

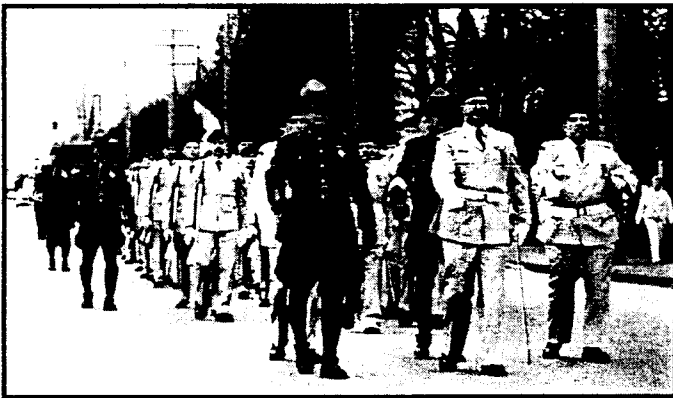
FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND 17 APRIL 1993

by LCol LAR Watkins, CD.

After having been quartered in the City of Richmond since 31 March 1976, 12 Service Battalion had a long-standing association with the council and people of the City. On 11 June 1992, in concert with the Mayor and Council the Commanding Officer, LCol KA McLeod, CD tasked the DCO, Major L.A.R. Watkins, CD to prepare a brief for presentation to the City on the background of the ancient tradition of the Freedom of the City.

The Freedom of the City is a ceremonial honour bestowed by the City on a military unit or formation. It is steeped in English tradition dating back to the mid 1600's. In England's feudal times, cities were walled and frequently savaged by raiders, and the Lord Mayor and Chief Constable viewed any large armed group of men with extreme caution. In later years, the sights and sounds of a military band signaled that armies were being recruited. This was a concern to the Mayor for it left few tradesmen and workers to service the city.

As civilization advanced, rituals such as the triple knock and sheathing of swords, developed as a formal sign of non-aggression toward the city. In modern times, Freedom of the City has evolved into a prestigious honour bestowed by the Mayor and City Council upon an Army unit as a symbol of the city's trust and appreciation for the unit's service.



On 17 Apr 93, after being met by a contingent of RCMP members, the Unit proceeded under escort to Richmond City Hall. Leading the parade was Superintendent Bruce Giesbrecht and LCol Will Watkins Photo: DND / Blackburn.

On 08 March 1993, 12 Service Battalion was informed that Richmond City Council had, by unanimous vote, conferred upon the Unit the honour of Freedom of the City. The Unit would exercise their Freedom of the City for the first time on 17 April 1993. Maj LAR Watkins and City Clerk Richard McKenna worked closely to organize the parade and ceremonies.

On the morning of 17 April, the RSM, CWO RW Bull, formed up the four companies of the 12 Service Battalion, and the Band of the Royal Westminster Regiment in the parking lot of Minoru

Park. Adjutant Capt G Simeoni received the parade from the RSM, and marched on the Officers. He then turned the parade over to the newly appointed Commanding Officer, LCol LAR (Will) Watkins.

12 Service Battalion Parade appointments:

Commanding Officer - LCol LAR Watkins, CD;
Deputy Commanding Officer - Maj J Haggart, CD;
Adjutant - Lt GN Simeoni;
Regimental Sergeant Major - CWO RW Bull, CD;
O C Supply & Transport Coy - Capt P Davis, CD;
Coy Sergeant Major - WO G Hickman;
O C Maintenance Coy - Lt D Frechette;
Coy Sergeant Major - MWO BR Sills;
O C Administration Coy - Maj M Kennedy, CD;
Coy Sergeant Major - MWO M Baumann;
O C Military Police Platoon - Capt E Brown;
Platoon Warrant - Sgt S Storms;
O C Vehicle Sect - Capt A Sloat;
Flag Party - 2Lt C Walker, MWO Toebaert, Sgt B Dennett, Sgt P Ohn.

Parade appointments for 12 Svc Bn Association:

Acting Commanding Officer - LCol J Gemmell, CD.

Parade appointments for 2947 Cadet Corps:

Officer Commanding - Capt P Appelton.

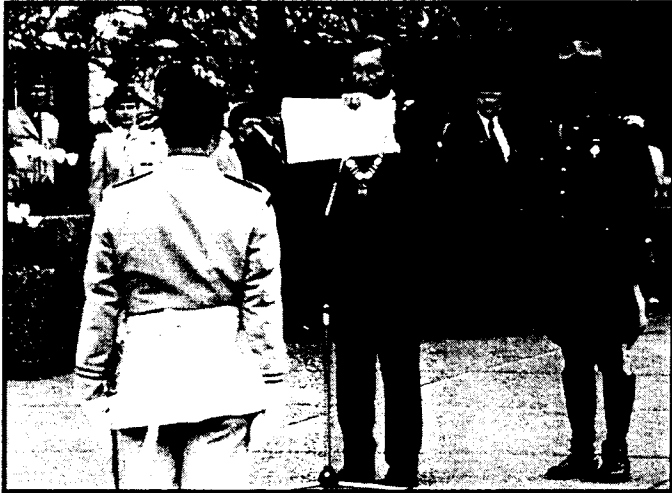
At 1245 hours the Battalion stepped off bayonets in sheath and the band playing. At the intersection of Minoru Boulevard and Granville Avenue (the designated City limits) the Battalion was halted by the City's Chief Constable Superintendent RB (Bruce) Giesbrecht and a contingent of RCMP members. The unit then proceeded under escort to the City Hall, the band silent and flags furled.

Upon arrival in front of City Hall, the Battalion was formed up.



LCol Watkins, knocks three times at the City Hall Door and is met by the City Clerk, Mr JR McKenna, who introduces his worship the Mayor. Photo: DND / Blackburn.

LCol (Will) Watkins was then shown to the City Offices where he drew his sword and knocked three times. The City Clerk opened the door and introduced his worship, Greg Halsey-Brant Mayor of the City of Richmond.



His worship Greg Halsey-Brant Mayor of the City of Richmond, reading the proclamation granting the Freedom of the City to 12 Service Bn. Superintendent Giesbrecht attends the Mayor. Photo: DND / Blackburn.

The Mayor was then invited to inspect the troops. Having been satisfied that the Battalion was deserving, the Mayor read out the proclamation granting 12 Service Battalion the Freedom of the City of Richmond. The Commanding Officer then requested permission for the Unit to exercise its right by marching through

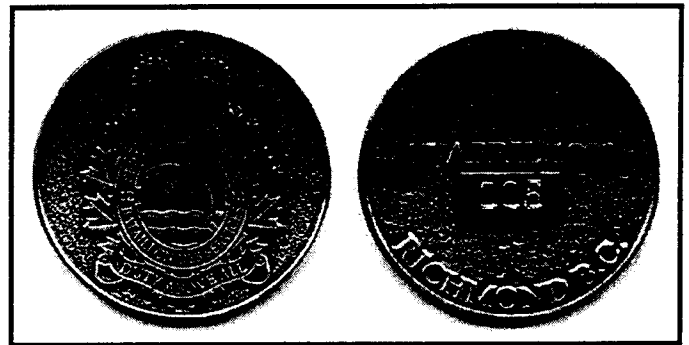


12 Service Bn personnel "Fixing Bayonets" in preparation to march off with "Flags flying and Drums beating". Sgt Bruce Dennett in foreground. Photo: DND / Blackburn.

the City Center. The RCMP escorts were then dismissed and the Battalion fixed bayonets, unfurled the flags and marched off to the playing of "Duty Above All", the Unit's march past.

Following the March Past of City Dignitaries the unit was dismissed to return to the armoury for an all ranks open house. The City graciously held a reception in the Garden house across from the City Hall for the Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Members of the unit. Later that evening the Battalion held a mixed dining in, where the City Council and staff were introduced and thanked for this prestigious honour.

Adhering to the tradition of Her Majesty's Canadian Armed Forces to recognize significant events in the history of one of her units, 12 Service Battalion has struck a coin to honour the occasion of the City of Richmond granting the unit the ancient rights of the Freedom of the City of Richmond.



Freedom of the City Presentation Coin. The obverse side (left) displays the Battalion Badge. The reverse side (right) shows the inscription surrounding 17 April 1993 and the individual coin's serial number.

The Presentation Coin is struck on antique silver. The unit Badge is on the obverse, and on the reverse is inscribed the Freedom of the City, Richmond, BC surrounding 17 April 1993 and the serial number.

Each member of the Unit is granted a coin, which is entrusted in care of the holder for as long as the waters of the Fraser River flow alongside of Lulu Island. The coin may be passed on to family members, but remains the property of 12 Service Battalion with changes registered with the 12 Service Battalion Society.

As with all coins of this nature there are rules that traditionally govern their use.

1. "The Coin" is to be carried by 12 Service Battalion members when attending formal or semi-formal functions while in Mess Dress, Service Dress (DEU) or appropriate civilian attire.

2. The challenge will be "Duty Above All", the reply "Child of the Fraser."

3. The Coin is then to be produced by both (or all) members. Any member not be able to produce his/her coin will be fined, at the discretion of the coin carrying member. A donation to the Unit Fund (minimum \$2) and a beverage of choice will be levied at the expense of non provider.

HISTORY

12 (Vancouver) Service Battalion was raised as the Vancouver Militia Service Battalion on 15th February, 1965. Effective the 15th March, 1965 it took under Command for all purposes 156 Tpt Coy RCASC, 24 Medical Coy RCAMC, A Coy 8th Ord Bn RCCC, A Sqn 8th Tech Regiment RCEME, 8th Provost Coy C Pro C. The 3 Area Signs Sqn RCCA and 4 Int Coy C Int C came under command for training and administration. Significantly, the Battalion was created before the experiments in the Service Battalion concept were completed in 1968 at CFB Galetown.

The Battalion badge^g received Royal consent in June 1977, thereby becoming one of the original three Service Battalions to have their badges authorized. The Unit's badge, heraldically described as: "Argent; in base three bars wavy azure: in front of the whole a killer whale leaping proper".

The first home of the Battalion was located at North Jericho and consisted of two hangers and an assortment of individual buildings. This arrangement was to last until an economical move by the Government closed the military installations in North Jericho and property transferred to the City of Vancouver. Therefore in October 1971, the Battalion was moved to its second home, Building 104 South Jericho. There it shared accommodations with the District Headquarters and several other Militia and Regular Force units. This location was less than satisfactory as the companies were dispersed between floors and without a parade square the Battalion parades required the unsavory task of shuffling vehicles in and out of the outdoor vehicle compound. On 31 March, 1976 the Battalion moved to the Sea Island Armoury, situated beside the Vancouver International Airport. The building, another hanger, had a history of serving the RCAF since 1941 and prior to our arrival housed the Air Movements Unit. Through Battalion efforts and Headquarters support armoury status was obtained in 1978 and Hanger 2 was retitled "The Sea Island Armoury". This third home with sufficient accommodations to house all Battalion components alleviated many of the initial growing pains and laid the foundation for unit cohesiveness.

The year 1974 heralded a series of organizational changes to all Militia Service Battalions. The first re-organizational changes effective 31 March 1975, retitled the Battalion from "Vancouver Militia Service Battalion" to "12 (Vancouver Service Battalion)", with the companies becoming more intrinsic by being renamed.

Transportation, Supply, Maintenance and Medical Company. 1975 was also the year the Chilliwack Detachment was formed using only the Battalions resources with no increase establishment or equipment. The relationship with the 3 Area Sig Sqn had previously ceased when they were incorporated into the Communications Branch Organization, but in 1976 the 4 Int Coy, now a platoon, was transferred to Area Headquarters. The following year 1977 saw the prospering Chilliwack Detachment assume the role and status of the Battalion's Supply Coy and simultaneously the fledgling Administration Coy having been formed the previous year became a fully functional entity, performing the Battalions 1st line support. Shortly after uniting with the Battalion in 1965, the 24 Medical Coy had been reduced to a section. The succeeding years found this section growing to a platoon and finally emerging as the 12 Medical Coy. This Coy stayed under command until April 1980 when with pride and somewhat sadness the "Medics" who the Battalion had fostered for so long, became fully independent and returned to South Jericho to assume their own genealogy.

With each passage of command the Battalion has grown in experience and knowledge to successfully overcome the initial discomforts of combining independent units into an intrinsic Battalion and then to progress in providing a Battalion Identity. This identity was created by a continuing process of initiating or revitalizing annual military or social traditions. Some of the traditions such as the introduction of sword drill and Flag Party during formal parades, paved the way for the future when the Battalion can parade their own Flag. Combined with the annual social events which include the Battalion Picnics, the Battalion Children's Christmas Party, the Junior Ranks Christmas Dinner and the revitalization of each mess conducting standard mess functions have all created a Battalion "esprit de corps".

Many accomplishments and awards have been attained by the Battalion over the years however the two life saving events tend to be highlighted. The first life saving incident occurred in July 1980 during the Annual Battalion Picnic when a group of unit members rescued a teenage girl from drowning in a water-filled ditch after a vehicle accident. For this the Battalion received recognition from the Royal Canadian Humane Society and each participant received the Mobile Command Achievement Award. The second incident occurred during a night time exercise in April 1982 when another group of unit members witnessed a civilian vehicle leave a lonely mountain road and careen down the mountain side. The unit members conducted a search and rescue operation and have been accredited with saving the lives of the two occupants.

From the date of the Battalions formation it has been highly cognizant of the Combat Service Support Roles and through its training has emphasized the instructions of soldierly skills as well as craftsman skills. Each annual training plan has allotted equal priority to trades training, field tactical exercises and small arms classification.

Through intensive small arms training, much of it on a voluntary basis, the Battalion has produced a first class group of shooters including members of the Bisley Team who have won top awards at that prestigious international venue. Combined training with our colleagues from 11 (Victoria) Service Battalion as a combined "11 Bde Svc Bn" has toned up our field efficiency to a higher level and having been given the extra loaned equipment from Regular Force sources for the Annual Milcon each year, we have greatly improved our training and morale. Morale has also received a boost from the fact that we have new Armoury in Richmond, B.C. This will be the first Armoury in Canada especially built to accommodate a Militia Service Battalion. The 12 Service Battalion Association, formed in 1985 to ensure the continued participation of retired and current members of all ranks in the family life of the Battalion, has proved an outstanding success. This active partnership has been appropriately manifest in attendance at ceremonial parades and mess functions to a degree not seen in the past, as well as, the public appearance of ex-members as part of the battalion contingent on parade in the streets of Richmond on Remembrance Day. Pride in the Battalion and its development is everywhere apparent in the field, in the Armoury and, also in the people both serving and non-serving, in the community of Richmond.

12 (Vancouver) Service Battalion is proud of its affiliation with 1 Service Battalion in the Army of the West and prouder still to practice and respect the Regimental Motto;

"DUTY ABOVE ALL"

Credits: -

Prepared by LCol LA Watkins, CD - Aug 82

Updated by: Capt PJ O'Sullivan, CD Aug 86



Office of the Mayor
CITY OF RICHMOND
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Proclamation

TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER
12 SERVICE BATTALION

GREETINGS

WHEREAS

We, the Mayor, Councillors, and the Citizens of the City of Richmond, in the Province of British Columbia, fully realize and appreciate the splendid record of 12 Service Battalion in this City and Province.

AND WHEREAS

We are gratefully aware of the particularly close and cordial relationship which has long existed between 12 Service Battalion and the City of Richmond.

NOW THEREFORE,

I, Greg Halsey-Brandt, as Mayor of the City, do by these presents, hereby confer upon you

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

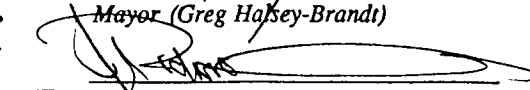
and thereby confer upon you the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching all, or any units, companies, or detachments of the Battalion through the streets of the City on all ceremonial occasions with bands playing, drums beating and bayonets fixed.

In witness whereof, we have caused our City Seal to be hereunto affixed this Eighth Day of March, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-three, pursuant to a unanimous vote by the City Council on the Eighth Day of March, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-three.





Mayor (Greg Halsey-Brandt)



City Clerk (J. Richard McKenna)