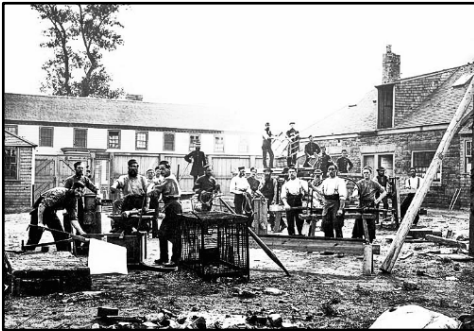


# Halifax, the First Home of the Engineers

In 1749, Edward Cornwallis founded Halifax, establishing a strategic British outpost that became a cornerstone of Canadian military engineering. The city's natural harbour facilitated settlement and defence, prompting Royal Engineers to lay out the town and its fortifications, including installations on Citadel Hill, Chebucto Head, and McNab's Island. The Naval Dockyard, initially modest, expanded significantly between 1800 and 1814.



A pivotal shift occurred in Halifax in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Britain transferred naval facilities in Halifax and Esquimalt, British Columbia to Canada. By 1907, Canada controlled 24 acres of shore facilities in Halifax, including a naval hospital, workshops, and residences. As British forces departed from Canadian garrisons, the demand for formal military engineer training increased. The Halifax



Dockyard's Kings Lumber Yard, previously used for Royal Engineer training, became the site for Canada's first permanent School of Military Engineering, authorized on 11 July 1907. This school included five sections: Construction, Electrical, Mechanical, Telegraphy, and Field Works.

During the First World War, the school temporarily closed from 1914 to 1919 when training was conducted by provisional schools and at Canadian Expeditionary Force establishments. After the war, it reopened at Wellington

Barracks in Halifax. The school continued to play a significant role during the Second World War, when it was redesignated as "The Royal Canadian Engineer Training Centre" on 1 December 1940, and transferred to the Canadian Army Active Service Force. In the Spring of 1940, the center relocated to Petawawa, Ontario.

To commemorate the connection between Canadian Military Engineers and Halifax, a monument featuring two Bailey Bridge panels was unveiled in Royal Artillery Park on 24 September 1995. This tribute stands at the site of the Royal Artillery/Royal Engineers Officers' Mess and honours the engineers' vital contributions during the Second World War.

Halifax's legacy as the birthplace of Canadian military engineering reflects its strategic importance and the foresight of early military planners. From its origins as a frontier outpost to its role in shaping Canada's military capabilities, Halifax has been integral to national defence history.

Establishing the School of Military Engineering laid the groundwork for Canadian Military Engineers. It prepared our soldiers for the challenges of war. Today, the Bailey Bridge monument serves as a reminder of Halifax's enduring contributions to military engineering and symbolizes the ingenuity of Canadian engineers involved in conflicts and peacekeeping missions worldwide.