

The Flags of St. George's

By John Duerkop

Flags are traditionally displayed in Churches, especially in Cathedrals. They may be the national flag, they may have some symbolic relationship to the institution, or they may be Military flags that have been superseded in design or function and laid up at the "Garrison Church" as was the case with many of St. George's flags.

As recently as 1971, thirteen flags (including no less than three King's Colours) hung from columns in the nave or at the side of the sanctuary. Seven flags have since been removed and four of the remaining six have been placed in enclosed glass-fronted cases that provide some protection for them. The cases have been placed in the Cathedral's balconies. Three additional flags have since been added.

The flags displayed now, running counter-clockwise from the King Street doors are: a Canadian Red Ensign (1957 design), a Canadian flag (1965), a Tyendinaga Mohawk flag (1984?), a Royal Military College Colour (1919), a Royal Military College King's Colour (1919), a Union Flag (1606 design), a Blue Ensign (1801 design), a Canadian Field Artillery Battery Flag (1915) and a Korean War battery flag (about 1953).

Red Ensign:

The Red Ensign stands on the right side of the First World War Memorial. The Red Ensign has been flown by "British" merchant ships since 1707 and many Royal Navy vessels flew it until 1864. Between 1868 and 1965, Canadians used it,

with the relevant Canadian coat of arms on the fly, as a distinctive Canadian flag while the Union Flag remained the official one. Canadian servicemen and women in both World Wars served under the Red Ensign. The provinces of Ontario and Manitoba have provincial flags that are based on it.

Canadian Flag:

The Canadian flag stands in the place of honour on the left side of the First World War Memorial. The flag was proclaimed in 1965. The basic design was a co-operative effort led by George Stanley and John Ross Matheson, both of Kingston. It is said that the design is loosely based on the RMC flag.

Tyendinaga Flag:

Since about 1984 a blue Tyendinaga Mohawk flag has been on display on the north wall of the nave over the plaque to Molly Brant. It may have come to the Cathedral in 1984 when HM the Queen dedicated the Loyalist Parkway west of Kingston. Both the "European" and the "indigenous" Loyalists arrived here close together in 1784. The white colour on the flag symbolizes good, purity and peace. The chain circling the centred eagle symbolises the strong relationship between the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) of which the Mohawks were part and the Europeans. The Eagle can see far from the top of the Great Tree of Peace. He can warn of approaching danger. Further information is available at [http://www.m bq-tmt.org/community history of Tyendinaga](http://www.m bq-tmt.org/community%20history%20of%20Tyendinaga).

A new Tyendinaga flag design has since been adopted and one of the new ones is scheduled to replace the older one in the Cathedral in April 2019

RMC Colours:

There are two Colours on the back wall of the RMC gallery. The college received both Colours in 1919 from HRH the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VIII). They were laid up at the Cathedral in 1942 when the college closed for the duration of the war. They were initially hung from the gallery railing on short staffs, one on each side of the college shield. They have since been put in cases for protection.

As viewed from the floor of the nave, the flag on the right at the back of the Royal Military College balcony is a College Colour, similar to a Regimental Colour.

The flag on the left side of a viewer standing back to look at the gallery is a King's Colour. It is a Union Flag with the letters "RMC" at the centre of the red St. George's Cross-. When paraded, a King's or Queen's Colour is treated as if it actually is the monarch. This requires an armed guard of 100 and usually a band. A Royal Colour is consecrated when presented and laid up in a Cathedral when its service life is over.

Royal Union Flag:

The Royal Union Flag that is located in the Stuart Room originated in 1606 with the union of England and Scotland. In 1707, they together became known as the "United Kingdom". This particular flag is the 1606 design that was used at the time that the Loyalists from the United States arrived in Cataraqui (now Kingston) in 1784. In 1801, a diagonal red St. Patrick's Cross representing Ireland was added to the previous design. The blue background and diagonal white St. Andrew's cross continue to represent Scotland while the red St. George's Cross represents England.

The Royal Union flag is popularly known as the "Union Flag" or as the "Union Jack". A "Jack" is a flag flown from the bow of commissioned warships when they are at anchor in harbour. The Royal Union Flag has served this purpose on British warships for over four hundred years.

In Canada, the Union Flag is used to represent the Royal connection and is featured in the provincial flags of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador. In the United States the state flag of Hawaii features the Union flag. This Union Flag was donated to the Cathedral in 2006 by the Kingston Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.

Blue Ensign:

A Blue Ensign is displayed in a case at the north end of the RCHA Balcony. Before 1864 the Royal Navy was organized into "Red," "White" and "Blue" Divisions. Ships in each division of the navy flew an ensign of the appropriate colour. Except for the Union Flag in the upper left quadrant, or union, the rest of these ensigns were the colour indicated by the name.

Since 1864, all commissioned Royal Navy vessels fly the White Ensign, RN auxiliary vessels fly the Blue Ensign and merchant vessels fly the Red Ensign. Over time, various British colonies, including Canada, put their own coat of arms or symbol on the fly of either the Red or the Blue Ensign and used it as their unofficial (later official in the case of Australia and New Zealand) flag.

This Blue Ensign of traditional design was probably flown over the naval dockyard on Point Frederick between 1864 and

1870. Except for the garrisons at the naval bases in Halifax NS and Esquimalt BC, the last British forces were withdrawn from all of Canada in 1870.

22nd Battery Flag:

The Union Flag in the centre of the back wall of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery Balcony was made in 1915 for the 22nd Battery of the 21st Battalion, 6th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery. The battery was raised in Kingston and Belleville. It had four 18-pounder guns and strength of 157 men and 4 officers. The youngest was a 14-year-old bugler. The flag was made for the 22nd Battery to take to France. A Colour was made for the whole 21st Battalion at the same time. Unit flags are not common in the field artillery, although some units had them at the beginning of the Great War. The ones in question were made in Toronto and embroidered by Mary Mitchell.

The Kingston Veteran's Association undertook fundraising for both flags. Mrs. Maria Phoebe Waldron was instrumental in having these flags made. The Waldron's owned a dry goods store at Brock and Wellington Streets. Their home still stands at the corner of Barrie and King Streets and is now owned by Queen's University. The Waldron Tower student residence is on King Street between their home and the Burr Wing of KGH. The family rented pew 38 at St. George's and donated our present lectern after the 1899 fire.

A plaque on the east wall of the nave reads: "Major Stanley Mott Waldron, 15th Battery Canadian Field Artillery, 29th April 1882, 4 May 1917 Vimy France." He had attended RMC (#514) and enlisted in Winnipeg 12 January 1915. At the

front, a German shell exploded in a dugout, killing Major Waldron. He had been married only four and a half months.

The 6th Brigade was disbanded as soon as it got to England (its members were assigned to other units) and the 22nd Battery flag was laid up on 19 April 1915. It was placed on Wolfe's grave in King Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey until the war was over. Battery flags were a simple way for a battery of guns to identify itself and its location. The guns themselves were usually dug in and hard to see, so for those artillery batteries that had them, the flag served as a rallying point, just as in infantry units.

The 22nd Battery flag was brought back to Kingston after the war by the 21st Battalion. It was then laid up in St. George's. The flag disappeared in the 1970s. Thirty years later, it was found by Rt. Rev. George Bruce and after being repaired, was placed in a case and put in the RCHA balcony on 12 September 2004. A great-granddaughter and a great-great-granddaughter of Mary Mitchell were present at the time.

After the war, the local field artillery unit became a battalion of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA) and the balcony railing on the south wall of the nave bears their regimental badge. The 22nd Battery was mobilized again in 1940 and landed at Normandy on D-Day, 6th June 1944. The unit was again disbanded in 1945.

Today the RCHA comprises two regiments. 1 RCHA is based at Shilo Manitoba and 2 RCHA is based at Petawawa Ontario. Captain Nicola Kathleen Sarah Goddard MSM (2 May, 1980-17 May, 2006) 1 RCHA, was the first woman in the Canadian

Forces killed in combat. MSM is the Meritorious Service Medal. When she was an RMC Cadet, Nicola paraded to St. George's.

Korean War Battery Flag:

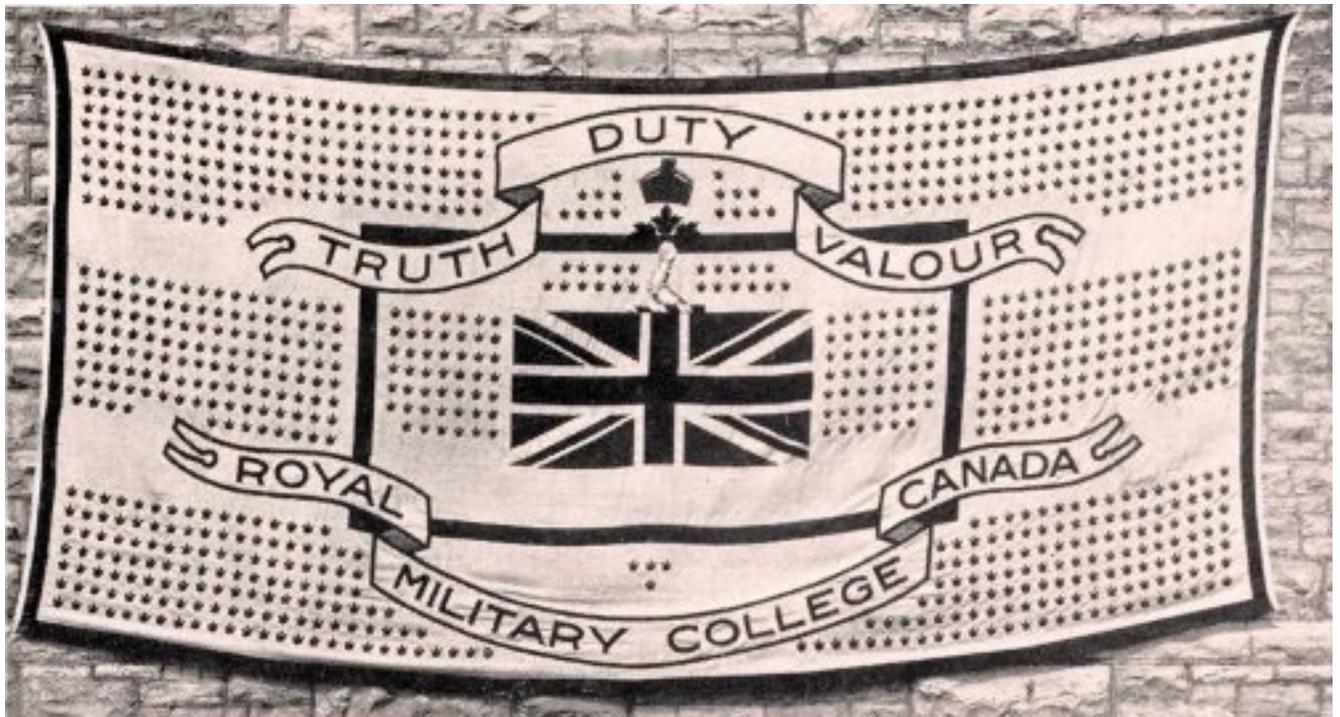
Also in the RCHA balcony, on the left, is an artillery battery flag from the Korean War, a utilitarian flag that is in contrast to the elaborate Great War flag to its right.

Flags No Longer On Display:

Speaking in 1913 of the appearance of the Cathedral interior before the fire of 1899, Canon G.L. Starr said "From either side hung the tattered and war stained flags of the early regiments". We do not know which particular flags he was referring to, but there were obviously flags in the Cathedral before the fire.

Royal Military College Memorial Flag:

Other than the 1870 Blue Ensign that we have, the earliest St. George's flag of which we have specific record was a special RMC memorial flag made by women of the parish. First displayed in the cadet's balcony on 8 December, 1918, it was enormous, 5.5 m (18') x 7.3 m (24'). The design included a Union Flag in the centre surrounded by 914 maple leaves for those ex-Cadets who served and 140 crimson ones for those who died during the Great War. The RMC motto "Truth, Duty, Valour" was also included. Given to RMC in 1934 because of its poor condition, it has been unaccounted for since 1942 when RMC closed for the duration of the war.



White Ensign:

A photograph in a 1956 fundraising booklet from St. George's shows a navy White Ensign hanging on a short staff from a column beside the RCHA balcony. It is not known when or how the White Ensign came to be displayed in the Cathedral. The ensign in question is not the White Ensign that was found by the Rt. Rev. George Bruce in the Cathedral offices in 2018, as the original would have been canvas and the one found in 2018 is made of a synthetic material. Possibly the "new" one was intended to be a replacement for the original.

Royal Air Force Ensign:

An RAF Ensign hanging on a short staff from a column near the RMC balcony shows in the same 1956 photograph. This ensign came to the Cathedral in 1943 when the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan ceased operating at the local airport. It was still there in 1971. It is not known what happened to it after that.

Special King's Colour 21st Battalion CEF:

King's Colour 59th Battalion CEF:

Regimental Colour 59th Battalion CEF:

This Special King's Colour was laid up in the Cathedral in 1921. The two 59th Battalion Colours were laid up in the Cathedral in 1919. All three were predecessor units of the Princess of Wales's Own Regiment of Kingston and were formally given back to them in the 1970s. They are now in the Regimental museum in the Montreal St. armoury.

Scout Flag and Union Flag:

The same 1956 booklet shows a pair of flags hanging from short staffs on the columns either side of the Cathedral aisle immediately inside the King Street doors. One, a Union Flag, was on the east side. On the west side, opposite the Union Flag, there was a Scout flag. They were both presented in 1925. The St. George's Boy Scout troop was disbanded about 1926. The Union Flag was made by the Anglican Sisters of St. John the Divine in Toronto. Both flags were still present in 1971 but by that time had been placed in cases. It is not known what happened to this pair of flags.

Acknowledgements:

Peter Gower and I have exchanged numerous reports and information items about the flags in the Cathedral. The Rt. Rev. George Bruce found two flags and provided information about Lt. Col. P.T. Nation, the compiler of the 1971 list. Lena Beliveau, the former curator of the RMC Museum, provided the scan of the Memorial Flag.

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