



The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment) 150th Anniversary Committee

BACKGROUND

TROOPING THE COLOUR

An Historical Summary and Outline of the Ceremony



*The Regimental Colour of The
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry
(Wentworth Regiment).*

The origin of the ceremony "Trooping the Colour" dates back to the 17th century. It was the custom for different Infantry Regiments to be distinguished by a particular colour. The facing of each soldier's uniform and the colour or banner carried by each regiments was of the same colour. This served to identify the soldier, while the colour itself was used as a rallying point in battle.

It was important then, that each soldier learned to know and recognize his Regiment's Colour so that it could be followed in battle. The Colour was therefore trooped or paraded through the ranks so every soldier could see it.

The Regimental Colour therefore had a definite role in battle, for it moved to ensure that the regiment did not become separated. About it the entire battle moved; as the Colour went forward, so the soldiers advanced; as it stood, so the unit stood.

The capture of the Colour was more than a mere disgrace, its loss usually meant defeat in battle, for, without this central pivot, the unit soon broke up. The Colour was therefore carefully guarded and on most occasions had its own escort to protect it.

On the Regimental Colour is embroidered the names of the battles in which the unit has fought. The Colour therefore reminds the soldiers of the past history and traditions of the Regiment. It becomes more than a rallying point; it is a symbol of the Regiment's past achievements and victories. As such a symbol, the Regimental Colour is the most prized possession of any regiment. It is saluted by all soldiers and always moves under an armed guard.

From these traditions built up over a good many years comes today's ceremony of "Trooping the Colour".

The Colour you see above was presented in 1962 by Governor-General Georges Vanier, at Civic Stadium (now Ivor Wynn) in Hamilton. Prior to September 15th, 2012, this was the last time this Colour was trooped. It bears 21 of the 41 Battle Honours awarded to the RHLI since being founded in 1862.