Halifax Citadel

National Historic Site

Parks Canada/C. Reardon

Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada

Welcome to the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site

Experience two hundred years of history at one of Canada's premier centres of military heritage, from the conflicts of the eighteenth century to the War of 1812, through the age of Queen Victoria and to the First and Second World Wars.

Our Heritage to Share The Halifax Citadel endures as a gateway to Canada's military heritage and passage to nationhood. With the founding of Halifax in 1749, the first of four forts was constructed on the strategic high ground behind the original town site. A second fort was completed during the American Revolution, though this was replaced in the 1790s with the onset of the wars of the French Revolution. Throughout the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, Halifax served as the headquarters for the North American Station of the Royal Navy, with the Citadel as the port's principal landward defence.

With the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, British authorities decided that the old wooden forts defending Canada's strategic strong points, including the Citadel, should be replaced by more powerful and permanent works of stone. The present Citadel thus became one legacy of the War of 1812. Construction began in 1828 and continued until 1856, a period of 28 years. The new fort's purpose was to deter an overland assault on the city and dockyard, and such was its strength and that of the other harbour defences that no enemy ever dared attack.

A portrayal of the Citadel's garrison during the War of 1812 is part of the 200th Anniversary commemoration.
Parks Canada/H. Thompson

The British garrison of Halifax changed frequently, with regiments staying from between two to four years at a time. Thousands of soldiers and their families called the Citadel home. Though British North America became the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the continuing importance of Halifax as a port for the Royal Navy saw British troops remain here until 1906. From that time onward the Citadel was occupied by the Canadian military, with the old fort serving through two World Wars as a transit barracks, an anti aircraft command centre, and a parting symbol for the thousands of troops who took ship overseas for the battlefields of Europe.

Though the Citadel had been designated a national historic site in 1935, in 1951 it was finally transferred from the Department of National Defence to Parks Canada, concluding its proud active military career.

Parks Canada manages one of the largest national park systems in the world. This system includes national parks, historic sites, heritage canals and marine conservation areas. Parks Canada strives to present these resources in a manner that fosters understanding of their value to all Canadians while protecting them for future generations.

Our Partners

The Halifax Citadel Regimental Association is a charitable non-profit organization created in 1993. Formed initially to administer the site historical re-enactment program, the Association now also oversees the Regimental Shop, Coffee Shop and on-site catering, a meeting and events facility, site fee collection and visitor orientation, and the School of Piping and Drumming.

Tel. (902) 426-1990 Fax. (902) 426-7806
Email: info@regimental.com
www.regimental.ca

The Army Museum is a non-profit institution created in 1953 to preserve the memory of Atlantic Canada's soldiers.
Tel. (902) 422-5979 Fax. (902) 426-4228

Thanks for Your Help!
Proceeds from admission and retail operations are reinvested in the site and its operation. Thank you for helping us preserve an important piece of our country's heritage, for by ensuring the Citadel's legacy we aren't just preserving our past, we're enriching our future.

We Need You!
The presentation of Canadian heritage is enriched by volunteers, who currently participate in many aspects of our presentation and support operations. Want to get involved? See below for contact information.

Hours of Operation

May 7 to June 30	9:00 am to 5:00 pm
July 1 to August 31	9:00 am to 6:00 pm
September 1 to October 31	9:00 am to 5:00 pm

From November 1 to May 6, the grounds are open 9:00 to 5:00; other services are available by appointment.

Contact Us
Halifax Defence Complex, PO Box 9080, Station A,
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M7
Tel. (902) 426-5080 Fax. (902) 426-4228
Email: halifax.citadel@pc.gc.ca
www.parkscanada.gc.ca/halifaxcitadel

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

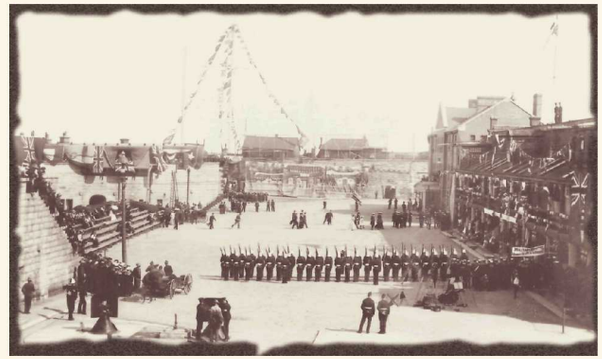
Special Programming and Services

The War of 1812 to Confederation

This year the Halifax Citadel offers historic programming representing two key periods in the military history of Canada. Special programming commemorating the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, including ceremonies and re-enactments, will continue into early 2015. At the same time, the 78th Highlanders and 3rd Brigade of the Royal Artillery will continue to bring the Citadel to life as it was from 1869-71, a few years after the Confederation of the Canadian provinces in 1867 and the height of the Victorian era.

Please inquire at the Information Centre for more details about scheduled events.

Colour-Sergeant and Mrs. Patrick of the 78th Highlanders
Nova Scotia Archives



Military Tournament at the Citadel, circa 1903
Library and Archives Canada

The 78th Highlanders perform period demonstrations daily.
Parks Canada/H. Thompson

Other Special Programs

Ghost Walks – an evening tour featuring ghost stories and folklore of the Citadel. Offered by appointment from April 1 to December 1, and to the general public as advertised.

Soldier for a Day – enlist as a soldier in Queen Victoria's army for a day. Learn about the customs and traditions of soldiering in a bygone era. This is a three hour immersion program available by appointment from June until October.

Birthday Parties – Let the 78th Highlanders host your child's next birthday party! This program includes a short tour, interactive activities and the use of an historic tent or barracks for cake and presents. Recommended for ages 6 to 12.

For more information or to book, call (902) 426-1990 or email info@regimental.com

Youth Education Programs

Youth programs are available for group bookings.

Education Programming – interactive school programming is now available for grade levels Primary to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 9, and grades 11 and 12. These fun and engaging sessions explore life in a 19th century garrison and also examine the role of Halifax and the Citadel in world affairs.

Music School – offering lessons year round on the great highland bagpipe. Individual or group instruction. Online lessons and summer music camps are available. Recommended for all ages.

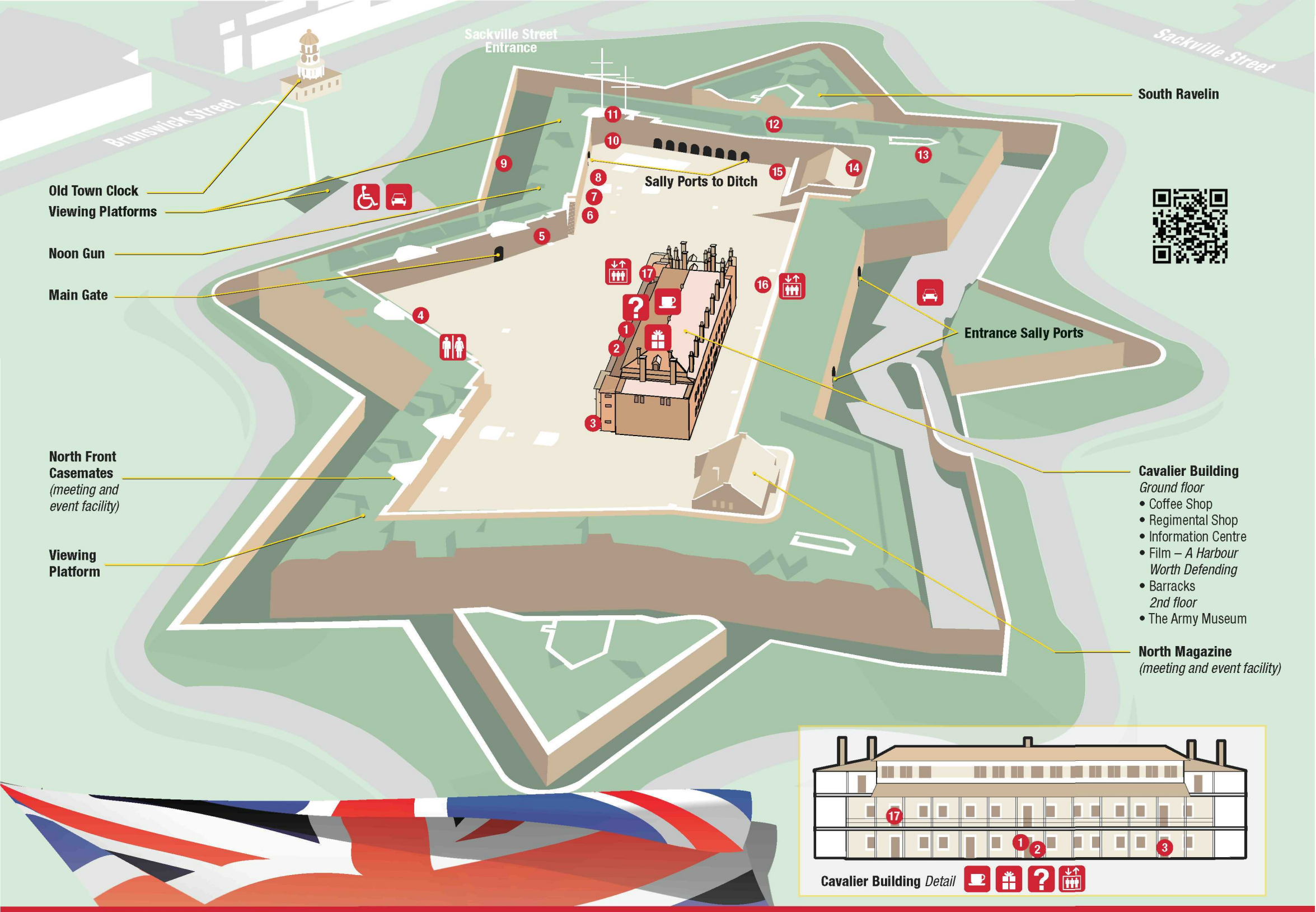
Parks Canada "Xplorers"

This free children's activity booklet is available at the Information Centre and at other locations on site. Complete at least five of the fun and exciting activities in the booklet to receive a special souvenir! Recommended for ages 6-11.

Group Services

Steeped in history and offering one of the best views of the city, the Halifax Citadel is the perfect setting for unique events such as meetings, weddings, dinners and receptions. Make the event even more special by having members of our living history program provide guided tours, perform military drills, rifle or artillery firings, or performances of period music. Call us today to help create your one-of-a-kind event.

Indoor events:	(902) 426-7665
Outdoor events:	(902) 426-1995
Re-enactment services and special tours:	(902) 426-1990



For Your Safety: The Halifax Citadel is a 19th-century fortification with steep masonry walls surrounded by a ditch up to 9 metres deep. To have a safe visit, please observe the following:

Do not climb onto the earthen walls or out into the gun openings, which slope directly into the ditch and are especially slippery and dangerous when wet. Young children should be under close supervision at all times.

Watch out for low doorways and uneven steps and floors.

Exhibits

1. **Information Centre** Begin your visit here for a general overview of the site. Hosted walking tours also depart from this location.
2. **A Harbour Worth Defending** Learn about the Citadel's rich history as a key British and Canadian naval base in this 15 minute film.
3. **Barracks** Visit the home of the Citadel's soldiers, see where they ate and slept, discover what every soldier owned and carried, and heft a full knapsack.
4. **Fortress Halifax – Warden of the North** This award-winning exhibit also tells the story of the Halifax Defence Complex.
5. **Guard Room** See how security matters were handled at the Citadel and take a turn in the lock-up cells for troublesome soldiers.
6. **Engineer Store** Find out what the Royal Engineers kept on hand to ensure the Citadel was maintained in good repair.
7. **Orderly Room** Try your hand at using a dip pen and India ink as you "enlist" in the British Army here in the garrison's administrative office.
8. **Tailor Shop** Assist the regimental tailor in this shop where uniforms were made and repaired. Try on a uniform coat and have your picture taken.
9. **Musketry Gallery** Explore this dark spooky tunnel that was built to allow soldiers to fire into the ditch while under cover.
10. **New Exhibit Space** Check this space for new and exciting exhibits.
11. **Signal Post** Find out how the Citadel's tall masts were used for sending coded signals to both the citizens of Halifax and to the other forts that protected the harbour.
12. **Expense Magazine** Explore this tiny dark "bomb proof" room where cartridges for the artillery were stored.
13. **Defence Casemates and Garrison Cells** Descend the thirty-three steps to these dank rooms that were designed to allow cannon to fire into the citadel's defensive ditch, but were also used to house military prisoners.
14. **South Magazine** Count the barrels in this reinforced structure where the Citadel's gunpowder was stored.
15. **School Room** Stop here to take a lesson from the School Master and see a "Magic Lantern" show.
16. **Tides of History** Experience the thrilling story the Halifax defences with this in depth 48-minute audio-visual presentation which begins every quarter hour.
17. **The Army Museum** Get a feel for Atlantic Canada's military past through exhibits of artifacts, photographs and documents dating from the 1600's to the present.

Services

Regimental Shop
Located on the ground floor of the Cavalier Building, the Regimental Shop provides a unique shopping experience for visitors.
Tel: (902) 423-0907

Coffee Shop Stop in for refreshments or a light meal in the Coffee Shop adjacent to the historic Soldiers' Library.
Tel: (902) 423-0907

Elevator There is an elevator in the lobby of the *Tides of History* theatre that gives wheelchair access to the upper level of the walls. The Army Museum can be accessed by the lift located next to the Information Centre.

Services for Visitors With Disabilities
The grounds, main floor of the Cavalier Building, the Army Museum, most of the exhibits and the washrooms are all wheelchair-accessible. The *Tides of History* and *A Harbour Worth Defending* films are both closed-captioned.

Smoking is not permitted in buildings.

Pets Only pets on a leash are permitted on the grounds; pets are not allowed inside the buildings.

Parking

Information

Washrooms

Things to See and Do

Information Centre

Start your visit here (1) where the staff will help you plan an exciting and enjoyable stay, and let you know about scheduled activities and demonstrations.

Tours begin here regularly throughout the day. Hosted tours last from 45 to 60 minutes and provide an overview of the site's vibrant history and its many attractions.

For a **self guided tour** option, follow the numbers on the exhibit guide above.

The Old Town Clock

The Old Town Clock is one of the most recognizable landmarks of historic Halifax. Constructed as a garrison clock on the orders of Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, who was Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America from 1799 to 1802, the clock began keeping time on October 20, 1803. Today, the Old Town Clock is maintained and operated by Parks Canada as part of the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site.

The Old Town Clock is currently not open to visitors.

Living History Activities

The Citadel's living history program brings to life the 78th Highlanders and the 3rd Brigade, Royal Artillery, 1869 to 1871. This year the Citadel also features representations of troops who served in Halifax during the War of 1812.

Sentry Changes Every hour, the sentry at the main gate is changed in a formal ceremony.

The Noon Gun Noon in Halifax is announced by the firing of the Noon Gun, a tradition that has continued, every day except Christmas day at least since 1856.

Performances of the Pipes and Drums The bagpipers and drummers of the 78th Highlanders perform favourite traditional regimental tunes at various times during the day.

Rifle and Cannon Firing Demonstrations Rifle firing demonstrations are carried out hourly, with larger demonstrations of massed rifles, muskets, and cannon fire in the afternoons between mid-June and August 31.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The Halifax Citadel offers a wide variety of attractions to suit a variety of personal preferences.

For the history and culture buff Watch either *A Harbour Worth Defending* (2) or, for a more in-depth experience, *The Tides of History* (16). Include a guided tour (1) and take in the *Fortress Halifax – Warden of the North* exhibit (4) and the Army Museum (17). Immerse yourself in a bygone era by exploring the ditch and ramparts, and visit the barracks (3), guard room (5), orderly room (7), tailor shop (8), and school room (15) for hands-on experiences. Take your time and chat with our many costumed living history personnel, and watch a sentry change, musical performance or other historic demonstration.

For those travelling with children Pick up a Parks Canada **Xplorer** activity booklet at the Information Centre (1). Ask staff when the next rifle or cannon firing will occur, and enjoy hands-on fun in locations such as the barracks (3), orderly room (7), tailor shop (8) and school room (15) for hands-on experiences. Explore the ditch, and see if you're brave enough to enter the musketry gallery (9), or to check out the prison cells in the guard room (5), and defence casemates (13). Grab a snack or drink in the coffee shop, and be sure to chat with a soldier or military wife, and watch a living history demonstration.

For those who want to relax Stroll the ramparts and take in the spectacular view of Halifax offered from the Signal Post (11). Take a guided tour (1), or watch the 45 minute *Tides of History* (16). Explore the grassy ditch, and the restored interiors (3), (5), (7), (8), (15). Be sure to chat with a soldier or military wife, ask the duty bagpiper to play you a tune, watch a sentry change, or other historic demonstration. If you need a break, stop by the coffee shop and be sure to visit the Regimental Shop before leaving.

Remembering your visit Visit the Regimental Shop to find a souvenir to remind you of your day at the Citadel, or a gift for family or friends back home. Choose from a variety of original items including a CD of the Pipes and Drums of the 78th Highlanders, as well as a selection of glassware, Celtic jewellery, Citadel-logo apparel, exclusive toy soldiers, books and other unique gifts.