



*Lt-Col E. W. Cormack O.B.E., E.D.*

# *The History*

of the 8th. Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft  
Regiment, R.C.A.

## Preface

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The following pages will trace in some degree of detail the adventures of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA, literally from the period of its incubation to a moment very near to the date of its honourable decease. It is hoped that personnel who have served with the Regt will find the material interesting, and that it coincides with their own memories of the events recorded. Whether or not it does however is really not so important. If the volume can refresh or stimulate memories of comradeships and incidents too precious to be allowed to tarnish from lack of use, then it will have gone far towards achieving its ultimate purpose.

A very great debt of gratitude is due to many people within and without the Regt for making this publication possible. Much of the material contained in the history was obtained from Lt-Col E. W. Cormack OBE, ED, and his personal diary was a primary source of information. To Lt-Col R. J. Heggan also the author must acknowledge a debt of gratitude.

The illustrations contained in the book could not have been completed without sketches prepared in advance by Gur. T. L. Allen of 70 Bty. The text would have been much less complete than is presently the case but for the assistance of numerous members of the Regt whose personal recollections greatly embellished the terse official records. And to a host of Dutch friends, headed by Mr. B. H. Wolf of Amersfoort, whose technical proficiency produced the book itself, are we all indebted.

The History of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA is therefore the composite child of many sires. It is the author's prayer that the paternal feeling that goes with progeneration will to some extent at least blind the critical eye to many of the book's numerous shortcomings.

*Amersfoort, Holland*

*December 1945.*

*W. S. Russell, Capt. R.C.A.*



# History of 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA

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## Foreword

The Commanding Officer of a fighting unit has a unique position in the Army organization. He is the highest officer in the military hierarchy who directly commands his men. His Regt is his family and from him it inherits its character. If the Regt is efficient or inefficient, energetic or lazy, resourceful or inflexible — you will see that the same characteristics are to be found in its commanding officer. For the Regt is the sounding-board and the mirror of the man who directs its destiny.

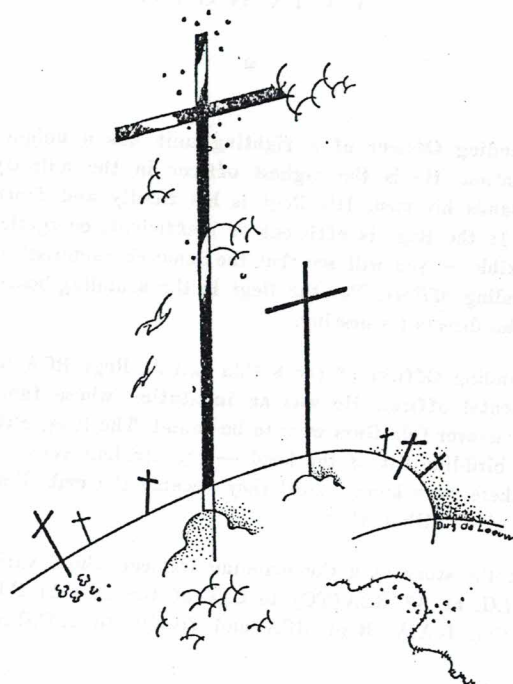
The Commanding Officer of the 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt RCA was more however than a regimental officer. He was an institution whose fame and reputation were legend wherever Cdn Gns were to be found. The long, stiff-legged, springy stride — the bird-like tilt of the head — the strident voice, the piercing eyes. Everywhere these were known until they became the embodiment of the Artillery watch-word — „Ubique”.

This is not the story of a Commanding Officer whose varied career has led him from C.I.G. at A3 RCA(TC) to C.O. of the 16 Cdn Fd Regt RCA, then to Comd 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt RCA and finally to A/C.R.A., R.C.A., 4 Cdn Armd Div.

It is not the story of a Commanding Officer who was called upon in ten short months of crowded action to deploy a LAA Regt, to organize infantry patrols, to establish the garrison defences of Tilburg, to site searchlights in the FDLs, to lay fire plans, to direct the disposition of security guards along the lines of communication to supervise a regiment employed on traffic control. All that will be found in the pages that follow.

It is simply the story of a kindly man who on the Regiment's last day in Canada took over the duties of Orderly Officer so that a subaltern could spend the evening with his wife. It is the story of a courageous man who refused to be absent from his troops when the fighting was most desperate. It is the story of a Regimental Commander who personally loaded and dispatched his own vehicle on an errand of mercy to alleviate the sufferings of 1500 dying men in a German Stalag.

The fact that he organized and led the finest regiment of its kind in the British Army through the entire campaign in Western Europe may soon be forgotten. The saga of his personal exploits will dim with the years. But the respect, the enduring friendships and the reputation for courage, efficiency and devotion to duty — these will always be associated with the name of Lt-Col. E. W. Cormack. OBE, ED.



## ROLL OF HONOUR

L-57872	Gnr. W. J. Abbott	II-82297	Gnr. W. Irving
B-15002	RSM P. D. Abel	II-75122	Sgt. M. E. Johnston, MM
II-614971	Gnr. E. Antonyszyn	F-78194	Gnr. W. B. Krizer
	Gnr. H. W. Avey	II-100574	Gnr. J. Kustra B.E.M.
L-61807	Gnr. E. R. Benjamin	B-129546	Bdr. A. E. Lambert
B-105124	Gnr. W. E. Bowslaugh	B-15538	L/Bdr. G. W. Langford
F-56140	Gnr. E. J. Brackett	D-6848	Gnr. G. Lockett
	Lt. A. H. Brown	M-36900	Gnr. G. A. Lucas
L-580	L/Sgt. R. J. Brown	B-15503	Sgt. J. E. Maloney
L-61813	L/Bdr. Bryde, N.	G-6048	Gnr. D. W. Maxwell
M-50442	Gnr. W. E. Cawthra	II-67246	Gnr. L. E. Metcalf
II-75210	Bdr. A. D. Coleman	II-75187	L/Bdr V. Mushumanski
L-61746	Gnr. J. A. Collard	D-116638	Sgmn A. MacFarlane
L-366	Gnr. N. G. Crampean	L-74647	Gnr. C. G. Olsen
II-75255	Sgt. G. W. Easton	B-15660	L/Sgt. B. C. O'Neil
II-75083	Gnr. F. M. Ewen	II-75096	Gnr. W. M. Ramsay
L-57630	Gnr. F. K. File	L-61755	A/Sgt. W. J. Reid
II-75147	Gnr. G. A. Finch	A-57044	Gnr. E. F. Russell
II-75155	L/Sgt. C. G. Flynn	L-61707	Gnr. J. W. Saint
M-61011	Gnr. A. Gardiner	F-82431	Gnr. M. R. Sherry
L-61821	Sgt. C. A. Gillingham	G-52059	Gnr. J. C. Taylor
II-75308	Gnr. W. Hamilton	L-61825	Bdr. C. H. Wakefield
B-15711	Sgt. G. L. Hendry		Capt. E. R. Waldie
M-101046	Gnr. A. N. Hope	II-75172	L/Bdr. F. White

Introduction



## 16 Cdn Fd Regt. RCA

To 4 Feb 42.

1. — The 16 Cdn Fd Regt RCA was the direct lineal predecessor of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA. As a Field Regt it had been conceived as part of the Div Artillery of 4 Cdn Inf Div.

2. — Mobilized in the fall of 1940, the 16 Cdn Fd Regt was made up of the combined 24/75 Bty from St. John, P.Q., under Major Dykes and the 87/88 Bty from Nova Scotia under Major Dunn. With the mobilization of 5 Cdn Armd Div, the resources of these two btys were diverted to the 4 Cdn A tk, 5 Cdn LAA, 2 Cdn Med and other units within that formation.

3. — On the 4 Jan 41, Lt-Col. E. W. Cormack was appointed to command 16 Cdn Fd Regt RCA. He went to Petawawa, Ontario 13 Mar 41, while on authorized leave in order to expedite the organization of his new command. The dissolution of the two composite batteries was in fact en train at that time, but on the 17 Mar 41 the new components of the 16 Cdn Fd Regt were unofficially stated to be the 70, 102 Fd Btys and 18 Med Bty.

4. — Lt-Col. Cormack had, since the date of his appointment, been very much concerned in selecting a suitable slate of officers. As C.I.G. of RCA(TC), Winnipeg, and District Artillery Advisory Officer of M.D. 10 he was in a very strategic position to earmark suitable candidates for his regiment, and the main pre-occupation was in some way to reserve them, against prior claims, for the eventual mobilization of 16 Cdn Fd Regt. To a large measure this was successfully done. By sending desirable officers on course, leave, and special duty, they were effectively removed from the available pool. When therefore the proposed slate was sent to Ottawa on 23 Mar 41, it included a large number of handpicked officers who would in the normal course of events have been snapped up for more urgent demands.

Among the officers who were reserved for 16 Cdn Fd Regt were the following:

Major H. E. Edworthy (70 Bty Comd)  
A/Major H. E. F. Clark (18 Bty Comd)  
A/Capt R. J. Hogan (70 Bty Capt)  
A/Capt Sol Kance (18 Bty Capt)  
Lieut E. W. Cowdry (Adjt)

Master Gunner Ken Pennie also was on the original slate having stepped down to RQMS to go active, and the following officers were „shelved” for 16 Cdn Fd Regt purposes:

A/Capt Stan McKay  
 Lieut Robert McAlpine  
 2/Lieut Roy White  
 2/Lieut A. G. Bishop  
 Lieut Art Kennedy  
 Lieut Gordon McGavin  
 Lieut Gil Barry (M.O.)  
 Lieut Dudley Crawford  
 2/Lieut Alex Cairns  
 Lieut Blatchford  
 Lieut Francis  
 Lieut Walker

6. — A vigorous programme of recruiting was immediately embarked upon. In command of his regiment, or at least of RHQ, 18 and 70 Btys. (102 was independently organized at Dundas, Ontario, and will be dealt with later).

6. — A vigorous programme of recruiting was immediately embarked upon. In Winnipeg, a famous character by the name of Lt. J. D. Blackwell, of the U.S. Army, conducted the campaign for RHQ and 70 Bty. Meanwhile a travelling circus under Major Clark toured the Province giving demonstrations and recruiting while Major Edworthy scoured the Brandon area for likely material.

7. — Capt Hegan meanwhile was charged with the responsibility of absorbing the stream of recruits into the Army. With a small HQ in Shilo, Man., this officer had the task of documentation, initiation and training the men sent to him and so difficult it was to obtain adequate assistance, that when on 21 Jun 41 Lt-Col Cormack inspected 70 Bty he found that Capt. Hegan, BQMS Pennie, and one new-made Bdr were administering to 162 ORs. Immediate steps were taken to provide further assistance for the 70 Bty organization, and in this, Lt-Col Sanford English, of A4 RCA(TC) proved a friend indeed. Lieuts. McGavin and McKay were sent at once to assist Capt. Hegan, and in addition NCOs and specialists were borrowed from A3 and A4 to give help in handling the men. Finally as more and more men were posted to 70 Bty the situation eased until eventually a complete slate was available to handle the Bty.

8. — While 70 Bty was taking shape at Shilo, Capt. Sol Kamee was vigorously going about recruiting for 18 Bty at the Lakehead. Personnel were carefully selected from a very high calibre of candidates at Port Arthur, Fort William and in the gold mining district of Geraldton and Sioux Lookout, and only men of initiative, physique and good education were accepted.

9. — On 8 Jul 41, RHQ 16 Cdn Fd Regt RCA moved to Shilo from Winnipeg, Man. 18 Bty had already arrived from the Lakehead. And so the Regiment began to function as an entity for the first time.

10. — While the western components of the regiment were thus being whipped into shape, the 102 Bty was taking form at Niagara-On-The-Lake. Under command of Major J. A. MacDonald, an old warrior and a great character with last war experience, the Bty was raised quickly and with great enthusiasm. The Bty plunged forward rapidly and in a very short time, and perhaps at the expense of basic training, was giving demonstrations on convoy work and occupation of positions. Lt-Col Cormack went to Niagara-On-The-Lake and inspected the 102 Bty on the 12 Jun 41.

11. — Orders were received 25 Jul 41 that the regiment would move to Debert, N.S. The western element entrained at Shilo enroute east and arrived at Debert Camp 1 Aug to find the 102 Bty already there.

12. — For the following two and a half months the regiment was busy with organization and training along all lines. A very keen rivalry broke out particularly between the 18 and 102 Btys, and eventually the intervention of the C.O. was necessary to provide direction to the pride and enthusiasm of the men. There was much work to be done at Debert Camp and the Regiment spent many hours in felling trees, levelling ground and constructing buildings. A total of 12 acres of heavy brush were cleared, an enormous parade ground constructed, and a large stone fire-place erected in the Officer's Mess.

13. — During this time Lt-Col Cormack was acting C.R.A. 4 Div and with Major H. Dow as C.I.G. and Capt. R. Telford (now Lt-Col) as Staff Capt responsible for the training of the 15, 16 and 18 Fd Regts. All these regiments were put through their firing practice, with 16 Cdn Fd Regt going to Tracadie 16 Oct 41. During the period at Tracadie the regiment had some very excellent training which included course and A Tk shooting, night occupations, recon, and long convoy moves. The regiment acquitted itself very well during the practice period, and returned to Debert 5 Nov considerably seasoned by the experience.

14. — The remainder of the year 1941 was spent at Debert Camp where the regiment continued to function as a unit and work into an efficient organization. On 19 Dec most of the Regt left on Christmas Leave and only a nucleus remained behind for the purpose of administration. It was during this period that far reaching changes took place for the regiment.

15. — While Lt-Col Cormack was at his home in Alberta on Christmas Leave, the change over of the 4 Div from an Infantry to an Armoured formation began to take effect. Shrouded in great secrecy, the transition was the subject of several important conferences and because of security measures it was difficult to fully inform the Commanding Officer of the urgency of the situation. On the 11 Jan 42, Capt. R. J. Hegan (now Lt-Col) on his own responsibility phoned Lt-Col Cormack to inform him of the changes impending and to advise him to return to the unit. Meanwhile at Debert, things moved on apace and eventually a Commanding Officer's conference was called on such short notice that it was impossible for Lt-Col Cormack to arrive in time by train. Capt Hegan intercepted him with a telegram at Medicine Hat, Alberta, and advised him to fly east. Lt-Col Cormack arranged to fly from Winnipeg by Harvard Trainer and was able to reach Kapuskasing, Ont. in good time. Bad weather intervened there, and it was not until 17 Jan that he finally arrived at Moncton, N.B.

16. — At Debert things became more involved. With the Commanding Officer still absent on the 16 Jan, Major Edworthy as his deputy attended the GOC's conference. It was learned that the 18 Cdn Fd Regt would be joining the 2 Cdn Med Regt and that 16 Cdn Fd Regt would be converted into a L.A.A. Regt and employed with the 4 Cdn Armd Div Support Group.



17. — The Commanding Officer telegraphed Capt Hegan to meet his plane at Moncton at 0400 hrs on the 17 Jan. Accordingly Capt Hegan took the Commanding Officer's Staff car and with Lt McGavin driving, set out through a blinding snowstorm from Debert to Moncton at 2300 hrs on the night of the 16 Jan. The roads were extremely slippery and conditions were far from good. Rounding a bend the car skidded and crashed into a bridge. Capt Hegan made his way to the nearest town, arranged other transportation to Moncton and a wrecker to haul away the damaged Staff car. Proceeding to Moncton, he met Lt-Col Cormack and related to him the whole story.

18. — It was a difficult situation that confronted Lt-Col Cormack. Worst of all, he had missed the important conference under circumstances which due to a misunderstanding on dates were not easy to explain. His Staff car was wrecked and an officer without standing orders had been driving it at the time of the accident. His regiment was converted overnight from Field to L.A.A. His 18th Bty had been removed and in addition he was in for a severe criticism for permitting so large a number of men to go on leave.

19. — In retrospect the whole incident seems amusing but in the stirring days of '42' a Commanding Officer could quite easily lose his command over such items. Lt-Col Cormack weathered the storm unruffled, but never to the end of the war was he able to replace the Staff car lost in the episode.

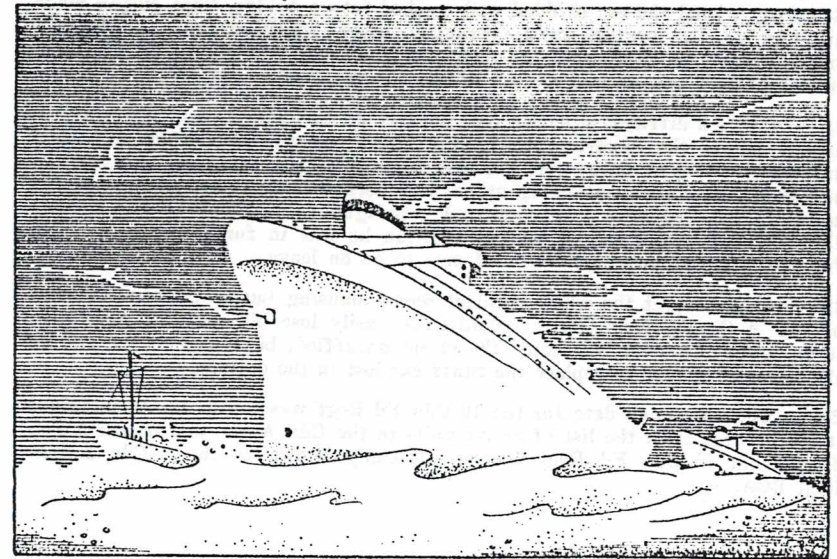
20. — The conversion date for the 16 Cdn Fd Regt was 4 Feb 42. At midnight it disappeared from the list of active units in the Cdn Army, and on the 5 Feb 42 the old 16 Cdn Fd Regt became officially known as the 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt RCA.

*Mobilization and Training  
in Canada*



## Debert, Sussex and the Capetown Castle

5 Feb 42—17 Aug 42



Debert

21. — The overnight conversion of the Regt from the 16 Canadian Field Regt to the 8 Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regt RCA brought few immediate changes in routine, organization or training. It was not as if the 18 pounder guns which had been the weapons of training were suddenly replaced with anti-aircraft guns, nor as if the field gunners had overnight acquired the Bofors gunner's skill. Indeed on looking about on the 5 Feb one could notice no change from the previous day. But on 5 Feb 42 a LAA Regt was born and as each day passed, alterations infinitesimal in themselves occurred within the units until eventually a fine, new, highly-trained Regt emerged.

Debert

22. — The organization of a LAA Regt at that time embodied three Btys. Each Bty in turn was broken up into three troops under two Lieutenants, each troop containing four detachments. The detachments, each under command of a sergeant, were armed with tractor-drawn Bofors 40 mm guns. Thus a Regt contained thirty-six semi-mobile 40 mm guns as its main armament, plus a variety of small-arms for its own protection. It was towards this establishment that 8 Cdn LAA Regt struggled during its stay in Canada.

Debert

23. — There was little that could be done at once to speed the conversion. The facilities and the trained personnel were not available for Bofors units, and even pamphlets were impossible to obtain. A start was made by constructing home-

made AA sights. Craftsmen were sent off to Halifax to secure the information which would allow them to manufacture dummy guns for training. For the most part however, conditioning, basic training, and schooling of M.T. personnel were wisely emphasized until more specific information on the AA organization and equipment was forthcoming. In any branch of the service bivouac schemes are good training. They were persevered with. In all arms convoy driving is essential. Convoy driving was practised. But while normal training was being carried on, a nucleus of officers and NCOs was sent away to be fully trained as Bofors instructors.

#### Debert

24. — Every opportunity was seized upon to introduce men of the Regt to their future weapon. On one occasion by liaison with the Navy a group of officers and NCOs went to Halifax and saw the Navy engage a sleeve with four precious Bofors rounds. Some instruction was likewise obtained on the equipment and the information was speedily passed on to the other members of the Regt.

#### Moosomin

25. — For the 101 Bty in Moosomin the situation was different. It had been mobilized on 12 Sep 41 as one of the Btys of 6 Canadian LAA Regt RCA, and in the re-organization of 4 Div was made a part of 8 Cdn LAA Regt.

#### Moosomin

26. — Recruiting for this Bty was conducted by Lieutenant King Softley and as its strength increased, a HQ was established at Moosomin under Major D. N. McCallum. Here with nothing but 18 pounder limbers the Bty went ahead with gun drill and winter schemes. Many of the men were dispatched from Moosomin to Dundurn or Regina for training, but at its HQ a strong esprit de corps was fostered which has always characterized this Bty. The 101 moved east 12 Mar 42 to join the balance of 8 Cdn LAA Regt at Sussex N.B.

#### Sussex, N.B.

27. — On 14 Mar advance parties from Debert came to Sussex to take over the lines for the rest of the Regt. Two days later the convoy from Debert made its way to Sussex bearing the main body of the Regt. Lt-Col Cormack himself arrived on 17 Mar and on that date the 101 Bty was formally taken into the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA.

#### Sussex, N.B.

28. — There was a decided quickening in the AA training in the next few months. Ingenious wooden guns (called "MacDonald Models" after their chief proponent Major J. A. MacDonald) were constructed and with a gun drill book in one hand and a picture of the gun in the other the men were taught the rudiments of gun drill.

#### Sussex, N.B.

29. — Maj-Gen Worthington CB, MC, MM, G.O.C. 4 Cdn Armd Div heard of these guns, and on inspecting the Regt insisted on viewing them. When he saw what the Regt had done he was tremendously impressed with the initiative and enthusiasm, and frightfully annoyed at the inadequacy of the training facilities. Demanding pictures of the wooden abortions, he wrote to NDHQ, and very soon after, real guns were sent to the Regt.

#### Newfoundland

30. — Two rather important opportunities for training and seasoning personnel from the Regt came up during the month of April. On 4 Apr the 102 Bty was given the chance to send a troop to Newfoundland. "K" Troop of that Bty was selected, and it was not until 9 Jul that it returned to New Brunswick. During its stay in Newfoundland the troop indulged in much useful training and it provided as well AA defence for St. John's Harbour and Gor Bay Airport for part of the time.

#### Arvida, P.Q.

31. — Similarly on 6 Apr two troops from the 70 Bty departed for Arvida, P.Q. to provide the AA defenses for the aluminum plant located there. Plenty of equipment was available at Arvida and by 7 Jun when the troops returned to Sussex N.B. they were well acquainted with the Bofors gun.

#### Sussex, N.B.

32. — At Sussex, N.B. the Regt bent every effort to increase its efficiency. A great fillip to training was given by the arrival on 30 Apr of six new Bofors guns. By that time also, sufficient trained personnel existed in the units to permit an energetic training school to be set up. The NCOs and men were trained during the morning and afternoon parades. Officers went to school each evening in No. 3 Drill Shed.

#### Sussex, N.B.

33. — As more equipment, particularly M.T., reached the Regt, driving and skeleton schemes were carried out in the Penobscis and Apoloqui area where training grounds were located. More and more information on the tactics and equipment continued to come in, and by a process of self-education the Regt slowly gained a firm knowledge of AA warfare. Had it not been for the sudden removal of the AA equipment to the west coast following a Japanese scare in that sector, even greater strides would have been made.

#### Sussex, N.B.

34. — So throughout May and June the Regt toiled to perfect itself in the ways of war. Aside from technical training wherein great advances were made, the steady "militarization" of men too-recently out of civilian life went on. How to wear the King's uniform, how to salute, how to march and how to obey — these and many other similar subjects formed part of the daily military curriculum. July found the 8 Cdn LAA Regt a tough, well-disciplined, hardy band of men with a sound knowledge of basic military training and an auspicious start in the direction of complete mastery with its own special weapon.

#### Sussex, N.B.

35. — On 8 Jul a number of officers from the Regt went to St. John, N.B. to observe a LAA firing practice being carried out by a local Bty. For most of the group it was their first opportunity to see the deadly Bofors in action. The shooting was mediocre in the extreme, and subsequently far excelled by our own detachments, but everyone was highly enthusiastic over the performance of the weapon.



**Sussex, N.B.**

36. — The 101 Bty got its chance at a detached and quasi-operational role in July. A guard duty job came up on the St. John Docks, and the troops of 101 Bty rotated on that task. It was extremely good experience for the troops, for it put the individual administrative problems squarely up to them.

**Sussex, N.B.**

37. — From the above it must not however, be assumed that life in Sussex, N.B. was merely a dull routine of training. Indeed most men who were with the units at that time will agree that the period spent in N.B. was among the most enjoyable the Regt ever experienced. The CO energetically pursued a policy of sports and entertainment at Camp Sussex. Boxers from the Regt took a prominent part in a Camp tournament, with L 61777 Gnr Jackson W.T. winning the Heavyweight title, and several inter-battery track and field meets were staged. The Regt was in fact well-rooted in the New Brunswick clay when news of its imminent departure overseas became known.

**Sussex, N.B.**

38. — On the 3 Aug information was received from HQ Support Group, 4 Cdn Armd Div to the effect that the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA would proceed overseas on 8 Aug. For several weeks plans had been made and preparations taken to prepare for this move, and consequently much had been done. Nevertheless the Quarter-Master in particular, and every man in the Regt generally, found ample to do in the last few days in Canada.

**Sussex, N.B.**

39. — All blankets, beds, etc were turned in the night of 7 Aug 42. Reveille came at 0400 hours 8 Aug and in the black of the morning final steps were taken before the departure. As morning broke bright and clear, the units swung down to the military siding and entrained for Halifax. A few moments later the wheels began to turn and the Regt was on its way.

**Capetown Castle**

40. — The trip to Halifax was made without incident. The train stopped at the docks and the troops immediately commenced to embark for overseas. The vessel was the motor-ship „Capetown Castle” of the Union Castle Line. The personnel went aboard and the Regt was immediately assigned quarters and duties on board.

**Capetown Castle**

41. — It was learned at once that our ship was to be one of twelve very fast, modern troop-ships including the „Andes”, the „Cameronia” and an impressive American complement headed by the „Westpoint”. The convoy remained in Halifax Harbour overnight and on the morning of 9 Aug it slipped past the boom and nosed out into the North Atlantic.

**Capetown Castle**

42. — The U-Boat menace in 1942 was serious and causing the Allies grave concern. Our convoy, well protected by units of the Canadian, British and American Navies was completely left alone. Even the weather was beyond reproach and only on 16 Aug did the land-lubber have cause to fear for his dinner.

**Capetown Castle**

43. — The organization and administration on board was at first awkward and accommodation for the men exceedingly cramped. „Stand to” was practised for possible abandoning ship and the usual precautions taken for the security of the ship and its personnel. The 8 Cdn LAA Regt was immediately given the task of manning AA M.Gs at various points on the ship and for the entirety of the voyage this was one of its duties.

**Capetown Castle**

44. — The time at sea went pleasantly enough. There were still aboard the ship many civilian amenities. Concerts were arranged, also sing-songs, and on Sunday a large church parade was held. Even the meals (which the men did not like) improved under the close scrutiny of the Orderly Officer and for war-time troop movement the inconveniences were not great.

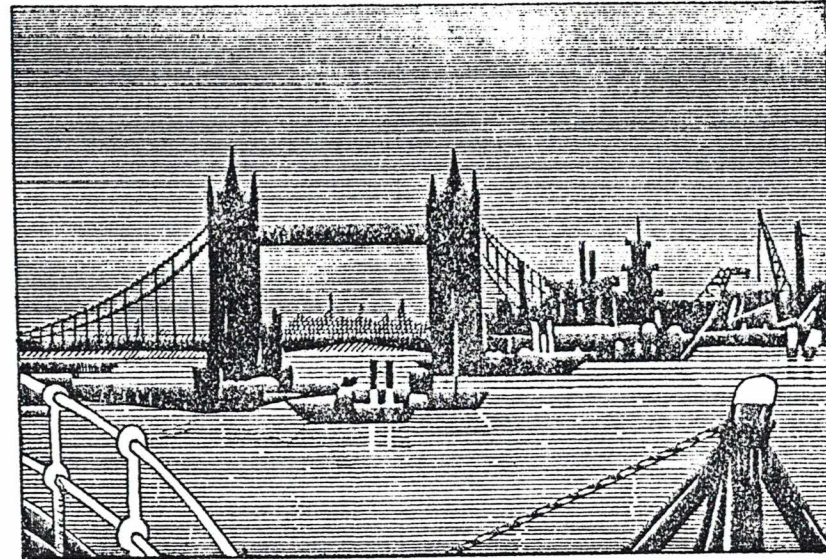
**Liverpool**

45. — It was on the 17 Aug that land was first sighted, and soon units of the convoy began to slip away as the vessels swung towards their various ports of disembarkation. As the „Capetown Castle” steamed towards Liverpool, Spitfires came swarming out of the clouds to dive and zoom in welcome over the ship. The sun came out about noon and caught the silver balloons floating above Liverpool in its rays. Gradually the drab red-brick buildings loomed into view and the „Capetown Castle”, her journey over, moved majestically up the Mersey and dropped anchor at 1700 hours. The voyage was over. The Navy had done its job.

**Liverpool**

46. — The Regt did not at once go ashore. During the night it remained on board watching the city from the blacked-out ship until sleep overtook it, and it was not until the 18 Aug that a landing in force was made on Churchill's Isle.





## Mobilization and Training in England

## Colchester

18 Aug 42—10 Nov 42

### Liverpool

47. — The 18 Aug dawned bright and clear to find the good ship „Capetown Castle” swinging lazily in the Mersey River. Already busy little tenders were nuzzling her steep black sides. The disembarkation of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt was in two parts. Half of the Regt entered the tenders and was ferried to shore at 1035 hours while the second half followed approximately five and one-half hours later.

### Liverpool

48. — It was while part one was going ashore that the Regt heard its first air-raid siren. For a moment no one spoke, and all sought to recall what the Passive Air Defence pamphlets had to say about such situations. Nothing that had been learned in Canada seemed quite to suit, and much the most practical thing was obviously to carry on unloading. With some inner misgivings therefore disembarkation went steadily forward, with only the occasional surreptitious glance into the peaceful sky.

### Colchester

49. — The two sections entrained at 1235 hours and 1530 hours respectively at the Central Station, Liverpool and travelled to Colchester, Essex, the first section arriving at that city at 2245 hours, while the second contingent detrained some two hours after.

### Colchester

50. — What a homecoming that was! The Regt descended at the inky-black Colchester station, still rocking from the motion of the train, to find virtually no preparations had been made for its arrival. True, vehicles from the 2 Heavy AA Regt RCA were available to move the bodies to the vast uncharted area of Sobraon Barracks, but once there the Regt was definitely on its own. In the black-out any form of organized control was impossible. It was a case of every man for himself. Some men stumbled into deserted barracks and slept on the floor. Some groped about the area, falling in and out of the slit-trenches until dawn. Others just went quietly off to sleep where they stood. It was not until morning that the Regt was informed that it would occupy tents and temporary barracks at Abbey Field until 3 Sep when the 2 Heavy AA Regt evacuated the permanent buildings at Sobraon Barracks.

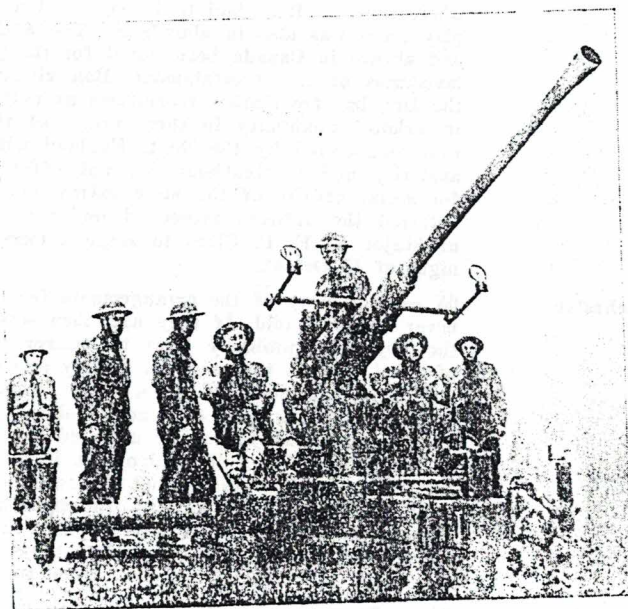
### Colchester

51. — Almost immediately on arrival in Colchester the Regt embarked on an extremely energetic campaign of training. A series of inspections culminating in a review of the Regt on the 24 Aug by Brigadier D.R. Agnew, Comd 1 Cdn AA Brigade was initiated. The latter inspection established an immediate reputation of smartness and steadiness for the Regt and the Brigadier was visibly impressed by the excellence of the show.

### Colchester

52. — In addition courses were at once commenced to train the Regt in anti-aircraft defence under a cadre headed by Lieutenant W. A. Drennan from C.A.R.U. Some officers and





*„Don't shoot!! It's only me — the camera-man!" The semi-mobile Bofors 40 mm with F.A. sights.*

NCOs were sent to various training schools in England and the usual hardening up process of P.T. and route marches was carried on. Tactics were also studied, and as equipment became available, schemes were commenced.

#### Colchester

53. — It was indeed a surprisingly short time from the date of the Regt's arrival until guns and stores began to arrive. The C.O. was able to negotiate the loan of twelve Bofors 40 mm guns on 22 Aug, only four days after the Regt landed in England, and with these in hand a start was made in training. The first M.T. reached the Regt on 4 Sep. It consisted of four 15 cwts, five jeeps and twelve motor cycles. A steady stream of equipment followed at irregular interludes including No. 3 Predictors, generators, guns and motor transport until eventually the Regt had actually more machinery than its training warranted.

#### Colchester

54. — In the case of guns it was found that stores were often not issued until some time after the ordnance had arrived. Particularly at first this proved awkward since practically all the equipment which came was in great need of maintenance and overhaul prior to use. Without stores the fitter's task was immeasurably more difficult. As time progressed however, this difficulty was overcome and ample supplies were on hand for every need.

#### Colchester

55. — By 21 Sep the Regt had nineteen guns and ten predictors. A large number of vehicles jammed the M.T. park. With the arrival of maps on 26 Sep extensive deployments were practicable, and by the end of the month sufficient M.T., guns and other equipment were available to permit a very wide and catholic range of training to be carried on.

#### Colchester

56. — One rather important feature of the daily training of the gun detachments was following practice. This was designed to synchronize the work of the layers and accustom them to follow fast-moving targets with the guns. In aid of this an exceedingly useful bit of air co-operation was received from the men of 418 Squadron R.A.F. On 12 Oct they commenced to „shoot up" our gun positions with their Boston Bombers giving our detachments experience in following war-speed targets. Sometimes personnel of the Regt accompanied the pilots, but in any event it added interest and value to the training.

#### Colchester

57. — Besides training however, the Regt also found itself with more serious responsibilities. The first of these, covered by an Operational Order dated 7 Sep 42, committed the Regt to assist in the defence of Colchester in the event of attacks by parachutists, air-borne troops, or actual enemy seaborne invasion. Lt-Col E. W. Cormack assumed command of Canadian Defence Troops in the Colchester area while each of the Bty Commanders had either a sector or the mobile reserve as his charge.

#### Colchester

58. — During all this period, it will be recalled, the German air force was waging war on the British Isles. The offensive edge of the enemy's flyers had been blunted the previous fall by the gallantry of the R.A.F., but in the autumn of 1942 the Luftwaffe still remained a potent force constantly threatening England with devastation from the air. Colchester was often on the path of the intruders. The air-raid siren and the uneven drum of enemy engines thus soon became accustomed sounds. Unaccompanied by hostile acts eventually even these manifestations of the enemy's presence lost their significance. On 28 Sep however, the men of the Regt learned first hand that the dog which barks sometimes can bite as well.

#### Colchester

59. — It was a dull overcast day, and training on the square was proceeding apace when the attack took place. Watchers from the barracks saw a plane nose silently and sinisterly out of the clouds and dive steeply over Colchester. Before you could say „Dornier 215" it opened up its throttle and roared upwards again seeking the shelter of the overcast. As it did so, three bombs came tumbling out of the bomb-bays and went screeching down into the town. A moment later three explosions shook the ground and rattled the windows. Then silence!

#### Colchester

60. — The bombs landed a considerable distance from Sobraon Barracks but their performance was nevertheless impressive. Several houses were destroyed and several



people were killed in that sneak raid. A rescue party from the Regt under Lieutenant D. G. Crawford assisted the local organization to remove the bodies. This was the first actual raid conducted in the vicinity of our Regimental area. It was not the last, nor the most imminent. But for those present it was a baptism of bombs which perhaps for the first time gave a sense of reality to training and a realization that war after all is very grim and very much in earnest.

#### Colchester

61. — It was as a result of this (and subsequent) air raids that the Regt undertook its first operational role in England. As of 9 Oct 42 the 8 Cdn LAA Regt deployed on the basis of two guns per Bty for the actual AA defence of Colchester. Ammunition was kept available and personnel were maintained to man the guns in the event of air raids on the Colchester area. The Devil however looks after his own, and no German plane again ventured to expose itself so flagrantly to the threat of immediate destruction.

#### Colchester

62. — The sudden dumping of a Regt on a community creates an interesting sociological problem. This is particularly so when the soldiers are alien and the products of an entirely different environment than their involuntary hosts. Regardless of good intentions, it is sometimes found that the ingredients simply will not mix. Inhibition, prejudice and background often prove too great a hurdle even for the most genuine good-will. World War II provided sociologists with numerous instances of these conditions. The presence of the Canadians in England simply duplicated a set of circumstances which could be found in almost every country in the world. It was rare however to find a case wherein the resultant amalgam was so satisfactory.

#### Colchester

63. — The men of Canada have a breezy facility for making friends. Lacking the debonnaire drawing-room manner, the tact and finesse of men of other nations they supplement for the more gentle virtues a boldness, a frankness and a directness which appears to charm as well as astound. Certainly in Colchester the relationship between the gunners of the 8 LAA Regt and the civilian population was exemplary. The British people opened their homes and their hearts to the new-comers, and the gunners won many friends and a wealth of respect from the townspeople. Their girls attended the dances in the Regt, the men visited them in their homes. And so well did these relations prosper that no returning wearer of the green patch and the flash of the 8 LAA Regt need be without friends in Colchester. It was not however only in the social field that the Regt scored a victory. On the 2 Nov 42, having learned that the 8 LAA was moving from Colchester, the Garrison Commandant, Col A. C. L. Parry, MBE, MC, called on Lt-Col E. W. Cormack and personally thanked him for the "soldierly-like conduct" of his Regt during its stay in the city. A very fine tribute indeed, and a happy augury for the future of the Regt in no matter which country it was eventually to find itself.

#### Colchester

64. — "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" says the old maxim. Plenty of work there was in Colchester where a whole Regt had to be equipped and trained. But play there was also in abundance. The 8 Cdn LAA Regt had always in Canada been noted for the prodigality and lavishness of its entertainment. Bon vivants not only in the Div, but from other formations as well, have shown a remarkable unanimity in their praise of the social functions engineered by the Regt. England with its war-time austerity and its blackout did not offer fertile ground for social affairs of the more extravagant kind, but undeterred the officers proceeded under the able direction of Major H. E. F. Clark to stage a mess dinner on the night of 15 Oct 42.

#### Colchester

65. — The story of the arrangements for that dinner will never be fully told. If they are, then several officers of the Regt will probably have to answer to the Ministry of Food. For on that night a variety and quality of food and drink was provided on a truly Utopian scale. Brig. D. A. Agnew was guest of honour and with numerous other visitors, could not fail to be affected by the completeness of the details. The full band of the Royal Berkshire Regt rendered selections throughout the evening. And as has been stated, the cuisine was incomparable. This first Officers Mess dinner set a worthy precedent for the future social functions of the Regt and at the same time proved that given the will, the way to a good time can be found.

#### Colchester

66. — There comes a stage in the training of a LAA Regt when in order to quicken the spirit of the personnel, and to increase the technical efficiency of the units, it has been found advisable to send it to a Practice Camp. At such camps, officers, NCOs and the gunners receive a thorough pepping-up, considerable technical instruction, particularly on the latest developments of this branch of the Artillery, and a much needed opportunity to sharpen up their shooting-eyes on the towed targets.

#### Colchester

67. — Towards the middle of October 42 it was learned that for its first Practice Camp the Regt had drawn Stiffkey Camp in Norfolk. Efforts to improve the efficiency of the Regt in AA shooting were stepped up and numerous arrangements had been made when it was learned that higher authorities had plans to move the Regt to Dunley Hill, Surrey, the first week in Nov. Such a move would obviously conflict with the trip to Stiffkey, which was to cover the period 10 Nov—23 Nov, so permission was obtained from DAQMG First Canadian Army to send an advance party to Dunley Hill on 2 Nov but to keep the gun detachments and troop officers at Colchester until the 10th of the month. They would then move direct to Stiffkey, returning from there to Dunley Hill at the completion of the period at practice camp. The advance party under Major H. E. F. Clark was duly dispatched and while preparations were going ahead at Colchester for firing camp, the most forbidding reports reached the Regt as to the inadequacy of the area in Surrey.



## Colchester

68. — The reception of the 8 LAA Regt into the fellowship of Canadians overseas was neither as cordial nor as efficient as might have been wished. Resolved therefore to do better than its predecessors, the Regt strained every fibre to make the introduction of its successors to Colchester (the 6 Cdn LAA Regt) as frictionless as possible. In no uncertain terms the policy of the C.O. was laid down. Each element of the Regt, whether it be a Bty or an attached service, was to be responsible that its opposite number be provided with every amenity that the camp could show. The buildings were vacated and made scrupulously clean. Palliases were filled, beds were set up, fires were lighted. The cooks worked hours preparing attractive meals for the newcomers. It was dark when the train bearing the new Regt arrived on 5 Nov 42, but the men were escorted by efficient guides to their quarters and ushered across the blacked-out parade ground to their various destinations. The efforts put forth were not unrewarded. The men of the 6 LAA Regt responded warmly to the unexpected cordiality of the reception and since that day a fine and friendly feeling has been manifest between the two Regts.

## Colchester

69. — On 10 Nov, with the 6 LAA already installed in Sobraon Barracks, the Regt moved from the Colchester area. Two road parties, one Stiffkey-bound and the other headed for Dorking, Surrey, left simultaneously. The main body travelled by train to practice camp. All „flights” made good time and the trips were accomplished without incident. Colchester was already just a memory.

## Surrey

10 Nov 42—10 Jun 43

### Dunley Hill

70. — Skeleton parties arrived at Dunley Hill, Surrey on 10 Nov 42 to take over the area, such as it was, for the Regt. RIIQ, which for lack of suitable accommodation was placed in Dorking, Surrey was able there to secure comfortable quarters with good communications to Brigade. The Btys however did not fare so well. As the name implies, Dunley Hill IS a hill, and a very high, remote one at that. The quarters and arrangements were definitely NOT adequate for the Regt, and despite vigorous efforts to overcome the location's shortcomings, it remained to the last a rather awkward place of residence. The view was excellent, and on a fine day exhilarating, but in the questionable English climate the soft dark loam was a menace for vehicles. Messes were lacking and the accommodation for officers and men always inconvenient. Nevertheless much very excellent work was done by the Regt at this location.

### Stiffkey

71. — While the advance party at Dunley Hill was endeavoring to cope with the deficiencies of that place, the „shooting” branch of the Regt was making progress at Stiffkey. The Regt discovered on detraining on 10 Nov that the actual practice camp was a considerable distance from „railhead” and apart from a small baggage party, the Regt was expected to cover the intervening mileage on foot. There is a very strong feeling in the mechanized artillery against walking, which is regarded as the prerogative of other arms. Fortunately the weather was fine however and the novelty of a march with full kit did not invoke much resentment.

### Stiffkey

72. — Stiffkey Camp under the energetic direction of Lt-Col J. Young, was an extremely efficient organization, and in the fourteen days spent there, the Regt learned much. The allotment of full charge ammunition at this time was very meagre. But it did give the detachments a chance to fire their guns at an airborne target, to perfect gun drill, and to learn more about their equipments. The shortage of full charge ammunition was somewhat compensated for by the abundance of sub-calibre shooting. Sub-calibre shooting was, in fact, found to be excellent preliminary training for inexperienced gun detachments. In this type of engagement a Bren gun, with tracer ammunition, is fixed on the barrel of the Bofors and lined up after the correct T.E. is applied. Thus the layers are given an opportunity to follow a target and to examine and „read” the tracer in the sky. The Detachment commander particularly with the forward area sights (which were in use at that time) was faced with many of the problems of full charge firing.

### Stiffkey

73. — During the first week at Stiffkey, the weather was excellent, and the air cooperation (a sleeve or „Drogue” towed by a Hawker Henley aircraft) was most satisfactory

Certain changes in drill were in vogue which had not before been known to the units, and these were imparted to the officers and men. The prototype of the Sights Correctional Mk V (the eventual primary means of fire control for Canadian 40 mm equipments) was seen in the form of the „Stiffkey Stick“. The „Stick“ was developed at the Camp and the keenness and enthusiasm which goes with proprietorship was transmitted by the staff to the Regt. It was in fact with the „Stiffkey Stick“ that our first hit was obtained on the sleeve.

- Stiffkey** 74. — The Is G of the Camp, always anxious to publicize their famous „Stick“, gave some instruction on its use, and set aside a small number of rounds to demonstrate its effectiveness. A trial detachment, chosen from the Detachment Commanders of the Regt, was selected to conduct the test. L 61794 Sgt LaRocque A.H. as No. 1 of the detachment handled the Stiffkey Stick.
- Stiffkey** 75. — A short conference was held. „Take post!“ yelled the D.C. The sergeants swarmed over the gun.
- Stiffkey** 76. — „Sleeve Right!“ came the cry, and the gun traversed onto the drogue as it swept through the sky at 1200 yards range.
- Stiffkey** 77. — „On!“ — „On!“ came from Nos. 2 and 3 as, squinting intensely through their sights they caught and held their target on the cross-wires.
- Stiffkey** 78. — „Engage!“ came the order and then after a second — „Fire!“
- Stiffkey** 79. — As the gun began to thunder the rounds traced scarlet scratches upon the azure blue of the sky. Slowly but surely Sergeant LaRocque nursed these traces towards his target.
- Stiffkey** 80. — „Low“ said the Recorder as the round whipped past the sleeve — „Minus-plus-plus-HIT!“
- Stiffkey** 81. — As he sang out a puff of black smoke appeared on the drogue. It disintegrated in the air as two and one-half pounds of High Explosive, touched off by the sensitive percussion fuze, exploded on impact with the fabric of the target. It was hit Number One for the 8 Cdn LAA Regt.
- Stiffkey** 82. — Training went on at Stiffkey until 23 Nov. Not only did the gun detachments receive opportunities to fire, but the officers as well took part in a shoot. Fitters too obtained training, and besides actual firing there were lectures on aircraft recognition, on deployment and on many other important subjects. It was a very self-assured, confident and highly-skilled group of AA gunners which left Stiffkey Camp and entrained for Dunley Hill.

#### Dunley Hill

83. — The trip from Norfolk to Surrey was an extremely trying one. The train was six hours late, and it made for a wearisome day. The rail party reached Dunley Hill Camp at 2130 hours 23 Nov while the road party arrived down approximately twenty-four hours later.

#### Dunley Hill

84. — The arrival of the bulk of the Regt emphasized the inadequacy of the Dunley Hill facilities and the C.O. with Brigadier W. C. Hyde, DSO, VD, immediately sought to find more suitable quarters at Newlands Corners, near Guildford. Another alternative and possible means of relieving the congestion in quarters was to send one Bty on Air Defense of Great Britain (ADGB) to occupy sites in the Borden area. But while these possibilities were explored much remained to be done on the „Hill“. Tactics were immediately pressed and in the Box Hill area much spade work was done in troop deployments. Other forms of training also were continued and the gains from firing camp consolidated by constant practice.

#### Borden

85. — Arrangements were completed for the deployment of a Bty on sites at Borden. In the vicinity of that town were located very extensive Base Ordnance Workshops and Dumps, officially known in AA circles as V.P. Serial 818. The 70 Bty was selected to relieve a Bty of the 7 Cdn LAA Regt RCA there. Accordingly on 9 Dec 42, that Bty took up positions on ADGB sites as mentioned and these sites were continuously manned by men of the Regt until 29 Mar 43.

#### Dunley Hill

86. — RHQ at Dorking and 101, 102 Btys were also kept busy. The B.R.A., Brigadier H. O. N. Brownfield expressed a desire to inspect the Regt and this was laid on for 11 Dec. 42. It was decided that in addition to a formal inspection by the Brigadier, a complete panorama of training would be displayed. Each troop was given a task. Lectures in aircraft recognition, equipment, etc were to be in progress so that the Brigadier as he passed among the men, might have an opportunity to see each phase of instruction. There were of course to be demonstrations in gun drill, and in addition the skill of our M.T. section in winching was to be exhibited. The finale included a troop deployment in the afternoon.

#### Dunley Hill

87. — The inspection which took place 11 Dec 42 was very successful. Never on parade did the men look smarter. Never was the drill more precise nor the marching more impeccable. There were however occasional unscheduled incidents that made the inspection even more interesting.

#### Dunley Hill

88. — For example, when Brigadier Hyde was inspecting the guard he was almost shot. Someone failed to ensure that his magazine was clear before „easing springs“ and a rifle bullet sang past the C.R.A.'s head when he pressed the trigger. The troop on winching completely disappeared and the B.R.A. in trying to locate it, himself got securely stuck in the mud. And all sorts of strange things occurred during the troop scheme. But on the whole the Regt, as al-



ways, made a superb showing and no small mishap could detract from the impression that here indeed was the finest Regt of its kind in existence.

#### Newlands Corners

89. — Following the B.R.A.'s inspection the 101, 102 Btys departed for No 9 LAA Training and Practice Camp, Ploockburgh, Camforth, Lanes: (Commonly known as Cark Camp). On 15 Dec also RHQ moved from Dorking to Newlands Corners, Surrey and took up residence there. Thus the highly unsatisfactory Dunley Hill Camp was left at the disposal of some other unfortunate unit.

#### Newlands Corners

90. — It was about this time that the Predictor was „washed out” for the 8 LAA Regt. It was a very ingenious mechanism and for static sites very useful. For the wear and tear of mobile operations it was at once too cumbersome and too delicate to be successful and the decision to dispense with it was highly popular in the Regt.

#### Cark

91. — For gunners already old hands at the „Practice Camp” game, Cark proved no novelty. More shooting was carried on (imagine an allotment of 25 rounds per gun to cover a period of two weeks, when each gun can spit out five times that many rounds every minute!) and more general training completed.

#### Cark

92. — Christmas caught the units thus dislocated. The 70 Bty was on Borden sites, RHQ was at Newlands Corners, while the balance of the Regt made merry in Lancashire. It was not a remarkable Christmas, and particularly for the 70 Bty under the necessity of maintaining its never-ending vigil it was a considerable flop. Generally speaking however the Regt fared as well or better than other units in similar circumstances. After a perfunctory pause in training on the 25th, all ranks were back at the grind on Boxing Day and by the 28th Dec the series was finished at Cark and 101 and 102 Btys entrained for Guildford, Surrey arriving the same evening.

#### Newlands Corners

93. — Newlands Corners, though not the perfect camp, was still a great improvement over Dunley Hill. It was muddy of course, but all England is muddy in December. And in other respects the accommodation was quite good. The facilities were excellent for entertainment of the troops, and New Year's Eve 1942 was celebrated on a scale which in a measure compensated for the dullness of the Christmas festivities.

#### Newlands Corners

94. — The year 1943 commenced as the year 1942 had finished with a steady training programme. An extraordinary appendix to normal training was inserted on 4 Jan when all ranks in camp were forced to take part in an eleven and one-half mile route march, the distance being covered in two hours and twenty-eight minutes. Schemes, instruction and inspections were carried out by 101 and 102 Btys until on 13 Jan 43 the latter replaced 70 Bty at Borden. Thereupon the 70 Bty became immersed in the training programme at Newlands Corners.

#### Newlands Corners

95. — It was during the month of January that a rather phenomenal training expedient was introduced. For one week commencing 24 Jan the daily training period was advanced 12 hours so that all training, administration etc was carried out in the dark. The week stressed such phases of training as night convoys, schemes, stalking, compass marches, etc. In practice much inclement weather during the week tended to limit its value. Probably the experiment however did no one any harm, and perhaps it did some good. „J” troop of 101 Bty was fortunate enough to be spared this nocturnal training. Orders were received during the middle of January that one troop of 101 Bty was to proceed to 16 LAA Practice Camp, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, as a demonstration troop. „J” troop was ultimately selected for the task and departed 10 Jan 43 for Essex.

#### Clacton-on-Sea

96. — That attachment of a troop, or part of a troop to 16 LAA Practice Camp continued from the end of January 1943 almost until „D” Day without interruption. It became in fact a duty, which rotated among the troops in the Regt. At the first the troop appeared at Clacton simply for the purpose of giving demonstrations of precision gun drill. The men were carefully trained, smartly turned out, and impressed with a sense of responsibility which resulted in a very high standard of gun drill being displayed. In return, the troop officers and NCOs were in constant liaison with the LG's branch of the camp, and in consequence informed of any modifications of drill or equipment as they came up. As time went on the demonstrations were expanded to take in mobile deployment as well, so that eventually visiting units were able to see first hand just how precise gun drill and deployment drill can be. There can be no doubt that the technical ascendancy and general efficiency of 8 LAA troops can in a large measure be traced to this highly successful attachment.

#### Clacton-on-Sea

97. — The Practice Camp on its part was completely satisfied. It had specifically asked that the demonstration troop should be provided by 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA. Never did it have cause to regret its selection. The gun detachments constantly thrilled and astounded the personnel of other less highly trained units who visited the camp for practice purposes and consolidated for the 8 LAA Regt its reputation of being the smartest Regt of all the LAA units in the British Empire.

#### Newlands Corners

98. — Early in the year 1943 a change over in the organization of LAA Regts began to take effect. The armament of a troop was increased from four to six guns, and to handle this larger sub-unit a Captain was placed in charge. Lt-Col Cornack had been anxious to secure captaincies for his own officers but the system of promotion at that time was such that for the most part the new Captains were posted to 8 Cdn LAA Regt from other units within 1 Cdn Army. By April this posting was virtually complete and by that time also the Regt had received equipment on a scale sufficient to bring its total strength up to the required fifty-four guns.



## Newlands Corners

99. — Meanwhile in hockey the Regt began to appear as a rather important entity. Having won the Brigade championship on 27 Jan the 8 LAA team took the measure of a sextet from HQ Squadron to win the championship of 4 Cdn Armd Div. The team entered the Army championships and was soundly trounced by a First Div aggregation. Nevertheless to Lieutenant Roy White and his henchmen is due much credit.

## Newlands Corners

100. — For most of the Regt, the early spring training of 1943 followed an unvarying pattern. There were deployments and demonstrations, gun drill and lectures and the usual instruction which was so much a part of the daily existence of every unit in England at that time.

## Cark

101. — On the 21 Feb the firing parties of 70 and 101 Btys went again to Cark camp for further shooting. They returned having completed the series of shoots on 13 Mar.

## Newlands Corners

102. — While they were away a work party at Newlands Corners was busily engaged building a new kitchen from scrounged materials. Some of our officers were detailed for umpires on exercise Spartan and in a short time learned much about large scale operations. But most useful of all this training were the three-day schemes, during which troops, complete with G1098 stores, deployed, moved and re-deployed.

## Borden

103. — While training of the Btys not on sites was thus going forward, the 102 Bty at Borden with ADGB was also having its moments. To many people in Southern England, the daily alerts had become a commonplace and prosaic matter and no occasion for either excitement or alarm. But for every man on ADGB each air raid was a period of tension and strain. During a forty-nine day period the 102 Bty responded to over two hundred and ten separate alerts, with each alert calling upon the men for the maximum of keenness. Anyone who has lived through the frustration of racing out to the guns time after time for weeks on end without firing a shot or seeing a plane will understand what a drain on enthusiasm and morale such an experience can be. AA units, on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, eagerly scanning the horizon for hostile aircraft are among the unsung heroes of the war.

## Borden

104. — During the period at Borden however the gunners of 102 Bty were not entirely disappointed. On 10 Feb an alert sent the detachments scrambling out to the guns. It was a misty day. Suddenly almost at tree-top height a Do 217 with engines full out went flashing by. It was a forlorn hope but some of the guns opened up. No hits were observed and in a moment the plane was gobbled up in the mist.

## Borden

105. — Two days later „F” troop had another chance. Again it was a difficult target — a high flying Ju 88 which was a receding target already when spotted. The guns spoke again and this time, as it disappeared into the clouds rounds were seen to strike its tail surfaces. The plane was not seen to crash however so the claim was not pressed.

## Newlands Corners

106. — The Regt was relieved of its operational role at Borden and the 102 returned to Newlands Corners on 29 Mar. But despite the boredom and fatigue involved in manning the sites, the Bty had so much enjoyed the operational „feel” that it actually regretted leaving the discomforts of Borden.

## Lydd

107. — The Bofors guns have always been primarily considered as anti-aircraft weapons. For anti-tank work however, armour piercing shot is provided and from the beginning some training was obtained in this type of shooting. In April 1943 the emphasis on anti-tank engagements was increased and on 9 Apr the troops were sent to Lydd, Kent for anti-tank shooting. The guns proved accurate, very well adapted for shooting APVs and as later events were to show, fairly effective against light armour.

## Cark

108. — The AA line was not ignored. Arrangements were made to obtain air cooperation from Mustangs of the Tactical Air Force which gave layers in particular excellent following practice. The 102 Bty, which because of its operational role at Borden had missed some AA firing, was sent to Cark for eight days commencing 11 Apr during which time its gun drill and general training were brought up to date.

## Clacton-on-Sea

109. — Up At Clacton, the practice of using a demonstration troop from 8 LAA continued, and the enthusiasm of the C.I.G. at that camp proved that the success of „J” troop in such a role merely indicated a high standard within the Regt. It was during such a period as demonstration troop that „B” troop 70 Bty partook of a night engagement against hostile aircraft. Approximately at 0025 hours on the 15 Apr 43 a considerable number of enemy planes passed over the firing camp at Clacton. Every gun in the place apparently opened up, and „B” troop, not to be outdone, belted away sixty-one rounds. In such cases claims are difficult to assess, but by the combined barrage two aircraft were knocked down.

## Alfriston

110. — Exercises continued to be the subject of much of the Regt's training and on 14 May it moved off in convoy to take its part in Gunbuster II. The locale for this exercise was in the environs of Alfriston. During Gunbuster II which was the first large scale exercise in which the 8 LAA Regt had been involved it was found that in many ways the Regt was superior in training to most of the other units in RCA 4 Cdn Armd Div. There were of course many items which required adjustment, but on the whole the training had been found to be remarkably sound.

## Alfriston

111. — It was during Exercise Gunbuster that the incident occurred which was to bring for the first time a decoration into the Regt. „B” Troop vehicles were concentrated in the 15 Field Regt area. A fire suddenly broke out in one of the gun-tractors which loaded as it was with petrol, small-arm and 40 mm ammunition could easily have set the entire park aflame. Lt 100574 Gnr. Kustira J. realized the



danger and leaping into the burning truck he drove it to a place of safety. Kustra made good his escape just as the 40 mm ammunition started to explode and for his gallant act he was awarded the BEM.

#### Newlands Corners

112. — The Regt resumed normal activities on its return from Gunbuster II. Training parades continued as usual, until on 10 Jun, Newlands Corners was evacuated and the Regt moved to the south coast with RHQ at Stone Cross, Sussex and the Btys respectively at Stone Cross, Westiam and Pevensy.

## Stone Cross, Sussex

10 Jun 43—25 Sep 43

#### Stone Cross

113. — The Regt had no sooner arrived in the Stone Cross region when it was learned that a Bty plus a troop would have to deploy on sites at Borden. The 101 Bty plus „A” troop, 70 Bty, was selected for this task and moved off on 11 Jun 43 to occupy sites there. The balance of the Regt commenced at once an intensified programme of anti-tank training which culminated in a successful shoot at Lydd, Kent anti-tank ranges during the week 16-23 June.

#### St. Agnes

114. — The 101 Bty plus „A” troop was relieved at Borden on 10 Jul and on the following day the firing parties from all Btys left by road and rail for No. 10 LAA Practice Camp which was located at St. Agnes, Cornwall. Excellent convoy training was obtained on the three day trip down to Cornwall and three hundred and twenty-nine miles without a breakdown indicated a high mechanical standard in the vehicles. The Regt remained in Cornwall until 25 July and although plagued by bad weather which prevented air cooperation for much of the time, the gunners learned many a new wrinkle while at the camp. In particular, naval type sights, used in conjunction with 40 mm equipments were tried out. Results with this type of „eye-shooting” exceeded expectations and the men were soon capable of firing accurate rounds by this means of fire control. The firing parties left St. Agnes for their Sussex billets 25-26 Jul and by the 31st of the month the 70 Bty was back on the familiar Borden sites.

#### Stone Cross

115. — From the date of its return from St. Agnes to its departure from the Sussex area, the Regt had a finger in many an operational and instructional pie. Almost never did it function as a Regt during this period. A small group of specialists, a troop or an independent Bty was split off from the Regt from time to time as the various tasks came up. R.H.Q. remained at Stone Cross during this particular month and administered as best it could its widely dispersed sub-units. During the whole period, training (with emphasis being shifted to the study of mines and booby-traps) was carried on as the circumstances allowed.

#### Stone Cross

116. — In line with this piecemeal employment of the Regt were such tasks as providing AA protection to various Regts assembled for inspection, sending groups of umpires on exercises Blast I and Blast II, and partaking in LAA schemes during the period. One extremely useful and informative bit of training was obtained in Exercise LAA staged 3 Aug 43. In that exercise, aircraft from 83 Group R.A.F. attacked typical V. Ps the object being both for the flyers of the T.A.F. to find out new means of attacking FLAK positions and for the LAA to obtain experience in fighting off the aircraft. The exercise was a great success, and impartial umpires declared that the guns had successfully

„engaged” the attacking planes. A small group of specialists departed also to partake in Exercise Snaffle, but „other requirements” forced its premature return on the 11th of the month.

#### Stone Cross

117. — These „other requirements” were engendered by Exercise Harlequin. For many months the Luftwaffe had been hording its planes against the invasion of the continent. Numerous stratagemis had been tried in order to coax it to its destruction in the air. Finally it was decided to sail an amphibious force out into the channel in a mock invasion. This, it was hoped, would bring up the German air force, and would enable the allies to deal a death-blow to the fighter wing of the enemy.

#### Staplehurst & Headcorn

118. — This exercise caused the entire Regt to be employed on operational duty. On 13 Aug the 102 Bty complete, plus „J” troop 101 Bty deployed to defend two advanced R.A.F. landing grounds in the Staplehurst and Headcorn areas in Kent. It was from these fields that part of the air cover for Harlequin was to be launched, and it was felt that the dromes should be covered by LAA guns in case of counterattacks from the air.

#### Newhaven & Borden

119. — 101 Bty was also used in Harlequin. „H” and „G” troops occupied sites along the coast at Newhaven as a defence against low flying intruders. Meanwhile 70 Bty remained under command 1 AA Brigade to protect the Borden V.P.

#### Wisbech

120. — As it transpired, Exercise Harlequin did not achieve its object. The barges sailed out almost in sight of France without interference. No German planes attacked the landing grounds. Therefore as the end of the month of September approached the Regt was gradually released from its multifield tasks. The 70 Bty returned to the Regt from Borden on 22nd and on the following day moved north to March, Lanes. The remainder of the Regt handed over its sites on the 25th and after a long convoy RHQ established itself at Wisbech, Cambs, while the 102 Bty went to Chatteris in the same county. The 101 Bty concentrated two troops in Wisbech, with one troop being detached at Elm, Cambs. From this area the Regt was in position to take part in the autumn exercises which were impending.

## Cambridgeshire and the Fall Manoeuvres

26 Sep 43—6 Nov 43

#### Wisbech

121. — There was very little time for parts of the Regt to „shake-down” in their new quarters before they were of again on exercise. The 101 and 102 Btys had a brief breathing spell after the journey north but almost immediately RHQ and the 70 Bty departed for a two day scheme Takex (the withdrawal of an armoured division less an armoured brigade).

#### Hilborough

122. — The scheme itself was conducted in the Hilborough area and the CO while making his way to Div HQ was suddenly pounced upon and captured by the Lake Superior Regt. It proved however easier to capture than to hold Lt-Col Cormack, and very soon he was on his way again leaving the Lake Sups a little uncertain as to what course they should have taken.

#### Hilborough

123. — „A” and „B” troops were employed covering crossings of the river Wissey. Everyone got thoroughly soaked in the rain and after three days of intricate manoeuvring the cease fire was given.

#### Newmarket

124. — On the 5 Oct the Echelon Group under the paymaster supported by troops of 102 Bty went of an administrative exercise known as Addex. The following day advance parties left the Wisbech area for Newmarket and on 8 Oct the 8 Cdn LAA Regt moved to that vicinity. RHQ occupied White Lodge, and the 70 Bty went to Links Stud. The 101 meanwhile moved into Chevely Stud and the 102 found billets at Dillingham.

#### Heacham

125. — On the arrival at Newmarket the Regt continued its preparations for the large scale exercises that were to come. The 102 Bty went to Heacham on the Wash for firing on the 14th of the month, but was unable to shoot due to bad visibility. The other Btys and RHQ remained busy with maintenance and administrative preparations for the schemes.

#### Newmarket

126. — On 18 Oct the Regt departed from Newmarket to join the Div for Exercise Grizzly. In this Exercise 70 Bty was to supply AA defence for 4 Cdn Armoured Brigade, 101 for the gun area and 102 for 10 Cdn Infantry Brigade.

#### Newmarket

127. — The exercise had been aptly named. It was a grizzly six days of soaking rain, mud, fog, night moves, accidents, misadventures and complete discomfort. It did however accomplish what it set out to do. It gave everyone from the GOC to the last Private a taste of large scale movement and manoeuvre and a realistic opportunity to test administration and operational tactics under very adverse conditions. The long columns stalled on the roads, the difficulties of communication and supply, the hardships of night moves carried out in complete black-out, the deployment in crowded



areas. All these features and many others were encountered and mastered during the six days manoeuvring. Nothing like Grizzly ever happened on operations, which in itself probably fully justifies the exercise.

#### Newmarket

128. — The 8 Cdn LAA Regt returned to the Newmarket area for a week of conferences and post mortems, of maintenance and of rest. A great many lessons had been learned on Grizzly and immediate steps were taken to plug the gaps in training, wherever they were found.

#### Thetford

129. — On 1 Nov the Regt was again on the road rolling towards the Thetford and Stanford Battle Area for Exercise Bridoon. Reduced to its simplest terms, the tactical situation was this: a chrome mine of great importance was located directly between the 4 Canadian Armoured Div and 9 Armoured Div (Br). Each division sought to capture the mine and hold it long enough to extract the ore. Whoever successfully accomplished this task won. In Exercise Bridoon the 70 Bty had a bridge-holding role. The 101 Bty deployed to protect the infantry and in addition was used to cover certain defiles against attack. The 102 provided the "umbrella" for the gun area.

#### Thetford

130. — From the start Bridoon was a much more interesting and successful exercise than Grizzly. For the LAA particularly the advent of "hostile" aircraft on behalf of the 9 Armd Div was stimulating. Numerous "engagements" took place and numerous "kills" were recorded. Again there were long blacked-out moves after dark; the deploying and redeploying; the inevitable rain. But the Regt had learned its lessons from Grizzly well, and it functioned during the entire exercise like a well-oiled machine.



*Compo again!! Let's get crackin' with that Sten!  
Norfolk 1943.*

#### Thetford

131. — The feature of the exercise came on 3 Nov when 9 Armd Div, benten to the mine, staged a terrific armoured attack. Bofors guns of the Regt, deployed well forward in the infantry area were among the first anti-tank weapons that the tanks encountered. Cunningly concealed Bofors, hidden in the lines of hedges and in every nook and cranny (as one trooper succinctly put it — "How the Christ many Bofors are there in a division anyway?") sniped at the armour from all sides, and when finally the referees ordered "cease fire" the gunners were satisfied with the soundness of their tactics.

#### Thetford

132. — The "cease fire" Bridoon was accompanied by an AA alert and the Bofors were immediately manned for a genuine shoot. Aircraft were heard throbbing overhead and a heavy AA Bty in a nearby town sent up a barrage. Fresh from its mythical kills on Bridoon however the 8 LAA got no chance to draw real blood.

#### Barton Mills

133. — At the termination of Bridoon the 4 Cdn Armd Div moved to a concentration area near Barton Mills. The exercises were over. On 5 Nov the long move south was made and at dusk the 8 LAA rumbled into Pippingford Park Camp, its winter quarters for 1943.



# Pippingford Park, Sussex, and the South Coast

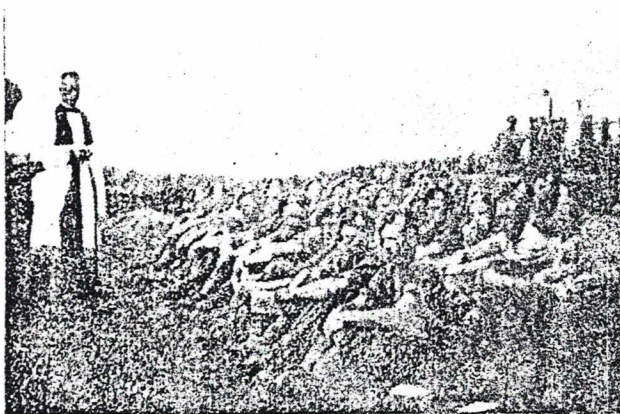
6 Nov 43—16 Feb 44

**Pippingford Park** 134. — Mention the word „rest” or „concentrate” or any synonym which may come to your mind and watch the eyebrows of the LAA gunners up. „Rest?” he will say with a world of skepticism „never heard of it!”

**Pippingford Park** 135. — Certainly the word „rest” has for the LAA Regts a different meaning than for other army units. It was so in England and it was so on the continent. LAA Regts in England were either vigorously training or on operational roles. Seldom did they rest, in the accepted Army sense.

**Stiffkey** 136. — The Regt installed itself in its chilly quarters at Pippingford Park on 6 Nov. It had been promised a rest. But it came as no surprise to the gunners when they learned that the fighting echelon would proceed to Stiffkey Camp for firing practice on 10 Nov. To them that was a normal rest.

**Stiffkey** 137. — The journey to Norfolk was by rail, and the Regt entrained at nearby Forest Row. There was little to distinguish the trip to Stiffkey from that to any firing camp, except perhaps that the weather was colder even than usual it seemed. There was one innovation which the gunners enjoyed. Two drogues were towed in the sky at the same time, and in addition a mock tank was available for shooting. The detachments with plenty of ammunition this time had a chance to see how quickly they could change from one target to another. The Regt as a whole did very well at this sort of thing, and again emphasized its proven excellence, both in AA and anti-tank shooting



Skypilot Mc Connell and his sheep. England 1944.

**Pippingford Park** 138. — The Btys had returned from Stiffkey to Pippingford Park by 24 Nov. On the 25th two troops from the 70 Bty were off to give AA protection to 4 Cdn Armd Brigade at Lydd. Then came „G” troop's turn. Units of 2 Canadian Infantry Div were holding exercises and that troop provided the AA cover.

**South Coast** 139. — On 8 Dec the 8 LAA Regt went under command 5 AA Brigade R.A. and moved to the south coast for operational duty. RHQ was set up in Hove, while the troops deployed on ADGB sites at Shoreham, Worthing, Portslade, Littlehampton and Borden. The units remained deployed on these sites for a month and a half spending Christmas manning the guns. Night after night they were alerted by hostile aircraft. The ill-luck which had dogged the Regt from the first persisted and not one round was fired in anger during the entire period.

**Borden** 140. — In order to keep the men on their toes during this trying period of inactivity numerous high officers took it upon themselves to stimulate interest by inspections. Always outspoken, these visitors did achieve the result of stimulating the detachments on the guns. On such an inspection one English Brigadier descended upon a gun-site under the command of B15507 Sgt (now BSM) J. A. Lodge. At every turn the Brigadier had some new suggestion or some penetrating criticism to make. Sgt Lodge was driven from pillar to post under a barrage of acrimonious remarks. At last thoroughly blistered by the Brigadier's comments, Sgt Lodge looked him in the eye and in his most impeccable manner said „Well thank you sir, for being so frank”. No record was kept of the Brigadier's reply.

**Pippingford Park** 141. — There had from time to time been rumours from high sources to the effect that 20 mm guns would be added to the WE of LAA Regts. For this reason many officers and NCOs were trained on this type of weapon. When in December 10 C.I.B. requested instructors on 20 mm equipments the 8 LAA Regt was able to set up a school for the infantry at Possingworth Park under Lieutenant H. S. Lockwood. By the 21 Jan when the detachments turned over their sites to men of 3 Cdn LAA Regt RCA the school had wound up its affairs and 10 C.I.B. personnel had been well instructed on the secrets of the Polsten 20 mm gun.

**Pippingford Park** 142. — The return to Pippingford Park was the signal for a strenuous campaign on mine-clearing and allied subjects. Schools were established in the Regt and under trained personnel all ranks were instructed and tested on enemy mines and booby-traps.

**Pippingford Park** 143. — On 4 Feb the new commander of 2 Cdn Corps, Lt-Gen Simmonds, DSO, OBE, inspected 4 Cdn Armd Div. As usual the 8 Cdn LAA Regt was called upon to supply AA defences to the various concentration areas. Nevertheless a large proportion of the strength was available to parade for the inspection near Pippingford Park. It was an exceptionally cold raw day, and the steadiness of the men was a fine tribute to their training and discipline.



## Beachy Head

144. — The fighting echelon of the 8 LAA went to Beachy Head ranges on 6 Feb for anti-tank shooting. Veterans by this time at the engagement of dummy AFVs, the gunners filled the moving targets full of neat round holes.

## Pippingford Park

145. — Normal training was carried on for the balance of the month. Lessons were learned and re-learned and deployments practiced again and again. War is fortunately a dynamic thing and new techniques and equipment constantly kept an edge of interest to what otherwise would have been a most monotonous period of instruction.

## Cark

146. — Trained to a fine point and raring to go, the gun group of the Regt entrained for practice camp at Cark on 25 Feb. The 8 LAA Regt was now well known in this practice camp and the instructional staff was prepared for some excellent shooting. What in fact it saw was the most phenomenal shooting ever done by a LAA Regt in Great Britain. At all forms of fire control the gunners of the Regt were deadly and long before the series of shoots was finished it was obvious that all previous standards of LAA shooting had gone by the boards. To punctuate the results aircraft-recognition teams from the Regt established a new record for Great Britain in that phase of training. When the Regt left Cark on 9 Mar it had the record for line of sight rounds and for hits as well as the A.R. championship of Great Britain securely tucked away.

## Pippingford Park

147. — Life for the stay-at-homes of the Regt at Pippingford Park had not meanwhile been dull. It was a period of important inspections and on 28 and 29 of February and 9 April respectively they were paraded successively for Maj Gen Worthington, General Bernard Law Montgomery and H.M. the King.

## Possingworth Park

148. — Recces had already been carried out for a new camp south of Pippingford when the Regt returned from Cark. Despite the construction of vehicle standings and other improvements in the old area, it had been decided that other accommodation was to be occupied by the 8 LAA Regt. On 9 March the lines of Pippingford Park were vacated and the Regt moved into Possingworth Park Camp.

## Possingworth Park, Sussex

16 Mar 44—27 Jul 44

## Possingworth Park

149. — In a remote part of Sussex, about four miles west of the village of Henthfield lies Possingworth Park Camp, so called because of its proximity to a hotel of the same name. The Camp consists of a battered group of drab Nissen huts distributed with supreme abandon on a gentle slope running down to a charming little lake. The area is famous for the rhododendrons in the spring, the dahlias in the fall, and the mud all the time.

## Possingworth Park

150. — It was to this camp that RHQ, 70 and 101 Btys repaired on 16 Mar 44. 102 finding the facilities crowded at Possingworth Park, remained only one night, moving the next day to the Burwash area nearby. The 102 Officers Mess was established in the vicinity of the Bell Inn. The troops, detached, found comfortable billets close at hand.

## Possingworth Park

151. — On the 17 March the Regt was augmented by three new 20 mm troops. They had formerly been part of 7 Cdn LAA Regt RCA, which had shortly been disbanded, and the W.E. of the 8 LAA Regt had been altered to include one extra troop per Bty. Their establishment called for 20 mm Polsten guns on a scale of six per troop, but on arrival at Possingworth this equipment was not yet available.

## Possingworth Park

152. — The arrival of these three new troops made the 8 LAA Regt RCA easily the largest Regt in the Division and one of the largest in the entire British army. It took a certain amount of time digest them into our organization. Most of their personnel had served for several years with the 7 LAA Regt and were understandably bitter at the change both of Regts and of equipments. This attitude altered as they became more familiar with the 8 LAA set-up and they soon became as enthusiastic about their Polstens as they had ever been with the Bofors.

## Possingworth Park

153. — March and April were months devoted to training in all forms, with operational roles coming up every few days demanding the services of one or more troops of the Regt. On 22 March 70 Bty deployed to give AA protection to 5 Anti-Tank Regt RCA. On the 30th of the month 102 Bty deployed in the area Arundel to cover 6 Cdn Infantry Brigade. And numerous schemes on a Bty and troop level were carried out during the period.

## Possingworth Park

154. — Gun-pit blowing became a part of the training. Competitions were held between detachments blowing and detachments digging gun-pits, and it was found that there was little to choose between the two methods. 101 and 102 Btys in particular investigated the merits of both types of construction rather carefully.



**Lydd** 155. — The units spent the first three days of April at Lydd, Kent on the anti-tank ranges. The weather was on the whole very good and some first class shooting materialized. A first class yarn concerning Capt W. C. Burge also emerged from the expedition.

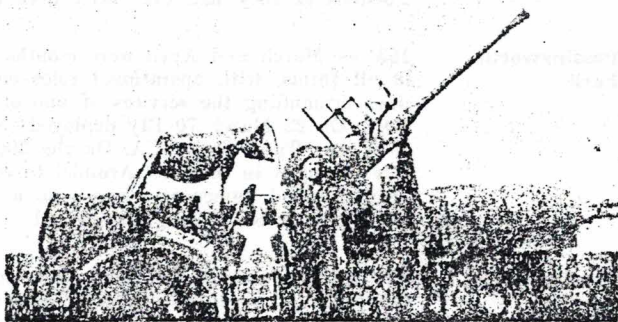
**Lydd** 156. — Capt. Burge, Troop Commander „A” troop was moving his guns down to the firing point one afternoon. There had been several administrative lapses by the camp staff that day and Capt. Burge was seething with righteous indignation. Now to top it off, he had no instructions as to where to put his guns. At firing camps, each L.G. on the staff (normally with a Captain’s rank) wears a red band on his cap as a symbol of his appointment. Capt. Burge caught sight of such a cap and racing over he spun its wearer around and demanded „Where shall I put my guns?”

**Lydd** 157. — The wearer of the red band looked at him in amazement. „I beg your pardon!” he exclaimed.

**Lydd** 158. — Capt. Burge repeated the question with greater emphasis.

**Lydd** 159. — A ghost of a smile flickered across the officer’s face. „I really don’t know” he replied, „I suggest you ask one of the staff. I am Brigadier Lane”.

**Possingworth Park** 160. — By April it was felt that „D” Day for the invasion of the continent was drawing close at hand. Each day the sky was full of bombers of the U.S.A.A.F. winging their way across the sky to bomb enemy targets, and each night the earth shook as R.A.F. „heavies” took to the air. Special instructions and intelligence marked „Top Secret” kept the orderly rooms humming. The feeling of tension was also heightened by certain extraordinary preparations which had not heretofore been taken.



Ford 40 mm S.P. (convertible) 1944 model.  
(See your local dealer!)

**Possingworth Park** 161. — One of these preparations was the training of M.T. personnel in the water proofing of vehicles and guns. Wading pools near at hand for M.T. were constantly in use, and courses ran full blast training drivers in the complicated task of water-proofing their vehicles.

**Possingworth Park** 162. — A further change in the W.E. also came into effect. It had been known for several months that self-propelled Bofors were to be issued in lieu of tractor-drawn guns on the scale of six per Bty. At a conference the CO laid down the policy that the third troop in each Bty, viz „C” „F” and „J” troops would be thus equipped. On 11 April the first six of these new equipments arrived and were distributed on the basis of two per Bty. The S.P. guns were English-made and mounted on Morris chassis. They had been provided with joy-stick control (power operated) and for a time personnel were trained at this form of control. Events proved that operation of the weapon by this means was unsatisfactory and eventually the power-units and joysticks were removed.

**Possingworth Park** 163. — On 22 April a warning re Operation Overlord was received and the following day, as if to clinch the thing 101 Bty was summarily ordered to proceed to Portsmouth on a special task.

**Portsmouth** 164. — What was this special task which was so important and so very secret? General Montgomery had moved his H.Q. to the Portsmouth area to more closely superintend the build-up for the invasion. And the 101 Bty had the honour of being selected to provide cover for the HQ there. The Bty (plus „A” troop, less „J” troop) moved off on 24 April and deployed about the HQ as ordered where it remained until 8 June 44. Its orders were very strict. It was absolutely not to fire under any circumstances except in case of a direct attack on the HQ itself.

**Portsmouth** 165. — As it happened no such attack occurred. But the general area of Portsmouth was soundly pestered by enemy bombers on several occasions, and the men of the Bty were often forced to sit grinding their teeth while German HE bombs came screeching down, splattering the area much too closely for peace of mind.

**Possingworth Park** 166. — Back at Possingworth careful training continued. On 25 April „B” and „D” troops were out on operations during Exercise Lift. Three days later 70 and 102 Btys returned to Belle Tout Ranges at Beachy Head for anti-tank shooting. Soon too, return trips to Clacton-on-Sea for firing were instituted with 70 and 102 Btys rotating.

**Possingworth Park** 167. — A task for 102 Bty (plus „J” troop 101) came up on 17 May. Right Hon. W. L. MacKenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada was to inspect elements of 4 Cdn Armd Div, and it became the task of the troops mentioned to ensure that the concentration of equipment and distinguished personages was not molested by the Luftwaffe.



**Passingworth Park**

168. — It was a singularly impressive march past with almost every form of weapon in 4 Cdn Armd Div on parade except the Bofors guns. These were perched on the tops of lonely hills or tucked away in cleverly-sited positions, watching and almost hoping that intruders would come to permit them to display their wares. Needless to say, intruders did not interfere.

**Passingworth Park**

169. — Further changes were proposed for the flexible. LAA W.E. Higher authorities seriously contemplated providing the 20 mm troops of the 8 LAA Regt with 4.2 mortars. A course for training the men of these troops with 4.2 mortars was at once started under the auspices of the New Brunswick Rangers. On 23 May on a demonstration shoot they displayed great accuracy with the mortars dropping bombs very close to targets 1800 yards distant. On 23 May also the Bofors troops of 70 and 102 Btys found themselves with an operational job. Gen Eisenhower inspected 4 Cdn Armd Brigade on that day. Dotted around the armour were the watchful Bofors guns of the 8 LAA Regt.

**Portsmouth**

170. — In the Portsmouth area the 101 Bty had a ring-side seat at the greatest marshalling area of them all. Long convoys of water-proofed vehicles rolled incessantly towards the port until the whole area was saturated with military equipment. In the harbour hundreds upon hundreds of small boats of all description rode at anchor while further off shore the black shapes of larger vessels dotted the water.

**Portsmouth**

171. — By 5 June the concentration was at its maximum. There seemed not a square foot of land available for military equipment. The roads, the streets, the fields were choked with men and supplies. „D” Day was surely close at hand — but when?

**Portsmouth**

172. — An officer of the 101 Bty was sitting by the phone in BHQ on 5 June when the bell jangled imperatively. He picked up the receiver and a voice from the other end of the wire announced briefly — „Strawberries are on sale today”.

**Portsmouth**

173. — The officer, mildly perplexed put down the phone. It seemed a frivolous sort of a message to come over an operational line. But out of a sense of duty he called up the troops and asked them to submit their demands for strawberries, never dreaming that hidden in that innocent sentence was the code which was to launch the world's greatest armada onto the beaches of Normandy.

**Portsmouth**

174. — 6 June — „D” Day!

**Portsmouth**

175. — The whole world stood still with bated breath while the allies performed the most difficult of all military manoeuvres — the sieging and holding of a bridgehead on the enemy occupied coast of Normandy. The air activity was tremendous and interspersed with the endless shuttle of bombers and fighters were the glider trains bringing relief to the paratroops which had dropped the previous night.

**Passingworth Park**

176. — Waterproofing had been going on apace at Passingworth. The 101 Bty, its task complete at Portsmouth, hastened back to commence preparing its equipment for the voyage to Normandy.

**Passingworth Park**

177. — The 20 mm troops, now up to W.E. in Polsten guns, were experimenting with ground mounts improvised by the ROEME section of the Regt under Capt. Ilec Marion. In trials they proved satisfactory and converted a high velocity AA weapon into a deadly heavy machine gun for ground shooting.

**Passingworth Park**

178. — On 10 June the last of the self-propelled 40 mm guns arrived. Under the spur of the invasion the three S.P. troops worked day and night until the necessary maintenance and modifications had been accomplished to make them battle-worthy.

**Passingworth Park**

179. — Personnel of the Regt were sitting around their respective messes, or lounging in their quarters on the night of 13 June talking with animation about the campaign in Western Europe. Above the chatter of the conversation came the crescendo drone of an aircraft heading towards the camp. Talking stopped. Ears were cocked in the direction of the sound.

**Passingworth Park**

180. — There was something definitely wrong! The aircraft was too low, and the beat of its engine too irregular to be functioning normally. People dashed outside, and those with keen eyes perceived a glowing red light flashing across the sky, accompanied by a deafening roar that rattled the windows and drowned all other sounds. The thing rumbled onwards towards London and in a few seconds was out of earshot. Slowly the conversation was resumed.

**Passingworth Park**

181. — It was a day or two later that the cause of this phenomenon and subsequent similar disturbances was ascertained. Then they knew! The first of the German reprisal weapons — the V-1 — had been launched against England!



**Passingworth Park**

182. — The Regt was on the „main line” for London of these robombs. At first it was quite a sport to watch them streak across the sky with fighters in hot pursuit. But on the 17 of June one of them, hit by Flak from the Guards Armd Div just south of Heathfield, suddenly cut out over the camp and came crashing to earth with a terrific explosion near the Passingworth Park Hotel. The Hotel was badly damaged by the blast. Two people died as a result of injuries received from the explosion. And Lieutenant W. S. Russell was taken to the hospital with wounds from fragments of the bomb. Thereafter a more healthy respect for the missiles was vouchsafed.



**Possingworth  
Park**

183. — Major-General G. Kitching, GOC 4 Cdn Armd Div, inspected the Regt on 15 June. He briefly outlined the role of the Div in operations to come and commented on the splendid record of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt. The frank address sent the gunners back to their waterproofing with renewed vigor.

**Possingworth  
Park**

184. — By the end of June waterproofing had been completed, A.V. battledress had been issued and the Regt was expectantly waiting orders to move. Hard fighting at Caen and bad weather on the channel was holding up the movement of troops however, and day after day went by without word to leave.

**Possingworth  
Park**

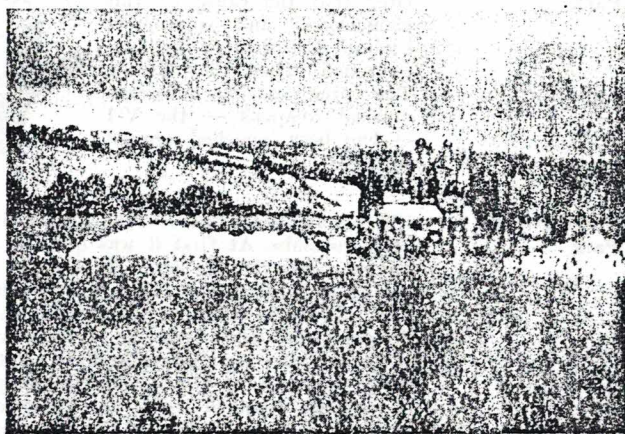
185. — On the 28 June the 20 mm troops put on a show for the GOC. They demonstrated their prowess with the Polstens in a ground role and also put on a shoot with the 4.2 mortars. It was a first-class exhibition which thoroughly pleased the General.

**Possingworth  
Park**

186. — Anti-Aircraft Command was busy setting up anti-V-1 belts of guns in Sussex. The 8 Cdn LAA Regt was called upon to deploy eighteen guns in a killing ground. On the 6th of July three composite troops, one from each Bty, deployed south east of Possingworth Park Camp.

**Possingworth  
Park**

187. — The troops found the „Divers” were very difficult targets and it took several engagements before they were able to obtain hits. On the 9th of July the eighteen detachments were sitting on their guns when the warning came. Eyes strained to the south and finally a low, swiftly-moving speck was discerned. A tremendous barrage was sent up and almost at once hits were observed. The robomb came plunging to earth and exploded harmlessly in an empty field. Which detachments had actually scored could not be determined. All were sure that it was their gun which had destroyed the bomb.



*Scratch one doodle-bug! That smoke on the horizon is it!!*



*Orders!! Map-markers Burge, McVilvie, Brown and Kennedy do their stuff.*

**Possingworth  
Park**

188. — Again on the 11th of July the guns scored hits on robombs one of which was seen to go crashing to the ground. Again the credit for the victory was impossible to place. It was a success for the Regt and not for any one gun.

**Possingworth  
Park**

189. — Claims for both these kills were submitted and months later it was learned that the 8 Cdn LAA Regt had earned the distinction of being the only Canadian Regt to partake in kills of V-1s in the United Kingdom with its own guns. The detachments were withdrawn from the shoot on the 18th of July in order to prepare for the trip to Normandy.

**Possingworth  
Park**

190. — It has been said that waterproofing had been completed by the end of June. However on the 9th of July, new Canadian-built Ford S.P. guns were provided to the three S.P. troops. It meant much hard work for these troops as the new equipments had all to be waterproofed and prepared for action in the shortest possible time. In many ways they were superior to the Morris S.Ps however and painting and servicing them became a labour of love.

**Possingworth  
Park**

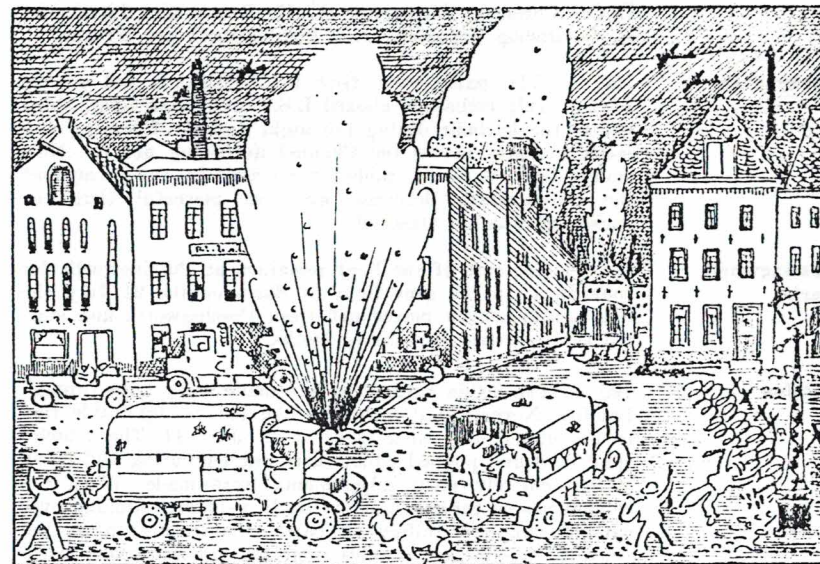
191. — There had been much time devoted to ground shooting by the 40 mm troops. Most of the officers and a great proportion of the men had been trained in field gunnery and they were convinced that the Bofors could be a very useful field gun. In particular Lt-Col Cormack and Lieutenant Alex Cairns advocated this role for the Bofors guns. On the 14th of July ground shoots were held at Lewes which completely justified every claim which had been made for the guns. They were exceedingly accurate, easy to lay, and provided a substantial burst which would undoubtedly be most unpleasant in the neighborhood of the target area.



- Portsmouth** 192. — By the 16th July sufficient „elbow-room” had been won in Normandy to warrant the use of the 4 Cdn Armcd Div. On that date the advance party of the Regt headed by Lt-Col Cormack, Lieutenant A. H. Brown and Lieutenant A. G. Bishop departed from Possingworth for France.
- Portsmouth** 193. — The party went first to Portsmouth and on the 17th of July embarked aboard L.S.T. 160. This vessel stood off in the harbour during the night and the following day sailed serenely across the Channel anchoring off the Normandy beaches. Night raids were staged by the enemy but the anti-aircraft defences were so powerful that the anchorage was not attacked.
- Possingworth Park** 194. — The rest of the Regt remained at Possingworth for four days. In the grey light of dawn on the 21 July the Regimental convoy moved off from Possingworth and started the road trip to Tilbury Docks.
- London** 195. — The 8 Cdn LAA Regt had made many trips through London. Never did it have one like the unforgettable ride to the marshalling area there on 21 July 44. The vehicles spluttered and popped under their water-proofing and many stalled entirely until adjustments were made. When the column passed through London itself V-1s were droning over cutting out and falling to earth almost on top of the convoy. Men on motorcycles went through purgatory when plaster and mortar from the damaged buildings of the city, pulverized by a million turning wheels, got into their eyes and throats.
- London** 196. — There was little respite at the docks. Robombs were dropping and exploding regularly in the area. The Regt itself experienced no casualties from this cause, but some other units suffered severely. Finally the Btys embarked and their vessels slid noiselessly down the Thames, anchoring off Southend for several days.
- Southend** 197. — There was an atmosphere of unreality on board ship. The sun shone down in all its splendor. The men sprawled on the decks basking in the sun or played cards in the lee of the cabins. „Horse races” were staged and excitement reached a fever-pitch. Each night too, like a pyrotechnic display put on for our benefit the AA of London staged its famous show as the buzz-bomb attacks increased in intensity. Talk about a „Phoney” war!
- Normandy** 198. — Finally came the end of the recess. First the ship carrying the 70 Bty, then that with the balance of the Regt, slipped down the coast under cover of darkness and in a short unmolested journey carried the 8 Cdn LAA Regt to the coast of France. On the afternoon of 27 July the low-lying hills and the church spires of Normandy were first seen, and in a few hours the vessels were lying off shore in the melee of ships and equipment about the beaches at Courseulles-sur-Mer.

*Active Service*

## Operation Totalize



On 29 Jul 44, 4 Cdn Armd Div (which had completely landed by 27 Jul) came under command of 2 Cdn Corps and two days later the command of all formations of 2 Cdn Corps passed to First Cdn Army. This Army was engaged at the time in the great holding role which was to permit the eventual American „right-hook“ to Argentan. As the situation deteriorated on the enemy's left flank it became necessary for him to weaken the strongly-held line barring the southward drive of 2 Cdn Corps towards Falaise. While 2 Cdn Corps was planning operation „Totalize“ which was to smash German resistance north of Falaise, 3 Cdn Infantry Div was withdrawn for a rest and refit. 4 Cdn Armd Div replaced 3 Div in the line on 30 July, 1944.

During the period of planning which preceded „Totalize“ minor attacks were mounted by 4 Cdn Armd Div, both for the purpose of maintaining pressure and to give battle experience to the newly arrived troops. On 2 Aug the Line and Worldt Regt supported by tanks made an unsuccessful attack on Tilly-la-Campagne. On 5 Aug the Lake Superior Regt made a similarly unsuccessful attack on La Hogne. Meanwhile operation „Totalize“ was being planned to break through the three defence lines before Falaise, with 4 Cdn Armd Div partaking in Phase II, the break-through along the Hautmesnil — St. Sylvain Line and Phase III, the exploitation about Falaise.



*Phase I, the break-in, was assisted by heavy bombers of Bomber Command. The second phase was supported by Fortresses and medium bombers of the 8th U.S.A.A.F. The first phase of the operation commenced at 2330 hours 7 Aug 44 and was completely successful, but the second phase (which included the dropping of bombs in 4 Cdn Armd Div area by misguided Fortresses) was stalled short of its ultimate objectives due to the quick deployment of enemy forces along a strong line passing through Quesnay Woods. By the 11 Aug a static situation had developed.*

#### Courseulles-sur-Mer

199. — The main body of the Regt was preceded to France by an advance party led by Lt-Col E. W. Cormack which disembarked at 0400 hours 19 July at „Jig” Beach, near Le Hamel, Normandy and by the 70 Bty which landed on 25 July. The balance of the units went ashore on 27—28 July at „Juno” Beach by Courseulles-sur-Mer. Some of the vehicles landed wet, some landed dry, but none it transpired required the elaborate job of waterproofing which had demanded so much of our time in England.

#### Courseulles-sur-Mer

200. — Courseulles, a sleepy little French village which had been propelled by the fortunes of war into the midst of a battle was now stunned and shocked by six week's war. On 28 June, miles back from the front, it remained a scrambled mass of stones through which the brutal bulldozers had driven a road. The civilians, still wary lest the Allies might yet be hurled back had little to say to the lorry loads of troops which rolled steadily through the ruins.

#### Cruelly

201. — The first stop of the Regt was in a concentration area near Cruelly. For miles, strewn about in the fields of golden grain, the vehicles and personnel of 4 Cdn Armd Div felt for the first time beneath them the soil of France.

#### Cruelly

202. — Disillusionment number one came almost immediately. The officers through force of habit had deployed the guns with a careful view to arcs of fire and mutual support, and each gunner had a conscious appetite for some honest-to-goodness shooting. When a „hold-fire” order came down from HQRCa therefore it was not happily received.

#### Cruelly

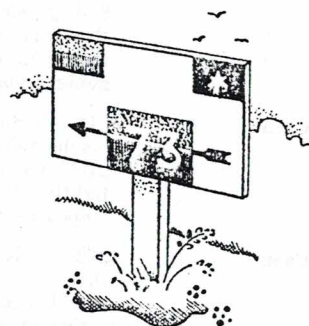
203. — The concentration area was well back from the lines and out of range of hostile artillery. But each night enemy intruders came in over the area to be greeted by great salvos of AA fire. The real danger lay not in the enemy bombers but in the shrapnel from our own shells. It was this which created the unanimous urge to get deep into the bosom of mother earth and caused the shovel to replace the dog as man's foremost friend.

#### Caen

204. — It was learned on 28 July that 4 Cdn Armd Div would partake in a three-way change-over involving 7 Armd Div (Br) and effecting the eventual relief of 3 Cdn Infantry Div. The 70 Bty was allotted the task of protecting 10 C.I.B. while 102 Bty was given a similar role with 4 C.A.B. The

#### Caen

101 Bty and RHQ, less the CO's Tactical H.Q., moved with Div Arty to the Admn Area. Recces were completed on the 28 July and liaison with the 4 Cdn LAA Regt (3 Div) finally established so that on the 29th July the first deployment in France was carried out without difficulty. The 70 Bty found that the AA defences about Caen were so numerous that only one 40 mm troop and the Bty 20 mm troop had space to deploy. The 102 Bty was able to deploy three troops, keeping one in reserve with the Admn Group, while 101 Bty complete, moved with RHQ to an unprepossessing field just south-west of the city of Caen.



205. — A reshuffling of the troops followed for the next two days. Troops of the 101 Bty joined in the defence of Caen and eventually when the take-over from 4 Cdn LAA was complete RHQ itself was established in the city. The sub-units deployed in the Caen defence were connected to AAOR by line. Other troops were by this time protecting the HQ of 4 Cdn Armd Div, of 4 C.A.B. and of 10 C.I.B. in addition to the 15 Field Regt RCA, the 4 R.H.A. and the 23 S.P. Regt R.C.A.

#### Caen

206. — Caen itself was of course a shambles. Great buildings lay flat or were heaped like canyon walls on either side of the routes of supply. The whole atmosphere was pungent with the sick, sweet smell of death. It was an unhealthy desolate, forlorn city which had died an awful death.

#### Caen

207. — There was virtually no hostile aircraft action over Caen during the hours of daylight, and ample breathing time was found to adjust the organization to a war-time operational basis. The enemy was still tossing shells into the city, and on the 31 July „J” troop fired a few rounds at a stray V-1 which passed over the city. But for the 40 mm troops which had been hoping for the first time to meet the German airforce in strength, there was a feeling of mild frustration at the scarcity of aircraft. Two of the 20 mm troops however, deployed forward of Caen with 4 C.A.B. and 10 C.I.B. respectively found life more lively under constant shelling and mortaring.

#### Caen

208. — There was a tragic side to life at Caen. One of the 20 mm detachments was completely wiped out by enemy shells. And at R.H.Q. a high-velocity gun which gave no time to take cover swiftly snuffed out two lives and caused several other casualties. But bitter though these losses were, it remained for Allied aircraft to inflict the greatest disaster of the war upon the Regt.



Caen

209. — With Totalize in the offing, the troops of the 8 LAA Regt were briefed on their jobs. They were to stick with and provide protection to the various units and H.Q.s to which they had been assigned right through the break-through and exploitation. To prepare for this operation the 101 Bty concentrated at Fauberg de Vaucelles just outside Caen.

Caen

210. — „G” troop was to be the first troop of the Bty to move off. Intelligence had been received that Phase I of the operation had succeeded on the night of 7—8 August and the troop, lined up in close column was preparing to move south in order to follow up the break-in at noon on the 8 Aug. Squadrons of American planes, the air support for Phase II, were drifting overhead, returning from the softening-up of German positions. Everything seemed to be going according to plan.

Caen

211. — Suddenly without warning, a cascade of American bombs fell upon the 101 concentration area. „J” troop and „H” troop still dispersed and under cover escaped very lightly. But „G” troop, exposed and concentrated was ripped asunder by the explosions.

Caen

212. — No battlefield was ever more gory than the area that day. Guns lay in smoking ruins. Vehicles snapped and crackled as the flames licked at their petrol tanks. Ammunition of all calibres up to 40mm exploded all round. But worst of all — the men!

Caen

213. — Some were killed outright by the bombs. Many others were wounded. But for the gallantry of those unhurt the losses of men and equipment would have been staggering. Outstanding in this rescue work was L 403 BSM G. A. Moffatt who was later awarded the Croix de Guerre and L 61838 Gur R. A. Bradshaw who was honoured by a M.I.D. But no man flinched or failed in that test of courage.

Caen

214. — To Lieutenant R. M. Armstrong must go credit for the most penetrating remark of the time. He was in a frail lean-to when the bombs shook the earth about him. Like any well-trained soldier Armstrong got as flat as he could and stayed that way. When it became clear that the raid was over he raised his head and sniffed the dust that hung everywhere in the air.

Caen

215. — „Boy!” he exclaimed „does that dust ever smell wonderful!”

Caen

216. — The four dead and forty-nine wounded plus the devastation of equipment of „G” troop eliminated it for a few days as a fighting entity. But while it was being reinforced and re-equipped the other troops were carrying out their AA functions.

Caen

217. — Phase II of the operation was only partially successful. Instead of a swift war of movement as had been anticipated the advance down the main Caen-Falaise road became slower and slower until finally a static type of war-fare

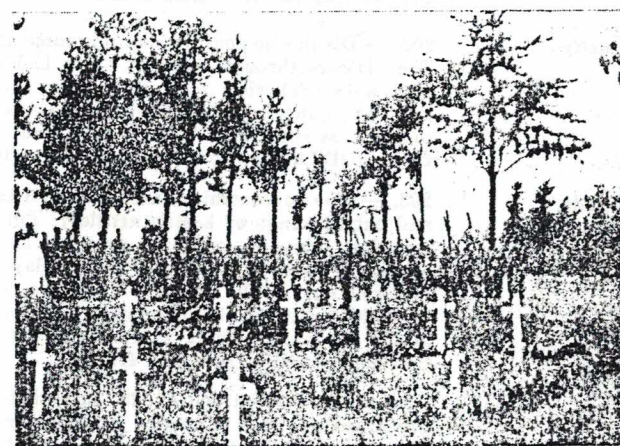
Caen

resulted. Up in the thick of it, dodging the shells and ducking the mortars were the troops of the 8 LAA Regt. They moved and deployed as the need arose, and were always ready, willing and able to beat off whatever planes the enemy had to send that way. Gerry, aware of the heavy AA concentrations which lay south of Caen, rarely sent aircraft over except at night. Whenever they came however the blazing guns of the Regt drove them off their 4 Div targets, and sent them wheeling away in search of easier prey.

Caen

218. — During this operation other grievous losses were inflicted on the Regt. On the 8 August, the blackest day in the history of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt, both Captain E. R. Waldie and Lieutenant A. H. Brown lost their lives through German shell-fire. Captain Clarence Estey, of „Z” Troop was wounded the same day, while Major J. A. Cook, Bty Commander of 70 Bty was also evacuated with wounds in the back. The next day casualties continued high with both Lieutenant Allan G. Bishop and Lieutenant David Ricardo among the officers being hit. Truly the Regt was suffering a painful battle inoculation. But ahead too, the Germans were being cut to pieces.

219. — If the 8 LAA Regt was being hard-hit it was dealing out some heavy blows as well. Particularly did the 20 mm troops extract casualties from the enemy. On the 12 August in support of the 18 Armd Car Regt, these troops moved forward to Pousst-la-Campagne, Fierville la Campagne and La Bu sur Rouvres where they took on opportunity targets with their 20 mm guns. This type of shooting proved very effective indeed and a savage vengeance was wreaked upon German troops. The ground mounts, perfected on the Downs of Sussex, worked without a falter, and the volume of fire laid down by these guns was terrifying to the enemy.

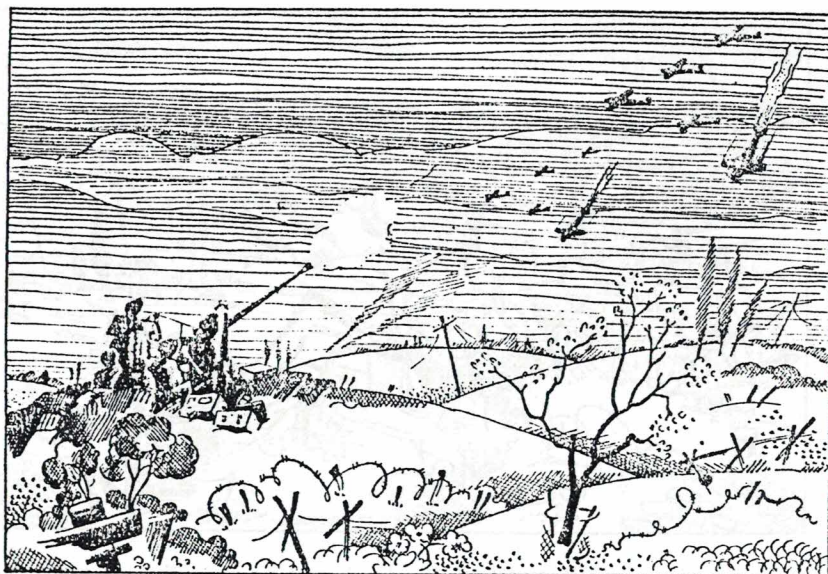


*The road to glory.....*



# Operation Tractable

14 Aug 44—17 Aug 44



The plan for this operation was to smash through a strong anti-tank line held by the enemy along the River Laison. Supported by two AGRAs plus the divisional artillery of the formations taking part, First Cdn Army also had the cooperation of 1400 heavy bombers from the R.A.F. whose purpose was to destroy opposition around Potigny which had stopped 4 Cdn Armcd Div in Operation Totalize. Having carried the Laison Line the infantry and armour of 4 Div was then to move forward to the high ground around Epancy overlooking Falaise and the escape routes to the east.

The attack began at 1200 hours 14 August with the tanks moving forward behind a smoke screen on a wide front towards the Laison. Despite a mishap whereby a large number of R.A.F. bombs fell on Allied troops in the Hautmesnil area, the Laison was carried by the tanks and Falaise was taken on 16 August by 2 Cdn Inf Div. Meanwhile 4 Div moved onto the high ground north east of Falaise and was preparing to drive on Trun.

St. Sylvain

220. — With each troop protecting either a HQ or a Regt and moving with the organization it supported, a wide decentralization of control existed during operations. The C.O. maintained a Tactical H.Q. with HQ RCA, and each Bty had a small Tac H.Q. with one of its troops. Where possible the whole Regt was netted in on a regimental

net, but during the swift war of movement, D.R. was the normal means of communication and often liaison between troops was difficult or virtually impossible.

St. Sylvain

221. — In Operation Tractable the troops followed the normal precept of moving with and deploying to protect the units with which they were associated. The weather which had smiled upon Normandy since the first of August continued to support the offensive. It was a perfect summers day for the big attack.

Hautmesnil

222. — During the morning of the 14th Aug a terrific build-up of every type of equipment had taken place north of the Quesnay Woods. Besides the Canadian troops there were Englishmen, Scots and Poles, all armed to the teeth and ready for the fray. The roads were choked with tanks, guns and vehicles and every suitable field harboured at least a complete Regt and often much more.

St. Sylvain

223. — The LAA troops of the 8th Regt were all teed up to go forward. But never for a moment did they relax their watch for hostile planes and never did they place themselves in a position where in the full weight of their fire could not at a moment's notice be delivered against possible German aircraft. For eternal vigilance is the AA gunner's lot.

St. Sylvain

224. — Bomber command R.A.F. was to intercede in the action. Well knowing this, at 1200 hours of the day of the attack all eyes were expectantly watching the horizon for the vanguard of the Lancasters which were to dispose of the immediate opposition on the front.

Quesnay Woods

225. — Promptly at noon on the 14 August the first wave of this tremendous force of planes, flying low and fast, appeared like a swarm of mosquitoes in the northern sky. As they approached their bomb-bays opened.

Quesnay Woods

226. — The Lancasters soared over head, past the guns. past the massive array of armour and as they wheeled above Quesnay Woods they released their bombs. A rumbling like thunder shook the ground and a terrific column of smoke immediately went up from the target area. More planes came and still more. The world seemed enveloped in the hum of their motors and the crump of their bombs. This was air support with a vengeance!

Hautmesnil

227. — How many waves of the planes had gone over and dumped their loads is difficult to say. For a few moments the sky was clear as one wave of planes departed and another approached for its run. Then as the new wave bore down upon the mass of allied equipment below it the bomb doors opened and the bombs, clearly visible to those on the ground came tumbling out and fell to earth in the midst of the white-starred equipment.

Hautmesnil

228. — A tremendous pillar of smoke and flame shot up. Other Lancasters seeing the conflagration added their contribution. Endlessly they came pounding away at the dense cloud of smoke taking a heavy toll of the men and supplies which were to support the forward troops of Operation Tractable.



#### Hautmesnil

229. — The bombing stopped as suddenly as it had begun. By far the largest weight had fallen on the enemy lines and the objective which it set out to accomplish was achieved. While the disaster was much more widely felt than the Fortress bombing a few days previous, the 8 Cdn LAA Regt escaped more lightly with five casualties and two equipments damaged.

#### Hautmesnil

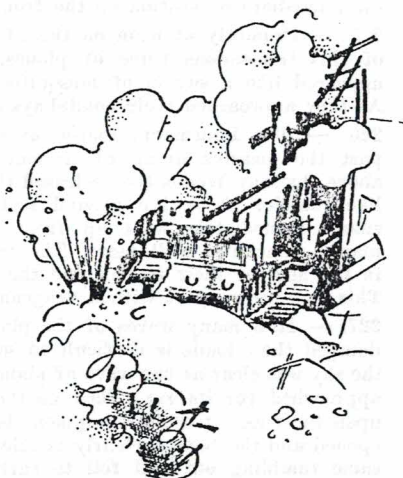
230. — Despite the disruption that the bombing caused the Operation was successful and a torrent of men and material poured through the breach to sustain the forward thrust. During the night the anxious Luftwaffe put up its heaviest bombers to shake our advance and destroy our communications. The Bofors gunners were ready for this contingency. They filled the sky with Flak and „C” troop 70 Bty was able to establish its claim for a Ju 88 on 15 August as a result of a successful shoot.

#### Laison River

231. — The great column surged down to the Laison River, flooded across it and spread over the anti-tank line which manned by fanatics of the 12 SS Division had so long delayed the advance. Prisoners came in by the hundreds as the maelstrom moved relentlessly forward.

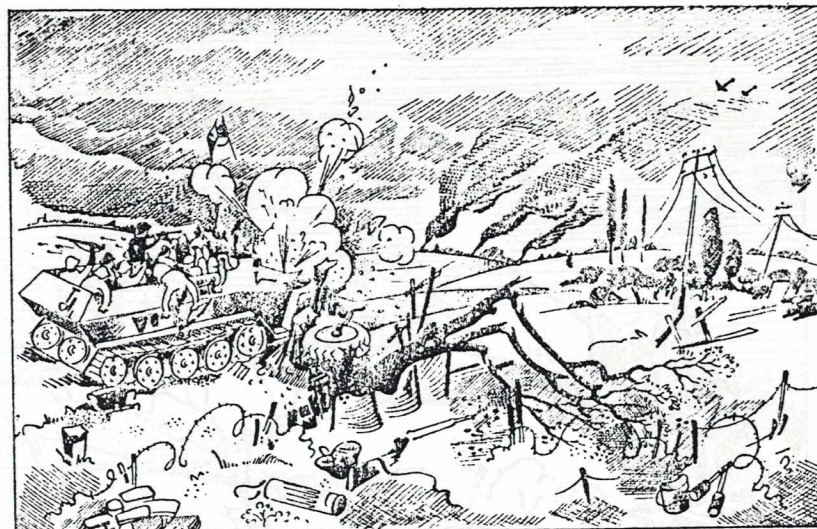
#### Perrieres

232. — By the 17 Aug, Falaise had fallen and the 8 LAA Regt, forward with the spearhead of the 4 Armd Div, was deployed along the chain of hills north east of the City of Falaise, spouts in the air and ready for business.



## Closing the Gap

17 Aug 44—22 Aug 44



By midnight 16—17 August the gap through which the remnants of the German 7 Army might escape towards the Seine was being steadily narrowed by 2 Cdn Corps attacking south from Falaise and by 5 U.S. Corps driving north from Argentan.

As its part, 4 Cdn Armd Div had the task of attacking south from the high ground east of Falaise and when the infantry brigade had seized a bridgehead across the Ante River at Damblainville, 4 Armd Bde was to advance along the main Falaise-Mandeville-Trun road.

The attack of 4 Div went in on 17 Aug, and failing to carry the Ante at Damblainville, the armour crossed the Dives further east at Mortcaux-Caulibocuf and then drove south. Armour of 4 Div entered Trun on the 18 August. The Div then plunged south towards Chambois but was held up at St. Lambert sur Dives. Meanwhile the Polish Armd Div, fighting a skilful and exhausting battle to the left of 4 Div, was able by obtaining supplies by air, to enter Chambois by the evening of the 19th and make contact with Allied troops moving up from the south.

By these manoeuvres the entire German Seventh Army had been encircled by Allied troops. The mouth of the bag between Trun and Chambois had been closed. For three days the artillery had a field day as it smashed the remains of the trapped divisions of the Wehrmacht. The enemy made several attempts to escape from the trap and continuous



*infiltration and attacks were carried out against the section held by formations under 4 Cdn Armd Div. With 12 Br Corps driving like a piston down the inside of the gap resistance collapsed by morning of 22 Aug and Cdn formations began forming pursuit groups for the chase to the Seine and beyond.*

#### Perrieres

233. — The troops of the Regt continued to afford the maximum AA protection throughout the division during this period of operations. The locale was the area east of Falaise and around the town of Trun.

#### Perrieres

234. — The division had moved out of the rolling wheat lands south of Caen and was now fighting for the control of a series of wooded hills from which it could completely dominate the escape routes by which the German Seventh Army was endeavouring to extricate itself. Fine weather prevailed and dry ground greatly facilitated the heavy movement of troops that the operations demanded.

#### Perrieres

235. — On 17 August the Regt was strung out along a wooded escarpment south of the villages of Epaney and Perrieres. It had arrived there by a series of swift moves cross-country and at 1100 hours the troops were deployed while awaiting a further advance. „G” troop had been parked on a heavily congested road and on Major R. J. Hegan's orders had been hastily removed from the road and thrown into action in a convenient field.

#### Perrieres

236. — From the south a formation of unidentified planes came snarling up. There was a moment's doubt, and then as the low wing, the sinister blunt nose and the characteristic fin and rudder of the F.W. 190 were recognized up went a volley of 40mm shells.

#### Perrieres

237. — From Sergeant La Rocque's gun it was a picturebook engagement. The indolent tracer, like a cat playing with a mouse, reached for a plane—missed—and reached again. There was the characteristic puff of black smoke and a wing was shorn off with surgical efficiency. The gun swung onto another target.



#### Perrieres

238. — At the 102 Bty Sergeants Langford, Holden and Henderson trained three lethal streams of tracer against the intruders. As they watched one—two—three planes came careening down to earth, while others mortally wounded fluttered south to the dubious protection of their own lines.

#### Perrieres

239. — It had been a sensational series of engagements. Three out of the twelve planes which came over had been shot out of the skies. Several others had been seriously crippled. But more important still, the formation had been cut to ribbons and driven off at a moment when the division, forced by defiles into long exposed columns was particularly vulnerable to air attack.

#### Trun

240. — The remains of the 20 mm troops also found action in this operation. They had received orders to turn in their equipment and return to the reinforcement pool for re-deployment, but this process had not been completed by 17 Aug. A „buckshee” troop of nine guns on ground mounts under command of Captain W. M. Buck and Lieutenant A. D. MacLennan, refusing to miss the battle, attached itself to the Lincoln and Welland Regiment as a supporting arm.

#### Trun

241. — This Regt came in for heavy fighting, for it was the spearhead of the Division, and the first battalion to enter the key town of Trun. The whole of this spearhead was armoured with one exception — the nine 20 mm guns of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt. How they were able to survive the journey to Trun mystified their armour-clad comrades. Having reached the town however these detachments — the remains of „X”, „Y”, and „Z” troops — immediately proved their worth.

#### Trun

242. — West of Trun (which was a principal bolt-hole for the enemy) the Hun was in a frenzy. Like a great fish the Seventh Army had been caught in a gigantic net and time and time again it lunged desperately at the meshes which confined it. Numerous counter-attacks were launched against Trun but the infantry and armour held firm. The Polsten guns of the 8 LAA Regt were murderous and demoralizing. Each time they stopped firing German soldiers, their hands held high, raced over the surrender.

#### Trun

243. — The 40 mm troops moved to the Trun area with the main body of 4 Div, taking up defensive positions along the eastern edge of the „bag”. Below in the valley they could see the death struggle of an entire army.

#### Trun

244. — Allied artillery surrounded the enemy sweeping the pocket from one end to the other. Planes of the Tactical Air Force which for days had been ripping the retreating columns of Germans to shreds, continued to ruthlessly pound every moving object in the shrinking net. Every high-way and bi-way was a charnel-house of the slaughtered foe. The devastation was incomparable, appalling.

#### Trun

245. — There was some infiltration through our lines. Occasional vehicles were able to slip through the cordon of Canadian, British and American troops. But one German half-track at least found escape of that nature a dangerous expedient.



Trun

246. — On 20 August an armoured troop-carrier loaded with Germans came racing up the road and swung off heading cross-country. Again Sergeant La Rocque and Sergeant Henderson had a chance to prove their marksmanship. Tracer whipped across the intervening 300 yards and unerringly found its mark. The half-track went up in a sheet of flame and its surviving passengers were swiftly made prisoner.

Trun

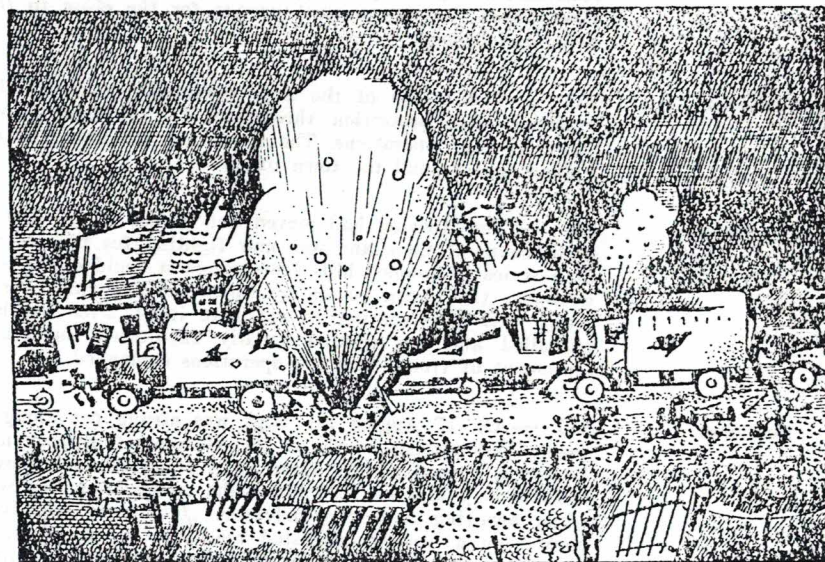
247. — Prisoners came in during the 21st and 22nd at such a rate that it was almost beyond the ability of the division to look after them. Lt-Col Cormack brought three in at the pistol-point himself. The 8 LAA Regt was ordered to strip its detachments to the minimum in order to help guard the prisoners. The German however was beaten and docile. Perhaps one deterrent was the French Forces of the Interior. These men, armed with German equipment had no love for the enemy, and the prisoner who found himself in the protective custody of Canadian troops had cause to be thankful.

Trun

248. — The net had been wrung by night-fall of the 21st August. But swift action was necessary to prevent the remnants of the Seventh Army from joining up with troops of the Fifteenth Army along the Seine. On the 23 Aug therefore, the Regt redeployed for a swift move towards Rouen.

## Pursuit

23 Aug 44—11 Sept 44



On 23 Aug, 4 Cdn Armd Div on the right flank of the drive of 2 Cdn Corps towards the Seine River moved off on a narrow front. Progress was excellent and on 25 Aug the Div crossed the Risle River at Fontaine. The leading elements of 4 C.A.B. reached the Seine between Criquebeuf and Pont de L'Arche on 26 Aug. By evening of that day 10 CIB had patrols across the Seine and the following day the remaining battalions moved across in assault boats. By the 27 Aug ferries were in operation at Criquebeuf. Orders were issued on 28 Aug for 4 Div to complete its crossing and during the day 4 Cdn Armd Bde crossed the bridge at Elbeuf while 10 CIB used the ferries at Criquebeuf.

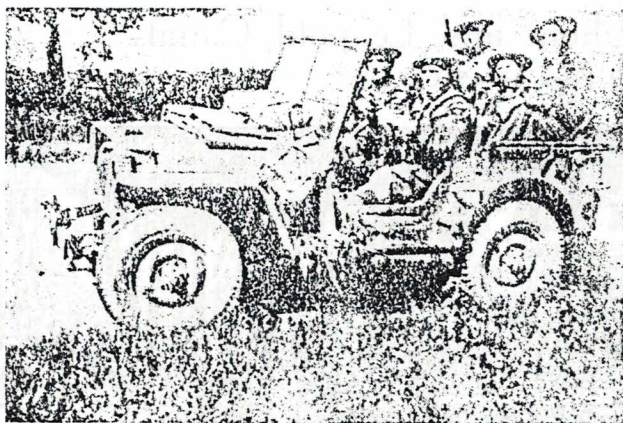
The pursuit continued at an accelerated pace through northern France. Formations from First Cdn Army swung off to liberate the Channel Ports. 4 Div advanced rapidly on a route parallel with the coast and behind the Ports. It crossed into Belgium, was held up momentarily on the Ghent Canal, and then went forward towards Holland.

Meanwhile 2 Br Army was racing towards Holland, and preparing the stage for the airborne attempt to seize Arnhem and a gateway to the north German plains.

Trun

249. — The war up until the 23 Aug had been rather a slugging match for the First Canadian Army. While the Americans were stealing the headlines in a series of brilliant





*Reece Party? Or RCEME on the prowl? Who knows — and who cares?*

advances, the Canadians had been forced to fight for every inch of ground. But now the track was clear and General Crerar's forces were finally in a position to exploit their great mobility.

**Trun**

250. — In 4 Div, pursuit groups, streamlined to include little more than essential fighting personnel were swiftly organized. In the 8 Cdn LAA Regt vehicles which had heretofore been regarded as essential to fighting efficiency were dropped off at Echelon. Speed was the key-note and no unnecessary equipment was permitted to travel in the vanguards.

**Trun**

251. — The deployment of a LAA Regt is well suited to a war of movement and constant training in England made it possible for the 8 LAA Regt to move and deploy with 4 Cdn Div so that at no time the column without anti-aircraft protection.

**Trun**

252. — The Div columns wheeled away on 23 Aug, a long sinuous snake bristling with armour and armament. At first movement was relatively slow. The roads were littered with destroyed enemy armour and guns, slaughtered by rocket-bearing Typhoons of The Air force. So dense in spots was the debris that bulldozers were needed to plough a path for the vehicles behind.

**Le Sap**

253. — As Trun and its grizzly memories were left behind however speed increased. Opposition, shattered by the disaster of the Seventh Army, had not yet reformed and only occasionally was there more than slight resistance.

**Bernay**

254. — The swift procession through Le Sap, Bernay, Neuborg and Tostes was a memorable one. In Normandy the reception of the liberators had been somewhat phlegmatic. But now the reserve was gone and in its stead was an enthusiasm which somehow seemed to justify the whole conflict.

**Neuborg**

255. — The column raced through towns and villages at break-neck speed, to be hailed and cheered by wildly excited town-folk. Vehicles were pelted with flowers and fruit. At each stop coffee or cognac were pressed on the men by the deliriously happy French. Crude signs bearing words of welcome and patriotic slogans were strung across the roads. From each house the tricolour of France proudly fluttered. Even the weather seemed to enter into the celebration. The sun shone brightly and warmly for almost the entire period.

**Tostes**

256. — On 26 August advance elements of the division had reached the Seine. They included the irrepressible 20 mm men who had travelled with the Lincoln and Welland Regt.

**Seine River**

257. — The Germans had rushed troops down from the Pas de Calais region and it was considered possible that the Seine might be stubbornly defended. Some opposition was in fact encountered and some casualties were sustained. The 20 mm troop was firing across the Seine when a shell fell in the Troop H.Q. One man was killed, two were seriously injured and Captain W. M. Buck himself was wounded. Similarly one 40 mm detachment was hit by a shell while digging in near the river. Eight men were lost by this misfortune, two being instantly killed.

**Criquebeuf**

258. — This opposition was soon overcome and in a remarkably short time ferries were plying back and forth across the Seine. The fighting echelons of the Regt went across at Criquebeuf and Elbeuf on 28—29 August. The „A“ Echelon followed on 31st of the month.

**Elbeuf**

259. — The remains of the 20 mm troops were finally disbanded on 29 Aug. For over two-weeks they had evaded their fate during which time their chattering Polstens had written a deadly saga from Caen to Criquebeuf. But now the demand for reinforcements prevailed even over so valiant a record and the detachments fell back for disbanding. Fortunately many of them could be absorbed in the Regt, and were able to continue the fight under the banner of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt.

**Ernemot  
sur Buchy,  
Hornoy**

260. — On swept the advance towards Abbeville and the Somme. On through Ernemot sur Buchy, on through Hornoy, on to Hallencourt, on the Somme river. Always the reception was the same — the cheering crowds, the flowers.

**Pont Remy,  
Epagny**

261. — The Somme River was crossed at Pont Remy on the 3 Sep. For three days planning, re-deployment and maintenance went on in the area of Epagny, where it was learned that the Div was to drive on in two Battle groups to an area north of Ghent. The C.O. sent 70 Bty to support 4 C.A.B. Group while 101 Bty went to 10 CIB Group. 102 Bty remained with the Div Arty Regts.

**St. Omer**

262. — On 6 Sep the chase was taken up again. A swift advance was made to St. Omer that day. Rain came pelting down here and continued as the march went on to Zeggars but it proved only a local shower and soon the sun was shining again.



## Bergues

263. — Resistance was once again beginning to swell. „A” troop ran into artillery fire in the village of Quaedyppe (near Bergues) and ten men were killed and five wounded by direct hits on the convoy. But real opposition was still some miles ahead.

## Dixmude

264. — On went the column through Dixmude crossing the Belgian frontier on 8 Sep. The Belgians were delirious with joy. As in France flags were everywhere and as in France the reception of the troops was magnificent. A night was spent at Gyverinchove and the next day a swift move took the Regt to the very outskirts of Bruges.

## Bruges

265. — Rapid movement had been the rule for so long that when the Regt bivouacked on the 9th of September there was every confidence that the swift pace would be resumed the following day. In the next two days however the Regt was concentrated and it became obvious that something abnormal was in the wind. HQ knew that the days of cheap gains were virtually over. It knew that the infantry of the division had more to do than one Brigade could reasonably handle, and that the reinforcement problem was becoming acute. And it suspected that somehow the 8 LAA Regt would be called upon to provide the solution to the dilemma.

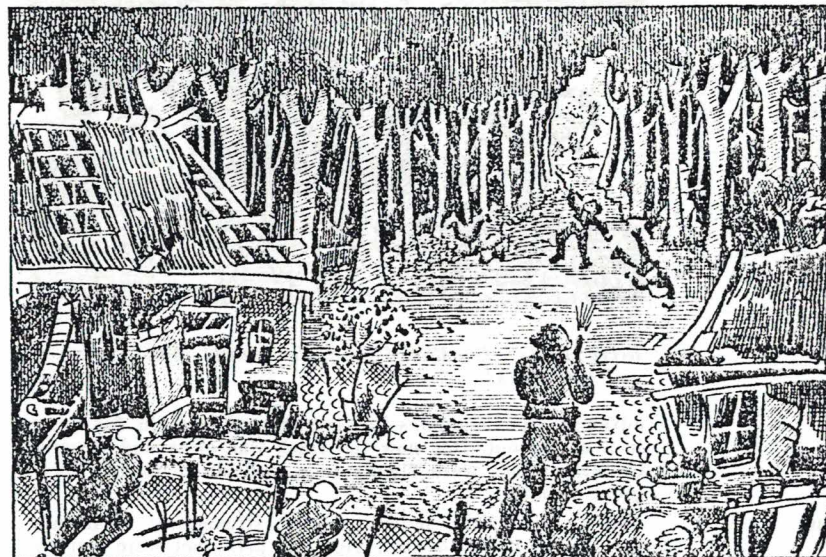
## Bruges

266. — Only too surely had the future been divined. On the 11th of September Lt-Col Cormack was summoned to a conference at HQ RCA. Here it was learned that in order to provide reinforcements, three troops were to be taken from the 8 LAA Regt and broken up. The remaining troops which were to be completely equipped with self-propelled guns, were to lose one man per detachment. And finally — the six troops of the Regt were to park their guns in a concentration area and relieve the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (4 Div) in an infantry role on the bridgehead across the Ghent Canal on 12 Sep.



## Ghent and Leopold Canals

12 Sept 44—5 Oct 44



While the Second Br Army was racing across Belgium and Holland in an effort to relieve the heavily beset airborne forces which had landed at Arnhem and Nijmegen on 17 Sep, the Cdn Army was finding stiff opposition along the northern fringe of the continent. The task of the 4 Cdn Armd Div was to clear the area between Ghent and the sea.

For the first time since Falaise the enemy was able to bring heavy artillery concentrations to bear on 4 Div troops and a stiff battle took place to clear a bridgehead across the Ghent Canal. While 10 C.I.B. was engaged in establishing a bridgehead at Moerbrugge, 4 C.A.B. attempted to invest Bruges but without success. As the infantry secured a bridgehead however, the opposition melted away and the Div was able to advance south of the Leopold Canal in an easterly direction.

To the 18 Armd Car Regt and the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA went the task of containing over a division of high-class German troops across the Leopold Canal while the armour and infantry of the two Brigades probed steadily eastwards towards the Dutch frontier.

## Bruges

267. — There was little time on 12 Sep to complete the reduction of the Regt from nine troops to six, or to prepare for the infantry role. The orders were that the relief of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders across the canal must be completed by 1300 hours.



**Bruges**

268. — Fortunately the fine weather prevailed. The troops were lined up. Lists had been prepared of the new troops based on seniority of service with the Regt. Swiftly two groups were segregated, one destined for infantry duty across the canal and one for 58 Company C.B.R.G.

**Moerbrugge**

269. — Vehicles transported the infantry troops to Moerbrugge. Here they dismounted and as the vehicles turned and rolled back to the Echelon area the men marched across the bridge and were led by reece parties to their sectors on the perimeter. The Argylls, with other employment in view, swiftly mounted and moved off. Patrols and strong points were organized. The two troops of 5 Anti-Tank which were under command were deployed. And with all precautions taken the Regt waited to see what would happen next.

**Moerbrugge**

270. — The real purpose for this unexpected role was to secure the flank of advancing units from attack. Only one bridge across the Ghent Canal — that at Moerbrugge — was in existence. It was imperative that no interruption at this point occurred. The enemy had recently contested bitterly the crossing and there was every possibility that he would endeavour yet to seize this vital bridge. Against such a possibility was arrayed the entire strength of the S LAA Regt.

**Bruges**

271. — For nine hours the three Btys manned the bridgehead perimeter. Then a scout-car arrived with orders for the 102 Bty. It was to immediately move to Bruges where troops of the R.H.L.I. (2 Div) which had occupied Bruges were to be relieved. A swift re-disposition of the 70 and 101 Btys was made in the dark to man the posts of Major R. A. McAlpine's men. And in the dead of the night the 102 Bty embussed and moved off to Bruges.

**Bruges**

272. — The Germans had pulled out of Bruges, preferring to conduct their defensive war-fare across the net-work of canals and flooded land lying east of the city. The 102 Bty swiftly organized a tight defence on the eastern extremity of the city, and from that base sent out strong patrols. Contact was occasionally made, but for the most part the enemy was content to have a water barrier between his troops and the Canadians.

**Moerbrugge**

273. — The threat to the Bridge at Moerbrugge never did materialize. Each day the danger at that spot diminished. By 13 Sep orders had been received that 70 and 101 Btys were to be employed for AA work with Div Art'y, HQ 4 Cdn Armd Div and H.Q. 10 C.I.B. and by 1500 hours on that day these changes had been completed. No orders came for 102 Bty however which continued to occupy Bruges and send patrols north and west from that city.

**Balgerhoek**

274. — This AA deployment for 70 and 101 Btys continued only a short time. In the early hours of 16 Sep orders were received calling for the redistribution of the Regt complete. 70 and 101 Btys, with two anti-tank troops under command and one troop of field artillery in direct support,

were to receive orders from 18 Armd Car relating to their deployment in an infantry role along the Leopold Canal. The 102 Bty was to move from Bruges to Balgerhoek on the Canal de Derivation de la Lys and hold a bridgehead there, protecting the lines of communication of the infantry and armour moving east.

**Balgerhoek**

275. — The 102 Bty was quickly able to concentrate its vehicles and guns and take over the defence of the bridge at Balgerhoek. Anti-infiltration patrols were sent out and strong points established to ward off any attacks against this defile from the north. Several times reconnaissance patrols from the enemy were encountered, but so roughly were they handled that no attack at Balgerhoek developed.

**Moerkerke**

276. — The task of the 70 and 101 Btys under Major R. J. Hegan's command was less routine. The orders from the 18 Armd Car Regt were curt and to the point. The 70 Bty was to „take and hold” the village of Moerkerke. The 101 Bty was to do likewise at Damme further west on the canal. Having attained these objectives, the Btys were to contain the enemy north of the canal, preventing the Germans from infiltrating across the Leopold Canal into Bruges or onto the main Div supply lines. Had it been known at the time that a complete German Division, plus a large specialist increment was pinned to the coast, the task would have been undertaken much less cheerfully than was the case.

**Damme**

277. — The 70 and 101 Btys as it was were under no illusions as to the possible difficulties which the completion of their tasks might entail. „Taking and holding” a strongly held town is a very hazardous and difficult operation and without armour and artillery support is often beyond the capabilities of foot-soldiers alone. The Algonquins had already been severely mauled along the Leopold and on the day that the operation took place had actually suffered casualties on the approaches to Damme.

**Damme**

278. — The 18 Armd Car Regt provided what small support it could. At the spearhead of the 101 advance party three Staghound armoured cars blazed away at the town and then withdrew. The civilians asserted that the Germans had pulled out of Damme as our troops approached. Was that the fact, or was the 101 rolling into an ambush? The answer lay ahead in the inscrutable brick buildings, already becoming dim in the fading light.

**Damme**

279. — Against all orders and precedent, Major Hegan himself decided to investigate the story. With Captain George Hammond he entered the town on foot. Swiftly a reconnaissance was made. Back at the main body of the Bty the troops waited tensely. Minutes dragged by. Finally Major Hegan returned. The men dismounted and moved forward on foot and as night settled uneasily over Belgium the 101 completed the occupation of the village.



#### Moerkerke

280. — Moerkerke presented a similar problem for the 70 Bty. Careful plans were made for an attack should such be necessary. But as in Damme the German garrison had withdrawn before the rumble of our impedimenta and the troops moved in without the expected battle. The first part of the orders had been executed on 16 Sep. Damme and Moerkerke had been taken. Now they were being held.

#### Leopold Canal

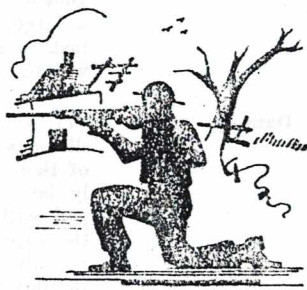
281. — The enemy was slow to react to our cheeky advance into these two important villages. His first response was to shower the 101 Bty with mortars and to send reconnaissance patrols into the sector at Moerkerke. The 101 survived the deluge and the 70 Bty with the aid of Arty fire discouraged the patrols for the time being.

#### Moerkerke

282. — Gradually however the Hun increased his pressure. Particularly at Moerkerke was the 70 Bty finding him attentive. Soon small-arm and machine-gun fire was ripping across the canal. The enemy brought up mortars to aid his failing cause. And at approximately 1900 hours 18 Sep a 30 man fighting patrol crossed the Canal in „B” troop sector.

#### Moerkerke

283. — The enemy forced his way into the house which had been barricaded as a strong-point by the detachment. Downstairs he swept the rooms with a chattering Schneisser. One of our Bren guns opened up through an upstairs window. A daring German grabbed the barrel of one of our rifles as it protruded through a window. For his pains the foe-man received both bullet and bayonet in the abdomen.



#### Moerkerke

284. — Gradually the „B” troop men got the better of the strong opposing force. Still fighting fiercely the enemy withdrew. We had lost one man killed in the fight. The more numerous enemy had suffered much heavier casualties.

#### Butswerve

285. — On 19 Sep the 101 Bty was removed from Damme to take up a position south-east of Moerkerke in the Butswerve Area. Butswerve controls the north-south road from Middlebourg to Maldegem and had been used by enemy patrols. This move frustrated any such infiltration. The enemy, patently in the area in sufficient strength to strongly oppose the 101 Bty made no effort to interfere. His patrols were contacted during the consolidation process but they shied away without firing a shot. The 101 took up a position firmly astride the road and one further route of penetration had been sealed off.

#### Butswerve

286. — The 101 Bty remained at Butswerve only for one day. The enemy did not challenge our position but an incident containing an element of grim humour did occur. The roadways in the area had not been checked for mines although they had, of necessity, been travelled by our vehicles. Soon after the Bty took over the area a farmer, perhaps lulled into a sense of false security by the traffic went strolling down the road leading a horse. All at once there was a terrific explosion as the horse stepped on a Teller mine. When the smoke had cleared away there was no horse to be seen — only an astounded peasant holding a short piece of rope in his hand. For a moment he stared unbelievably at the spot where his nag had been. Then when he realized his loss he leaped down the lead in a burst of fury and went stamping angrily off.

#### Scheewege

287. — On 20 Sep the 20 LAA Regt RA relieved the 101 Bty which was ordered to Scheewege near 70 Bty. The reconnaissance party, arriving ahead of the main body had been led by Major Hegan to its appropriate area and a detailed survey of the ground was being made when enemy movement was detected. Through his field-glasses Major Hegan could see a machine gun party laying a trap for the advancing reconnaissance group. A warning was sent to Captain D. Wolstenholme in charge of the group, and the main body was halted the men being swiftly deployed to advance and support the recon party.

#### Scheewege

288. — The reconnaissance party, duly warned of its danger, at once opened fire on enemy positions and in return the enemy lashed out with everything he had. Two armoured cars of 18 Armd Car Regt supplemented our forces with their imposing fire-power. And as the main body came up the enemy withdrew.

#### Scheewege

289. — It was difficult to accurately assess the winner of that short, fierce contest. Stretched out on the ground was a dead paratrooper. At other spots, blood was found and evidence of other casualties. But on our side lay Captain Wolstenholme, his left arm shattered by an enemy bullet.

#### Scheewege

290. — When the main body of the Bty arrived it was deployed in strong positions in the area. There was no need to exhort the men to dig. The skirmish which had cost us Captain Wolstenholme was obviously only the first round. Gerry would be back.

#### Scheewege

291. — The Bty remained alert all through the night and it proved well that it had done so. At 0430 hours 21 Sep a strong German patrol moved in on our outposts. Small arms fire broke out at very close range and grenades were freely thrown both by the enemy patrol and our own troops. Finally the Hun broke off and withdrew in the dark. A swift examination showed that again the 101 Bty had gotten the better of the enemy. One German soldier lay dead a short distance from the outpost and several more were known to have been wounded. Our losses? One man slightly wounded.



## Moerkerke

292. — All this activity along the Leopold was immediately reflected in troop dispositions from Div H.Q. H.Q. Squadron was ordered to relieve 102 Bty at Bulgerhoek, and the 102 Bty moved into the Moerkerke area to support the 70 Bty there. In addition units of 4 C.A.B. moved up on the right of the Regt to bolster the thin green line and promise was given of further support.

## Moerkerke

293. — On the 22 Sep 101 and 102 Btys, supported with 25 pounder and Bofors fire staged a general advance of about 600 yards. They consolidated the gain despite ineffectual enemy opposition and continued to dominate the area for as long as the infantry employment endured. On the following day two 17 pounders were taken into Damme to engage houses from which hostile O.P.s had been directing fire onto our positions. Lt-Cormack personally conducted the shoot which effectively „blinded” the enemy on our left flank.



*Commando Cormack  
on the war path.*

## Moerkerke

294. — It was on the 23 Sep also that 70 Bty ran into some brisk action. Here is the story as told by Lieutenant R. W. Libbey of „B” Troop.

## Moerkerke

295. — „B” troop maintained a standing patrol in a house about twenty-five yards from the bank of the Leopold Canal, from which two telephone lines ran back to T.H.Q. At about 1900 hours daily the outpost was relieved by the night patrol. On 23 Sep H 75122 Sgt M.E. Johnston led the relief towards the bank, following one of the lines and checking it for breaks. As he approached the house he found that a twenty-foot section had been cut out of the wire. This made him suspicious, so he immediately positioned his men and went forward to investigate. Near the house he found a German force of about ten men dug in with machine-guns covering the door of the house. We figure now that Gerry thought the post was manned only during the day and had planned to mop up the detachment as it returned to T.H.Q. Sergeant Johnston moved up firing and throwing grenades. At the same time Gerry opened up with covering fire from the other side of the Canal. He also threw over

some incendiaries which set the barn on fire. There was hell to pay for a while with lead flying every way and finally the Gerries beat it. However four of them were killed in the fight and one guy was taken prisoner. It was a pretty good show!”

## Moerkerke

296. — The next bit of close action fell to the 102 Bty. The day after Sergeant Johnston's engagement (which incidentally earned him the Military Medal) a joint patrol of the 102 Bty and Lake Superior Regt set out on a reconnaissance mission. As it neared the canal bank, the patrol broke up into two parts. The LSRs went right while the 102 component under Major D. A. MacLaren and Lieutenant D. J. MacRae advanced on the left. MacRae went forward and clambered up the canal bank to inspect the opposite shore. On reaching the top he peaked over and on the other side saw a sizeable group of the enemy across the water. MacRae crawled back down the canal bank for a machine gun and was returning with Sgt Henderson and his machine-gunner when he heard the approach of men from the other side of the bank. The three men, half-concealed by a sparse hedge, stopped dead and trained their weapons on the top of the bank, no more than ten yards distance. Low guttural voices were heard and in a moment three of the Herrenvolk appeared on the top of the canal bank. The Bren and the rifles immediately opened fire, instantly killing two of the enemy. The third took cover and seconds later was joined by comrades with automatic weapons. They proceeded to rake our positions thoroughly and might have caused us great inconvenience but for the LSR patrol. From the right it took on the Germans while the 8 LAA men withdrew to better positions. They in turn provided the covering fire which permitted the LSRs to pull back.

## Moerkerke

297. — By the last week in Sep the supporting troops for the 8 LAA Regt had been greatly swelled from the initial troop of field artillery plus two troops of anti-tank guns. Artillery support was increased to two troops. The RAF Regt supplied us with three-inch mortars plus trained mortar crews. And finally one troop of tanks from 21 Armd Regt plus a troop in reserve, were placed in direct support of the Regt. Thus it was quite a solid, hard-hitting packet which was under the C.O.'s command.

## Moerkerke

298. — On 27 Sep the Lake Superior Regt moved in and took over the ground occupied by the 101 and 102 Btys. The 102 Bty forthwith moved into the 70 Bty area in Moerkerke and the 101 Bty was withdrawn from the line and concentrated for a rest and refit.

## Moerkerke

299. — Moerkerke remained a fairly active spot but it was the LSRs who got the brunt of the hand-to-hand fighting from then on. Perhaps it was that the enemy had tasted enough of the Regt's metal. At any rate while mortar and artillery duels continued, enemy patrol activity sharply decreased on the Moerkerke sector. Finally it was learned that the Lake Superiors were to completely take over the Regt's infantry commitment.



#### Moerkerke

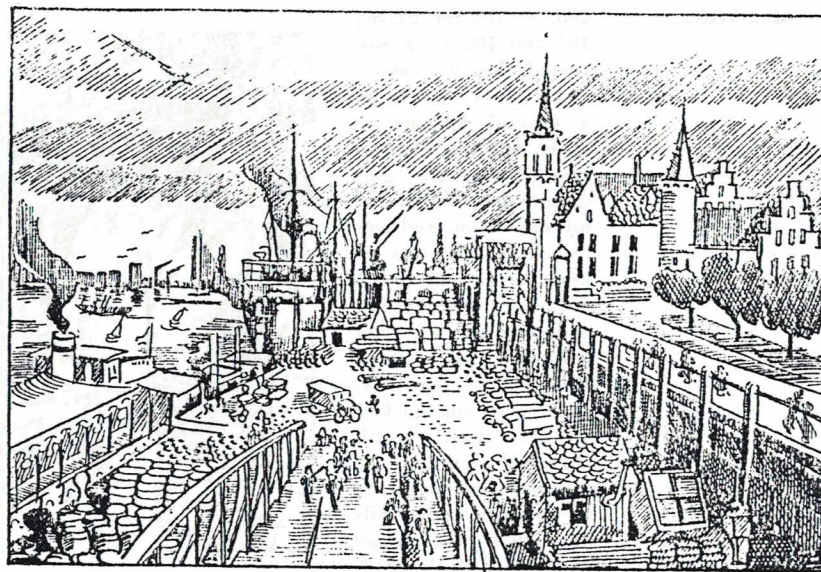
300. — Advance and reeve parties from the LSRs were around on the 4 Sep to get the lay of the land. On 5 Sep they moved in in force and the 8 LAA concentrated near Bruges for a move east.

#### Leopold Canal

301. — Thus after almost one month as infantry, „Cormack's Commandos" returned to anti-aircraft work. It was with no small pride that the Regt turned over the hot-spot which it had so gallantly held to other troops. During that month, the Regt had maintained pressure on the enemy across the canal by patrolling and S.A. fire. It had inflicted heavy casualties on a vastly superior force. But above all it had secured the flank of the advancing First Canadian Army and had released other forces for swift exploitation in other directions. No wonder then that „Cormack's Commandos" walk with a bit of a swagger when the name „Leopold Canal" is mentioned.

## Operation Switchback, Operation Suitcase and the Lower Maas

5 Oct 44—21 Dec 44



When it was discovered that the task of clearing the area north of the Leopold Canal and west of the Schelde was beyond the capabilities of an Armoured Division, the 3 Cdn Inf Div was hurried to this sector with great secrecy. The need for shorter lines of communications had become vital, and the clearing of the Schelde estuary became the priority task of 1 Cdn Army. The mighty operation Switchback which was to clear the western approaches to Antwerp was commenced on 8 Oct by 3 Div, with the support of troops from 4 Cdn Armd Div.

On the completion of its tasks in Switchback, 4 Cdn Armd Div moved to Antwerp and then north in an operation known as Suitcase to Bergen op Zoom and Steenberghe. 2 Cdn Inf. Div launched attacks on Zuid Beveland and in conjunction with an amphibious operation by 52 (Mountain) Div, on Walcheren to free the eastern approaches to the Schelde. With the lower Maas almost completely cleared, 4 Cdn Armd Div was sent across to the area almost directly north of 's Hertogenbosch along the Maas River.

Meanwhile General Eisenhower had commenced his great winter offensive. At heavy cost he was driving forward from the Maas to Switzerland when Rundstedt launched his counter-offensive in the direction of Namur on 17 Dec. Coupled with the heavy concentration of troops north of



*the Maas River in Holland, the possibility of some spectacular move to cut off the Port of Antwerp could not be discounted, and on 21 Dec 4 Cdn Armd Div was concentrated in the area of Fught for any eventuality.*

#### Sas van Gent

302. — With the relief of 8 Cdn LAA Regt by the Lake Superior Regt on 5 Oct the former deployed in an AA role in support of units which were to take part in Operation Switchback. In order to reach the new area there was a general move east. 101 Bty went under command 4 Cdn LAA Regt to protect 9 AGRA south of the Leopold Canal. 102 Bty took over the gun area north west of Sluiskil. One troop of 70 Bty went to 10 Medium Artillery Regt while the other was charged with the protection of an ammunition dump which had been built up for use during the operation. RIHQ was established in Sas Van Gent while Tac RIHQ moved to Sluiskil.

#### Terneuzen

303. — The preparations for this great operation had been virtually completed when 8 LAA Regt arrived on the scene and a terrific atmosphere of excitement existed throughout the concentration area. It had been planned to start the amphibious force on its way across Braak Man on the 7 Oct and during the evening of the previous day amphibious tanks and vehicles chugged steadily up the canal towards Terneuzen. The assault was delayed one day due to technical hitches but was successfully launched on 8 Oct.

#### Sluiskil

304. — The weather had become decidedly colder and deteriorated steadily during the operation. Whenever air support was possible it was generously provided, but much of the time neither Allied or German planes could get off the ground and the responsibility of AA units was thereby greatly reduced.

#### Leopold Canal

305. — The Regt remained deployed along the Leopold and Terneuzen Canals until the advance of ground troops in the Breskens Pocket made artillery support across these two obstacles impossible. By the middle of October this condition obtained and warning orders were received for further moves east.

#### Brasschaet

306. — On 17 Oct the Regt moved from Holland via Ghent and Antwerp into billets in Brasschaet, Belgium a few miles north and east of the latter city. Immediately troops were placed to give AA cover to the 4 Div concentration area.

#### Brasschaet

307. — The Div remained only a few days concentrated. The battle was moving up the coast and plans were quickly made for the employment of the formation. Op Suitease aimed first at pushing the enemy across the Canal Rosendal and later exploiting the bridgehead. Tasks were given to the troops of 8 Cdn LAA including guarding bridges and ammunition dumps and the advance commenced on the morning of 19 Oct.

#### Brasschaet

308. — The accommodation at Brasschaet had been much the best we had encountered in our long trek to Belgium. But the advent of the V2 Rocket Bombs which were presumably being aimed at nearby Antwerp threatened to cause the Regt needless casualties and it was well that it got out of the metropolitan area.

#### Huijbergen

309. — Suitease was a dreary, painful, unspectacular operation conducted in appalling weather. The Germans apparently recognized the inevitability of their withdrawal from southern Holland and fought only a stubborn, skilful delaying action, using mines in abundance to slow our advance. By 21 Oct Phase I, the crossing of the Canal had been achieved. Essechen fell the following day. The Div then drove on through Wouwsche Plantage into Huijbergen and on to Bergen op Zoom.

#### Huijbergen

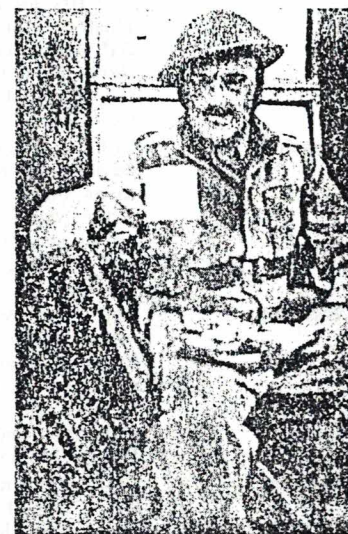
310. — On 23 Oct „B” troop went into infantry action with IIQ Squadron on the Div's left flank. As Tac RIHQ moved into blasted Huijbergen a jeep of that troop went up on one of the numerous mines that abounded in the area. The driver was instantly killed and Captain Don Harper injured by the blast and evacuated. „B” troop remained as infantry, the command going from IIQ Squadron to the South Alberta Regiment and finally over to the Lincoln and Welland Regiment until 27 Oct when it was concentrated for a rest.

#### Bergen op Zoom

311. — During this period there were several interesting occurrences. Lieutenant Alex Cairns of 101 Bty stepped out and captured twenty-six prisoners who had been cut off and gotten lost as a result of our advance. Also three guns of „F” troop under Captain Mel Howden went into action in a ground shoot supporting the South Alberta Regt. But it was around Bergen op Zoom that the fun really began.

#### Bergen op Zoom

312. — Bergen op Zoom, a strategically important and a highly defensible town lying on the coast athwart the only good route north was strongly defended by the enemy. By 28 Oct the south half



*Prosit! Lt-Col D. A. M. MacLaren bends an elegant elbow*



of the town was in Canadian hands and „F”-troop was sent forward for ground shooting across the canal which separated us from the foe. The following day Lt-Col Cormack went into Bergen op Zoom to observe the shooting.

#### Bergen op Zoom

313. — Bergen op Zoom on 29 Oct 44 was a very hot spot to be. Tough German troops were doing all in their power to hold us up a few hours longer. Mortars in particular were being expertly used against us and causing many casualties in the town. While Lt-Col Cormack was watching the shoot of „F”-troop, a mortar bomb came over, exploded nearby, and shrapnel from it penetrated his arm and thigh. Fortunately he was not seriously injured and was able to return from hospital to the Regt on 14 Nov. During Col Cormack's absence, Major D A M MacLaren (who was promoted to the rank of Lt-Col) commanded the Regt.

#### Bergen op Zoom

313. — Bergen op Zoom on 29 Oct 44 was a very hot spot was fighting north of Bergen op Zoom against rear-guards holding the road to Steenberg. „E”-troop 102 Bty moved into Bergen op Zoom and deployed for anti „E” Boat defence on 1 Nov. On the 2nd of the month 101 Bty was ordered in raw, cheerless weather into an infantry role protecting the flank of 10 CIB at Lepelstraat.

#### Lepelstraat

315. — The Germans made the first night at Lepelstraat an interesting one. They took on the village with self-propelled 75 mm guns and with mortars, knocking out five vehicles despite elaborate protection. The men of the 101 Bty had learned much about digging in the past three months however and no losses of personnel were suffered. The Bty hit back with its Bofors guns and with „E”-troop plastered the German strong-hold of Kladder with HE and AP shot. That did the trick. Nothing more was heard from Gerry from then on. Having thus disposed of the threat to the flank the Bty returned to the concentration area on 5 Nov.

#### Enschot

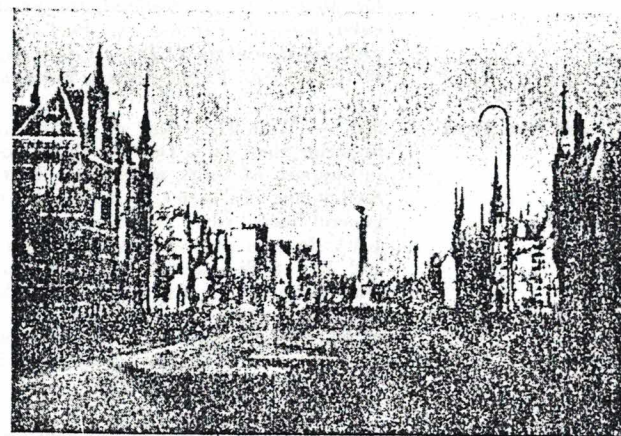
316. — Troops of the Regt pushed forward with the advance to Steenberg providing protection for the gun areas until 4 Div's part in driving the Hun against the Maas was completed. They then concentrated near Bergen op Zoom and on 9 Nov moved off via Roosendaal, Breda and Tilburg to a concentration area near the town of Enschoot.

#### Enschot

317. — It was a strange move. Troops which started behind other troops apparently passed them on the road without knowing it and arrived at the new area at the wrong time. Other troops never arrived at all, or at least not that night. It was not until noon the following day that the last straggler had been accounted for and the last vehicle had pulled in.

#### Enschot

318. — It was fully intended when the Regt left Bergen op Zoom that it would go into the line as infantry along the Maas river holding a sector near Lith. The 5 Anti-Tank was also to hold part of the area. A recon showed that there was neither room nor accommodation for two gunner Regts along the river and the 5 Anti-Tank was nominated to do the job.



*'s-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant, Holland.*

#### 's-Hertogenbosch

319. — Troops of the 8 LAA Regt were immediately deployed in AA roles, while RHQ moved first to Oosterwijk (11 Nov) and then to Haaren (18 Nov). Eventually having three troops deployed on the bridges at 's-Hertogenbosch, RHQ itself moved into that city on 30 Nov.

#### 's-Hertogenbosch

320. — The guns were getting no opportunity to fire at aircraft, but more and more their utility as field cannons was being recognized and put to work. 4 CAB became rather keen on Bofors as a supporting weapon and almost nightly from 13 Nov on it became the custom for a section of the Regt to take on targets across the River Maas, sometimes in support of actual patrols, sometimes as a ruse or for deception and sometimes on H.F. tasks. The targets varied but Hedel, Amerzoden, Fort Crevecoeur, Driel and Kerkdriel all were at one time or another engaged with conspicuous success.

#### 's-Hertogenbosch

321. — The men had the occasional chance to keep their hand in as AA gunners. On 7 Dec an Me 109, apparently bent on mischief in 's-Hertogenbosch came down within range of the guns. A detachment of the 101 Bty under L 299 Sergeant J A Elliott opened fire and brought the plane down with some very skillful shooting.

#### 's-Hertogenbosch

322. — By this time the German had prepared launching sites north of the Maas for V-1 attacks on Antwerp. On 16 Dec a stream of the robots was released which maintained a constant procession over 's-Hertogenbosch. Orders were at once issued by HQ RCA prohibiting their engagement by 8 LAA guns for fear of having the projectiles fall down on Allied troops. This order did not reach „E”-troop in time to prevent it from bringing down the first of these missiles with its guns.



#### 's-Hertogenbosch

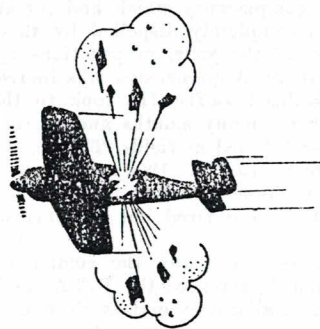
323. — It was while we were in 's-Hertogenbosch area that the Regt pulled off some of the prize social events of the war. Parties and dinners were held at all levels and very successful they were. But most spectacular of all was the kiddies party held on 5 Dec 44.

#### 's-Hertogenbosch

324. — All ranks throughout the Regt contributed to the limit of their ability to make the party a hit. The complete issue of chocolate for the Regt went into paper bags for the children. Each man provided other sweets or gum as well. There was a bit of a speech by the C.O., a Punch and Judy show, a Santa Claus and a Blackamoor to assist him and cocoa and edibles for the children. They really enjoyed the party and it is believed that almost 500 kiddies were entertained. To Captains A. H. Wilson and G. D. Wood went the lion's share of the credit for this philanthropic enterprise.

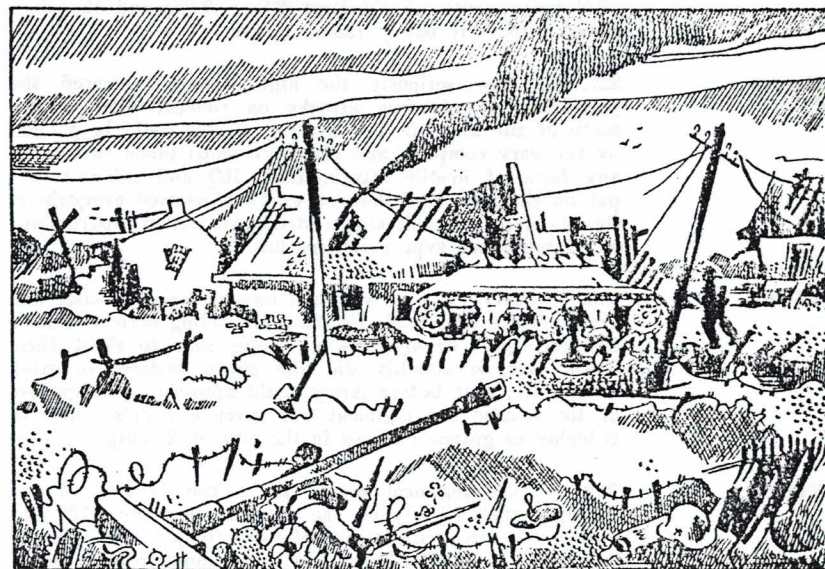
#### Haaren

325. — On 20 Dec a surprise order was received for the Regt to concentrate in the area of Haaren. Reps from the LAA Regt 1 Polish Armoured Division were around to receive the gun sites and quarters of the 8 LAA Regt on that date and on the 21 Dec the Regt moved to a concentration area near Haaren.



## Anti-parachute Defence

21 Dec 44—23 Jan 45



In conjunction with his dash towards the Meuse, the enemy continued to build up troops north of the Maas until a force estimated at between 50 and 60 thousand troops including 2 parachute divisions, had been assembled. Large quantities of bridging equipment were known to be in the area and a goodly number of guns of all calibres were deployed.

This was no idle threat, but an all-out build up for an offensive to coincide with Rundstedt's drive further south. The German's first plan provided for the dropping of paratroops in the Tilburg area 25 Dec 44 and a crossing of the Maas at the same time. The date for the operation changed to 27 Dec and later again was hoisted to synchronize with the arrival of Rundstedt's troops on the banks of the Meuse River — an achievement which German armour came very close to attaining.

In order to combat the threat to the Port of Antwerp and the Allied lines of communication, 4 Cdn Armd Div was withdrawn from the Maas to provide anti-parachute garrisons in key cities and to afford a reserve in the event of an overwater attack by the Germans. By 4 Jan the threat was largely over but it was not until sometime later that units which had been drawn into the defence organization were finally released for other tasks.



Haaren

326. — The move from 's Hertogenbosch to the concentration area near Haaren was hastily made but executed without difficulty. It was a sharp clear day when, with the exception of „A” troop (with Div HQ at Boxtel) and „B” troop (with 15 Fd Regt RCA) RHQ and the Btys moved into their barely reseed billets.

Haaren

327. — How seriously the high command viewed the possibility of airborne attacks on concentration centres south of the Maas in 1 Cdn Army Sector could be judged by the very complete and elaborate steps taken to combat any form of hostile attack. Each HQ and sub-unit was put on the alert and defence works blossomed everywhere. Guards were doubled, and a steady stream of instructions and intelligence kept the wires hot.

Tilburg

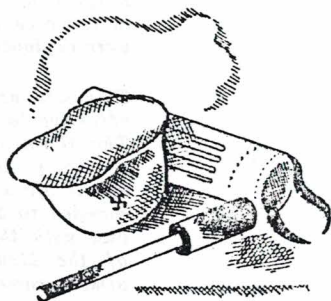
328. — Diver (V1) activity had increased prodigiously and great efforts were made by the commanding officer to have the unit guns deployed in a killing zone to shoot them down. But so steadily did the grave tactical situation deteriorate, that before Army could approve or disapprove of the scheme the regiment was given 4 hour's notice to redeploy as garrison troops in the city of Tilburg.

Tilburg

329. — The regiment moved in on the 23 Dec 44 and deployed with 70 Bty on the northern perimeter, 102 Bty on the southern perimeter and 101 Bty (with a heterogeneous collection of service and line of communication troops under command) as the city's mobile reserve. The commanding officer, Lt-Col E. W. Cormack, himself manned a tactical HQ near the phone of the 102 LAA Regt RA, so as to be in constant touch with the situation.

Tilburg

330. — Each day from the 23 Dec to the end of the year brought new and more ominous promise of the enemy's intentions to smash south from across the Maas and each day saw the garrison organization more solidly built into a last ditch fighting force. HQ 1 Cdn Army which was situated at the south western corner of the city, stirred uneasily as intelligence named unit after unit of the Wehrmacht moving into assault positions on our northern flank. Meanwhile the order of battle for the Tilburg garrison continued to swell, the most welcome adjunct to the organization being 206 „Kangaroos” from 1 Cdn Armd Carrier Regt. A close liaison was established with this unit by troops of the mobile reserve and constant infantry-tank exercises were practised on assault tactics.



Tilburg

331. — Christmas 1944 passed in this weary atmosphere. There was no let-up in the intensity of the preparations for the defence of the city of Tilburg. The traditional Christmas dinner was carried on, but the tension and strain of the continuous vigil, plus the grave word of enemy successes in the Ardennes, curtailed to a degree the festivities. It was on Boxing day however that the climax was reached in this war of nerves.

Tilburg

332. — Garrison troops in Tilburg were just preparing for bed when at 2310 hours 26 Dec the general alarm was sounded. The long heralded air borne landing was on! According to reports paratroops were dropping on the Tilburg-Breda road.

Tilburg

333. — The speed with which the defence organization swung into action was a revelation and a tribute to those in position of responsibility. Before midnight armoured carriers, ready for any emergency, were clattering off down the Breda road through the black night. The streets were alive with armed men stopping every vehicle and checking authorities of every stranger. All road blocks were manned, all defences fully garrisoned.

Tilburg

334. — The actual „stand to” lasted only one hour, at the end of which the landings were authoritatively refuted. But any complacency which had remained up till that time had been completely dispelled by this grim scare and until the first of the year, preparations against future alarms went on apace. Apprehension was increased on 1 Jan 45 when the revitalized Luftwaffe took to the air in greater strength than for many months and carried out straffing attacks on several Allied airfields. Tilburg itself came under the attack from 8—10 P.W. 190s and it was a bitter pill for the 8 Cdn LAA gunners to find themselves in an infantry role. A few rounds were fired but the intruders escaped unscathed.

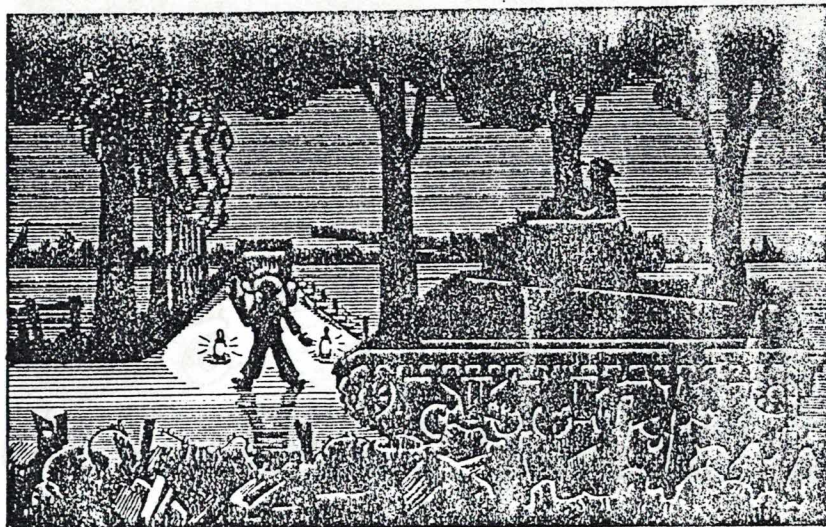
Tilburg

335. — On 2 Jan the commanding officer, Lt-Col E. W. Cormack, replaced the B.R.A. as Tilburg Garrison Commander. Realistic exercises were carried out and the garrison organization improved. As the month wore on however, and the concentration of men and material north of the Maas began to dissolve, many of the regulations and restrictions in Tilburg area were relaxed. On 11 Jan, 101 Bty was moved to 's-Hertogenbosch where it resumed an AA role. Other sub units under command were released from the defence organization. A guard was provided for a F.M.C. from the regiment on 19 Jan, and on 23 Jan the garrison HQ was formally dissolved and the regiment redeployed in various AA roles in 4 Div area, with RHQ moving back to 's-Hertogenbosch the same day.



# Traffic Restrictions (Op Veritable) and the Watch on the Maas

23 Jan - 25 Feb 45



With the headlong rush of Rundstedt's forces stopped in the Ardennes and with counter pressure by Allied troops steadily restoring the line, the Allies themselves commenced the series of drives which eventually was to clear the area west of the Rhine of German troops.

To the 1 Cdn Army, which had not participated in any great strength in the general offensive towards the Rhine during Eisenhower's winter push went the honour of opening this new assault. Assembled under command of General Crerar was one of the greatest arrays of military power ever handed to an Army commander. In order that this tremendous power be concentrated for a strike at the northern flank of the Siegfried Line, enormous troop movements, conducted almost entirely at night, were necessary. The steady flow of equipment prior to, and in the initial stages of the campaign became one of the great preoccupations of Cdn Army authorities, and a comprehensive plan of route restriction, involving the 8 Cdn LAA Regt was laid on.

When at last the great offensive was launched, 4 Cdn Armd Div which was not used in the assault, was concentrated for future commitments following up operation „Veritable“. In order to permit other units of 4 Cdn Armd Div to prepare for their part in the new series of operations,

the 8 Cdn LAA Regt was directed to relieve the Lake Superior Regt and the 5 Cdn A Tk Regt RCA, as defenders of the south bank of the Maas and the left flank of the Allied Armies in Western Europe from Gewande to Lith.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

336. — The regiment slipped back into former role in the 's-Hertogenbosch area so unobtrusively that there were virtually no difficulties in picking up where the units had left off in Dec. Almost at once the ground-shooting programme with 4 C.A.B. was resumed with troops of 102 Bty particularly playing a prominent part. Buzz-bombs appeared for most of the time to be the only form of German airborne equipment in action, and on the rare occasions that the Luftwaffe showed itself, the planes remained discreetly out of range of the guns.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

337. — Towards the end of Feb, word was received from the C.R.A. that the regiment would be employed with the Provost as route restrictors during the build-up of forces for operation „Veritable“. The task imposed a heavy strain on the personnel of the regiment since certain AA commitments had still to be maintained. By stripping offices and HQs of all but the absolutely essential personnel and by cutting down the gun detachments to the irreducible minimum, sufficient bodies were released to fully man the route assigned to the unit.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

338. — The essence of the route restrictor's task was quite easily grasped by the gunners. It was to prevent any unauthorized vehicles whether military or civilian, from travelling on the arteries flowing into the concentration pool in Nijmegen district. A cordon of men controlled every intersection from Tilburg and Eindhoven to Vught, 's-Hertogenbosch and Grave. The road from Eindhoven to Veghel was also restricted and later, on special request, the route from Tilburg to Best.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

339. — On 2 Feb at 1800 hours, equipped with lanterns, armbands, lamps and special authorities, the men, having been thoroughly briefed, were transported to their posts on the various routes. Thereafter, nightly until 12 Feb, they spent the nocturnal hours in a lonely but essential vigil as the tanks, guns and transporters rumbled by in the black-out, unhampered by unessential traffic on the roads.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

340. — Despite the shroud of secrecy which veiled the troop movements before the commencement of operation „Veritable“ on 8 Feb, the enemy, anxiously watching from across the Maas could not but perceive some part of the extraordinary activity preceding the operation. His V-1 launchings were stepped up, and in addition he endeavoured, by means of long range guns, to harass the movements of troops along the main highways.

## 's-Hertogenbosch

341. — 's-Hertogenbosch was shelled, on several occasions by his medium guns. No casualties to personnel or equipment were suffered however by the 8 Cdn LAA Regt.



#### 's-Hertogenbosch

342. — On the return of the men to 's-Hertogenbosch when the role of route restriction ended, still another task over and above the AA role, was given to the unit. An emergency landing strip was required at Krankzinnigengesticht, south of 's-Hertogenbosch and the 8 Cdn LAA Regt as the nearest available source of manpower was nominated to construct it.

#### River Maas

343. — By the 16 Feb the concentration of 4 Cdn Armd Div for future operations had commenced. The immediate effect of this movement on 8 Cdn LAA Regt was to send 102 Bty from its AA role to an infantry task replacing 1 Coy of the Lake Superior Regt along the River Maas, north of 's-Hertogenbosch. Two days later skeleton parties from the other two Btys had moved to relieve 5 Cdn A tk Regt RCA in an infantry role further east along the river and by 19 Feb the entire unit was in position on the Maas front occupying the villages of Lithoijen, Lith, Beemden, Maren, Kessel, Gewande and Wild.

#### River Maas

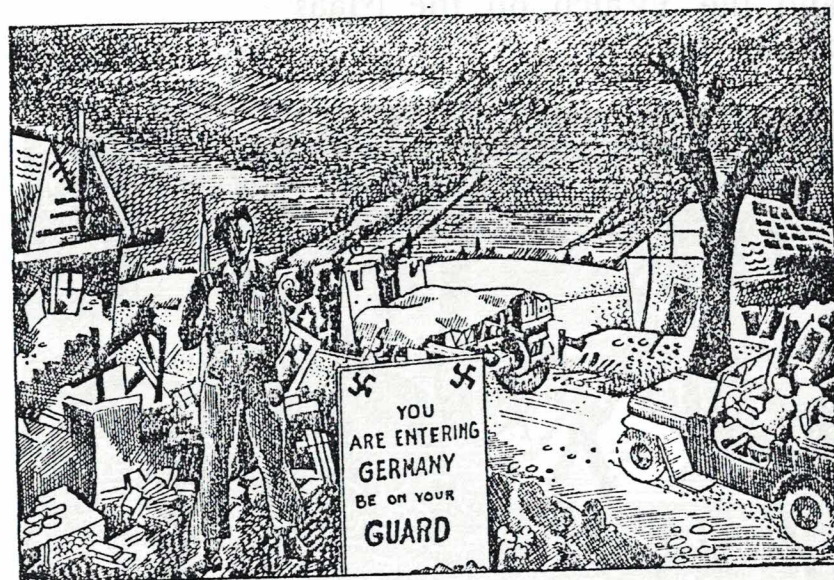
344. — The River Maas was a swollen, virtually impassable stream in Feb. The tremendous rains which had turned operation „Veritable” into a series of amphibious assaults had inundated the low dyked land and saturated much of the area in the 8 Cdn LAA sector. Offensive patrols across the Maas therefore were out of the question. Contact patrols were maintained along the bank linking outposts in the various Bty sectors and sharp S.A. exchanges occurred nightly across the flooded river. But more alarming than these M.G. duels were the V-1s which fell thick and fast along the river bank, blasting deep craters in the soft loam or tearing great chasms in the dykes.

#### River Maas

345. — The regiment itself was not without artillery support and was able at different times to bring 25 pdr fire and 75mm fire on selected targets on enemy ground. The Bofors were also used with excellent effect to shatter suspected Observation Posts and snipers nests across the river, and just prior to surrendering the sector to the Poles, the regiment conducted a shoot with borrowed 4.2 mortars which made a shambles of enemy occupied areas within the 2500 yard range of these powerful weapons. During the period 21—25 Feb, the regiment was under command of 3 Inf Bde of 1 Pol Armd Div. On 25 Feb troops of that division relieved 8 Cdn LAA Regt along the Maas and on the same day the regiment moved into Germany to take its part in operation „Blockbuster” with 4 Cdn Armd Div.

## Op Blockbuster

25 Feb — 12 Mar 45



Operation „Veritable” had succeeded by 25 Feb in smashing into the Siegfried defences between the Maas and Rhine rivers. The enemy had been driven from the Reichswald Forest. But although the Hun was recoiling slowly before the attacks of the 1 Cdn Army, a new operation, throwing into action fresh armoured troops whose use in the Reichswald had been limited by the weather and terrain was necessary to maintain the pressure. This new operation, called „Blockbuster”, was destined to smash the German Armies west of the Rhine in Northwest Germany.

Realizing as he did that this battle ground was the key to the North German Plains, the enemy hurled every possible resource against 1 Cdn Army. High calibre, heavily armed troops fought for every inch of the ground. But despite this fanatical opposition, the appalling weather conditions, and the difficult terrain, the formations of 1 Cdn Army ground relentlessly forward.

For its part, in a series of glorious actions, 4 Cdn Armd Div slashed down from Cleve to the Hochwald Forest and was driving hard from the Hochwald Forest towards the Rhine when it was removed from the battlefield for a refit. While the 1 Cdn Army was acting as a magnet for German reserves, the great armies to the south swung into action. The American 9th Army drove rapidly to the Rhine, linking up with the 3 Inf Div (Br) on the Cdn right flank. The



*American 1st Army leaped forward and in a surprise dash captured the famous Remagen bridge across the Rhine. General Patton's 3rd U.S. Army completed a phenomenal series of actions which ended in the complete annihilation of the German forces opposing him.*

*By 12 Mar the power of the enemy west of the Rhine had been effectively smashed; and the death-watch had begun to measure off the last days of the 3rd German Reich.*

#### Cleve

346. — Although the Commanding Officer, with rare intuition, had journeyed up to IIQ RCA 4 Cdn Armd Div near Cleve in Germany on the 24 Feb, the following day must be regarded as the historical date on which the 8 Cdn LAA Regt crossed the German Frontier. No man who served with the unit at that time will forget the move from Lith to Cleve on that day. The gigantic concentration of military equipment, the congestion on the roads, the „liver cure mile” through the Reichwald Forest, the shattered bones of gliders and transports near Groesbeck — monuments to the great airborne attacks of the previous fall — the splintered trees, the mud, the rain, and above all the electrical atmosphere of suppressed excitement — these are the souvenirs of the times.

#### Cleve

347. — The move was accomplished, not without incident, but at least without enemy interference and by darkness on 25 Feb the troops had deployed with the units they protected. 4 guns of „D” troop reported to the Support Coy of the Algonquins with a special ground shooting task in view but for the rest it was to be a normal AA role.

#### Louisendorf

348. — Operation „Blockbuster” commenced on 26 Feb to the tune of a heavy artillery barrage, and thereafter for duration of the operation the guns were never silent. The weather was almost entirely bad and the movement forward through Louisendorf, Keppelen, Udem to the Hochwald Forest was laborious and difficult.

#### Louisendorf

349. — As in the past, the Luftwaffe did not show itself during the daylight hours. However the deficiency was made up by 8 Spitfires which apparently in enemy hands straffed the area on 1 Mar with some effect. Minor night attacks developed by enemy aircraft but no opportunity appeared for AA engagements by the units.

#### Hochwald Forest

350. — „D” troop had been unable to fulfill its appointment for a ground shoot with the Algonquins on the 26 Feb due to the fact that the roads leading to the deployment area were impassable. „C” troop had better luck the night of 2/3 Mar when two guns fired directional tracer in support of a deep thrust through the Hochwald Forest by elements of the Lake Superior Regt and Algonquin Regt. The shoot was very successful, and the infantry was able to advance along a very precise axis with the assistance of the tracer. Eventually however, the spearhead of their audacious attack was surrounded and heavy casualties were suffered by the infantry before the area was finally cleared.

#### Hochwald

351. — It was as a result of the pressure here that the regiment lost the services of Capt Alan Melville (Croix de Guerre). The Germans, as always, used mortars extensively on our forward troops and the indomitable little troop commander of „A” troop was wounded while on a reconnaissance the 2 Mar 45.

#### Sonsbeck

352. — The greatest contribution by the regiment to operation „Blockbuster” was made on the nights of 7/8 and 8/9 Mar 45. On 7 Mar the infantry of 4 Cdn Armd Div which had suffered heavy casualties during the early stages of „Blockbuster”, was fighting east of Sonsbeck towards the town of Veen. Opposition was exceptio-



nally bitter and the enemy with his mortars was exacting a heavy price from our ground troops. Bad weather made air cooperation quite unreliable, and the available supporting artillery was on a lighter scale than desirable in view of the enemy's apparent disposition to mount powerful counter-attacks against the tiring infantry. Both „B” troop 70 Bty and „C” troop 101 Bty were in the Sonsbeck area, and it was decided on the afternoon of 7 Mar to employ the guns of these troops in support of our infantry and in an H.F. role.

#### Kusterhof

353. — The guns were deployed east of Sonsbeck at Kusterhof. A wireless station, manned by the Adjt, Capt W. T. Moran, was set up Bde IIQ and in constant contact with the guns, and a large amount of ammunition was dumped for the shoot. Promptly at 1730 hours, on receipt of information relating to a concentration of enemy vehicles near Veen, a 12 gun Bofors barrage opened up on the crossroads concerned. During the night a complete fire programme was laid on, carrying the guns through until 0800 hours. The same targets were called for on the night 8/9 Mar with „B” troop providing the fire power on this occasion.

#### Kusterhof

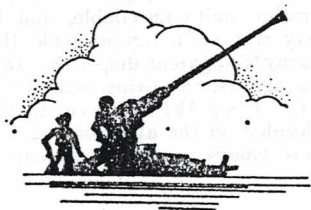
354. — The shoots were of great morale value both to the infantry and to the gun detachments. A very heavy volume of fire was kept dropping at irregular intervals on areas of known enemy concentrations and some fires were started in these localities. Accurate mortaring was brought down on the gun positions by the enemy, but fortunately no casualties to personnel or equipment were sustained.

#### Poppel

355. — By the 10 Mar opposition west of the Rhine in 1 Cdn Army sector was swiftly being eliminated. To the last the enemy fought savagely and well. As the Allied formations closed in upon the narrowing German bridgehead it

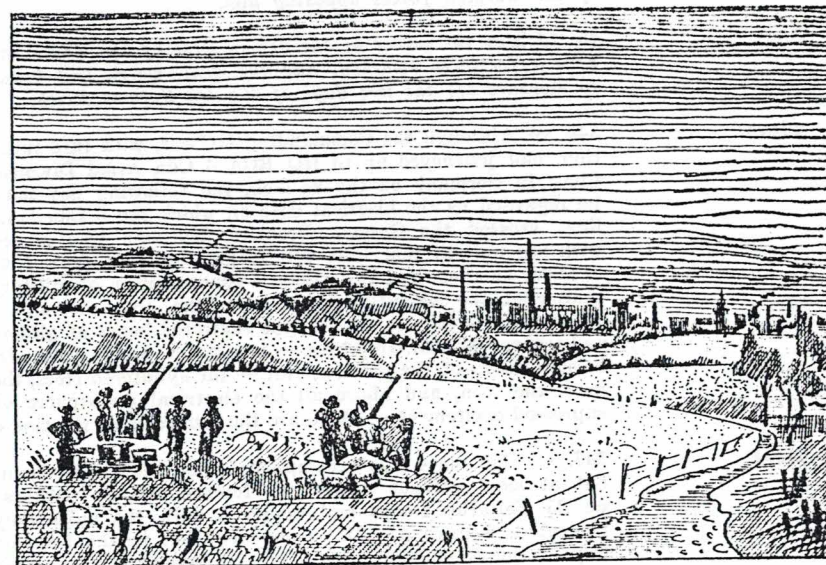


became impossible to fully deploy the troops at General Crerar's command. Reeves were called for on the 11 Mar to explore a rest area for the regiment in Belgium, and 0230 hours 12 Mar 45 the regiment found its place in the long column of vehicles moving back from the front. Shells fell on the convoy as it passed through Cleve, and light casualties were sustained, but as throughout „Blockbuster” the regiment escaped very lightly considering the grim defence put up by the Germans. Eventually by 1730 hours on 12 Mar the regiment had crossed into Belgium with RHQ, 101 and 102 Btys concentrated at Poppel, while 70 Bty moved to the nearby town of Weelde.



## Poppel and Pepperpot

12 Mar – 31 Mar 45



The exhausting battles of the operation „Blockbuster” took a heavy toll of 4 Cdn Armd Div's resources and when its role in that great action was ended it was removed for a refit and rest. Elsewhere however, energetic planning was being done for one of the most spectacular operations of the war — the crossing of the Rhine.

Among the assault forces which crossed that great obstacle were troops from Canada's famed 3 Div. Having made their crossing near Rees under cover of a heavy concentration of artillery these Cdn forces swung left, fighting their way down the right bank of the Rhine towards the town of Emmerich. To assist their advance, and to prepare a route, a heterogeneous collection of weapons was assembled across the river. Tanks, machine guns and Bofors guns from the 8 Cdn L.A.A. Regt made up this formidable „Pepperpot” which sent a hail of shells cascading down on obstacles ahead of the hard-fighting infantry. Heavy defences delayed the time table of this phase of the operation, but the „Pepperpot” commenced at 1435 hours 28 Mar 45, continuing 3 days. By the end of this period our infantry had made such progress as to overrun the targets of the „Pepperpot” making further shooting impossible.



*During this period the great airborne landings were made across the Rhine and Allied air support was on a truly colossal scale. The Luftwaffe put into the air few of its remaining planes, mostly as night intruders, but on a scale completely inadequate to interfere with the enormous military effort of the Allied forces.*

#### Poppel

356. — The fine weather which had eluded the 1 Cdn Army through its spring offensive, returned in all its glory during the fortnight of rest of 4 Cdn Armd Div. At Poppel and at Weelde where the 8 Cdn LAA Regt was concentrated, this change was greeted with enthusiasm. There was much work to be done. Guns and vehicles had gone through a hard campaign and required much attention in order to make them battle-worthy. Nor had the attrition of battle left personnel unscathed. The rest, change and quiet of the concentration area was of great benefit to all ranks. Leaves were stepped up, recreation was featured, and at the same time training was carried on for future operations. The war however, was left behind for a fortnight, and except for the rumbling of V-1s overhead and the staccato bark of AA guns, one might have been far from the battle front. Even in this secluded harbour however, violent death was not far away. On 15 Mar a V-2 rocket-bomb came smashing to earth just south of Poppel. Lt-Cormack, who had been visiting the 70 Bty at Weelde, was travelling on the road at the time, and narrowly missed being a casualty. As it was, a number of vehicles just ahead of him were wrecked with substantial casualties to personnel.

#### Weelde

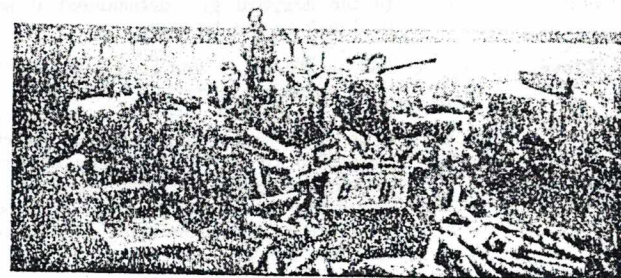
357. — For a fortnight the sedentary life in Belgium went on. By the 19 of the month it was known that the Div artillery would be employed to support the crossing of the Rhine, and on the 20 Mar, the commanding officer gave his orders. Reece and holding parties departed the following day plus troops of the 102 Bty and the next day the balance of the regiment moved off.

#### Cleve

358. — The unit concentrated east of Cleve in Germany on the flat, lush meadow-lands about 4 miles from the Rhine. Smoke troops had deployed and were already masking the south west bank of the river from anxious eyes of observers across the Rhine.

#### Cleve

359. — Detailed information was received from HQ RCA on the whole plan. A „Pepperpot” of light guns had been assembled along the Rhine front across from the town of Emmerich. After the river crossing had been made, it was to smash the opposition in the town of Emmerich and at strategic points in the Emmerich area so that a Cdn spearhead forming the left flank of the bridgehead could move swiftly north. The 8 Cdn LAA with its thirty-six rapid-firing Bofors guns was to contribute a large percentage of the total weight of metal of „Pepperpot”.



*The Pepperpot. And that is Emmerich across the Rhine under the guns.*

#### Cleve

360. — Reccees were at once carried out. In order to cover all the targets allotted to the units, it was necessary to reece alternative positions for both 101 and 102 Btys, with a view to redeployment as the F.D.Ls across the river moved forward. 70 Bty, in the centre of the front, was given, in addition to its HF tasks, the job of neutralizing hostile Observation Posts in Emmerich town. For the signallers it was a mighty task. The widely dispersed command-posts required a web of lines connecting them with the gun positions. For the Q branch too, there was much to do. The operation contemplated an expenditure of ammunition on an unprecedented scale. But finally the last map was set, the last lay checked, the last man briefed. All was in readiness.

#### Cleve

361. — „H” hour for the Rhine crossing was 2100 hours 23 Mar 45. For AA guns a „no-fire” order had been imposed 24 hours previous but in the case of the 8 Cdn LAA regt this signified little as the guns were sited in a ground role, and had no disposition to disclose their whereabouts until the order was given to fire in support of 3 Div.

#### Cleve

362. — On 24 Mar came that great airborne armada which shattered the German lines of communication and the German rear. From the point of vantage on the Rhine, this enormous display of air power was of staggering dimensions. Troops of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt had already deployed in their initial positions, and it was anticipated that within a few hours, the „Pepperpot” would be called upon to pour forth its lethal rain. As the days dragged by however, and no call for fire support came, an uneasy feeling permeated the Regt that this great fire-plan would be abandoned. On 28 Mar, 101 and 102 Btys moved to their second positions without having fired a shot. But no sooner had they redeployed when orders came crackling over the air and at 1442 hours „Shot 1 Grainger” was reported.



Cleve

363. — Operation „Pepperpot” lasted only 4 days, but during that period the intensity of fire was so great that an ammunition expenditure figures soared to astronomical heights. In all 2400 rounds per gun were fired and 43 barrels worn out in the mighty series of shoots. No sooner was one task completed than another one was commenced until to the haggard gun detachment it seemed that there was no break in the barrage.

Cleve

364. — The H.E. and tracer of the 40mm was found to be most effective in an H.F. role. Large volumes of H.E. fire could be swiftly and accurately brought to bear on the target areas and the incendiary effect was highly satisfactory. The 70 Bty, using some of its guns for sniping at observation posts obtained excellent observed results and completely neutralized points of observation. Capt L. L. Leatherdale who conducted the shoot was well satisfied with the results.

Cleve

365. — The advance of 3 Div troops behind this fire support brought them to the gates of Emmerich by 30 Mar, and on the following day the town had been largely overrun. „E” troop was released on afternoon of 31 Mar in order to move eastward with HQ 4 Cdn Armd Div. The „Cease fire” came later on that day for the balance of the regiment, and with that order were details for further moves.

Cleve

366. — So ended „Pepperpot”. It had not been without its casualties. Night bombing attacks by small numbers of enemy planes had caused casualties both to personnel and equipment, and mishaps at the guns plus shelling had added to the list. But the unit had come off surprisingly lightly considering the nearness of the enemy, and it was with a certain relief that the troops were withdrawn from their exposed Rhine positions.

Cleve

367. — Packing and concentration was fairly well completed the night of 31 Mar, and the regiment was ready by first light the following morning for further adventures.

## Festung Deutschland

1 Apr - 25 Apr 45



Once the bridgehead over the Rhine was established the game for the Germans was up. Ground between the Anvil of the Red Army and the Allied Hammer, the Wehrmacht sickened and crumbled. The Brit Second Army, in powerful battle groups raced north and east. The U.S. 9th Army sped across Northern Germany to the Elbe. Further south the U.S. 1st Army and the 15th Army enclosed the Ruhr in a grip of steel while strong forces of the U.S. 3rd and 7th Armies and the French Army on the Rhine smashed forward into the very heart of the Reich.

To General Crerar's troops went the honour of Liberating Holland. The First Cdn Corps which had been moved from Italy, sprang into action. 2 Cdn Corps with 4 Cdn Armd Div on its right flank, drove north along the German-Dutch Frontier.

For the enemy the battle was hopeless, and indeed large forces of his troops did lay down their arms. But before the advancing 4 Armd Div, the German troops fought stubbornly and desperately. More restricting than the enemy's defence was however the terrain over which the Div fought. As the advance proceeded, the ground became less and less suited for armoured warfare until at last, at the Kusten Kanal in Germany the tanks were able to provide only a limited support for the tired infantry of 10 C.I.B.



Rees

368. — The morning of 1 Apr was dull and cool, but it remained relatively dry. Along the roads in the gun area the sub units of 8 Cdn LAA Regt were marshalled for the move and one by one they slipped into the stream of traffic rolling towards the Rhine. The convoy moved to the river bank opposite Rees, and went clattering across via Blackfriars Bridge. By noon the regiment complete was on the eastern bank of the Rhine, and the units were soon established near Rees in a gutted and shell-shocked farm at Esserden.

Esserden

369. — The stay in Rees was very short lived. At 1500 hours 1 Apr an orders group at Bde HQ gave tasks to the troops in an AA role, and advised the regiment that it would move off for Germany at 0100 hours the following morning.

Vlaswinkel

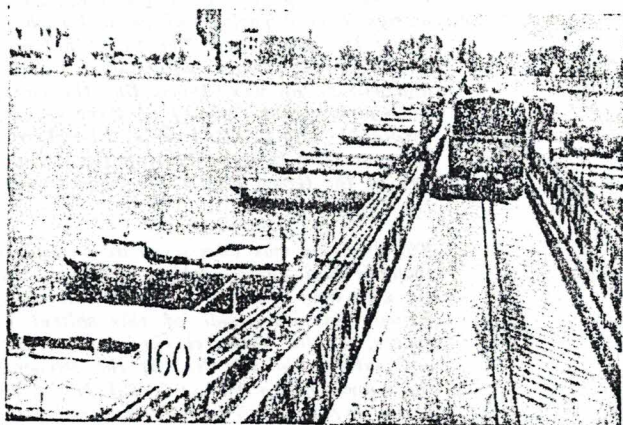
370. — The column went rumbling off in the blackout, right on schedule, and rolled steadily along, heading almost due north. A recon party under Major J. A. Cook which had wheeled off earlier in the evening met the convoy the morning of 2 Apr and swung it off the centre line to harbour near Vlaswinkel. Another jump put the regiment in Wegdam and on the 5 Apr it had advanced as far as Borne, with the Tac RHQ just south of Almelo at Zenterden.

Delden

371. — It was while the Regt was in this area that the commanding officer received orders to deploy some of its troops as security guards along the line of march. The left flank of the Division was being seriously menaced, and the danger of infiltrating German patrols cutting the bridges on the Delden-Almelo road could not be ignored. Such troops as were necessary were therefore immediately placed at Maj Cook's disposal and promptly organized as guards along this very vital route.

Almelo

372. — The responsibilities of the commanding officer expanded also in other directions. Already Div AA Commander and guardian of the bridges, he was suddenly told that he was responsible for the deployment of 557 (ML) Bty R.A.



The Rhine, a Bailey Bridge, and one 60 cwt.

Esche

as well. Accustomed to unusual tasks, this latter chore was quickly mastered as were numerous other bizarre tasks that were soon to follow.

Esche

373. — By the 6 Apr the vanguards of the 4 Cdn Armd Div had probed forward into Germany and were stabbing at Meppen on the Dortmund-Ems Canal. RHQ and most of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt moved on the 6 Apr to the Esche area, but those detachments required on bridge defences south of Almelo remained at their posts.

374. — The Division was now in enemy territory, and one by one, P.O.W. cages were being over-run and liberated. At first the P.O.Ws were of great interest, but as their number increased they became a decided embarrassment. There was no immediate organization to take control over them and administer to their needs, and the hard-pressed fighting units had not the personnel, equipment nor supplies to adequately take care of them. North of Esche for example, a cage containing high-ranking Yugoslav officers was liberated. Immediately the Yugoslavs took to the roads, causing considerable anxiety among those in charge of security in the Division. The 8 Cdn LAA Regt was near at hand with a reputation for smartness and efficiency, so immediately its ranks were raided for a restrictive guard over these men, pending more permanent arrangements.

Neufnhaus

375. — The tenuous lines of 4 Cdn Armd Div, running as they did through long stretches of uncleared German territory, made further demands on the units. The 70 Bty moved on 7 Apr to guard all bridges on the Green Route between Almelo and Meppen. Small towns on the route became possible points of ambush, and on 8 Apr „C” troop was sent to garrison the enemy town of Neufnhaus.

Ems River

376. — „D” troop of 101 Bty had meanwhile gone forward with the Field regiments of the Div Artillery and on the night of 7 Apr took part in a fire plan on Meppen which proceeded the assault crossing of the Ems River.

Meppen

377. — The Regt by this time was widely dispersed and on 9 Apr only Tac RHQ plus Echelon (with one troop in reserve) moved in to Meppen. Requests for additional troops were almost immediately made of the regiment. A Stalag containing 1500 Russians P.O.Ws had been contacted by our patrols which reported back that the Germans, who had withdrawn, had first removed all the food and smashed the water system. The Russians diseased and crippled, were frightened to have the Allies withdrawn and anxious to have troops there to protect them against the possible return of their oppressors.

Meppen

378. — The 8 Cdn LAA Regt had exactly one gun and 10 men to spare. However these were despatched under Lt. J. O. Nicol together with the commanding officer's vehicle which had been loaded with plundered food from a defunct German officer's mess, and for 48 hours it was a bulwark against the possible return of the Hun. Water, too, was hauled to the camp, but there was little that could be done until adequate supplies and personnel from the proper agencies arrived, except to reassure the Russians. This the 10 men were able somehow to do.



Wahn

Kusten Kanal

Kusten Kanal

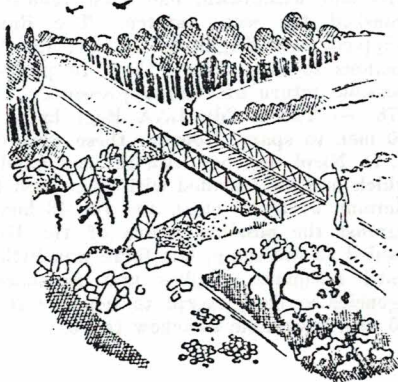
Kusten Kanal

379. — On 12 Apr the 6 Cdn LAA Regt RCA took over all the garrison and route protection tasks of the units south of Meppen. Guards of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt were maintained however on the bridges over the Ems at Meppen and on a P.O.W. cage at Wahn, east of the town itself.

380. — Ahead of RHQ the Division's advance was being pressed through Sogel and Friesoythe and to the Kusten Kanal, but the strain of the heavy fighting was beginning to tell, and fresh men were needed to bolster the battle-weary infantry. In aid of the crossing over the Kanal; „C” troop moved forward on 13 Apr in a ground role to give support to the assault troops. Stung into action the enemy sent a 30 man patrol armed with Panzerfaust back across the Kanal, intent on getting the guns. With the scarcity of infantry in the area a more determined body of men could have inflicted considerable damage. As it was, one of the guns was bazooka'd but the score was evened by the capture of 3 of the patrol by men of the troop. More and more troops of the regiment were spirited away to other than AA roles, until by 16 Apr only one of the regiment's 6 Bofors troops was employed for AA defence.

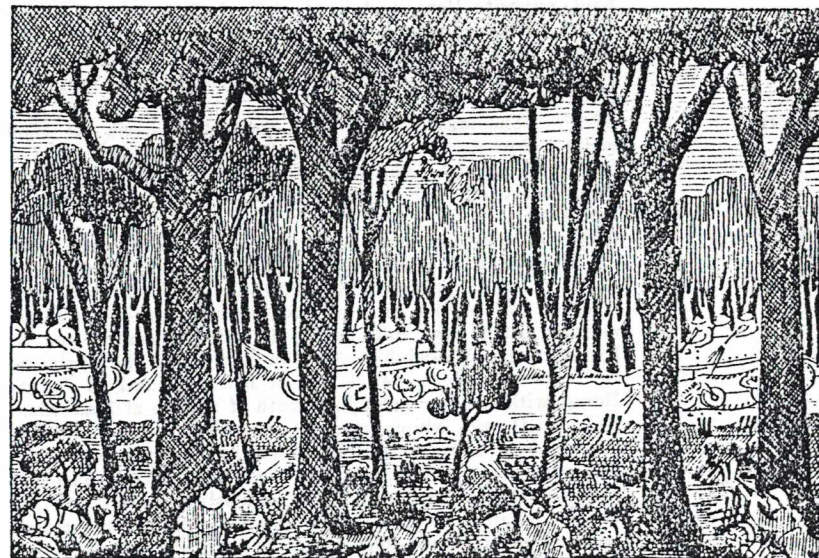
381. — What of the others? One troop was operating with the 15 Fd Regt firing directional tracer. Another troop, working under the aegis of the 8 Fd Sqn RCE was endeavouring to keep the one artery for supplies open. Two troops were operating with the 18 Armd Car Regt as light field guns. And one troop was in reserve. By 20 Apr the reserve troop was moved up to provide AA protection on the bridge across the Kusten Kanal, making 6 troops employed.

382. — Perhaps the most useful, and certainly the least glamorous of these multifold tasks was that of road construction. While „D” troop was waging a duel with Nebelwerfer detachments and dodging patrols of Germans armed with bazookas, and while „A” and „E” troops were hurling shells into enemy positions, „B” troop (and later „D” troop) was working feverishly to prevent the advance from stalling completely through lack of supplies. The job of keeping the spongy dirt track which was the Div axis open to traffic was beyond the capabilities of the Engineers themselves. Therefore the work done by the gunners of the 8 Cdn LAA regt was essential to the continuing advance.



## The Kusten Kanal

25 Apr - 5 May 45



By the 25 Apr 45, bets were being freely exchanged that the war would be over by the end of the month. Almost everywhere the German Front had crumpled. Almost everywhere the enemy had had enough.

Victory was in the air. Only a few pockets held by desperate men made any attempt to resist the Allies. It was however, against such a pocket and against such men that the 4 Cdn Armd Div was pitted. The force that opposed our men was a motley one. Crack paratroops, Volksgrenadiers, marines and sailors, all were there. But they had plenty of machine guns and mortars, plenty of Panzerfaust, and above all an invaluable ally in the terrain. Elsewhere deep advances and large surrenders were meeting the Allied troops. But at the end of the Green Route there was a sullen savage battle to the finish.

The Division was advancing as an isolated finger pointing towards Bad Zwischenahn and Oldenburg, a probing tentacle with long vulnerable flanks running back to the Kusten Kanal. On either side of this salient were strong enemy forces, capable unless checked, of knifing in from the sides and cutting the life line of the Division where it crossed the Kanal. Every man in 10 C.I.B. and 4 C.A.B. was needed in the forward offensive action, and yet somehow resources had to be found to hold off the Hun on either side of the line of advance. Two fine regiments of gunners, the 5 A Tk



and the 8 LAA Regts, each with infantry experience were available. The decision to employ them as infantry was inevitable.

„Cease fire” came at 0800 hrs 5 May 45 with the Div, protected on either flank by the gunners of the 5 A Tk and 8 LAA Regts RCA, driving forward to Bad Zwischenahn.

**Kusten Kanal**

383. — 25 Apr was a fine warm spring day. Overhead Typhoons of the T.A.F. wheeled and zoomed as they pounded enemy strong points ahead. Never had air support been more complete and more continuous. But despite this support, the advance to the north was painfully slow.

**Kusten Kanal**

384. — At Tac RHQ, a group of officers including 3 Bty commanders and the B.M. HQ RCA were gathered together. They had barely been seated for dinner when the telephone rang. There was a brisk conversation, the other party rang off and everyone waited expectantly for the news.

**Kusten Kanal**

385. — They were not disappointed. With the sun already low in the western sky, the regiment had been ordered to relieve the Lake Superior Regt in an infantry role forthwith.

**Kusten Kanal**

386. — The 70 Bty was the least involved of the units of the regiment, and in the fading light reeve parties set off to contact the out-going unit. It was to be the task of that Bty to deploy its troops, using its own guns for Artillery support, along the Kusten Kanal.

**Kusten Kanal**

387. — The Kanal itself, a formidable water barrier cutting the centre line, had been spanned by the engineers with a Bailey bridge. But the 4 Cdn Armd Div salient across the Kanal meant literally that the Division was fighting on 3 sides. The most vulnerable point of the salient was at the Kusten Kanal and up until the night of the 25 Apr the eastern approaches of the bridge had been guarded by the Motor Btn. Now the task was being handed over to the 70 Bty. The troops were swiftly moved up the Kanal and deployed, one on each side of the obstacle as infantry, under Captains W. A. J. Kennedy and H. W. Simms.

**Kusten Kanal**

388. — The men taking over the sector were immediately engaged with small arms fire, and a brisk battle ensued out of which the 70 Bty emerged with one prisoner. Again on the 26 Apr, a fierce exchange of shots occurred, but this time, backed by their own formidable 40mm guns, there was no doubt of the outcome, and 4 prisoners surrendered themselves to the 70's cocky gunners.

**Ostersheps**

389. — On 27 Apr, 102 Bty went the way of the 70. The 5 A Tk Regt and the New Brunswick Rangers had been standing off the enemy east of Ostersheps. Now they were required for other duties. So in went the 102 as infantry. As if to show the newcomers how it was done, the 70 patrols grabbed two more prisoners that afternoon.

**Kusten Kanal**

390. — „C” troop was taken off its AA role on the bridge over the Kanal. On the 28 Apr a possible „back door” route for German forces bent on attacking 4 Cdn Armd Div rear lay down the single road leading from Oldenburg to

Friesoythe south of the Kusten Kanal. Armoured cars of the Royal Cdn Dragoons were already in position, but not in sufficient strength to guarantee the security of the supply line. To this threatened sector Capt Tolson and Lieut. F. J. Morgan led the men and guns of „C” troop, 101 Bty.

**Kusten Kanal**

391. — While „C” troop was moving south and east on its new task, a consolidation was taking place on the 70—102 sectors. Parties from each Bty, equipped with mine detectors, set out simultaneously to clear a route from 70 to 102 BHQs via a tertiary road running north from the Kanal banks two miles east of the main Div axis. A large number of mines were discovered and disarmed, but before vehicle contact could be made a bridge had to be built. This was accomplished, and patrols were able to dominate a strong perimeter running north from the Kanal to the Div line east of Ostersheps.

**Kusten Kanal**

392. — This entire sector was extremely lively. The 70 Bty had already been subjected to heavy small arms fire, in addition to shelling and mortaring, and further north the 102 Bty found the enemy equally aggressive. The Btys themselves were very offensive minded. On the Kusten Kanal „A” and „B” troops had already mastered their opponents. „E” and „F” troops were just as anxious to try the metal of the enemy that opposed them. For the latter the opportunity for action came on the 29 Apr.

**Kusten Kanal**

393. — North of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt sector and in a vaguely defined area, a battalion of the Royal Marines had been operating. Liaison had already been established with their outposts. On the morning of 29 Apr a fighting patrol from „E” troop, 102 Bty, with Capt. R.L. White at its head, moved east on a reeve. They contacted the enemy and were forced after a sharp battle to withdraw leaving one man dead on the ground. When therefore a strong carrier force of the Marines proposed that a joint patrol from the Marines and the 8 Cdn LAA Regt return to the ground, „E” troop leapt at the chance for revenge. Fire support was arranged from „F” troop and the carriers under the leadership of Marine officers, planned to clear the area in which „E” troop had met opposition that morning.

**Kusten Kanal**

394. — It was approximately 1630 hours when the patrol set out. Almost immediately communications with the guns broke down, but foolishly as it afterwards appeared, the carriers continued on their way. As the patrol approached the enemy territory it was ambushed. Swept from all sides by machine gun fire, the troops dismounted to fight it out. Lt. R. H. Marshall who was in charge of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt component of the forces took cover under the carrier, and was with the rest of his men giving a good account of himself when the driver of the carrier, without warning, backed the machine over his body.



#### Kusten Kanal

395. — From „F” troop’s position the situation was not clear. Out of communication, they could only observe the battle helplessly. When it finally became clear that the patrol had been largely wiped out, and that the German ambush had succeeded, the guns extracted heavy casualties from the enemy. But because they were not in contact with the patrol, the fire power of the troop was not brought into play until after the disaster was complete.

#### Kusten Kanal

396. — The losses of the regiment were really not so heavy. 3 men out of the 5 men employed were missing. But added to the casualties that morning, plus one dead and one wounded in the 70 Bty, it was an impressive enough toll.

#### Kusten Kanal

397. — The following day the guns were again used to hammer the German positions, and again the dividend of prisoners came rolling in. On the 1 May the dosage was repeated and more prisoners surrendered.

#### Kusten Kanal

398. — The Marines moved out from their position on the left flank of 102 Bty on May Day. „C” troop, no longer required south of the Kanal was moved to fill the gap, getting into position as night fell on the 1 May. It is to be noted that 20mm guns were used that day. These equipments consisted of 4 Polsten guns mounted on a power operated turret and capable of turning out a large volume of fire. When the regiment went into the infantry role two of these equipments were in the hands of an instructional cadre which was conducting a school in the regiment on the use of these weapons. Since no personnel were available for the school once the infantry role was undertaken, these instructional guns were pressed into operational service. The immediate result was the taking of 9 POWs.

#### Kusten Kanal

399. — On 2 May there was a mass surrender of civilians opposite 102 Bty who vouchsafed the information that the Germans had pulled out of their positions during the night. The following day a strong patrol under Capt Roy White completed clearing the area, taking 3 prisoners enroute. On the return of this patrol the Brigadier immediately ordered the regiment to advance and occupy Jeddoloh and from that point to embark on a clearing operation which in conjunction with 10 C.I.B. on the left flank and 2 Cdn Inf Div on the right would ensure that the flanks and rear of Cdn Troops advancing into Oldenburg would be safe. The area given to the regiment comprised almost 40 square miles of difficult territory.

#### Jeddoloh

400. — There were several bridge-building and road repair jobs needed before even Jeddoloh was reached and from that point the entire regiment was sent off on different routes bent on completely sweeping the area.

#### Jeddoloh

401. — The patrols were conducted with dash and initiative and even the paratroops showed little hesitation in surrendering to these determined gunners. On the right flank, contact was made with a 2 Div patrol working out of Oldenburg, and after the clearing operation was completed, over 40 prisoners were found in the 8 Cdn LAA Regt net

#### Gut Horn

402. — Contact having been lost with the enemy, the Regt, less „C” troop on bridge protection and „D” troop on road construction, was withdrawn and concentrated north east of Bad Zwischenahn at Gut Horn. Word was received the evening of 4 May that the surrender of the enemy in North Germany, North Holland and Denmark had been arranged, the „Cease fire” to come at 0800 hours 5 May 45.

403. — Promptly at the said hour the orders to cease fire came from Bde HQ and the gunners relaxed, their great task finally ended. The German War had ended for the 8 Cdn LAA Regt RCA.





# Après la Guerre

5 May 45 - ??

JUST CALL ME LARRY!



*Lt-Col R. J. Hegan, Commanding Officer  
from July to December, 1945.*

*The cessation of hostilities on the First Cdn Army Front did not at once mean a reduction in activity, an orgy of celebration, nor a swift return to Canada. A large well-armed and well-organized force of the enemy still existed in north-west Europe, and the disarmament of this force had to be accomplished.*

*4 Cdn Armd Div took its part in the rounding up of enemy stragglers and the neutralization of key points. Eventually the Division was withdrawn from Germany and was given*

*a concentration area in eastern Holland in the Almelo, Enschede, Ruurlo area. Here the Division laid down its arms and began to prepare for its return to Canada.*

*The 4 Cdn Armd Div was the last Division to leave Canada. It was destined to be the last to return. As the intervening months wore on, sports, education, recreation were all featured to while away the weary hours, before repatriation was achieved.*

## Torsholt

404. — The regiment remained at Gut Horn in Germany long enough to celebrate VE Day on 8 May 45. It then moved south to the Torsholt area, from whence protective guards were dispatched to look after special German equipment. The unit vehicles were used to collect stores and ammunition scattered about the country and a precautionary search was made in the area for mines, concealed weapons and escaped prisoners.

## Torsholt

405. — At Torsholt an inspection was held by the GOC and the regiment roundly complimented on its fine war record. Later also Lt-Gen Guy Simonds took the salute of the 3 Cdn LAA Regt RCA.

## Borculo

406. — The regiment moved into a concentration area in Holland 26 May. RHQ went to Ruurlo, while the Btys found accommodation in the village of Boreulo about 12 kilometres distant.

## Ruurlo

407. — On the 8 Jun a farewell march past and salute to the guns was held with the GOC 4 Cdn Armd Div, Maj-Gen C. Vokes taking the salute. The parade consisted of the fighting echelons of 15 Fd, 23 Fd (SP), 5 A tk and 8 LAA Regts RCA, and as the guns rolled past for the last time a guard of honour from the 8 LAA Regt snapped to the „Present Arms”. After the march past, the guns swung into column of route and Lt-Col E. W. Cormack took the salute of his Regiment as it rumbled through Ruurlo.

## Amsterdam

408. — The farewell to the guns by no means meant the last of the regiment's chores however. On 26 Jun the unit moved en masse to Amsterdam where with the Provost it worked at its old and well-practised job of route restriction. The occasion was the liberation celebrations in the city of Amsterdam, and in order to control the crowds during a mammoth parade, men of the 8 Cdn LAA Regt were called upon to assist the authorities. The Regt returned to eastern Holland on the 29 Jun having, as always, accomplished its objective with energy and precision.

## Ruurlo

409. — By the end of Jun, the disintegration of the regiment had begun. Commencing slowly at first, the tempo of repatriation increased sharply in July, and by mid Aug apart from a framework of veteran officers and key personnel, the whole regiment had changed almost beyond recognition.



## Ruurlo

410. — Undoubtedly the most significant alteration in the unit occurred when on 1 Jul Lt-Col Cormack left the regiment to assume the duties of C.R.A. at HQ RCA. This was not a new thing. As long as Div Arty had existed (and indeed longer) Lt-Col Cormack had been the Brigadier's deputy, and as such had often acted in the C.R.A.'s stead. But the appointment this time was permanent and entailed his movement to Bde HQ.

## Ruurlo

411. — To replace Lt-Col Cormack as commanding officer went Major (now Lt-Col) R. J. Hegan. Almost as much a fixture in the 8 Cdn LAA Regt as Lt-Col Cormack, and indeed a worthy successor, Lt-Col Hegan became the only other officer to command the Regiment. Other great changes occurred. Splendid officers with great records of service in battle, efficient NCOs and gallant gunners who had served with the Regt from its incubation, departed one by one. But under the new commander the character and spirit of a regiment so carefully created and tempered in action by Lt-Col Cormack was maintained and preserved by the remaining few for as long as the regiment endures.

## Appendices



Heroes Moffatt and Dearle  
are decorated by the G.O.C.

## Honours and Awards

### Order of the British Empire

Lt-Col E. W. Cormack

#### Military cross

Capt. R. L. White

#### Croix De Guerre (Belgian)

Major R. A. McAlpine

#### Croix de Guerre (French)

Capt. A. Melville

L-403 B.S.M. Moffatt, C. A.

#### Military Medal

B-11888 L'Bdr. Brown, R. A. C.

B-15502 RSM Hall, F. C.

H-35261 BSM Haywood, A. E.

H-75122 Sgt. Johnson, M. E.

#### British Empire Medal

H-35396 RSM Elrick, R.

H-100374 Gnr. Kustra, J.

### Mention In Despatches

Lt-Col R. J. Hegan

B-15666 Sgt. Henderson, T. G. H.

B-18674 Sgt. James, C. I.

L-61794 Sgt. LaRocque, A. H.

H-35544 Sgt. Leleu, H. S.

H-75169 Gnr. Myhill, G. W.

B-15691 Bdr. Ryan, C. N.

### Commander-in-Chief's Certificate

L-280 Bdr. Bishop, W. C.

H-75741 BQMS Boyd, A. E.

L-61838 Gnr. Bradshaw, R. A.

H-75307 L'Sgt. Dearle, D. J.

H-75255 A/Sgt. Easton, G. W.

B-15657 Gnr. McEwen, J. D.

Major R. A. McAlpine

H-82290 Sgt. Sinclair, G. M.

B-45459 Gur. Wood, G. F.



## Casualty List

## Killed

Number	Rank	Name	Bty	Date of Casualty
	Lt	Brown, Albert H.	70 Bty	8 Aug 44
	Capt	Waldie, Ernest R.	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-15002	RSM	Abel, Percy D.	RHQ	20 Aug 44
	Gnr	Avey, H. W.	102 Bty	27 Jul 41
B-105124	Gnr	Bowslaugh, Wilbur E.	102 Bty	15 Aug 41
F-5614	Gnr	Brackett, Edward J.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-380	L/Sgt	Brown, Robert J.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
M-50442	Gnr	Cawthra, William R.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
H-75210	Bdr	Coleman, Alvero D.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-61746	Gnr	Collard, John A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-75083	Gnr	Ewen, Frank M.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-57630	Gnr	File, Frederick K.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-75147	Gnr	Finch, Glen A.	RHQ	7 Aug 44
K-76640	Gnr	Fyfe, Dugald	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
M-61011	Gnr	Gardiner, Andrew	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
L-61821	Sgt	Gillingham, C. A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-75308	Gnr	Hamilton, William	70 Bty	7 Aug 44
M-101046	Gnr	Hope, Albert N.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
H-82297	Gnr	Irving, William	70 Bty	7 Aug 44
F-78194	Gnr	Keizer, Walter B.	102 Bty	27 Aug 44
B-15538	Gnr	Langford, Gordon W.	102 Bty	15 Aug 44
D-6848	Gnr	Lockett, George	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
M-36900	Gnr	Lucas, Gordon A.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
B-15660	L/Sgt	O'Neil, Billy C.	102 Bty	29 Apr 45
H-75096	Gnr	Ramsay, William, M.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
D-137018	Gnr	Royea, Charles N.		8 Aug 44
A-57044	Gnr	Russell, Ernest F.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
H-75172	L/Bdr	White, Francis	70 Bty	18 Sep 44

## Died of wounds

Number	Rank	Name	Bty	Date of Casualty
L-366	Gnr	Crampean, Neil G.	101 Bty	27 Sep 44
H-75255	Sgt	Easton, George W.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
B-129546	Bdr	Lambert, Arthur E.	101 Bty	29 Aug 44
G-6048	Gnr	Maxwell, Donald W.	70 Bty	24 Oct 44
B-45924	Pte	McCulley, Robert		7 Sep 44
H-67245	Gnr	Metcalfe, Lyle E.	102 Bty	20 Oct 44
L-74647	Gnr	Olson, Carl G.	70 Bty	29 Apr 45
L-61707	Gnr	Saint John, W.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
F-82431	Gnr	Sherry, Maurice R.	70 Bty	5 Aug 44

## Wounded

	Lt	Bishop, Allan G.	102 Bty	9 Aug 44
	Capt	Buck, William M.	102 Bty	27 Aug 44
	Major	Cook, John Anderson	70 Bty	8 Aug 44
	Lt-Col	Cormack, Eric Wyld	RHQ	29 Oct 44
	Capt	Estey, Clarence L. B.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
	Capt	Harper, Donald D. E.	70 Bty	26 Oct 44
	Lt	Marshall, Stewart H.	102 Bty	6 May 45
	Lt	McLennan, Arthur D.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
	Capt	Melville, Alan	70 Bty	2 Mar 45
	Lt	Ricardo, David W. C.	70 Bty	8 Aug 44
	Lt	Russell, William S.	RHQ	17 Jun 44
	Capt	Wolstenholme, D. A.	101 Bty	21 Sep 44
B-15002	RSM	Abel, Percy D.	RHQ	7 Aug 44
L-65595	Gnr	Armstrong, Harvey	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
F-77858	Gnr	Arsenault, Peter G.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61788	Pte	Barnard, Douglas, K.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
F-21848	Sgt	Barrett, Leon C.	102 Bty	14 Aug 44
L-61803	Gnr	Bauder, Gustave	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61751	Gnr	Bell, James L.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-111923	L/Bdr	Bellamy, Percy Jr.	102 Bty	13 Aug 44
A-31257	Gnr	Bender, Clayton H.	RHQ	7 Aug 44
M-37091	Gnr	Bender, Philip	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61123	Gnr	Beviss, Stuart W.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-100336	Gnr	Bionnieri, John H.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-112429	L/Bdr	Bois, Francis A.	102 Bty	13 Aug 44
L-61779	Gnr	Boulton, Charles R.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-22627	Sgt	Bourgeois, Patrick	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61838	Gnr	Bradshaw, Ray A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-65723	Gnr	Bratton, James A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-320	L/Bdr	Briltz, Matthew M.	101 Bty	30 Jul 44
L-18545	Gnr	Brooks, Mathew W.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61702	Gnr	Brough, William T. M.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-57637	Gnr	Buttar, William R.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
B-15535	L/Bdr	Caldwell, Charles C.	RHQ	20 Aug 44
L-440	Pte	Cale, Edwin T.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-360	Gnr	Cardin, Joseph D.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-15664	Gnr	Careswell, Eric R.	RHQ	24 Mar 45
L-62110	L/Bdr	Casement, Lloyd, T.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
A-69324	Gnr	Caven, Lorne A.	70 Bty	8 Aug 44
M-50442	Gnr	Cawthra, William R.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
F-43817	Gnr	Clamp, Eric	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
D-118721	L/Bdr	Clarke, Edwin E.	RHQ	7 Aug 44
A-57016	Gnr	Clifford, Jack N.	102 Bty	19 Aug 44
L-57862	Gnr	Corke, John L. G.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
M-68040	Gnr	Cormack, A. S.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-57846	Pte	Cote, John L.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
K-45735	Gnr	Croft, Jerry H.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-101730	Gnr	Cubbiteooke, L. G.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61845	Gnr	Davidson, James R.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
K-49758	Gnr	Davies, Ernest H.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
C-120596	Gnr	Davis, William F.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-75148	Gnr	Donaldson, A. C. A.	70 Bty	1 Oct 44
H-75114	L/Bdr	Dow, Norman E.	70 Bty	3 Mar 45
L-61745	L/Bdr	Dow, Frank H.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44



Number	Rank	Name	Bty	Date of Casualty
II-67490	Gnr	Downie, Robert	70 Bty	19 Aug 44
L-57764	Sgt	Drury, Ray G.	70 Bty	14 Aug 44
L-100501	Gnr	Dubyk, Dmytro	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
F-95147	Gnr	Eagles, Ralph S.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61742	Cpl	Eustace, John S.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-15626	L/Bdr	Fairbrother, J. M.	102 Bty	5 May 45
II-75313	Gnr	Farmer, Jack R.	RHQB	7 Aug 44
L-282	Sgt.	Feader, James Al	101 Bty	28 May 45
II-75262	A/Bdr	Feldman, Phillip Z.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
B-22408	Sgt	Fess, Donald, L.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-62117	Gnr	Fuglerud, Henry M.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-57854	Gnr	Goldsack, Leslie R.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
B-15595	Bdr	Goodwill, John	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-100029	Gnr	Gustafson, Obert W.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-100167	Gnr	Harkness, N. A. G.	101 Bty	29 Mar 45
II-75021	Cpl	Havlik, Albert J.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
L-100484	Gnr	Hilts, Arthur, H.	101 Bty	4 Sep 44
L-57849	Sgt	Hopkins, Geoffrey, A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
II-75215	L/Bdr	Hrycak, Mathew	70 Bty	11 Aug 44
K-14113	Gnr	Hully, Cecil F.	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-57605	L Sgt	Jackson, Floyd E.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
L-57684	L/Bdr	Kay, Harvey L.	101 Bty	27 Aug 44
L-66418	Gnr	Kazuska, Nick	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-102869	Gnr	Kelly, Lester W.	101 Bty	14 Aug 44
L-304	Bdr	Kennedy, Cecil G.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
II-62669	Gnr	Kolke, Paul	70 Bty	6 Mar 45
L-100400	Gnr	Konkin, Fred	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-84649	Gnr	Konyi, Coleman J.	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
II-35564	Sgt	Leleu, Harry S.	RHQB	7 Aug 44
L-26409	Gnr	Letkeman, George	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-15507	BSM	Lodge, J. A.	102 Bty	1 May 45
K-70815	Gnr	Loney, Leonard G.	102 Bty	14 Aug 44
B-15561	Gnr	Lucas, Harold E.	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-26412	Gnr	MacDougall, John R.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-100248	Gnr	Marsh, George H.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
II-100518	Gnr	McConnell, D. E.	70 Bty	14 Aug 44
F-51292	Gnr	McCombes, Douglas, E.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
K-45603	Gnr	McKenzie, John	102 Bty	29 Apr 45
L-57884	Sgt	McMullen, John J.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
L-61709	Gnr	McPhee, Ronald A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-66504	Gnr	Metz, Felix, G.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61820	L/Bdr	Mitchell, Ralph R.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-403	Sgt	Moffatt, Cecil A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
II-100030	Gnr	Morrice, John A.	70 Bty	29 Sep 44
II-75124	Gnr	Mouck, James H.	70 Bty	7 Sep 44
II-75169	Gnr	Myhill, Gordon W.	70 Bty	28 Apr 45
F-3474	Gnr	Page, Victor, J.	102 Bty	29 Apr 45
II-64841	L/Bdr	Patterson, W. R.	70 Bty	29 Sep 44
L-110209	Gnr	Paul, Donald L. H.	70 Bty	11 Aug 44
B-75062	Gnr	Peters, David	70 Bty	11 Aug 44
D-26572	Cpl	Powers, Dennis R. N.	102 Bty	12 Mar 45
II-66515	BSM	Prokaska, Peter	70 Bty	10 Aug 44
B-45008	Gnr	Reid, Kenneth, E.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-57646	A/Bdr	Ritchie, James C.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
H-75010	A BSM	Robertson, Blair A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44

Number	Rank	Name	Bty	Date of Casualty
L-54805	Gnr	Robertson, Ray W.	70 Bty	27 Aug 44
L-351	Bdr	Roe, Maddison, F. F.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-57607	Gnr	Schuck, John A.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
L-61822	Gnr	Sheffield, Robert B.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-100762	Gnr	Sinclair, Norman	70 Bty	14 Aug 44
M-66346	L/Bdr	Smith, Albert J.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-62129	Gnr	Smith, Clifford, G.	101 Bty	2 Aug 44
II-75311	L/Bdr	Smith, Leslie P.	70 Bty	29 Mar 45
L-338	Pte	Smith, Ressie J.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-130610	Gnr	Spence, Clarence T.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
L-355	Bdr	Stewart, John A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
M-56571	L/Bdr	Sullivan, Douglas, H.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
L-57628	Gnr	Talbot, Lyell M.	70 Bty	4 Aug 44
L-10504	Gnr	Taylor, Alfred J.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
H-75238	L/Bdr	Taylor, Gordon L.	RHQB	24 Oct 44
L-292	Gnr	Tebb, Elmer A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61744	Bdr	Thompson, George	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-110907	L/Bdr	Trainor, Glyn E.	102 Bty	14 Aug 44
B-22573	Gnr	Turner, Richard A.	102 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-44843	Gnr	Twining, Larry F.	70 Bty	3 Mar 45
L-100522	Gnr	Vandenabeele, Henry	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-54799	Gnr	Walton, Arnold R.	101 Bty	26 Aug 44
L-61844	Sgt	Walton, Noel L. S.	101 Bty	21 Sep 44
L-61747	Gnr	Watt, Clarence A.	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-62101	Gnr	Wawrenchuk, Stephen	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61824	Gnr	Wetaski, William	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
B-22412	Sgt	Witherspoon, A.	102 Bty	27 Aug 44
L-61767	Gnr	Ziegler, John	101 Bty	8 Aug 44
L-61819	Gnr	Zwack, Lloyd M.	101 Bty	28 Mar 45

## Died

L-57872	Gnr	Abbott, W. S.	70 Bty	11 Jun 44
II-614971	Gnr	Antonyshyn, E.	70 Bty	15 Jul 45
L-61807	Gnr	Benjamin, E. R.	101 Bty	22 May 43
L-61813	L/Bdr	Bryde, N.	101 Bty	8 Sep 45
II-75155	L/Sgt	Flynn, Clifford G.	70 Bty	22 Aug 44
K-10219	Gnr	Gates, John R.	101 Bty	6 Oct 44
B-15711	Sgt	Hendry, G. L.	RHQB	2 Apr 45
II-75122	Sgt	Johnston, M. E.	70 Bty	17 Nov 44
II-100574	Gnr	Kustra, Jack	70 Bty	22 Nov 44
B-15503	Sgt	Maloney, Joseph E.	102 Bty	19 Sep 42
II-75187	L/Bdr	Mushumanski, Victor	70 Bty	13 Apr 43
L-61755	A Sgt	Reid, W. J.	101 Bty	16 Jan 44
G-52059	Gnr	Taylor, John C.	70 Bty	15 Sep 44
L-61825	Bdr	Wakefield, C. H.	101 Bty	27 May 43

## Released P.O.W.

M-12263	L/Bdr	Kauppila, A.	102 Bty	29 Apr 45
B-15626	L/Bdr	Fairbrother, J. M.	102 Bty	29 Apr 45
	Lt	Marshall, S. H.	102 Bty	29 Apr 45



Number Rank Name Bty Date of Casualty

## Slate of Officers - 18 Aug 42

Lt-Col. E. W. Cormack	Lieut F. W. Johnson
Major H. E. F. Clark	Lieut W. A. J. Kennedy
Major D. A. M. MacLaren	Lieut F. M. Ladd
Major R. J. Hegan	Lieut H. S. Lockwood
Capt D. D. E. Harper	Lieut D. J. Lynn
Capt R. A. McAlpine	Lieut J. B. Lawson
Capt C. S. McKay	Lieut F. J. Morgan
Capt K. C. Pennie	Lieut F. G. McGavin
Capt J. G. Barry	Lieut G. B. F. MacKay
Lieut F. N. Balls	Lieut C. P. Redwood
Lieut A. G. Bishop	Lieut L. A. Rose
Lieut A. H. Brown	Lieut W. S. Russell
Lieut J. A. Cairns	Lieut D. R. Sheldon
Lieut G. D. Crawford	Lieut R. L. White
Lieut D. B. Dawson	Lieut M. L. Williams
Lieut G. B. Hamilton	Lieut A. H. Wilson
Lieut G. M. Howden	

RCAMC

RCAPC

## Attached

H/Capt A. S. McConnell | Spvr W. Snowden S.A.Aux

## Slate of Officers 28 July 1944

Subs Rank	Acting Rank	Name	Appt
1. Lt-Col		Cormack	E. W. C.O.
2. Major		Cook	J. A. O.C. 70 Bty
3. Major		Hegan	R. J. O.C. 101 Bty
4. Major		MacLaren	D. A. M. 2 i'e
5. Major		McAlpine	R. A. O.C. 102 Bty
6. Capt.		Donaldson	H. 70 A T C
7. Capt		Hammond	E. G. 101 C T C
8. Capt		Harper	D. D. F. 70 B T C
9. Capt		Howden	G. M. 102 D T C
10. Capt		Leatherdale	L. L. 70 Bty Capt
11. Capt		McGavin	F. G. Adj
12. Capt		Meldrum	S. W. 101 J T C
13. Capt		Melville	A. 70 C T C
14. Capt		Nesbitt	J. R. PMR
15. Capt		Pennie	K. C. Q.M.
16. Capt		Watson	G. L. M.O.
17. Capt		White	R. L. 102 E T C
18. Capt		Wilson	A. H. 101 Bty Capt
19. Capt		Wolstenholme	D. A. 101 H T C
20. Capt		Wood	G. D. 102 Bty Capt
21. Capt		Waldie	E. R. 102 F T C
22. Lieut		Armstrong	R. M. 101 J Tp Sub
23. Lieut		Balls	F. N. 102 D Tp Ldr
24. Lieut		Bishop	A. G. 102 F Tp Ldr
25. Lieut		Brown	A. H. 70 A Tp Ldr

Subs Rank	Acting Rank	Name	Appt
26. Lieut		Cairns	J. A. 101 BtlQ Sub
27. Lieut		Frazer	C. M. 70 A Tp Sub
28. Lieut		Gammel	J. P. 102 D Tp Ldr
29. Lieut		Godkin	C. B. 102 F Tp Sub
30. Lieut		Hale	W. R. 70 C Tp Sub
31. Lieut		Kennedy	W. A. J. 70 C Tp Ldr
32. Lieut		Lawson	J. B. 102 BtlQ Sub
33. Lieut		Libbey	R. W. 70 Bty B Tp Sub
34. Lieut		Lockwood	H. S. 101 G Tp Ldr
35. Lieut		Lynn	D. J. 70 BtlQ Sub
36. Lieut		McRae	D. J. 102 Tp Sub
37. Lieut		Moran	W. T. BtlQ O.O.
38. Lieut		Morgan	F. J. 101 H Tp Ldr
39. Lieut		Nelms	V. C. 101 H Tp Sub
40. Lieut		Nicol	J. O. 102 E Tp Ldr
41. Lieut		Ricardo	D. W. C. 70 B T L
42. Lieut		Russell	W. S. 101 J T L
43. Lieut		Williams	M. L. 101 G Tp Sub
44. Capt		Buck	W. M. Tp C Y Tp 102
45. Capt		Estey	C. L. B. Tp C Z Tp 101
46. Capt		Munro	G. D. Tp C X Tp 70
47. Lieut		Gwynne	W. Tp Sub X
48. Lieut		Haddow	F. G. T L Y
49. Lieut		McLennan	A. D. T L Z
50. Lieut		Reid	W. A. T L X
51. Lieut		St Onge	J. A. W. Tp Sub Y
52. Lieut		Taylor	J. T. Tp Sub Z

## Attached

Subs Rank	Acting Rank	Name	Appt
H Capt		McConnell	A. S. Chaplain
Spvr		McIntock	P. Y.M.C.A.
Lieut		Fader	H. S. X 4A L.



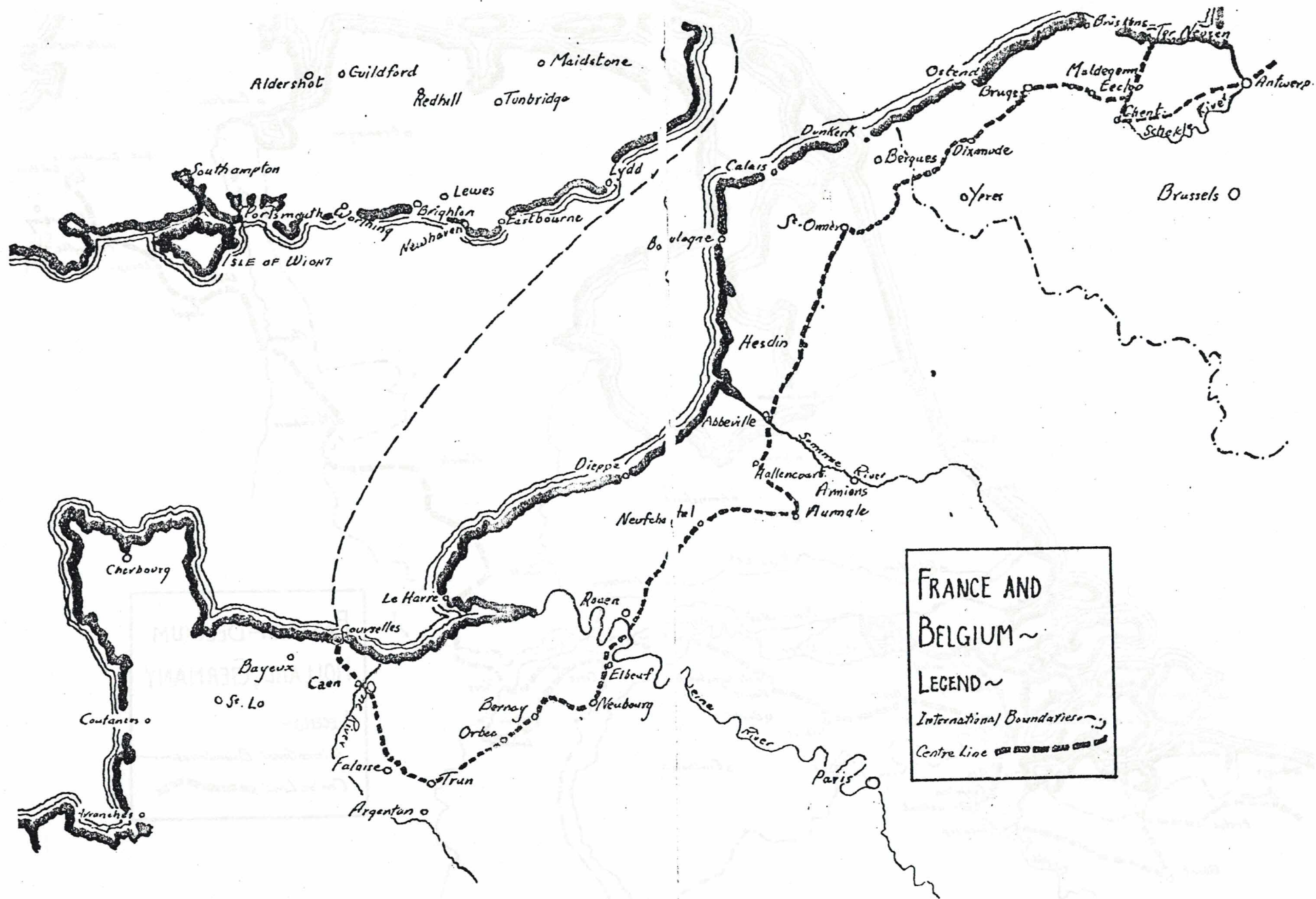
# Officers Slate - 8 May 45

Subs Rank	Acting Rank	Name	Present Corps	Appointment Held
1. Lt-Col		E. W. Cormack	R.C.A.	C.O.
2. Major		R. J. Hegan	R.C.A.	2 i/c
3. Major		J. A. Cook	R.C.A.	O.C. 70 Bty
4. Major		R. A. McAlpine	R.C.A.	O.C. 102 Bty
5. Capt	A/Major	J. C. Boeckh	R.C.A.	O.C. 101 Bty
6. Capt		R. O. Flett	R.C.A.M.C.	M.O.
7. Capt		E. G. Hammond	R.C.A.	D Tp Comdr
8. Capt		G. M. Howden	R.C.A.	F tp Comdr
9. Capt		W. A. J. Kennedy	R.C.A.	A Tp Comdr
10. Capt		L. L. Leatherdale	R.C.A.	70 Bty Capt
11. Capt		W. T. Moran	R.C.A.	
12. Capt		J. R. Nesbitt	R.C.A.P.C.	PMR
13. Capt		K. C. Pennie	R.C.A.	Q.M.
14. Capt		D. W. C. Ricardo	R.C.A.	Adjt
15. Capt		H. W. Simms	R.C.A.	B Tp Comdr
16. Capt		R. L. White	R.C.A.	E Tp Comdr
17. Capt		A. H. Wilson	R.C.A.	101 Bty Capt
18. Capt		G. D. Wood	R.C.A.	102 Bty Capt
19. Lieut		F. N. Balls	R.C.A.	E Tp Ldr
20. Lieut		J. A. Cairns	R.C.A.	D Tp Ldr
21. Lieut		C. M. Fraser	R.C.A.	102 BHQ Sub
22. Lieut		J. P. Gemmell	R.C.A.	E Tp Sub
23. Lieut		D. A. Green	R.C.A.	F Tp Sub
24. Lieut		C. W. Griffith	R.C.A.	A Tp Ldr
25. Lieut		W. R. Hale	R.C.A.	70 BHQ Sub
26. Lieut		L. L. Johns	R.C.A.	A Tp Sub
27. Lieut		R. W. Libbey	R.C.A.	B Tp Ldr
28. Lieut		H. S. Lockwood	R.C.A.	C Tp Comdr
29. Lieut		H. D. McKnight	R.C.A.	B Tp Sub
30. Lieut		A. D. McLennan	R.C.A.	101 BHQ Sub
31. Lieut		F. J. Morgan	R.C.A.	C Tp Ldr
32. Lieut		J. O. Nicol	R.C.A.	E Tp Sub
33. Lieut		W. S. Russell	R.C.A.	I.O.
34. Lieut		J. R. Wastle	R.C.A.	C Tp Sub

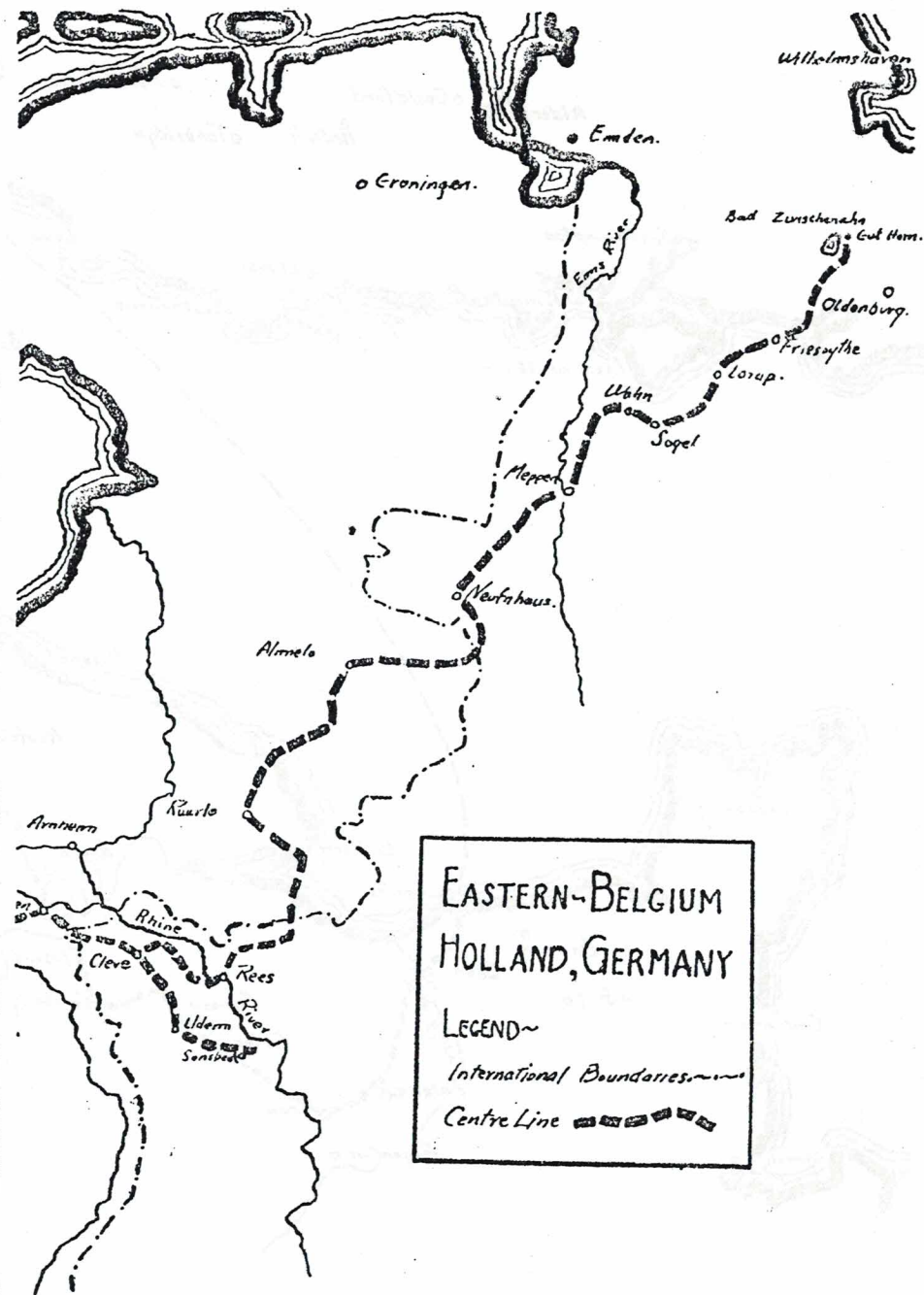
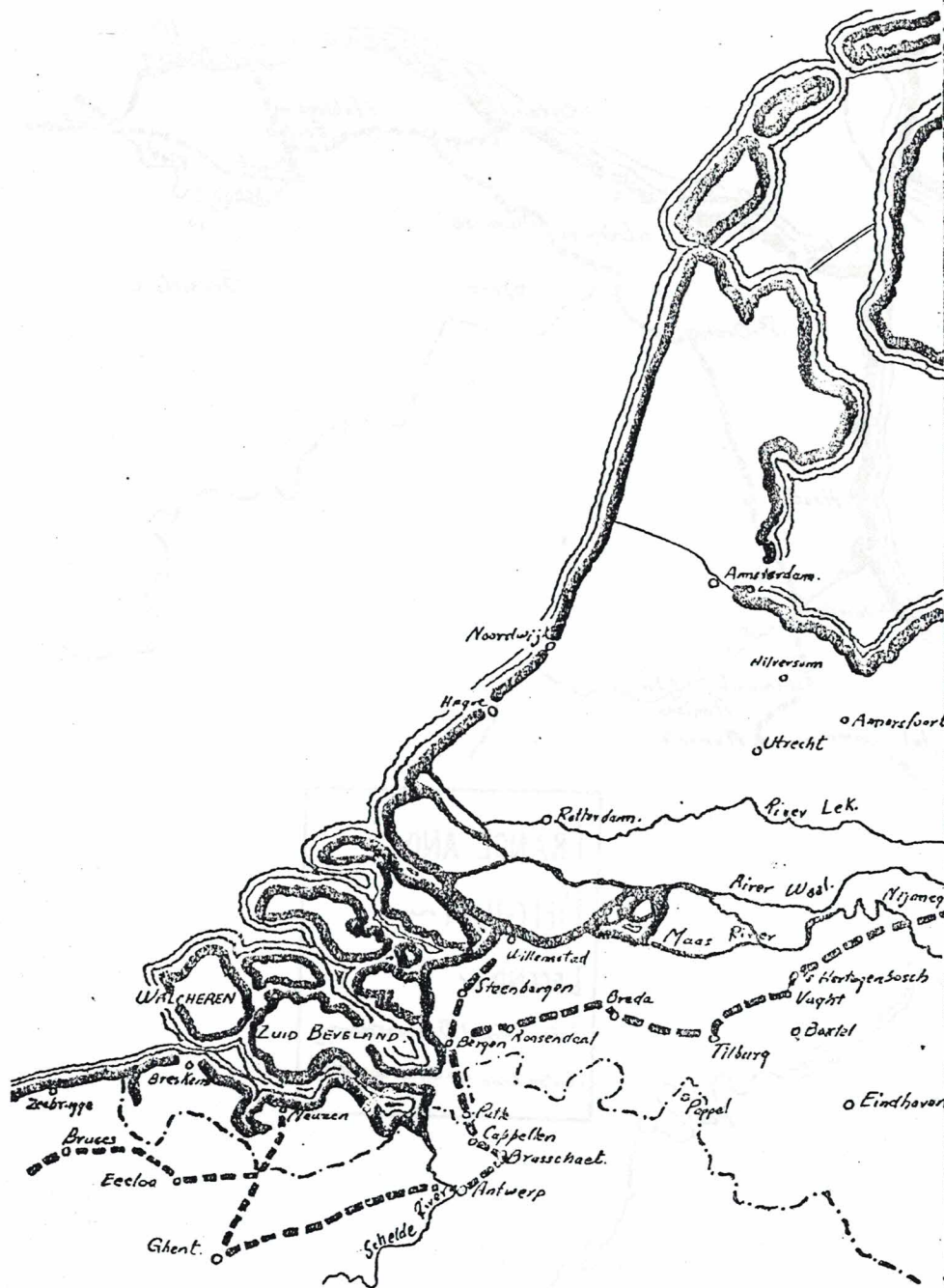
## Officers Attached in Excess of W. E.

Spv	P.	McLintock
Lieut	D. J.	Lynn
Lieut	J. B.	Vaughan









**EASTERN-BELGIUM  
HOLLAND, GERMANY**

**LEGEND~**

International Boundaries. ---

Centre Line ---