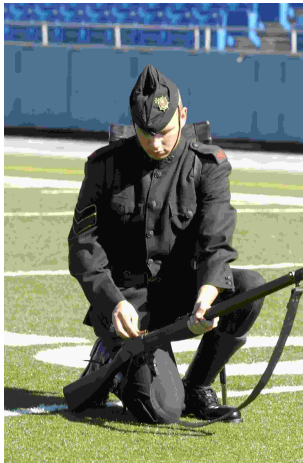


# Regimental Skirmishers

During the Napoleonic Wars and into the first decades of the 20th Century Skirmishers played a key role in battles by attempting to disrupt the main enemy force by firing into their close-packed ranks and by preventing enemy Skirmishers

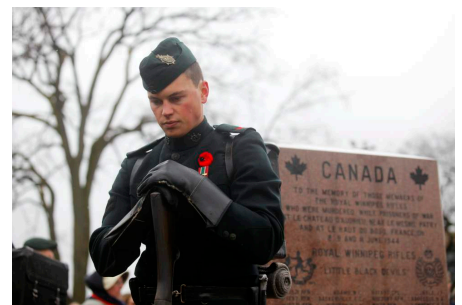


from doing the same to friendly troops. Due to their mobility, Skirmishers were also valuable for reconnaissance, especially in wooded or urban areas. As the Skirmishers generally fought in open order, they could take cover behind trees, houses, towers and other obstacles, and as such were harder targets to hit with small arms and artillery fire, though this made them very vulnerable to cavalry.

Once preliminary skirmishing was over, Skirmishers participated in the main battle by shooting into the enemy formation, or joined in melee combat with sword bayonets.

The aims of skirmishing were to disrupt enemy formations by causing casualties before the main battle, neutralizing key leaders, and tempting the opposing infantry into attacking prematurely, throwing their organization into disarray. Skirmishers could also be effectively used to surround opposing soldiers in the absence of friendly cavalry.

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles still parade a ceremonial detachment of Skirmishers wearing ceremonial uniforms with appropriate accoutrements, and carrying the Martini-Henry rifles. On a Regimental ceremonial parade, their duties consist of securing the ground (parade ground) at the start of the parade, as well as enacting an advance on an enemy trench. Once reporting to the RSM that the ground is secure, the Skirmishers are ordered to “Take Post”, and for



the remainder of the parade, patrol the perimeter of the parade ground, protecting the Regiment from threats; when the Regiment steps off for the March Past, Double Past and Dismissal, the Skirmishers lead the parade.

The Regimental Skirmishers also perform sentry duty at memorials and cenotaphs on Remembrance Day and other similar occasions.