

Greetings from Her Majesty The Queen, Our Captain General: Colonel Commandant's Audience with Our Captain General



Salutations de la part de Sa Majesté La Reine, Notre Capitaine Général: Audience du Colonel Commandant avec Notre Capitaine Général

All Ranks of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, Regimental Family, and Supporters of Canada's Gunners; À tous les Artilleurs du Régiment Royal de l'artillerie Canadienne, la Famille Régimentaire et les Supporteurs des Artilleurs Canadiens.

At 12:15 on Tuesday, 10 November 2009, on behalf of all Canadian Gunners, I had the duty, honour and great pleasure to have an audience with Her Majesty the Queen, Our Captain General. It gave me great pride to report to her on the state of her Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. After exchanging a few pleasantries, I borrowed the words of General Andrew Leslie, our Chief of Land Staff: "Your Highness, *'It's a great time to be a Gunner!'* " She smiled.

I was so proud to tell her why it's a great time to be a Gunner, and Her Majesty was genuinely interested and enthused. In the fifteen to twenty minutes we shared, I informed her about her Canadian Gunners. We particularly spoke about her Gunners serving in Afghanistan, fighting for an important cause and facing the same risks and dangers faced daily by our infantry, armoured, engineer and other comrades in arms. I informed Her Majesty of our close relationship and mutual support with and of the British Armed Forces, particularly the British Army, and the trust, confidence and friendships that have emerged facing a common enemy in battle. Her Majesty was, not surprisingly, very well informed about her Gunners and Canada's efforts. She took great interest in our accomplishments, the challenges, and the state of our men and women and their families.

Sa Majesté s'est montrée tout particulièrement intéressée de la situation de nos artilleurs blessés physiquement et mentalement et elle voulait savoir comment les familles passent au travers ces épreuves. Elle a beaucoup d'intérêt pour nos vétérans de l'Afghanistan ainsi que ceux des autres guerres précédentes. Je l'ai renseigné du mieux que j'ai pu mais il m'est impossible de bien exprimer les sentiments de tristesse, les blessures et les pertes que tous et toutes peuvent ressentir. Je n'ai pas perdu la vue ou un membre de mon corps, je n'ai pas vu mes confrères ou consoeurs perdre une jambe ou se faire éventré et je n'ai pas vu les soldats retournés chez eux profondément dérangés. En tant que votre représentant j'ai fait de mon mieux pour informer Sa Majesté que les conjointes et conjoints, les enfants, les familles et nos supporteurs ont beaucoup de courage de bravoure et de détermination et durant les déploiements et à leur retour on peut sentir leur fierté et le sens de la camaraderie. Vous devriez tous et toutes savoir qu'elle comprend du fond du cœur et qu'elle a beaucoup d'empathie.



I did mention to Her Highness that in the event that she should visit Canada during Her Diamond Jubilee, or any other suitable occasion, we Gunners would be thrilled to host her for an event. The Protocol staff at the Royal Household or in the Governor General's office might be saying, "Who the heck does this guy think he is?" Well, I'll plead temporary loss of sanity and be prepared to accept the Extra Drill and Duties at the Tower of London for being so forward – but sincerely it would be so nice for us Canadian Gunners to be able to host our Captain General, for a few moments in Canada or the UK. When I suggested this, again, she smiled!



Ceci peut vous sembler très commun que votre Colonel Commandant puisse parler avec la Reine sur une base journalière! Eh Bien! Je dois admettre que j'en avais des papillons plein le ventre devant Sa Majesté. Je me suis alors dit que ce n'était pas la moitié, même un pourcent de ce que nos valeureuses femmes et hommes font à chaque jour en Afghanistan. Elle m'a alors mis bien à l'aise.

Her Majesty took great interest in the brief anecdotes about the bravery, heroism, sacrifice and comradeship which has been the daily routine of soldiers such as Captain Nicola Goddard, Captain Marie-Eve Bégin, Capt Justin Brunelle, Capt Hicks, WO Buchanan, WO Power, Sgt Kremer, MBdr Cummings, MBdr Joksimovic, MBdr Van Damme, Bombardier Boutillier, Gunner Dion, Bombardier Emond, and so many, many others Gunners. They have faced great danger and uncertainty day after day, for months on end, and often they faced moments of sheer pandemonium. And our Gunners still risk their lives daily for others, and show great courage in all they do. Her Majesty took it all in.

As Colonel Commandant, I was with Her Majesty in recognition of our lost and injured, in support of those who fought the good fight, and in support of those who continue to carry on the fight at this very time. I have heard so much of our soldiers' extraordinary and courageous exploits and the sacrifices of our Gunners in theatre, and I tried hard to relate these stories. She understood only too well. I also related to Her Majesty the great work that goes on in the Regiments, at the Armouries', in the School at Gagetown, with families, employers, and Honoraries, and yes, in Ottawa - and, I told her especially about the families, friends, loved ones and supporters of our Gunners. Sachant que j'étais au Château Windsor pour raconter leur histoire et exprimer notre loyauté ceci m'a donné de la confiance et du courage. Je me sentais très humble de représenter de si vaillants soldats et leurs supporteurs, tous et toutes de superbes Canadiens.



It gave me great pleasure to present Her Majesty with a bronze Gauthier statuette of the Air Defence Gunner. Her Majesty remarked that it would go very well with the kneeling Gunner, presented by the former Colonel Commandant, General John Arch MacInnis. We joked that they'd make nice bookends. But sincerely, the symbolism is important and was not missed on Her Majesty. We talked about how versatile and professional our Gunners are - Canada's Field Gunners, Air Defence Gunners and our great achievements in Surveillance and Target Acquisition, Targeting, Airspace Coordination, Forward Air Control, and Command and Control. *Everywhere, whither right and glory lead!*

À vous les membres de la famille du Régiment Royal de l'artillerie Canadienne – Je l'ai dit auparavant et je le redirai encore et encore – je suis votre humble serviteur et je suis gratifié d'être votre Colonel Commandant. J'ai été votre humble serviteur devant notre Capitaine Général et j'ai été d'autant plus fier de parler de vos accomplissements.

It gives me great pleasure to report to you – each and every Gunner, Bombardier, Sergeant, Warrant Officer, Officer, Honorary, family member, and loved one, that Her Majesty the Queen, our Captain General, wishes you safety, security, happiness, success, good fortune and a wonderful life. She thanks you for your courage, dedication and loyalty. Sa Majesté affectionne particulièrement son Régiment Royal et les familles. Elle m'a aussi demandé de vous faire parts de ses meilleurs vœux et vous salue. Bonne chance à tous et à toutes. Her Royal Highness knows, with certainty that, in Canada, *it's a great time to be a Gunner!*

Good Shooting! Ubique!

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