

Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Hatfield, BA (Hons), LL.B., CD

Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence Hatfield, the Commanding Officer of 56 Field Artillery Regiment, belongs to two professions and his second profession, the profession of arms, has engaged him passionately for over 31 years. Dedication to military service, no matter where his life has taken him, has marked his life since 1989 when he joined 56 Field Engineer Squadron in his home town of St John's, Newfoundland.

After graduating from Memorial University in 1995, he obtained his law degree from the University of Windsor and moved to Hamilton in 1998 to begin his legal career. For 20 years he practiced civil litigation at all levels of court in Ontario as was a partner with the firm of Flaherty Sloan Hatfield. In 2020 he joined the panel of mediators with the firm Global Resolutions.



While with the Engineers he qualified as a heavy equipment operator, demolitions instructor, was the top student on his combat leader's course, was awarded Top NCO in his unit, and promoted to sergeant. In 1995, on his move to Law School in Windsor, he commissioned into 23 Military Police Platoon and, less than two years later, transferred to The Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment as a platoon commander where he deployed for the Eastern Ontario Ice Storm. In 1998 the move to Hamilton brought him to the Argylls, where he has held various positions, most notably as Officer Commanding B Company the unit's Rifle Company for over 6 years.

In 2002 he commanded the unit's first Cambrian Patrol team which won a Bronze medal at the British Army's highly demanding annual competition in Wales. It was one of the first medals ever awarded to a Canadian reserve team and he subsequently received the Land Force Special Achievement Award. In 2003, he earned his parachute wings. In 2005 he was recognized as an innovator in Army training when he received the Canadian Army Commander's Commendation for the development of an urban warfare training system specifically designed for local armouries. The following year, he attended the NATO urban operations instructor course at the British Army Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, UK. With the Argylls he also qualified as NBCD officer and military parachutist.

He was on active service in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2007, deploying as a mentor for the Afghan National Army. For his efforts in mentoring the ANA and developing a specific ANA training program he was awarded the Task Force Afghanistan Commander's Commendation and the US Army Achievement Medal. In 2011, he returned to Afghanistan on a technical assistance tour to mentor at the Afghan National Army Command School.

LCol Hatfield has repeatedly represented his unit and 31 Brigade. He started as the commander for Brigade combined unit companies on both national and international exercises. In 2010 he was selected as a rifle company commander attached to Third Battalion the Royal Canadian Regiment for Operation Cadence (G8 security). That year, he also completed the year-long Army Operations Course, passing out first with the top student's sword. From 2010 to 2012, in addition to his regimental duties, he was the deputy commanding officer of the Territorial Battle Group where he was the chief planner for the Brigade's summer concentration and was awarded a brigade commander's commendation.

In 2012 he took command of the Argylls and in 2013 he was given command of the 650 soldiers of the 31 Brigade Territorial Battle Group (TBG). He led the all arms battle group throughout the year, including a demanding February deployment to Rankin Inlet, Nunavut for Ex Trillium Response and for the 4 Division summer concentration in Welland. After command of the Argylls in 2015 he has served as reserve advisor in the 4th Division Headquarters focusing on Army reserve projects of high school coop and the Canadian Military Leadership Pilot Initiative. In 2018 he took command of 56 Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery with in Brantford, Simcoe and St Catharines. In 2020 he volunteered for full time service for Operation Laser, the Canadian Forces response to the COVID 19 pandemic and commanded over 1000 soldiers with the 32 Brigade Summer Training Battalion.

In addition to his two professions, LCol Hatfield has been active in his community. He takes seriously the idea of the Army's footprint in the community and to that end he fulfils many engagements as a public speaker. He has been a Big Brother for many years ended his term as the char of the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters. He is a former member of the OPP Auxiliary, the Ontario Legal Aid Appeals Board and the Boy Scouts. He coached rep hockey with the Ancaster Minor Hockey League for 4 years and in 2019 joined the Board of Governors for Robert Land Academy.

LCol Hatfield lives in Ancaster where he enjoys the inestimable support of his family. His wife Shari, who shares his belief in the importance of service, left her own law practice in 2006 so that he could deploy to Afghanistan. Lawrence shares a passion for English riding with his daughter Lawren (17) and hockey and paintball with his son Lawson (15).