

# RECOGNIZING THE FIRST COMMANDING OFFICER

## GLENS WAR OF 1812 COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 2013

23 February	Battle of Ogdensburg Bicentennial	Prescott & Ogdensburg, NY
6 - 12 April	March of the 104 <sup>th</sup> Regt Relay March from Fredericton to Kingston	SD&G and Kingston
13 April	1812 Banner Presentation at the Army Ball	Gatineau
27 April	Battle of York Bicentennial Parade	Toronto
30 June	SD&G 1812 Tattoo	
13 - 14 July	Crysler's Farm Re-enactment Weekend	Morrisburg
20 July	Dedication of John Crysler Memorial Park	Crysler
3 - 4 August	Dedication of Monument to Crown Forces Fallen (including Glens) at the Battle of Sackets	Sackets Harbor, NY
9 November	Dedication of Iroquois Point Lading Cairn	Iroquois
9 November	Crysler's Farm Regimental Dinner	Cornwall Armoury
10 November	Battle of Hoople Creek Bicentennial	Long Sault
10 November	Saving our Stores – Occupation of Cornwall Commemoration	Cornwall
11 November	Battle of Crysler's Farm Bicentennial Parade	Morrisburg

### AIM

To recommend the installation of a Glens initiated memorial at the location of Colonel Darby Bergin's grave.

### BACKGROUND

Darby Bergin was born in York, Upper Canada in 1826 and died in Cornwall in 1896. During his lifetime, he was a physician, politician, entrepreneur, and soldier. In the Harkness History of the United Counties, it is noted: "As indication of the esteem in which he was held, his funeral

was one of the largest ever seen in Cornwall". It was estimated that between 7000 and 8000 people attended the funeral, and the procession to the cemetery at Flanagan's Point was over two miles long.

**Physician.** Darby Bergin was a graduate of medicine from McGill. He practiced in Cornwall. He was a founder of the local medical associations and served as President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. He played a humanitarian role in support of Irish immigrants (typhus) and First Nations in Akwesasne (smallpox).





**Politician.** He first served as a Federal Liberal member. With some conflict in the riding, he switched sides and on his death was the Conservative Member of Parliament for Stormont. He opposed the Canada Temperance Act. He promoted legislation for improved safety in the workplace, perhaps motivated by Cornwall's textile industry.

**Entrepreneur.** Along with his brother, he operated the Stormont Stock Farm, raising trotting horses and short-horn cattle. He promoted the Ontario Pacific Railway, serving as president from 1886 until his death. This venture later became the New York Central line from Cornwall to Ottawa. He promoted improvements to the Cornwall Canal.

**Soldier.** Colonel Bergin's military career involved the Trent Affair (1862) and the Fenian Raids (1866). He raised the 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Militia Rifle Company of Cornwall. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1868, he became the first commanding officer of the 59<sup>th</sup> Stormont and Glengarry Battalion of Infantry and held this appointment until 1885.

Some feel that his most important military appointment was as Surgeon General for the Riel Rebellion expedition. He took over the task from another doctor who felt the task of providing medical services to General Middleton's Expedition was impossible without help from Americans. Bergin was still an MP at the time when serving as Surgeon General. Bergin created a medical service out

of chaos. The problems he faced were substantial. The service was dismantled after the expedition, but Bergin advocated the creation of a permanent medical corps to help prevent the situation of 1885. The Canadian Army Medical Corps came into being in 1904.

In 1886, Bergin was promoted to colonel. Ten years later, he succumbed to an unidentified illness.

## RECOMMENDATION

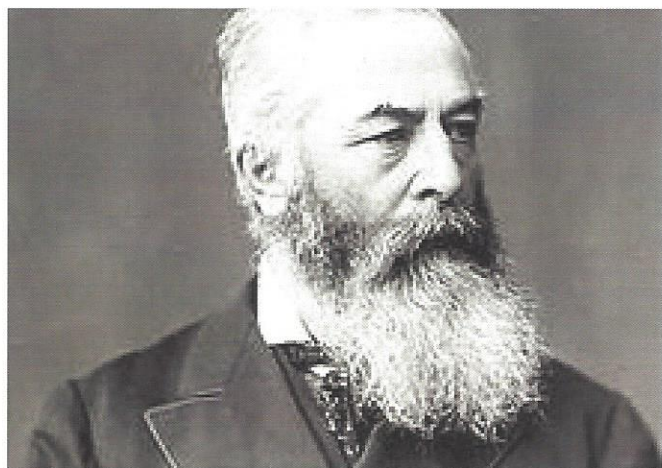
It is recommended that the SD&G Highlanders' Regimental Foundation initiate a project to place a memorial in the Precious Blood Cemetery, Glen Walter, linking Colonel Bergin with the Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders.

## CONCLUSION

Colonel Darby Bergin's burial place should have a memorial, recognizing his service to Canada and his connection with the military heritage of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry.

(Based on agreement within the SD&G Highlanders' Regimental Foundation, a proposal will be developed for submission to the Ontario Heritage Trust.)

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Colonel Darby Bergin (Library & Archives Canada)



The Bergin Monument – Precious Blood Cemetery