

History of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps

The corps was formed on 13 August 1940 as the Canadian Armoured Corps with Major-General (then Colonel) F. F. Worthington as its first colonel-commandant, but claimed lineage from the Canadian Tank Corps of the First World War.

Initially its equipment was 219 US M1917 tanks – a First World War design – obtained at scrap prices. They were sufficient for some training and familiarization but otherwise museum pieces of no combat use. To form the 1st Army Tank Brigade, Valentine tanks were ordered. This British design was to be built in Canada. Aside from the necessary adjustments to the design to incorporate local engineering standards and available components, the Canadian Valentines used a GMC engine, which being an improvement over the original engine was applied to British production. In practice Canada never used most of the 1,400 Valentines they built: they were supplied under lend-lease to the Soviet Union.

In early 1941 the 1st Tank Brigade was sent to Britain and equipped with the Matilda tank. For the formation of two armoured divisions it was expected that 1,200 cruiser tanks were needed. The United Kingdom was not in a position to supply them, as it had shortfalls in supply for its own needs, and orders placed in the United States to fill these meant that Canada had to develop its own production. To this end a tank arsenal was set up under the management of a subsidiary of a US firm engaged in tank production.

The *royal* designation was added on 2 August 1945, after the European war ended. Canadian armoured regiments split their heritage between the cavalry, from which many armoured regiments were created, and the infantry beginning in 1936 with the creation of "infantry (tank)" regiments and continuing from 1940 when many infantry regiments mobilized armoured units for the Second World War and eventually transferred from the (Royal) Canadian Infantry Corps into the RCAC.

In Canada, with the integration of the Canadian army into the Canadian Forces, the Armour Branch has continued to use the title

Royal Canadian Armoured Corps.

