

HISTORY OF THE 2 CANADIAN ANTI TANK REGIMENT ROYAL CANADIAN ARTILLERY

Sect. I - Mobilization and training in Canada

Composition:

With the declaration of war in 1939, certain N.P.A.M. (Non-Permanent Active Militia) Units received orders to mobilize to W.N. strength. The four batteries that were to become the component parts of the 2 A Tk Regt. RCA (Anti Tank Regiment Royal Canadian Artillery) were shown below:

18 Bty Regina, Sask. (MD 12) mobilized 2 Sept.
20 Bty Lethbridge, Alb. (MD 13) mobilized 1 Sept.
23 Bty Calgary, Alb. (MD 13) mobilized 1 Sept.
108 Bty Kimberley, B.C. (MD 11) mobilized 1 Sept.

Mobilization of batteries, recruiting documentation and early training 1 Sept. '39 - 27 May '40:

On receipt of mobilization instructions these batteries proceeded to recruit up to full strength on the basis of their NPAM status i.e. 18 to 20 batteries as 18 pr (18 pound guns) forward batteries and 23 to 108 batteries as 4.5 in. (4.5 in. howitzer) batteries.

The recruiting, documentation and early training of all batteries was carried out in the area of their NPAM affiliation, except in the case of the 108 battery who moved from B.C. late in Oct. and shared the old RCMP barracks with 20th battery in Lethbridge until regimentation took place.

Formation of 1 Canadian Corps:

Announcement of the formation of 1 Canadian Corps, showed (on paper) that the four a/m batteries were to be known as 2 Army Forward Battery RCA mobilizing with 1 Cdn Infantry Division and likely to proceed overseas at an early date. Recruiting immediately increased a large number of well trained senior NCO's (from B.C. coast Battery) reverted to gunners, and were recruited to 108 battery. Enthusiasm and interest was short lived for in early Nov. came word that reorganization had taken place, and the four batteries had been converted (once again on paper) to anti-tank gunners, and as such would form the 2 Cdn Artillery Regiment. To dyed-in-the-wool field gunners, this was the greatest mortification.

Furthermore this change meant inclusion in the 2 Cdn. Division and consequently a much later sailing date for overseas. The ways of the army are exceedingly strange. Shortly after this conversion to anti-tank status, the 108 battery, who had never been fully equipped for NPAM training, received the balance of their 4.5 howitzers.

Training 1 Sept. '39 - 27 May '40:

Because the new anti-tank equipment was not available, training consisted chiefly of foot and arms drill, TOET's (Test of Elementary Training - weapons proficiency) and general individual training. Selected personnel were immediately dispatched to Ottawa on an anti-tank course while H.M. Stationary Dept. worked overtime turning out new training pamphlets.

In early spring two orders Q.F., 2 pr. MK IX and X on carriage Mk II were allotted to the regiment. One being shared between 18 and 23 batteries and the other between 20 and 108 batteries. The gun that found its way to Lethbridge was worked on 24 hours daily as the two batteries worked alternately, a week of night training and a week of day training. Enthusiasm and morale was high - there was much training to be done in a very short time, we thought. By the middle of May almost 100% of all battery personnel had mastered anti-tank gun drill and arrangements had been made for the regiment, as such, to conc. (concentrate) at Camp Shilo Manitoba.

Conc. of 2 anti-tank at Shilo Manitoba and organization of RHQ (Regimental Head Quarters)

On May 1940, the four batteries converged on Camp Shilo and the 2 Cdn Regiment became a reality. RHQ had previously formed (on paper) from personnel from the four batteries with Lt. Col. WH Huckvale of Medicine Hat as Co (commanding officer), Major HC Singer Lethbridge as 2 I/C (2nd in command) and Capt. NG Ledingham as Adjutant.

During the following three months the emphasis was on tactical training, with all officers doing appreciations, orders, etc. Considerable night training was carried out, but was greatly hampered by a lack of guns. The regiment was responsible during this period for the daily firing of 12 pr. time signal. Gas training and gas chamber tests were carried out and final inoculations were given to all ranks. Moral was very high although lack of regular leaves caused much discussion. The commercial venture of "Gunners Roost" semi-open air beer parlour proved highly re-numberative, and was the most popular spot in Shilo's limited entertainment field. During this period drum and trumpet bands were formed in each battery, and subsequently a regimental band was formed and took part in several entertainments in the camp, most notable of which was the visit of Miss Gracie Fields in July 1940.

During this period the 6 Cdn Infantry Brigade also came into existence and conc. in Shilo. The 6 Cdn Field Regiment of which we were to see so much later, also conc. there. Prior to departure from Shilo, Major General Victor R. Fraser, CRA (Commander Royal Artillery) 2 Cdn Infantry Division and Major General Victor W. Odlum, CB, OMG, G.O.C. (General Officer Commanding) 2 Cdn. Infantry Division, inspected the regiment and apparently satisfied with the high standard of training of the regiment for shortly after instructions were received for embarkation overseas. The regiment embarked for overseas at Halifax on 24 Aug. '40.[/size]

Training in England from 4 Sept., 1940

After an uneventful crossing, the regiment disembarked at Gourock, Scotland, on 4 Sept. 1940, and by noon the next day were settled at Lille Barracks Farnborough, Hants. As a result of some misguided sector, church bells (the sign of invasion) were rung one morning early in September and for a week the regiment "Stood To" every morning beginning 10 Sept. '40.

During this early period the regiment was cast in a motorized infantry role, at instant readiness to deploy in the general area of Caesars Camp. Shortly after arrival in Aldershot area, the regiment drew a number of new vehicles but still had no anti-tank guns. Rifles and bayonets were issued to each man, and training with these weapons was stressed.

When the invasion scare subsided, training progresses from an individual to a troop and then to a battery basis. Training of NCO's and Junior Officers received particular stress at this stage and troop exercises involving recces (reconnaissance, pronounced recky), move, appreciations and deployments followed one another with monotonous regularity.

Later came battery exercises and then as a natural sequence came BN (battalion) and Bde (brigade) exercises. Counterattack rules and defensive tactics were practiced continually during the first winter.

Exercise Dog 1940 and Exercise Bumper in Sept. '41

The first Div. exercise "Dog" served chiefly to illustrate just how much training was still required at every level. Exercise "Bumper", involving all Canadian troops in England and lasting two weeks not only showed weaknesses in organization and administration in units and formations, but also gave us an opportunity of seeing new country in southern and central England. From the regiments point of view many lessons in administration and communication were learned during the exercise and close liaison with the infantry units they were supporting was found to be of prime importance.

Coast Defence Role June - July 1941 and Oct. '41 - May '42

During late December '40 and early Jan. '41, the 18th and 20th batteries in succession relieved batteries from 1st A/tank regiment for one week tours in the Brighton area i.e. defence of South Coast. In a further "Defeat Invasion Plan", the regiment put in an initial five weeks in the Rye-Eastbourne area in a coast defence role.

Following exercise "Bumper" the regiment retired to the South Coast and relieved the 6 A Tank Regiment RA (55 Br. Div.) in a coast defence and anti-paratroop role. The task of the regiment was to protect the high ground between the rivers Rother and Brede against invasion.

In addition to the 2 prs with which the regiment was partially equipped by this time, the regiment inherited some 6 pr Hotchkiss naval guns, which, fortunately there was never an occasion to fire.

With the appointment of Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery to command SEGC (South Eastern General Command) the regiment gravitated gradually westward in its coastal defence role. The "Nodal Point" theory of defence necessitated the building of numerous static defence positions at selected nodal points.

During late winter and early spring, numerous short exercises on battery and regiment basis were carried out during which a final assault scale for the regiment was worked out.

After summer spent under canvas in the general area of Horsham, the regiment took winter billets in and around Bognor Regis, but still in a minor coastal defence role. Intensive training periods were carried out with emphasis on crossing water obstacles from which the "Murray Boat" for short river crossings was developed.

For the first time since its arrival overseas, the regiment began to get regular firing practice at Lydd and Beachy Head Ranges, probably because at this time (1942) the regiment switched from 2 prs to 6 and 17 prs.

1943 -1944 "Spartan" "Welsh" Exercises

Exercises on BN and Bde level became the normal routine. The further move of the regiment to Barnes Green area was the signal for intensive weapon and signal training, renewed firing practice and vehicle and gun classification. Exercise "Spartan" (Bumper again) served to show what progress in training had been made in the past year and a half. Exercise "Welsh" involving movement, deployment and firing, taking the regiment from Leives area through Salisbury and on to Harlech, Wales.

With the coming of Fall and a further move to the Steyning area, short exercises on assault scale were carried out on the South Downs. Night training was particularly emphasised at this time. The re-organization of each battery to include one troop of 17 prs. brought about battery and regimental schools on the new weapons.

1944 Exercise "Last"

The arrival of Spring brought with it exercise "Last" which, if nothing else, denoted our last regiment conc. area in England. Following this scheme the regiment became 100% mobilized in every respect for the first time. The practicing of water-proofing and the study of short sea voyages were definitely "shades of things to come". After four years of training, embarkation orders were received, and between 5th and 8th July 1944 the regiment conc. on the coast of Normandy, ready, in respect for the months intensive action which lay ahead.

Morale Sept. '40 - Sept. '44

For the first few weeks after arrival of the regiment in England, the morale of the men was exceptionally high. Disembarkation leaves were quickly granted, but human nature being what it

is, longer and more frequent leaves were looked for. To some extent, this question of leaves contributed to the unfortunate sit-down strike in Nov. '42. The replacement of the CO and the removal of a number of men, at first, appeared to alleviate a lot of the complaints of the men, but subsequent events proved the truth of the old adage 'out of the frying pan into the fire'.

Air Raids

Air raids, after momentarily shaking the men, became the normal routine, and from points of vantage in the Aldershot area, The Battle of Britain over and around London, was viewed with great interest.

Even the bombing of the officers mess in Jan. '41 in which 3 batmen lost their lives, stunned the personnel of the regiment only temporarily. By summer 1941, after almost a year in Aldershot, the men were more than ready for a change and the move to the South Coast, once again boosted morale tremendously. The arrival of the 3rd Div. gave the men of the regiment the feeling of old veterans and hardened campaigners.

With only a few exceptions the morale was high throughout the long enforced stay in England. Frequent exercise, changes of locations, arrival of new equipment, fairly regular leaves, the Div. part in the Dieppe Raid and the departure of 1 Cdn. Div. for active service in Italy all played a part in maintaining a high standard of morale.

Section III

Active Service

The four days, after landing at Banville area, Gray-Sur-Mer (between Caen and Bayeux) and El Hamie, preceded to Bealeux then Ryes, where the regiment conc. on 8 July and completed de-waterproofing. Two days later the regiment passed through Crepon, where the BHQ (British Head Quarters) conc. at Carpiquet while batteries moved to Cairon. Bretteville and area west of Carpiquet where 18 battery and 108 battery deployed in Cussy and 23 battery in Rots area. On 12 July, 18 battery deployed in Eterville area and experienced their first close enemy mortaring. 108 battery also came under heavy mortar fire and the first casualties in the regiment came from this battery when one man was killed and one wounded. The following day, 18 battery again came under heavy mortar fire and one man was killed and one wounded. A T-16 (troop carrier) belonging to 108 battery received a direct hit and burned on 15 July and the next day a gun tower from the same battery burned in the same way.

The first gun casualty was in towed 17 pr. from the 18 battery which received a direct hit on 17 July but there were no casualties to personnel. Spirits were somewhat brightened when two enemy planes were shot down over the area.

During this period, enemy aircraft were very active coming over our lines day and night. An

ammunition trench received a direct hit but ten boxes were saved due to gallant action of Sgt. Barrett, although a fire was started. Many prisoners were taken which included young Russians and Poles who seemed willing to surrender. The 23 battery moved into Caen on 19 July where very intense fighting was experienced. The next day, one troop in this battery lost four guns and towers, had seven men killed and many missing by heavy shelling and very accurate mortar fire.

From 21 to 23 July, the guns of the regiment were responsible for knocking out seven tanks but one officer (Major Edward B. Rogers, killed 23 July '44) and 5 OR's (other ranks) wounded. It was at this time that Bdr. (brigadier) Grassick of 23 battery at St. Andre-sur-Orne single handed, fired both 6 and 17 pr guns and knocked out one tank. He was afterwards awarded a mention-in-dispatches. 18 battery lost another gun by a hit from an 88 (German 88mm gun) and had a FAT (Field Artillery Tractor) damaged.

The casualties from the regiment for the 15 days so far were 25 killed, 46 wounded, 15 missing and 17 evacuated for medical reasons.

In July, a message from Rt. Honourable MacKenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, to Comd 2 Cdn Corps was read to all ranks:

"Would you please extend to the officers and men of the 2nd Cdn Div. my best wishes as they arrive in Normandy to join their Cdn., British and American comrades of the liberating armies."

Message from Major Gen. C. Foulkes, CBE, Comd 2 Cdn Inf. Div. to Comd, 2nd Cdn Corps for onward transmission to the Prime Minister of Canada:

"Please convey to the Prime Minister of Canada the sincere appreciation of all ranks 2 Cdn Inf. Div. of his expression of good wishes on the return of the Div. to France with the Allied Armies of Liberation. All ranks are confident of speedy victory and look forward to the early liberation of their comrades captured at Dieppe."

During the attack by 2 and 3 Div. (Division) on Bretteville-sur-Laize on 25 July the regiment had five men wounded and lost three F.A.T.s, two guns and one jeep. The gun crew of Sgt. Winstons accounted for four enemy tanks under heavy bombing and shelling.

On the 26 and 27 July at Verriers, the enemy mortared continually. Personnel losses were five killed and three wounded and two F.A.T.s 2 guns and one gun telescope destroyed.

For the next few days anti-personnel bombs were dropped and many spider were sent to our lines. These were half-track troop carriers loaded with HE (high explosives) and petrol. A driver takes them part way and then bails out. They made a great deal of noise and a large hole in the ground. On 1 August, 8 of these were sent toward our lines. Heavy shelling and mortaring continued in this area until operation "Totalize" (7 - 10 Aug. '44) began by our own heavy bombers on enemy positions on 7 August. Large columns of black smoke could be seen rising high in the air and it was thought to be enemy ammo. (ammunition) dumps. This was later proven to be the case.

Large yellow flags were spread out along our own front to enable our air force to distinguish our front lines from enemy positions.

The batteries took a number of prisoners during August, many of them willing to give up, due to the bombing by the air force and shelling from ground forces.

Two more F.A.T.s were lost and one T-16 burned by an enemy 88 while taking up positions north of Fontenay de Marmion and two killed and eight wounded by 23 battery on 8 August. One gun was knocked out and a 15 cwt. (hundred weight) damaged by a hand grenade in 108 battery the same day.

On August 9th, all batteries deployed in areas north of Bretteville-sur-Laize, Fontenay-le-Maimion, May-sur-Orne and Rocquancourt but enemy activity very quiet during the next few days. Some enemy maps and minefield positions were found and turned in to H.Q. by 20 battery.

All batteries moved again on 12 August, 18 going to Le Mesnil with 5 CIB (Canadian Infantry Battalion), 20 battery in support of 4 CIB to Moulines, 23 battery in support and deployed Fontenay-de-Marmion and 108 battery in support of 6 CIB in Urville, Gouvix and Hautmesnil area. During this operation only one OR was killed and two wounded in the regiment and one gun and 15 cwt destroyed. There was very little shelling during this time but enemy mortar fire was very heavy. Reports received that tanks, 88's and Mgs (machine guns) withdrawing on all division front. Many mines and booby traps are being laid by enemy troops and the situation was not improved when our lines were bombed by Lancaster causing some damage to vehicles but personnel escaped. Troops were nearing Falaise and positions taken up on high ground just west of Falaise, where enemy snipers were active. One officer was wounded on move to Falaise.

J tp (troop) of 23 battery was again bombed and machine gunned by our own planes on 17 August, having four casualties.

A narrow escape was experienced on the same by Capt. Pyne and Lt. Hellyer. Driving down a road near a town they saw a Jerry (German) armoured car burning beside a house. Getting out to investigate, a German from an upstairs window, dropped a potato- masher. Both officers saw it and were successful in getting behind a fence. Two more grenades were thrown, one failing to explode the other damaging the jeep. Help was obtained and two prisoners were taken but one escaped.

An enemy patrol reached one gun of 108 battery on the night of 18 August but was beaten back. In the morning two Germans were found dead in front of the gun position. The next day this battery went in reserve and all personnel saw a movie and visited a mobile bath. "A" Ech (echelon) moved into a Chateau and the officers were treated to wine by the Count and Countess.

On 20 August all batteries deployed along North side of Falaise Gap. 108 battery deployed from Le Nue Modeaux to Barn with 3 A/Tk guns as a report circulated that 45 Jerry tanks were expected to try to break out of the area south of the battery.

The push to the Seine continued on 21 and 22 August as 4 CIB with 108 battery in support moved west of Livarot and river La Touques. Some resistance from high ground beyond Orbec and mortaring with some shelling continues. Civilians report enemy moving out.

By August 24, the supply problem was becoming difficult due to continual change of batteries. Casualties were very light during this period although some shelling was experienced and mortaring heavy at times. 108 battery moved to Thiberville where the French were very pleased to see them and showed their pleasure by offering milk, eggs and wine. Many civilians proceeded to get drunk on spirits hidden from the Germans for years. Two Scottish R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) personnel who had been living with a French family were overjoyed at being free again. Two prisoners were captured by 23 battery in area around Brionne on 23 August. The area was bombed fairly steady all day but no casualties to personnel until next day the bombers returned and two OR's were wounded. A small counter-attack along road and woods N.E. of Bourgtheroulde was beaten back with no casualties to btys (batteries).

On night of 26/27 August, the R.R.C. with A trp. 18 bty in support left Berthoville to force river crossing of the Seine. The column was proceeded by tanks using a smoke screen followed by R.R.C. on T.C.V.'s (troop carrying vehicles) and A trp. in rear. The convoy was continually fired upon but Bourgtheroulde was reached although many casualties from grenades resulted and several T.C.V.'s destroyed by heavy shelling after the town was reached. An enemy counter attack was also repulsed that night. Captain CC Storr was killed (Capt. Cecil C. Storr, killed Aug. 26, '44) and four OR's wounded during the day.

The following day, 5 CIB with 20 battery in support cleared out Foret De La Londe. A Canadian airman who had been living with the French for three months was taken to Bde. HQ by 23 battery. Lieut. Paul (Lieut. James Paul, wounded 28 Aug '44) and four OR.'s wounded.

The move across the Seine was made on 31 August. 18 battery crossed and deployed in orchard. By nightfall 5 Bde and 20 bty was halfway to Dieppe advancing to Rouen. The 25 and 108 btys. crossed and conc. at Sierville.

Dieppe was captured on 1 Sept. and all batteries conc. in Dieppe area. The cemetery of 800 Canadians killed at Dieppe in 1942 was found and visited by many regimental personnel. Major Lennon (Major Andrew C. Lennon, killed 1 Sept. '44) of 23 battery was killed on 1 Sept. On 3 Sept. a regimental church parade and memorial service for those who had fallen was held in Dieppe and in the afternoon a March Past of all 2 Div. the salute being taken by Lt. Gen. HGD Crerar. A big reception was accorded all Canadians by Dieppe civilians.

Rece's were made on 8 Sept. for new conc. area in Belgium. The next day the regiment moved to area near Izenberge (Isenberg). Some batteries deployed covering escape routes from Dunkerque and coastal strip east of Dunkerque. Word was received that one battery might be called on to act as infantry holding units. Six pr tps would then deploy but 17 pr tps would act as lorried (lorries - trucks) infantry and guns left at A Ech (Administrative echelon). On 10 September 20 battery was given this task in Looberghe (Hooberge) and Bourbourg (Bourbough

Ville). A small enemy force of 300 men and 88 mm guns with flame throwers were reported but no enemy action. Movie "Song of Russia" shown in rear area to batteries able to see it.

18 battery was now given tasks to fire on Ops (observation posts) in towers in Bergues, and 23 battery with AA (anti aircraft) support engaged some enemy pill-boxes. After a few rounds were fired, 300 prisoners, including 8 officers gave up to Essex Scots. German ammo dumps were set on fire and when a 9 man patrol tried to infiltrate into 20 battery area, two enemy were killed, one wounded and six prisoners taken.

For the next few days targets were engaged by all batteries which included buildings, pill-boxes and church steeples in areas around Bergues and Dunkerque. Very heavy return mortar and no fire was experienced and when 20 battery set a group of farm buildings on fire they immediately withdrew to a new gun position. Only a few minutes had elapsed when their old position was completely covered by air bursts.

On Sept. 15, orders were received for move to Antwerp area and 18 battery left the next day from Poperinge (Poperinghe) through Leper (Ypres), Poelkapelle (Poilcappel), Roeselare (Roulers), Tielt (Thielt), Ghent, Overmere (Overmeire), Dendermonde (Termonde) to area near Antwerp. All batteries followed in the course of the next few days.

For the next four days, enemy snipers and mortar fire with occasional bombing and strafing made things rotten at times. Reports began to come in of paratroops landing in Holland. Dunkerque is still holding out and an ultimatum to surrender was sent to German commandant which was refused. All 2 Div. tps. in area opened fire and some return fire was experienced.

Lt. RD Titt (Lieut. Eric Douglas Titt, wounded 19 Sept. '44) was wounded while on recce. of gun positions on 20 Sept. Many targets were engaged. Mostly being enemy OP across Albert Canal SE of Wijnegem (Wyneghan). The Albert Canal was crossed by 20th and 108th batteries on 22nd and 23rd Sept. 18 battery contacted enemy in Merxem, firing at a chateau and silencing a MG post. An ENSA (Entertainments National Service Association) show shown at Gravenwezel in rear area was attended by some regimental personnel and greatly enjoyed. Many mines and bobby traps were being found as we advanced. 18 battery engaged a barn and pillbox and four buildings set on fire on 27 Sept. Many German soldiers were seen to be running from pillboxes. One carrier (universal troop carrier) and one T-16 lost due to enemy mortar fire. On the last day of the month, 5 Bde with 20 battery crossed the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal. One man was killed while guns were silencing a MG position.

During the first part of October the batteries moved through Eindhoven, Stenhoven and Lohtenberg. Many targets were engaged, mainly enemy OP and freight cars along railway engaged by 18 battery, who were credited with 30 killed and twice as many wounded. Civilians in this area were happy to see Canadians but badly in need of food and clothing. Batteries conc. in this area until 6th and 7th October when move orders were received to advance toward Bergen-Op-Zoom. The object of this was to seal off peninsula leading to Walcheren Island. Word was received on 6 October that 108 battery with 17 Canadian LAA (Light Anti-Aircraft) battery was to take over an infantry ground role, replacing the FERs (Field Engineers Regiment). On 8

October, "O" tp of 108 battery took 32 PW (prisoners of war) under heavy mortar fire. "F" tp of 20 battery also captured a 17 pr with SABOT ammo from the enemy and took 16 prisoners. One gun crew from this same troop observed a tank but in order to engage it had to move their gun. While moving their gun to a new position they were observed by the German tank crew and fired on, killing three and wounding one and disabling the gun. A carrier was also lost by mortar fire.

Two 17 pr from 20 battery were knocked out by enemy fire during the night of 9/10 Oct. and Lt. Ireland (James L. Ireland, wounded 9 Oct. '44) and one OR wounded. The 23 battery also had one killed and six wounded the same night. An enemy 88 SP was knocked out by 18 battery on 10 Oct. and German paratroopers were identified. 20 battery position was overrun; one gun knocked out and vehicles had to be left behind. Lt. Cornell (Lieut. Richard S. Cornell, wounded 10 Oct. '44) went back at first light the next morning with a fighting patrol and discovered that vehicles were alright but he and five OR's were wounded. The 108 battery deployed covering roads in the area of Stabroeck, Driehoix and Putte. One vehicle and one carrier were casualties when 23 battery area was shelled and two OR's were wounded. On 15 Oct., Maj. D McCarthy was captured by enemy wearing our steel helmets and held in a PW camp in north Germany. He was liberated subsequently by Allied troops and repatriated soon after his release.

It was announced in the press shortly after his return to Canada that Maj. McCarthy had been awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) for Gallantry and outstanding leadership while commanding the 108 A/Tk battery. This announcement was received with great pleasure by all ranks.

New types of rocket bombs were being launched on Antwerp. Two killed and two wounded in 18 battery by direct hit on gun positions but two PW taken. On 14 Oct. 20 men wearing our steel helmets and battle dress entered our lines. When hailed in English, they opened fire with German weapons. After exchanges of fire they were driven off. Twelve PW were taken by 23 battery. Captain J. Keefe and Bdr. (brigadier) Gardiner wounded, but remained on duty. One carrier and one F.A.T. destroyed.

On conclusion of the operation in a ground role of 108 A/Tk battery and 17 Canadian 1AA battery, a letter was received from the A/CRA 2 Cdn Inf. Div. (Canadian Infantry Division) which is shown below:

2RA/4-1-1
2RA/4-1-2
RCA 2 Cdn. Inf. Div.
19 Oct. '44

2 Cdn. A/Tk Regt
3 Cdn. 1 AA Regt.

Recent Ops - in a ground role
108 Cdn. A/Tk Bty.
17 Cdn. 1AA Bty

1. Now that the employment of 108 Cdn. A/Tk Bty and 17 Cdn. 1AA Bty. has terminated, I would like all ranks concerned to know that the keenness and energy with which they carried out their task has not passed unnoticed.

2. Not only have I heard most complimentary remarks passed from many sources with regard to them, but I know that similar reports have also come to the A/GOC.

3. They have thus brought much credit to themselves and their units and sub units, and have demonstrated that gunners are able and willing to undertake any task, however novel, and discharge it with flying colours. 4. The work of Maj. McCarthy up until his unfortunate capture, and of Capt. Pyne has been especially outstanding.

5. It gives me much pleasure on behalf of the entire Div. Arty to thank and congratulate the officers and OR's of these two Btys.

“S H Dobell”

(S H Dobell) Lt. Col.

A/CRA 2 Cdn. Inf. Div.

This letter was read to all ranks in the battery together with a letter from Lt. Col. H. E. Murray, CO 2 Cdn. A/Tk. Regt. RCA which is as follows:

2 A/T 4-0

22 Oct. '44

A/O.C.

108 Cdn A/Tk Bty. RCA

Recent OPS in a ground role

1. I Have much pleasure in enclosing a copy of letter rec'd from the A/CHA 2 Cdn. Inf. Div. which I would like read to all ranks.

2. Having watched with great pride the willingness with which this task was undertaken, and has been so successfully carried out by all ranks, both by day and by night, in fair weather and foul, I am very proud to say that you have rightfully earned great praise and respect for yourselves, your Battery and your Regiment from the Div. Comd. As well as from other tps in the Division.

3. The loss of Maj. McCarthy is very keenly felt by all officers and men of the unit and we all wish him well and hope that he will receive the same just and fair treatment that he gave enemy prisoners captured by his battery.

4. In addition, I wish to express appreciation to all officers and NCO's of the battery for their sound appreciation of situations as they arose, and their aggressiveness in handling them.

H. E. Murray
(H. E. Murray) Lt. Col., RCA
c.c. 2 Cdn Anti-Tank Regt. RCA

On 24 Oct., 4 Bde began an advance into South Beveland. During the initial stages it was slowed up somewhat by mines, booby traps, and MG fire. Two fighting patrols were sent out by 108 Bty reported 19 dead Germans, Canadian battledress, rifles and bren found but no contact with enemy made. The Bty then moved back to Berendrecht for a much needed rest.

On 1 Nov., a new conc. area was received for regiment near Mechelen (Mechlin) between Antwerp and Brussels. The regiment commences to move on 2 Nov. and all batteries allotted billets. This was the first time since leaving England that batteries have been together as a regiment. Many shows marked our stay in the rest area. Dances were held for Ors in Heiver on 3rd, 5th and 7th Nov. and for officers on 4 Nov. Girls were brought from Antwerp and dances much enjoyed. Liberty vehicles were sent to Brussels daily and 30% of personnel were allowed to go. Officers attended a lecture in Mechelen (Mechelin) by Gen. Simonds on "OPS" (operations) on 6 Nov.

Orders were received for regiment to move to Nijmegen area and on 8 Nov. move commenced and all troops deployed in Mookgrave area taking over from batteries of 45 British Div. Some enemy aircraft were over during this period but no bombs dropped. From present positions we could see Germany and across a small valley the wreckage of planes which carried the airborne attack which first established the bridgehead.

The area was shelled, at times quite heavily, for period 9 Nov. to 18 Nov. Supposed V-2 launchings could be seen from the Reichswald and bearings were taken and reported to Div. Six Bde. asked 108 Bty. to engage church at 3600 yards and although visibility was poor, hits were believed to have landed. New 9mm Browning automatics were issued in this area to all officers in lieu of .380 revolvers.

On 19 Nov. a large caliber shell landed in our LAD area. Two men were wounded, one civilian killed and one vehicle damaged. Some increase in enemy mortar and artillery fire was experienced during the night and the next few days, and aircraft activity increased.

Sniping with a 17 PR

On 22 Nov. '44, while in support of 6 CIB the 108 A Tk Bty was asked to take on an enemy OP which, due to its situation and structure, was not only dominating too much of the Bde area, but was not the best target for other weapons.

The troop Commander, Lt. K.L. Murray, to whom this job was given, proceeded to the forward

pl (platoon) on the right of SSR (South Saskatchewan Regiment) , and together with a rep of the Bn, (battalion) identified the target which was a partly damaged brick or stone tower part of which was screened by a light growth of trees.

A gun position, with covered approach was then found, some 1400 yards distance, this being, by the way, about the only place, with effective range, from where a 17 pr could see the target. Arrangements were then made for mortaring of the enemy in the area where he might see the flash of the gun, to discourage him from taking too keen an interest in the proceedings; the plan being to engage the target after the mortaring started.

Due to rain, visibility at times was nil, but fortunately at 1601 hours 23 Nov., after one minute of mortar fire, the haze lifted and fire was opened on the target.

The gun was quickly got out and the enemy's retaliation with mortar fire, a minute or so later, was so inaccurate as to indicate he had no accurate knowledge of where the gun had been.

Capt. RJ Adshead and two ORs left the regiment on 24 Nov. on rotation leave to Canada. The next day the officers held a dance in Nijmegen which was well attended.

The new NCO's school, opened only a few days before, was damaged and some billets suffered when a few bombs dropped on 26 Nov. One civilian was killed but no casualties to our troops.

During the early part of December, flame throwers were reported in Groesbeck area but our area was fairly quiet with only small numbers of rockets landing near and some small arms fire. Considerable patrol activity was carried out by our troops on right flank and 25 German PW killed. Our casualties being 14 wounded. The weather was very cloudy and wet during December. All ranks took advantage of the rest period to get fully rested and equipment in shape for the coming offensive into Germany. Mobile baths were near our area and many movies were shown, which helped morale a great deal. During all this time, from the landing in France, through Belgium to Holland the morale of our troops was exceptionally high.

On 9 December the first snowfall added to the already very muddy conditions in our area. Many "Moaning Minnies" (German rocket launcher) were sent over during the next few days and reports show that Jerry's changed their positions too. Lectures were held in addition to the school, on enemy mines and bobby traps which we were encountering in ever increasing numbers.

On 16 December, one gun crew of 20 battery had their billets burn, losing some equipment.

Much work was done during the period towards improving roads by hauling brick and materials from bombed or burned houses. The same battery also lost one gun due to mortar fire but had the pleasure of seeing two enemy planes shot down and one probably destroyed on 17 Dec.

Many air burst followed and fires were seen over the town of Cuijk and one of our aircraft was seen to fall. Enemy planes strafed the regimental area and five men were wounded returning from the bath parade, and a vehicle was severely damaged. One gun of E troop 20 battery was also

knocked out the same day by a direct hit from a mortar bomb.

On 18 December, an Investiture was held at Grave. Awards were presented by Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Montgomery and Lt. Col. H. E. Murray, our CO, received the Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.). On 20 Dec., our water trucks were busy hauling water for a railway engine at Groesbeck, which was to be loaded with explosives and sent into enemy lines. A defensive plan was drawn up for use against a possible parachute attack.

Christmas dinner was held for RHQ and 108 battery personnel at Nijmegen on 24 December. Entertainment was by a Dutch orchestra. Later a film was much enjoyed. 18 battery held their Christmas dinner on Christmas Day and children from the neighborhood in Nijmegen came to a Christmas party held in the orderly room. 23 battery and 108 battery officers also held Christmas parties in the evening. The men of 23 battery held their Christmas dinner 26 Dec. at Danachool Nxdego with a movie for all ranks in the afternoon. The 20 battery was relieved by the 108 battery on 29 Dec. which enabled the men to hold their Christmas dinner on 30 December.

Some enemy activity was experienced on New Years day over Nijmegen. Shells also came over but no casualties. One German fighter was shot down in flames by one of our Spitfires.

Many dances were held in Nijmegen during the weeks of January and movies were shown regularly. Recces were made of billets in Tilburg including "King William II Barracks" but regiment never moved there. On 7 January 23 battery moved to Nijmegen still under command of 4 Bde but did not deploy. 6 Bde relieved 5 Bde so 108 battery relieved 20 battery. The 3 A Tk completed the tie in on left flank of Bde front.

During our stay in Nijmegen, the RMD (Regimental Doctor) and dental officer worked overtime getting inoculations up to date and teeth fixed. Many UK (United Kingdom) leaves and short leaves to Brussels and Antwerp were granted and helped, in no small measure, the high morale of the regiment.

On 17 January, 20 battery supplied one 6 pr and one 17 pr with crews, who reported to 3rd Coy (company) engineers to practice river crossing exercises lasting several days. Many camouflage lectures were held at which snow camouflage was stressed. During this period all small arms were rigidly inspected by RCEBH and all zeroed.

The first three 17 pr Valentines (tanks) arrived in the regiment on 19 January and allotted to "C" troop 18 battery. The next day they were inspected by the CNA. A school was immediately started for "C" troop which included driving, gun drill and equipment on new Sps (Valentine tank with self propelled gun).

The CO celebrated three years in command of the regiment on 22 January by an "At Home" to all officers.

The BC (18 battery) attended a demonstration of 17 pr and 95 mm firing at Lohel ranges on 25 January. On 28 January 3 more 17 pr Sps arrived and allotted to "G" troop 20 battery, making

one 6 pr towed troop, one 17 pr towed troop and one 17pr SP troop. "B" troop 18 battery relieved "G" troop 20 battery to allow training on new Sps to be carried out. Roads were very bad during January due to snow melting on warm days.

Many assault troops started moving into Nijmegen during the early part of February, and roads in places were almost impassable. No night movement of troops in area was permitted due to many English artillery units with tanks moving in adding to the confusion and the mud. Some shells came over due to so many tanks moving around carrying sound to Jerry's lines. First briefing of Operation "Veritable" on 5 February but only 20 battery taking part. Their job was to thicken A Tk defences near Vossen Daal.

All transport was frozen on 7 February unless authority was granted by a Brigadier or higher. Messages from Fd (field) Marshal Montgomery and Gen. Crerar read to all ranks.

Operation "Veritable" commenced with terrific artillery barrage at 0500 hrs 8 February '45. Large scale assault by 30 British corps. 53 Div. passed through 23 battery positions at Groesbeek at approximately 1000 hrs. Over 1000 prisoners were taken the first day and Cleve (Kleve) was captured on 10 February after heavy opposition through the Reichswald.

On 16 February the 18th battery moved with 4 battery to area Cleve in Germany. The next day 108 battery moved to Materborn near Cleve followed by 20 battery and 23 battery on successive days.

On 20th February the enemy put in a counter-attack on 4 Bde (brigade) area were 18 battery with Essex Scots were deployed. At approximately 0615 hrs. "B" Coy (company) Essex Scots with A troop 18 battery in support withdrew from area leaving 18 battery alone.

Shortly after, enemy infantry again put in an attack. One of our 6 prs (6 pound guns) put out of action by a round jammed in the breech and one carrier damaged by shell fire. One enemy tank knocked out in fierce battle which followed but the enemy were forced to withdraw. Lt. F.R. Rae was later awarded the M.C. (Military Cross) for outstanding leadership. On the same day at approximately 1400 hrs. the Germans put in a counter attack on RHLI (Royal Hamilton Light Infantry) positions with "C" tp (troop) 18 bty in support. This troop of SP's knocked out two tanks and disabled one. One hour later another tank was destroyed. At 1800 hrs, the Germans put in another counter attack when "C" troop knocked out three more tanks making six and one disabled for the afternoon. The Tp commander Lt. D. Hears later received the M.C. (Military Cross) for this action.

18 and 23 batteries returned to Nijmegen and conc on 13 February. The next day 20 and 108 batteries returned making this a regimental conc. area.

On 21 February, RHLI (Royal Hamilton Light Infantry) scouts infiltrated into German lines killing twenty five and taking 50 prisoners. These were identified as P2 Lehr Regiment employed as a special counter attack force.

Prisoners stated company now wiped out. Many enemy aircraft were over our area during the

period 20 February - 23 February. Most were ME 262a but very high for our AA. A few jet propelled were seen.

On 24 February, "B" troop had one F.A.T. destroyed and one 15 cwt) damaged by shell fire. "A" troop fired 87 rounds on houses in the area believed to contain enemy and many were destroyed. The area around Louisendorf was heavily mortared and shelled in J troop area. A troop 18 battery destroyed a German tank when they attacked RHLI area with six tanks and infantry on 26 February.

Operation "Blockbuster" commenced on 26 February by an attack of 4, 5 and 6 Brigade of 2 Division which was the beginning of two corps assault on Udem and the Hochwald Forest. All batteries were subjected to sporadic shelling during this period but our casualties were fairly light. Two officers were wounded and one OR killed on 26 February and one Sgt. was killed and two men were killed on the last day of February. Due to heavy rains and almost impassable roads, rations had to be delivered to 23 battery by SP Valentine (tank) during the early part of March. One SP even got bogged down while returning to rear area, Rations improved considerably after arriving in this area and chicken dinners were the rule more than the exception.

A mistake was made by our tactical air force on the morning of 2 March when some of our transport was bombed but very little damage was done considering our vehicles were fairly close together. Guns moved now had to be towed by Valentines and even many quads (F.A.T.'s - field artillery trucks) had to be towed.

On 3 March, Sgt. Stone of "K" troop engaged enemy infantry with a Bren (light machine gun) inflicting some casualties. One man in "E" troop was killed and one was wounded the same day. Much air activity was observed over Kensil and Udem area during the night. The Auxiliary Service officer brought a show and soap, cigarettes and chocolate bars to 108 battery on 3 March which was greatly appreciated. The "White Cliffs of Dover" was shown and was the first the men had been able to see for some time.

All of our troops were conc. in Hochwald area on 4 March and contact with the enemy for the time being was lost. A memorial service for L/BRD Smith, (L/Brd. Charles Smith, killed 3 Mar. '45) 23 battery, was conducted by H/Captain Fyfe. Sgt. Grassick was presented with OAK Leaves by the CO denoting a Mention-in-Despatches. The same day, "F" troop engaged a Jerry OP (German Observation post) in tower and fired 28 rounds, mostly HE with a few SABOT; many hits being observed.

On 6 March, Sgt. Ness and Sgt. Gregg were presented with C-in-C certificates for good service. Enemy air activity was fairly light during this period especially at night. Some troops were mortared and machine gunned at regular intervals but no casualties received.

The final attack which resulted in the taking of Xanten was launched on 8 March. 4 Bde with 18 battery in support suffered very heavy casualties but 400 prisoners were taken. The attack by 5 Bde supported by 20 battery was held up due to heavy fighting by 4 Bde. Lt. Col H.N. Murray left the unit the next day on rotation leave to Canada.

On 10 March, orders were received to conc. regiment for rest period and after recce parties had left, the regiment moved off the next day for the Reichswald Forest.

Our stay in the Reichswald Forest lasted from 11 March to 28 March. During this time all personnel had a good chance to get rested up, have regular baths, plenty of shows and many short leaves to Antwerp and Brussels. Schools in SP (self propelled guns) equipment were carried out to make all personnel familiar with new SP equipment.

The first three days were utilized by all batteries settling in many elaborate dugouts and log cabins were constructed to accommodate whole troops of gun crews and furniture was found, from unnamed sources, suspected as having come from Germany.

Some roads had to be repaired which kept the regiment busy for the first week. A few single-engine enemy aircraft made their appearance over the area but no strafing carried out. Daily liberty vehicles were laid on from each battery to Nijmegen both afternoon and evenings. Sports equipment supplied by the Artillery Services was in constant demand and softball games between batteries were keenly contested.

Our 2/c (2nd in command), Major Birmingham, left on rotation leave to Canada on 13 March and his place was taken temporarily by Major C. Giokas who was also acting CO as our new CO had not arrived. The next day Major R.J. Hamilton took over from Major C. Giokas as acting CO.

Rifle and vaudrey ranges were built and used by all personnel in regiment during our stay there and all rifles zeroed by armourer.

Seven new Valentine Chargers were received during our stay in the Reichswald Forest. The main armament on these were 75 mm guns. Half tracks were also received to replace quads towing 17 pr guns. The 18 and 23 batteries each supplied two SPs on 15 March to shoot at towers in Emmerich, being used as enemy Ops, across the river. Results were satisfactory.

On 23 March, our new CO, A/Lt-Col JD Southan took over command and spoke to all officers the next day. Word was received by 0830 hrs. on 24 March that three crossings of the Rhine had been made against light and spotty opposition. It was reported that Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Field Marshal Montgomery had spent several hours on the East Bank of the Rhine on 25 March.

On 28 March, the Lt. for 25 battery, Lt. G. B. North, left with six Bde recce (brigade reconnaissance) party across the Rhine, which was crossed near Rees at 1500 hrs. and through Esserden, Speldrop (Spelging) to Bienen. This officer was the first in the regiment to cross the Rhine. At approximately 2300 hrs., 6 Bde with 23 battery followed and stayed near Bienen. All troops moved with battalions i.e. I troop with Camerons (Cameron Highlanders) of Canada, J troop with SSR (South Saskatchewan regiment), K troop with Fusiliers Mont Royal.

The 20th battery crossed with 5Bde on 29 March and 18th battery crossed with 4 Bde (brigade) on 30 March, but 108 battery, who were changing over to SP (self propelled gun) equipment did

not cross until night of 23 April.

On 30 March, I troop lost one quad due to enemy fire near Schriek. K troop fired 29 rounds at churches getting 21 hits and I troop fired 14 rounds at another church getting 10 hits. All Bdes for the next few days moved very fast. Recce parties after picking new areas would move farther on, sometimes recceing (reconnoitring) two or three areas in one day without them being used. On 31 March, J troop took 25 prisoners but had one quad damaged by enemy fire. K troop destroyed towed gun and fired at enemy OP beyond Ulft and Veldhunten. 108 battery still in Reischwald undergoing training on SPs. Word was received on the last day of March that Lt. S. Hellyer was mentioned-in-dispatches.

Enemy resistance during early April continued to be light and opposition was spotty. 20 battery had three men wounded and three vehicles knocked out on 1 Apr. but took six prisoners in Doetinchem area. 6 Bde and 23 battery moved to new area near Hengelo.

On 4 Apr, Sgt. Douglas of 18 battery took 5 PW. 20 battery left Doetinchem and moved to Vorden in preparation for attack by 5 Bde across canal to Laren.

Morale was high at this time as Canada Leaves came quite regular and many UK Leaves were granted. The weather was not too good and it rained nearly every day.

Capt. RJ Adshead returned from Canada Leave on 7 April and took over Adj. (adjutant) job at RHQ. All batteries moved to area near Holten on 8 April. Many mines encountered near approaches to bridges and engineers were having a difficult time building them for our SPs as they require a class 40 bridge. Rafts have been used at times. All batteries were continuing moves through Nijverdal, Mullar?, Hellendoorn (Dorn), Isselburg, Haneai?, Lemele (Lemeli), Nieuwebrug (Nieweburg), and Haarle. On 11 April, 20 battery crossed bridge south of Ommen and advanced with R.N.C. to Varsen. 23 battery with 6 brigade, moved with them to take up new axis of attack through Holten, Rjssen, Almelo, Harlerberg, Hardenburg and Gransbergen. The LO (Liaison Officer) then left with Bde recce (party to Haleberg?, Kerkenbosch and Hoogeveen followed in late evening by 6 Bde and 23 battery.

Sgt. McGirr of 18 battery took 17 prisoners in Assen on 13 April. Resistance by enemy mostly by SA (small arms) and 20 mm fire. 18 battery fired on a tank and knocked out several trucks carrying reinforcements being rushed into Assen by the enemy. 5 Bde moved into Assen with 20 battery and stayed over night in this area. C troop moved with RHLI (Royal Hamilton Light Infantry) into area near Groningen on 14 April. C Troop with Toronto Scots entered Keppel and found it free of Germans and received a tremendous welcome from the civilians. Our troops moving into Groningen encountered some fairly stiff fighting although Germans pulling out of the town and making for the sea. Groningen was cleared by 17 April and all resistance ceased.

I troop moved with Camerons (Cameron Highlander Regiment) of Canada to Ten Boer and remained there while 2 Div awaited news to start on long move into Germany. Orders for move came through on 18 April and each battery was to move with brigades. RHQ and 108 moved on 18 Apr. with Div HQ and 18 battery moved with 4 brigade to new area south west of Haselunne

Germany taking over from 214 British Div.

20 battery moved to new area near Herzlake in Germany on 19 Apr. but 23 battery did not move until 21 April. 18 battery had several shoots which were successful firing this period setting many houses on fire. Polish slave workers told 108 battery that a German officer was hiding, in civilian clothes, in a house and after being interrogated proved to be an SS Captain. Sgt. Davies of 18 battery was evacuated on 22 April after hitting a mine with a carrier.

The next day, I troop moved with Camerons (Cameron Highlanders) of Canada to Kirchhatten, E troop with SSR (South Saskatchewan Regiment) to Sandhatten, and J troop with FMR (Fusiliers Mount Royal) between the two towns. One troop 108 battery went under command 3 LAA Regiment in a ground role. The other two troops moved to an area south of Neerstedt. Some activity on all battery fronts with mortar, 88s (German 88 mm anti-aircraft gun) and air burst especially over I troop and Camerons area in Kirchhatten. During the next few days most troops had chances to fire rounds at houses and very good results obtained, with very little return fire from the enemy.

On 28 April, I and J troop formed part of Jocks force to take over and hold ground seized by FMR (Fusiliers Mount Royal) near Nunderlongssen? while Bde cleared woods southeast of Oldenburg.

The move through Oldenburg Forest was held up considerably by mine and road blocks and movement was very difficult due to muddy conditions of the roads.

Lt. MP Croome (Lt. MP Robert F. Croome, killed 1 May '45), Sgt. Parcelles (Sgt. R. Parcelles, killed 1 May '45) and L/Bdr Hooker (L/Bdr. RM Hooker, killed 1 May '45) were killed on 1 May by hitting a mine with a carrier. The death of these three in the regiment was keenly felt by all personnel as the war seemed so near an end. It was later announced that Lt. Croome was awarded the M.C. (Merit Cross).

The confirmation of Hitler's death, which was announced late on the evening was received with much rejoicing which continued next day when word came through that the German Forces in Italy had surrendered and Berlin had fallen to the Russians.

Oldenburg surrendered on 3 May and all the regiment came in city, which had not been badly damaged, with the exception of I and J troop of 23 battery who moved to Hude under command of 3 LAA but guns were not deployed, due to the fact that the news we had been waiting for, came over the radio in the early part of the evening, that all organized resistance on 21 Army Group Front was to cease at 0800 hrs. Saturday, 5 May '45.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced the end of the war at 1500 hrs. 8 May '45, hostilities to cease one minute after midnight that night.

V-E Day to Disbandment

During the week following the German surrender, regimental vehicles were busy moving German guns and equipment to Ordnance Eclipse Dumps. The regiment moved on 9 May to the area near Bremen at Delmenhorst and Ganderkesee.

On 13 May, a march past of all 2 Div. artillery guns took place including 4th Canadian Fd Regiment, 5th Canadian Fd Regiment, 6th Canadian Fd Regiment, 2nd Canadian A Tk Regiment, and 3 Canadian LAA Regiment, the salute being taken by Maj. Gen. A Bruce Matthews CCC (Canadian Commander-in-Chief) 2 Canadian Infantry Division.

On the 27th May, the regiment moved to area near Varel with RHQ, 23 battery and 108 battery occupying the same billets and 18th and 20th batteries finding billets nearby. The same day, the 23 battery main party moved to Wangerooge and Longerooge Islands (Frisian Islands) to relieve the Royal Regiment of Canada who had been guarding the arms and ammunition dumps there. This was the most luxurious spot the battery had yet enjoyed. Many Germans were set to work clearing beaches of mines and wire to enable our battery personnel to use the beaches for recreation.

On 6th June, Captain Boldenius, the German Naval Commander of all the Frisian Islands was taken to Sengvorden by Lt. North and placed under arrest on the orders of NOIC (Naval Officer in Charge) in Wilhelmshaven.

On 29th May the corps commander inspected all 2 Div. A Tk (2nd Division anti tank Regiment) and 4 brigade at airport near Edsel. After the inspection he gave a short talk thanking officers and men for the good job done and said that 2 Div had never failed to take any objective given to them. This, from the corps commander was a fitting tribute to all ranks of the 2 Canadian Infantry Division for the part they had played toward the downfall of Hitlerism, and the defeat of the German Army, and left all ranks with a feeling that they had done their job well.

Reece parties left our area for recce of new area in Holland on 1st July, but it was not until 9 July that the regiment started the move in regimental convoy toward Zwolle. The first day the convoy travelled through Cloppenberg, Longingen, Haselurms, Lingen and Hengelo staying in 2 Div staging area between Hengelo and Enschede all night and moving on to Zwolle the next day

All personnel seemed pleased with their new billets, the first time they had been living in a town since the end of the war. All vehicles, with the exception of two, which each battery were allowed to retain, were placed in the regimental vehicle park and Captain G Laughlin was appointed MT (Motor Transport) Officer.

On the 17th July, a regimental school was opened with Lt. D Brinsden in charge. Subjects included French, Dutch, bookkeeping, math, welding and auto-mechanics.

A regimental parade was held on 20th July and all ranks complimented by the CO on the turnout and the deportment of all since our arrival in Zwolle.

A "wet" canteen was opened for OR's called "The Gopher Hole" with an orchestra in attendance

every night and proved to be one of the bright spots in Zwolle as far as the men were concerned.

The remainder of our guns were turned in together with half-tracks, carriers and ammunition on 23rd July leaving only trucks and jeeps on regimental charge.

Our stay in Holland proved very interesting and many tours to Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and other important places of interest in Holland were enjoyed by many of our men.

Many softball and volleyball games were played with other 2 Div artillery regiments, which proved interesting and competition was keen.

During July, Lt. G.C. Tompkins worked at HQ RCA (Head Quarters Royal Canadian Artillery) with Reps from other regiments within the Div on re-allocation of personnel (then on paper only) to units going to their respective MD's. (military districts). During August these cross postings were made between units and between batteries within our own regiment in preparation for the time when we would start our homeward journey.

This long anticipated journey started with the move of the three batteries at 4 Bn (battalion) CBRG (Canadian Brigade Groups) in Nijmegen on 22 September and followed by 108 battery the next day. The regiment, as such, ceased to exist on 23 September '45.

The 18th and 20th batteries left Nijmegen for England on 24 September to be followed on the 26 September by the 23 battery and the next day by the 108 battery.

The four batteries were posted as Canadian Repat Serials 495, 496, 498 and 499 to "s" wing 3 Cdn Repat (repatriation) Depot, Beaumont Barracks, Aldershot.

A ten day leave was immediately granted to all ranks after which they returned to Repat Depot to await shipping space to Canada ... and home!

*This information is from an original document "The History of the 2nd Cdn. A/T Regiment Royal Cdn. Artillery" prepared by Lt. GB North in 1945 in London before his return to Canada.