

THE SHERBROOKE HUSSARS: *IN HOC SIGNO STABILITAS* (STEADFAST BY THIS SIGN)¹

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The *Sherbrooke Hussars* can trace their origins back to 1803 when a militia corps was put together under the leadership of Sir John Johnson. This Eastern Townships Militia saw action during the war of 1812 with the United States and, in 1836, a company was raised to subdue the Papineau riots and fought in the rebellion of 1836–1837.

The official history of the Regiment begins on September 21, 1866 when the *Sherbrooke Battalion of Infantry* was formed to meet the threat of invasion caused by the Fenians. Less than one year later on March 22, 1867, the unit was divided in two, creating the *53rd Battalion of Infantry* in Sherbrooke (QC) and the *54th Richmond Battalion of Infantry* in Melbourne (QC). Later that year, another unit was formed, the *58th Compton Battalion of Infantry*, located in Cookshire (QC). The, *53rd*, *54th* and *58th* are considered the Regiment's original units and its members saw duty in the Fenian raids in 1866 (Stanstead Plain) and in 1870 (Frelighsburg).

Several members of these three original units were deployed and served with the *Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry* during the Boer War (1899–1902). Following this war, Canadian militia recognized the need to augment the number of cavalry units. This is why, in 1903, the *54th Richmond Regiment* and the *58th Compton Regiment* were converted into cavalry units and became the *XIth Hussars* and the *7th Hussars* respectively. As for the *53rd Battalion of Infantry*, in 1900, it would become known as the *53rd Sherbrooke Regiment*.

When world war broke out in 1914, many members of the three original units left for Europe with the first Canadian contingent. In the spring of 1915, an Eastern Townships Cavalry unit was formed by LtCo. G.H. Baker and designated as *The 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles* (C.E.F). This unit provided the first real Eastern Townships contribution to the First World War, where two of its members (Major G.R. Peakes and Lt C.S. Rutherford) received a Victoria Cross. Sixteen of *The Sherbrooke Hussars'* battle honours were earned by this unit. In December 1915, the *117th Eastern Townships Battalion* was formed

and trained, and it was deployed to Europe in August 1916. Once in Europe—due to the significant rise in casualties on the battlefields—this unit was disbanded and its members served as reinforcements to other Regiments, including *The 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles*.

After the First World War, the numbering of units was discontinued and in 1920, *The 53rd Sherbrooke Regiment* became "*The Sherbrooke Regiment*."² In 1936, *The 7th Hussars* and *XIth Hussars* were amalgamated to form *The 7/XI Hussars*.³

At the onset of the Second World War, *The 7/XI Hussars* and *The Royal Rifles of Canada* were mobilized under the name *1st Battalion of the Royal Rifles of Canada* and deployed to the Pacific where its members saw action in Hong Kong. As for *The Sherbrooke Regiment*, on July 23, 1940, an amalgamation of *The Sherbrooke Regiment* and *Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke* was authorized and *The Sherbrooke Fusilier Regiment (C.A.S.F)* was formed. Initially an infantry unit, they were soon converted into an armoured unit. The first vehicle of the regiment touched ground in Normandy on the 6th of June at 12:15 and the Regiment served with distinction through the European theatre until the end of the war. Twentytwo battle honours were earned by the unit during this time.

On February 15, 1965, *The Sherbrooke Regiment* and *The 7/XI Hussars*, amalgamated to officially form *The Sherbrooke Hussars*.⁴ Since the Second World War, many members of the Regiment have served in peacekeeping missions under the Umbrella of the United Nations and/or NATO. Members of *The Sherbrooke Hussars* have been deployed to places like Egypt, Sinai, Golan Heights, Cyprus, former Yugoslavia, Congo, and Afghanistan.

The archives of *The Sherbrooke Hussars* are kept at their headquarters in Sherbrooke (QC). Furthermore, the ETRC archives have some archival material of interest to the activities of *The Sherbrooke Hussars*; most notably, the archives of *The 5th CMR Association*. In September 1934, members of *The 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles* who had served during World War I organized *The 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles Association* to perpetuate the memory and the tradition of their battalion. It is worth noting that the diary of Private Frank Herbert Price included in the series "Personal Documents" was published in the *Journal of Eastern Townships Studies/Revue d'études des Cantons de l'Est*, No. 2, Spring 1993. For information about these archives and more, please contact the ETRC Archivist.

ENDNOTES

1. Except where it is specifically noted, the content of this article is derived from two informally published documents: *The Sherbrooke Hussars, 1866–1997*, an unpublished manuscript by former commanding officer, Lt. Col (Ret.) Daniel M. Braün; and, *Cérémonie de passation de commandement du Régiment: The Sherbrooke Hussars*, a booklet created by The Sherbrooke Hussars on the occasion of their 150th anniversary.
2. Canada, National Defence and the Canadian forces. “The Sherbrooke Hussars.” *Directorate of History and Heritage, Histories, Official lineages*, accessed 6 June, 2017, www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/ol-lo/vol-tom-3/par1/arm-bli/SH-eng.asp.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

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