

The Guards in Review – Col RM Foster, MSM, CD



This is believed to be one of the earliest images from the Regiment. While it is a well-known photograph to many in the Regiment the actual names of the individuals are a mystery. What we do know is that the Library and Archives database identifies the photo taken in 1875 as “C.O. - Col. Ross of Governor General's Foot Guards”. In May 1874 the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, wife of the Governor General, presented our first stand of Regimental Colours so the date of 1875 for the photo seems accurate. This particular studio photo is not attributed to a photographer, which is odd and means that it is likely not the work of the most prominent photographer in Ottawa, William Topley who has an extensive collection available at the Library and Archives. Now to determine what we don't know.

With a little bit of work I have taken the opportunity to try and figure out who is who. If you believe I am in error please let me know as the work is based on some Internet sleuthing. Using a spreadsheet created by the late WO John Swan of the NCOs of the Regiment I was able to list of names of Sr NCOs serving in 1875. Using that as a baseline I searched all 30 names against images in the library and archives database. I only used photos of people that are available online. All comparison photos are from the Topley collection unless otherwise noted between 1868 and 1881 with the assumption that individual facial features would not change much in the time period beyond facial hair.

The only person we know for sure is Lt Col Thomas Ross, the first Commanding Officer and known as the Father of the Guards. He was instrumental in raising the Regiment. He is in the Centre with his chin resting on the sword.



The officer in rifles uniform is likely the Adjutant, John Rhodes formerly of the Ottawa Brigade of Garrison Artillery sitting to the left of Lt Col Ross. It is possible that he is still wearing the uniform of the Civil Service Rifles but this seems unlikely. The Glengarry cap was a common headdress but it is not clear why he is wearing the cross belt? Any ideas? He could be an officer from the QOR who was attached, William Egerton Hodgins. But it is not confirmed that Hodgins was in Ottawa in

1875. He is wearing a sword and also has a swagger stick in his right hand.



The Senior Colour Officer is likely Telmont Aumond. He was an original officer of the Regiment who served for many years. He was second in command of the Canadian contingent that went up the Nile River to rescue

General Gordon at Khartoum in 1884. I personally thought that Aumond had moved on from the Regiment in the 1880s but a recent photo uncovered in a Sandy Hill Walking tour showed a photo of him with other Guards including Charles Winter, but that is a future story.

The Junior Colour Officer is most likely Gerald H. Bate. The photo was not found in the Library and Archives Database but rather from the “findagrave.com” which includes his obituary and information on his brother, H.A. Bate who commanded the Regiment. The Bate family were prominent in Ottawa known for real estate. Bate island on the way to Hull is named after the family.



Based on ranks the RSM, James Keating, in on the far left holding in his right hand a drill cane. It is possible that this is the same drill cane that rests in the officer’s mess at Cartier Square. I am not aware of any photos of James Keating in the Regimental inventory.

The Drum Major at the time should be Lambkin as he held that appointment a year earlier. He stands between the two Colour Officers holding the Drum Mace. Based on the comparison of photos I think it might be Desloges who joined after the presentation of Colours in November 1874. (Photo: Mr Desloges, Dec. 1873, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP397606)



The two Colour Sergeants and the four Sergeants all carry weapons, the 1853 Enfield rifled musket with bayonets fixed. This was the commonly issued weapon to the Militia at the time. It was not uncommon for the weapons to be stored in personal lockups at home for use at shooting events on weekends.



The two Colour Sergeants are in interesting positions, one is in the back row and the other is seated. The Colour Sergeant in the rear appears to be **Christopher Graburn (1839-1908)**

Born in Lincoln County, England on 24 December 1839, sixth son of Marmaduke Graburn, he was educated at the Diocesan College at Lincoln. He emigrated to Canada with three of his brothers in 1857, bought land at Ottawa, and took an accounting job with a lumber merchant from 1865 to 1871 before taking an accountancy job. He left Ottawa in the spring of 1882 and moved to Winnipeg. The source for the biography is

http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/graburn_c.shtml. (Photo: Mr Graburn, Feb. 1872, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP386425)



Colour Sergeant Lambkin, a veteran of the Fenian Raids was transferred into the Regiment in 1872. His appointment in WO Swan’s spreadsheet suggests he was the RQMS which may be the rationale for why he was given the opportunity to sit even though he is carrying a rifle. (Photo: Sergt Lambkin, Jul. 1868, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP406359)

The Sergeants are all in scarlet's with the exception of the first person in the list that appears to be wearing a working patrol-type uniform. I was not able to confirm any real information about the sergeants so this is largely speculation.



Sgt Sutherland was promoted into the Sergeants Mess in 1873 and he remained until 1889 as the Orderly Room Sergeant. This may be the rationale for the difference in uniform. (Photo: Sutherland, Nov. 1871, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP417759)



Sgt G. O'Connor joined the Regiment in 1873 and was immediately promoted into the Sergeant's Mess indicating past service in another unit. (Photo: O'Connor, Sept. 1875, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP370133)



Sgt Green joined the Regiment in Nov. 1874 also directly into the Sergeant's Mess. (Photo: Green, Oct. 1875, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP370188)



Sgt W. Blanchard joined the Regiment in Nov. 1873 directly into the Sergeant's Mess. (Photo: Blanchard, Nov. 1873, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP396595)



Sgt R. Salter joined the Regiment in Oct. 1874 directly into the Sergeant's Mess. (Photo: Salter, May. 1872, Ottawa, Photographer: William Topley, DAPDCAP386719)

Dissecting a photo that is 146 years old is no easy task and I may have gotten it all completely wrong. I'd like to think that a couple are right! I would welcome any thoughts or suggestions to help identify the people in this photograph as we journey towards the 150th celebration of the Regiment. Up the Guards!