

## **C: MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COLOURS OF THE KING'S ROYAL YORKERS**

*Master researcher, Todd Braisted of New Jersey, has provided three critical letters concerning the question of whether the Royal Yorkers at any time received an official Stand of Colours from the Crown. Judging from Todd's findings, the prospect seems very bleak.*

*If Ed Anderson's recollection (see History of the Colours article) that Governor Guy Carleton criticized Sir John (sometime before he left Canada in June 1778) for purchasing Colours before his 1<sup>st</sup> battalion was complete, then one could suppose that Sir John made this purchase on his own accord. If so, they would hardly have had the same cachet as an officially provided Stand.*

*Adding to this supposition of a personal purchase of Colours is the recognition that the regiment's drummers had instruments prior to 1779, whether supplied by the Crown or not.*

*The three letters were written in 1779, the same year as the regiment's coat colour changed from green to red. The first letter indicates that Sir John's novice agent, John Blackburn, was moved to apply for Colours and drums as part of the Crown's first supply of red clothing. As you will see, his application was denied and the reason given was that the KRR NY was not established.*

*Sir John had pursued an establishment for his regiment almost from the moment he received his first beating order in 1776. He was spurred into increased activity when Allan Maclean's Royal Highland Emigrants was raised to the British Establishment in 1778 as the 84<sup>th</sup> Foot. Sir John believed that his beating order and the verbal understandings he had been given by Governor Carleton put his regiment on the same footing as the Emigrants. As we shall see in a later article, this was not the case, much to the baronet's disappointment.*

*It appears from my research that Sir John never achieved an establishment for the KRR – not to the British Establishment, nor to the American Establishment. He was particularly aggravated that three of the Central Department's loyalist regiments had been elevated to the latter in 1779 and two others in 1781.*

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### **07Jul79** John Blackburn to [Lord George Germain?], [London?]<sup>i</sup>

My application to You this day was for an order on Mr. Boddington to deliver to me the Drums, Colours &c for the Kings Royal Regiment of New York Commanded by Sir John Johnson. The Regt. Consists of one Coll. One Major, 8 Captains, one Captain Lieutt. 11 Lieutenants, 8 Ensigns, one Adjutant, one Quarter Master, one Surgeon one Surgeons Mate 30 Serjeants, 30 Corporals, 20 Drums or Fifers & 530 private.

The Cloathing are Shipped & Shipping & as a Coll. of a Regt. Told me that Sir John Johnson's Regt. Was to be provided with Drums Colours &c. & Sir John desires me to apply for those things I took the liberty to make the application. I am very much the Friend of Sir John Johnson, & on that account am willing to do Him any good office in my power – but I am a Stranger to the Business of agency & therefore must referr you to the usual order for other Regts. in such Cases.

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### **08Jul79** Thos de Gray to Mr. Blackburn, Whitehall<sup>ii</sup>

Lord George Germain directs me to acquaint you that He believes the Drums and Colours were not given to the Royal Highland [Emigrants] Regiment 'till they were established, and that He cannot at present give any Directions for their being furnished to the King's Royal Regt. of N. York – at the same time he desires is to be understood that no one wishes more sincerely than he does to shew every mark of personal respect and attention to Sir John Johnson for his Character and meritorious Services.

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### **06Sep79** Extract of a Letter from Coll. Sir John Johnson, Montreal<sup>iii</sup>

I hope the Colours Drums &ca have been obtain'd as it would hurt me much to be refus'd so small a favour, when I have made so great a sacrifice. I even flatter'd myself from the assurances of General Haldimand, that both he & Sir Guy Carleton would make use of all their Interest to get my Regiment establish'd, that I should have heard of that also; I think it is poor encouragement for those who have given up their all in support of Government, & have rais'd Corps on the same Terms with those lately rais'd & establish'd at home, not to be put at least upon the same footing. They cannot mean to consider my Corps on the same footing with those rais'd to the Southward by the Kings bounty, all of

which have only provincial Commissions, where as my Regiment was rais'd entirely at my own expence, & my Commission by the Articles of War, gives me the same rank as the Kings would. [N]othing but the situation of Affairs in this Country has hitherto prevented me crossing the Atlantic once more, to endeavour to do my Friends, family & self that Justice, I think them & myself entitl'd to, but I am almost determin'd never to leave the Country, 'till affairs take a favourable turn, or we are drove to the unhappy alternative of giving up, & quitting our native Land, or submitting to the Damnable Government that now but too generally prevails, which God of his infinite goodness avert. A very bad conduct on the part of some of our Commanders, has hitherto prevented the unhappy dispute from being settled in the manner all good Subjects would wish, which must have been the Case long since, had not jealousies in some, & a predetermination in others to persue the plans of self Interested Men, frustrated the well concerted plans of Government.

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<sup>i</sup> Jno Blackburn to [Lord George Germain?], [London?] 07Jul79. PRO, CO5/156, f.136.

<sup>ii</sup> Thos de Gray to Jno Blackburn, Whitehall 08Jul79. ibid, f.140.

<sup>iii</sup> Sir Jno Johnson to ?, Montreal 06Sep79. ibid, f.203.