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The Royal Canadian Horse Artillery Brigade Association

Incorporated 1947

Mission

History, Heritage and Tradition
Lest We Forget

Historical Highlights

This Association, which was closed at the start of WW II, was reborn in January 1947 on the initiative of Barney Haylock, Syd Taylor, Jimmy Burns, Don Harper, Len Tritsch, Allen Risk and Doug Tyrrell. Their aim was to provide a place where ex-members of the RCHA Brigade could get together and enjoy mutual friendship.

By March 1947, they had agreed to rent the top 2 floors of what is our current building, for $50/month. Since it had not been used since WW 1, when it was used as an Army Medical Centre, the area required major renovations. After months of heavy work by volunteers, and donations of furniture etc, they had the official opening of the Club on July 18, 1947, as a Provincial Corporation Without Share Capital.

Their outreach work included a Welfare Committee to address the needs of members in hospital, and a Benevolent Fund to provide Christmas presents to children of members, and give donations to Orphanages & Welfare Homes.

In February 1951, the Club sustained a serious loss by fire caused by an overheated oil stove. Fortunately, the insurance covered the cost of rebuilding and they were back in business by October 1951.

In 1957, the building was purchased for $54,000 from Mrs. Lingham who held a 15-year mortgage. Toye's wholesale business leased the first floor until 1973.

Major renovations, including repair of outside walls took place in 1967.

By May 1968 the original mortgage was paid.

As part of the 1969 Kingston Winter Carnival, the RCHA organized a Historic Hockey series between Queen's and RMC to commemorate the first game in 1886, which continues to the present.

In the late 70's, part of the property that ran from the building to the tracks along the lakeshore was sold to Paron Corporation for $50,000 and the cost of renovations to the clubrooms.

In 1980, the Historical Committee was founded to preserve and maintain the history of the Association and care for the many artifacts. A lounge was built on the second floor, and a small kitchen was installed. The Constitution was changed to allow women in the clubrooms as guests at anytime.

From time to time the Club had a paid manager, but cash flow did not permit this to continue - committed volunteers have since filled the void.

To comply with a new City Bylaw smoking in the club was discontinued in 2003.
Previously membership was open to men only – in 2004 Associate status was made available to women and 7 joined the RCHA in the first year. In 2006, Gayle Caldwell became the first female Active/Voting member; and then Board chair in 2007.

In 2005, an exterior wall required costly repairs, and some electrical updates were made.

Membership fees were $5 in 1947, and increased slightly over the years but had not kept up with the real costs of operating the Association and maintaining the building. In 2006, the Board approved an annual fee of $150. Reduced to $100 in 2011 to encourage renewed and new memberships.

In January 2007, the military artifacts were moved to open view on the second floor, with additional artifacts on the third floor - a wonderful display of Gunner memorabilia.

In 2010, the Club risked being closed but was saved by an outpouring of support, especially from the musician community, new members/associates and people stepping up as volunteers.

The Club is supported by membership fees, space rentals, bar sales and significant hours provided by many volunteers. Additional volunteers are always welcomed.

In 2011 the first floor was leased to a restaurant and as part of the renovations major upgrades were made to the basement and first floor structure.

Over recent years, air conditioning and the roof have been replaced, and major repairs have been made to the elevator. In 2016 initial repairs were made to the masonry around the roof. As well, the second-floor committee fundraiser, and many volunteer hours, enabled upgrades to the second floor.

In 2023, we were finally able to create a second-floor cold room for the storage of our beer kegs with lines up to the third-floor bar, removing the need to physically move the kegs. Thanks to our special project donors, contributors to the Capital Improvement Fund, and the renovation team of Frank Warnica, Jim Davidson, Steve Gillen and Dieter Rohde. Fundraising continues to cover the additional costs associated with this and future projects.

In 2025, we successfully applied for and received a grant of $124,909 from Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund. This amount represented 75% of the KONE contract cost of $166,545 to retrofit the elevator. The additional funds were raised through a successful fundraiser with generous donations from members and others. The modernization of the elevator, which included the replacement of the electronic and electrical components, was completed during January 2026; and is essential to ensure the accessibility of staff and patrons to the RCHA. In October 2026 the deteriorating Clarence Street wall was re-pointed funded by remaining funds, the Capital Improvement fund and re-mortgaging.

Please consider contributing to our Capital Improvement Fund to assist with other necessary upgrades.

Our website has a more detailed history of the Association: www.rchaclub.com

New memberships are warmly welcomed.

In addition to supporting the Association, members receive discounts on services at various businesses and on RCHA entertainment and rentals.

BAR HOURS

Open at 3 pm on Tuesday & Friday, 4 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday
Closed on Sunday (unless a special event)

Entertainment: usually Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday
Check website: https://rchaclub.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/rchakingston

***Cover charge* for Non-members:** Members/Associates are exempt.

Ticket events: Members/Associates receive a 20% discount on most events

Food: Snacks are available in the club and you are welcome to order food in from local restaurants.

Darts: Wednesday (Sept-May) – All skill levels welcome! If you are interested in playing, contact Steve Gillen (steve.gillen@gmail.com).

Special Events include:

New Year's Day Levée, Robbie Burns Celebration, Historic Hockey, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter Ham Shoot, Remembrance Day Service at the RCHA Memorial in City Park, Christmas Turkey Shoot and New Year's Eve Party.

Golf Tournament: Annual golf tournament with dinner.

The 2nd & 3rd floors are available to rent. Please refer to: rchaclub.com/event-space-rental.php

Come out to enjoy great hospitality and stories, quality entertainment and fellowship.

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