

Lieutenant-Governor presides over Rangers? Change in Command ceremony



Ontario Lieutenant-Governor Edith Dumont shared her pride in the Queen's York Rangers on Saturday morning when she made her first trip to Aurora in her capacity as the Regiment's Colonel.

The occasion, which was held at the Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe Armoury on Industrial Parkway South, was twofold: a Change in Command Parade, which saw outgoing Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Matthew Lennox celebrated as he handed over the sword to new Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Gerry Almendrades; and York County Day, a celebration of the Regiment's ties to the York Region community, featuring a family barbecue cooked up by several area Lions Clubs.

"It is an honour for me to have been invested as Colonel of the Regiment, [a duty] I do not take lightly," said Dumont, the King's representative in Ontario. "In so many key moments in Canada's and the world's history, Rangers have been there not for glory, but for duty, protecting our country and our allies, and safeguarding our freedom and our values."

"We remember the deeds of the Rangers who marched through the mud-soaked terrain at Passchendaele, who pushed through at the Somme, and who served with honour in the Middle East. Collectively, they have set a high standard indeed, asking those who come after them to rise above obstacles, to lead with humility, and to build on the great legacy of this Regiment. It seems to me that these words could well describe Lieutenant-Colonel Matt Lennox."

Dumont paid tribute to Lennox's more-than-20-year contributions to the Canadian Armed Forces, and concurred with the sentiments he expressed in the latest edition of *Swift and Bold*, the regimental magazine, that the Rangers are "people-centred."

"I consider myself truly fortunate to have learned from you about what it means to be a Ranger, and to have witnessed the high esteem in which you are obviously held and the camaraderie you have fostered. As Colonel of the Regiment, and as the representative of the Crown in Ontario, and from the bottom of my heart, I thank you."

"You have guided this Regiment with the conviction and wisdom of someone who has walked the full path to command. You have done every single person here proud, and I know you will carry that knowledge wherever your future takes you, including, I understand, on a Disney cruise with your family! And now, as we enter a new chapter, Lieutenant-Colonel [Gerry] Almendrades, welcome back to the Queen's York Rangers. It will be wonderful to see you bring your experience, perspective, and personality to your new command. Please know that your fellow Rangers will look to you for direction, sound judgment, and the kind of integrity that earns a special trust. Through the centuries, the Queen's York Rangers have been led by some of Canada's best. This responsibility now rests with you, and I know it will suit you well."

Lennox, in turn, paid tribute to the men and women he commanded.

‘You don’t need me to tell you the world seems to be in a pretty precarious place these days,’ he said, referencing the Rangers’ upcoming deployments to battle ongoing wildfires in Manitoba, and to Latvia to train Ukrainian soldiers. ‘Anyone going to Latvia is putting themselves right next door to one of the bloodiest European conflicts since the Second World War’ and yet, our soldiers not only volunteer to go, they essentially have to compete for a limited number of spots.

‘But that’s how it is with our soldiers. Whether it was the Balkans in the 90s, early 2000s, or Afghanistan a few years later, or Eastern Europe today, any number of domestic operations, or long training courses, or any kind of tasking that, quite frankly, sucks, our soldiers always seem to have their hands up and just want to know if there’s going to be Wi-Fi there. So, to all the soldiers, I say thank you.’

As part of the celebrations, the Royal Canadian Legion’s Aurora branch represented by Branch president Bonnie Robertson and Stephen Boyne presented the Regiment with a donation to support the local reserves, including help to secure vital health, fitness and sporting equipment for active reservists.

By Brock Weir