operations with broken hearts. We were deployed under Operations ATHENA, ARCHER, APOLLO and ATTENTION in support of coalition efforts in Afghanistan. How much we sacrificed, how much effort we put into that conflict particularly in the areas of Kabul and Kandahar to promote stability and create some sort of chance for life in areas that had been ravaged by tyranny and oppression. Many of our soldiers also strengthened ties with our NATO allies in areas such as Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul, working with them to demonstrate our finest capacities as soldiers and colleagues.

I urge you not to feel sad and embittered by the fact that the Taliban now seems to be in the ascendancy in Afghanistan. I remember my visits as Commander-in-Chief when I was Governor General and subsequently as your Colonel-in-Chief with memories of pride in our service. I remember with great emotion the ceremonies at Trenton when I went to do honour to our returned fallen. These are memories that we all collectively share and cherish.

I want to emphasize that just because it now looks as though we sacrificed so much and yet have not emerged by accomplishing what we wanted, the courage and the commitment which the Patricias exhibited will never be forgotten. Doing the right thing is never wrong.



The Canadian Armed Forces are going through a time of questioning, of doubt, and of reassessment. I am depending upon each and every one of you to try and absorb and understand what is happening in this very profound moment of societal and military change. We must adjust ourselves as a regiment and as part of the Canadian Armed Forces to the realities of modern Canadian life with its respect for all human beings and its commitment to the equality of men and women.

There is no better time to commit ourselves to this purpose than on our Regimental Birthday.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne Clarkson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adrienne Clarkson