

## **THE ROYAL CANADIAN DENTAL CORPS ASSOCIATION**

*Brigadier E.M. Wansbrough, OBE, MM, ED, CD, FICO, FACD , 1963*

When officers of the RCDC are requested to support the above organization they may very well ask "What is this Association?" "What does it do?" and "What is its purpose?"

In order to answer these questions a brief history is in order, which it is hoped will help to explain the objectives as stated in the Association constitution, i.e "To promote the efficiency and esprit-de-corps of the Royal Canadian Dental Corps and to co-operate with fellow members of the Conference of Defence Associations in the promotion of general efficiency of Canada's Defence Forces."

Prior to and during the Second World War, dental officers were eligible for membership in the Defence Medical Association, However dental officers who attended the annual meetings found that the agendas were filled with specific medical problems which did not apply to the Dental Corps since it had, long since, been a separate Corps, The suggestion was made that a dental division be constituted but this idea did not find favour with the Medicals and it was decided to establish a separate organization to be known as the Defence Dental Association, Ex-militia officers of the Arms and Services of the Canadian Army who served in the CDC during the Second World War knew full well how much these associations had contributed in the lean days of the Non-Permanent Active Militia and were keen to have such an Association.

During the summer of 1947 an organizing committee composed of Col DS Coons, Col LV Janes and Major HC Thompson, all of Hamilton, Ontario, was given the responsibility to submit an application for membership in the Conference of Defence Associations. This membership was granted and a letter was dispatched to all ex-CDC officers in Canada which set forth the aims and objects of the Association, A channel of communication with the Minister of National Defence and the Chief of the General Staff was established to permit direct replies from these officials on matters dealing with the resolutions endorsed at the annual meetings.

Initially, the Association's membership was composed solely of ex-officers of the wartime Canadian Dental Corps and branches were formed in several cities across Canada, However, with the authorization and formation of the RCDC(M) the emphasis shifted to these units and their problems, It was thought that the facilities of these units would serve as rallying points where all officers of the RCDC, CADC, RCDC(R) and RCDC(M) could meet from time to time to consider matters of general interest.

The first meeting of the Defence Dental Association was held in the Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal on Oct 29-30, 1948. The Executive consisted of:

Honorary President Brig FM Lott  
President Col LV Janes  
1st Vice President Col DS Coons  
2nd Vice President Lt Col CL Strachan  
3rd Vice President Lt Col LA Stirling  
Secretary-Treasurer - Major HC Thompson  
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer - Lt Col WH Smith

Since that time, meetings have been held annually, with Ottawa being chosen as the primary site, This arrangement permits many senior officers of the three Armed Services to attend the meetings with some regularity, Perusal of the minutes of these meetings indicates the variety and complexity of the subjects discussed, Many resolutions have been framed and forwarded to the Conference of Defence Associations, In 1952 one of these called for the change in the name of the organization to the Royal Canadian Dental Corps Association, One of the most worthwhile results of the meetings has been to provide an opportunity for the Commanding Officers of militia units to get together to discuss their common problems and to review their progress during the current year.

In common with so many other organizations there are ever present financial problems. Dependent to a great extent on the vagaries of an annual government grant and the energy and vigour of the Commanding Officers of units in collecting and forwarding the annual dues, the treasurer has often been in a precarious state. However, due to the skilful manipulation and management of the treasurer, the late Colonel McLaren, the accounts were always paid.

Although the dispersal of the RCDC units from the Atlantic to the Pacific provides wide distribution and representation of the Corps in the Armed Services of Canada, this dispersal also produces many problems of a challenging nature, These problems can only be discussed and resolved through a face-to-face meeting and the annual meeting of the Association provides such a medium. Administration, training, recruitment, accommodation, standards and regulations for awards are subjects which appear regularly in the minutes and are the subject of careful thought and discussion.

It is, therefore, with the hope of welding together all these elements and diverse interests that the RCDC Association exists, The working executive this year, Lt Col WG Campbell - President, Col CB Climo - Secretary, and Col CE Woods - Treasurer, can only accomplish so much, They depend on the active interest and support of all officers (past and present) of the Royal Canadian Dental Corps for the continuing success of this most worthwhile organization.