



Information Sheet

Infantry Organization and Ranks

This information sheet will help the non-military reader understand the historic organization and rank structure of the Canadian army with a focus on the infantry. This explanation uses First World War information as the structure and ranks during the Second World War were effectively the same.

First World War

The 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish) was part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) – the overseas force created by the Canadian government in 1914 as Canada's contribution to what became known as the First World War. The First Contingent of just over 30,000 eventually came to number over 600,000 with 260 separate numbered infantry battalions. 13 regiments of mounted rifles, support units included 13 railway troop battalions, 5 pioneer battalions, field and heavy artillery, field ambulance, medical, dental, forestry, labour, tunnelling, cyclist, and service units. Many soldiers had joined the British Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service before they were combined as the Royal Air Force.

Organization

| Unit Name | No. of Men | Consists of | Commanded by a ... |
|---|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Army (e.g., 5 th British Army) | 200,000+ | Two or more Corps | General |
| Corps (1 st Canadian Corps) | 60,000–100,000+ special purpose troops | Two or more Divisions | Lieutenant-General |
| Division | 12,000 men + 6,000 artillerymen | Three Brigades | Major-General |
| Brigade | 4,000 men | Four Battalions | Brigadier-General |
| Battalion | 1,000 men + Btn. HQ and specialist units | Four Companies | Lieutenant-Colonel |
| Company | 200 men + Company HQ | Four Platoons | Major or Captain |
| Platoon | 48 men | Four Sections | Lieutenant |
| Section | 12 men + company specialists (signals, machine-guns, bombers) | | Corporal |

Ranks

