

The Flags of St. George's Cathedral
May 30, 2018
By John Duerkop

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 They may be the national flag, they may have some symbolic relationship to the religious institution, or they may be superseded in design or function and laid up at the "Garrison Church" as is the case with many of the flags at St. George's.

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. Five were soon removed and four of the remaining eight were enclosed in glass-fronted cases that provided some protection for them. The cases were then placed on the walls of the two balconies. Three additional flags have since been added.

There are currently nine flags on display in the Cathedral. Running clockwise from the northeast corner of the nave, these are a Canadian Red Ensign, a Canadian flag, a Tyendinaga Mohawk flag, a Royal Military College flag (1919), a Royal Military College King's Colour (1919), a Union Flag (in the pre 1801 design), a Blue Ensign (1870), a Canadian Field Artillery Flag (1915) and a Korean War artillery battery flag.

A memorial to parishioners who served or died in the Great War is located on the wall in the northeast corner of the nave. The Canadian flag and the pre-1965 Canadian Red Ensign stand on either side of the Memorial to the left and right respectively.

Red Ensigns have been flown by British merchant ships since 1707 and many Royal Navy vessels 1707-1864. Beginning in 1868 Canadians began to use it, with the current 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 also based on the Red Ensign.

The "new" Canadian 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 was loosely based on the RMC flag.

A blue Tyendinaga Mohawk flag hangs on the north wall 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" Loyalists and the indigenous ones arrived here in 1784. The colour white symbolizes good, purity and peace. The chain circling the centre eagle symbolises the strong relationship between the Iroquois Confederacy (Haudenosaunee) of which the Mohawks were part, and the Europeans. The Eagle in the centre can see far from the Great Tree of Peace. He can warn of approaching danger. More information is available at [http://www.mbq-tmt.org/community history of Tyendinaga](http://www.mbq-tmt.org/community_history_of_Tyendinaga).

There are two Colours in cases on the back wall of the RMC gallery. RMC received both the Colours in 1919 from HRH the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII). They were laid up 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.

The flag on the left side of a viewer standing back to look at the Royal Military College gallery is a King's Colour. It is a Union Flag with the letters "RMC" at the centre of the St. George's Cross. When paraded, a King's, or Queen's, Colour is treated as if it is actually the monarch. This requires an armed guard of 100 and usually a band.

The second flag presented to the Royal Military College by the Prince was a College Colour. As viewed from the nave, it is on the right in a case on the balcony's back wall. Like the King's Colour, it was laid up at St. George's in 1942.

The Union Flag that is located in the Stuart Room is the pre-1801 design that was used at the time that the Loyalists arrived in Cataraqui (now

Kingston) in 1784. It was donated in 2006 by the Kingston Branch of the United Empire Loyalist's Association of Canada.

The Union flag is now used to represent the Royal connection in Canada. In its present form it became the official flag of Great Britain and the Empire in 1801 when a diagonal red St. Patrick's Cross was added to represent Ireland. The blue background and diagonal white St. Andrew's Cross continue to represent Scotland while the red St. George's Cross represents England. The Union Flag in the Stuart Room is the pre-1801 version under which the Loyalists arrived here in 1783.

At the end of the RCHA balcony, displayed in a case, is a Blue Ensign. 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 top left quadrant, or union, the whole of the fly of these ensigns was the colour indicated by the name. The 1801 Union Flag filled the upper left quadrant.

In 1864, it was decided that all commissioned vessels of the Royal Navy would fly the White Ensign, auxiliary vessels would fly the Blue Ensign and merchant vessels would fly the Red Ensign. Various British colonies, including Canada, superimposed their own coat of arms 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) national flag. That was how the Canadian Red Ensign came into being in 1868.

Apparently a Blue Ensign had flown over the naval dockyard on Point Frederick where RMC is now located between 1854 and 1870. It was in 1870 that the last British forces were withdrawn from all of what was then Canada except the garrisons at the naval bases in Halifax NS and Esquimalt BC. It has been suggested that the Blue Ensign in question probably came from the dockyard.

The Union Flag in the centre of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery Balcony is that of the 22nd Battery of the 6th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery. The battery was raised in Kingston and Belleville. It had four 18-pounder guns and a strength of 157 men and 4 officers. The youngest was a 14-year-old bugler. The flag was made for the battery

to take to France in 1915. The battery was part of the 21st Battalion and a Colour was made for them at the same time. 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 the battery flag and the battalion colour. Mrs. Maria Phoebe Waldron was apparently instrumental in having these flags made. The Waldrons owned a dry goods store at Brock and Wellington Streets. Their home still stands at the corner of Barrie and King Streets and is owned by Queen's University. The family rented pew 38 at St. George's and donated the new lectern after the 1899 fire.

A plaque on the north 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 5.9" shell exploded in the officer's dugout, killing Major Waldron. He had been married only four and a half months.

In any case, the brigade was disbanded as soon as it got to England (its members were assigned to other units) and the battery flag was laid up on 19 April 1915 on Wolfe's grave in King Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey until the war was over.

The flag was brought back to Kingston after the war by the 21st Battalion. It was then laid up in St. George's Cathedral. 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 descendent of Mary Mitchell was present at the time.

After the war, the local field artillery unit became a battalion of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and the balcony railing on the south wall of the nave bears their regimental badge. The 22nd Battery was mobilized in 1940 and landed at Normandy on D Day. It was disbanded in 1945. In

the early 1950s, it became part of the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment.

Today the RCHA is based at both Petawawa Ontario and Shilo Manitoba. Capt. Nicola Goddard MSM (1980-2006), the first woman in the Canadian Forces killed in combat, was a member of the RCHA.

Also in the RCHA balcony, on the left, is an artillery battery flag from the Korean War. Battery flags were a simple way for a battery of guns to identify itself and its location.

The first of two parts