

### **3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment 1940 - 1945**

The Lowlands had fallen, the Maginot Line turned, France overrun and the British Expeditionary Force evacuated through Dunkirk. Britain was now reeling, beaten almost to her knees. Air power, skilfully exploited by the Third Reich, had thrown its weight against soldier and civilian alike wreaking havoc and destruction undreamed of in our generation.

It was mid-summer in the year of our Lord 1940; the sky over Britain was black with German aircraft. Our airmen, fighting against terrific odds were cutting those tight German formations to pieces but our losses could not go on indefinitely. There were few reserves left. Anti-aircraft artillery regiments must be formed to supplement our air force and to guard England.

A regiment of light anti-aircraft was formed in Western Canada and named the 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. It moved to England, and within the space of two years, by its keenness and efficiency, knocked out of the air so many enemy aircraft that it became one of the highest ranking regiments in the whole of the Motherland.

The 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was to form part of the Artillery of the Second Canadian Infantry Division. It was composed of a Regimental Headquarters and four Batteries of three Troops, each Troop having a complement of four guns. Each Battery was under command of a Major and was formed to perpetuate the name and district of a particular part of Canada. They were recruited and trained in their respective Military Districts under command of the District Officer Commanding. Regimental Headquarters was formed separate and apart from the Batteries, all to be later married up in England.

Major B. Russel Ker, the Major commanding the fort at Merry Hill on Vancouver Island, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and placed in command of the Regiment on the 15th October, 1940. Captain Andrew M. Clarke, Staff Captain of Victoria and Esquimalt Fortress, was selected as Adjutant; Lieutenant E. F. Marshall was Orderly Officer; Captain Jeffrey Hale as Regimental Quartermaster; Captain H. Scott as Medical Officer and D. J. O. Richards as Regimental Sergeant-Major. Lieutenant-Colonel Ker had his pick of the Fortress garrisons and his headquarters was staffed in record time. With twenty Other Ranks billeted in Work Point Camp in the municipality of the Esquimalt, he established his headquarters and began the long uphill grind of making civilians soldiers.

In October, 1940, the Commanding Officer received orders to report to Ottawa and, accompanied by his Adjutant, Captain A. M. Clarke, he inspected each of the Batteries on his way east. The Batteries were turned out smartly dressed, each man was inspected, squads were put through their paces and the state of training proved to be excellent. Lieutenant-Colonel Ker inspected the guards mounted in his honour and was well pleased with the discipline of the Regiment. Morale and keenness had reached a high state; his Regiment was shaping up. He could report to Ottawa that basic training was nearing completion and the Regiment must now enter advanced training

in its particular branch of the service. Instructors and equipment could only be had in England. He and the Regiment were looking forward to the time when they would move to the overseas theatre, get at grips with the enemy and play their part in the great drama.

The Regimental Headquarters proceeded with training and hardening up exercises which included marches, physical training and sports. Christmas time came and with it all the social amenities of the town were made available. Half of the headquarters received leave for Christmas and the balance on New Years, four days at home being enjoyed by everyone.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ker received embarkation orders and after the New Year he was issued a warning order and authority to grant embarkation leave.

On 29 January, 1941, the Regimental Headquarters boarded a ship in Victoria, having moved the day before from Esquimalt to begin their eastern journey across Canada to the Atlantic seaboard. At Calgary the 17th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery boarded the same train and met the men with whom they were to spend over four years of overseas service. On the long journey across Canada stopovers were made and one route march carried out to break up the monotony of travel and to wear off that restlessness that comes with the desire to get overseas. Many were looking forward to the sea voyage, but some of them who at the time had never seen the ocean were unhappy with the thought of a rough journey and the nauseating fear of seasickness. Few were disappointed.

On a cool crisp morning in February Regimental Headquarters and the 17th Battery boarded the Duchess of York and got used to hammocks slung from hooks, and the business of living a life in the crowded quarters of a ship. The meals, never too good, were served in three sittings in the room that was also used as their sleeping quarters. As the ship had to wait for a convoy to be assembled this dull routine lasted for twenty-eight days. After three days at the wharf the Duchess moved up into Bedford Basin and the men lived the life of sailors. These hardships did not lessen their interests, no one was up for office nor was there anyone absent without leave. The Duchess sailed on the 17th of February and the men's spirits soared for there were to be new scenes, new faces, action and new worlds to conquer.

### **15th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery** **38th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery**

On the 17th of August, 1940, Major R. F. Capel was given orders to mobilize the 38th Field Battery of Winnipeg (NPAM) as a Light Anti-Aircraft unit, which on active service, was to be known as the 15th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. Recruiting began immediately in the City of Winnipeg and was completed in a few days, as every one was anxious to get in a unit slated for a Division of overseas service. The nucleus of the Battery came from the Artillery training centre of Shilo, Manitoba.

Major R. F. Capel became the Officer Commanding being directly responsible to the District Officer Commanding of the Military District Number 10 for mobilization, quarters and stores but

forming part of the 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. His second-in-command was an accountant, Captain W. M. Carlyle.

The Lieutenants of the Battery were also selected from the training centre as well as from the former NPAM Battery. They were B. W. Wood, S. (Stan) Laing, W. O. Sorby, J. Hinchliffe, E. C. (Ted), Lee, R. C. Brian Dixon and R. C. (Bob) Martin. H. W. Chitty was Battery Sergeant-Major and W. Balmer was Battery Quartermaster Sergeant.

The unit was quartered in a civilian building in downtown Winnipeg called the Barrish Building but the facilities of the city Armouries were also placed at the disposal of the Battery in turn with other units. A great deal of help in training was given by the Artillery training centre in the city.

Training in the basic and elementary subjects was begun and sports formed a prominent part in both the training and hours of relaxation after an intensive day on the parade square or in the class room; a fundamental and necessary part in the making of a soldier.

Courses were available in the training centre and advantage was taken of the Vocation School's offer to throw open courses in electricity for men who were later to become Predictor Numbers. Classes in mathematics were also run, especially trigonometry and geometry, and a high standard was achieved by the personnel of the unit. Their educational background was excellent and the average age at the time of recruiting and training was only 23 years.

When the cold weather made indoor training necessary, Minto and McGregor Armouries were used for classrooms as well as for parade square work and sports.

Many inspections were carried out by the Acting District Officer Commanding, Colonel Morton, and his G.S.O. I, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Hunt, who were more than satisfied with the state of training and praised the Battery for its showing.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ker held a march past during his inspection when he stopped to pay the Battery an official visit on his way to Ottawa and took the salute himself.

Christmas or New Year's leave was given to all ranks and in order that every one might enjoy the good fellowship of being together the Christmas dinner for the Battery was held on 21st December. What a bang-up party! The dinner was served by the Officers and Sergeants. There was beer, turkey, four kinds of vegetables, dressing, Christmas pudding, mince pie and all the fixings. It was their first Christmas in the army and every one enjoyed it.

After the New Year the Battery was warned for overseas service and preparation was begun. All the ranks were granted four days embarkation leave. On the 3rd February, 1941, at 2200 hours the unit entrained and began its eastward journey which was to end in the heart of Germany itself with England as its first stop.

The scene at the station on leaving home was unforgettable. There were thousands of people on the platform and milling about the station saying good-bye to their loved ones and friends.

The train, after making a few stops for route marches and exercise, finally arrived in Halifax on the 6th February, 1941. The Battery immediately boarded the Warwick Castle, there to remain two weeks before sailing in convoy for Europe and the scene of operations.

### **17th Anti-Aircraft Battery**

On the 17th August, 1940, in the Mewata Barracks in Calgary, Major J. H. R. Thomson began recruiting for active service the 17th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. This Battery perpetuated the Macleod battery of Alberta. Many recruits came from Macleod and Lethbridge District and the balance poured in from Calgary and Edmonton.

The Battery was formed in Calgary in Military District Number 13 and was a separate unit under the District Officer Commanding, Brigadier Matthews. The unit, however, was listed as part of the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and part of the Artillery of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division.

Major J. H. R. Thomson of Calgary was the Officer Commanding and his second-in-command was Captain D. P. (Hardrock) Campbell. The other officers were Lieutenants H. S. Stata, Paul T. Rowe, J. D. Boyd, V. Leech, F. G. (Guy) Pym, G. Madeley and F. Robinson, Charley Pidoux was the Battery Quartermaster Sergeant. A total of 220 Other Ranks were recruited and were formed immediately into three Troops. The Troops in turn were divided into four sections each of which was to man one 40 millimetre Bofors gun.

The Battery was billeted in Mewata Barracks in the heart of the City of Calgary and training in basic subjects and lectures was begun. Many hours were spent on the parade square, and the men became first-class drill enthusiasts. This was carried over into their guards and their general appearance on and off parade. The 17th Battery shared with other units stationed in the Barracks in the mounting of guards of the thirty-seven men. Civilians used to gather to watch the changing of the guard and would remark on the smartness and turnout of the personnel.

Colonel Ralston, the Minister of Defence, inspected the men in the latter part of August and although some of them were still at that time partly dressed in civilian clothes, the Battery was complimented on its fine turnout. The men themselves were greatly cheered and pepped up by the Minister's interest and his encouraging remarks.

Basic subjects of an elementary type were taught by Instructors and by the Officers who had been sent on courses. The training in the handling of personal weapons was brought up to a high standard. The work done on aircraft recognition was to stand them in good stead when they reached overseas.

The hardening up process was further advanced through an extensive sports program under Lieutenant Paul Rower. In addition they took forced marches in full equipment.

Later, on numerous occasions, the District Officer Commanding, Brigadier Matthews, inspected them for state of training and his remarks on the conduct and discipline were always complimentary.

The 17th Battery was inspected by their Commanding Officer on 14th November, 1940. A ceremonial parade was held and a march past with the Commanding Officer taking the salute. Lieutenant-Colonel Ker watched the training and progress of various squads. The state of training could easily be assessed by the ease and precision with which the squads carried out their drills. Colonel Ker, by his encouraging remarks, showed himself well pleased with the training on basic subjects.

The morale of the unit at this time was at its highest, they were shaping into a unit and they were indeed proud of their Battery and all were waiting in eager anticipation to go overseas.

All was not hard work, however, as considerable social activities were carried on. Entertainments were held in the large Barracks itself and dances for the benefit of the men in a rented hall. At Christmas a Battery dinner was served with the usual custom of Officers and Sergeants waiting on tables. It was a new experience for the men and a good time was had by all. All members of the Battery without exception were given four days leave at Christmas or New Years.

Shortly after New Years the Battery was warned for overseas service and equipment was issued. Canada Badges were sewn on sleeves of tunics and greatcoats, paybooks were made up and all preparations made for an early move. Embarkation leave was granted to all ranks.

The troop train carrying the Regimental Headquarters came through from the Pacific Coast and the 17th Battery boarded it at midnight on the 31st January, 1941, and started eastward. At Winnipeg the train was boarded by two of the Officers, Lieutenants H. S. Stat and F. G. Pym, who were on course in that city. On the journey eastward route marches were held at North Bay, Ontario, and Riviere du Loupe, P.W., and the train arrived in Halifax on a cold morning in early February at 0900 hours. Immediately the troops detrained and embarked on the Duchess of York. Two evenings were enjoyed off the ship in Halifax, then it moved up into the Basin where it remained for two weeks before sailing in convoy to the United Kingdom.

### **16th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery**

On the 17th August, 1940 Major E. J. B. Edmonds of Vancouver began recruiting for active service the 1st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery at the Seaforth Barracks in Vancouver. It was originally intended that the Battery should form a part of a Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment and be used for anti-aircraft defence along the western coast of Canada. In September the need arose for another Battery for the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and the 1st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery

became the 16th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. The Battery was at first under command of the District Officer Commanding Military District Number 11. Major E. J. D. Edmonds was made Officer Commanding and his Second-in-Command was Captain F. J. Thorne.

The Lieutenants were mostly drawn from the Non-Permanent Active Militia of Military District No. 11. They were J. D. Overholt, George Avery, T. D. Groves, Norman R. McLeod, George C. Wallach, S. A. (stew) Bourns, A. Melville and D. S. Gillies. The Battery Sergeant-Major was J. G. Scott and the unit strength was 241 Other Ranks.

Training was begun on basic subjects and as many of the Non-Commissioned Officers and Gunners had been in the Non-Permanent Active Militia and were familiar with weapons a great deal of training was spent on 13-pounder gun drill as well as its mechanism and deployment. This early training with 13-pounders and the principles of gunnery were a great help to the men of the Battery as they found it very easy to change over from one type of artillery piece to another.

On 24th September the 16th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was moved to Windsor, Ontario, for training. They became part of a great geographical shuffle of troops in Canada about that time, some for necessary quartering, others to fit in with the general movements eastwards of the Divisions slated for overseas service.

Training was now stepped up and more Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers were sent on courses now readily available in the larger camps in Central Canada. The Ford Motor Company made for the Battery, from scrap metal, a dummy 40-millimetre anti-aircraft gun. It was hauled by a horse and great practice was received in putting it in and out of action.

The Battery fitted in well with the civilian population and were feted and treated with great hospitality not only by their fellow Canadians but by our friends, the Americans of Detroit, Michigan, many of whom went out of their way to make things more pleasant for both officers and men. It is to be remembered that this time America was not at war, but there were many who came to Canada and volunteered for active service with the Canadian forces.

Every Sunday fleets of cars were supplied by the clubs of Windsor: the Gyro, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce and many private citizens as well. These took the enlisted men to Niagara Falls, Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary and Detroit, Michigan, as well as on educational tours to a number of factories such as Ford's and the Heinz factory at Leamington.

The first battle was decisively won when many of the men took unto themselves wives from among these friendly and hospitable citizens of Windsor, Ontario. In the fall of 1940, strikes broke out in the factories of General Motors Company in Windsor. The 16th Battery placed guards and picquets on the whole works and it was six weeks time before the unit was removed from its commitment.

Morale was of the highest but every one was anxious to push on, get overseas and at grips with the enemy.

Basic training progressed very well, sports forming a large part and Tests of Elementary Training were completed by the men in record time. Each man's progress was charted and when Lieutenant-Colonel Ker inspected the Battery on his way to Ottawa, his remarks on their high state of training and physical fitness were very complimentary.

On 8th February, 1941, the Battery started eastwards again and upon arriving in Halifax boarded the Orontes. Within twenty-four hours a number of the unit fell ill with German Measles. The convoy with the rest of the Regiment sailed without them. The Battery was placed in quarantine and three days later the men were moved off the ship and taken to a large Divisional Camp then being built at Debert, Nova Scotia. There was no heat in the quarters and the water pipes had burst so the following day they were moved into the Artillery section of the camp and spent six weeks waiting for another ship. On the 10th of April, having again embarked, this time on the ship Batory, they left for Great Britain and arrived off Gourock on the 19th.

## **Part II**

### **Mobilization and Training in England**

Regimental Headquarters and the 17th Battery disembarked at Gourock in Scotland on the 27th February, 1941, and entrained for Colchester where they were to come under the command of the 1st Canadian Anti-Tank and Light Anti-Aircraft Training Brigade. They were welcomed at the station by then Lieutenant-Colonel, later Brigadier, G.N. McCarter, the Brigade Commander; Major J.W. Barrie, the Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, and Major J.N. Lane, the Brigade Major.

The 15th Battery arrived overseas on 1st March, 1941, and on 13th March the 534d Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Battery joined the Regiment. This latter Battery, which came from the 4th Canadian Field Regiment, had a nucleus of Officers and N.C.O.'s who had been trained in Light Anti-Aircraft Gunnery at the 224th British Light Anti-Aircraft Training Regiment at Aberystwyth in Wales. It had as its Officer Commanding Major C.E. Woodrow with Captain J.R. Pepall as Second-in-Command. The other two officers were Lieutenants C.R. Osler and C.W. Couch. With the arrival of the 16th Battery on the 20th April the Regiment became a complete unit.

Intensive training began under the direction of Brigadier McCarter and all ranks fell to with a keenness and interest which impressed even the English instructors who had been attached to the unit for training purposes. Within the space of a few weeks both officers and men were polishing off the rough edges of gun drill on mobile mountings. The complicated drill with Predictors was mastered in a short space of time and by the middle of March, Officers and Other Ranks were sent for advanced training on Predictors at English training schools.

During the first three months in England the Regiment was inspected on many occasions. The following high ranking officers visited and inspected the unit in turn in addition to the regular visits of the Brigade Commander: Colonel J.L. French, Colchester Garrison Commander; Brigadier J.C. Murchie, Brigadier General Staff, Canadian Military Headquarters; Brigadier J.H. McQueen, Deputy Quartermaster General, accompanied by Brigadier F.R. Phelan, Deputy Adjutant General, Canadian Military Headquarters; Brigadier J.C. Stewart, D.S.O., Royal Artillery; Major General Price Montague, Canadian Military Headquarters; the Commander Royal Artillery, 2nd Divisions, Brigadier R.A. Fraser; Brigadier A.E.D. Tremaine; the Hon. Dr. R.J. Manion, and Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton, the Corps Commander. The Regiment was highly complimented by the inspecting officers who were amazed at the ease with which the Canadians adapted themselves to their new task and the speed with which they moulded themselves into smooth working gun teams.

Light Anti-Aircraft guns were very scarce in England at that time and as the manufacture of them was a long process each gun issued to the Regiment had to be kept in use at all times. Meal hours were staggered to make this possible and after training hours the Regiment used to send a Troop at a time with guns to deploy along the coast near Clacton-on Sea but they had to be back in time to start training in the morning. This sort of training was carried out to make the men familiar with handling the gun and to make use of the gun in off hours. The men called this night training "Duck Shooting" and the name stuck. It was on such an occasion on the night of 6/7th August, 1941, when the 16th Battery was deployed at Walton-on-Naze that they heard an aircraft approaching the coast. The searchlights illuminated the target and they identified it as a Junkers 88, opened fire, hit it with three rounds of H.E. and watch it crash into the sea. The townspeople were greatly delighted and the Gunners were congratulated on all sides.

Training progressed rapidly. In addition to gun and predictor drill, siting and deployment were introduced. The first mobile schemes were conducted on a Troop level but later on they were carried out on a Battery, Regiment and even Brigade level. The 17th Battery went on once scheme with the 49th British Infantry Division in Suffolk and Norfolk counties and gained a great deal of valuable experience.

In July and August the Regiment went to practice firing camps. The 17th and 38th Batteries went to the 13th Light Anti-Aircraft Practice Camp at Alberayron, Wales, and the other two Batteries visited 10th Light Anti-Aircraft Practice Camp at St. Agnes in Cornwall. The success achieved by all ranks gave a boost to their morale and the fine report of the Camp Officers on the ability of the Regiment as a whole and each Battery in particular was merely a true forecast of the high standard that the Regiment was later to attain.

When the unit returned to Colchester, due to their high standard of training and their fine showing at practice camp, they were immediately despatched to protect fighter airdromes and important factories and industrial areas south of London and also the coast of Kent. The 17th Battery took over tasks at Kenley and Tolworth, the 38th Battery at Farnborough and Bromley,



the 53rd at Croydon and Biggin Hill and the 16th at Gatwick and Red Hill. In some cases they used their own guns while in others they took over equipment then on the airdromes or factories.

The airdromes under the protection of the Regiment were used daily for raids and sweeps over France and the lowlands. Men like Malan, Finucane and Bader, who made R.A.F. history in this war, flew from these airdromes and the men felt that they were part of the great plan for the defeat of Germany and the protection of England. Although manning of gun sites day and night in all kinds of weather is a very monotonous job, the pride that they showed in their gun, its surrounding emplacements, their billets and their own appearance showed that their morale was on a very high level indeed.

On the 9th February, 1942, the Regiment was relieved of its commitments and it returned to Goojerat Barracks in Colchester for a brush up in training after such a long spell on the guns. This took the form of intensive work in mobile training. On the 27th February, 1942, the Regiment took part in its first scheme which was called "Repulse." It was designed to illustrate the deployment of an Anti-Aircraft Regiment with a Division and was held in the Colchester area.

The 3rd Regiment ceased to be under command of 1st Anti-Aircraft Brigade on the 19th March, 1942, at which time it moved to Bexhill-on-Sea in the 2nd Canadian Division's area. With Regimental Headquarters at Cooden Beach the Regiment became a forward defence for fighter airdromes and English coastal towns which at that time were receiving many attacks from enemy sneak raiders. The success of the unit in re-siting guns and changing the fire plan at a moment's notice confused the enemy and was instrumental in their being able to knock down a large percentage of enemy raiders attempting to achieve surprise attacks on the English watering places on the south coast.

As the tactical situation allowed, Batteries in turn were sent off to a firing camp where they got practice by firing at a sleeve or drogue towed behind and aircraft.

Besides providing protection for the immediate Divisional area the Regiment lost no opportunity to move with the Division on schemes thus developing their deployment to a high state of efficiency. On 20th April 1942, when the Division went on exercise "Beaver" in Littlehampton-Burpham-Hendon area the Regiment provided anti-aircraft protection for the Divisional Headquarters, routes and debussing areas, returning again to operational tasks at the conclusion of the scheme. A month later they took part in exercise "Tiger."

The 53rd Battery went to Clacton firing camp in 1942, to give a demonstration of anti-aircraft and anti-tank shooting. In attendance at the shoot were General Sir Alan Brooke, General Sir Bernard Paget of the Home Forces, General Pyle of Anti-Aircraft Command, and Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton, the General Officer Commanding 1st Canadian Corps. After putting on an excellent exhibition the Battery returned to their Divisional area and deployed near Bexhill.

In June the Regiment got its first taste of combined operations when four Officers and one hundred and forty Other Ranks went to the Isle of Wight on exercise "Simmer."

In spite of operational tasks, schemes and trips to firing camps the unit found time for quite an extensive sports program under the able direction of Lieutenant P.T. Rowe. On 15th July, 1942, the Regiment, which by that time had moved and re-deployed in the Crawley area, held a sports day on the Crawley Recreation Grounds before a large crowd of sports enthusiasts. The final standing showed the 38th Battery team to be the winners.

Operation "Jubilee" took place in the month of August. A force made up of Headquarters 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, 4th and 6th Canadian Infantry Brigades and detachments from other arms and services plus commandos and a party from Royal Marine Commandos, supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, landed on seven beaches in the Dieppe area, France, at 0528 hours on the 19th August, 1942, after crossing the channel without loss.

The 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment sent 10 Officers and 236 Other Ranks, who were allotted different tasks, in support of Infantry battalions. For this operation the personnel were divided into five parties. The task of the first beach party was to provide anti-aircraft protection on the beach. It was made up of 3 Officers, namely: Major C.R. Ostrander, Officer Commanding Anti-Aircraft Group, Captain P.T. Rowe, Captain Perly-Robertson, and 49 other ranks from the 16th Battery. They embarked on a Tank Landing Craft along with personnel from the Toronto Scottish Regiment on the 18th August, 1942, and proceeded to France. The night was spent in cleaning light machine guns and loading magazines, as well as instructing the light anti-aircraft personnel in the handling of hand grenades 100 round Bren magazines. By 0630 the E3aster German coastal Battery had not been taken by the Commandos. Major Ostrander was then informed that the craft would touch down in 15 minutes but it stopped one mile off-shore and was sent to a navy pool with seven others. Until 1200 hours fighting was going on in the town and in the air, with the destroyers constantly firing inland. The anti-aircraft gunners had a chance to engage a few enemy aircraft, and along with Oelikon's manned by Naval personnel and Vickers machine guns manned by the Toronto Scottish, one Focke Wolfe 190 was destroyed and another damaged. At 1200 hours orders were received to return to England. This party had no casualties.

The second party's task was to capture an anti-aircraft gun in order to investigate a new type of gun sight that the Germans were using. This party was composed of 2 Officers and 24 Other Ranks from the 16th Battery. They embarked with the Royal Regiment of Canada, to whom they were attached. When the craft landed, the beach was strewn with bodies in and out of water and up the seawall. It was continuously swept by machine gun as well as sniper fire and the men that reached the wall were treated with hand grenades dropped from the cliff above and with mortar fire. At approximately 1100 hours the craft was ordered to return. Of this party only seven Other Ranks returned – Lieutenant F.B. Carpenter, Lieutenant J.D. McFetridge and the seventeen Other Ranks were reported missing.

*From the nominal roll of officers and Other Ranks of 3rd Canadian L.A.A. Regiment Killed or Wounded in Action – Appendix B & C – those reported killed, wounded, and missing on 19 August 1942.*

*Rank - Name - Casualty - Remarks*

**Lieutenant Frank B. Carpenter** Killed Prev reported missing - buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery (Hautot-Sur-Mer) Seine-Maritime France Grave Reference E. 75 - Son of Frank and E.S. Carpenter of Winnipeg, Manitoba

**A/BDR James Charters** Presumed Killed Prev reported missing - commemorated Brookwood Memorial Panel 23, Column 2 at Brookwood Military Cemetery; Age 22, Son of James and Isabel Charters, of Vancouver, British Columbia. His brother Ralph David also died on active service with RCAF.

**Gunner J.E. Dessureault** Killed Prev reported missing - buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Grave Reference G. 57

**L/BDR Lucien J. Fournier** Killed Prev reported missing - buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Grave Reference E 77

**Gunner Percy S. Fox** Wounded

**Gunner Isaac Hartlin** Killed Prev reported missing - commemorated Brookwood Memorial Panel 23, Column 2; Son of Mr. & Mrs. E. Hartlin of Spryfield, Halifax Co., Nova Scotia.

**Gunner William J. McMullen** Presumed Killed Prev reported missing - commemorated Brookwood Memorial Panel 23, Column 2; Age 38, Son of Archibald and Mary McMullen, of Benburb, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland

**A/BDR G.A. Northgraves** Killed Prev reported missing - commemorated on Brookwood Memorial Panel 23, Column 2; Age 22; full name George Allen Northgraves; A/BDR Northgraves original unit of service 11th Anti-Aircraft Battery; joined the 16th Battery in June 1940. On September 14, 1942, his father Denton Northgraves of McConnell Road, Chilliwack, British Columbia received a cablegram informing him of his son's death.

**Gunner Henry John Rowe** Wounded

**SGT Mark R Rushton** Wounded

***Gunner Kenneth M. Stuart*** Killed Prev reported missing - buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Grave Reference G 4; full name Kenneth MacDonald Stuart; Age 19; Son of Cyrus and Laura Stuart, of Hall's Harbour, King's Co, Nova Scotia

***Gunner Morris Robert Vick*** Killed Prev reported missing - buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Grave Reference E 23; age 26; Son of James Herbert and Annie Louise Vick, of Listowel, Ontario.

*Rank Name Casualty Date*

***Lieutenant John D McFetridge*** Released POW Wounded 19 May 1945

***Gunner Earl K. Davis*** Released POW Wounded 21 Apr 1945

***Gunner Lorne V Davis*** Released POW Wounded 25 Apr 1945

***Gunner Jack H. France*** Released POW 19 Apr 1945

***Gunner Nelson E Longeuay*** Released POW 21 Apr 1945

***A/BDR H.A. Slader*** Released POW 27 May 1945

***Gunner E.H. Smith*** Released POW Wounded 19 Apr 1945

***Gunner E.A. Underwood*** Released POW Wounded 11 May 1945

***Gunner R.V. Waddy*** Released POW 16 May 1945 - Cowichan, British Columbia. Please see thread "Horror Beyond Dieppe" for his story.

***Gunner G.A. Williams*** Released POW Wounded 20 Apr 1945

The third party which was composed of 1 Sergeant and 6 Other Ranks from 16th Battery was on special duty with Captain Harrel of the British Intelligence Service. They did not land and returned without casualties.

The fourth party, composed of 3 Officers, Captain G.C. Wallach, Lieutenant S.A. Bourns, Lieutenant J.R.C. Dowdell and 54 Other Ranks from the 17th Battery was under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Gosling, the Commanding Officer of the Toronto Scottish Regiment. It was allotted the task of forming 5 anti-aircraft detachments of 4 Bren guns each, which were to be inside the perimeter of the Toronto Scottish Vickers machine guns in order to protect the pavilion on the beach from aircraft attack.

The craft arrived off the coast at 0645 hours, where it remained for six hours. Anti-aircraft protection was provided by two twenty millimetre guns manned by Naval personnel and eight Vickers light machine guns manned by the Toronto Scottish Regiment. Our personnel did not set up the Bren guns, as it was necessary to keep the ammunition for their task. At approximately 1200 hours, the craft was ordered to return to England, without having landed, as another Tank Landing Craft which had landed at their point of disembarkation had been sunk by a German Coastal Battery. No casualties were suffered by this party.

The fifth party consisted of 1 Officer, Lieutenant J.R. Ferguson, and 51 Other Ranks from the 53rd Battery and 1 Officer, Captain Nobleston, and 51 Other Ranks from the 38th Battery. The

task allotted was first to provide anti-aircraft protection for the Tank Landing Crafts and secondly to help in unloading tanks. The party was divided into two Battery groups and embarked on two Tank Landing Craft with Calgary Tank Regiment. They were given 25 Bren guns and 125,000 rounds of ammunition per craft.

The crafts were scheduled to land at 0700 hours but did not. Throughout the morning the gunners were busily engaged in firing at enemy aircraft. At noon, they returned to England without loss.

The remainder of the Regiment which had stayed in England were busy, too. Guns were deployed at Bognor Regis and Selsey as a precaution against enemy attacks on landing points for boats returning from Dieppe. Several Junkers 88's and Dornier 217's raided Bognor and Selsey area at 1600 hours. Although the gun detachments of the Regiment were made up mainly of drivers and cooks they made a creditable showing scoring nineteen hits on the enemy aircraft and shooting three down into the sea, expending in all 214 rounds of ammunition.

On the 23rd August a large representation of all ranks attended a Memorial Service at Brookwood for those who made the supreme sacrifice at Dieppe.

In September the Regiment deployed with the 16th Battery on Thorney Island and Merstham Airdrom, the 17th at Bognor Regis, the 38th in Littlehampton, and the 53rd at Selsey. During the month there was much enemy air activity and a number of enemy aircraft brought down.

During the autumn months the Batteries in turn were sent to firing camps again. In December the drivers were sent to Rothesay, Scotland, for training in the waterproofing of Vehicles, and landing tactics.

The new year opened with Exercise "Falcon" which was supervised by the Corps Commander Royal Artillery. It consisted of a move to a concentration area, deploying to cover Infantry Brigade areas and lastly deploying to protect Divisional routes. Although the scheme lasted only one day much valuable experience was gained.

A new War Establishment was introduced on 19th January, 1943. Troops were increased from four to six 40 millimeter Bofors guns each and the Regiment as a whole was reduced to three Batteries. As a result the 53rd Battery went to form part of a new regiment, the 11th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

Three more exercises followed in quick succession, "Elm", "Spartan" and "Welsh". Of these, "Spartan" was carried out on much the largest scale. On 7th March the 2nd Division concentrated east of Liphook. The exercise was to practice troops in a break through from a bridgehead. The Batteries of the Regiment deployed with their respective Brigades and the Division took up positions on the Hogsback between Farnham and Guilford. When the breakthrough started the Thames River was crossed and the advance halted along the line Grand

Union Canal. When the exercise ended on the 12th March all ranks were weary but confident that they knew their job.

In the latter part of May, upon returning from Lydd Firing Camp the Regiment moved to a new area south of Horsham. Regimental Headquarters was located at Worleys Wood with the three Batteries near by. The month of June was largely devoted to tests in Elementary Training and sports. A Regimental Sports Day was held at Marlpost Wood. This was followed by a Divisional Sports Meet at which the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft team won by a wide margin. In the Divisional Sports Meet held at Petworth Park the Regimental Team came fifth.

The summer of 1943 was a strenuous one. The Regiment on one scheme after another only to return to a firing camp or an operational commitment. No leaves were granted. In the latter part of August the Division practiced moving into assembly areas for movement overseas. The actual practice was carried out and the loading in barges was completed in record time. During this exercise, which was called "Harlequin", the complete Division was kept in suspense and confined to barracks in the marshalling area for two weeks. By that time the Italian invasion had been completed.

Upon returning from "Harlequin" the Regiment proceeded to the Battle Training Camp at Penybont in Wales. It was here under very unsanitary and unhealthy conditions that continuous rain, mud, lack of leave and general lack of action on a war front caused the morale of the Regiment to drop to its lowest ebb.

Lieutenant-Colonel Plow, Major D.P. Campbell, Major Carlyle, Captain Steel, Captain Nobleston, Captain Clark, Lieutenant Dowdell left the Regiment at this time.

A few days later Major J.M. Hockin, Major C.J. Willis, Captain J.H. Buck, Captain J.C. Osborne, Captain W.H. Annable and Lieutenant D.M. Hodge joined.

Much hard work was the daily routine, tactical exercises on platoon and company levels were carried out in almost constant rain.

During a night training exercise Lieutenant Slingsby fell over a cliff while visiting a gun position and sustained serious injuries to his back and spine from which he died in hospital in Canada in the summer of 1944.

Upon returning to fresh billets in Lancing and Shoreham, and new gun sites along the coast, displaced gun crews were put into working order again, and on the 25th October Lieutenant-Colonel G.G. Peake took over command of the Regiment. When new equipment arrived in January, 1944, and a firing camp gave an opportunity to test it the unit had climbed up to its former high standard. It put up a record at Netherton firing camp that was not equalled until the Regiment returned in March and established a new record of 212 hits. The report given by the

Instructor in Gunnery and the Camp Commandant left nothing to be desired. It showed the Regiment at the top of its form as was later demonstrated on its first day in France.

Another change in establishment took place in March, 1944, when one troop of 20 millimeter guns was added to each Battery. These troops came intact from the 7th and 11th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiments which were being disbanded at that time. In addition to their 20 millimeter guns these "Flak" troops were also trained in the use of 4.2 inch mortars.

April brought with it exercise "Step", unit censorship and a move to the Divisional marshalling area. The Regiment encamped in a beautiful woods near Eyethorne in Kent. Inspections by the Commander Royal Artillery, the General Officer Commanding and General Eisenhower followed. On each occasion the unit received special mention for fine turnout.

The waterproofing of all vehicles completed by 9th June, the balance of the time was spent on a sports program which terminated in a Regimental Sports Day in the latter part of the month.

As 1st July drew near, although morale was at its highest, the Regiment became restless, anxious to get going and get at grips with the enemy.

### **PART III**

#### **ACTIVE SERVICE**

On the night of the 1 / 2 July, 1944, the Regiment commenced the move from Eyethorne in Kent to a marshalling area near London. The 16th Battery led off in the pouring rain at 0230 hours followed by the 17th, 38th and Regimental Headquarters, on succeeding nights. En route "buzz bombs" heading for London were seen to pass overhead at regular intervals. One landed near the highway as the convoy entered the city where it caused much destruction but none of the unit's vehicles were damaged. Upon arriving at the transit camp near Tilbury instructions with regards to embarking were received, waterproofing of vehicles was completed, and on the following day the unit began loading equipment at Tilbury docks. As each ship finished loading it moved out and started down the river to the boom where it waited for the others. The whole Second Canadian Infantry Division moved in the convoy.

It proceeded down the river into the Downs past Ramsgate, Margate, Deal and Dover, thence into the Channel. While passing through "buzz bomb alley" many V weapons passed over. One was seen hotly pursued by a fighter but they both disappeared towards the coast near Hastings. The men recognized towns along the South coast of England where they had spent many happy days during the past four years and many of them wondered what the future had in store for them.

On the way across endless numbers of ships were seen. Buoys with flags mounted on them marked the channel route for the entire crossing. Convoys going each way found a never ending stream of ships from the English coast to that of France. On the third day at dusk the convoy

anchored just outside a huge artificial breakwater near the French coast. Sunken ships helped to form a sort of harbour in that area. Nearby were cruisers, destroyers, battle ships and hundred of merchant vessels, some of which were unloading. The Regiment had to wait its turn.

Darkness fell and with it came enemy aircraft. The din which followed was terrific. The battleship Rodney, which was lying nearby shelling Caen opened up with all her anti-aircraft guns; cruiser and destroyers began firing and in addition the anti-aircraft land defences went into action. A sheet of red tracer could be seen following the path of the aircraft as they circled and banked. One aircraft was hit by flak and its wing caught fire. It was seen diving to earth a short distance away and crash with a huge burst of flame. The sight was most impressive after such a quiet crossing.

On the 6th July, 1944, landing craft came alongside the ships and the Regiment commenced to unload equipment and men. In every case the men went ashore along with their own vehicles and equipment. Just as soon as a landing craft touched down the front of it was dropped to form a gang plank for the vehicles which drove off through the shallow water complete with personnel. Upon reaching land each vehicles was directed by Provost to the de-waterproofing area where the first stage of de-waterproofing was carried out. Here each Battery and Regimental Headquarters was met by its advance party Officer and guided to a concentration area near Tierceville. Unloading was not all completed until the next day.

At approximately 1900 hours on the evening of the 6th July, Lancaster bombers by the hundreds streamed overhead on the great daylight raid on Caen and Vaucelles. They were seen to drop their bombs, bank sharply toward the right and return into the setting sun at a lower altitude. The protective screen of enemy flak was colossal. A number of Lancasters were hit and went down almost instantly. One with two engines on fire crashed into the sea nearby and burst into flames.

On the 10th of July reconnaissance parties from all units were sent out to the area Rots-Carpiquet-Authie-St. Manvieu with a view to concentrating the Division astride the Caen-Bayeux road with its centre the Carpiquet Airdrome. The Regiment was to remain under command of the Commanding Officer with one troop from each Battery in support of each of the Field Regiments. The other two Troops of each Battery were to be given the task of protecting the concentration areas of their respective Infantry Brigades and the 20 millimeter Troops were to be used to thicken up the fire plan. All were to be sited behind a ridge overlooking the airport and the valley of the Orne River. The peculiar nature of the ground in this particular area plus good camouflage was later instrumental in catching a large number of enemy aircraft napping.

The Regiment moved to this new area under cover of darkness on the night 10/11 July. The anti-aircraft defences provided by the unit were augmented by the guns of the 4th Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, then spread thinly over their whole Divisional front. At 1430 hours on the 11th July twelve Messerschmitt 109G's appeared flying at approximately 200 feet along the valley from Caen parallel with the Caen-Bayeau road. They were cruising at about 225 miles per hour and were probably a reconnaissance flight. On reaching Carpiquet they banked sharply right



towards the coast and directly over the Regiment's guns attempting to gain altitude as they did so. Every gun in the unit fired at point blank range. Two of the aircraft fell immediately behind "E" Troops' headquarters, one behind the 16th Battery's headquarters and others a short distance away. Of the twelve that came over seven fell in flames within open view of the Gunners and it is believed that the remaining five were damaged. These aircraft continued taking evasive action and banked sharply toward their own front lines. This was the first engagement in which the Divisional Artillery took part.

At 1400 hours the following day six Messerschmitt 109G's appeared from the same direction (southwest) and banked sharply north at the same place as they did on the day previous. Three were immediately shot down; the others continued, but two of them were smoking badly when last seen. The pilot of one machine bailed out but drifted down into his own lines near the Orne River to the south of the gun positions. Later in the day two Spitfires following the same course as the enemy and machine gunning as they came passed over the gun positions. Both were shot down. A Court of Inquiry was convened to investigate the tactics of the Spitfire pilots and the Regiment was relieved of all blame.

Two days later a mixed group of enemy aircraft, Messerschmitt 109's and Focke Wolfe 190's appeared, from the southeast and passed over Carpiquet airdrome at about 1200 feet. With the exception of the 20 millimeter Troops who were operating under restricted fire orders all guns in the Regiment went into action. Eight of the aircraft were seen to fall but the Infantry received a number of casualties when machine gunned by a Focke Wolfe 190 returning towards his own lines at zero feet.

The first casualty in the Regiment occurred on the 13th July when Captain J.H. Buck, "D" Troop Commander, was wounded by shrapnel. A few days later two members of his Troop, then in support of the 5th Field Regiment northwest of Verson, were killed by mortar fire, and H/Captain Seaman, the Regimental Padre, was so badly wounded, that he died a day later.

### ***Killed In Action - July 12 – 17***

***Chaplain 4th Class William Alfred Seaman***, d. July 21, 1944, age 34; son of William James Seaman and Sophia Seaman; b. June 14, 1910 Springfield, Queen's County, Prince Edward Island; enlisted August 2, 1940 Pictou, Nova Scotia; husband of Louise Van Duyn Seaman of Sackville, New Brunswick; buried XVI B 14 Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery Calvados, France]

***SGT Stanley George Machnee*** k. July 15, 1944, age 28, son of George and Mary Machnee of Edmonton, Alberta; husband of Helen Luella Machnee, of Edmonton; buried XV. A. 13 Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery Calvados, France

***Gunner Marshall Vernon Sawler*** k. July 15, 1944, age 22, son of Roland L. and Vera P. Sawler, of Western Shore, Lunenburg Co., Nova Scotia; buried XV. C.14 Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery Calvados, France

***Gunner Lewis Clark McKenzie***, d. of wounds July 17, 1944, age 32, son of Alexander and Annabella McKenzie; husband of Cynthia Jan McKenzie, of Norwood Grove, Manitoba; buried XIII. B. 7 Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery Calvados France]

***Wounded in Action - July 11 – 17***

***Captain John Harris Buck*** w. July 13, 1944

***L/Bombardier John L. Bates*** w. July 13, 1944

***Gunner M.R. Cox***, w. July 14, 1944

***Gunner Albert E. Hurlburt***, w. July 11, 1944 – Chilliwack, British Columbia; 16th Battery

***Gunner (Bombardier) Lorne F. Kirk***, w. July 12, 1944

***Gunner Robert A. Newlunds***, w. July 17, 1944

***Gunner Gerard N. Peterson***, w. July 14, 1944

***SGT M.W. Phillips***, w. July 14, 1944

***Gunner W.G. Spencer***, w. July 14, 1944 – Calgary, Alberta; 17th Battery

Although the whole Regiment was now under shell fire, the morale was never higher. At last the men were doing the job for which they had trained for so long. Every man was on the alert at all times and every engagement of aircraft indicated their high state of training. They had already satisfied themselves that they were able to not only protect their area but knock out of the air anything the enemy had to send over. The high praise and compliments handed out by the Infantry and other arms of the service who went out of their way to visit gun sites was greatly appreciated. When shelling was heaviest they took to their slit trenches like veterans and like gophers they emerged when immediate danger had passed.

With the fall of Caen and its suburb, Faubourge de Vaucelles the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division crossed the River Orne and dug in on the right flank in the area Fleury sur Orne-Ifs. The regiment deployed with one semi-mobile troop in support of each Field Regiment while the other troops gave protection to the Brigade forming up areas. [21 July 1944]

The failure of the Luftwaffe daylight raids led to light bomber nuisance raids at night. These were carried out by Messerschmitt 109's, Focke Wolfe 190's, Junkers 88's or 188's usually accompanied by flares. They strafed, bombed or took pictures by means of instantaneous bursts of some new type of flare. A favourite target was the searchlights which were supplying artificial moonlight. Their chief weapon was the anti-personnel bomb dropped in a big canister which on the way down discharged its cargo over a wide area with a terrific noise. As the Regiment was handicapped by orders against firing visually at aircraft at night, barrages were worked out to combat this new threat. The Regiment was linked to an early warning system by means of a buried German cable which passed underneath the Orne River. This enabled a Radial Zone Barrage to be fired with Number 14 Tracer with excellent results. The first night the Regiment put up a barrage two Junkers 88's were shot down. Attacks soon became much less frequent and from a higher level.

The concentration of men and equipment in the Faubourg de Vaucelles area and immediately to the south of it was so great that every barrage sent over by the enemy inflicted heavy casualties. It became necessary to establish counter mortar observation posts. On the 29th July the Regiment established and manned three of these. Here, using their own means of communication, they got on with the job of flash spotting and pinpointed many "moaning minnies," rockets, mortars, and guns on the immediate fronts. The information obtained at these Observation Posts was flashed immediately by wireless to the Counter Mortar office at H.Q, R.C.A. The Counter Mortar Officer passed it on to the guns. These observation posts relieved the overworked Artillery Observation Posts and gave a better fix on their spotting as well.

News of what was going on on other fronts was most difficult to get. Newspapers were few and the Germans jammed the B.B.C. off our 109 receivers. It was necessary for the Educational N.C.O. to take down news at dictation speed from a civilian radio and send out a news sheet to each gun detachment. This was greatly appreciated.

On the night of the 7/8 August, 1944, the 16th Battery marked out with Bofors fire the lanes and objectives for the big push that led to the break through to Falaise. In all there were four lanes each 16 yards in width, three on the right and one 500 metres east on the left flank. The guns were surveyed in north of Verrieres and gun pits dug. The positions were occupied by night. The firing was to begin at H hour (2330 B) and stop at H plus 55 but at the request of the tank commanders it was continued until daylight. Two thousand two hundred and eighty rounds were fired by three guns with no stoppages.

On 8th August, 1944, American Fortresses, due to an error in navigation, unloaded their bombs a short distance south of Vaucelles causing a large number of casualties. Eight members of the Regiment were killed and a number injured. No anti-aircraft guns fired at them.

*Casualties on 8 August 1944 were:*

**K18091 Gunner John Earl Boyd** - Killed Age 30, son of Hugh Archibald and Edith Jane Boyd of Kamloops, British Columbia; buried IX. A. 11 Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery, Calvados, France

**F78103 Gunner Gordon Albert Dewar** – Killed Age 21; date of birth September 1, 1922 Roseneath, Prince Edward Island, son of William Weston Dewar and Florence M. Dewar of Brudenell, King's Co., Prince Edward Island; buried VI. F. 13 Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

**L10546 L/BDR David George Farrow** – Killed Age 24; son of Ernest T. Farrow and Ann Farrow of Regina, Saskatchewan. Buried VI. F. 12, Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

**B111901 Gunner William Leo Fortier** – Killed Age 21; son of Albert and Mary Fortier of Toronto, Canada; buried VI. F. 10, Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

**D124613 Gunner Joseph Bernard Horn** – Killed Age 22; son of William Horn and Regina Horn of Montreal, Quebec; buried V. F. 7. ., Bretteville-Sur-Laize. [also includes mini bio and notes that he is also honoured on pg 35 of the memorial book, Canadian Jews in World War II, Part II, Casualties

**K76810 Gunner Albert L. Kinney** – Died of Wounds Age 26; son of Milo J. and Florence A. Kinney of South Fort George, British Columbia; buried VI. F. 11, Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

**K15182 BDR Gordon G. Sheldon** – Killed Age 39; son of John Herbert and Lena Sheldon; husband of Exie Estelle Sheldon of Stockton, California, U.S.A.; buried VI. F. 15, Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery

The Regiment provided directional fire a second time when on 13th August, just North of Barberry, "C" Troop marked the advance of the 4th and 5th Brigades by firing a gun on each flank. In addition to giving direction it was found that the tracer of the Bofors shell provided a considerable amount of light. Both the Tanks and Infantry were well pleased with its help.

About this time, in conjunction with the Engineers, the Regiment repaired and put into action three captured 15 centimeter Nebelwerfers. On the 15th August, 1944, these were fired from two different positions near Brette-ville-sur-Laize. The results were unfortunately unknown as the visibility was bad and the fall of shot unobserved. The enemy's counter mortar reply was rapid and effective.

After the capture of Falaise, while the pocket surrounding a large portion of the German army was being sealed off, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division set off in pursuit of the remnants of the battered German army who were escaping towards the Seine River. With the superiority of the

allied air force firmly established slaughter and decimation awaited any enemy that attempted to move on the roads. The Regiment, less the semi-mobile Troops attached to the Field Regiment and 20 millimeter Troops now in "B" Echelon awaiting disbandment, was first concentrated in the Divisional area in an orchard in Morteaux-Couliboeuf.

The traffic at that time was very heavy and the roads were in a terrible state having been cratered by bombs and shells and littered with wrecked and burned out German tanks, armoured cars, and trucks. Dead horses lay about in tangles of harness still hitched to their guns and wagons just as they were when caught by the allied air force on their vengeful holiday.

The Division pushed on to Le Billot and then set out for Orbec. The semi-mobile troops of the Regiment moved with their respective Field Regiments and the other two troops of each Battery with their respective Brigades. The night move through Vimoutiers was one that all drivers will remember. The town itself was a heap of rubble and the roads which were in a complete state of ruin were strewn with Tiger tanks, guns and wrecked enemy vehicles of all kinds. Although the move was made without lights the Regiment never lost a vehicle which is a glowing tribute to the drivers. The Infantry push, supported by the artillery was halted before Orbec by a determined enemy rearguard equipped with 88 millimeter guns and other lesser important types of artillery. The balance of the Regiment deployed on the flanks and rear while the town was cleared.

The advance was slowed up again when the enemy blew the bridge at Brionne. Stiff opposition in the Foret de la Londe near Bourghtheroulde held up the Division for a time and that loop of the Seine was never crossed. It was necessary to turn right and cross at Elbeuf.

The Regiment passed through Rouen on the 31st August where thousands of cheering people lined the roadside. It was here that the French underground was first seen at work gathering in collaborators and escaping Germans. Women collaborators with shaven locks were forced to stand by the roadside for all to see. From then on every town and village had its haircutting parties in the town square.

In the latter part of August the self-propelled Troops were attached to their respective Infantry Brigades, with two guns to each battalion. They were to move at the rear of the battalion advance guards and give covering fire for the Infantry. The extreme was reached when the Infantry ferried on tanks followed by two self-propelled guns, set off on an armoured reconnaissance. Opposition was brushed aside by the tanks while the Infantry deployed and collected prisoners. The 17th Battery self-propelled troop made such an armoured reconnaissance right into the town of Dieppe capturing prisoners and driving through lanes of cheering citizens.

After the fall of Dieppe the Regiment concentrated at Offranville. While there all the equipment was checked and guns and vehicles cleaned and repainted. The veterans of the Dieppe raid of 1942 held a memorial service at the graves of their fallen comrades on the morning of 3rd

September and in the afternoon the whole Second Infantry Division marched past the saluting base where General Crerar took the salute – thus were our fallen honoured.

Following the rest period the Regiment moved with the Divisional column through Abbeville and Montreuil thence to Isenberghe area in Belgium. No opposition was encountered on this move but en route the column passed so close to the enemy held medieval town of Bergues that it was possible to see the Germans on the wall of the town. A section of the road was under shellfire but not casualties occurred.

On the 11th September, 1944, a new War Establishment came into effect. The Regiment was reduced to three Batteries of two Troops, one Troop being semi-mobile and the other self-propelled. It was generally agreed that the semi-mobile troops should be used in support of the Field Regiments and the self-propelled ones for special tasks with the Infantry Brigades. This arrangement did, however, vary with the tactical situation.

The 5th Infantry Brigade occupied the area including the banks of the Canal immediately adjacent to the enemy fortified town of Bergues. Anti-tank and light anti-aircraft guns were sited on all roads leading out of the town to prevent a threatened breakthrough by the German garrison. “C” and “D” Troops of the 17th Battery were assigned this role with “D” Troop in support of the Regiment de Maisonneuve who were sited on the only high ground on the left flank of Bergues overlooking the Canal de Colme and the village of Brienne. The guns were brought in under cover of darkness and gun pits dug. The French underground brought the information that a platoon of Germans were holding the station house 500 yards away. It was engaged by “D” Troop with armour piercing and high explosive shells and set on fire. Cries of agony were heard and one German was seen jumping from a window. On later examination it was found that about fifteen men with their equipment had perished. Numerous other targets were engaged by these guns with satisfactory results, one in particular, a staff car, was hit by a round of high explosive at 2500 yards while still on the move. Germans tumbled out and ran into a house. The house was then worked over, rounds entering the windows and doors, but the gunners were disappointed when the house didn’t burn.

The 6th Infantry Brigade with “H” Troop of the 38th Battery in support pushed on past Isenberghe to Middelkerke. On the 12th September this Troop in support of the Essex Scottish was called on to neutralize an enemy strongpoint and observation post in that area. All main roads were under observation, but H3 got into position near a 17 pounder anti-tank gun without being seen. Targets were indicated by the Infantry Commander. The 17 pounder opened fire first then the 40 millimeter gun was asked to fire on what seemed to be a camouflaged gun position. The camouflage was quickly cleaned off by the Bofors shells and later eight men were found dead in the gun pit. They next engaged the command post, firing at the slits. Some rounds were seen to burst on the edge of the slit but a great many went inside and burst. Very soon the white flag went up and 280 prisoners were taken. Two Essex Scottish men who had been taken prisoner by the enemy were in the post at the time. They reported that the bursting of the high explosive within the emplacement so terrified the enemy that he gave up. The praises of the Commanding

Officer of the Essex Scottish on such close support was considered a tribute to the efficiency of the gun crews and the versatility of the Bofors gun.

“B” Troop of the 16th Battery in support of the Essex Scottish in Oost-Dunkerque-Bains area opened fire at 500 yards over open sights at an enemy strongpoint. Although they lost a gun by enemy shell fire they gave a good account of themselves and the Germans surrendered nearly 300 officers and men.

While still in the Dunkerque area the Regiment manned three French 88 millimetre equipments captured near Nieuport. Key personnel were obtained from the 6th Canadian Field Regiment. These guns were semi-mobile, tractor drawn with a split trail and fired a 100 pound shell. They were taken out of a German fortress by R.C.E.M.E. and deployed in the area of Lapanne to engage targets in Dunkerque. About 800 rounds were fired in four days. The observation posts reported the gun to be quite accurate and the fall of shot satisfactory. One premature occurred at 150 yards from the piece but no one was injured.

About the middle of September word was received that the Canadian Army was to clear the port of Antwerp so Dunkerque was left to special service troops. The Second Canadian Infantry Division was ordered to deploy in the Antwerp area by the 19th September. For their new task the semi-mobile troops were to work with the Infantry Brigades and the self-propelled Troops were to support the Field Regiments. The whole Division spread out thinly on the ground in and around the city and, due to intermittent shelling, the Regiment was again called on to man Observation posts.

Life in the city of Antwerp itself went on at a normal pace even with Germans still in some parts of the town and intermittent shelling during the day and night. The troops enjoyed the luxuries of the city in their off hours but they found it difficult to realize that a war was going on outside.

With the absence of the Luftwaffe and the success of the 40 millimeter Troops in a ground role, a method of laying the guns to fire by the indirect method was experimented with. To begin with, range tables, the angle of sight graph, a compass and a field clinometer were used, but later all guns were equipped with both bearing and range drums and the Bofors became a very accurate harassing weapon.

Each self-propelled Troop in turn tried indirect firing with varying success. The air O.P. observed for one of the Troops and reported rounds in the target areas, slipping in open windows, ricocheting off walls and generally having a terrifying effect. In addition to damaging houses this particular shoot forced a German 88 millimetre Battery to move.

Any attempt to cross the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal near St. Job in 't Goor met with very heavy opposition. The 5th and 6th Brigades were given the task of crossing the canal, attacking on the right flank and clearing the far bank as they advanced. The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment with the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment as infantry, and the light anti-aircraft guns in support, were to hold

the near bank of the canal and prevent the enemy from patrolling it. Major H.M. Gandier with the 38th Battery and one Troop of the 17th under command sited the guns; wire was laid, and all guns were ordered to fire on any target within range. From an observation post in St. Job in 't Goor targets were pinpointed and a number of harassing and destructive shoots carried out. No patrol reached the near side of the canal and the task was accomplished when a number of the Germans surrendered and the balance withdrew northward under pressure from the infantry.

Upon moving to the Antwerp area the self-propelled Troop of the 16th Battery had many interesting ground tasks as well as providing anti-aircraft protection when required. With two guns in support of each battalion of the 4th Infantry Brigade they deployed in the dock area of the city on the north bank of the river. There was bitter fighting in that area as the enemy forces south of the Scheldt estuary were endeavouring to cross the river and make their way northwards, while those on the north shore were trying their best to blow up the dock installations before leaving. On the 21st September "A" Troop engaged and sunk a German motor launch off the shore near the village of Lillo. On three different occasions they brought down harassing fire on the village of Eecheren just north of the city and on the 23rd September they put up a Radial Zone Barrage over the Antwerp docks area.

As the enemy withdrew northward along the coastal area he was harassed all the way. The town of Woensdrecht was strongly held hence received a large share of the harassing fire. The high ground overlooking the town made it possible to pick out individual houses through the telescopic sights and fire either high explosive or armour piercing shells at a range of 1000 yards. The 2nd Anti-Tank and the Light Anti-Aircraft guns fired at a church steeple there, a confirmed observation post, until it was completely battered down.

With the withdrawal of the enemy to the mouth of the Veveland peninsula the right flank of the Second Division became very long and was held by an extremely thin line as was proved when enemy patrols filtered down into the Brasschaet area. To strengthen the defences the 108th Battery of the 2nd Anti-tank Regiment and the 17th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery were placed under command of the Cameron Highlanders on the 11th October and put in the line as infantry on the right flank of the Division north of the village of Putte on the Dutch-Belgian frontier.

"D" Troop of the 17th Battery went into the line with the Camerons on their left flank and the Anti-Tank on their right. In addition to twelve Bren guns they sited and dug in three self-propelled Bofors to be used as heavy machine guns in case of an enemy counter attack. "C" Troop guns were carefully sited in the sand dunes at the rear of the Anti-tank positions. Their task was to provide support for the infantry and anti-aircraft protection if the need arose. A lookout tower in front of the "D" Troop position made an excellent observation post as it covered a distance of 3000 yards on the immediate front. Telephone line was laid from the observation post to "C" Troop guns, to the 108th Anti-tank Battery and to the 6th Infantry Brigade hence it was possible to call on the 6th Field Regiment for help if the need arose. A constant watch was kept on the immediate front. With Captain W. R. Tippet, "D" Troop Commander, at the observation post controlling the fire of the guns, an enemy ammunition dump



was hit and set on fire, enemy slit trenches and dugouts were engaged and German self-propelled guns attempting to shell the Divisional area were forced to move. Targets were given by 6th Brigade and on occasions enemy observation posts and machine gun nests were engaged over open sights. The enemy retaliated with mortar and shell fire but the troops had no casualties.

Active patrolling was carried out over the whole area and such an aggressive and destructive fire program was kept up day and night that the enemy was deterred from making an attack on that part of the front.

When the 17th Battery headquarters was situated just north of Putte near the Dutch-Belgian frontier it was subjected to a series of shellings by enemy self-propelled guns. On the 16th October the Battery Commander Major C.J. Willis was seriously wounded by shell fragments and died upon being admitted to hospital in Antwerp.

***Major Charles James Willis**, son of Harold S. and Amy Jane Willis, of Winnipeg, Manitoba; husband of Lauretta Merle Willis. Buried III. K. 9. Schoonselhof Cemetery Belgium.*

*[The cemetery itself is located in Wilrijk, a suburb of Antwerp. From the Bistplein in front of the railway station in Wilrijk follow the Kleinsteenweg for 300 M until you arrive at the ring road. Turn right and follow the ring road for 100 M to the first set of traffic lights and turn left. Go under the flyover and continue straight on over the dual carriageway into Jules Moretus Lei. Follow this street for 1 kilometre and the entrance to the Municipal Cemetery is on your left. After entering the cemetery follow the Commission (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) signs to the **three Commission plots** at the far end of the cemetery.*

The Commanding Officer, the remaining Battery Commanders and a representation from all ranks of his Battery were present when he was laid to rest in Boom Cemetery just outside the city of Antwerp. Thus passed a gentleman, respected and admired by his men, another sacrifice of Canada on the altar of Germany's second bid for world domination.

As the enemy had been unable to destroy the dock area before leaving Antwerp he commenced, about the middle of October, to send over "buzz bombs" and his new V2 weapon. Some fell short within the Divisional area near the Regiment's "B" Echelon but most of them landed within the city itself causing fearful destruction. The dock facilities, however, escaped damage.

When the 4th Armoured Division pushed through on the right flank of the 2nd Division it was necessary to still maintain the flank south of Ossendrecht. In order to have the Calgary Highlanders for the attack on Beveland Peninsula they were relieved on the 22nd October by the 17th Battery with one troop of the 16th under command. Sergeants to act as leaders of patrols were supplied by the Cameron Highlanders. The 38th Battery supplied the harassing fire and the enemy was kept at bay and forced to withdraw from the 4th Division on the right. Meanwhile the 2nd Division swept up the Beveland Peninsula. A raid by an enemy aircraft resulted in the Regiment reverting to its anti-aircraft role [29 Oct. 1944] and it deployed to protect the

Divisional Route as far as Goes. Later the 38th Battery provided harassing and destructive fire for the 5th Brigade's attack on the causeway leading to Walchern Island.

Upon being relieved by an English Mountain Division the 2nd Division moved to a rest area near Brussels. The Regiment concentrated at Perck [2 Nov 1944]. Here, all equipment and vehicles were cleaned, painted and reconditioned. In addition to getting a much needed rest the men were given time to see the sights and explore the wonders of a continental city.

On the 6th November Lieutenant-General Simonds, the Corps Commander, called a meeting of all Officers and Warrant Officers of the Second Division. It was held in a large theatre in Mechlin, Belgium. He reviewed the great task just completed, handing out compliments where they were due, and everyone was impressed by his sincerity. Antwerp had been cleared on time. The next phase was a holding one for the purpose of building up supplies in order to push on. The Division was assigned the task of holding the Nijmegen sector including the vital bridges in the Nijmegen-Grave area and was to actively patrol the front in order to keep the enemy guessing.

The Canadians were the anvil on which the German 15th Army had been hammered out. Could it be possible that same anvil would do again for the next blow and the prize be Germany itself?

The Regiment, in Divisional column, left Perck, at 2330 hours on the 8th November and arrived at Nijmegen, Holland, at 1200 hours on the 9th taking over immediately gun for gun from the 43rd British Division. Then began a reshuffling and regrouping as the Division was taking over part of the 89th U.S. Airborne Division's area as well. These divisions had been holding the same line on the borders of Germany since the abortive attack on Arnhem in mid-September.

Upon arrival in the new area the Troops showed great initiative in preparing winter quarters. Excellent dugouts were built, stoves were installed and within a few weeks everyone was comfortably settled in.

Evidence of the desperate September struggle could be seen everywhere. Wrecked American gliders, parachutes and packing cases were scattered all over the area. The Germans endeavoured to booby trap and mine every conceivable thing in no man's land as well as their own lines and some casualties were suffered by enthusiastic souvenir hunters.

As great stores of 40 millimetre ammunition were left behind by the outgoing unit a reconnaissance was made for positions from which the guns could be fired in a harassing role or a destructive shoot. Traces were prepared showing the gun positions and targets that could be engaged from each. Each target was given a number and in addition the trace also gave the line, range and angle of sight to lay the gun on. This enabled a Troop to occupy any gun position, fire on a given target and get away in the shortest possible time. The traces were submitted to higher formation and when a call for fire on certain targets came down one of the self-propelled troops working in co-operation with a Field Regiment occupied the position and, using the Field

Regiment's observation post and lines of communication, engaged the targets. On occasions the Regiment used its own observation post and means of communication. In this way selected targets were successfully dealt with regularly but not without some casualties as the enemy was capable of bringing down return fire within ten to fifteen minutes.

*Casualties 3 December 1944 – The Calgary Highlander's and the Black Watch's War Diaries state that the weather in the Nijmegen Salient was fair and cold in the morning with heavy showers during the afternoon and evening.:*

**M60984 Bombardier Merlin Amos Crawford** died of wounds, son of Amos L. and Anne Crawford; husband of Melba Frances Crawford of Lethbridge, Alberta. Buried IV. C. 7. Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery

*(Groesbeek is located 10 km south east of the town of Nijmegen and close to the German frontier. The Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery is 3 km north of the village and 1500 metres east of the main road to Nijmegen. Follow the direction signs to Mook War cemetery. After passing Mook War cemetery continue to the village of Groesbeek to a set of traffic lights. Turn left at the lights onto Dorpstraat passing through Groesbeek. The road name then changes to Molenweg. A Commonwealth War Graves Commission direction sign indicates the right hand turning down Molwenweg onto the Zeven Heuvelenweg. The Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery is located on the right hand side, about 1 km after entering this road. On the Memorial in the cemetery are inscribed the following words: Pro amicis mortui amicusvivimus, We live in the hearts of friends for whom we died.*

**M60854 Lance Bombardier John C. Kennedy**, Wounded

**M61000 Gunner Phaederick R. Lowe**, Wounded

**M60943 Sergeant John H McGillis**, Wounded

**C120580 Gunner Cecil W. Velej**, Wounded

As winter approached the weather became more and more disagreeable as it rained almost every day. On days when flying was possible enemy aircraft came over the area in an attempt to bomb Nijmegen and Grave bridges as well as take photos and drop propaganda leaflets.

Early in December the personnel of the Regiment got their first view of Germany's new jet-propelled aircraft, the Messerschmitt 163 and 262. The former, which appeared to be a bumpy, bat-like, single jet machined, seemed to have a very uneven speed as if gliding most of the time. The 262 was a beautifully streamlined twin jet aircraft that took evasive action by means of a slight roll and travelled at an incredible speed. The gunners were keenly interested in this new type and looked forward to engaging it. They had not long to wait.

"D" Troop of the 17th Battery was sited in and around a wood on the high ground not far from Groesbeek. On the morning of the 18th December the peculiar sound of jet-propelled aircraft was heard approaching. Three Messerschmitt 262's appeared almost instantaneously flying at

zero feet. As the guns opened fire the aircraft began to take evasive action. One was hit and although it headed for its own lines it crashed in no man's land. This is believed to have been the first jet-propelled aircraft shot down by any Canadian Light Anti-aircraft Regiment.

As the enemy was thought to be massing artillery in the Reichwald area the unit was again called on to man counter mortar observation posts. Each Battery set up a post and manned it with one Officer and eight Other Ranks including signallers. These parties had a difficult time as their area was shelled intermittently and they were in constant danger of being overrun by enemy night patrols. It was necessary for the units to maintain these posts until such time as the Divisional Artillery Counter Mortar Staff was set up. The Unit Officers were relieved about the 12th of December, but it was not until a month later that the Other Ranks were returned to the Regiment.

The increased air activity during Christmas week was but the prelude to the break through by Field Marshall Von Rundstedt on the American Ardennes front. As a precaution against enemy paratroops on the Nijmegen front one Infantry Brigade was withdrawn from the line to act as a mobile reserve and the 16th Battery, with "C" Troop of the 17th under command, moved to protect vital bridges near Ravenstein. This necessitated the re-siting of all anti-aircraft guns in the Nijmegen area. With the threat of enemy parachutists becoming more acute further precautions were taken; guards were doubled and warning signals arranged. The harassing program was doubled, too. The 38th and 17th Battery took part in all Divisional fire plans in support of Battalion attacks in an effort to straighten out their front lines and take enemy prisoners. On Runstedt's push being held, the Divisional mobile reserve returned and with it came the 16th Battery and "C" Troop of the 17th. All the guns returned to their former gun sites but harassing programs were continued by each Battery in turn.

For Christmas there was a special ration issue which included such extras as frozen turkey and fresh fruit. This issue, supplemented by large N.A.A.F.I. purchases of beer, candy, cigars and fruit cake made an excellent dinner. During the day the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Peake, and the Adjutant, Captain H.S. Stata, visited all gun sites and found everybody happy.

During the winter, clubs both for Officers and Other Ranks were opened in Nijmegen, Grave and Oss. Allotments at the cinemas were very generous and regular 48 hour passes were granted to Ghent and Brussels. With the New Year came privilege leave to the United Kingdom and later to Paris.

In early January preparations for the spring offensive began. Just as soon as the roads were repaired restrictions were put on local travel and convoy after convoy arrived. Regiment after regiment of artillery moved in and dug in in the Second and Third Divisional areas wherever they could find room. Then came tanks of all kinds, buffaloes, ducks and infantry. Everyone knew in his own mind that there was a big push in the offing but security was excellent.

The big push, known as operation "Veritable" was scheduled for 8th February. On the 5th the Regiment received orders to concentrate the guns near Berg-en-dal, dig in and prepare to carry out a fire plan which was to be known as "Pepperpot." Major Gandier was put in charge of the Regimental show and he had at his disposal his own Battery plus "B" and "D" Troops. They moved into the allotted gun area, which was very small and dug in on the night of the 6th February. As all roads were almost impassable the ammunition had to be hauled to the guns from an Army Service Corp dump by Bren Gun Carriers provided by the Toronto Scottish. This was completed by 2300 hours on the night of the 7th. The barrage began at 0500 hours on the following morning. Although the Regiment's guns fired 800 rounds each their contribution was only a small part of one of the greatest barrages of the war. The enemy retaliated at first with air bursts but soon he failed to reply and the Infantry went in and captured their first objective without opposition.

Divisional Headquarters followed the Infantry into Germany but the Artillery remained concentrated in the Nijmegen area because the single road to Cleve could not accommodate the traffic. As a result a temporary redistribution of troops took place. Only absolutely essential troops and vehicles were allowed to move forward. The self-propelled troops moved up with the Field Regiments on the 18th February and took up positions southeast of Cleve.

While on a reconnaissance in the Cleve area Captain Paul Rowe, Lieutenant Harry Saunders and L/Bdr. Hennessy, E.D., were wounded by shell fire, Hennessy for the second time. With the death of Lieutenant Saunders while on his way to the hospital the Regiment lost one of its finest Officers. He was buried the following day in a little Dutch cemetery near Nijmegen.

The remainder of the Regiment moved to the Cleve area on the 19th February and the semi-mobile troops took over from the self-propelled. All the guns were deployed on area tasks. Two days later the Divisional area was subjected to one of the heaviest enemy aircraft raids of the war. It began in the morning when Messerschmitt 109's and Junkers 88's as well as the new twin jet propelled aircraft, the Messerschmitt 262, came over. The first two types were used as nuisance raiders only but the Messerschmitt 262's came in flights of six and eight dropping fragmentation bombs which caused numerous casualties in the Field Gun areas. One 1000 pound bomb landed about 100 yards from the 17th Battery headquarters but it did not explode, hence was quickly removed by the Engineers.

The tactics used by the raiders were peculiar in that a single aircraft appeared, just at the maximum range of the Bofors, flying on a level course at a great speed acting purely as a decoy to draw fire. Other members of the squadron dived shallowly out of the sun, dropped their bombs and made off with a great burst of speed. All the guns in the Regiment went into action and two aircraft were brought down.

With the advance of the infantry on the left flank Calcar fell and the Regiment moved to the Udem area west of the Hochwald Forest. At this time all units were experiencing considerable difficulty due to the sticky and treacherous mud of the area. If a vehicle left the highway it was

almost sure to get stuck. This made the work of the semi-mobile troops that were deployed to protect the Field Regiments most difficult as guns had to be winched in and out of positions.

On the 7th March one Battery of the 6th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment came under command of the Regiment for a "Pepperpot." The reconnaissance for the gun positions was made by Major W. Taylor and Captain W.R. Tippet. Line was laid to the positions and ammunitions drawn but the Regiment itself did not take part.

During the advance from Calcar to Xanten all troops were deployed in an anti-aircraft role but no engagements were recorded. The Troop tasks during the period were: Field Gun areas, Divisional Headquarters, the town of Udem and the road from Calcar to Xanten.

On 11th March the Regiment concentrated in the Reichwald Forest for two weeks rest. The time was profitably spent in cleaning and painting vehicles, guns and equipment. All the men's kits were checked and brought up to date. Liberty vehicles were run to Nijmegen daily much to the enjoyment of all. Within a few days enemy air activity over the area resulted in three troops being deployed.

There was considerable night air activity by the Luftwaffe during this rest period. Anti-personnel bombs were dropped in the Field Gun areas and the forest itself. At last permission to fire at enemy aircraft during the hours of darkness was obtained with the provision that the aircraft must be illuminated by moonlight or searchlight. The 38th Battery had an engagement a few nights later but the results were unknown.

One of the most spectacular sights of the war was the continuous smoke screen which shrouded the highway running from Nijmegen to Cleve. It no doubt caused endless speculation amongst the enemy which culminated on the 23rd March at 2100 hours when operation "Plunder" began and British forces crossed the Rhine.

"E" Troop of the 38th Battery in support of the Field Regiment was the first Troop in the unit to cross the Rhine. "C" Troop of the 17th followed very closely, protecting the 5th Field Regiment. The 38th Battery, less "E" Troop came next and the following day the remainder of the Regiment crossed and deployed in the area of Milligen, having as its tasks, in addition to the Field gun areas, Medium gun areas and Divisional Headquarters.

Once across the Rhine the Regiment advanced at a steady, sometimes even spectacular speed along the axis to Gronigen. During the period 1st to 16th April the unit passed through Gendringen, Terborg, Doetinchem, Vorden, over the Twente Canal, through Laren, Holten, Hellendoorn, Ommen, Assen, to Gronigen, sometimes moving two or three times a day.

As there was absolutely no enemy air activity after crossing the Rhine the troops that were not protecting Field or Medium Regiments began to wonder what they would be called upon to do next. The 17th Battery was given a new role, that of Bridge Security which they maintained until

finally relieved by a Battery from the 6th Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The 38th Battery took over the task of protecting both the 5th and 6th Field Regiments. It was while doing so that "E" Troop captured two German Officers and 315 men.

The Regiment finally ended its march north when they reached the airfield near Groningen.

After the fall of Groningen the unit was called on to perform a number of tasks of immediate importance. Part of the 16th Battery was used to guard enemy ammunition dumps, part of the 17th still acted as Bridge Security Guard and part of the 38th policed a hospital in the city itself. The remainder of the unit continued to protect the Divisional Artillery.

Soon the Regiment received orders to move to Germany. At approximately 1100 hours on the 18th April it moved into the Divisional convoy and a long monotonous journey began. Upon arriving in the Cloppenburg area it was learned that as the advance in the region had been very rapid, there were still many small but potentially dangerous bodies left behind and by-passed by the Division. As these constituted a threat to every headquarters it was felt that Divisional Headquarters should have a strong, tight defence about it. This was accomplished by the combined efforts of the 3rd Regiment and the 2nd Canadian Anti-Tank Regiments, each having a semi-circle about Divisional Headquarters as its sphere of defence.

The layout was planned on the basis of using personnel of Regimental Headquarters and the three Battery Headquarters as infantry. Listening posts were established hence an alarm could be raised if anything suspicious occurred. Upon hearing the alarm the squads built up by each Battery were to take offensive action. To strengthen this meagre force, "B" Troop and four guns of "D" Troop were deployed in a dual role on the perimeter. No threat developed.

From the 23rd April until the end of the war in Western Europe the Regiment might well have been termed the 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Infantry Brigade for it was on that day that the Regiment received orders that it was to relieve the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade in the area of Hentslage-Dohlen-Huntlosen by first light on the following day. Reconnaissance parties proceeded to the new area and were put in the picture by the Battalion and Company Commanders.

The significance of this new employment is deserving of note. Here was a unit, strength roughly 600, relieving a Brigade of three Battalions, each greater in strength than the total relieving force. Furthermore the Regiment was now responsible for the protection of the left flank of the Division.

As supporting arms the unit had a Battery of Field Artillery, a Troop of self-propelled anti-tank guns and later a section of Engineers. Also, although not under command or in support, the Commanding Officer was permitted to call on help from the South Alberta Regiment, the Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment on the right flank of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division.

The relief of 5th Brigade was completed by 1030 hours on the 24th April. As the Regiment was comparatively few in numbers the guns had to be used to the best possible advantage. They were sited to give ground support for the men employed as infantry. Standing patrols were maintained by day but withdrawn at night to help form a tight defence for the Headquarters along the main axis. Fire plans were drawn up and co-ordinated with the Field Battery.

Patrols were sent out regularly. "F" Troop patrols plus tanks from the South Alberta Regiment beat up some German locations on the right axis on their first day in the line. A patrol from "D" Troop under Lieutenant Rohne, captured two enemy, and from information obtained from them a successful shoot took place, resulting in the surrender of twenty-six more.

All troops took part, at various times, in harassing fire tasks on enemy locations and areas on the Regiment's front and that of the South Saskatchewan Regiment on the right flank. A telephone line was put through from "F" Troop to the South Saskatchewan thus hooking up the Regiment with Division eight miles away.

Casualties during the period were very light. One man was wounded by a mine, one by blast from a mine and one Officer, Lieutenant John Ross, was wounded by a rifle shot when his patrol ran into a pocket of resistance.

As prisoners of war reported that the enemy were withdrawing it was decided to move forward on the 30th April in conjunction with the 6th Infantry Brigade's attack. A "Pepperpot" fire plan was carried out at 0445 hours in support of the attack and the town of Westerborg was taken without opposition but many road blocks, mines, bombs and craters were encountered.

On 1st May, 1945, patrols from the 17th and 38th Batteries proceeded along both axis and met at Astrup and reported that the enemy had departed. As a result the Regiment moved forward about five miles to the area of Wardenburg and Astrup. A considerable number of mines were found in this new area and the help of the Engineers in neutralizing them was much appreciated. Most of the roads were blocked by trees which had been felled as road blocks. These were quickly removed by civilian labour. Prisoners of war reported no enemy before Oldenburg so an advance was made to Tungeln and the village of Wardenburg. When patrols reported the bridges blown over the river north and west of the area arrangements were made to build a raft capable of bearing a jeep over the river to enable contact to be made with Division by a short route. This was cancelled on the 3rd of May by orders to concentrate in Wardenburg.

Orders to relieve the 5th Infantry Brigade in the Hude area were received late on the 3rd of May and were completed the following day at 1700 hours. Patrols sent out from Hude the next day brought in prisoners who reported that the area was clear. When the "stand fast" order was received at 1000 hours patrolling ceased except for the search of the villages in the area for weapons. On the 6th of May the Commanding Officer conducted a thanksgiving service and the unit received word that it would remain in its present area. At 0900 hours the regiment stood



down after eleven months of arduous effort and supporting arms were ordered to return to their respective units.

During the whole of this latter period the unit had undertaken to hold, patrol and advance on a front formerly held by a complete Infantry Brigade. They had formed the left flank protection for the Division and had moved across the entire Divisional area to form the right flank protection. On the advance they kept even with, and sometimes outstripped their flanking Brigade; indeed the expression, "The 3rd Light Anti –Aircraft regiment is worried about its right flank" has become a byword in the Division.

May the Regiment, mighty in conflict, prove itself as noble in peace!