

THE FIGHTING PERTHS

BY STAFFORD JOHNSTON

*The story of the first century in the life
of a Canadian county regiment*

*"While rivers run into the sea, while on the mountains
shadows move over the slopes, while heaven feeds the stars,
ever shall thy honour, thy name, and thy praises endure."*

— Virgil's Aeneid

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FOREWORD

On being asked to write this Foreword I questioned the reason for my being so honoured. It can only be because of my relationship to the Regiment-close to them but not of them.

Our direct relationship was short in time but of an intensity that only war can produce. I knew this Regiment as I knew my own and took pride in their victories. They were the first to penetrate the Gothic Line and enabled the difficult Montecchio feature to be taken from the rear. They were splendid in the capture of Coriano which had delayed the allied armies for some weeks. They were rugged in the bitterness of the Lombardy Plain. They were determined in the capture of Delfzijl when victory was in our hands and life once more was precious. They had all the high qualities of the Canadian soldier – no praise can be higher.

I look forward to reading this book with the prospect of sharing in retrospect the incidents of army life with my old friends of the Perth Regiment. Others will find a tale of sacrifice, loyalty and valour.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Johnston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'P' and 'J'.

Former Commander, 11th Infantry Brigade
5th Canadian Armoured Division

*This book is dedicated to
all those citizen-soldiers who,
both past and present,
have contributed to the enduring greatness of
The Perth Regiment*

PREFACE

The principal sources of information for this narrative have been: Annual Militia Reports, 1857-91, in Sessional Papers; files of the Stratford Beacon, from 1855 onward; personal-experience manuscripts by Lt.-Col. Arthur Garrod, Mr. Stanley Scislowski, Major the Rev. D. Crawford Smith, Mr. Walter Macnee, and the late Lt.-Col. G.D.L. Rice; maps and documents provided by Lt.-Col. M.W. Andrew), Major F.S. Walker, Major J.H. Dempsey and Mr. William Ewart; files of the Perthonian, edited by Capt. J.M. Dent; files of The Stratford Beacon-Herald, from 1923 onward; the War Diary of the First Battalion, faithfully and informatively written by a succession of battalion intelligence officers; war diaries of Headquarters 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade and of The Irish Regiment of Canada.

On doubtful points, and where discrepancies have appeared in dates, spellings or place-names, the texts of, "Canada's Soldiers" by G.F.G. Stanley, and of "The Canadians In Italy" by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, have been treated as definitive.

The author is grateful to the staff of the Library of the University of Western Ontario, and in particular to Mr. J. F. Macpherson, also to the staff of the Canadian Army Historical Section, and in particular to Lt.-Col. H.F. Wood, for assistance cheerfully given. Help and encouragement have been given by the historical committee of The Perth Regiment Veterans' Association, consisting of Lt.-Col. J.S. Whyte, Lt.-Col. Andrew, Major Walker, and the late Mr. Emmanuel Balls. The task of reading the text in manuscript, and again in proof, was undertaken by "The Great White Father", Major Walker.

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STAFFORD JOHNSTON

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1 – THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS

From Windsor, Ontario, in the spring of the year 1865, to Delfzijl in The Netherlands in the spring of the year 1945, the active-service history of The Perth Regiment has its continuity in the word, "volunteer."

The Regiment had its beginnings in the concept of voluntary service, as opposed to conscript service. When the first Perths went to defend the borders of Canada, organized in independent companies, they represented the triumph of the volunteer principle. They were among the first to show that the old compulsory militia of Upper Canada was obsolete, and that the defence of the country required trained volunteers.

When the Regiment was first recognized as a county unit, Sept. 14, 1866, by the grouping of companies under a battalion headquarters, it confirmed the end of the old militia system in Perth, and the beginning of the new.

When the Regiment recruited the 110th Battalion for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, in 1916, it was again a triumph for the principle of voluntary service. The cry for conscription was becoming loud, in the third year of the First World War; the recruiting of the county battalions, of which Perth's 110th was one, reaffirmed the principle of volunteered service as Canada's best defence.

The story of The Perth Regiment in the Second World War continues the theme. Citizen volunteers, wearing the uniform and the "Perth" badge of their own free will, hardened themselves with tough training, fought as a team, cracked the Gothic Line in Italy, and out-fought the German Army in The Netherlands.

From Lt.-Col. R. S. Service, who commanded the first Perths to go on active service in 1865, to Lt.-Col. M. W. Andrew, DSO, CStJ, ED, QC, who commanded the Perths most recently returned from active service, one thread of fact is continuous. Both of them, and all the commanding officers between, commanded volunteers.

The Regiment has its name from the Ontario county of Perth, in which the first group of settlers, in 1832, were Scots from Perthshire, Scotland, a shire which lies astride the Highland line, with Lowland farmers and townsmen in its southern part, Highlanders in its north. The area which is now Perth County in Ontario was settled rapidly by immigrants during the 1830's and early 1840's. Irish and Germans were the most numerous groups among the settlers. The Scots had been here first, though, and the name "Perth" which they brought from their homeland was confirmed as the name for the county of which Stratford is county town.

From the Regiment's point of view, the fitness of the choice of name was confirmed 98 years after 1832, when The Perth Regiment was affiliated in 1930 with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), a regiment which is the modern-day descendant of the Perthshire Volunteers, raised in 1794, in Scotland. The Perthshire Volunteers (90th Foot), became the Scottish Rifles, and subsequently were merged with The Cameronians; two streams of military tradition, one with its source in the Scottish Perth, and the other with its source in the Canadian Perth, became confluent.

To understand the beginnings of The Perth Regiment, it is necessary to know a little of the military situation in Canada in the year 1856, when the first group of volunteers, on their own initiative, organized a rifle company in the Village of Stratford (population about 3,000) and proceeded to drill regularly in their own time, and at their own expense.

There was a militia organization in Perth at the time. It was a joke. It was the hangover from the highly efficient militia system which had been devised more than 60 years earlier, by John

Macdonell, as adjutant-general under Governor John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe and Macdonell had the problem of organizing the defence of Upper Canada when the whole population of the province numbered not more than 10,000, exclusive of Indians, and when an aggressive United States had an army under General "Mad Anthony" Wayne hovering just south of the border, as a continuing threat.

The militia system organized by Macdonell, in 1793, was the only one possible under the circumstances. The militia consisted of every able-bodied man in the Province, organized in companies under local officers, and always on call.

In the circumstances of 1793, long before Perth County was settled, the compulsory militia was efficient. Almost every man in Upper Canada in that earliest period was either a frontiersman, or a war veteran, or both. The whole male population consisted of men hardened to the outdoors, handy with a musket or a skinning knife; a majority of them had experience in forest warfare of the raid-and-ambush sort.

When the first settlers started to arrive in Perth County, in 1832, the militia system of a generation earlier was still on the books. Every able-bodied man was enrolled in the militia, as automatically as a child is now registered for baby bonus. Every neighbourhood had its paper organization, with lieutenants and captains of militia.

By 1856, however, the frontier days were becoming ancient history. The new settlers who flooded into Perth County from 1832 onward were farmers, clerks, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers. They were not frontiersmen, and never had been. As potential soldiers, they were unskilled, and totally untrained. None the less, the theory continued to be that any threat to Canada would be met by this mass of untrained civilians, who in case of need would form ranks, march off under their completely untrained officers, and fight the foe.

On paper, the strength was formidable. In the 1850's, Perth County had six battalions of militia, each with a full list of officers, none of whom were qualified. In the 1860's the paper militia in Perth was reorganized in two battalions; in the South Riding, Lt.-Col. T. B. Guest nominally commanded a militia battalion of 4,221 men, organized in nine companies while in the North Riding Lt.-Col. J. C. W. Daly commanded a battalion of 5,264 men, organized in 12 companies.

This force, formally titled with unconscious humour, "The Sedentary Militia" was mustered for training once a year, usually on May 24. No one took it seriously. The prevailing attitude can be judged from the report of the 24th of May holiday celebration which appeared in the weekly Stratford Beacon, May 29, 1855:

"Everything that could encase a grain or two of powder, from a pocket pistol up to a blacksmith's anvil, was pressed into service, and (from 1:00 a.m.) until after daylight kept up a species of sharp shooting from which we would have given something to be delivered. In the forenoon the militia muster took place, and a very small muster it was. The muster rolls having been called over, the proceedings terminated; not however, without threats being used by some of the officers that the absentees would be fined."

This was one year's training for the militia.

From 1854 onward, Britain was involved in war against Russia, and was pulling troops out of Canada for the Crimea. Canadians suddenly had to look to their own resources for defence against the United States, which continued to make aggressive noises. The Sedentary Militia did not look like a strong defence, and in many Canadian communities, Stratford included, public-spirited young men began to organize volunteer rifle companies, and undertake serious training, evenings and weekends.

The volunteer companies were recognized by the Militia Act of 1855. The need for Canadian self-defence continued; the British troops which had been called away from Canada for the Crimean war, 1854-56, were next needed for the Indian Mutiny, 1857-59; then, in 1860, the American Civil War started, and Canada had all the more need for alert defence against a neighbour which went on a war footing.

The first volunteer rifle company in Perth County was organized in 1856, by about 80 men who chose their own officers, Henry Imlach as captain, L.T. O'Loane as lieutenant and James Orr as ensign (second lieutenant). At its start the Stratford Volunteer Rifle Company had the same status as a present-day Rotary Club or Kiwanis Club. The volunteers banded themselves together, and drilled regularly at their own expense, to provide a public service, which in their case was to be ready to defend against invasion.

After two years of completely voluntary and unpaid training the Company was given official recognition, under a new Canadian Government policy of encouraging such volunteer companies. The history of The Perth Regiment might be said to date officially from May 6, 1858, when a government order constituted the "First Volunteer Militia Rifle Company of Stratford," and authorized the issue to it of pay and equipment at public expense. The volunteers, who for two years had been providing their own uniforms, such as they were, and buying ammunition for target practice, became entitled to a uniform allowance of \$4 per year per man, and received an issue of Enfield rifles and black leather belts. The uniform allowance, plus more from the pockets of the men themselves, was invested in a company uniform of green jacket, black trousers and forage cap. The first set of officers completed their terms, and were replaced in 1860 by R. S. Service as captain, Robert Macfarlane as lieutenant, and W. M. Clark as ensign.

The year 1858, when the two-year-old Volunteer Company at Stratford was officially recognized, and granted an allowance from public funds of \$240 a year for its 60 men, was one in which there was lively public interest in defence matters in the Province of Canada. British forces were tied up with the Indian Mutiny, and not available for the defence of Canada, while the Civil War was brewing in the United States; both situations made it obviously desirable for Canada to have her guard up. The sharp contrast between the old-style Sedentary Militia, and the new-style volunteer companies was made obvious when the Canadian government decided to cancel the annual muster of the Sedentary Militia for that year, and thus reduce its annual training from one day to none. The Stratford Beacon, on May 14, 1858, observed: "The Governor-General has issued an order dispensing with the annual muster of the Sedentary Militia this year. Doing away with the farce called training is a wise step. It never resulted in anything but hard feelings in the community. The men learned nothing except to make fun at their officers. They went from the ground as ignorant of military evolutions as they came on it. If it is necessary to educate our people in military exercises, the training should be gone into thoroughly."

The volunteers continued regular training, evenings and weekends. On July 16, 1858, the Governor-General stopped for two hours in Stratford, in the course of a vice-regal train journey. The volunteers of the Rifle Company paraded in uniform, and escorted the Governor-General from the railway station to the town.

In 1862 the Company, now in its fifth year, was still active and progressing. On Sept. 26, it paraded for its first official inspection, by Col. Wiley, an officer appointed by the government of the Province of Canada to check on the state of training of all the recognized volunteer companies. In the same year, with tension growing between Britain and the Northern side in the United States Civil War, there was accelerated interest in defence matters. In November, W. J. Imlach, the original captain of the first volunteer company in Perth, started to organize a second. It was officially

authorized Nov. 7, 1862, and the organization meeting was held in Stratford Town Hall Nov. 14; 43 men enrolled that night, under Capt. Imlach, with Charles James as lieutenant and George Small as ensign. This second company took the title of Stratford Infantry Company, and chose scarlet jackets and dark trousers as its uniform. For the next four years there was vigorous rivalry between the two independent companies; the local people distinguished between them, for short, as "The Rifles," in green jackets and "The Infantry," in red.

There was international tension during 1862 and 1863, as the result of the Trent Affair, and for a while it seemed probable that the United States North would declare war on Britain, and attack Canada. The emergency led not only to great local interest in the training of the Rifles and the Infantry in Stratford, but to the organization of other companies of local volunteers in Perth County.

In December 1862, 77 men met at the Commercial Hotel in Mitchell to organize a rifle company.

On Feb. 6, 1863, at a meeting in a rural schoolhouse, a volunteer company was organized in Downie Township, which adjoins Stratford to the west. In the same week, volunteers formed a company and started training at West's Corners (now Milverton).

In March 1863, at a meeting at Brocksden rural school, 30 men of North Easthope Township signed up to form a volunteer company. In the same month an organization meeting was held at Kirkton, for another company. The Kirkton group, unlike the others, decided not to ask for Government Issue of rifles, but to supply all its own needs at the expense of the volunteers themselves. In the words of the report from Kirkton, the company, ". . . will hang from its own hook, or stand on its own bottom"

At about the same time, 66 men enrolled at St. Marys, and elected officers from among themselves to form another company. All of the 66 were bachelors, and a move was on foot for a time in St. Marys to form a second volunteer company entirely of married men.

In April, 1863, 70 men met at Shakespeare, seven miles east of Stratford, elected James Trow as their captain, and started training.

During the same period, still other company-size defence forces came about spontaneously in Blanshard Township, with the drill centre at Rannoch; in Fullarton Township, with the centre at Fullarton Village and in Listowel.

Most of these spurts of local patriotism failed to gain official standing, and most did not long survive the war scare of the early 1860's. Two, those at St. Marys and Listowel, were eventually granted official standing as independent companies of volunteer militia. When the Perths finally became a Regiment, it was done by grouping four existing companies, the two at Stratford, and those at St. Marys and Listowel.

More remarkable, perhaps, is the history of two of the rural companies of volunteers, those in Blanshard and Fullarton. They were never given any assistance by the government, during the period when the independent companies were the only active militia in Perth. They persevered and survived on their own for five years, and finally, after the Regiment was formed, were taken in as companies of the Regiment.

2 – THE FENIAN RAIDS

The call for active service by the volunteers first came in the spring of 1865. Armed forces for the invasion of Canada were raised in the United States by the Fenian Brotherhood. The Fenians found their recruits among veterans of The American Civil War, which had just ended. The Fenians, at their core, were Irish Nationalists, who hoped to strike at Britain indirectly, by attacking Canada from bases in the United States. They attracted to their ranks many recently-demobilized American soldiers, and attracted to their treasury a good many American dollars, from anti-British elements in the United States. There was considerable doubt at the time about the attitude of the United States government towards the Fenians; if the American authorities were not helping the Fenians very much, they certainly were not hindering them. The situation was not unlike that between the United States and Cuba in April, 1961, when the United States did not attack Cuba, but certainly did nothing to hinder, and at least a little to help, the Bay of Pigs invasion.

With Fenian forces openly recruiting and drilling in Detroit and Buffalo, the Canadian government decided without hesitation to ignore the old compulsory militia, and rely on the new volunteer militia. The Stratford Rifle Company was one of those called out for frontier defence in the spring of 1865, and manned defence lines at Windsor, and then at Sandwich, from call-up April 24 until demobilized July 4.

In the spring of the following year, the Fenian threat had to be taken even more seriously. A Fenian force did cross the border from Buffalo to Fort Erie, May 31, 1866; it destroyed part of Fort Erie, marched 10 miles inland, met and defeated a local militia force at the Battle of Ridgeway, June 2, before retiring back across the river to Buffalo.

The two Stratford companies, the Rifles and the Infantry, were called out March 21, 1866, and went immediately to Chatham. The order to mobilize was received in Stratford by telegraph at 9:00 a.m., and at noon the two companies boarded the train to go.

Stratford Town Council moved almost as promptly. It had a barrel of beer at the railway station as a gift from the corporation, so that the six officers and the 120 other ranks would not leave thirsty.

The Infantry Company was demobilized after one week, as part of a general reduction of the frontier force after the first rush of the emergency. The Rifle Company remained on duty in the Chatham area until mid-August, when it was moved to the Niagara frontier.

On Aug. 17 the Stratford Infantry Company was again called out; three officers and 65 men put on their scarlet jackets and joined the other Stratford company at Thorold, where there was a big militia concentration for the dual purpose of countering the invasion threat, and training the volunteers in tactics beyond the company level.

It was at this Thorold camp that The Perth Regiment really had its genesis.

Col. Garnet Wolseley (after whom Wolseley Barracks at London is named) was the commander of defences on the Niagara frontier, and also commanded the training camp at Thorold, where 20 or more independent companies were brought together. For convenience in training, and for tactical purposes, Col. Wolseley grouped the companies in battalions, and created several temporary battalion headquarters, using the best material he could find among the company officers. One of the battalions was formed by grouping the two companies from Stratford with two from Chatham, and one from each of Ingersoll, St. Thomas and Guelph. Col. Wolseley's choice for command of the seven-company group was Capt. Service of the Stratford Rifles, who thereupon became a temporary lieutenant-colonel.

He must have earned a nod of approval from Col. Wolseley for his work; less than a month later, a General Order was issued authorizing formation of the 28th (Perth) Battalion of Infantry, with Robert Service appointed to command, and to hold the rank of lieutenant-colonel. The Regiment, as first constituted, consisted of the two companies at Stratford, one at St. Marys and one at Listowel, all of which had existed previously.

The date of the General Order, Sept. 14, 1866, is the one to be marked when The Perth Regiment celebrates its 100th anniversary, two years hence.

3 – FORMING THE REGIMENT

The Regiment was formed by the coalition of four existing companies, and soon added two more. Uniforms were issued to all six companies during the winter of 1866-67, the first regimental range practices were held in 1867, and the Regiment started in at once to get officers away for 90-day courses of instruction at London, to become qualified for their ranks. The Perths had an unusually good record, from the beginning, in qualifying leaders for commissioned and non-commissioned rank. The records show that by the end of 1867, 11 Perth officers had taken their courses and passed.

The Regiment also began its career with a ready-made band. During the years of rivalry between the two independent companies in Stratford, the Greens and the Scarlets had each had a company band. In 1866 the two company bands were merged to make a regimental brass band of 22 members, with instruments valued at \$700.

Full-scale battalion training began in 1868, when all six companies were concentrated at Stratford for eight days of drill, tactics and range practice; the turnout was 26 officers and 340 other ranks. The Fenian threat still continued (it was not to end until the final Fenian attempt at invasion was defeated at the Battle of Eccles Hill, May 25, 1870), and while there was real danger, military enthusiasm continued to run high.

The Perths took part in a 16-day training program in June, 1871, which brought together at Goderich six battalions of volunteer militia and a battery of militia artillery. It was one of the biggest troop concentrations ever undertaken in this area; the public mind at the time was much aware of the need for trained volunteers, because of the problems created by the first Riel Rebellion in 1870. At Goderich, Lt.-Col. R. S. Service of the Perths acted as brigade-major for the whole force in large-scale tactical schemes.

Pay rates in force for the Goderich camp were 50 cents a day for privates, 60 cents for corporals, 70 for sergeants, 90 for staff-sergeants. Lieutenants got \$1.58 a day, captains \$2.82, majors \$3.90, lieutenant-colonels \$4.87.

As the need of Canada for military preparedness became less obvious, in the years after 1870, public enthusiasm and support dwindled, but in Perth County the volunteer militia was kept alive through some dull and discouraging periods in the years that led on toward 1914. For the first 54 years of its life, it should be noted, the Regiment was not referred to conversationally as "The Perths," but as "The 28th". The official title from 1866 to 1900 was "The 28th Perth Battalion of Infantry". On May 8, 1900, it was redesignated "28th Perth Regiment". Not until April 1, 1920, was the title simplified to its present form, "The Perth Regiment."



The number "28" came from the series used to number the new volunteer militia battalions which were formed, beginning in 1866, to take over defence responsibilities from the outmoded and useless conscript militia. The new county battalions of volunteers were numbered in the order in which they were formed. Volunteers in Oxford County, adjoining Perth to the south, for example, were organized as a battalion a little sooner, and became the 22nd Oxford Battalion. The next to be organized after the Perths was the Waterloo Battalion, which became the 29th; the neighbouring county to the west, Huron, had the 33rd Battalion in the volunteer series.

Confederation came the year after The Perth Regiment was formed; the addition of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to Canada in 1867 did not disturb the system of militia organization. The legislation which had previously been in effect for the Province of Canada was extended to take in

the two extra provinces, and new militia units in the Maritimes were given numbers in the same series. Thus the Princess Louise Fusiliers, organized at Halifax in 1869, became the 66th, and the Three Rivers Battalion, organized in 1871, became the 86th, in the same series in which the Perths were the 28th.

The Princess Louise Fusiliers, the Three Rivers Regiment and The Perth Regiment are three among notably few regiments in Canada, which can trace an unbroken history back to parent units in the numbering series of the first volunteer Canadian militia.

The successor units of the 28th, 66th and 85th were all part of the Canadian Army in the Italian theatre in the Second World War. The Princess Louise Fusiliers, using 4.2 mortars and medium machine-guns, were with the Perths at the Melfa River in May, 1944; the old 86th fought in Italy as the 12th Armoured Regiment.

In the part of Canada in which The Perth Regiment has its home, it is the only county battalion of the original numbered series which has survived to the present day.

The old 22nd was continued as The Oxford Rifles, which lasted until the 1950s. The old 33rd survived in a merger, as the Middlesex and Huron Regiment, until the 1940s, and then disappeared. The old 29th (Waterloo), 30th (Wellington) and 32nd (Bruce) have long since vanished.

Both the citizens of Perth County, and the soldiers and ex-soldiers of The Perth Regiment are entitled to take some pride in the unbroken history of "The 28th", one of the very few regiments in all Canada to hold together through every period of discouragement, and to survive every reorganization, in more than a century since the volunteer principle began to operate.

For the first 12 to 15 years after it was organized in 1866, The 28th Regiment was a lively and vigorous organization, with well-qualified officers, and a turnout of 300 or more at annual training camps. Then government budgets for the militia, and local interest, both began to dwindle.

The Fenian threats and the Riel Rebellion troubles served to keep public interest in the militia stirred up, until the 1880's. After that came low points and discouragement for the militia.

In 1882, the 28th went to Carling Heights at London for 12 days' training. From among a strength on paper of 26 officers and 281 other ranks, the Regiment mustered only 21 officers and 154 other ranks at camp, a poor showing in the light of its previous history. Major-General R. G. A. Luard inspected the Regiment on its 11th day in camp; his report said: "Very weak; men not kept up to their work; discipline very slack; with the exception of No. 5 Company (and this company was small) the battalion was unsatisfactory." His report on the 28th's band, which in earlier years had been one of its strong points, was brief: "25 musicians; instruments out of tune."

No. 5 was the rural company from Blanshard.

The following year, 1883, the 28th showed that it was capable of pulling itself together again. The inspecting officer was again Major-General Luard, who observed: "This corps ... paraded considerably stronger this year, presented a better appearance, and showed more satisfactory progress. The discipline is not quite up to standard, and too many men appeared to escape drill. The reorganization and increased strength of Nos. 3 and 4 Companies, St. Marys, is noted with pleasure."

Through such downs and ups, the Regiment continued past the turn of the century. Many county units, of the same vintage, had downs from which they did not come up, but the Perths always found a nucleus of loyal officers and non-commissioned officers who held the Regiment together.

The shifting organization in companies during the difficult years is one guide to understanding the Regiment's dogged survival. The 28th, to begin with, had an active company in Listowel. After 10 years the Listowel company had faded, and was transferred to St. Marys, which for a while had

two companies of the Regiment. Then interest was revived in Listowel, and from 1884 to 1895, there was a company there again, before it faded out for the second time.

The Regiment had an active company at Fullarton from 1868 onwards, until it began to dwindle in the early 1880's. In 1882 the Fullarton company started to parade at Stratford, its numbers in the Fullarton area having become too few for survival as a company. The device of including some Stratford men did not work, and in 1884 the company was disbanded. For a few years there was a company at Mitchell, and then it faded.

The Regiment itself never faded, and when war came in 1914, Perth had an established military organization, ready to provide at once hundreds of volunteers, with some degree of training, in answer to the first call for men for the First World War.

4 – SNUBBED IN 1914

As the year 1914 approached, staff officers of the Canadian Militia prepared mobilization plans, in the hope that chaos could be avoided if it should prove necessary to call out large numbers of the militia for active service. If these plans had been put into effect, the 28th Perth Regiment would have been mobilized as such, immediately after the German Army struck at Belgium in August, 1914.

No one in the Perths knew this. The ultra-secret mobilization plans for Western Ontario, prepared during the period 1911-1914, were in a sealed envelope, in a locked vault in London, Ontario.

The plans were never used, and the 28th, in common with all other militia units in Canada, was pushed aside, and disregarded when the actual mobilization began on Aug. 6, 1914. In the case of the Perths, 48 years of regimental tradition went for nothing in the 1914 mobilization, but their case was not unique

No. 1 in the series of the militia regiments in which the Perths were the 28th, was the 1st Battalion Militia Rifles of Canada, (later the Prince of Wales Regiment, still later the Canadian Grenadier Guards). As a unit, it was seven years older than the 28th, having been formed in 1859. From the 1st (Prince of Wales) right through to the end of the list, the existing units of 1914 were not allowed to retain their identity in Canada's fighting forces of 1914-18.

The explanation is common to the histories of all historic Canadian regiments; a brief summary may be of interest, however, to indicate why the Perths, as such, had no part in the First World War.

Sir Sam Hughes became minister of militia in the Borden government in 1911. In May 1913, he discovered that there was a set of secret plans for the mobilization of a division and a brigade of cavalry, in the event of war. Sir Sam was a man of vigorous character and explosive temperament, even under normal conditions. When he discovered that the mobilization plans were being kept so secret that they were secret even from the Minister of Militia, for nearly two years after he had assumed that office, he exploded at the security-minded staff officers who had drawn up the plans. When war did come, he threw the carefully made, detailed plan in the wastebasket, and invented a mobilization plan of his own. The plan which had annoyed him called for mobilization of the 1st Division at Petawawa; therefore he ordered mobilization at Valcartier; the secret plan called for mobilization of existing units; therefore he invented new units.

In the words of Prof. G. F. G. Stanley of the Royal Military College, author of "Canada's Soldiers":

"The Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, took matters into his own hands and, with an excess of patriotic zeal which might have been devoted to a better cause, improvised a new mobilization scheme. He ignored the existing militia units with their traditions, and after calling for volunteers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, formed them into numbered battalions bearing no relation to the number allotted to the militia battalions then in existence. To accommodate the CEF volunteers, he constructed a mobilization camp at Valcartier, complete with four miles of rifle ranges, streets, buildings, lighting, telephones, baths and sanitary conveniences. It was a magnificent achievement but wasteful and unnecessary."

The Armouries of The 28th at Stratford immediately became a recruiting centre, however, and from the citizen soldiers of the Regiment, a contribution of manpower was made at once to the First Canadian Division, CEF, which began to assemble at Valcartier in the latter part of August, 1914.

Included in the force of 33,000 which made up the first Canadian Contingent were four officers and 142 other ranks who volunteered through the 28th Regiment, most of them with the asset of volunteer training received through pre-war service in the Regiment. The four officers were Lt.-Col. J. L. Youngs, Lt.-Col. T. G. Delamere, Lieut. Glen Gordon and Lt.-Col. H. J. Coghill.

Many of the 146 all ranks contributed by the Regiment were enrolled in the 1st Battalion, CEF, which in its original makeup was a Western Ontario unit. Others were scattered through the other 16 numbered battalions of the Contingent.

For the record, the First Contingent organization included:

First Infantry Brigade: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions

Second Infantry Brigade: 5th, 7th, 8th and 10th Battalions

Third Infantry Brigade: 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions

Base Brigade (Training Depot): 6th, 9th, 11th, 12th and 17th Battalions

The contribution made by the 28th to the Second Division, CEF, was much more closely identifiable with Perth, and with the Regiment, than was the Perth contribution to the hastily assembled First Division.

The offer of a second division for overseas services was made by the Canadian government, and accepted by the government of the United Kingdom, in the first week of October, 1914, and recruiting for its 12 infantry battalions and other units started immediately. The organization of the Second Division was somewhat less helter-skelter than the organization of the First, and had more geographical pattern. The 4th Brigade was raised in Ontario, the 5th Brigade in Quebec and the Maritimes, and the 6th Brigade in Western Canada.

5 – THE 18TH BATTALION

The leading battalion of the leading brigade in the division was the 18th, which was recruited chiefly through the headquarters of Western Ontario militia units, notably the 7th (London Fusiliers), 21st (Essex), 24th (Kent), 28th (Perth) and 29th (Waterloo). The fighting history of the 18th Battalion, CEF, 1915-1918, is properly part of the history of the 28th Perth Regiment, which furnished two officers (Capt. G. M. Loghrin and Capt. W. D. Perry) and 91 men to its first complement, and sent many more as reinforcements during three and a half years in which the 18th Battalion fought on the Western Front.

The link between the Perths and the 18th Battalion, CEF, is stronger than the mere arithmetic of 93 all ranks, for included among the 93, were Cpl. Arthur Garrod and Pte. S. H. McComb.

Cpl. Garrod was to become Lt.-Col. Garrod, MC, ED, who commanded The Perth Regiment, 1933-39, and mobilized it for service in the Second World War. Pte. McComb was to become Major McComb, ED, second-in-command at mobilization in 1939, and then Lt. Col. McComb, commanding The Perth Regiment, 1939-40.

Under the command of Lt.-Col. E. S. Wigle, the 18th left London, Ont., April 12, 1915, sailed from Halifax April 17, aboard the SS Grampian, and arrived at West Sandling Camp, in England, April 29. It was the first unit of the Second Division to go overseas. Training continued in England until September; on Sept. 2 the Battalion was inspected by His Majesty King George V, an event which was the usual precursor of a move to the front in France. On Sept. 14 the 18th Battalion, together with the headquarters of the 4th Brigade, embarked at Folkestone. Excitement began before the 18th reached France. The old paddle-wheel steamer was involved in a collision in mid-Channel, where it was rammed by a British destroyer. Neither vessel sank, and there was no loss of life, but the troopship had to be towed the rest of the way to Boulogne. Eight men who jumped from the troopship to the deck of the destroyer ended their journey back in England, and rejoined the 18th later in France. In late September, the 2nd Canadian Division took over a sector of front from the 28th British Division, and on Sept. 25 the 18th Battalion was in the front line in the Kemmel area, just north of the French-Belgian border.

The 18th Battalion was involved in heavy fighting, and had heavy casualties in the St. Eloi sector in March and April of 1916. In June, 1916, it was engaged at Ypres, and had five weeks in front-line trenches at one stretch, without relief.

With the rest of the three-division Canadian Corps, the 18th Battalion moved south from St. Eloi about 60 miles to the Somme front, in late August, 1916. They took over front-line trenches in the Courcellette area, and formed part of the Canadian-British force which launched the great attack of Sept. 15, 1916. It was the performance of the Canadians on the Somme front in that month that earned for the Canadian Corps a reputation, with friend and foe alike, as elite troops. Writing of the Somme battle, Lloyd George said: "The Canadians played a part of such distinction that henceforward they were marked out as storm troops; for the remainder of the war they were brought along to head the assault in one great battle after another. Whenever the Germans found the Canadian Corps coming into the line they prepared for the worst."

The 18th Battalion, working with tanks for the first time in history, captured all its objectives in the Somme battles.

After a winter in the relatively quiet Lens sector, the 18th Battalion moved to positions in front of Vimy Ridge. At dawn on the morning of April 9, 1917, the battalion went "over the top" in the great assault by the four Canadian divisions, which attacked the Ridge positions eight brigades abreast, each division with two brigades leading and the third brigade in support. The 18th Battalion

captured its first-day objectives early in the day, and at nightfall was established on the near slope of the Ridge, at its southern end. On the second day of the offensive, the 18th Battalion drove the enemy off the crest of the Ridge. By April 13, the battalion had cleared the far side of the Ridge on its front, and was established on the open plain beyond. The 18th did its full share in the exploit which made Vimy forever Canadian soil.

In 1917, the 18th was in action at Fresnoy in May, at Hill 700 in August and in the muddy horror of Passchendaele in November.

The winter of 1917-18 was again spent in the Lens sector. The main task was strengthening the line in preparation for the expected German offensive of the spring of 1918. When the final great German effort of the war came, in March and April of 1918, the blow came to the south of the Canadian Corps front. Most of the Canadian Corps was not involved in the defensive battle, but the 18th Battalion was one of several Canadian units which were rushed to the British front to plug gaps in the Allied line. The battalion was away from the Canadian front from late in March until the end of June.

The 18th Battalion had its role in the victorious advance of the Last Hundred Days, from Amiens in August to Mons in November. It began the march into Germany on Nov. 18, and crossed the Rhine at Bonn, Dec. 13, with bayonets fixed and colours flying.

The Battalion returned to London, Ont., on May 24, 1919, about 650 strong, and was demobilized at Carling Heights on that date. Of the original unit, 16 officers and 90 other ranks returned to Canada with the battalion.

Casualties in the ranks of the original unit were 121 killed in action or died of wounds, and 496 missing or wounded. Including reinforcements, a total of 3,953 all ranks served in the Battalion; total war casualties in the Battalion were 770 killed in action or died of wounds, 36 missing, 2,071 wounded.

Decorations awarded to members of the 18th Battalion included one Victoria Cross (posthumously to Lance-Sgt. Ellis W. Sifton) , 11 Distinguished Service Orders, 35 Military Crosses, 16 Distinguished Conduct Medals, 175 Military Medals.

6 – THE 110TH BATTALION

The 14-month history of the 110th Battalion, CEF, is part of the story of the volunteer principle which runs like a continuous gold thread through the history of The Perth Regiment. The 110th was denied the chance to face an enemy under its own name, but it was the first battalion to carry the name "Perth" abroad as a regimental name. Its individual members fought in France, eventually, as members of the 58th Battalion, and of the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles. The raising of the 110th was, however, a triumph for the idea of volunteer service, and for the idea of loyalty to a county regiment.



During the first part of the 1914-1918 war the voluntary system of recruiting worked well. By the end of 1916, about 385,000 Canadians had volunteered for the armed services. Before the end of the year 1916, it was becoming obvious, however, that the supply of men was drying up, while the fighting battalions in France were calling for reinforcements. From an average of 30,000 a month at the beginning of 1916, enlistments dwindled to an average of 6,000 a month at the

end of that year.

In the emergency, the nation had recourse to the loyalty of the county militia regiments which had been snubbed in 1914.

Perth County was called on, as were other Canadian counties, to raise a new battalion which would be distinctively Perth's own.

Recruiting started at Stratford in October, 1915, in a store near the west end of Ontario St. The Perth Regiment's armouries was then being used as barracks for a company of the 71st Battalion; the first recruits of the 110th continued to live at home, or were billeted out. Command of the 110th went to a Perth officer, Lt.-Col. T. G. Delamere; in charge of recruiting office routine were Sgt.-Major (WO 1) John MacDonald and Sgt. Roy Morrow. Dr. Ramsay Rankin examined the first recruits, and later became battalion medical officer.

The 110th was first assembled under one roof in the former Kemp factory, which was hastily converted to a barracks. (The site is now occupied by the Kroehler Manufacturing Co.) To begin with, there were no blankets, mattresses or beds; the men slept on the wooden floors. Basic training was vigorous and thorough, under the eye of Sgt.-Major MacDonald. His only son had been killed in action early in the war; he was determined that the 110th should be an efficient fighting unit, and under his eye there was no slackness. The recruiting objective of 1,500 was not attained; two years of war had already seriously depleted the manpower of Perth County. About 1,200 men were enlisted in the 110th with the recruiting slogan of "Perth's Own."

In April 1916, the 110th moved to London, to a tent camp at Carling Heights. In August came a move to Camp Borden, then a wilderness of sand and tree stumps, with no roads. The move overseas came in November, aboard the SS Caronia from Halifax, and on Dec. 2, 1916, the 110th arrived at Seaford on the south coast of England.

Early in January 1917, the 110th made its last and longest route march, 27 miles along the south coast road from Seaford to Shoreham. There it ceased to exist as a unit; the 110th, 147th and 159th Battalions were merged to form the 8th Reserve Battalion, which was to supply reinforcements for battalions in France.

Although the unit which had called itself "The Perths" lost its identity, its members who had been together as a team for 14 months, did not lose their sense of identity. To a considerable degree,

they were able to stay together; most of the originals were drafted to Mounted Rifles of the 8th Brigade, or to the 58th Battalion of the 9th Brigade. Those two units were together in the savage battle of Bourlon Wood, during the victorious Canadian offensive at the Canal du Nord in September 1918. In fact; if not in official record, the 110th originals regarded Bourlon Wood as a battle honour earned by the Perths, even if it does not show as such on the official record.

Contributions made through the agency of The Perth Regiment to the fighting forces of Canada, 1914-18, can be measured in the instances of the First Contingent, of the 18th Battalion, and of the 110th. These were only a part of the total contributions; it is estimated that 4,000 men volunteered from Perth in the First World War.

7 –BETWEEN THE WARS

During the year 1919, the troops were coming home, some of them after fretful delays in embarkation camps in Britain. In 1920 the Regiment was reorganized and its official title altered from "28th Perth Regiment," to "The Perth Regiment." It was well served by volunteers who were veterans of overseas service; a man who had volunteered for the 110th as soon as he reached his 18th birthday would have been only 22 when the Regiment began to pull itself together, after the war, for the job of peacetime preparedness. All through the 1920's the Regiment consisted, in the main, of men who were both youthful and seasoned; the training of new militia volunteers was carried forward by regimental instructors who knew what they were talking about.

The 19-year period from reorganization to the beginning of the Second World War is, obviously, a vital part of the history of the Regiment. If the Regiment had not been held together, in the face of great discouragement, there would have been nothing to mobilize in Perth on Sept. 1, 1939.

In the 1920s, pacifism was fashionable, and only the few who had a stubborn sense of responsibility worked to hold militia regiments together. In the 1930's the Great Depression whittled defence budgets, and the militia was starved for money. The Regiment was kept in being, and kept up its training, while pay was, in effect, nil. Officers and other ranks signed over their bits of militia pay to the regimental fund, to sustain the Regiment itself. Equipment wore out and was not replaced at public expense. Through the whole difficult period, under a succession of four commanding officers, The Perths kept up their regimental standards, got officers and NCOs away to qualifying schools, and held together the framework of a fighting battalion.

During 15 years that the Regiment trained as a rifle battalion, it was in the running six times for the top efficiency rating in comparison with all the units in Military District No. 1 (Western Ontario). Two years it rated first, two years it was runner-up, and two years it rated third. The signal section was very strong, and several times won top rating in the District. The regimental first-aid team was best in Western Ontario several times, in annual competitions, and once came within a few points of winning the Dominion championship for efficiency. In 1936, three Lewis Gun teams from the Perths finished first, third and fifth in District competition.

The spirit of the Regiment was evident when it was converted, effective Dec. 15, 1936, from a rifle battalion to a machine-gun battalion. Before the end of the year 1937, every officer and NCO in the Regiment had qualified in the new arm.

It was not an accident that The Perth Regiment was chosen to be one of the first mobilized (actually before Canada declared war) in 1939.

Three events of the between-war period must be mentioned, even within the limits of a brief history. In 1927, the Regiment received its first set of colours. In 1930, it became allied with The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) and became an inheritor of the traditions and customs of that famous Lowland regiment. In 1936, the Perths were organizers and hosts of a militia muster which brought 3,500 volunteers on parade at Stratford; it was a remarkably defiant gesture of strength in a period when public support of the militia was at a low ebb.

The First Colours

The Perth Regiment received its first set of colours June 16, 1927, as the gift of the 28th Regiment Chapter (now The Perth Regiment Chapter) of the Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire. The IODE Chapter which carried the Regiment's name had been organized in 1914 by Mrs. William Lawrence, whose husband commanded the Perths 1912-20.

The colours carried the two battle honours credited to the Perths from the First World War:

"Ypres 1915" and "Festubert 1915." They stand for the part played by the volunteers who signed up at the Perth armouries in 1914, and fought with the Canadian First Division when the Germans first used poison gas, April 22, 1915 at Ypres, and in the Battle of Festubert, May 19-31, 1915.

The colours were presented by Mrs. S.R. McConkey, regent, and Mrs. George Nornabell, standard-bearer. Lt.-Col. A. W. Deacon, MC, commanded 224 all ranks of the Regiment on parade for the ceremonial which was to be repeated 35 years later, on the same ground at Queen's Park, Stratford.

In the ceremony of 1927, Major A. T. Trethewy and Major R. M. Trow, senior majors, unfurled the colours; Lieut. Homer Taylor and Lieut. H.H. Fry received the colours for the Regiment. The colour party was under command of RSM W.J. Plume. Among the officers on parade were Major Arthur Garrod, MC, and Major S.H. McComb, each of whom was later to command The Perth Regiment in the Second World War; Lieut. T. W. Orr, who was later to command the Second Battalion 1944-46; Lieut. W. J. McCabe, later to be The Perths' paymaster in the Second World War.

The salute was taken by Major-General J. H. MacBrien, CB, CMG, DSO, a former Chief of Staff, who just a few weeks before had become honorary-colonel of The Perths.

One other event of the day helps explain why The Perth Regiment earned a reputation, between the wars, which made it one of the first in Canada to be mobilized in 1939. A presentation was made to the Regiment of the Canadian Infantry Association trophy for the most efficient militia unit in Military District No. 1.

The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)

The custom of affiliations between Canadian regiments and British regiments was introduced by Major General Douglas Hamilton-Cochrane, Earl of Dundonald, when he was G.O.C. Canadian Militia, UW2-04. The first such alliance was (as might be expected from the thoroughly Scottish name and title of the officer who first proposed such affiliations) between two kilted units, the 48th Highlanders of Toronto, and the Gordon Highlanders of Great Britain, who became linked in 1904.

The Scottish tradition behind the name "Perth" was reinforced in 1930, by an affiliation between The Perth Regiment and The Cameronians¹ (Scottish Rifles). The dress, badge and customs of the Regiment, as a result, reflect in many details the histories of two proud Scottish regimental traditions. Since 1930 the history of The Perth Regiment has included, in a sense, the histories of the old 26th Foot (Cameronians) and the old 90th Foot (Perthshire Volunteers) which were merged in 1881.

A curious by-product of the affiliation is that the Perths, by linking themselves with the traditions of the 26th and the 90th, acquired a history of active service in Canada at a time much earlier than the first settlement of Perth County. The 26th served in Canada in the War of the American Revolution; in 1775 a company of the 26th (Cameronians) recaptured Fort St. John, (the site of the present College Militaire Royal at St. Jean, P.Q.) from the American rebels who had taken it in a surprise attack led by Benedict Arnold.

The 90th served in Canada in the War of 1812-14, and held Fort Niagara, on the American side of the border, from October, 1814, to May, 1815. Thus there began the series of three repetitive connections between The Perths and the Niagara Frontier.

The Perth Regiment, as we have noted, began its existence as a regiment immediately following the good showing made by its first commanding officer, and by volunteer companies from Perth, in

¹ Disbanded 1968.

active service on the Niagara Frontier in 1866.

When The Perth Regiment was mobilized for the Second World War, its first tour of operational duty, in 1940, was on the Niagara Frontier, mounting anti-sabotage guard on hydroelectric generating stations and the Welland Canal. The affiliated British unit had been there, for the defence of Canada, 126 years earlier.

There is yet another coincidence which makes it unusually fitting for The Perth Regiment, in Canada, to be allied with the British regiment which continues the history (1794-1881) of the Perthshire Volunteers. Amulree and Balgowan are two villages in Perthshire, Scotland, which are only 10 miles apart.

The first group of pioneer settlers to come, in 1832, into the wilderness which is now Perth County, Ontario, were from the neighbourhood of Amulree in Scotland. They brought the village name with them; there is a hamlet named Amulree 10 miles northeast of Stratford, Ontario.

The Perthshire Volunteers, when the regiment was first raised, in 1794, for service in the Napoleonic Wars, were recruited from a headquarters at Balgowan. Many of the first recruits to the Perthshire Volunteers, and many of the first pioneers in Perth County, Ontario, undoubtedly came from the same neighbourhoods and the same families. For almost a century, the connection was broken; then the link was restored in 1930, by the affiliation made between The Perth Regiment and the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles.)

In the great body of ready-made tradition acquired by The Perth Regiment in 1930, the story of the beginning of The Perthshire Volunteers is one of the most dramatic.

Thomas Graham, laird of Balgowan, was a soldier whose military career did not begin until he was 45 years old. He was a farmer on a fairly large scale, liked country living and outdoor sports, and as a young man had no experience whatever of army life.

His wife, when he was married at age 26, was one of the famous beauties of the day; she was the subject of four Gainsborough portraits. When Thomas Graham was in his late 30's, his wife's health began to fail. The diagnosis was "consumption"; it was probably tuberculosis. There was no medical help available in those times which was of use; having tried everything else, Thomas Graham in 1791 took his wife to the South of France, hoping a change of climate might help her. She died while her husband was taking her on a Mediterranean cruise, off the French coast, in June, 1792.

The French Revolution was then in one of its violent phases, as Thomas Graham learned when he started on his sad journey through France, escorting his wife's body home to Scotland for burial. At Toulouse, on July 14, 1792, a mob of half-drunken revolutionary soldiers seized the coffin, and smashed it open, arguing that it might contain smuggled arms.

From that event is dated the history of The Perthshire Volunteers. Thomas Graham, the civilian with no interest in politics, suddenly became a man in a cold fury, determined to fight against Revolutionary France.

After completing the journey to Britain, with his wife's body in a replacement coffin, Thomas Graham took ship to Gibraltar, just as war was declared between France and Britain. At Gibraltar, he used his influence to wangle his way, as a civilian, aboard a British warship which sailed as part of a fleet to attack the French port of Toulon. At Toulon he went along with British troops that were ordered to capture a hill overlooking the port; at the climax of the attack, he led the party which successfully assaulted the summit. Thomas Graham, the civilian who hitch-hiked his way into a war, was mentioned in dispatches for gallantry in action.

After thus testing himself under fire, Thomas Graham journeyed home to Britain, by way of Italy and Germany, and obtained permission from the government to raise a new regiment. The

conditions were that he should recruit 10 companies, with a total strength of 1,108 all ranks, and do it within three months.

He threw all his energy, and every penny he could scrape up from his own resources, into the recruiting task. From his home at Balgowan, in Perthshire, he directed the recruiting drive.

With four days to spare before the end of the three months allowed him, Thomas Graham paraded his regiment at the town of Perth, on May 13, 1794, for inspection by the Commander-in-Chief for Scotland, General Lord Adam Gordon. The General thereupon gave Lt.-Col. Graham a letter of approbation, certifying to the number and high quality of the officers and men, and the regiment was given its official standing as the 90th Regiment of Foot, Perthshire Volunteers.

The thistle in the badge of The Perth Regiment is a reminder of the link between the Canadian Perths who were mobilized in 1939 and those Scottish Perths who were mobilized by Thomas Graham in 1794.

The Perthshire Volunteers (later to be called Perthshire Light Infantry, and still later Scottish Rifles) were not, it should be noted, a kilted unit. Their uniform, for the first 87 years after the unit was formed, was red tunic and grey breeks. Only after the merger with the Cameronians did the uniform become green tunic and tartan trews.

Following on the affiliation in 1930 with The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), The Perth Regiment formed similar links in 1931 with the Otago Regiment, New Zealand Military Forces and with the 26th Battalion, Australian Military Forces. In 1932, the family of affiliations was extended to include the 10th Infantry (Witwatersrand Rifles) of South Africa. In 1944, in Italy, visits were exchanged between the Perths and the Witwatersrand Rifles, which formed part of the 6th South African Armoured Division, in the Eighth Army.

The initiative and vigour which sustained The Perth Regiment through the lean years of the militia, between the wars, is well illustrated by the story of the militia muster at Stratford on June 21, 1936. At a time when the militia had been financially starved for a decade, and many Canadian regiments were faltering, the Perths organized and administered, in Stratford, a garrison church parade for Western Ontario. It brought together 4,500 men, 3,500 of them militia in uniform, and 1,000 veterans in Canadian Legion groups.

On its way past the reviewing stand, where Major-General J. M. Ross, CMG, DSO, VD, took the salute, the parade took 45 minutes to pass a point. The Perths, oddly, were one of the smallest units in the march-past; as the host unit, they had supplied so many men for traffic control and administration that few were left to march.

Public funds were not available, in the parsimonious atmosphere of the 1930's for such an ambitious undertaking. The money needed for special trains and for the feeding of 4,500 men was raised by The Perth Regiment, and very largely by the generosity of Lt.-Col. Alex Faill of Stratford, who was then honorary colonel of the Regiment.

The biggest contingent on parade was that of the Essex Scottish, with 400 all ranks. Names of some of the militia infantry units which were guests of The Perth Regiment that day are now to be found only in history; The Huron Regiment, Middlesex Light Infantry, Canadian Fusiliers (London), Oxford Rifles (Woodstock) and Scots Fusiliers (Kitchener) have since either been disbanded, or merged and redesignated.

The crowds, and the traffic problems, were the greatest in Stratford's history up to that time. An estimated 20,000 spectators attended the drumhead service in Queen's Park, and the Avon River was crowded with canoe-loads of spectators. On the march to and from Queen's Park, the parade route used a portion of the route of No. 7 and No. 8 Highways through Stratford; by the time the rear of

the parade cleared the highway, traffic was backed up bumper-to-bumper for a mile and a half.

The worship service was conducted by Maj. the Very Rev. Charles E. Jeakins, chaplain of The Middlesex Light Infantry; the sermon was preached by Major the Rev. F. Gwynne Lightbourn, chaplain of The Perth Regiment.

The enterprise of June 21, 1936, unprecedented in Western Ontario and never since repeated on the same scale, can be cited as an example of the regimental spirit which kept the Perths to the fore during difficult years, and led to the Perths being chosen as one of the first militia regiments in Canada to be mobilized for the Second World War.

8 – CALL TO ARMS

When the Second World War began, the call for The Perth Regiment was immediate, and the response of the Regiment was immediate.

The war was touched off by Hitler's invasion of Poland, in blitzkrieg style, Sept. 1, 1939. The governments of the United Kingdom and of France honoured their commitments to defend the small countries of Europe against Nazi aggression, and declared war against Germany Sept. 3. The Canadian Parliament was called into emergency session on Sept. 7, and approved a declaration of war against Germany, with effect Sept. 10.

The Perths had not waited for these events to unfold. On Sept. 1, the day that German tanks and dive-bombers carried the swastika emblem across the Polish border, a telegraphed order was transmitted from London, Ontario, to Lt.-Col. Arthur Garrod, commanding officer of The Perth Regiment at Stratford.

Timed at 2:23 p.m., Sept. 1, the order said: "You will mobilize immediately in accordance with your mobilization scheme." From that moment, The Perths were at war. A few officers of the battalion headquarters staff had had warning five days earlier to prepare for possible mobilization. The Government of Canada, having anxious regard to the worsening situation in Europe, decided Aug. 25 that selected militia units, to a total of about 10,000 men, should be mobilized as a precaution. On the afternoon of Aug. 26 Lt.-Col. Garrod received telegraphed instructions to open his "Mobilization Directive," and to act immediately on its contents.

The Directive, in a large, sealed envelope, had been received earlier in the year, and had been placed in the vault of a Stratford bank for safe-keeping. It was evident to a higher authority early in the year 1939, that if a great emergency should arise, the Perths were in a higher state of readiness than most militia units.

As soon as he received his instruction, on Aug. 26, to open the sealed envelope, Lt.-Col. Garrod ordered three key officers to meet him at the Armoury. He obtained the envelope, and opened it in the presence of Major S. H. McComb, second-in-command; Capt. J. E. Tipler, adjutant; Major F. S. Walker, quartermaster. The four of them worked until after midnight, studying the detailed instructions, and beginning preparations for mobilization on a war footing. Thus on Sept. 1, the day the war began, the battalion headquarters was prepared to act without hesitation.

First home of the active service battalion was the Moore-Bell factory building in Stratford. By the time actual mobilization began, Lt.-Col. Garrod and his staff had allotted space in the building for adjutant's office, quartermaster's stores, medical examination rooms and other battalion offices. When recruiting began in earnest, Capt. M. W. Andrew and Capt. W. I. Kemp were in charge of interviewing volunteers. There was, at first, no arrangement for living in barracks or regimental messing, so the first recruits were given subsistence allowance, and arrangements were made for civilian billets, if required. While recruiting started, there were crews of electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and telephone men at work through Saturday, Sept. 2, and Sunday, Sept. 3, to convert the Moore-Bell building for military use.

Among the earliest volunteers, Sept. 2, was a family group of four. Company Sergeant Major E. M. Hutchinson and his three sons, Cpl. E. M. Hutchinson, Pte. J. W. Hutchinson and Pte. J. A. Hutchinson all volunteered together. Cpl. Hutchinson was later to be Capt. Hutchinson, adjutant of the active service battalion, and still later Lt.-Col. Hutchinson, commanding The Perth Regiment 1955-59. His two brothers also became regimental officers.

Two three-room suites for medical examinations were partitioned off during that first weekend, so that two medical boards could be at work beginning Monday, Sept. 4. The first swearing-in of

officers and men took place Sept. 4, and it is from that day that the Regiment officially dates its Second World War history.

One of the first medical boards consisted of Major F. J. R. Forster, Capt. F. H. Nelson and Lieut. J. G. Jose; the other of Lt.-Col. A. J. McGanity, Major C. C. Ballantyne and Major David Smith. Of these six, Major Smith and Major Forster are living retired in Stratford, and both still take an active interest in the Regiment.

A nucleus of the Regiment took possession of the Moore-Bell building on the night of Sept. 3-4, as the workmen were finishing their rushed conversion of the building. Fifteen men chosen from among the earliest volunteers formed the first active-service guard of the Regiment that night, under Sgt. W. Gillingham. A more practical first was scored by Sgt. A. Whitehead who was in charge of the first fatigue party, which worked all night to clean up the building. Lieut. A. F. Hunter was on duty as the first orderly officer.

On Monday morning, Sept. 4, the Union Jack was raised over the Regiment's first wartime headquarters, while Sgt. A. Murray, as bugler, sounded Reveille.

Ninety volunteers had been interviewed and selected even before the medical boards could start work; on Sept. 4, 59 of these men were cleared through the medical examinations, and attested for service. One of the oddities of these earliest swearing-in ceremonies was the wording of the attestation papers. The first Perths on active service were taken on, "For the duration of the war and for one year after demobilization if required." Strictly speaking, this was nonsense, because on Sept. 4, 1939, Canada was not at war, and would not be until a week later. The Perth recruiting officers, using forms which had been printed for 1914-18, were anticipating history.

The Regiment that carried the county name was supported, from the beginning, by the people of Perth County and its county town of Stratford. Mayor T. E. Henry headed a citizens' committee organized Sept. 9, to help with the recruiting drive. The first cash gift to the Regiment, to help with recruiting expenses, was \$25 from the County of Perth, by Fred W. Armstrong, county clerk. Total assistance to recruiting costs, during the first month after mobilization, included \$500 from the City of Stratford, \$800 from the County of Perth, and \$75 from the Town of St. Marys.

It had been feared from the start of recruiting that no medical board could honestly pass Lt.-Col. Garrod as fit for combat duty in a second war. The fear was realized late in September, when command passed to Major McComb, who was promoted and assumed command on the occasion of a ceremonial parade at Queen's Park, Sept. 22. The two had worked as a team for years, to sustain the Regiment, and there was no loss of continuity. Lt.-Col. Garrod later commanded wartime training centres at Kitchener and Chatham.

At the end of September the Regiment had a strength of 25 officers and 611 other ranks. On Oct. 4, it was recruited to battalion strength. Recruiting continued, both to balance the losses which came from transfers and medical discharges, and to build up a reinforcement company. On Nov. 1, the Perths had 26 officers and 729 other ranks on strength.

If the Regiment had realized, at the end of the first two months that another 23 months were to go by before it would move from Canada toward the war front, morale might not have been as high as it was at the conclusion of the recruiting phase.

In sober truth, the only assets of the Regiment in November, 1939, were the nucleus of partially-trained officers and NCOs which had been furnished from militia days, and a mass of men who were physically fit and willing, but had everything yet to learn. The equipment for learning was pitifully scanty, and the shortage of equipment was to hold back the Regiment's development during all of its 25 months in Canada.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Hon. Albert Mathews, inspected the Regiment at Stratford, Nov. 3, 1939. It was a cold day, and the men could not control their shivers as they stood on parade. His Honour was surprised that there were so few greatcoats to be seen; he questioned many men in the ranks to find what they had of warm clothing, which was not much. Uniforms issued up to that date were chiefly old militia stores, raked in for the Perths from militia units which had not been mobilized. The first issue of battle-dress was not available until late in November. On Nov. 22, a 10-mile route march was enough to disable scores of men; there were not yet enough boots to get all the feet fitted. The Regiment had little transport until the summer of 1940; it was a big event when Capt. F. S. Walker and Capt. A. F. Hunter, with a detail of drivers, went to Windsor on July 18, 1940, to take delivery at the factory of 21 trucks, and drive them to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where the Perths were then stationed. The first issue of web equipment did not come to the Regiment until late in August, 1940.

While the Perths trained hard, and built themselves into a battalion team under discouraging conditions, other units were getting overseas, and getting priorities on equipment. Units of the First Canadian Division were in Britain in December, 1939; units of the Second Canadian Division followed beginning in May, 1940. Having been mobilized with the role of a corps machine-gun battalion, the Perths were not divisional troops, and had to take a place far down the priority scale for the equipment that slowly became available. In the early summer of 1940, when France collapsed and Britain was left nearly defenceless, every scrap of equipment that could help was rushed to units actually in Britain; the Perths, in common with every other mobilized unit in Canada, saw their hopes for weapons and transport again deferred.

A change of role came after a year and a half of training for work as Vickers machine-gunners. Changes in high-level planning, based on lessons learned during Nazi blitzkrieg in Western Europe, brought the decision to increase radically the hitting power of the Canadian Army, by creating two armoured divisions, plus two independent armoured brigades.

The new policy, which called for converting the 4th Canadian Division from infantry to armour, and creating a 5th Division which would be armoured, was strongly influenced by General H. D. G. Crerar, who returned to Canada in July, 1940, after nine months in Britain which encompassed the period of Nazi blitzkrieg successes. General Crerar became Chief-of-Staff in Canada, and started applying the lessons learned.

Organization of the 5th Division began in the early spring of 1941; the Perths got the news on March 4 that they would be part of it. Their role was to be that of a motor battalion, fully mechanized, and to be brigaded with three regiments of tanks. The intensive training done with the Vickers gun was no longer applicable, but the Regiment did have a continuing asset in the fact that it had qualified a high proportion of its men in the trade of motor mechanic. Although disappointed that after faithful training, they seemed to be going back to the beginning to start again, the Perths threw themselves with good heart into the new training, and began at once to send many men on courses to qualify as drivers (tracked), drivers (wheeled) or driver-mechanics.

A second change of command came while the Regiment was still in Canada. The Perths learned with regret on July 17, 1940, that Lt.-Col. McComb was on that date ordered to report to depot, together with Major D. M. Ross, MM, who had been commanding Headquarters Company. Their long experience had served the Regiment during the organization period, but the time came for command positions in a combat unit to go to younger men. Major E. C. Shelley was temporarily in command until Lt.-Col. George W. Little arrived, fresh from a Senior Officers' Course at the Royal Military College, to assume command Aug. 13, 1940. He had First World War service with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was wounded at Vimy Ridge, and won the Military Cross in

September, 1917.

Another event bearing on the later command of the Regiment occurred in May, 1940, when Major J. S. H. Lind left the Perths to go to Britain for staff course at Camberley. He rejoined the Perths 27 months later as Lt.-Col. Lind, in command.

Early in the two-year period the Regiment spent in Canada, companies were organized on a regional basis, to give recognition to the fact that many of the original volunteers came to the recruiting centre at Stratford from beyond the boundaries of Perth County. Because they were mobilized early, the Perths had first pick of those who were quickest to volunteer, from a considerable area of Western Ontario. On Nov. 9, 1939, the companies were reorganized so that, within the Regiment, "A" Company was the Waterloo County company, "B" the Bruce County, "C" the Huron County and "D" the Perth County. The Headquarters Company was designated as "Stratford and District." During the five years which followed it was not possible to keep strictly to this regional plan; casualties went out, recruits came in where they were needed, and the Perths drew reinforcements from every province of Canada. Although the edges of the regional plan for company organization became blurred, the plan adopted in the autumn of 1939 gave each company its own personality, which tended to persist.

The years in Canada were really the time of the most severe testing of regimental morale in the Regiment. Men, who had joined up to get to the war, and to fight, did not accept comfortably the delays, the equipment shortages, the feeling that the Perths were in a backwash of the war. Regiments which had been mobilized later went overseas sooner, a fact which was not good for morale. It is remarkable, in retrospect, that the crime rate stayed low, AWOLs were few, and the Perths earned a reputation for soldierly behaviour in every Canadian community in which they were stationed.

One saving factor was that the many moves made in Canada did not take the Regiment more than 150 miles from its home. If they were not getting to where the war was, they were at least not having the annoyance of being left in Canada, but far from home. For most of the original Perths, it was possible to get home for one or two weekends ends a month, all through the first 25 months after mobilization.

On Dec. 1, 1939, the Regiment moved from the Moore-Bell building to the McLagan Furniture Co. building in Stratford. The larger McLagan building had been renovated, and renamed, "Perth Barracks." On May 25, 1940, the Regiment moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where two companies at a time did guard duty on the Chippewa Power Canal and Queenston hydro-electric plant, while the remainder of the battalion continued training.

This first operational duty of the Regiment repeated history, by taking it to the Niagara Frontier. Four volunteer companies from Perth (two from Stratford, one from St. Marys, one from Listowel) had been on active service on the Niagara Frontier in 1866, the year of the Fenian capture of Fort Erie. Much earlier than that, the Perthshire Volunteers, a parent unit by affiliation, held Fort Niagara (on the American side of the river) during the war of 1812-14. On July 24, 1940, the Regiment moved to Camp Borden; on Nov. 25, 1940, it went into winter quarters in Standard Barracks in Hamilton; on April 17, 1941, it moved back to Camp Borden.

Each time orders were issued to prepare for a move, rumour sprang alive from the hope that the move was to be overseas. Finally, in early October, 1941, the rumours had substance behind them. At 0715 hours, Oct. 3, the Perths paraded with full equipment. There was the usual disillusioning wait, with web straps cutting into shoulders, pulled down by the weight of full pack. At 1330 hours the first of two troop-trains left Camp Borden station; the remainder of the Perths were on a train which left at 1600 hours. Strength of the Regiment that day was 41 officers and 843 other ranks.

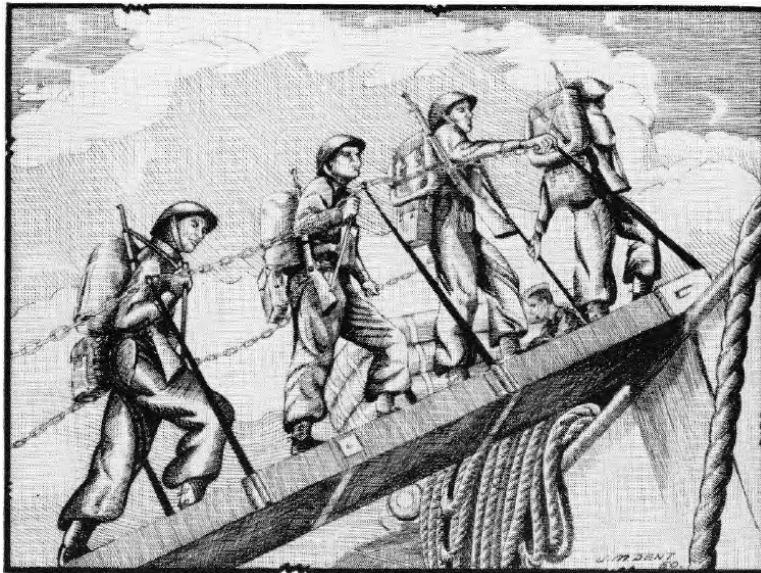
The first train stopped at Quebec City in the morning of Oct. 4, for long enough to allow a route march through the city to loosen stiff muscles. For those on the second train, the same opportunity to stretch cramped limbs came at Riviere du Loup. The Regiment boarded ship, the "Reina del Pacifico" at Halifax on the morning of Oct. 5.

9 – ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

While the convoy was making up, the Perths had four days aboard ship in Halifax harbour. Boat drills started on the Monday morning, Oct. 6, and were taken seriously; of a sudden, this was the real thing. Learning the way to the right boat station was not an exercise against a "let's-pretend" enemy. Out there beyond the harbour mouth was a real enemy, with real torpedoes. Ship's orders were studied, and everyone adjusted to the differences in routine which were to be followed for the two weeks of shipboard life. Boots were -not worn, life-jackets were carried everywhere, and everyone readily grasped the idea that the greatest crime would be to violate blackout.

Other troops aboard the *Reina del Pacifico* were reinforcement details for infantry battalions of the First and Second Divisions, ordnance and signals units, and a detachment of recruits for the Czechoslovak Brigade which was forming in Britain. Lt.-Col. Little became O.C. Troops, for the period aboard ship, and Major R. L. Tindall was in acting command of the Regiment.

The passenger list totalled 2,222, including 833 all ranks who were Perths, 1,289 all ranks of other Canadian Army units, 42 Czechoslovak soldiers, and eight individuals travelling on special warrants.



Also aboard ship was a cargo of oranges for Britain. Strict orders were issued against theft from the cargo.

Perths were not idle during the shipboard period. In 1941, the Navy was at full stretch to meet the demands on it; troops aboard filled the gaps for the anti-submarine and anti-aircraft defence of the ship. Perths manned 12 lookout posts topside. Lieut. G. R. Tripp, Lieut. H. W. Chambers and 81 other ranks did duty as the anti-aircraft gunners for the ship. Every third day the Perths were duty group for the ship,

an assignment which called for six officers, 20 NCOs and 183 men. Perths staffed the ship's orderly room, as well as the battalion orderly room aboard ship.

The crossing was a smooth one, and few were seasick. The large convoy, guarded by Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy warships, encountered no enemy action. The only aircraft sighted were British long-range bombers, flying recon-naissance and escort missions, which appeared on the morning of Oct. 16. The *Reina del Pacifico* dropped anchor in the Mersey River, off the Liverpool docks, at 1410 hours on Oct. 17. The Perths had only to look at the bomb-ruins ashore to know that they were now within the enemy's striking range. It was quite obvious that this was not a bomb-free Canada.

The Regiment was two years in Britain before it boarded ship again to seek out the enemy in Italy. The story of the two years in England falls naturally into four periods. For the first three months, the Perths were at Chilton Foliat, a rural Wiltshire village, 75 miles west of London.

For a little more than seven months, they were in the Aldershot area, first in billets near Aldershot, and then in the drab brick barracks of Aldershot itself, with which Canadians became so

depressingly familiar in two wars. After ten months in England, the Regiment moved into the coastal area of Sussex, where it remained for ten months, moving several times, but within 20 miles of Brighton. The exception was an 18-day period early in 1943, when the Perths were away to the West of England to take their part in the large-scale confusion of Exercise Spartan.

During most of its last four months in England, the Regiment was almost constantly on the move, taking part in brigade and divisional schemes which ranged over northern Norfolk, on the East Coast, and then over the training areas of Salisbury Plain. During this four-month period of scheme after scheme the Regiment was based first at Hunstanton, on the East Coast; then at Barton Stacey Camp, in Hampshire; then, briefly, at Eastbourne, Sussex.

The Perths had their first look at wartime England during the 125-mile train journey from Liverpool docks south to Hungerford; the Regiment was moved in three trains, the first on the afternoon of Oct. 19, 1941, and two more trains on Oct. 20. From the railway station at Hungerford, all ranks marched the two miles to Chilton Foliat. In sharp contrast with what the Regiment was able to do a year or so later, it was not until the afternoon of Oct. 22 that the first Perth guard was mounted on the camp; it was not until Oct. 25 that the signallers got field telephones working within the camp; it was not until Oct. 27 that the Regiment got down to serious training. Before the Regiment left England, it could pick itself up and move to a strange area, with all its equipment, and be in business five minutes after arrival.

The first half of the month of November was used to give five-day landing leaves; 17 officers and 387 other ranks went for the period Nov. 4-8; 22 officers and 378 other ranks were on leave Nov. 11-15. Equipment remained scanty during most of the period at Chilton Foliat; to begin with, unit stores and baggage did not arrive from Liverpool until Oct. 29. At Chilton Foliat the Regiment learned to live in war-time England, to accept the black-out as a fact of life. The Perths adjusted to a new emphasis on security and censorship, and began to live like 24-hour-a-day soldiers, instead of eight-to-five soldiers.

The first move, on Jan. 15, was to billets on the outskirts of Farnham, five miles south of Aldershot. The Perths were still only theoretically "on wheels." The battalion motor convoy left Chilton Foliat early in the morning, carrying as many men as it could. That left 23 officers and 420 other ranks to march to Hungerford Station, and travel by rail to Farnham. On April 1, the Perths marched to Aldershot, where they took over Talavera Barracks from the Westminster Regiment. In those drab and draughty brick barracks they remained for more than four months.

The training pace quickened and stiffened, on arrival in the Aldershot area. Beginning in February, the Regiment had a series of 10-mile and 12-mile forced marches; on Feb. 23 there was an inter-company competition on a 10-mile forced march, won by C Company. Companies worked at convoy and movement exercises. On March 27 and 28 there was a battalion exercise to practise an opposed river crossing by a motor battalion, with assault boats. During the summer of 1942, there were defence schemes and assault schemes, along the Blackwater and Wey rivers in the Aldershot training areas, some of them in co-operation with tanks of the Governor-General's Horse Guards and the British Columbia Dragoons. In these exercises the Perths began to come to grips with their role as a motor battalion within a tank brigade.

On Aug. 12, 1942, the Regiment, without regret, departed from the Aldershot area, and moved by vehicle convoy 50 miles east to Ashdown Forest in Sussex, where it took over Nissen-hut quarters in Pippingford Park. The move was noticeably more efficient than the two previous moves in England. For the first time, movement control within the Regiment was done with wireless communication between key vehicles.

The day after the move, the Regiment was unpacked, shaken out into the new quarters, and

carrying on normally, a result it could not have achieved six months earlier.

Aug. 15, 1942, was a date hailed by everyone in the motor companies. For the first time since arrival in England, Headquarters Company, with help from Battalion Headquarters and the newly-organized anti-tank platoon, took a turn as duty company.

At Pippingford Park the training schedule became tougher, and also more interesting. The first two two-pounder anti-tank guns arrived in August. All warrant officers and sergeants became students at night classes in wireless procedure, conducted for six weeks by Lieut. C. H. Swartz. A battalion assault course was set up by Capt. G. R. Tripp. Companies worked at woods-clearing schemes, night patrol schemes, mine-laying and mine-detecting. The battalion sergeant-major, T. H. Soper, ran a smartening-up school for corporals and lance-corporals. Mustang aircraft of 414 Squadron worked with the Perths, practising strafing and low-level bombing while the Perths practised anti-aircraft defence. The Regiment did a realistic three-day exercise as motor battalion to three British tank regiments, the 1st and 2nd North Hants Yeomanry and the 1st Royal Gloucester Hussars. Freed of the barrack-square dullness of Aldershot, and hard at work, the spirit of the Regiment lifted.

The Perths' own assault course was a 600-yard stretch of rough ground, to be covered at the double, with the accompaniment of thunder-flashes, smoke from dischargers, and the crack of live ammunition. It included a run up a slippery board ramp, a leap across an eight-foot ditch, a climb over a 10-foot corrugated-iron wall with a mud-hole at its foot, a crawl under a net 18 inches above ground, the crossing of pits filled with barbed wire and overlaid with muddy poles, climbing 15 feet up a tree and swinging hand over hand 40 feet along a rope to another tree, a crawl along a ditch under fire from live ammunition, and a final bayonet charge down a steep bank and across a shallow pond.

The war diarist, in his monthly summary at the end of August, 1942, wrote: "This training is of course vigorous, but also interesting, and every officer has thrown himself so enthusiastically into his tasks that other ranks cannot fail to follow cheerfully. Days spent on the assault course have undoubtedly toughened the men physically and made their minds more alert. We can truthfully say that The Perth Regiment is hard-working, comfortable in body, happy in spirit, and well prepared physically and mentally to go into action."

The Regiment moved Oct. 21 to Hove, on the coast of the English Channel, where it was quartered in evacuated apartment houses and seaside hotels, with headquarters in the New Imperial Hotel. The billets were good, but the move also brought new responsibilities. There was a counter-invasion role, which required at least two-thirds of the total manpower to be on immediate call every night. Live ammunition was, for the first time, a permanent issue; 12 rounds for each pistol, 50 rounds for each rifle. A welcome benefit was the chance for hockey in nearby Brighton Arena, where the Perths beat the Governor-General's Horse Guards 12-2, on Nov. 2.

The Regiment went back inland to Pippingford Park, Dec. 29, and 16 days later made another short move, six miles to Uckfield, where it took over, from the 48th Highlanders of Canada, billets in requisitioned houses and institutions. Here the Perths were to have their longest stay in England, nearly six months.

10 – MARCHING INFANTRY AGAIN

It was at Uckfield, on Jan. 16, 1943, that the Perths learned that their role in the Canadian Army was again changed. At a series of company parades, Lt.-Col. J. S. H. Lind explained that the Perths were no longer a motor battalion, brigaded with tank regiments, but had been redesignated as standard infantry, brigaded with two other infantry battalions, the Irish Regiment of Canada, and the Cape Breton Highlanders.

For 22 months the training of the Perths had been guided by the belief that it would fight as the infantry component of an armoured brigade. In March, 1941, when the Perths became part of 5th Armoured Division, the concept was of a hitting force in which tanks would be the major element; for three regiments of tanks there was to be one of infantry. The infantry would be trained for rapid movement, for quick-thinking action, and for brief, sudden battle. The task allotted to The Perth Regiment, when it became a motor battalion, was essentially the same as that of the small forces of heavily-armed Panzer Grenadiers who motored through France in the summer of 1940, in the wake of Hitler's tank columns.

Top-level thinking in the Canadian Army was changed by the lessons learned as the war developed in 1941 and 1942. The need for a higher proportion of infantry was appreciated; at the beginning of 1943, the two Canadian armoured divisions, the 4th and 5th, were reorganized so that each would have one armoured brigade and one infantry brigade, instead of two armoured brigades.

The effect on the Perths was that they had to go back to the beginning, in many respects, and learn the Regiment job all over again. The burden of relearning fell most heavily on junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers. The change from motor battalion to marching infantry changed the duties of sub-unit commanders in many tactical operations of war.

There was a conspicuous change in the scale of transport which the Regiment would get. As a motor battalion, it rehearsed for battle on the assumption that the Regiment, or any motor company of the Regiment, would be self-sufficient for transport, and instantly ready to move on its own wheels and tracks. (In fact, never during the 14 months of motor-battalion training in Britain did it have its proper establishment of vehicles, but training, until January of 1943, was done on the assumption that in battle, the Regiment would be self-mobile.)

As an infantry battalion, the Regiment was allotted its own vehicles only for specialized platoons, such as anti-tank and three-inch mortars, and for unit and sub-unit headquarters. The main fighting strength of the Regiment was back on its marching feet; when transport was needed, troop lifting lorries would be allotted for a specific move, and then withdrawn again.



Regiment had one chance to get acquainted with its new comrades, the Irish and the Cape Bretoners, at a parade of 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade near Crowborough, Jan. 19, inspected by Lieut.-Gen. E. W. Sansom, commanding 2nd Canadian Corps, and Brig. T. J. Rutherford commanding the new brigade. It had one chance to practice the new movement techniques, in an embossing-and-debussing exercise with a troop-lifting platoon of the RCASC, Feb. 14, 1943. Then it was launched into the 18-day turmoil of Exercise Spartan.

Spartan was the biggest training exercise ever undertaken in Britain; 300,000 troops, in opposed forces, fought a practice war over a 12-county area of Southern England. The story of Spartan

cannot be told here, fascinating though it is for its effect on Canadian Army policy. It will go down in history as one of the greatest traffic snarls of all time. Movement control up at divisional and Corps levels frequently faltered while masses of vehicles churned up confusion on narrow English roads.

Spartan took the Perths on a great 250-mile swing over through the West of England, almost to Bristol, and then north and east into Northamptonshire. The record shows that the Regiment acquitted itself remarkably well. In the traffic snarls that developed, the Regiment frequently was broken into fragments, but always collected itself together at least once in every 24 hours, and did not once fail to carry out an assignment.

Typical of the problems which tested the Regiment during Spartan was the move made in the early morning hours of March 9, the 12th day of the exercise. Ordered to make a tactical move from Cirencester to Banbury, the Regiment found at least three other units trying to use the same two-lane highway for a night movement, under blackout rules. The Perths' war diary notes that at times four lanes of military traffic were trying to move abreast through the blackness. The Perths' convoy got broken up in packets in the traffic snarl, but the Regiment had itself pulled together by 0830 hours, where it was supposed to be. Orders were received for two attack operations against the exercise enemy during daylight hours, after which the Regiment carried out orders for two more moves before midnight.

The Regiment met the test of Spartan with an organization of three rifle companies, instead of the four-company pattern to which it had been accustomed. During the early months of 1943, the Regiment was plagued by reorganization, at the same time as it was adjusting to the change of role. It was shaken down from four rifle companies to three at the end of February. A new support company was formed, and D company vanished. Orders came down from above to reorganize to the four-company pattern, early in May. Accordingly, "Dog" Company was revived, with Lieut. C. F. Carsley in command, and a draft of 20 men from each of the other three rifle companies, to make a nucleus. On May 20, the instructions from above were again reversed, and the Regiment was shaken back into a three-company pattern; Capt. J. G. Bell, Lieut. Carsley and Capt. J. S. Whyte became the commanders of A, B, and C Companies and "Dog" vanished again. It was finally revived by still another reorganization, Aug. 14, which restored the four-company pattern, with Major J. E. Tipler, Major W. I. Kemp, Capt. J. S. Whyte and Lieut. W. J. Ridge appointed on that date to command A, B, C and D, respectively. Throughout all these shakeups, Major C. B. Arrell remained in command of the specialized fighting platoons, grouped in the Support Company.

Command changed often during the two years in Britain. Lt.-Col. Little was called away May 11, 1942, to an armoured corps posting, and Major R. L. Tindall was in command for nearly three months.

On Aug. 1, 1942, Lt.-Col. J. S. Lind, one of the mobilization originals, rejoined the Regiment, after an absence of more than two years, and assumed command, while Major Tindall remained as second-in-command. Only a few days later another name which is important in the regimental annals was added to the roster: H/Capt. the Rev. D. Crawford Smith joined the Perths as chaplain on Aug. 4, 1942, and stayed with them through the worst of what lay ahead.

Major Tindall was transferred April 8, 1943, to the Westminster Regiment, and Major H. E. T. Doucet arrived from the Royal Highlanders of Canada to replace him as second-in-command. A month later, May 10, Lt.-Col. Lind was appointed to the staff of Headquarters 2nd Canadian Corps, as a GSO 1; Major Doucet was promoted and assumed command of the Perths.

Within a few days there was another item in orders which had a bearing on future command; Major M. W. Andrew was posted away from the Regiment May 13, 1943, to attend an eight-week

senior officers' course at Brasenose College, Oxford. Major Andrew had been named second-in-command under Lt.-Col. Doucet; during his absence on course, Capt. R. A. MacDougall was named acting 2 i/c, so that Major Arrell could continue in direct command of the Support Company.

Command changed again less than three months later, when Lt.-Col. Doucet was posted away to the 1st Canadian Division, (then in Sicily, and poised for the Sept. 3 assault on the mainland of Italy). On Sept. 1, 1943, Lt.-Col. Doucet was succeeded in command of the Perths by Lt.-Col. W. S. Rutherford, formerly of the Glengarry Highlanders.

During the final weeks of Lt.-Col. Doucet's tenure, the Perths were engaged in large-scale exercises on the East Coast. They left Uckfield July 3, 1943, and moved to Hunstanton, on the Norfolk coast of The Wash. The battalion vehicles moved right through the heart of London, via the Marble Arch; Metropolitan London police who controlled the movement closed up the convoy radiator-to-tailgate to get it through mid-city traffic and the Perths lost one despatch-rider, hit by a truck and taken off to hospital.

From Norfolk, the Regiment moved across England again to the neighbour-hood in which they had first been, on arrival from Canada. On Aug. 19, they arrived in Barton Stacey Camp, Hampshire, 20 miles from Chilton Foliat. In 22 months they had come almost full circle, geographically, but in competence the story was different. The Regiment which moved on short notice to Barton Stacey was a team in which every man knew his job, and did it without hesitation.

At Barton Stacey, 5th Canadian Armoured Division was concentrated for divisional manoeuvres, in which the Perths confidently played their role. During this period the Regiment got its first inkling of Combined Operations; on Sept. 11 and 12, it carried out a movement exercise which taught it the new phrase, "craft serials," and led it through transit camps and marshalling areas to Southampton, and the "hards," or concrete ramps from which assault vehicles would board naval assault ships.

On Oct. 14, the Regiment moved back to Sussex, to billets in Eastbourne. Their stay was brief; at a battalion parade Oct. 16, Lt.-Col. Rutherford announced that the Perths would be leaving England soon. Ten days later the Perths moved in two trainloads to Liverpool, and on Oct. 27 the Regiment sailed, ostensibly for Northern Ireland.

Just on the edge of embarkation, the Regiment said a regretful farewell to its Regimental Sergeant-Major, T. H. Soper, whose regimental number, A11000, bore witness that he had been in from the beginning. He was the guest of honour at an officers' mess party, and at a sergeants' mess dinner, at Eastbourne on the night of Oct. 15. At a battalion parade the next morning, RSM Soper was invited by the Commanding Officer to inspect the parade.

11 – TIMBERWOLF

The Perths first heard the code-word "Timberwolf" when Lt.-Col. Rutherford spoke to all ranks in the mess hall at Eastbourne, on the morning of Oct. 16, 1943. His story that day, in brief, was that the Regiment would be turning in all its equipment, and going to Northern Ireland, where it would draw American equipment. He was particularly stern about the need for strict security, and complete secrecy about "Exercise Timberwolf."

At the highest level of Allied command, Timberwolf had been the subject of argument for a month and a half. On Aug. 31, while the Regiment was at Barton Stacey, Winston Churchill was in Canada, at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City. On that date Hon. J. L. Ralston, Canadian minister of defence, put strongly to Prime Minister Churchill the case for sending another Canadian division to Italy, to join the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. On Sept. 19, Mr. Churchill, back in London, cabled to Canada that the answer was "No," because shipping would not be available. On Sept. 30, Hon. Vincent Massey, Canadian high commissioner, talked to Mr. Churchill in London, and renewed the argument for giving battle experience to one of the Canadian divisions then in England. Persistence paid off; on Oct. 7 the British War Office said it might be feasible, after all. After another five days of negotiation, agreement between the Canadian and the United Kingdom governments was confirmed by cable the night of Oct. 12. Orders started going out immediately for the ultra-secret move of 5th Canadian Armoured Division to Italy.

On Oct. 13 the Regiment was doing normal training at Barton Stacey. On Oct. 14 it moved to Eastbourne. On Oct. 15 the Regiment learned that Exercise Grizzly, for which it had been warned, was cancelled. On Oct. 16, came the announcement of Timberwolf. New uniforms and personal kit were issued; all other equipment was turned in; the Regiment boarded ship at Liverpool Oct. 26, and its ship, the John Ericsson, sailed at 7:00 a.m., Oct. 27.

Late on the morning of Oct. 28, Lt.-Col. Rutherford told a battalion parade aboard ship that they were not going to Northern Ireland; that had been a cover story for security purposes. No one was very much surprised; the coast of Ireland was fading away off the port stern, and the John Ericsson had passed Londonderry, the last North Irish port at which it could have docked.

Africa was now said to be the destination. The Ericsson was crowded, with 5,400 troops aboard, and meals, because of the crowding, were two a day, with coffee at noon. To the Perths, though, the meals seemed wonderful. Shipboard menus were incomparably better than British wartime rations.

The convoy of 24 ships headed westward out into the Atlantic, then wheeled south and east, and passed through the Straits of Gibraltar Nov. 4. There was the normal excitement of seeing land, first sighted in mid-afternoon that day, after a week out in the Atlantic. To the Perths, it was much more exciting to see lighted villages on the African shore after darkness fell; house lights at night were something they had not seen for two-years.

The next day it was announced to all ranks that the ship was bound for Italy, instead of North Africa, and would probably dock at Naples. Unlike the switch from Northern Ireland to North Africa, this was not the uncovering of a deliberate deception. Preparations for the reception of the 34,000 Canadian troops in the 24-ship convoy had been going forward while the convoy was at sea; some units in the convoy went to Philippeville in Algeria, where Canadian base units were grouped; some went to Sicily; some, including the Perths, were routed to mainland Italy. The final decisions on destinations were made after the Regiment sailed from Liverpool.

Boat drill and air-raid drill were rehearsed frequently aboard the Ericsson. All aboard knew that in addition to submarine torpedoes, the Germans had recently been using glider-bombs in air attacks on shipping. Air-raid drill, which called for all troops not on gun watch or lookout duty to get below

to their quarters, was something to make the Perths think. Baker, Charlie and Dog companies formed one compartment group; under command of Major M. W. Andrew. Their compartment, E4, was below water line.

An air alert which was the real thing came in the twilight of Nov. 6. The four-bell alarm sounded at 1800 hours; everyone not on duty went below. For more than an hour there was gunfire from every quarter of a darkening sea. Stanley Scislowski², then in Dog Company, recalls; "Within minutes of the alarm the first sounds of distant gunfire filtered through to the men in their berths below decks. The ack-ack fire increased in intensity, and the deeper sound of heavy explosions made the ship's plates vibrate. Down in the lower decks we glanced nervously at each other, knowing that if a torpedo should hit, there would be little hope for us."

The Ericsson was not hit and the troops aboard did not learn the details of the story until much later. The convoy, spread over many miles of sea, had been attacked at 1810 hours by 12 German torpedo bombers which came in from the north. Three ships were sunk, and three of the attacking aircraft were shot down. Only one of the torpedoed ships carried Canadians; aboard the S.S. Santa Elena was No. 14 Canadian General Hospital. The Santa Elena was hit near the water line by a torpedo, and hit a second time by a bomb which went through the deck. The life-boats put away with the 121 nursing sisters of the Canadian hospital. Crewmen assigned to the lifeboats were Latin-American waiters and stewards, who turned out to be useless as boatmen; the Canadian nurses took over the oars, and rowed to the troopship S.S. Monterey, half a mile away, where they scrambled up rope ladders. United States destroyers picked up the remainder of the Santa Elena's passengers and crew.

One immediate result of the air raid was that additional Bren gunners from the Perths were detailed for duty topside, to thicken up the ship's anti-aircraft defence.



On the afternoon of Nov. 8, the Regiment formed up on the dock, and marched through Naples and on to Afragola, a rural village on the outskirts of the city. For the first mile of a seven-mile route march, the Perths were favourably impressed by their first look at Italy. Then they left the central city, and went on through slum areas, of which the Chaplain observed, "... showing us life in the raw in Naples." Stanley Scislowski recalls that at almost every step of the march, the men were trying to dodge the piles of human manure on the slum streets. The war diary note on this introduction to Italy says, "When we got into the suburbs, filth and squalor became more apparent. Large families were living in one room which was devoid of what we consider the bare essentials."

During the march it rained hard. The marching Perths arrived at their bivouac area just at dark, after which officers hurried off to draw tents and rations, but could not get them in time to be of use that night. There were no blankets. The Perths slept on the ground in a vineyard and learned that in Italy the nights can be cold in November. The following day pup tents were set up, one for two men, kit bags were brought out to Afragola from the docks, and the Regiment rapidly organized itself. On the third day in Italy, the Perths and the Irish Regiment carried out a ceremonial changing of the guard in the town square of Afragola, and also formed for inspection by Brig. George Kitching, newly appointed to command 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade.

Rations were short for some days at Afragola. Meals were two a day, of bully beef, hardtack and

² See Scislowski, Stanley. *Not All Of Us Were Brave*, Dundurn Press, Toronto, 1997.

tea. For four of the 10 days the Regiment was in this first bivouac in "Sunny Italy," the weather report in the Perth war diary says tersely, "Heavy Rain."

Canadian commanders at higher levels were well aware of the conditions under which the Perths, and other newly- arrived Canadian units, were being introduced to the Italian theatre. On Nov. 15, Maj.-Gen. G. G. Simonds, newly- appointed commander of the 5th Division, was writing to Lieut.-Gen. H. D. G. Crerar, commanding 2nd Canadian Corps: "I am most anxious to get the troops away from this sort of suburban built-up area as quickly as I can. It is a very poor training area, the squalid slums are depressing and constitute a very bad atmosphere in which to condition troops."

Four days later, on Nov. 19, the Regiment was on the move, right across Italy to a camp area near Altamura, 35 miles from the Adriatic seaport of Bari. Here living conditions were a little better and training conditions much better. The Regiment was to remain in the Altamura area until after the turn of the year to 1944.

Just before leaving the squalor of Afragola, the Perths encountered the payoff on a deal which had been made between the British War Office and the Canadian Army, during the days in early October when the proposal to send the 5th Canadian Armoured Division to Italy was hanging in the balance. One of the objections, lack of shipping, was met by an arrangement to leave in Italy the equipment of the British 7th Armoured Division, which was slated for return to England. Shipping was economized by having 5th Canadian travel to Italy without equipment, and take over the equipment of 7th Armoured.

The exchange was done on a unit-to-unit basis; 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade took over the equipment of 131st Infantry Brigade, and within the brigades, the Perth Regiment took over the equipment of the 1st/5th Queen's Regiment.

The official history of the Canadian Army in Italy, written by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, notes that most of the old vehicles thus acquired had two-wheel drive, instead of the four-wheel drive to which the Canadians had been accustomed in their own Canadian-made transport. "There was great dissatisfaction over the unserviceable condition of a large number of the vehicles relinquished by the 7th Armoured Division ... It appears that a natural spirit of camaraderie among the veterans of desert fighting had led to extensive unofficial swapping of the 7th Armoured Division's better vehicles for the worst in other units and formations of the Eighth Army, these latter finishing up in the hands of the Canadians."

The Perths sent a party of two officers and 28 drivers, with Capt. F. S. Walker in charge, to pick up the first lot of vehicles from the 1st/5th Queen's, on Nov. 15. They took over 12 carriers, 18 wheeled vehicles and six anti-tank guns, but they did not get them all back to camp that day. Some of the ancient vehicles broke down on the short trip to Afragola.

On the long move across Italy, on Nov. 19, many of the trucks broke down; some of them did not get to Altamura until a week later. The paymaster, Capt. W. J. McCabe, and the chaplain, Capt. D. C. Smith, remember making the trip in the back of a truck which was towed the last 50 miles of the way.

In the training area near Altamura, the three battalions of 11th Brigade, Perths, Irish and Cape Bretoners, were 130 miles behind the fighting front in Italy. They knew that the first taste of battle could not be far in the future, and the Regiment consciously drew itself together in these final weeks of tune-up. For a month before arrival at Altamura, including the 13 days aboard ship, there had been no hard training, and muscles had softened a little. Long route marches and assault exercises in the rocky, boulder-strewn country around the camp, rapidly hardened the Perths again. For the first time, live ammunition was used in cross-country tactical

exercises; Italian sheep-herders learned to lie low when they saw the "Canadese" coming.

There was also a new approach to reality in a six-day exercise carried out by 11th Brigade, Dec. 18-23, 1943. The narrative and the problems of the exercise were based on the operations of 1st Canadian Infantry Division, three months earlier in the Altamura area. Major-Gen. G. G. Simonds, who watched the infantry of his new command tackle the exercise, had been in command three months earlier of the Canadian division which had driven the Germans out of the exercise area in an actual operation of war; Brig. Kitching, supervising the exercise, had been principal staff officer to Gen. Simonds in the September fighting over the same ground.

They must have been satisfied with what they saw of the newly-arrived brigade. Before the end of December, Gen. Simonds was reporting to Lieut.-Gen. Crerar that although the armoured brigade of 5th Division was still held up by lack of equipment, the 11th Infantry Brigade was, "steaming ahead"; he proposed sending a brigade group forward, "to get its first experience of contact with the enemy."

On Jan. 4, 1944, Brig. Kitching received orders for his brigade to relieve 3rd Brigade of 1st Canadian Division, on the coastal sector of the front, just north of Ortona. That same evening, the word was passed on by Lt.-Col. Rutherford to all officers of the Regiment that the Perths would soon be going into action. Two days later, Lt.-Col. Rutherford spoke to all ranks of the Regiment, and told them that they would soon be moving north, that they would be going into the front line under command of 1st Division, and that the Perths, Irish and Cape Bretoners would be relieving 3rd Brigade. (West Nova Scotias, Carleton and Yorks, Royal 22eme.)

This briefing of all ranks, several days in advance of a major operational move, told a story in itself about the maturity of the Regiment. Back in Canada, three and four years earlier, the destination of moves had been shrouded in secrecy; when the Regiment was in England, there were still precautions against letting all ranks know where a move might take them. At Altamura, Lt.-Col. Rutherford spoke plainly and openly to all ranks, in confidence that every Perth would remain tight-lipped, after being handed information that enemy agents would be eager to acquire.

An advance party, consisting of the Scout Platoon and the Intelligence Section, started north on a Saturday, Jan. 8. On the Sunday, Roman Catholics of the Regiment paraded to mass at the cathedral in Altamura; open-air church service for Protestants was held in the unit lines by the Perths' chaplain. Capt. Smith told the story of Gideon and his chosen few, and preached from the text, "I the Lord have called thee; I will keep thee."

On Monday and Tuesday the Regiment was on the move northward, spending one night at a staging camp at Ururi, while Lt.-Col. Rutherford went on ahead, joining the battalion scouts and the intelligence section to visit the Carleton and York Regiment's positions north of Ortona, and prepare for the takeover.

12 – THE ORTONA FRONT

The sector into which the Perths were moving was one in which there had been bitter and costly fighting for more than a month. The climax had been the capture of Ortona in an eight-day battle, Dec. 20-27 by Canadians of 1st Division, and of 1st Armoured Brigade. The nature of the house-to-house defence put up by the German 1st Parachute Division in Ortona can be judged by the casualty record of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, which in eight days in Ortona lost 172 men, 63 of them killed.

The coastal town of Ortona had been the eastern anchor of the German line across Italy. At the beginning of January, 1944, the front had been pushed two miles north of Ortona, to the line of the little Riccio River. One of the unanswered questions was whether the German paratroopers on the far bank of the Riccio were under orders to hold on as stubbornly as they had in Ortona, or were prepared to pull back if strong pressure was put on them.

There seems to be little doubt that the first intention, when the untested battalions of 11th Brigade were put in the line, was to give them a gradual break-in. The orders given to Brig. Kitching on Jan. 4 described the role as, "holding and patrolling."

The picture changed, on the Italian front as a whole, between Jan. 4 and Jan. 14. The change altered the nature of the Perths' baptism of fire. On Jan. 12, the day the Perths arrived in the Ortona area after the long move from Altamura, orders were being issued by General Harold Alexander, in supreme command in Italy, that pressure should be put on the enemy at the east, or Ortona end of the line, to prevent the enemy moving troops to the west end, where the Anzio landings were to be made Jan. 22.

"Putting pressure" meant mounting an attack to keep the enemy occupied. The attack was planned as a two-battalion effort to capture the high ground beyond the Riccio, and go on to the next valley, that of the Arielli River. The two battalions that were on the ground, and got the order to attack, were the Perths and the Cape Breton Highlanders. Lt.-Col. Rutherford was told on the afternoon of Jan. 13 to prepare for an attack on the morning of Jan. 17. On the morning of the 14th, company commanders went forward to observation posts from which they could see the ground over which they were to attack. On the 15th, company commanders took their platoon commanders forward to the OPs, and on the morning of Sunday, Jan. 16, Lt.-Col. Rutherford talked to each of the rifle companies in turn, explaining to all ranks the plan of the attack.

The brigade plan called for the Perths to attack first, and capture objectives near the top of the ridge on the far side of the Riccio; when the Perths were on their objectives, the Cape Breton Highlanders were to attack on their right, and come up into line. Then the Perths and Cape Bretoners were to exploit on over the crest, to positions which would dominate the valley of the Arielli. The Irish Regiment was in brigade reserve.

As things worked out, the Perths never saw the Arielli.

On the morning of the 17th, all companies breakfasted in the dark, at 0330 hours. They fell in at 0430 hours, and moved on schedule toward the assembly areas. When the artillery barrage opened, promptly at 0530 hours, the two leading companies, Able on the right commanded by Capt. F. B. Kennedy, and Charlie on the left, commanded by Major R. A. MacDougall, reacted smoothly to their training, and moved forward without an instant's delay.

For 15 minutes the fire of 15 regiments of artillery was turned on the enemy-held ridge, in support of the Perths. The moment the artillery barrage lifted though, the battle-wise German paratroopers came to life again. Just as Able Company crossed the stream at the bottom of the gully, it came under heavy mortar and machine-gun fire. Capt. Kennedy tried to manoeuvre his company

forward by sending a platoon under Lieut. A. J. Clements to the left, to try to outflank the enemy posts that were pinning Able Company in the bottom of the valley. Lieut. Clements was killed while trying to lead his platoon forward. Able's PIAT gunners wormed their way forward, and got within range of a house from which a German machine-gun was firing; they scored hits, and two Germans came out and surrendered. Other Germans immediately occupied the house, and the machine-gun kept on firing. Capt. Kennedy, in wireless touch with battalion headquarters, described the situation to Lt.-Col. Rutherford, who arranged for tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment to engage the house. The Germans were not dislodged.

Meanwhile Charlie Company, about a quarter of a mile upstream, had moved to the attack with equal promptness. Ten minutes after the artillery barrage began, Lieut. R. S. Chamberlain, commanding the leading platoon of the company, was fording the Riccio. The platoon put its battle-drill training to quick use, and wiped out a machine-gun post which was in its path, leaving the three Germans dead. Lieut. Chamberlain pressed on up the ridge, and at 0730 hours was on the company objective; with him were nine, all ranks, of his platoon. The enemy, meanwhile, had opened up with mortars and heavy machine guns, just as the main body of Charlie Company was fording the river. Most of the fire which pinned the company to the ground seemed to be coming from a large, white house about 200 yards up the slope. Major MacDougall, with Lieut. L. J. W. Rochon and six others, rushed the house. The party of eight was wiped out; Major MacDougall, Lieut. Rochon and two others were killed; four were wounded.

It had been intended that Baker Company would come into action after Able and Charlie were on the ridge across the river. With Able and most of Charlie pinned in the bottom of the valley, Baker was ordered forward to reinforce Able. The men of Baker tried repeatedly to get through the storm of mortar fire and machine-gun fire which was falling on the fords; not enough got through to make any useful addition to Able's strength.

At mid-morning, casualties were coming back, and three companies were pinned down and being punished in the bottom of the valley. The battalion reserve, Dog Company under Capt. W. J. "Sammy" Ridge, had been hard hit even before being committed. Knowing the ground thoroughly, the German paratroopers put down predicted mortar fire on the company's forming-up area, killing Pte. J. E. Gallant, who was carrying the company's No. 18 wireless set, and wounding CSM Donald Habkirk and two others. With the wireless set gone, communication with Dog Company was difficult for the rest of the day.

Late in the morning, Lt.-Col. Rutherford sent Capt. Ridge's company around to the left, to try to take the pressure off Charlie Company. Dog Company worked its way along a shallow fold in the ground, until they came out in the open in the bottom of the valley. The entrenched paratroopers opened up at once with machine-gun and rifle fire; after trying to get forward, Capt. Ridge pulled his company back about 100 yards from its limit of advance, and held on in the slight shelter of an earth bank. Stanley Scislowski, who was there, recalls: "Those men of Dog Company who survived their first battle will not forget their sudden acquaintance with the MG 34, which they nicknamed the rubber-gun or cheese-cutter. The German MG's extremely high rate of fire was a wonder to all who cringed beneath the stream of bullets. In comparison, our Bren gun seemed innocuous ... The withdrawal was as hectic as the advance, as mortars followed the fall-back. Through all this only five men had been hit, and here we learned one fact. Though the enemy MG's threw out a tremendous rate of rounds, this hose-pipe technique was highly inaccurate compared to our own Bren."

The brigade plan had been to send the Cape Breton Highlanders to the attack as soon as The Perth Regiment was on its objective. At midday, when the situation was because of smoke and the breakdown of communications with the Perth companies, Brig. Kitching ordered the Cape

Bretoners into action. Two companies of the Cape Bretoners moved to the assault about half a mile downstream, to the right of the Perths. As soon as they started across the open ground in the valley bottom, they met the same storm of fire as had hit the Perths. In a short time, the two companies had 13 killed and 33 wounded. Lt.-Col. J. B. Weir, commanding the Cape Bretoners, was ordered by Brig. Kitching not to commit his other two companies unless the first two got on their objective.

With the sister battalion on the right also pinned down, the Perths mustered another punch. Lt.-Col. Rutherford organized a new artillery support program for an attack by Dog Company, coming in at an angle from the left toward the original Charlie Company objective. Under cover of smoke, a troop of the Sherman tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment manoeuvred to positions to the left of Dog Company, to give supporting fire across the valley. At 1615 hours, Capt. Ridge led forward the combined remnants of his own company and of Charlie, while the battalion mortars laid down an excellent smoke screen to cover his right flank. They got up the slope to within 200 yards of the ridge road which was the objective line, but the ranks were so much thinned that Capt. Ridge's little force did not have the manpower or the firepower for a final rush into the teeth of the enemy's positions.

As darkness began to gather at the end of the short January day, orders came down from brigade headquarters to withdraw the battalion. At that moment Capt. A. Binnington and two sections of his carrier platoon were about to move in an attempt to cross the valley to the support of Capt. Ridge's attack.

The part of the story that remains to be told is that of Lieut. Chamberlain and the one section of Charlie Company who were on the battalion objective at 0730 hours. Nothing was heard from them all day; when the battalion was pulling back after dark, it was assumed that they were casualties. Sometime after midnight, they came back through the outposts. They had wiped out two enemy machine-gun posts up on the ridge. Then they had dug in, and fought off counter-attacks, all day long, by the paratroopers who were all around them. Lieut. Chamberlain was awarded the Military Cross.

A first-hand report of the feat was recorded immediately after the action in an interview by War Correspondent Bert Wemp, of The Toronto Telegram, with Sgt. N. O. Bell: "We stayed behind the enemy lines all day, and were reorganized at night by Lieut. R. A. Chamberlain of St. Thomas, who led us back to our boys. As we crept along at night we passed among German positions and machine-gun posts. We could hear the Germans talking as plainly as I am talking to you now. It sure was quite an experience. Those German paratroop guys are a tough outfit. Both the hillside and the crest we attacked had dugouts I'll bet were 20 feet deep. You had to get down them by a ladder. They must have been shooting their machine guns by sight through periscopes, for they certainly didn't show their heads.

One day in action cost the Regiment 137 casualties. Three officers and 44 men killed; 62 were brought back wounded; one officer and 27 men, many of them wounded, were taken prisoner.

On the day following, when the Perths were on their way back to a rest area 10 miles behind the front, the mood in the Regiment, it is clear from the contemporary accounts, was one of sullen resentment that they had not been allowed to finish the job. After four years of training, and one day of fighting, they had taken a very hard knock. They also learned, in the supreme test of battle, that they could depend on each other. While men were falling, teamwork stood up.

Jan. 17, 1944, was the first, last and only time in the Second World War that the Perths failed to capture an objective.

On the second day after the Riccio River battle, the Regiment paraded for an informal inspection by Maj. Gen. Chris Vokes, commanding 1st Division. He told the Perths they had done

an excellent job against the German Army's best, and that the fact the Regiment had been withdrawn was no indication that they had not inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. As an epilogue, it should be noted that two weeks later, after careful preparation, a battalion of 1st Division attacked again, higher upstream, to try to throw the enemy off the ridge between the Riccio and the Arielli. This attack also was thrown back, and the Germans remained in possession of the ridge another three months.

On the third day after the battle, the Regiment was ordered up to another section of the front 12 miles inland from the Adriatic, and near the town of Orsogna. They came under command of 4th Indian Division, who were planning an attack on Orsogna; the Perths, Irish and Cape Bretoners took over a brigade front, to let an Indian brigade reorganize for assault. It was a first introduction to the polyglot nature of the Eighth Army which in 1944 included British, New Zealand, Polish, Canadian and South African divisions, plus Greek and Italian units. On Jan. 21, Baker and Dog Companies took over from Gurkhas, with Punjabis as neighbours.

From Jan. 21 to March 14, the Perths endured one of the most miserable periods of their war experience. They were holding the line on a static front, in the Italian winter; two weeks in forward positions, a week in the counter-attack role, and then forward again. "Holding the line" meant occupying weapon-pits dug in the sticky clay of hillside farms. The weather was a mixture of rain, sleet and wet snow. In the day time the temperature was a few degrees above freezing and at night dropped a little below. A day's work consisted of crouching in a wet hole in the mud, keeping watch for any movement, but never making any movement that might attract enemy fire.

A divisional operations summary for the period Feb. 1-14, 1944, says: "The slit-trenches are full of water, the ground is deep in mud, and temperatures at night are below the freezing point."

In each company area the three platoons rotated duty, so that one platoon got its chance every third day, to get a couple of hundred yards back, to positions where it was not quite so necessary to be vigilant while sitting in cold mud. After a couple of weeks, companies found it necessary to organize rest areas, where men who were showing signs of strain could relax and get warm. The company rest area was usually an Italian farmhouse, the typical two-roomed stone cottage of Central Italy, half a mile or so back from the forward defended localities. Three men from each platoon, about 10 per cent of the fighting strength of a company, went back in turn for 24 hours. They could get under a roof, sleep on dry straw, get out of mud-caked uniforms and get their clothes dried, and have three hot meals.

The hardest blow that hit the Regiment during its eight weeks of misery in the Orsogna sector was dealt by a single German mortar bomb that caught Baker Company at meal-hour, Feb. 5. In an instant, the company had the heart knocked out of it, by 37 casualties.

The company kitchen was set up in a cave in the side of a ravine. The approach to the cave was by a narrow ledge, from which there was a steep 30-foot drop to the floor of the ravine. Men coming back from the forward weapon pits converged on the ledge, to queue up at the mouth of the cave. They were crowding each other when a single bomb landed on the ledge; the explosion threw most of the bodies down into the ravine. Fourteen were killed and 23 wounded; of the latter, five died of wounds.

Stanley Scislawski, whose company was in reserve positions, recalls: "We got the message that Baker Company had been hard hit by casualties, and that volunteers were wanted to carry them out. Eight men went out and when they arrived on the scene the carnage that greeted them was soul-shattering. Bodies were scattered all over the muddy floor of the wooded ravine. Many of these were almost completely dismembered. Others were twisted so that they looked unreal. Without asking questions we picked up one of the wounded and slipped and stumbled a good way through ankle-

deep mud, tangling in woody brush that pulled at our legs, and then up a fairly steep incline into an open stretch of field to the road, where lines of ambulances already waited. Caution was ignored in crossing that exposed ground, and the way it looked Jerry must have realized there were a lot of wounded men in that ravine because he never disturbed us throughout that whole heart-breaking afternoon."

The Chaplain, Capt. Smith, who worked that night to prepare the 14 dead for burial, estimated that a difference of two feet either way in the flight of the mortar bomb would have missed the group. If the bomb had been two feet shorter it would have hit the crest of the hill above the ledge; if it had been two feet longer, it would have fallen in the ravine below.

On the Perth's calendar, the winter of 1943-44 ended on March 15, when their front-line tour in the Orsogna mud came to an end, and they moved back 70 miles behind the fighting front. For three weeks they were in reserve, with the rest of the 5th Canadian Armoured Division, in a much more pleasant and agreeable part of Italy, at Casalnuovo, 20 miles west of the big Allied air base at Foggia. There were two intensive bouts of specialized training during the three-week period out of action, but there was also time for rest and recreation. The Regiment was under canvas, and all nearby towns were posted out-of-bounds, but the weather was spring-like, sports and moving pictures were organized in camp and except for training exercises, parades were few.

During the third week of March, and again during the first week of April, all the fighting units of 5th Division worked hard at improving the techniques of cooperation between infantry and tanks in the attack. Although they had been within an armoured division for four years, the Perth's had had remarkably little opportunity to train in teamwork with armoured regiments, before they went into action north of Ortona with a squadron of the Three Rivers Regiment in support. On the training areas around Casalnuovo, the Perth's and other infantry units of 5th Division rehearsed the drill for tanks helping infantry forward by dealing with enemy machine-guns, while the infantry helped the tanks forward by dealing with enemy anti-tank guns.

During the fourth week of March, the Regiment worked at river-crossing techniques, at a divisional river-crossing school at Guglionessi which was organized and directed by Lt.-Col. Rutherford. He had been called away from the Regiment March 15, to organize the school, and had been succeeded in command by Lt.-Col. Lind, who arrived March 16 to begin his third instalment of wartime service with the Perth's.

The climax of the special training in the Casalnuovo area came with Exercise Thruster, April 7-8; it required the complete battalion to move 20 miles; join up with Lord Strathcona's Horse, company with squadron and platoon with troop; carry out an intricate leap-frogging attack scheme; reorganize and move 20 miles back to billets.

The Perth's had just started on this two-day enterprise, when orders came for Lt.-Col. Lind to leave at once for the far side of Italy. Major Andrew took over command for Thruster, while Lt.-Col. Lind went to see the front-line sector near Cassino which the Perth's had been ordered to take over.

13 – CASSINO AND THE LIRI VALLEY

All through the winter of 1943-44, the Allied advance in Italy had been held up by stubborn German defence of the mountain-top monastery as Cassino. It was the key position of the whole Italian front; Cassino guarded the mouth of the Liri Valley, which was the only practicable route for an advance towards Rome.

In the mountains northeast of Cassino the Free French had pushed back the German defence line to make a salient, which outflanked the Cassino bastion to some degree. The positions the Free French had won were hard to hold, partly because the country was difficult, and partly because the Nazi high command, sensitive to the importance of the sector, had moved the 1st Parachute Division from the Ortona front to the mountains near Cassino.

Four battalions of Canadians were sent to hold the ground the Free French had won. New Zealanders were to take over the positions later on, but from April 9 to May 5 the Perths were fighting the war in rocky, craggy mountains where it was a feat even to move around. The front-line posts the Perths took over were on hills which rose steeply from valley floors about 300 feet above sea-level, to craggy tops 1,000 to 1,200 feet above sea-level. Right in front of them the German paratroopers were solidly established on 3,000-foot Monte Cifalco. The enemy's artillery observation posts could watch every daylight movement.

There were no trenches or weapon-pits, in the ordinary sense of the word. The forward positions were on solid rock, and protection was gained by building up, not by digging down. After Lt.-Col. Lind's first reconnaissance, the Perths became acquainted with the word "sangar," meaning a circle of stones built up to make a breastwork. The word is of Pushtu origin, and was taken into military vocabulary by British regiments in India; the Perths learned it from the Royal Fusiliers, who held the positions until the Perths took over.

Stanley Scislawski writes: "Inside these piles of stones men had to spend the daylight hours completely hidden, while the hot sun beat down on them. During the long hours they ate, slept, read anything they could lay their hands on, and even did their natural bodily functions inside these tiny sangars. If the urge to peek over the top became irresistible it usually brought down 88 fire on them, so after the first couple of days there was no more curiosity. Daily barrages stonked the sangars on Dog Company's hill, but very few men were hit. When night fell, men crawled out of their sangars like slugs."

Walter Macnee, then a corporal in Abel Company, wrote a letter home on April 24, 1944, while his company was getting its turn in reserve, about a mile back from the forward hilltops. "We've moved 'back part way from the front and are what you would call in reserve. Actually (and this is not heroism) I would much prefer the front as back here you must contend with artillery, and all you can do about that is swear. To add to the dangers of this so-called 'rest' position we've been billeted on a cliff. About every 10 feet there is a ledge about five feet wide. We've pitched our pup tents on these ledges. It's all right, except that every time I descend to the kitchen or come up again I feel as though I am getting the bends. The change of altitude and pressure being too much for me, I suppose."

The Cassino front is memorable to the Perths as the place where daily supplies of rations and ammunition depended on the mules getting through. No movement of any kind was possible by daylight in the forward areas. As soon as it was dark, each evening, jeep-trains started forward from Acquafondata, each jeep pulling six or seven trailers. The route of the jeep trains was along the Inferno Track, a route that had been cut out of the rocky hillsides by the manual labour of the Free French, to get supplies forward. The jeep trains reached their limit at a sugar-factory building in the

village of San Elia Fiumerapido. There, under the supervision of Major C. B. Arrel, Capt. F. S. Walker or RQMS C. T. Carter, the supplies for forward companies were reloaded on pack mules, which went up through the darkness on mountain tracks to the rifle companies.

The Inferno Track had been built because all the existing roads in the area were under enemy observation. The Germans knew where it was, though, and every morning and every evening the sugar-factory area was stonked.

On the night of April 21-22, an exchange of areas was made between the Perths and the Irish. Darkness hid the changeover from sight, but did not hide it from the enemy's ears. His listening posts must have picked up some hint of unusual activity, because at 2245 hours, after the first of the Irish had started moving in and the first of the Perths had started moving out, German artillery opened up. On a narrow hillside track, Irish in single file were moving in one direction and Perths in single file in the other. There was little chance to dodge the shrapnel in the dark. After the burst of shelling, 16 casualties were counted. Five Perths and one of the Irish were killed; seven Perths and three Irish wounded.

The four weeks in the Cassino positions were a taxing time for the Regiment. Men in the forward companies lived under extreme tension through every minute of daylight, and patrolled at night in the valleys to maintain contact between their hilltops. The Regiment marched in from Acquafondata early in April with a strength of 846 all ranks; it marched out the night of May 4-5 with a strength of 801. The attrition of the holding job in a "quiet" sector cost the Regiment 45 casualties.

If it had been permitted to treat cases of battle exhaustion as such, the casualty list would have been longer. The reinforcement pinch was beginning to be felt, however. Orders were that no battle-exhaustion cases should be sent to the rear of battalion aid posts because trained reinforcements were not available. As a result, the Perths' medical section, set up near the sugar factory where jeep-trains met mule-trains, looked after men who should have been in hospital miles behind.

On the last day in the Cassino area, the Regiment was host to the advance party of one of its affiliated units. As the Perths moved out, their battalion area was taken over by the Witwatersrand Rifles of the 12th South African Motor Brigade.

The month in the sangars had been an interlude. As soon as they were in their reserve area in the Volturno Valley, 30 miles behind the fighting front, the Perths were back in the main stream of events for which they had been getting ready with special tank co-operation and river-crossing training just before the move to Cassino.

Within a few days the grand design began to unfold for the great Allied campaign of the summer of 1944. In a planned series of blows, the Fifth Army and the Eighth Army, under General Sir Harold Alexander, ended the winter stalemate. A month of violent fighting broke first through the Gustav Line, then through the Hitler Line, and sent the German forces reeling back 200 miles, before the front was again stabilized.

General Alexander's grand design called for British and Indian infantry, supported by Canadian tanks, to break through the prepared defences of the Gustav Line, at the mouth of the Liri Valley. At the same time Poles would be attacking through the mountains on the right; Free French through the mountains 'on the left.

Once the Gustav Line was breached, 1st Canadian Infantry Division and 78th British Infantry Division were to attack up the valley, and assault the Hitler Line.

As soon as the Hitler Line was breached, the 5th Canadian Armoured Division was to be

unleashed, to go through the breach, and get the war moving.

For the first time the Regiment was to tackle the job for which it had prepared and trained. As one of the infantry battalions of 5th Division, the Perths were to have a chance to fight a war of movement. In the event, they achieved a brilliant success.

On the day the Perths went back to their reserve area, May 5, General Alexander issued his operation order for the great battle. The Perths had their part to play in the scheme of deception which hid from the enemy the strength of the forces massed on the Liri Valley front. Tents and vehicles were camouflaged, unit signs were hidden, security discipline was strict; 5th Division was hiding until its cue came.

On May 11, the day the Indians and British launched the first stage, Brig. T. E. D'O. Snow, commanding 11th Brigade, visited the Perths and spoke about the shape of events then beginning to unfold. On May 12 Lt.-Col. Rutherford spoke to all ranks on battalion parade, explaining the role for which the Perths were being held. The Perths' intelligence section mapped the day-to-day progress of the battle which was going on 30 miles to the north, to keep all ranks informed.

A change of command came while they waited. Lt.-Col. Rutherford returned to the Perths May 5, after being away on special duty for seven weeks. He left again May 17 to become a senior instructor for the staff course at Royal Military College in Canada. Lt.-Col. Lind, who had been acting in command, assumed command May 18.

The Perths' turn to move came May 20. They were soon in the area which had been taken from the enemy in the nine days preceding. Stanley Scislowski recalls: "The debris on the road thickened, until the men had to take to the verges to by-pass the obstacles. An anti-tank gun that had been manned by a stubborn crew lay askew in the road, with its dead crew scattered around it."

The Perths marched, halted and dug in; marched, halted and dug in. On the night of May 24, they marched through the hours of darkness, and at daybreak were in an area from which enemy stragglers had not yet been cleared. As a prelude to breakfast, each company detailed a fighting patrol to clear Germans from its company area.

Later in the morning, orders arrived for the Perths to force a crossing of the Melfa River, a mile and a half ahead. In the afternoon the rifle companies moved forward, and at 1800 hours the forward companies made good the river crossing, against machine-gun and mortar fire, with only three casualties. For the next five days, the Perth Regiment was part of the spearhead of the Eighth Army.

May 26 was a hot, dusty day. Moving in cooperation with a squadron of tanks of the New Brunswick Hussars, the Perth rifle companies fanned out in arrowhead formation, and fought forward across five miles of scrubby countryside from the Melfa to the Liri River. Enemy shelling was heavy; machine-gun nests and anti-tank guns were dealt with as the Perths and Hussars encountered them. The day's casualties were 10 killed, 30 wounded.

On May 27 the Perths moved early in the morning to attack the town of Ceprano, on the far bank of the Liri. As they neared the river, they came under heavy shellfire. Of the assault boats they were carrying, only one was not damaged.

The Regiment met its problem with speed and dash. Baker Company found a place, downstream from Ceprano, where the river-bank was masked from enemy view. Using the one small boat, all of Baker crossed in repeated trips, and all of Dog Company followed. The two companies at once launched the assault on the town. The other two rifle companies followed and Charlie Company went on to drive German rearguards off high ground two miles beyond Ceprano. In a day of dashing action, casualties were four killed, 27 wounded.



The following day the Regiment enlarged its grip on the west bank of the Liri. On May 29, troop-lifting trucks came forward and lifted the Perths five miles north toward the hilltop town of Pofi, which they captured in a quick evening attack. The only opposition was from snipers and a few self-propelled guns. The same night the Perths marched again, and at daybreak were poised for an attack on the town of Arnara, two miles beyond Pofi. This time there was no opposition. The last Germans

were leaving one side of Arnara, as the Perths entered the other.

At Arnara the Regiment was at the high-water mark of its second fighting campaign. It was a contrast in every way with the first campaign. In its two-month introduction to war, at the eastern end of the Italian front, the Perths had started with the hard knock of Jan. 17, and continued with the grinding discomfort of the winter warfare around Orsogna.

In the three-month campaign at the western end of the front, the Perths began with the special problems of the mountain warfare near Cassino, and finished with a flourish as they drove the enemy successively out of Ceprano, Pofi and Arnara, all within four days. In the closing days of May, 1944, the Perths had their chance, at last, to use their years of special training for the infantry role in a hard-hitting armoured formation. The skill and spirit with which the Regiment seized its opportunities, in the Liri Valley battles, were recognized by the award of the Distinguished Service Order to the commanding officer, Lt.-Col. Lind. When the award was announced, Lt.-Col. Lind told the Perths, on a battalion parade July 29, that the decoration was really for the Regiment as a whole, because of the distinguished achievement of the battalion in the breakout from the Hitler Line.

In common with the rest of the Canadian forces in Italy, the Perths had no part in the final capture of Rome, which came June 4. It was a disappointment to miss being a part of the triumphant entry to the Eternal City, but geography dictated the withdrawal of some of the Allied divisions which were converging on Rome. The front was narrowing as it moved, and the road system did not provide elbow-room for American, French, Canadian, Polish, New Zealand, Indian and South African divisions all to keep moving abreast.

At the beginning of June the serious fighting for Rome was done, and the Canadian Corps was withdrawn into army reserve. While other formations pursued the retreating Germans to the northwest, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, 5th Canadian Armoured Division and Canadian Corps units and headquarters moved southeast. In the valley of the Volturno River, 100 miles southeast of Rome, Canadian soldiers numbering about 60,000 spent nearly two months recouping from the effects of battle, and carrying out training to improve the short-comings revealed by the tests of battle. The Perths' location in the Volturno Valley was near Caiazzo, only 25 miles north of Naples, where they had first set foot in Italy.

The Perths were ready for the period of relative relaxation. For more than six months there had been no let-up in tension; when not engaged in all-out battle, as on the Riccio and the Melfa, nor under the strain of front-line defence, as at Orsogna and Cassino, they had been filling the intervals

with the hard training programs of Altamura and Casalnuovo.

The Regiment arrived back in the Caiazzo area on June 14, and stayed there until Aug. 1. No time was lost in organizing leaves to the Canadian Army rest camps at Bari and Salerno. The first group of Perths to be allotted seven-day leaves at Salerno left on June 15, and the first group for the Bari camp began their seven days on June 16. Routine was altered, in deference to the heat of the Italian summer. Reveille was at 0430 hours, and training hours were from 0600 to 1130. Five officers and 96 men from the reinforcement depot were taken on strength temporarily, to live and train with the Regiment, and get acquainted with the team on which they might later have to fill the gaps. Sports meets were organized, and movies were shown almost nightly in the Perths' area. The commanding officer, the chaplain and company commanders all took early opportunity to go and visit wounded Perths who were in the Canadian Army hospitals at Caserta and Avellino.

The regimental chaplain, Hon. Capt. D. Crawford Smith, took the move back out of the battle zone as his opportunity to do extra work.

Ever since the Black Day of the Perths, in the Riccio Valley north of Ortona, Capt. Smith had kept in mind his duty to provide decent and Christian burial for those men of his Regiment who were killed in action. As soon as it was known that the Perths would be in reserve for some weeks, he got permission to go back across the full width of Italy to the area where the Perths had made their first contact with the enemy, five months before. His story is best told in his own words, set down soon after the event.

"I got permission from the C.O. to go back and recce the area of our first action, as the Germans had withdrawn when the pressure was put upon Rome, and we wanted to have some idea who had been killed, and who, perhaps, had been taken prisoner, as P.O.W. lists were very slow in coming through. We got back to the area and bivouacked near the house that had been used as an O.P. on Jan. 17, and I scouted over the area on the forward slope. I found one of our chaps who had not been buried, but there were no more on that slope, although there was evidence that there were some on the reverse slope of the Jerry position. There was, however, evidence that the area was very heavily mined, at least along the river bank and periodically, while we were there, blasts were heard around the area as the Italians, who were returning to their homes, and messing around the land, lost contact with this earth."

Capt. Smith drove the 150 miles back across Italy to the camp at Caiazzo, and reported his findings. Volunteers were sought for a burial party, and on June 19 Capt. Smith went back to the scene of the January fighting, this time as one of a party led by Major C. B. Arrell, and including Lieut. L. F. Jones and 14 men, most of them from the pioneer section. The chaplain went on to say:

"We set out again to the area to go over it more carefully. We made our headquarters in the O.P. and began to comb the area carefully, following the routes that the companies, particularly C and A, had followed in the attack. As we moved up in the C Company area we found a large number were still there and had been unburied by the Germans, among them Lieut. Rochon, but there was no sign at all of Major MacDougall. We decided to form a cemetery on a level piece of land near the crossroads which was to have been the objective that day, and there we buried them as we found them. A few could not be identified, as there was no trace of their dog tags, but a description of these was made, in the hope that later they might be identified. We moved over and went through the area in which A Company had attacked, and found a number of their men. In all, I think 19 were buried those days, in that cemetery. We found the grave of one who had been buried by the Germans in the village. An unfortunate accident brought to a close the search, when C.C. Sim, of Georgeville, P.Q., stepped on an S-mine and was killed, and another soldier had his leg broken. We buried Sim with the others, and evacuated the casualty to a British Field Ambulance in Ortona, and

after marking the graves with crosses, started back. It was rather a rough do."

On the last day of the Perths' stay in the Volturno Valley, the Canadians in Italy were inspected by His Majesty King George VI, who had travelled to Italy incognito, as "General Collingwood." It was not feasible to assemble in one place all of the Canadian force then in the area. Instead, the parade was formed of six selected units, The Irish Regiment of Canada, The Westminster Regiment, Lord Strathcona's Horse, The Royal 22eme Regiment, the 8th Field Regiment, and the 2nd Medium Regiment.

The parade sergeant-major was RSM. George F. Curtis of The Perth Regiment. Perths who were allotted space as spectators for the royal inspection were Lieut.-Col. J. S. H. Lind, Major F. S. Walker, Capt. W. J. Ridge, Lieut. G. A. Gallagher, Lieut. R. E. Crouch, Lieut. H. C. Pattison, and 29 other ranks.

A second infantry brigade for the 5th Armoured Division was formed while the Division was in the Volturno rest area in July, 1944. It is convenient to refer to the new brigade at this point in the narrative of the Perths, although the effect on The Perth Regiment did not become apparent until later.

One of the lessons learned from the fighting done by 5th Armoured Division in the first half of 1944, was that it was underpowered in infantry for the conditions of the Italian theatre of war. This had been foreseen, it should be noted, both by General Sir Harold Alexander, supreme commander in Italy, and by General Sir Bernard Montgomery, commander of the Eighth Army. Both had put themselves on record, even before the Perths and the rest of 5th Canadian Armoured Division first arrived in Italy, as saying that another Canadian infantry division would be much preferable to a Canadian armoured division.

During the pause which came between the Liri Valley battles in late May, and the Gothic Line battles which began in August, an extra infantry brigade was scraped together, to share with the 11th Brigade the load of foot soldier fighting. The new brigade was formed by taking away the motor battalion, the Westminsters, from the 5th Armoured Brigade; converting the 1st Division's reconnaissance unit, the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, to infantry; building another battalion of infantry on a core consisting of the officers and men of two light anti-aircraft batteries, the 89th and 109th. The last-named of these three was designated, for the eight-month lifetime of the brigade, as the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish.

When the 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade was formed, July 12, 1944, Brig. D. C. Spry was moved from 2nd Brigade in 1st Division, to command. A month later he was promoted major-general and went to France to command 3rd Canadian Division; Lt.-Col. Lind of the Perths was promoted brigadier, and appointed to command 12th Brigade.

As well as losing its CO, the Regiment temporarily lost a future CO; Capt. J. S. Whyte was promoted major, Aug. 15, 1944, and transferred away from the Regiment to the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish. He was to return to the Perths in North-west Europe, when 12th Brigade was dissolved; still later he was to be the first post war commanding officer.

Major W. W. Reid of the Irish Regiment of Canada was promoted Lieut. Colonel, and assumed command of The Perth Regiment, Aug. 14. He was to lead the Regiment for only 18 days, before being wounded in action, but the 18 included some of the briskest days in the Regiment's fighting career.

14 – THE GOTHIC LINE

In the last days of July in their rear area in the Volturno Valley, the Perths could smell something big in the near future. They knew that the war had moved far to the north; during June and July the Germans had gone back more than 200 miles, and re-established themselves in the prepared defences of the Gothic Line. One of the questions in the minds of the German high command in Italy, as we know now from documents captured at the end of the war was, "Where are the Canadians?" The Germans were as eager to know where the main blow would be struck against the Gothic Line, as the Allied command was to conceal its intention. From experience, the German command had learned to respect the Canadians as shock troops.

The Perths had their part in a deception scheme on the grand scale, to mislead the Germans. In the last days of July, the maroon divisional patches, "Canada" flashes, cap badges and all other insignia were removed from uniforms. Unit signs were painted out on vehicles. On Aug. 1 the Regiment started to move north, as one of the road convoys which were to move the entire Canadian Corps up to the Gothic Line. Special security orders for the move were strict. All towns along the route were out of bounds. Talking to civilians anywhere along the way was forbidden. It was stressed, Stanley Scislowski recalls, that chocolate-bar wrappers, empty cigarette packages and cigarette butts must not be tossed from trucks, or otherwise discarded along the route. To the limit of what could be achieved in secrecy, the Perths were part of an anonymous, unidentifiable force rolling northward toward the battle zone.

On the first day of travel, the Perths travelled back up the Liri Valley, where they had fought two months before, and saw the grass growing up around rusting and twisted tanks. The first night was spent at a staging camp south of Rome; here an age-old threat to military security presented itself. Several of the local prostitutes appeared in a field outside the bivouac area, ready to do business in the long grass. Military police shooed them away.

On Aug. 3 the convoy rolled on north, and then turned eastward. The Regiment bivouacked for two days, and then continued farther east, to bivouac again near Perugia, where the Canadian Corps was concentrating. The pause here was for nearly two weeks; strict security was continued, and the camp was camouflaged. The Perths moved forward again, in troop-lifting lorries, on Aug. 21, and bivouacked near Jesi.

At this point in the long trek, the Regiment had come 300 miles from its Caiazzo camp, and was within 15 miles of the outposts of the Gothic Line. The enemy, as we know now from captured records of the German Tenth Army, was still ignorant of the Canadian build-up which was taking place on the east end of the front. The masterly security plan had worked. During August the Perths and another 15 battalions of Canadian infantry, plus four Canadian tank regiments, plus 12 regiments of Canadian artillery had been secretly slipped across Italy, and poised ready to hit.

The main defences of the Gothic Line, in the sector where the Perths were to deal their share of the blow, ran along the north bank of the Foglia. In front of their Foglia positions the Germans had fortified posts on the hilltops along the ridge between the Foglia and the Metauro River, 10 miles south of the Foglia.

The Foglia flowed in a flat valley two miles wide. The valley had been cleared by the Germans, using conscripted Italian labour, of every obstacle to a clear field of fire. Every tree had been cut down, and every building razed. There were minefields in the river flats, and an anti-tank ditch had been dug 14 feet wide. On the north bank of the river were concrete pill-boxes, surrounded by the thorniest barbed wire the Canadians had yet seen in Italy. On the high ground overlooking the river, there was a second line of concrete pill-boxes. Behind that line, the Germans had anti-tank guns and

flame-throwers, dug in.

The Canadian Corps plan called for 1st Division to get bridgeheads across the Metauro, and drive the enemy from the belt of territory between the Metauro and the Foglia, along a front of four miles. Then the 5th Division was to be unleashed, to deliver the big punch across the Foglia against the main positions of the Gothic Line.

The plan began to unfold at midnight on Aug. 25, when infantry of 1st Division silently waded the Metauro, surprised German outposts, and moved on. At daylight on Aug. 26, British tanks crossed to support them.

The Perths, 15 miles behind, got their orders on the 25th, and on the morning of the 26th moved forward into the valley of the Metauro. There they sat through two long, hot days. The 27th was a Sunday; Capt. Smith held a voluntary service of Holy Communion, which, the war diary notes, was "well attended." On Monday and Monday night the Regiment broke camp and marched three times. The third move forward brought them to Ginestreto, where they took over from the Seaforths of 1st Division, at midday on Tuesday the 29th.

The tension had been quietly growing, but the Regiment was fit and ready.

At Ginestreto the Perths stood on the edge of the valley of the Foglia. They knew their tasks, and began to probe, while waiting for the final order to go. At last light on the 29th, a three-man patrol slipped forward two miles, down to the river, where Lieut. D. L. Thompson and two men of the scout platoon did a reconnaissance of the anti-tank ditch, and the river crossings. On the morning of Aug. 30, Lieut.-Col. Reid himself went forward, accompanied by Lieut. J. R. Henderson and Lieut. Thompson. The three officers succeeded in crossing the river to check the intended route for the assault.

On this same morning the German command, finally realizing that the Canadians were present in force, were hurrying units of the 76th Panzer Corps into the main defensive line along the north side of the Foglia.

The assault by 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade was launched in late afternoon, with two battalions forward, Cape Breton Highlanders left, and The Perth Regiment right. Assaulting on the Perths' right were Princess Pats of 1st Division. The Cape Bretoners were directed at Montecchio, a small town in the bottom of the valley; the first objective for the Perths was Point 111, a height half a mile beyond Montecchio.

The Cape Bretoners, in their frontal assault on the town, were stopped. The minefields on the floor of the valley took their toll, and machine-guns swept the open area between the river and the town. The Highlanders got almost to their objective, but with 65 casualties, had to fall back.

Baker Company of the Perths started moving down the slope toward the river at 1730 hours, with Major H. A. Snelgrove leading, and Lieut. Thompson as guide. The leading platoon, commanded by Lieut. A. W. D. Robertson, crossed the stream and moved briskly across a 1,200 yard belt of marshy flatlands, to the beginning of the rise in ground on the north side. It was not until they started to climb that they came under fire. Heavy mortar and machine-gun fire then came down on the river crossing point; the defenders began to sweep the valley floor with fire, and Major Snelgrove could not deploy the rest of his company forward to support the leading platoon. Lieut. Robertson's platoon, thinned by casualties, had to fall back.

In the early evening, Dog Company, under Capt. W. J. Ridge, renewed the attack, with a squadron of New Brunswick Hussar tanks giving overhead fire to help them forward. Capt. Ridge's company went steadily forward, across the valley, and up the slope. One Hussar tank got forward, to give covering fire. The Perths continued warily, then went the last 100 yards to the crest in a



screaming bayonet charge, took 30 prisoners and dug in. At this point they had outflanked the village of Montecchio, and overlooked it from higher ground at 1,000 yards range. They had broken the crust of the main defence line, and their presence on the knoll helped lever the whole brigade forward.

A second and higher knoll stood half a mile beyond the vantage point gained by Dog Company. The Perths exploited swiftly. Less than an hour and a half after Capt. Ridge's men began their advance, Abel Company, commanded by Major J. E. Tipler, moved on through, used the cover of darkness to outflank the next knoll, Point 147, then assaulted from the rear of the German position and took it. The whole operation moved with such speed and dash that the two forward companies were firm on their newly-won positions before midnight, and the other two companies were across the river and on high ground to round out a battalion perimeter defence against counter-attack.

Nothing better illustrates the degree to which the Perths astonished the German defenders, than the fate of a German ammunition party which walked up into No. 18 Platoon's position, soon after dark, and discovered too late that they were bringing ammunition to Canadians. Cpl. J. Eves called to them to surrender. All but one promptly put up their hands. The last German in line fired one shot at Cpl. Eves and missed; before he could fire a second, Pte. Walter Thomas had emptied a sub-machine gun magazine into the German.



The Canadian War Cemetery at Montecchio stands on a rising ground to the east of the village, overlooking the valley of the Foglia River. It is part of the area which was the first objective of The Perth Regiment on the afternoon of Aug. 30, in the opening stages of the successful Canadian assault on the Gothic Line defences. Members of the Regiment who fell at Montecchio and in the battle of Point 204 are buried here. The cemetery is maintained by the Imperial War Graves Commission, which employs a full time gardener.

With the Perths across the valley, units on the flanks were able to improve the situation. During the night, the Princess Pats, downstream to the right, crossed the valley floor in single file, losing men to mines, but accepting the casualties. Before first light they were dug in on the Perths' right. On the second day of the battle, the Irish crossed where the Cape Bretoners had been stopped, and with the help of fire from the Perths, drove the enemy out of Montecchio, and off the next knoll upstream. During the morning the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, fighting as infantry and temporarily added to the 11th Brigade, crossed to take over the Perths' positions. On the afternoon of Aug. 31, the Perths attacked again, this time with tanks leading them. The objective was Point 204, on higher ground a mile and a half farther on.

Shelling and mortaring were heavy all day, and casualties mounted, both while the Perths held their first gains, and while they pressed on, behind tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse, up the long, open slope that rose toward Point 204. During the morning the Regiment lost its intelligence officer, Lieut. Henderson, killed, and its signals officer, Lieut. J. Morgan, wounded. In the afternoon advance there were three more officer casualties, Lieut. G. S. Hall, killed, and Lieuts. W. C. Hider and G. S. Till, wounded, during the advance to Point 204. Casualties during the day totalled 52.

Tanks of the British Columbia Dragoons were the first Canadian forces to get a toehold on the key height of Point 204. The quick-laid plans of the morning of Aug. 31 had called for the Perths to move with them, but under heavy shelling, tanks and infantry were separated. In the late afternoon, however, with one squadron of Strathconas in support, three companies, Dog on the right, Baker on the left and Charlie in the rear, were on the height and digging in for the inevitable counter-attack. Strathcona tanks laagered behind them for the night.

Fully aware at last of the weight of the surprise blow dealt by the Canadians, the German high command in Italy was hurrying the best troops it had to repair the breach in the Gothic Line.

The speed and surprise of their attack had saved the Regiment from a serious counter-attack on the first night. The second night was different. The battle-wise 26th Panzer Regiment, and the tough veterans of the 4th Parachute Regiment arrived on the scene Aug. 31. About an hour and a half after midnight, on Sept. 1, the paratroopers hit the Perths.

Hand-to-hand fighting soon developed, and continued until about six-o'clock in the morning. In the grim struggle in the dark, the German paratroopers repeatedly gained lodgements, and were repeatedly driven out of the Perths' perimeter. Several armoured self-propelled guns came forward boldly to support the German attacks at close range. Lieut.-Col. Reid gathered together a party of PIAT gunners from Dog and Baker companies, and led them in a tank-hunting attack on the enemy guns, scoring several hits, and driving them off. Lieut.-Col. Reid was wounded in the face, but continued in action until he was wounded a second time, and was persuaded to let himself be taken back as a casualty. Sgt. K. M. Rowe three times led bayonet charges to regain his platoon's positions, which were three times over-run by the paratroopers. Pte. R. D. Saunders, after his section commander and the section second-in-command had become casualties, took over the leadership of the section and drove back the enemy who had captured the section's trench.

The night's work on Point 204 brought the award of the Distinguished Service Order to Lieut.-Col. Reid, the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Sgt. Rowe, and the Military Medal to Pte. Saunders.

Scislowski (who was himself wounded that night), recalls one of the oddest incidents in the epic stand on Point 204. Pte. Hugh Detlor, drugged with fatigue after more than 24 hours of fighting, fell asleep in his slit-trench during a lull. The next German attack overran parts of two Perth platoon areas, and the two platoons were pulled back so that Canadian artillery could put down a stonk on the ground the Germans had just captured. As soon as the artillery fire lifted, the two platoons charged, and recaptured the ground. Detlor slept through it all. During their brief tenure, the

Germans must have assumed that he was dead.

When daylight came, the Perths held Point 204. Abel Company moved up to make the battalion complete on the feature, which served as the firm anchor for the Corps advance. On Sept. 1, the Irish, the Cape Bretoners, the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, the Edmontons and the Seaforths swept forward on a three-mile front, and took the remaining high ground on the ridge where the Perths had gained and held the vital lodgement.

Col. G. W. L. Nicholson's official history of the Canadian Army in Italy says: "The Perths did well enough to claim to be the first to break into the Line."

The early morning hours of Sept. 1 confirmed for the Perths their right to one major battle honour, "GOTHIC LINE," and two secondary battle honours, "MONTECCHIO" and "Point 204."

They also brought to the Regiment the ninth, and last, change of command in the 77 months of Second World War service.

When Lieut.-Col. Reid was wounded the second time in the night fight on Point 204, Major M. W. Andrew, second-in-command, took charge. Six days later the word came that he was confirmed as Commanding Officer, and that his promotion was back-dated to Sept. 1. The war diary entry for Sept. 7, 1944, reports the news as the Regiment viewed it when it happened. "Major M. Andrew was appointed to Acting Lt.-Col. and assumed command of the Regt., achieving the ambition of every officer who had been with the unit and had the unit's best interests at heart since before the war. Major C. B. Arrell became Acting 2 i/c, another of the old originals."

15 – CORIANO

The Canadians, when they had cracked the Gothic Line, were 400 miles of mountains along the route they had come in a year of fighting, from the day 1st Canadian Infantry Division had landed on the mainland toe of the Italian boot.

Behind the Germans, who had fought delaying actions from hilltop to hilltop for the 400 miles, were 30 miles of foothills and gullies; behind again was the great, level valley of the River Po.

Dislodged from the Gothic Line, the Germans still fought hard to stay where the rough country favoured the defence, and to prevent the Eighth Army, with its superiority in tanks, getting running room in the Po Valley.

After being driven from the ridge north of the River Foglia, the enemy turned and stood again on Coriano Ridge, 10 miles to the north. Here he occupied a dominating position, with the steep-sided valley of the Besanigo River in front of him, along the three-mile length of the ridge.

The Perths moved forward on Sept. 6 to the valley of the Besanigo, and sat for nearly a week under occasional shell-fire and mortaring. The impression soon grew that a major attack would be needed to put the enemy off the Coriano feature, and that the Perths were likely to be called on for another big show. The Regiment began active patrolling.

On Sept. 8, Lieut. F. T. Egner led a large fighting patrol on a reconnaissance of the near bank of the Besanigo, and brought back a report on possible vehicle crossing places. He reported one bridge across the Besanigo still intact, and the next night Lieut. F. J. Culliton had a standing patrol on the job through the hours of darkness to protect the bridge, which Lieut.-Col. Andrew foresaw would be important if the Perths should be ordered into an attack against the ridge. The same night Lieut. D. J. Dooley led a D Company patrol to reconnoitre the condition of another bridge which had been demolished while Lieut. H. C. Pattison took out a patrol from C Company to reconnoitre closely another stretch of the Besanigo.

There was disappointment on Sept. 10, when Lieut. G. F. Downham took a standing patrol out again to the bridge that had been discovered and found the Germans had succeeded in blowing it. The Perths continued aggressive patrolling to the Besanigo, to examine possible crossing places. On Sept. 11, Cpl. D. Low and Pte. H. Nelmes of the Regiment's scout platoon undertook a dangerous two-man patrol across the Besanigo, and right up the ridge to the edge of the town of Coriano, where they listened to German activity in the town. Their feat, and the information they brought back, earned praise from the brigade commander, Brig. Ian Johnston. That night Cpl. G. F. Cote, Pte. G. Reid and Pte. W. Thurlow crossed the Besanigo, and scouted up the ridge toward the town on the crest. They by-passed several enemy outposts, but ran into trip-wires and had to turn back before getting to the town. Their report, too, was valuable.

While the Perths had been vigorous in preparing for a possible attack on the ridge, the same careful preparation had gone forward at higher levels of command, with an eye to the wider front. The fire of 700 guns was organized for the Canadian assault on the ridge. Gurkhas of the 43rd Indian Brigade were fitted in to the plan, to attack to the left and protect the flank of the Canadian assault.

The chaplain, Capt. Smith, has his own recollection of the pause period before Coriano: "The R.A.P. moved up and took a position in a house on the ridge that overlooked the valley before Coriano, but it was not a very comfortable spot, as all the high-priced help kept trooping up and hanging out the windows looking the situation over. It was, at the same time, an observation post for the 17th Field Regiment." Lieut.-Col. Andrew issued orders to the Perth company commanders on Sept. 11. The next day was spent in final preparations.

Guides from the Regiment's Scout Platoon and Intelligence Section confidently led the rifle companies to their jumping-off areas after dark on Sept. 12.



An hour after midnight, on Sept. 13, the artillery barrage began. Canadian and British gunners, with a well-prepared plan, boxed off the flanks as well as putting a terrific concentration on the ridge along the front of the attack. Lieut. H.C. Pattison's platoon, leading Charlie Company, followed closely on the barrage, and was on the objective, to the left of the town of Coriano, at 0215 hours; all of Charlie Company was on its objective an hour and a half after the artillery opened up. On Charlie's left, Abel Company, using

two platoons forward with Lieut. T. S. Cooper and Lieut. F. Culliton leading, moved with equal dash and speed. The other two rifle companies were prompt in coming up to their reserve positions, and at first light the Regiment was firmly astride the ridge. The Cape Bretoners, meanwhile, who had attacked at the same time, had taken more casualties, but were also on the ridge, to the right of the town.

The night attack, in which every Perth objective was taken within 90 minutes of the opening artillery salvo, was a brilliant climax, not only to a week of alert and aggressive preparation, but to five years of training and battle experience.

During the last hours of darkness, with the Perths ahead on the ridge to give protection, engineers worked at the bottom of the valley with armoured bulldozers, and ramped down the steep banks to make a tank crossing. A squadron of the New Brunswick Hussars rumbled forward at 0600 hours and joined the Perths on the ridge, where Abel and Charlie companies used the tanks' help for house-clearing. There was trouble briefly while the Hussars mistakenly shot up the buildings which were being used by Major Harvey White as Charlie Company headquarters, but the presence of the tanks made the battalion position secure against counter-attack.

In the final stage of the battle, The Irish Regiment came up between the Perths and the Cape Bretoners, and fought a day-long battle to clear the enemy, house by house, out of the town.

CORIANO," a battle honour awarded to the Perths, will hold its place in the Regiment's history as a classic example of an operation painstakingly prepared, and dashinglly executed.

The tension and strain of the fortnight which encompassed the brilliant successes of Montecchio and Coriano were followed by an eight-day period in reserve. The Regiment withdrew five miles back from Coriano Ridge, to the village of San Giovanni, where 25 reinforcements arrived to fill some of the gaps. Auxiliary services were in action quickly to provide movies, a band concert, a canteen; the Canadian Army show appeared in San Giovanni to stage the revue "Kit Bags" for the Perths. The men had hot baths, got their uniforms and kits cleaned up. The sand beaches of Cattolica, in peacetime a seaside tourist resort on the Adriatic, were only five miles away, and swim parades were organized.

On Sunday, Sept. 20, Capt. Smith conducted a memorial service for those who had been lost in the Regiment's Gothic Line and Coriano actions. The 2nd Canadian Corps band came to play for

the service, which was attended by the divisional commander and brigade commander, Major-General B. M. Hoffmeister and Brigadier Ian S. Johnston.

Just as the Regiment started north again for the front, after the let-down at San Giovanni, Lieut.-Col. Andrew was summoned to hospital for a previously scheduled operation. Lieut.-Col. Reid came straight out of hospital to assume temporary command again for a 24-day period, while the new Commanding Officer spent 12 days in hospital for surgery, and then had convalescent leave. (Lieut.-Col. Reid's second brief term in command, it was to turn out, would again end with a trip to hospital. He became seriously ill, and was sent back as a suspected malaria case.)

16 – THE FIUMICINO AND THE SAVIO

The return to action led the Perths into the two-week frustration of the Fiumicino front. It was an attack which never happened, but was harder on the Regiment than if it had.

While the Perths were in reserve, the war finally moved out of the foothills, and out on the flatlands of the great North Italian plain. They returned to the war at the Fiumicino River, nine miles inland from Rimini. (The Fiumicino is one of three rivers in the Rimini area for which the claim is made that it is the Rubicon River across which Julius Caesar led his legions in the year 49 B.C. The others are the Uso and Pisciatello. Official Italian maps call the Fiumicino the Rubicone.)

As they closed up to the east bank of the river on Sept. 28, the intention was that the Perths, the Irish and the Cape Bretoners should fight their way across the river, three battalions abreast and continue the advance.

On the previous day, the autumn rains had started. On the 28th the Perths marched in heavy rain. Before the end of the day the Fiumicino, normally a small stream, rose between its dikes to become a torrent 30 feet wide. The Perths moved up to the river without a fight, but after they were in position, the enemy on the far side opened up with intense shell-fire and mortaring. There was nothing to do but dig into the sticky clay, and sit. One platoon of Abel Company sought shelter in a house which was found, too late, to have been booby-trapped. Most of the platoon became casualties. Capt. Frank B. Kennedy, commanding A Company, and Lieut. F. J. Culliton, also of A Company, were killed by shell-fire, leaving Lieut. G. A. Gallagher in command of the company. Before the end of the day, the Regiment lost a total of 30, killed or wounded. The attack across the river was postponed.

For another three days the Perths stayed in the same positions, while the higher command postponed the attempt to cross the Fiumicino, hoping for a change in the weather. The rain stopped Oct. 1. By that date the Regiment had a total of 67 casualties from the incessant enemy shelling. The river continued high and swift, and officers and men, after four days in the mud, were showing the strain. On the evening of Oct. 2, New Zealanders relieved the Perths, who marched back eight miles to the village of San Giustina, for rest and clean-up. It rained again that day, and the roads were starting to go to pieces. Two officers, completely exhausted, were sent back as casualties.

After a 48-hour rest, during which they had a welcome visit from a mobile army bath unit, the Perths were on one-hour notice to move forward again, to attempt the river crossing. The weather continued foul, and the move was postponed from hour to hour, and from day to day, until the afternoon of Oct. 8, when the Regiment moved forward, in the rain, to its jump-off positions at the Fiumicino. The rifle companies were in position, and ready for the attempt, at 1600 hours. At 1630 hours the order came down from brigade that the operation was definitely cancelled. The weather had won.

The frustrated Fiumicino operation cost the Regiment approximately 100 casualties, which it could then ill afford. Since late in August, it had been getting the evidence that the reinforcement stream was thinning out. Just before the Gothic Line action, the Perths received a reinforcement draft including some men who had had two weeks training in Canada, before being hurried across the Atlantic, through the depots in England, and on to Italy. In October, after the fiasco at the Fiumicino, some reinforcement men arrived who had been wounded in action in France, certainly not sooner than June 6, and had been sent to Italy from hospitals in England.

Back in Canada, at the same time, the political crisis of the conscription issue was boiling. Trained men who did not choose to volunteer were staying in Canada; volunteers were being rushed to the fighting fronts, trained or not.

For ten October days the Regiment was in billets at Miramare, a seacoast resort south of Rimini. Just at the end of October they moved up to the River Savio for a brief spurt of action. The Regiment's orders were to hold on the near bank of the Savio; on the morning of Oct. 24, Perth patrols found evidence that the enemy was withdrawing from the far bank. That evening Baker Company, led by Major Snelgrove, crossed the river without a shot being fired, and before midnight the battalion was across. It was a good fresh start for Lieut.-Col. Andrew, who had returned from convalescent leave that day, and taken over from Major C. B. Arrell, temporarily in command from the time Lieut.-Col. Reid was felled by malaria.

The main share of the action at the Savio line fell to the lot of A Company, under Capt. Robert Cole, which was detached from the Regiment for a week to go under command of the Governor-General's Horse Guards, a tank regiment. The tanks and the Perth infantrymen worked as a team to fight their way across the Savio, several miles downstream from the Perths' sector; after the team had won a bridgehead, Major Cole's company fought a sharp and successful action to hold it against a German counter-attack.

From the area of the Fiumicino and the Savio, west of Rimini, the Regiment went back 35 miles, past the scenes of its September triumphs, to Urbino, for a month out of the war. The Canadian Corps was in reserve, pending decisions by the Allied command on when the offensive in Italy could be renewed. The lack of reinforcements was a worry throughout the Eighth Army; also, so many divisions had been withdrawn for France and the Low Countries that the two Allied armies in Italy, Eighth and Fifth, were reduced to 23 divisions against a German Army Group of 28 divisions.

Urbino was a town that the war had missed. It was undamaged, and billets were found in private homes, in schools and in the university. In the judgment of the Chaplain, "It was not too bad a go." Stanley Scislowski remembers Urbino as a place where the adult Italians, unlike those in most Italian towns the Regiment had seen, were too proud to ask for charity. During the period the Regiment was there, Nov. 4 to Dec. 1, parades were kept to a minimum, movies and concerts were available, there was a good deal of fraternizing with the Italian residents, and the Medical Officer, Capt. Page Statten, seized the opportunity to catch everyone for shots in the arm.

17 – ACROSS THE LAMONE RIVER

The return to action brought the Perths to an Italian countryside strangely similar to the Dutch landscapes across which they were to be fighting three months later. West and north of Ravenna, the land is low-lying and flat. The rivers flood in rainy seasons, and are contained by high earthen dikes. The flat farmlands are laced with drainage ditches, including deep ditches along the narrow roads. In wet weather the land is waterlogged, and any movement off the road becomes difficult.

high flood-dikes along the main rivers gave the Germans excellent observation of the flats, and sites for burrowed-out shelters and machine-gun positions.

The first such river obstacle the Canadian Corps tackled, when the offensive was resumed in December, was the Lamone. Its dikes are grassed earth banks, 25 feet high on the land side, 40 feet high on the river side. In summertime its water is a lazy trickle, but when the Perths came to it, it was 35 feet wide, running fast and icy cold.

Lamone River is a black name in the annals of the Royal Canadian Regiment and of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.

On Dec. 4 and 5, these two battalions of 1st Brigade, 1st Division, made assault crossings of the Lamone, and then were hit by strong German counter-attacks, and had their bridgeheads wiped out, with heavy casualties. The R.C.R. got 205 all ranks across the Lamone; only 99 came back.

While the 1st Brigade was having its bloody day at the Lamone, 11th Brigade of 5th Division, the Perths included, was closing up to the Lamone five miles downstream, encountering some German patrols on the near side of the river. In a 24-hour period, Dec. 5, the Perths took 45 prisoners, killed at least two Germans, and inflicted other casualties at a cost to the Regiment of one killed and five wounded. On Dec. 6 the Perths were given the job of forcing a crossing of the Lamone at the village of Borgo di Villanova, about four miles north, and downstream, from the site of the ill-fated 1st Brigade effort.

Brig. Johnston, when he issued his order for the Lamone crossing, added the assurance that the Perths would not be asked, "to fight both weather and enemy."

Major Robert Cole and Major W. J. Ridge, who were to command the assault companies, reconnoitred approaches to the river. RSM George Curtis got the assault boats as far forward as possible, and the men of the assault companies man-handled them across sticky clay fields to the start lines for the operation. The Perths were ready to go, when orders came down to postpone the operation for 24 hours. Heavy rains were reported from the mountains to the south, and a rise in the river was expected. The men carried out in reverse the laborious task of manhandling the boats.

In the late-afternoon dusk of the short December day, the Perths lugged the boats forward again on Dec. 7, and were in position to start up the dike with them, when the operation was again postponed. Weather reports said the Lamone was in flood up in the hills.

For another three days the weather caused postponements from day to day, while the Perths held themselves in constant readiness. The scout platoon repeatedly patrolled up and over the dike, to keep check on water levels in the river, and the Perths' sniper section, as well as keeping the enemy side of the river under observation, scored seven kills in the last three days of waiting. Abel and Dog Companies launched their boats into the river at 1930 hours on Dec. 10. The crossing was made as a silent attack without artillery preparation, and complete surprise was achieved. The two assault companies cleaned out the enemy dugouts and gun pits on the reverse slope of the dike. An hour after its leading platoon started to cross the river, Dog Company was all across, had dealt with the enemy in the river-bank positions, and was starting to move on into the darkness.

Lieut.-Col. Andrew sent Baker Company across at 2030 hours, to do house-clearing in the village of Borgo di Villanova. As soon as Baker was across he launched the fourth rifle company and sent it on through Abel. Charlie went on through the darkness to the first lateral road paralleling the river, and dug in to make a firm base while Abel Company moved through and beyond, until it came under very heavy fire, and dug in about half a mile from the river.

On the morning of the 11th the Regiment's fighting companies and tactical headquarters were across the river and in firm possession of a bridgehead half a mile deep and more than half a mile wide. During the last hours of darkness, the Irish Regiment had crossed into the Perths' bridgehead, and then swung off to the left, and during the morning they advanced on the Perths' left flank. Lieut.-Col. Andrew, as soon as he had seen the position by daylight, organized artillery support for a quick attack to enlarge the bridgehead; Capt. R. S. Chamberlain led Baker Company in the attack, which soon after noon had cleared the enemy from the key crossroad on the route from the Lamone forward to the next water obstacle, the Fosso Vetro. With the crossroads secure, Lieut.-Col. Andrew sent Major Ridge's company forward to the left, and Major Cole's forward to the right, and at nightfall the Perths controlled the belt of land between the Lamone and the Vetro.

"LAMONE CROSSING" is one of the battle honours now carried on the regimental colours. The beginning of its story resembles the Fiumicino story; mud, rain, tense days of waiting under miserable conditions. The climax resembles the Coriano story; an attack delivered with speed, precision, and complete success.

Other units took the lead for the assault crossings of the Fosso Vetro, Fosso Vecchio and Canale Naviglio, each of them a diked watercourse, lying across the path of the advance.

18 – FOSSO MUNIO

On Dec. 19, the Perths were again engaged in an assault water-crossing, to get over the Fosso Munio, a main drainage ditch, with a stream 30 feet wide between five-foot dikes. Beyond it lay 600 yards of flat, treeless, muddy ground.

The Perths again used the technique of the silent night crossing, this time with only one company, Capt. Chamberlain's, in the first crossing. A lodgement was seized on the far bank, after which the other three companies in succession, crossed and fanned out in the dark. The plan required pinpoint direction-finding by company and platoon commanders, and instinctive teamwork within the platoons. The Perths could do it.

Taking frequent casualties from mortar fire, Baker Company got forward about 800 yards, before being stopped by machine-guns which the Germans were firing on fixed lines, straight down the road on which the company was trying to advance. At about 0100 hours on Dec. 20, Lieut.-Col. Andrew sent Major Cole's company, Abel, to try to sweep to the right. The company advanced about 1,000 yards, mopping up enemy posts as it went, and at about 0330 hours dug-in around an isolated stone farmhouse, the Casa della Congregazione.

Meanwhile, back at the river, trouble was developing in an effort to get tanks across to the aid of the Perths. The engineers worked under shell-fire to get a bridge across the Fosso, but in the dark the bridge was set at the wrong angle, and tanks could not use it. Every German gun within range was soon firing at the crossing place; for a time shells were coming down at the rate of 150 a minute, and further work on the bridge was impossible.

At daylight, as soon as the Germans realized the situation, counter-attacks began to come at the Perths who had dug in at the Casa della Congregazione. After beating off two attacks by the 98th Fusilier Battalion, the reconnaissance unit of the German division holding the sector, Major Cole's company had taken 20 prisoners, but was running low in ammunition. The Perths' RSM, Mr. Curtis, started out with a carrying party to try to get through to the Casa. At that moment, the Germans had it surrounded, and the RSM was taken prisoner. Later in the day he escaped, while his captors were being heavily shelled by Canadian artillery. To everyone's surprise, Mr. Curtis suddenly turned up at the Regiment's tactical headquarters. He brought information that led Brig. Johnston to reason that the enemy intended to withdraw; as a result there was a new brigade plan and a quick renewal that night of the offensive.

Perth casualties in the Fosso Munio action were 32 killed, 49 wounded.

On the day following the decisive stand made by a company of Perths at the Casa della Congregazione, the Regiment was mopping up its newly-won territory, and capturing a German company headquarters, a battery of 28-centimetre Nebelwerfers, and 18 prisoners. The day brought one other event which was a hint of things to come. Two Italian officers arrived, posted to the Perth Regiment as observers. One went to D Company and one to C; they were the fore-runners of the Cremona Battle Group, an Italian formation approximately of brigade size, which had helped expel the Germans from Corsica in 1943, and had then been retrained and given British equipment. Three weeks after the two Italian liaison officers joined the Perths at the Munio, the Gruppo Cremona was to take over a front-line sector from the Perths, and free them for the long journey to the Netherlands.

Christmas Day, 1944 came while the Regiment was still in the two-mile strip of flat land between the low dikes of the Fosso Munio and the high dikes of the River Senio, where the Germans were dug in for their next stand. Major-General Hoffmeister and Brigadier Johnston came forward to visit the Regiment on Dec. 25; after discussing the recent action with Lieut.-Col. Andrew, and

congratulating him on the achievements of his Regiment, the two senior Canadian commanders went on forward to pay visits to the rifle companies in their front-line positions.

Capt. Smith recalls that, "Major Walker, the quartermaster, did what he could to see that every man who possibly could had something in the way of a Christmas dinner. The company quartermaster-sergeants had hot dinners cooked in forward positions, and nearly every man got his share of a menu which included roast pork, potatoes, salad, mince pie, pudding and Christmas cake.

This was the Regiment's fourth overseas Christmas. In 1941, newly-arrived in England, the Perths had Christmas dinner at Hungerford, two miles from their billets at Chilton Foliat, because Chilton Foliat had no halls or meeting-places. The Perths' sergeant-cook and 20 helpers cooked a Christmas dinner in camp, and then transported it to Hungerford to be served in the Corn Exchange and Church House there; Lieut.-Col. Little and senior officers carved the turkeys.

At Christmastime, 1942, the Regiment was in billets at Hove. Through the enterprise of the Quartermaster and the courtesy of the Borough Council of Brighton, the Regiment had the use of the famous Royal Pavilion at Brighton for Christmas Day; dinner was served in the Dome Hall, which seats 3,000 for concerts, and a regimental dance was held in the Royal Pavilion Christmas night

Christmas of 1943 was at Altamura, where the traditional dinner was served by the officers to the men in two large marquees, which had been borrowed at Bari from the British Army.

Christmas under shell-fire in 1944 was to be followed by yet one more overseas Christmas, before the Regiment again saw Canada.

19 – LAST DAYS IN ITALY

After the difficult ditch-to-ditch fighting of the Lamone and Munio fronts, the Perths were to have one more chance in Italy for mobile and dashing action of the kind to which their training had been directed.

Four days in billets in the city of Ravenna gave the Perths little enough time for rest and clean-up, before they were ordered into action, with the rest of the 5th Division, to clear the Germans from the area between Ravenna and Lake Comacchio, about 12 miles to the north. The German command, evidently putting a high value on holding a line south of Lake Comacchio, had reinforced in the area with the best they had, the heavily-armed Kesselring Machine-gun Battalion.

The Perths had hard fighting for two days, Jan. 2 and 3, around the town of Conventello, before they could get the advance rolling. The decisive stroke of the battle came on Jan. 4, when two companies of the Perths, commanded by Capt. P. F. Fisher and Capt. D. A. Cook were placed under command of the British Columbia Dragoons, to try to seize a crossing over the Canale Bonifica, the only major water-obstacle the Germans had on which to base a defence of the contested ground.

The country was flat, but had its difficulties for tank attack. The fields were small, with fences at short intervals, and many of the fields were vineyards, with rows of wires and poles obscuring the view. It was a situation in which determined German infantry could get to close range for bazooka attacks on tanks.

In the two-mile dash to the Bonifica, the Perths rode on the Dragoons' Shermans, and dealt with anti-tank weapons as they came to them.

The bridge toward which the attack was directed had been blown by the Germans by the time the Perth-Dragoon team got to it. Without pausing, a squadron of the Dragoons and Charlie Company of the Perths pushed on a mile and a half to the next bridge, which they found ready for demolition. After driving off the German demolition party the Perths removed the explosives from the bridge supports, the tanks crossed, and the Perths dug in to establish a firm bridge-head on the far side of the canal.

On Jan. 6, in their final offensive action in Italy, the Perths in combination with the Dragoons swept forward five miles to the Adriatic coast at Casal Borsetti, an action which completed the rout of the Germans from the territory south of Lake Comacchio.

On the night of Jan. 12 the Perths handed over their front-line positions to the Cremona Battle Group; the change-over was done under heavy mortaring and shelling, and with language difficulties. After a slow and confused transfer of responsibilities, the Perths withdrew 50 miles south, down the coastal highway to Cattolica. They did not know it then, but they were finished with fighting in Italy.

The Regiment had five weeks in Cattolica, during which battle losses were replaced, equipment and discipline were brought back to parade-square standards, and leave parties were organized to Rome, to Florence, and to the familiar environment of Urbino, where the Perths had spent most of November, 1944.

Rumours began to circulate about an impending big move. In the third week at Cattolica the Perths' war diarist was noting: "Training was being carried out, but without enthusiasm ... The feeling that something was about to happen was in the air. The officers and men were becoming restless and it was beginning to show."

The Regiment was, in fact, getting involved in another great deception scheme, bigger even than the deception of August, 1944, in which the Canadian Corps moved from one side of Italy to the

other, baffling the German intelligence service as they did it and achieving surprise when the Canadians hit the Gothic Line.

In their billets at Cattolica, the Perths were waiting out the time during which the secret organization work was being done for the move of the complete Canadian force in Italy to North-West Europe, to rejoin the larger fraction of the Canadian Army which was in action there.

So successfully was the big deception carried out by the 1st Canadian Corps, that in mid-March of 1945, when the Corps was in Belgium, the German Army intelligence staff in Italy was issuing a situation map which showed the two Canadian divisions, 1st and 5th, in reserve near Ancona.

The cover story for the big move was that the Canadians were moving to the south of Italy for special training. Extra deception was organized by sending a small group of Canadians, with a large supply of unit and formation signs, 60 miles south to Macerata, from which centre they drove about putting up signs, and taking them down again. Canadian army signallers, sent to widely scattered points in Italy, kept the air full of dummy wireless traffic for the German intelligence service to intercept.

Canadians Corps headquarters in Italy got the order for the move Feb. 4. The Perths got the cover story on Feb. 6. The war diary for that date says: "The Colonel held an O Group at 1600 hours relating to a scheme involving a move south for special training. The plan was not convincing and there was still considerable speculation as to our ultimate fate."

On Feb. 9, obeying orders from above, the Regiment despatched a reconnaissance party under Capt. P. J. F. Baker, presumably to reconnoitre a training area somewhere in the south of Italy. On Feb. 11 a second reconnaissance party, under Major P. F. Fisher, also went off under brigade orders to an unknown destination. On Feb. 16 the Regiment moved, in wheeled convoy. The route did indeed lead south and east, in the general direction of Egypt and Australia, for about 70 miles. Then the convoy wheeled sharply west, crossed Italy with two overnight stops, and brought the Regiment to a staging camp from which the leaning tower of Pisa was visible. Here there was a pause for three days. Orders came to remove all insignia and badges from uniforms and vehicles. On Feb. 20, at a battalion parade in the camp, Lieut.-Col. Andrew told all ranks that they were on their way to join First Canadian Army in the Netherlands.

American tank landing craft, sailing in groups of six, took the Perths across the Mediterranean from Leghorn in Italy to Marseilles in France.

After being broken up in parcels for the sea voyage, the Regiment was reassembled in a staging camp 18 miles north of Marseilles, and then started off on the long truck-convoy move up through France. It was a six-day journey, with overnight stops in staging camps; the route was by way of Lyon and Dijon, skirting Paris 20 miles to the east, and then through towns well-known to Canadians in the First World War. The Perths passed through Cambrai, crossed the Belgian border near Mons, turned west through Courtrai and Ypres, and halted at Kemmel, just north of the Belgian border, March 5.

Here the history of the Regiment was repeating itself. Thirty years earlier the 18th Battalion, C.E.F., including two soldiers who were to become commanding officers of The Perth Regiment, had gone into action for the first time, at Kemmel. Arthur Garrod and S. H. McComb, who fought in the ranks at Kemmel in 1915, mobilized the Regiment in 1939 as Commanding Officer and Second-in-Command.

During a three-week stay at Kemmel, the Perths were billeted in private homes, a luxury they enjoyed after two years of bivouacs and barracks. Leaves to England were in order, and began immediately; six officers and 94 other ranks left on March 7, and other leave parties followed at intervals of a few days, until 19 officers and 392 other ranks had the opportunity to revisit the

country where the Perths had spent two wartime years, and where some had acquired wives.

In the interests of military security, the public announcement that 1st Canadian Corps had moved from Italy to the Netherlands was not made in Canada until April 23. By that time the Perths had spent three weeks at Kemmel, and nearly four weeks in action in the Netherlands.

20 – NIJMEGEN TO THE IJSELLMEER

The Regiment came back to grips with the enemy just north of Nijmegen, where other Canadians had been holding a static front through the winter of 1944-45. The Perths relieved a battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, part of 49th British Division which was then under command of First Canadian Army. For two weeks the Perths held a relatively quiet front, with one sharp burst of action on April 3, when the Regiment was given the town of Driel as an objective, as part of a general advance to the line of the Dutch Rhine. The Perths captured the town in a morning of fighting with support from tanks of the Governor-General's Horse Guards. During the afternoon the Perths beat off three German counter-attacks, and consolidated their hold on the town.

At Driel the Regiment was on the bank of the Rhine, four miles downstream from Arnhem, where British 6th Airborne Division had made its bold and ill-fated drop seven months before. The Germans were still stubbornly holding Arnhem itself; the Perths' battle of April 3 was part of the plan for the encirclement and final capture of Arnhem.

Arnhem, the vital crossing point across the Rhine on the way to the northern Netherlands was finally wrested from the enemy by British 49th Division, under command of First Canadian Army, in a three-day battle, April 12-14. The way was cleared for the Canadian advance into that part of the Netherlands which had endured the starvation winter of 1944-45 under the Nazi occupation.

As part of the design for the operations in the Arnhem area, the Perths swung from west to east of Arnhem on April 12 and 13, moving south from Driel to Osterhout, and then east and north to prepare for an operation to capture the town of Doesburg, on the River Ijssel, seven miles north-east of Arnhem.

Here the Regiment got its first direct evidence that the enemy was at last beginning to crack. Two soldiers in German uniform came out of Doesburg to the Perth's Abel Company's forward positions, and reported that their comrades in Doesburg wanted to surrender. Two men from the Perths' battalion intelligence section accompanied the two deserters back to Doesburg, and returned with 88 prisoners, who brought with them complete arms and all the equipment they could carry. Many of them were Russians, conscripted into German uniform, and eager to change sides in the war at the first opportunity to escape from their German officers.

There was no fighting for Doesburg.

On April 15 the Regiment seized its last opportunity in the Second World War for its special role as fast-moving infantry working in support of tanks.

On the wide scene of the European war, the German Army was collapsing in April, 1945. By the Russians coming from the East, and the Western Allies from the west and south, the remnants of Hitler's Wehrmacht were vastly outnumbered and vastly outgunned.

On the narrow front of the Netherlands, the balance of strength was paradoxically different. The grand strategy of the Allies was to press on into Germany, with First Canadian Army protecting the left flank of the grand advance.

Throwing the maximum strength into the main assault in Germany meant leaving the minimum strength to deal with the German forces remaining in the Netherlands. The result, during much of April, was that two Canadian divisions, with a total strength of about 35,000, were required to carry on offensive operations against enemy forces numbering about 120,000.

The bold stroke in which the Perths had a part was an operation, started by 5th Canadian Armoured Division on April 15, to punch across the 25 miles from Arnhem to the Zuider Zee, and so complete the boxing-off of the German garrisons in Western Holland.

In four days of quick-hitting action, the job was done by the Perths and their comrades-in-arms of many Italian battlefields, the Irish and the Cape Bretoners, together with the three tank regiments of 5th Canadian Armoured Brigade. The operation was launched from Arnhem, with three companies of Perths following a regiment of tanks, and Charlie Company riding on tanks as the mobile reserve. The Perths took the town of Dielen, and the Cape Bretoners took Terlet. The next day the tanks over-ran Otterloo, and the Perths moved in behind to help the Irish mop up the town. On the same day, Abel and Charlie Companies, riding on tanks, continued six miles beyond Otterloo, and in the early evening took the town of Lunteren, meeting no serious opposition, and taking a small harvest of prisoners, including three German officers. On the third day of the operation, Abel Company, riding on tanks of the British Columbia Dragoons, swept four miles forward from Lunteren, and captured Barneveld.

On the fourth day, April 18, the Regiment came under command of the Dragoons, for the final strike to the shore of the Zuider Zee. The tank-and-infantry push began in mid afternoon, and in little more than two hours advanced 10 miles. At nightfall the Perths were in possession of Harderwijk. The Dutch underground went into action as the Perths approached, and helped deal with Nazi sympathizers among the civilians, as well as with the German garrison. The Perths received a wild welcome from the Dutch people of Harderwijk. Lieut.-Col. Andrew, reconciling the exuberant hospitality of the liberated Dutch people, with the need to keep the Regiment efficient for continuing the war, issued orders late in the evening of April 18 that any Perth found drunk in Harderwijk would be court-martialled.

That day the Regiment took 118 prisoners, and had no casualties. The four-day operation earned for the Regiment the battle-honour, "IJSELMEER."

21 – VICTORY AT DELFZIJL

Hitler's empire was fast falling apart, but there remained one job for the Perths to do before the fighting ended.

The Germans in West Holland, cut off by the strike to Harderwijk, agreed to a truce April 29. Most of the Germans in North Holland were rounded up without much trouble during the third week of April. The exception was at Delfzijl, a port and wartime German naval base, in the northern tip of the Netherlands. Here a last-ditch force of do-or-die Nazis, about 4,000 in number, and including a large proportion of naval gunners, held out stubbornly. They had heavy naval guns as part of their armament, and the defensive zone, with minefields, barbed wire and gun positions, extended out to a radius of five miles in a semi-circle around Delfzijl. Here the Perths, the Irish and the Cape Bretoners, supported by tanks, were involved for the last week of April in some of their bitterest fighting of the war.

The long move from the Zuider Zee up to North Holland, 137 miles, was made on the night of April 21-22. On the night of April 23 the Perths launched a night attack, to take the outlying village of Holwierde. Abel and Baker Companies ran into heavy opposition, and were stopped in the near end of the village, where they held on for the rest of the night; their casualties in the night operation were eight killed and 23 wounded. Meanwhile the scout and tank-hunting platoons probed into the village of Krewerd, without meeting opposition, and Charlie and Dog companies both moved forward, coming under heavy shellfire. The whole battalion area was heavily shelled all day on the 25th; heavy German naval guns on the high coastal dike had perfect observation, and were firing point-blank into the positions gained by the Perths. Help was arranged from 12 Spitfire fighter-bombers. The plan was that artillery should fire smoke-shells to indicate the German gun positions to the aircraft. The Spitfire squadron arrived overhead too soon, did not wait for target identification, and their bombing was a failure.

The slow advance, with frequent casualties, went on for another three days of hard fighting, with the naval guns on the dike taking a persistent toll.

On the fifth day of the battle, Lieut.-Col. Andrew had manoeuvred the Regiment, yard by expensive yard, to a position from which he considered the big guns on the dike could be tackled. With the aid of a smoke-shell program from artillery and the battalion mortars, Dog Company made a 500-yard dash across open ground, and wiped out an enemy position which was protecting the guns; 20 prisoners were taken in the process.

Just after dark, Charlie Company went through Dog Company, while artillery and mortars again smoked the guns on the dike. Charlie's final assault took the Germans by surprise, captured the guns, and bagged 177 prisoners, more than twice the strength of the assaulting company. An examination of the position afterwards showed what a feat the assault had been. The area of the guns was heavily armed with automatic weapons, and the gun emplacements were of heavy concrete, built in to the dike.

In the small hours of April 29, the Perths kept the attack rolling, with the big guns at last silent. Abel Company moved soon after midnight, and in four hours fought half a mile toward Delfzijl, taking 70 prisoners. At first light, having run out of ammunition, Abel was counter-attacked in strength. Captured weapons and ammunition were used to beat off the enemy. Ammunition was sent forward to Dog Company, which got it on forward to Abel. In the afternoon Abel pushed on again, and after a brisk fight, captured the village of Nansum.

The Perths' prisoner count for the day was 295.

Having cleared the outworks from an area of more than 10 square miles, on the approaches

from the north to the town and port of Delfzijl, the Perths were relieved by the Cape Bretoners, who carried out the attack on the port itself. The Perths meanwhile, circled around from north to south, and took over the area of the southern approaches from The Irish Regiment.

On April 30, the day Hitler put a pistol in his mouth and blew his own brains out, the Perths were pulling back from the north edge of Delfzijl, except for Baker Company, which remained forward to help the Cape Bretoners clear the suburb of Biesum, taking 30 prisoners while doing so.

On May 1 the Perths made the side swing, going 15 miles west to Groningen to get to a bridge across the Eems Canal, and then 15 miles east again to relieve the Irish at the south edge of Delfzijl. The next two days were quiet but not idle. As part of the outlying defence of the port, the countryside had been studded with minefields and the Perths' pioneer platoon, under Lieut. G. G. Getty, was busy sweeping roads and verges to make the battalion area safe for movement.

On May 2 Lieut. Getty had an even more dangerous task. He found the main canal gates on the Eems Canal had been left mined for demolition. The main charges he could not handle; they were 45-gallon steel drums packed with explosive. He did successfully remove the igniters and prevent the flooding of a large area.

On the evening of May 4 a message came to the Perths' battalion headquarters at Wagenborgen, five miles south of Delfzijl that hostilities would cease the following morning. So far as the enemy in front of the Perths was concerned, hostilities had ceased two days before. The word that the war was officially in its last hours had the result, in the words of the war diary, that, "A rum issue was authorized for the battalion, and a minor celebration took place." The Regiment sat for four weeks in the positions it occupied at war's end. On May 7, Dog Company took one prisoner, who had been in hiding for a week. He proved to be a useful catch. He knew the layout of the minefields that had been sown in the area, and was put to work as a guide to the pioneer platoon, which was still busy searching, defusing and lifting.

On May 8 the Regiment's signallers rigged up a public-address system to serve the whole battalion, so that all could hear Winston Churchill broadcast the word of the complete and unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany on all fronts.

22 – OVERSEAS INTERLUDE

The fighting was ended, but more than eight months were to pass before the Regiment returned home. The Perths remained, with increasing impatience, until May 30 in the flat dike lands south of Delfzijl, before they were able to move to more comfortable billets in the city of Groningen. One duty which broke the monotony a little, during May, was the shepherding of German prisoners on their way from the Western Netherlands back to Germany. In a seemingly endless column, more than 100,000 prisoners were marched along the top of the great dike across the mouth of the Zuider Zee, and then across the width of the northern Netherlands to the German border. The Perths did their share of guarding the overnight staging camps, and escorting the daily march.

Also while still at Wagenborgen, the Regiment listed and attested those Perths who volunteered for service in the Pacific theatre of war, against the Japanese. The majority were ready to call it a war, and go home, but 73, all ranks, opted for joining the Canadian division which was being organized for service against Japan. In the event, of course, Japan surrendered before the Canadians could get to the Pacific. The volunteers included three officers, Capt. A. W. B. Robertson, Capt. C. E. Stewart, and Lieut. J. Haldane, CSM J. R. Spencer, and six sergeants, W. R. Allen, W. D. Baird, A. Gibson, W. J. Plume, G. E. Stringer and V. R. Davis.

After a fortnight in four requisitioned school buildings in Groningen, the Regiment moved to Sneek, in the north western province of Friesland, where the tedium of waiting to get back to Canada was balanced by an unusually happy association between the Regiment and townspeople. The Regiment was stationed at Sneek, during the slow process of getting the Canadian Army back to Canada, for 23 weeks. A friendship developed between the Regiment and the Town which is still kept alive by a two-way correspondence and visiting, 19 years after.

Good relations between restless soldiers in a strange country, and local townspeople on whom the soldiers are billeted, are not normal. The unusual success of the Regiment's relationship with Sneek can be credited to the foresight of the Commanding Officer and senior officers of the Regiment, on one side, and the town authorities, on the other, in arranging at the beginning for mutual cooperation.

An open letter to the Regiment, written early in July, 1945, by the Rev. H. DeVos, DD, of Sneek said, in part: "We will help you fight the boredom which will take you. Difficulties may arise, also, between you and us. We must speak plainly and say the truth. When you came you were heartily welcome. We hailed you as our liberators. You still are welcome, and we shall never forget what you did for us. If ever we forget we are not worthy of our freedom. But as weeks and months go on there may come frictions. Young men become jealous because you dance with their girls, mothers become anxious about their daughters. You will take care of our girls? They are as dear to us as your sisters and friends are to you. We must prevent these difficulties, and therefore you must become a part of the population of Sneek. Your Colonel has understood this very well when he asked the civilian authorities to institute a committee to promote the contact between you and us. So there has been appointed the Contact Committee Canada-Sneek ... "

The C.C.C.S. did its work well.

On Nov. 26 the Regiment was drawn up on parade on the street in front of the Sneek town hall, for the ceremony of presenting to the Burgomaster of Sneek a hand-carved plaque with the design of the Perth regimental badge, and a brass plate engraved with a message of goodwill from the officers and men of the Regiment, to the citizens of Sneek. The Burgomaster in turn presented to the Regiment an "Album of Sneek," bound in leather and embossed in gold.

On the night of Nov. 27-28, the Regiment left Sneek to begin the journey through staging camps

in England, to home in Canada. The war diary report of the departure includes the note: "It was plain to see that many of these civilians were reluctant to see us leave, as most of the difficulties pertinent to the calling of the roll at 0100 hours were engendered by over-long farewells."

The stay at Sneek encompassed the life history of "The Perthonian," a regimental newspaper which appeared weekly for 19 weeks, under the editorship of Capt. J. M. Dent, with Lieut. V. E. Fryer, Pte. J. A. Curtin and Lance-Cpl. S. E. Smith on the board of management. Among its most piquant and memorable features were its cartoons drawn by Capt. Dent, and by Pte. M. L. Pincombe.

Announcement of the award to Lieut.-Col. Andrew of the Distinguished Service Order came during the stay in Sneek. Officially announced Sept. 18, 1945, the citation said: "This officer assumed command of The Perth Regiment on Sept. 1, 1944, and since that date has led it gallantly and successfully in every action in which the brigade has participated from the Gothic Line in Italy to the capture of the port of Delfzijl in Holland."

Lieut.-Col. Andrew was himself away from the Regiment for much of 1945, carrying out the duty of defence counsel for SS Major-General Kurt Meyer, on trial on war crimes charges. The Commanding Officer returned to the Regiment in time, but just barely in time, to lead the Perths home. The Regiment was aboard ship at Southampton in England, and the ship was about to sail, when Lieut.-Col. Andrew, who had been delayed completing his work on the Meyer case, arrived at dockside with no time to spare.

The Regiment came back across the Atlantic aboard the Queen Elizabeth, as part of a passenger list which included 12,314 Canadian soldiers and airmen, and also included Winston Churchill, on his way to a six-week holiday in Florida. The ship docked at New York Jan. 14, 1946, and the Regiment arrived by train in Stratford, Jan. 16, to be greeted by a civic welcome. The final parade was held that same day, and Lieut.-Col. Andrew ordered, "Dismiss" as the end of more than 64 months of active service.

The 13 officers and 354 men who detrained at Stratford Jan. 16, 1946, formed a group which bore little resemblance to the Regiment as it had been constituted when fighting had ended in Holland eight months before. A points system which gave priority to long-service men had operated to send many of the "originals" home months before the Regiment itself. During the months at Sneek the strength of the Regiment had increased, as officers and men with homes in Western Ontario were posted to the Perths in a great reshuffling of the Canadian Army overseas; then the strength shrank steadily, through the summer of 1945, as Perths with high point scores were given opportunity to return to Canada.

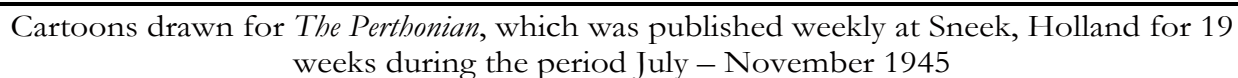
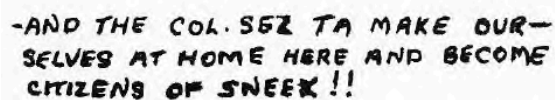
On May 1, 1945, on arrival at Sneek, the Perths numbered 784 all ranks. On May 30, their numbers had increased to 1,047 all ranks. By the time they left Sneek at the end of November, to start the journey home, the Perths numbered only 419, consisting in part of long-service veterans with key jobs in the administration of the Regiment, in part of officers and men who had been on special duty away from the Regiment and returned for the trip home, and in part of men with low point scores.

The officers and senior non-commissioned officers who were with the active-service battalion until the final parade were: Lieut.-Col. Andrew, Major H.A. Snelgrove, Major Robert Chamberlain, Major John A. Cowie, Capt. W.A.H. Cree, Capt. G.A. Gallagher, Capt. W.C. Hider, Capt. J.M. Dent, Capt. A.B.J. Mills, Capt. D.J. Dooley, Capt. H.G. Pattison, Capt. J.R. White, Lieut. G.G. Getty, CSM. A. Crawford, RQMS. W. J. Hansford, Sgt. A.J. Bondy, Sgt. J.M. Burgess, Sgt. V.W. Hodgins, Sgt. F.A. Kelly, Sgt. G. Manktelow, Sgt. G.W. Martin, Sgt. W.D. McKay, Sgt. W.J. O'Neill, CQMS. H.S. Thompson, Sgt. F. Ward, CQMS. J.R. Willacy.

Taking part in the welcome to Lieut.-Col. Andrew and his men, on their return home, were the officers and men of the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion, which had kept the Regiment active on the home front through the war years. Consisting in the main of men whose age or medical category barred them from active service, the Second Battalion gave preliminary training to recruits, maintained a regimental brass band, turned out for many special public parades to assist recruiting and Victory Loan campaigns, conducted military funerals and memorial parades and gave assistance in many ways to a succession of active-service units which occupied barracks in Stratford.

One of the voluntary tasks from which the members of the Second Battalion derived deep satisfaction, was the holding of an annual Christmas party, at the Armouries in Stratford, for the children of men who were overseas with the First Battalion.

The Second Battalion was organized July 22, 1940, with companies at Kincardine, Walkerton, St. Marys and Listowel; the Listowel company had a platoon at Mitchell. Headquarters and Headquarters Company were at Stratford. Lieut.-Col. G. D. L. Rice commanded from July 1940 to July 1944; Major T. W. Orr commanded from then until the postwar reorganization of the Regiment, which took effect April 1, 1946.



23 – THE REGIMENT GOES ON

The post war history of the Regiment dates officially from April 1, 1946, when the militia role was resumed, with Major J. S. Whyte promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and appointed to command.

The first major concern was to carry out in fact the change to Scottish customs and dress, a change which had been made in theory while the Regiment was in the Netherlands. A formal request for permission to become a Scottish unit had been made in 1944, and permission was granted by National Defence Headquarters in 1945. Under Lieut.-Col. Whyte, the Regiment adopted the kilt as normal wear, and began the organization and training of a pipe band. The Douglas tartan was adopted, in keeping with the Cameronian affiliation; the Cameronians wear the Douglas because they were first recruited, in 1689, from among the tenantry and supporters of the Marquis of Douglas, and their first colonel was the Earl of Angus, son of the Marquis.

In keeping with the new character of the Perths, the regimental badge was redesigned, to add thistles and a St. Andrew's cross. The design work had been done overseas, by Capt. J. M. Dent, and submitted to Ottawa for approval before the end of the war.

The new dress regulations for officers, other ranks and the pipe band were drawn up in detail by a regimental committee of officers and former officers; they follow, with some variations, the dress of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles.) The story of The Perth Regiment, in respect to dress, repeats that of the old Perthshire Volunteers (90th Foot), who were a trousered unit, wearing red tunics and grey breeks, from the time they were organized in 1794, until 1881 when they were merged with the Cameronians, and changed from trousers to tartan trews.

There was a 30-month hiatus in the independent history of The Perth Regiment, beginning when it lost its identity, Oct. 1, 1954, in a merger with the Highland Light Infantry of Canada. The two were combined, as part of a general militia reorganization in Canada, to form one militia unit under the name of Perth and Waterloo Regiment (H.L.I. of C.) Officers and men accepted the merger loyally, but there was no enthusiasm for it on either side. Strong representations were made to Ottawa for the right of a county regiment which had been solidly supported by the people of its county, for 88 years, to continue under the county name of Perth. Ottawa listened, the merger was dissolved, and The Perth Regiment resumed its separate existence April 1, 1957.

When General Sir Horatius Murray, KBE, CB, DSO, flew from Norway to Canada in November, 1960, he made history for The Perth Regiment. General Murray was then in a high NATO post as Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Northern Europe. He was also colonel-in-chief of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). His trip to Canada was for the purpose of paying a visit to The Perth Regiment; it was the first such visit since the affiliation of the Perths with the Cameronians in 1930.

On the evening of Friday, Nov. 25, 1960, General Murray was the guest of honour and principal speaker at the 29th annual St. Andrew's Feast of the officers' mess of the Regiment. On this occasion he presented to the Regiment a pair of inscribed silver candlesticks, chosen from the collection of silver in the officers' mess of the Cameronians' depot at Lanark, Lanarkshire, Scotland. When they arrived at the home of Lieut.-Col. J. H. Wyatt, then honorary colonel of the Perths, and Mrs. Wyatt, General and Lady Murray were welcomed by two pipers in Douglas tartan, Pipe-Major Jack Skinner and Sgt. Donald Morrice, of the Perths' pipe band. General and Lady Murray were guests of Lieut.-Col. and Mrs. Wyatt for their six-day stay in Stratford.

At the St. Andrew's Feast of 1960, the toast, "To the pious memory," was proposed by Major D. M. Ross, a former Perth officer, who had himself been a visitor at the Cameronians' depot at Lanark.

The New Colours

The award to the Regiment of the ten primary battle honours and four secondary battle honours from the Second World War was announced Feb. 17, 1959, by Canadian Army Headquarters. The painstaking and detailed work of documenting the Regiment's title to the honours had been done, over a period of years, by a regimental committee; to a considerable degree, the committee relied on Major F. S. Walker, who had been the Regiment's active-service quartermaster from mobilization in 1939 until after the end of hostilities in Europe, in 1945.

The ten primary battle honours included two theatre honours, "ITALY 1944-45," and "NORTH-WEST EUROPE 1945." The other eight were awarded for specific actions, six in Italy and two in the Netherlands. At the same time as the award was made for the Second World War, the two battle honours which had been carried on the regimental colour for the First World War were reclassified as one primary and one secondary; the Regiment therefore became entitled to 11 battle honours on the regimental colour, and an additional five on its official record.

Following on the award of honours, the decision was made that the Regiment should have new colours. One reason was that of the two honours, "YPRES 1915" and "FESTUBERT 1915," embroidered on the colour which had been presented to the Regiment in 1927, the Regiment was entitled to have only one emblazoned on its colour, after the reclassification of 1959. A second, more practical reason, was that textile experts, after examining the 1927 colour, said that the silk of the material was too old and too brittle to accept the embroidery work which would have to be done to add ten new inscriptions in metallic thread.

The Regiment's second set of colours, embroidered with 11 primary battle honours, was presented as the gift of the Crown, by the Queen's representative for Ontario, Lieut.-Governor J. Keiller Mackay, on June 30, 1962.

The ceremonial parade closely duplicated the ceremony which had taken place 35 years before. It was held on the same ground, Queen's Park in Stratford, and among the 2,000 spectators who saw the ceremony in 1962 were a number who had been in uniform, wearing the Perth badge, in the ceremony of 1927. Lieut.-Col. E.B. Burnett as Commanding Officer was in the role which had been played in 1927 by Lieut.-Col. A.W. Deacon. Eight former commanding officers were present: Lieut.-Col. Arthur Garrod, Brig. W.S. Rutherford, Lieut.-Col. M.W. Andrew, Lieut.-Col. J.S. Whyte, Brig. Howard Hemphill, Lieut.-Col. E.M. Hutchinson, Lieut.-Col. F.W. Savage and Major T.W. Orr.

The Perths who had won the ten new battle honours for the Regiment were represented on parade by a contingent of 400 Second World War veterans, under command, for the occasion, of Lieut.-Col. Andrew.

The link from the past to the future of the Regiment was obvious in the ceremony. The young officer who received the new regimental colour from the hands of the Queen's representative was Lieut. Thomas O. Soper, son of the Perths' regimental sergeant-major of the period 1939-43.

There was one moment of amusement while the colours were being presented. The parade was formed not far from Stratford's Festival Theatre, which fires a bomb, simulating a field-gun, to signal the start of each performance. Many people jumped with surprise when the bomb went off. An observant newspaper reporter noted that one group in Queen's Park in which not a muscle twitched, was the contingent of veterans, rock-steady on parade.

On the following day, Sunday, July 1, the Regiment and the Perth Regiment Veterans'

Association marched to St. James' Church, Stratford, to lay away the old colours. The adjutant, Capt. T. W. Dickson, carried out the ritual of knocking three times on the church door, while the Regiment waited behind him. In keeping with the special tradition of the Cameronians, officers of the Regiment carried their swords into the church, when the Regiment was formally admitted by Capt. the Rev. Michael Griffin, rector of St. James' and chaplain of the Regiment.

Members of the colour party which escorted the old colours to the church were Second Lieut. Robin Freeman. Second Lieut. Donald Fryer, Warrant Officer William Thiel, Sgt. Donald Gardner and Sgt. Thomas Kirkby. The old colours were escorted up the aisle of the church by four former commanding officers: Lieut.-Col. R. M. Trow, Lieut.-Col. Garrod, Lieut.-Col. Whyte, Lieut.-Col. Savage. The old colours were handed to the churchwardens of St. James' by Major Howard Galloway and Major Kenneth Sippel, to be placed in the chancel.

There they will remain.

The sermon was preached by Major the Rev. D. Crawford Smith, who had conducted divine worship for The Fighting Perths in the training camps of England, and on the battlefields of Italy and Holland.

As the parade formed outside St. James', after the solemn service of the laying-away, and of remembrance, the past and the future of the Regiment stood in living contrast.

The middle-aged men in mufti, most of them greying on top and thickened around the middle, formed in column of route.

The men in the uniform of the Regiment, most of them too young to have any memory of the Second World War, formed in line, ranked along the edge of the paved street.

The first command was, "Veterans, Quick March." The middle-aged legs swung easily into the marching rhythm that had taken them to the Hitler Line, to the Gothic Line, and on.

The second command was, "To the Veterans, Present Arms." The young militiamen stood steady at the present, while the men of Coriano and Delfzijl marched by, and took the lead. The Regiment fell into column of route behind them, with the new colours flying.

ADDENDUM (2016)

As a result of recommendations in The Commission on the Reorganization of the Canadian Army (1964), The Perth Regiment was reduced to nil strength and assigned to the Supplementary Order of Battle on 28 February 1965.

BATTLE HONOURS

PRIMARY BATTLE HONOURS EMBLAZONED ON THE COLOURS

YPRES 1915	Recognizing the contribution of the 28 th Perth Regiment to the First Division, CEF which withstood the surprise use of poison gas in the Battle of Ypres, April 22 – May 3, 1915.
ITALY 1944-45	Sixteen months' wartime service in Italy.
LIRI VALLEY	Hitler Line battles, May 25 – June 1, 1944.
GOTHIC LINE	Aug. 29 – Sept. 1, 1944
CORIANO	Sept. 13, 1944
LAMONE CROSSING	Dec. 10 – 11, 1944
FOSSO MUNIO	Dec. 19 – 20, 1944
CONVENTELLO-COMACCHIO	Infantry-cum-tank advance, with the British Columbia Dragoons, Jan. 2 – 6, 1945.
NORTH-WEST EUROPE 1945	Eleven weeks' wartime service in France, Belgium and the Netherlands
IJSSELMEER	A 25-mile advance, April 15 – 18, 1945, from Arnhem to Zuider Zee, to cut off enemy forces in the Western Netherlands.
DELFZIJL POCKET	Operations to quell the last organized German resistance in the Netherlands, April 23 – May 2, 1945.

SECONDARY BATTLE HONOURS

FESTUBERT 1915	An action fought by First Division, CEF, May 19–26, 1915.
MELFA CROSSING	Beginning of the breakout from the Hitler Line, May 25, 1944.
CEPRANO	May 27, 1944
MONTECCHIO	Aug. 30, 1944
POINT 204	Sept. 1, 1944

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lt.-Col. RS Service	1866 – 1872
Lt.-Col. WM Smith, VD	1872 – 1881
Lt.-Col. David Scott	1881 – 1885
Lt.-Col. ES McKnight	1885 – 1898
Lt.-Col. HAL White	1898 – 1903
Lt.-Col. WG Moscrip, VD	1903 – 1908
Lt.-Col. GT Cooke	1908 – 1912
Lt.-Col. WM Lawrence, VD	1912 – 1920
Lt.-Col. JL Youngs, MC	1920 – 1923
Lt.-Col. AW Deacon, MC	1923 – 1928
Lt.-Col. RM Trow	1928 - 1932
Lt.-Col. H Denroche	1933
Lt.-Col. A Garrod, MC, ED, SBStJ	1933 – Sep 22, 1939
Lt.-Col. SH McComb, ED	Sept. 23, 1939 – Aug. 12, 1940
Lt.-Col. GW Little, MVO, OBE, MC, ED	Aug. 13, 1940 – May 11, 1942
Lt.-Col. RL Tindall	May 12, 1942 – July 31, 1942
Lt.-Col. JSH Lind, DSO, ED	Aug. 1, 1942 – May 9, 1943
Lt.-Col. HET Doucet, OBE, ED	May 10, 1943 – Aug. 31, 1943
Lt.-Col. WS Rutherford, ED	Sept. 1, 1943 – March 15, 1944
Lt.-Col. JSH Lind, DSO, ED	March 16, 1944 – Aug. 13, 1944
Lt.-Col. WW Reid, DSO	Aug. 14, 1944 – Aug. 31, 1944
Lt.-Col. MW Andrew, DSO, CStJ, ED, QC	Sept. 1, 1944 – Jan. 16, 1946
Lt.-Col. EM Hutchinson, CD	April 1, 1957 – Aug. 31, 1959
Lt.-Col. FW Savage, CD	Sept. 1, 1959 – Feb. 14, 1962
Lt.-Col. EB Burnett, ED	Feb. 15, 1962 – Feb. 29, 1964
Lt.-Col. EC Skowby, CD	March 1, 1964 – Feb 28, 1965

SECOND (RESERVE) BATTALION

Lt.-Col. G. D. L. Rice	1940 – 1944
Lt.-Col. T. W. Orr	1944 – 1946

PERTH & WATERLOO REGIMENT (HLI OF C)

Lt.-Col. E. McIntyre, ED	Oct. 1, 1954 – Aug. 2, 1955
Lt.-Col. E. M. Hutchinson, CD	Aug. 3, 1955 – March, 31, 1957

HONOURS AND AWARDS

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER (DSO)	Lt.-Col. JSH Lind Lt.-Col. WW Reid Lt.-Col. MW Andrew Maj R Cole
THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE)	Col GW Little, MVO Lt.-Col. HET Doucet Capt RW Mitchell
MEMBER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MBE)	Maj JG Jose Capt FG Twist
THE MILITARY CROSS (MC)	Maj RS Chamberlain Capt the Rev. DC Smith Maj PF Fisher Lieut GF Downham Capt T Cooper
THE MILITARY MEDAL (MM)	RSM George F. Curtis L/Cpl. CJ Schamdl Sgt JL Derrick Pte FK Baker Sgt GE Grant Pte JF Bennet Sgt WJ Hansford Pte GF Cote Sgt GA Lyons Pte F Dorschnor Sgt MC Rawding Pte CJ Mills Sgt JR Spencer Pte RD Saunders Cpl JA Lawlor Pte DH Thompson L/Cpl AM Hayward Pte AJ Vertulia
MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES (OAK LEAF ON VICTORY MEDAL)	Lt.-Col. JSH Lind CQMS JN Grainger Maj CB Arrell Sgt GM Smithson Maj EM Hutchinson Pte L Charbonneau Maj WJ Ridge Pte JW Foreman

	Capt WC Hider Pte VE Gooding RQMS C. T. Carter Pte L. E. Harper CSM D. R. Bruce Pte RA Prashaw CSM W. J. Hall
NETHERLANDS BRONZE LION	Capt GA Gallagher Sgt FW Moffatt
AMERICAN BRONZE STAR	Maj EM Hutchinson
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S CERTIFICATE	Capt P Statten (RCAMC) Pte MA Roane Cpl MB O'Donnell

IN MEMORIAM

These are the names of those who died in active service in World War II – 1939 – 1945

Maj	RA	MacDougall		C43769	Cpl	A	Rochlin
				C103297	Cpl	JK	Rudolph
Capt	FB	Kennedy		A11314	Cpl	FF	Sapwell
				A28251	Cpl	AE	Simpson
Lieut	AJ	Clements		A67826	Cpl	WJ	Smith
Lieut	AR	Coyston		F32019	Cpl	RD	Smith
Lieut	FJ	Culliton		G32970	Cpl	FH	Tucker
Lieut	NS	Drummond (RCCS)					
Lieut	GS	Hall		D121127	L/Cpl	CWA	Daymond
Lieut	JR	Henderson		A11509	L/Cpl	LN	Dean
Lieut	GAM	McCourtie		B157575	L/Cpl	P	Dyck
Lieut	RW	Patterson		A103495	L/Cpl	H	Kolapack
Lieut	LJW	Rochon		G7752	L/Cpl	Z	Kulimowski
Lieut	GW	Stone		A70488	L/Cpl	JG	Leonard
Lieut	DF	Trebell		A11490	L/Cpl	TH	Littlejohn
Lieut	JA	Young		A11359	L/Cpl	LJ	Lyons
				A102225	L/Cpl	F	Lytwyn
L65695	CSM	RA	Johnston	C101116	L/Cpl	JJ	Marrs
A11025	CSM	RO	Marquis	D132859	L/Cpl	JG	Martell
A11002	CSM	JR	McRobb	B64553	L/Cpl	W	Maryglod
A11684	CSM	JK	Ross	A50576	L/Cpl	JA	Pain
A11455	CSM	EE	Weaver	M35632	L/Cpl	WW	Shattuck
				A58052	L/Cpl	SW	Tilley
A11933	Sgt	KS	Beckner	B64486	L/Cpl	FR	Wells
A11224	Sgt	CA	Benner				
B43086	Sgt	RJ	Dickson	A22993	Pte	KA	Adair
A11463	Sgt	S	Jessop	A117480	Pte	EK	Alexander
A11229	Sgt	RM	Livock	C10186	Pte	GR	Allin
A11392	Sgt	PN	McRorie	M106030	Pte	E	Alm
A58162	Sgt	FW	Taylor	B41645	Pte	JE	Anderson
				M60307	Pte	L	Anderson
A11862	LSgt	CT	Cottel	A11179	Pte	TH	Appleton
				A11298	Pte	JE	Bailey
A21239	Cpl	RJ	Adair	B76890	Pte	JW	Bartlett
H8057	Cpl	JJ	Carson	B132822	Pte	C	Beaumont
B68647	Cpl	JA	Chambers	K48903	Pte	JOM	Belisle
B79675	Cpl	WJ	Cobean	A105415	Pte	MW	Bell
A11233	Cpl	FG	Doxey	A67832	Pte	GE	Belrose
A11415	Cpl	WA	Doyle	B17356	Pte	HAE	Blackwell
A21480	Cpl	AJ	Dube	B41793	Pte	W	Bolton
A117525	Cpl	JT	Leonard	A59182	Pte	IH	Bowles
A11369	Cpl	JA	McKay	A104912	Pte	EA	Boyd
A11231	Cpl	J	Redfern	M107496	Pte	RB	Calkins

G22893	Pte	GH	Cameron	H1561	Pte	P	Gallagher
M106715	Pte	NA	Cameron	F60174	Pte	JE	Gallant
K49145	Pte	CA	Carey	B42814	Pte	FT	Gardner
F60499	Pte	SW	Carr	F60517	Pte	NJ	Garland
L104580	Pte	LE	Carr	L101916	Pte	M	Geize
D72361	Pte	AW	Cartland	A107840	Pte	AR	George
A37684	Pte	AJW	Cartlidge	A102600	Pte	A	Gibel
F59801	Pte	JF	Casey	A102900	Pte	GW	Good
C36822	Pte	NW	Clark	A64159	Pte	H	Graham
A22204	Pte	J	Clowater	B46938	Pte	TW	Gregory
A11825	Pte	E	Clutterbuck	A64307	Pte	RG	Gremm
B77698	Pte	JM	Clyde	B148732	Pte	AH	Griffin
B133184	Pte	DA	Collier	A21191	Pte	GC	Haley
C73673	Pte	TF	Collins	B13043	Pte	WJ	Halstead
L11313	Pte	W	Collins	A103140	Pte	FW	Hardy
B118518	Pte	SA	Colton	L100989	Pte	S	Haresign
B24455	Pte	W	Contin	A107995	Pte	JR	Harper
B1629	Pte	CG	Cooper	A59343	Pte	R	Harris
B64558	Pte	GH	Copeland	G49141	Pte	WJ	Harris
H102761	Pte	DL	Crave	A50035	Pte	EC	Hedrick
A11663	Pte	JB	Crawford	A116744	Pte	CW	Henderson
A56875	Pte	RG	Dahmer	B157987	Pte	KE	Hepinstall
A116764	Pte	GA	Day	C34909	Pte	WA	Heward
A109177	Pte	EA	Dean	B133831	Pte	EJ	Hewings
A104789	Pte	GF	DeBaere	C33634	Pte	JDG	Hill
B132818	Pte	AJ	Demers	F76031	Pte	FP	Hirtle
A11225	Pte	LJ	Dewey	B1638	Pte	FG	Hootun
H20745	Pte	NA	Diamond	A11791	Pte	JEA	Hurlock
B116525	Pte	AJ	Diwell	A49891	Pte	NL	Hurrell
A55153	Pte	CJ	Doan	A115579	Pte	RE	Hyatt
D71247	Pte	LL	Dorion	A117462	Pte	TN	Jack
A23111	Pte	HJ	Drouillard	B118273	Pte	EJ	Jackson
A11039	Pte	K	Duley	B77088	Pte	KJ	Jardin
A23090	Pte	JW	Durham	B132809	Pte	MP	Jones
L104262	Pte	R	Eichler	A115526	Pte	FW	Kesselring
B130724	Pte	JB	Ellwood	B145620	Pte	WD	Kingdon
A23409	Pte	EJ	English	A104549	Pte	LG	Kirk
A105329	Pte	JM	Evans	L104669	Pte	JL	Kostenly
A117430	Pte	GGC	Evans	B143937	Pte	W	Krawetz
A50486	Pte	WS	Faircloth	C58518	Pte	RJ	Lacasse
B142376	Pte	GR	Fasken	A10055	Pte	LG	Lake
A11781	Pte	WT	Fawcett	B157645	Pte	FJ	Larrett
B145968	Pte	CE	Felton	C21739	Pte	A	Latour
A106345	Pte	MK	Fisher	C34908	Pte	V	Lavallee
A11221	Pte	N	Foreman	B46946	Pte	JD	Lawson
B57563	Pte	DW	Forrester	A31133	Pte	JA	Lee
F77904	Pte	JG	Fougere	A71060	Pte	OCE	Lockery
F51536	Pte	DC	Fraser	A89273	Pte	RO	Losch

B46937	Pte	SE	Ludwig	M104270	Pte	JA	Robb
B138562	Pte	FH	MacGregor	D71502	Pte	J	Robertson
B42188	Pte	WA	MacKeigan	H14071	Pte	WH	Rogers
A108862	Pte	JT	MacMillan	A59831	Pte	RE	Salisbury
B89402	Pte	WA	MacPherson	A103220	Pte	DW	Schmidt
B68982	Pte	E	Marks	A11931	Pte	SC	Schmidt
A105148	Pte	AJ	Martin	B127906	Pte	DE	Schooley
B138398	Pte	P	Martin	A116458	Pte	LB	Settlington
B41881	Pte	AE	Martin	D46731	Pte	JAG	Shinnick
A106198	Pte	C	Marys	E52861	Pte	CC	Sim
D137616	Pte	I	Mayoff	A117752	Pte	RP	Simard
B56365	Pte	B	McCabe	B59759	Pte	JH	Simons
A28723	Pte	JK	McClure	A105586	Pte	WP	Simpson
B113454	Pte	JDH	McDonald	A105127	Pte	EJ	Smith
A11527	Pte	AJ	McLeod	A11766	Pte	FA	Smith
A107378	Pte	WT	McMillan	B46934	Pte	DW	Smith
C79401	Pte	GR	McNutt	A117481	Pte	KG	Stephens
A11210	Pte	A	Melville	A11256	Pte	WR	Stewart
B118594	Pte	DW	Merson	A59443	Pte	GW	Stirling
A11764	Pte	WJ	Miller	B64565	Pte	RC	Tavignot
A105836	Pte	TG	Mills	A117783	Pte	G	Taylor
A68070	Pte	C	Milson	B111554	Pte	CW	Theodorff
B132964	Pte	JD	Mitchell	A118143	Pte	WL	Trimble
A104920	Pte	RE	Mohlman	A49675	Pte	JP	Trojek
B130062	Pte	GG	Monro	K42595	Pte	HM	Van Horlick
D139948	Pte	E	Moran	B157751	Pte	RJ	Vince
A102554	Pte	HD	Murchison	A59804	Pte	AB	Walker
A117881	Pte	DL	Neal	A105081	Pte	FGN	Waterfield
C73668	Pte	CF	Nicholson	K115952	Pte	RF	Weiberg
A102747	Pte	NAJ	Parent	A38141	Pte	RJ	Weinstein
A102887	Pte	CK	Park	B134390	Pte	RH	Wheatley
H14043	Pte	EW	Parker	B46807	Pte	HA	White
E30227	Pte	M	Pelletier	B37930	Pte	EE	Widdis
A11095	Pte	A	Phillips	B77579	Pte	RC	Williams
C144659	Pte	J	Plavetich	A11832	Pte	FA	Wilmore
A64791	Pte	LH	Podann	A87273	Pte	R	Wilson
A11142	Pte	AW	Prior	B115373	Pte	JR	Wilson
A89237	Pte	GD	Purcell	B88913	Pte	J	Windover
A88110	Pte	CG	Radtke	B134857	Pte	HW	Woodcock
A11338	Pte	AG	Reid	D167124	Pte	WC	Woodgate
B132261	Pte	J	Revill	B73895	Pte	MR	Wright
F76045	Pte	EJ	Rhodeniser	D137473	Pte.	M	Schacter
H104623	Pte	GF	Richards				
A11792	Pte	WJ	Richardson				
E106635	Pte	L	Ritchie				

*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall now weary the, nor the years condemn;
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

— Lawrence Binyon.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

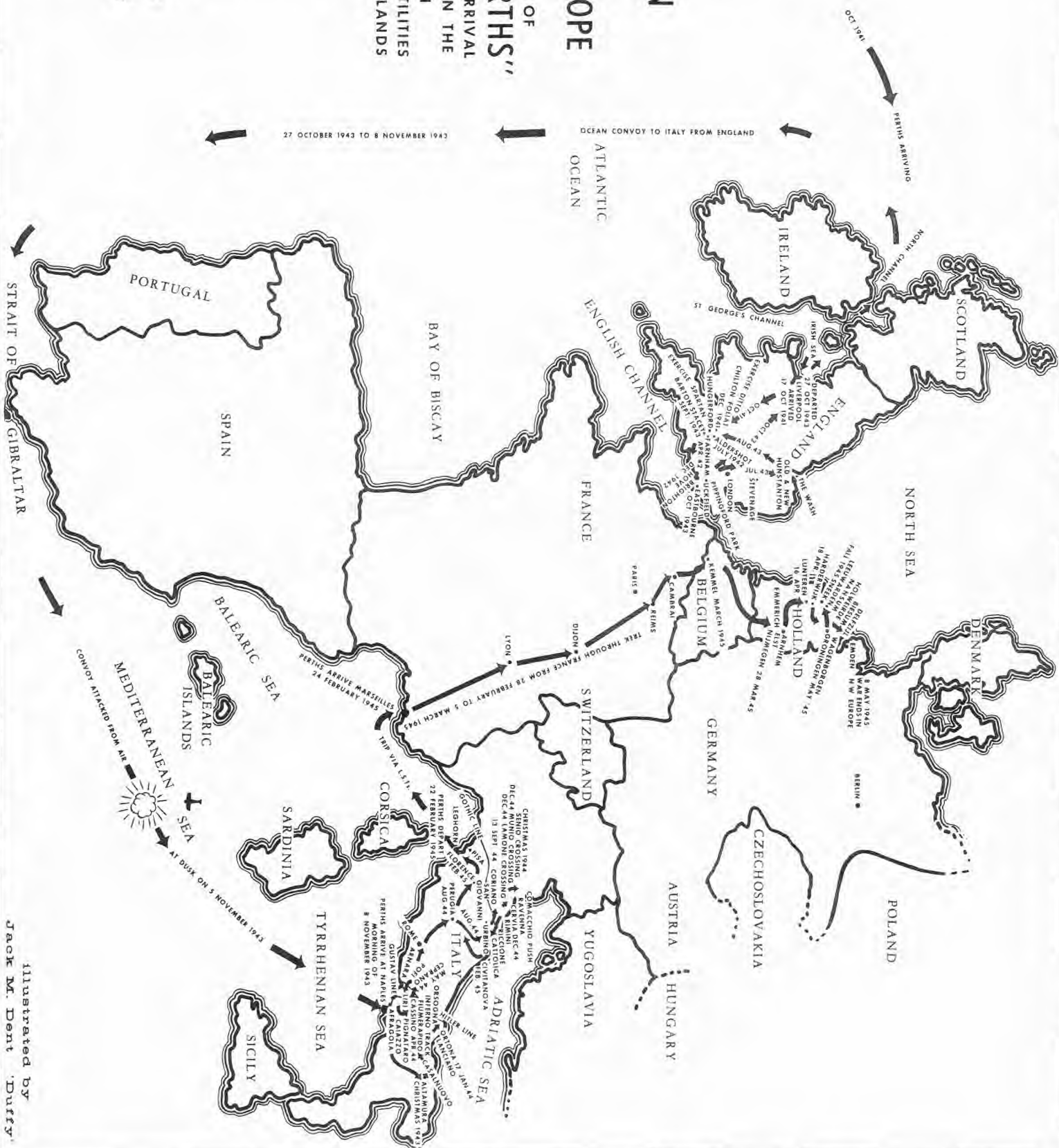
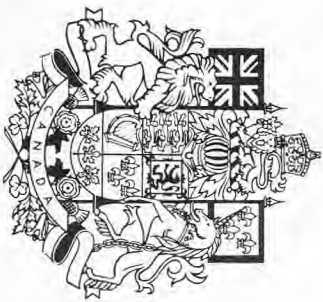
This brief history of The Perth Regiment is published to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the mobilization of the regiment for active service, 4 September 1939.

The author, Major Stafford Johnston, served with distinction in World War II. He was with The Oxford Rifles in 1939 but transferred to The Elgin Regiment, September 1940, as an active officer. The Elgins moved overseas in 1942 as part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division. Later Stafford Johnston became the Intelligence Officer of 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, a formation which took part in the D-Day assault on the Normandy coast and later took a prominent part in the Battle of Caen and the Victory at Falaise. Major Johnston is presently on the staff of The Stratford Beacon-Herald as its Associate Editor.

The cover design, the map and illustrations are by Major J. M. Dent of Wallaceburg, Ontario. Major Dent served overseas with the Perths in the Italian and North-West Europe campaigns, World War II.

WAR MAP
of
GREAT BRITAIN
and
NORTH WEST EUROPE

ILLUSTRATING THE ROUTE OF
 "THE FIGHTING PERTHS"
 FROM THEIR MOMENT OF ARRIVAL
 AT LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND ON THE
 17th OF OCTOBER, 1941
 TO THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES
 AT DELFZIJL IN THE NETHERLANDS
 ON THE
 8th OF MAY, 1945.



Illustrated by
Jack M. Dent 'Duffy'