

rough, tough fighting men. The brass days are gone and I think it's ridiculous to put outfits like that on reserve men .....[and] strutting around like a bunch of leftovers from the War of 1812.<sup>5</sup>

The Royals ignored such whining – almost certainly caused by plain old-fashioned jealousy – and used their ceremonial dress as a draw in their recruiting activities and literature. There seems to be no doubt that in the 1950s the scarlet-clad Royals were a popular and attractive sight in Toronto. When construction of the Yonge Street subway was finally completed in March 1954, it was the Royals' band in scarlet and bearskins which lent a touch of class to the official ceremonies. Sheila Billing, Miss Toronto of 1955, was named the Sweetheart of the Regiment the following year and duly appeared in her bare-shouldered gown cuddled up to a Royals sergeant in full dress. Royal Regiment of Canada Guards of Honour in scarlet and bearskins were on hand to greet the Queen when she visited Canada in 1957 and 1959, and were often part of the official greeting ceremony for lesser royalty and other notables.\*



**Wintertime and the living isn't so easy.** In the 1950s the Royals made a determined effort to return the regiment to scarlet and bearskin. It took more than a decade to do so but by the time of the regiment's centenary in 1962, the Royal Regiment of Canada was back in their traditional uniform. This picture, obviously meant to illustrate a regimental Christmas card, shows the rigours of guard duty in winter time. Thankfully, the snow was not real. (Photograph by Ken Bell, LAC e011157179)

#### Boomtown Toronto, 1945–1961

If the Royals can be said to have done well throughout most of the 1950s, the city of Toronto went from strength to strength in the same period. The population doubled from just under one million souls in 1951 to just under two million in 1961. This increase led to the creation of a belt of suburbs in the first postwar decade and eventually the 1953 amalgamation of 12 separate municipalities into Metropolitan Toronto. The flight from the city centre led to an emphasis on transportation and Toronto in the 1950s came to resemble one massive and unending construction site. Much of downtown Yonge Street was dug up between 1949 and 1954 to complete the first subway, which ran from Union Station to Eglinton Avenue and was later extended along Bloor Street and up University Avenue. Expressway construction in and around the city blossomed: the four-lane Highway 400 was constructed north to Barrie while Highway 401 formed a multi-lane bypass north of the city and was connected to the downtown area by the Don Valley Parkway. Finally, the Gardiner Expressway, although built against much

opposition, connected the Queen Elizabeth Way to the Don Valley. Both harbour and air traffic facilities were expanded – the first to handle the large ocean-going vessels that could reach the interior by means of the new St. Lawrence Seaway and the latter to handle the boom in air traffic, which saw humble Malton become the enlarged Toronto International Airport to handle the jet aircraft now coming into civilian service.

The face of the city also began to change. The prewar Anglo-bastion “Toronto the Good” was affected by a wave of postwar immigration from Europe. One of the largest of the new ethnic communities was formed by 300,000 Italians who provided much of the labour for the construction boom that overtook the city as new office and residential buildings seemingly sprang up overnight. The coming of the Europeans with their more sophisticated cultures brought a new liveliness to the city and eroded the rather stiff image that it had projected up to this time. Thanks to the efforts of councillor Allan Lamport, a former member of the Toronto Regiment and the Royals and an ardent opponent of the “Blue Laws,” which saw even the swings in playgrounds padlocked on Sundays, the city came alive. In short order, cocktail bars were introduced and in 1950 permission was granted to hold sports events on Sundays. The city's two major league teams, the Maple Leafs of the National Hockey League and the Argonauts of the Canadian Football League, did well in the postwar era: the Leafs captured the Stanley Cup five times (1945, 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1951) while the Argonauts took the Grey Cup in 1945-1947 and 1951 and 1952. At the end of the decade, films, plays and concerts were permitted on the Sabbath. The Royal Ontario Museum underwent a major expansion and a major modern theatre, the O'Keefe Centre, opened in 1960.

Toronto, of course, had always been a business city and as the 1950s wore on it overtook Montreal as the economic centre of Canada, buoyed by its excellent geographical location, educated population and sophisticated transportation network. The city was also the centre of English-language publishing in Canada and it quickly assumed the same role in the television, radio broadcasting and advertising industries.

In the 15 years that followed the Second World War, Toronto prospered. The city's pride was reflected by Mayor Nathan Philips, elected in 1955. A *bon vivant*, Philips was an established guest at the Royals' dinners, where he became a fixture at the head table and was guaranteed to provide a speech boosting

the city and its regiment. His affection for the unit led to him being called the “Mayor of all the Royals,” past and present. In 1958, when the City Hall became overcrowded, Philips organized an international competition for a new building that drew 500 different designs from 42 countries. The winner was a futuristic design by Finnish architect Viljo Revell that featured twin curved towers surrounding a disk-like council chamber. Although many considered it too extreme a building for a city that had always been somewhat conservative in attitude, construction commenced in 1961 and was completed some four years later.

**Right The subway is opened, 1954.** It took five years but the subway was finally completed in March 1954. At this time no major civic event was complete without the presence of the Royals' regimental band, and they were present when the subway was officially opened. (City of Toronto Archives, Series 381, File 298, Item 11847-4)



**Sounding their own horns.** In the late 1950s the Royals formed a drum and trumpet band as an adjunct to the regimental band. Both organizations proved popular in the city and were extremely busy during the lead-up to the regiment's centennial year in 1962. (Photograph by Ken Bell, LAC, e011157181)



**Left Opening of the new City Hall, 1965.** When the old city hall on Queen Street – where the Royals had been present when it opened in 1899 – became overcrowded, Mayor Philips held a design competition for a new building. The winning design was the work of Finnish architect Viljo Revell. (Toronto Reference Library)

\* Today, this duty is shared with other units of the Toronto Garrison.