

ONWARD: THE KING'S OWN CALGARY REGIMENT IN PEACE AND WAR, 1910-1960

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ISBN 978-1-77385-602-5

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A Short Peace and a Second War

The Militia and Hard Times

The Canadian militia had thrived during the years immediately prior to 1914. Senior militia officers viewed their units, not the small regular army, as the backbone of Canada's defence, and if need be, its contribution to Imperial defence. The militia units of 1914, and particularly their cadre of officers, played a significant role in both the formation of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the subsequent operation of its fighting arm, the Canadian Corps. But by the Great War's end, even Anglo-Canadians, the community that had been most supportive of Canada's intervention, had paid most of the cost in blood, and had believed the military effort had been noble, were hard-pressed to see any threat on the horizon. Soon, many Canadians would question the need for the militia or, indeed, defence of any kind, with the result that the part-time military would be forced to operate in survival mode during the two decades of peace the Great War bought. Isolationism, the belief that the combination of favourable geography and friends with powerful navies could shelter us from troubles abroad, became widespread. And why not hope for peace, given the suffering the Dominion had just endured? Only in the late 1930s did any Canadians begin to question isolationism's viability as a national defence strategy. The irony of isolationism was that the dominant Anglo-Canadian community never questioned Canada's duty to rally to the defence of the "mother country." With no such prospect on the horizon in 1919, or for years thereafter, the question of exactly what we would rally with could be safely ignored. But world events have a way of intervening, and allowing the militia to wither for twenty years looked like a very poor choice in September 1939. Having barely survived the lean years, the officers and men of the Calgary Regiment scrambled to prepare for another war. They had little time—within two years they would be overseas.

The Militia Reborn

Despite the conviction that foreign entanglements were unlikely, Ottawa did turn to the question of how to constitute and maintain the regular army and militia in the post-war world. When Permanent Force officers put forward the idea of a full-time force of 30,000—a real army—supported by a substantial conscript militia, it was dismissed out of hand. Instead, Canada entered the 1920s with a more modest professional army numbering around 5,000 officers and men. But what of the militia (officially the Non-Permanent Active Militia) that had modestly more support in the country and came much cheaper? The reorganization of 1919–20 attempted to graft the wartime organization of numbered battalions onto the pre-war militia structure.¹ Before the 50th Battalion had even left England, Lt.-Col. Page had pressed the idea that its record should be perpetuated in a militia unit bearing the same designation, as such units “would have more real value than they had before the war for they would have all their old traditions [as well as the] history in France to look back to and live up to.”² While Australia adopted this template, Canada would not. Instead, after considerable debate, battle honours won by the numbered battalions of the Canadian Corps would be assigned to a militia regiment. Enough of the latter would be created—or in many instances revived—to satisfy the many veterans who felt preserving the achievements of their wartime (numbered) battalions was sacrosanct. But it would also satisfy militia supporters who were determined that pre-war regimental identities also survive. In practice, the compromise meant militia regiments that had supplied a substantial portion of recruits to a numbered battalion would simply inherit its battle honours and thereafter commemorate that unit.³

The Calgary Regiment

On 15 March 1920, as part of this post-war militia reorganization, the 103rd Regiment (Calgary Rifles) became the Calgary Regiment. An ensuing reorganization designated that the 1st Battalion of the Calgary Regiment (1/Calgary Regiment) would commemorate the Canadian Corps’ 10th Battalion and the 2nd Battalion (2/Calgary Regiment) the Corps’ 50th Battalion.⁴ Three more battalions of the Calgary Regiment were authorized to commemorate the CEF’s 56th, 82nd and 137th Battalions but never recruited personnel. All trophies, mess equipment and the cash reserve of the 103rd Regiment were divided between the 1st and 2nd Battalions.⁵ Splitting the silverware was one thing; splitting the honorary colonel quite another. R. B. Bennett chose the 1/Calgary Regiment, leaving the 2/Calgary Regiment to locate a replacement with sufficient standing in the local business and professional community. They were

fortunate to persuade Senator Pat Burns to take on the responsibility. Lt.-Col. R. B. Eaton, briefly commander of the 50th in 1917, became the 2nd Battalion's first commanding officer, with Maj. L. O. Svendsen, another veteran of the 50th, as second-in-command. Almost all of the initial group of officers and men had overseas experience, and by early 1921, evening parades were drawing an average of thirty officers and fifty-one other ranks.⁶ The 50th Battalion's dissolution in September 1920 also saw its colours officially retired. A month earlier, the armoury had been jammed with 50th veterans and guests as Brig. A. H. Bell presented the officers and men of the 2/Calgary Regiment with their new colours.⁷

1st Battalion/Calgary Regiment

The dual identities and traditions of the Calgary Regiment as formed in 1920 confused everyone outside militia circles and satisfied no one within. A second reorganization resolved this in May 1924. Henceforth the 1/Calgary Regiment became the Calgary Highlanders and the 2/Calgary Regiment became 1/Calgary Regiment.⁸ For the remainder of the interwar period, these two regiments dominated the militia world in Calgary.⁹

During the early 1920s it had been enough that the new militia structure simply take root in the community and survive. Officers soon realized that the days when militia units had found it easy to recruit were over and, short of a war, unlikely to return. Managing to maintain a strength of 125 to 150, which the army considered barely acceptable, proved elusive, with numbers bottoming out at ninety in 1923.¹⁰ And turnover was stubbornly high. Annual inspections consistently praised the enthusiasm and training proficiency of the battalion's officers but acknowledged that the unit was no more than "an efficient skeleton organization."¹¹

The great majority of the part-time soldiers who stuck at it during the 1920s were overseas veterans of the Great War, the militia likely supplying the military camaraderie they missed as civilians. But age, changing family situations and career demands inevitably led many of even these men to drift away. What would motivate younger men—men with no military background—to take their places? While Lt.-Col. Page had admitted in 1919 that "this is the last war most of us will see," he still believed there had to be a measure of military preparedness, and "the discipline that is gained from military training is undoubtedly a big asset to the nation."¹² Not many Calgarians seemed to agree. It certainly did not help matters that the militia myth had not survived the war. The great majority of the men who served overseas had lacked any military experience when they joined up, and yet performed just as well as their militia comrades. Once one embraced the idea that the nation's defence could (indeed,

should) rest on the shoulders of such citizen soldiers, it was easy to dismiss the militia's worth.¹³

Sheer Survival

Keeping in the public eye was a constant priority; building regimental spirit another. Opportunities to perform in the community achieved both objectives. The two obvious opportunities came during the annual victory commemoration, usually held in August or September, and the more sombre remembrance ceremony that followed in November.¹⁴ Viscount Byng of Vimy's participation in the former in 1922 drew throngs of Calgarians, with the twenty-six officers and eighty-five other ranks of the then 2/Calgary Regiment providing a guard of honour.¹⁵ On 23 May 1924, the now 1/Calgary Regiment provided part of the honour guard for the dedication of the Soldiers' Monument in front of the city library.¹⁶ And when Calgary's cenotaph was solemnly dedicated in Memorial Park before 10,000 citizens on Armistice Day, 1928, the 1/Calgary Regiment and Calgary Highlanders each contributed fifty men for the ceremony.¹⁷ But it was the regiment's "very active brass band," which played concerts in Central Park throughout the summer months, that likely garnered it the most attention during these years.¹⁸

Of course, a great deal of the regiment's life revolved around its own social activities. Among these were a variety of annual events—the picnic on St. George's Island, the regimental smoker commemorating Vimy, the Christmas party, and the Brides Dinner honouring the wives of officers or men married during the previous year. But there was no end to initiatives on the social front, since any open to the public—dances were especially popular—could double as fundraisers. Most of these were organized and catered by the Ladies Auxiliary, "which added a great deal to the [regiment's] success."¹⁹

Training During the 1920s

"The record of the Battalion's fourth training year contains few items of outstanding interest," Lt.-Col. Svendsen's annual report to Ottawa for 1923–24 concluded, "but is nevertheless a record of continued progress."²⁰ Ironically, both statements were true. Throughout the decade, training followed a pattern constrained by the limited facilities of Mewata Armoury and even more by the limited funding allocated by Parliament. With tongue firmly in cheek, the 1927 annual report outlined the weekly routine: "Each Thursday night [from 2000 till 2200] a more or less numerous band of lawyers, accountants, mechanics, grocers, bond salesmen, men drawn from every phase of the city's multitudinous activities, don the King's uniform and take their places as members of the 1st Bn Calgary Regiment." The men drilled by company and platoon and

alternately filled the basement firing range. “The ‘sirs’ mostly come naturally on parade,” the author noted, with “only a smattering of Fred’s and Tom’s uttered.”²¹ Some sort of lecture on the military arts would follow at 2115, and the evening’s activities ended with a welcome round of competitive sports.

By the mid-1920s the regiment comprised a headquarters, four rifle companies, and a signals platoon. Weaponry was mostly Great War-vintage .303 Lee-Enfield rifles and Lewis light machine guns. The promised attachment of regular force members to assist with training had begun and ended with a single officer from the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light infantry (PPCLI) during the winter of 1920–21. For most officers and men, summer training with other militia units under canvass at nearby Sarcee Camp was the yearly highlight. Otherwise, militiamen got July and August off. But in 1923 tightened finances led Military District 13 to cancel the camp, a major loss to the militia because so much of the indoor training focused on being able to apply the lessons learned to outdoor exercises, no matter how modestly. A short training camp resumed at Sarcee in 1927—all of four days—but it allowed the new commanding officer, Lt.-Col. D. G. L. Cunningham, to direct a weekend tactical scheme. About sixty members of the regiment, mostly officers and NCOs, participated, and “all ranks felt it was at least a beginning.”²² Thereafter the duration of summer camp gradually lengthened—the most promising development on an otherwise bleak training front.²³

Money, Money, Money

“In peacetime the success of a [militia] regiment depends to a large extent on its finances.”²⁴ So opined Lt.-Col. Cunningham in 1929. In fact money—specifically not having much of it—underpinned every aspect of the Calgary Regiment’s existence during the 1920s and 1930s. So-called local training one evening per week for ten months considerably exceeded the funding available, which varied with the annual militia budget but averaged about enough for eight days a year. For summer camp, pay was allotted by the day, with the training periods varying from four days to two weeks, depending on the militia budget. But this was misleading because only a limited number of men were ever funded. For most of these years other ranks drew no local pay, though during the latter 1930s they drew half their local pay. At no time did officers draw any pay (nor receive a uniform allowance), all their pay being voluntarily transferred for regimental purposes, which included buying boots for the men since Ottawa did not budget for any. Every year, officers also contributed out of their own pockets for various regimental purposes. In addition to their regular parades, NCOs and officers who attended “schools” at the armouries did so without pay.²⁵ It is in this light that one must view the endless fundraising efforts undertaken by

the regiment and the Ladies Auxiliary as well as acknowledge the generosity of the honorary colonel, for Senator Burns repeatedly came to the regiment's financial rescue.²⁶

The hand-to-mouth existence typical of the militia—and in fairness, of the Permanent Force as well—put enormous stress on senior militia officers. During the winter of 1926–27 Colonel Redman (a Non-Permanent Active Militia [NPAM] officer commanding the 24th Brigade, the umbrella organization for militia units in the southern half of the military district),²⁷ criticized the sad state of both Calgary units. It was particularly infuriating that he lectured them about the need to arrange more outdoor training, given the benefits to their men. A clearly frustrated Lt.-Col. Ritchie (the Highlanders' CO) could hardly contain himself, reminding Redman that apart from the interminable financial saga, "it was found impossible to get both officers and men to turn out owing to their being unable to leave their business or work."²⁸

The post-war decade had been a trying time for the Calgary Regiment. Its own assessment of what had been achieved bears repeating: "In spite of the small allowance and a considerable amount of public indifference and even opposition the unit in common with others in the [military] district maintained its organization and efficiency owing to the determination and enthusiasm of its members."²⁹

Indeed, dedication had been the only resource not in short supply. Unfortunately, the regiment's officers and men, like the rest of the Canadian militia, would soon face even more daunting trials.

An Allied Regiment

Amidst a sea of troubles, the regiment took a step during the 1920s that would have a lasting impact on its identity. After the end of the war, the British War Office, in co-operation with the Department of Overseas Settlement, conceived of an emigration scheme whereby British regiments would be formally linked to Canadian militia units, the hope being that this would lead to the settlement of the former's expired (retired) men in Canada. Though the scheme never achieved much by way of resettlement, the opportunity to ally with established British regiments was enthusiastically embraced in Canadian militia circles, for whom any British link gave added lustre. The Calgary Regiment's first suggestion was stillborn, but Ottawa's follow-up recommendation bore fruit. The result was a formal alliance with The King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster), approved by King George V in the autumn of 1927, which remains in place today. The Calgary Regiment's interest was straightforward.³⁰ As its annual report for 1927 enthused, a unit that could only trace its roots to 1910, and whose only real soldiering was the 50th Battalion's twenty-six months on

the Western Front, “now has a background and a tradition second to none in the history of British arms.”³¹ The adoption of the alliance led to the anointing of St. George’s Day as the Calgary Regiment’s own annual celebratory date. Cunningham’s enthusiastic support for the latter was crucial. He was one of those adult immigrants whose outlook remained thoroughly English despite crossing the Atlantic, and for years he’d expressed dismay that his adopted city had no suitable commemoration of England’s patron saint. Now Alberta’s grand British heritage and their allied regiment (whose regimental day it was) could be honoured simultaneously. Despite some flickering of a national identity in the overseas forces during the latter stages of the First World War, it had not taken long in the post-war years for the great majority of the senior ranks in the Canadian military—regulars and part-timers alike—to regress into a state of near total deference to all things British. Cunningham encountered no opposition in getting St. George’s Day, April 24 adopted and its predecessor—Vimy Ridge Day, April 9—peremptorily dropped.³²

Battle Honours

It was only toward the end of the 1920s the matter of battle honours was sorted out between individual militia units and the Department of National Defence. In the case of the Calgary Regiment this meant the honours earned by the 50th Battalion as well as the 89th and 137th. Ottawa provided an official list of seventeen, with the option of choosing up to ten of them. The committee struck in late 1927 included Lt.-Cols. Page, Mason, Cunningham, and Svendsen.³³ In the year-long deliberations, Cunningham and Page seem to have played the leading roles, with the committee finally settling on Ypres 1915, 1917; Festubert 1915; Ancre 1916; Vimy 1917; Arras 1917, 1918; Passchendaele; Amiens; Drocourt–Quéant; Canal du Nord; and Valenciennes. Noticeably absent was Hill 70, which was intended to include Lens as well. Ypres 1915 (the Second Battle of Ypres) and Festubert, engagements fought more than a year before the 50th Battalion even reached the front, were included out of respect for the 846 men from the 103rd Regiment who were part of the 10th Battalion when it was mobilized in the autumn of 1914. Because 250 recruits drawn from the 50th before it left Calgary had reinforced several of the participating battalions, Mount Sorrel (June 1916) had also been put forward. But unable to prove that any of them had actually fought there, Ottawa refused.³⁴ It’s hard not to conclude that the Calgary Regiments’ officers were self-conscious about the 50th Battalion and the rest of the 4th Division being last to the dance, and determined somehow to match the 1915 and 1916 battle honours of their city rivals, the Calgary Highlanders, whose predecessor 10th Battalion had been in the thick of the fighting from the start. But Ypres 1915 was fully deserved—had

they not pressed the matter, ordinary citizens would have remained blissfully unaware that the Calgary Regiment's claim to that battle honour was every bit the equal of the Highlanders'.

Militia Rivals

The militia occupied a small world in Calgary and given both the Calgary Regiment and Calgary Highlanders struggled to be noticed, a rivalry was inevitable. The roots went back to the war itself, when the 10th Battalion had outshone the 50th in public estimation despite the latter having the greater claim by local enlistment numbers for the title "Calgary's Own." The formal split in 1924 was driven in no small part by the desire to cease being Calgary's "other regiment." However, the problem did not go away, for "ordinary infantry dressed in regular khaki" could never compete with the glamour of kilts, sporrans and Glengarry bonnets.³⁵ Throughout the remainder of the interwar years, it grated officers and men that their regiment earned insufficient respect from the community. As the commanding officer lamented in 1935, in a thinly veiled reference to the Highlanders, "[our] standard of excellence would be appreciated by those able to look beneath the surface, [but] to the majority of our people it has no significance, and as we have left the flag-waving and drum beats to others, to them has gone the appreciation and remembrance of the people in general."³⁶

The Dirty Thirties

By 1930, Calgary and southern Alberta had entered a sharp recession, marked by steep declines in agricultural prices, construction and investment and ominous rises in unemployment and bankruptcies. Within a year it had become the Great Depression, which would drag on until the outbreak of World War II. Added to the suffering were periods of severe drought that gave the decade its cruel name on the Prairies.³⁷ A decade of hard times and despair would certainly not make the militia's lot easier.

King's Own Royal Regiment, Calgary?

When King George V officially authorized the association with The King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster), the Calgary Regiment's officers had debated whether to procure new colours and incorporate "King's Own Royal" in their own title, a step the allied regiment strongly encouraged. A request duly went forward to the Department of National Defence. At the time (1930), there was no militia regiment with the designation "Royal" west of the Lakehead, and it would also be the first regiment from the 4th Division of the Canadian Corps so honoured, so receiving the title would be quite a coup. Moreover, as Lt.-Col

E. R. Knight, Cunnington's successor, emphasized, it would help to further distinguish the two principal militia regiments in Calgary in the public mind.³⁸ Knight's correspondence that spring with his opposite number in England neatly summarizes his and his brother officers' views about the indispensable role Britishness played in their regimental identity:

To the average Canadian ... loyalty to His Majesty the King, faith in British institutions and pride in upholding the British tradition grows stronger The [regimental] alliance therefore, means a great deal to us in many ways. It is one more tie with England, it gives us a [military] background which we otherwise would lack and ... an incentive in these days of small appropriations from Parliament, of talk of universal peace, of apathy to the Militia from the great bulk of our own people, to make of the Calgary Regiment something of which our Allied Regiment need not be ashamed.³⁹

For reasons that are not entirely clear, the issue of renaming faded away, only to be revived after World War II.⁴⁰

From Infantry to Machine Gunners

As part of broader militia reforms, 1930 saw one of the Calgary's infantry companies converted to a machine-gun company and to all intents the regiment became a hybrid infantry/machine-gun battalion. In the spring of 1936, when the city's 13th Machine Gun Battalion was wound up in still another round of militia reform (which invariably meant dissolution during the 1930s), its sole company was shifted to the Calgary Regiment. This entailed a complete reorganization of the latter, whereby all four companies of the erstwhile infantry battalion emerged as machine-gun companies equipped with the water-cooled Vickers.⁴¹ The transformation would prove short-lived—even more dramatic changes were only months away.

Tough Times

In 1931, for the first time since pre-war days, summer training at Sarcree Camp extended beyond four days. Although everyone agreed camp training gave the best return on money spent, being the costliest it also placed a great strain on the regimental purse. Officers' pay for the entire year was absorbed just in messing expenses for the 120-odd members planning to participate. Just when it seemed an extended summer training period might become the norm, a militia budget already considered "meagre and wholly inadequate" underwent the

first of its Depression-era cuts. With the regiment running a deficit of close to \$600 that year, further economies were hard to find. As was often the case, the honorary colonel's generosity made the difference between survival and disbandment.⁴²

The nadir of the Depression in Canada was 1932, and funding for anything to do with the military was the lowest priority of all. Fearing there would be no militia training grant at all and recognizing that prolonged breaks from parade accelerated turnover among the men, Lt.-Col. Knight and his officers hatched a plan. If the other ranks agreed to train for the first half of the year without pay, the officers would find a way to finance a three-day camp at Sarcee. Most accepted the offer, even those whose jobs would keep them from attending. In the end, some funding from Ottawa miraculously appeared, and that, along with the men's pledge, ensured everyone who wanted to attend the training camp could.⁴³ In 1933, summer camp was extended to eight days. The regular Thursday evening training tried to avoid square bashing, instead focusing on tactical exercises, lectures and the firing range. Regular officers from the Calgary garrison also volunteered to prepare their militia comrades for the annual round of classification tests. When Knight stepped down as CO in 1934, the regiment's annual report stressed that he had "battled years of financial stringency more daunting than any which had been seen before and managed to keep the regiment afloat."⁴⁴ He was especially remembered for the effort he put into selecting and grooming a cadre of young officers. Though passing unnoticed at the time, his success, and that of his militia peers across the country, would make possible the rapid expansion of the Canadian Army when war broke out.⁴⁵

Warmongering

The new commanding officer, Lt.-Col. L. A. Cavanagh, immediately faced a major crisis. In 1933, with the Depression dragging into its fourth year, the Bennett government had launched a national public works program. With the Permanent Force garrison, and nearly 900 militiamen, 180 of whom belonged to the Calgary Regiment, relying on its facilities, Mewata Armoury was bursting at the seams. Word filtered down that the Calgary project would comprise barracks and other facilities to accommodate the Permanent Force units in the city, thus freeing the armoury for its original purpose—militia training.⁴⁶ Cavanagh was a leading figure in the business community and worked hard to mobilize his associates to persuade council to accept Ottawa's largesse. Had it been a post office or customs building, opposition would have been nil. But it was a military base, and that ran head-on into vocal opposition from women's peace groups, assorted idealists, and very vocal left-wing working-class groups

like the Workers' Ex-Service Men's League.⁴⁷ Still, it was the anti-military sentiments found among the general public which were the real obstacle.⁴⁸ Not the least through Cavanaugh's tireless efforts, initial opposition on the council was eventually won over and the project to construct Currie Barracks and an adjacent military airfield went ahead.

The 1936 Militia Reorganization

The restructuring of the Non-Permanent Active Militia in 1936 had a lasting impact on the Calgary Regiment. Recent international disarmament and arms limitations conferences suggested a reassessment of the Dominion's defence needs. Clearly, protecting Canadian territory or providing a modest expeditionary force for Empire defence were the only justifications for land forces, and if budgetary savings could be had, all the better. Obviously, Canada required considerably fewer forces than the militia's nominal 123 infantry battalions, fourteen machine-gun battalions and thirty-five cavalry regiments, even if many of those were close to inactive and the majority of the rest were oversized companies training 30 days a year with World War I equipment. Detailed planning by DND on how to cut back on the militia had been in the works for several years and there had even been some discussion, not always harmonious, with militia leaders.⁴⁹ When changes were finally implemented in 1936, Military District 13 emerged in better shape than many, its six infantry battalions being only reduced to three, with a fourth accepting conversion to a tank battalion.⁵⁰ The changes were inevitable, but that hardly reduced their negative impact on the morale of the country's "Saturday soldiers" who felt it was just another case of their contributions being disregarded.⁵¹ In reality, militia reorganization mattered little when Canadian defence plans now had the army and its militia reserve pulling up the rear. As one historian caustically put it, with these priorities the re-equipping of the army and militia would occur "as soon as resources permitted—that is, never."⁵² This didn't bode well for the six new tank battalions that had been authorized, one of which was the Calgary Regiment.

Saying Goodbye to the PBI

No record survives of the consultation between DND, MD 13, and the Calgary Regiment that led to the latter's conversion from infantry/machine gun to armour. Lt.-Col. Cavanaugh and his officers had the foresight to see the idea's possibilities, given the army was keen to embrace mechanization, and seized the opportunity.⁵³ On 14 December 1936 the Calgary Regiment officially disbanded, to be reconstituted the next day as the Calgary Regiment (Tank), technically making it the first armoured regiment in the Canadian Army. "We

have said good bye to the P. B. I. [Poor Bloody Infantry],” the year-end report announced with fanfare, and “all ranks looking forward to annual training in 1937 when we hope to go into camp with some sort of equipment resembling tanks and trying to find out how it [sic] works and why.”⁵⁴ Better they were optimists—none of them would see an actual tank until they reached Camp Borden in the spring of 1941, and most of those would be Great War-vintage relics.

A Funeral and a Coronation

Early in 1937 the regiment suffered a grievous loss when Senator Pat Burns, their long-time honorary colonel, passed away. Fortunately, John Burns was willing to assume his father’s role, thus averting what could have been a major crisis. The Coronation of King George VI followed in May. There had been great excitement when it was learned that MD 13 would be able to send three officers and eight other ranks as part of the Canadian contingent, and equal disappointment when none of the regiment’s nominees were accepted. The news was doubly disappointing since Lt.-Col. J. Packard, the commanding officer of the 2/King’s Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster), had generously offered any of the Calgary officers attending the coronation the opportunity to observe the battalion’s training and manoeuvres and “see all we have to show them.”⁵⁵ Lt.-Col. Cavanagh had planned to pay his own way if any of his officers and men had been chosen to go to London, and watching a real army train would have cheered his spirits. His initial enthusiasm about the shift to armour was undergoing its harsh confrontation with Canadian military reality. “We do not know when we will receive a tank, if ever,” he confided to his British opposite number, “so that our training will be pretty much theoretical with the exception of our musketry and Vickers work.”⁵⁶

The Last Years of Peace

Despite the worsening international situation in 1937, few Calgarians, including those in the militia, believed war was imminent. Yet as the troops, among them 140 uniformed members of the regiment, marched back to Mewata Armouries from Victoria Park and their part in the city’s coronation ceremonies earlier that afternoon on May 12, it lay a mere twenty-eight months away.⁵⁷ Cavanagh knew that for now preparing his men meant continuing to train as an infantry/machine gun unit along Great War lines. As for tank work, a handful of pamphlets had arrived from Ottawa, and they would improvise.⁵⁸ No matter how comical some of these improvisations seem in retrospect, at least an effort was being made. In one drill, for example, each crew (the new name for section) pretended to be a vehicle and made wheels instead of turns. Having mastered this, the platoons (now troops) followed suit.⁵⁹ At Sarcee Camp in early July

the regiment had been authorized to make use of civilian vehicles—in lieu of actual tanks these would at least be more mechanical and add some realism to their training. Albeit slowly, the tank-oriented component of their training improved. The men were exposed to various types of crew exercises to foster teamwork and studied tank signalling (with flags) and basic armoured tactics. For those who could find the extra time—always the militiaman’s bane—there were courses at Currie Barracks in motor mechanics and welding. Still, the greater part of their parade nights continued to focus on infantry skills.⁶⁰

Lt.-Col. Walter Jull, who had spent fifteen years with the regiment, assumed command in March 1938. After serving overseas in the 31st Battalion—where he had risen from the ranks to the level of captain, had been wounded three times, and had won an MC—Jull chose to pursue a law career, articling in R. B. Bennett’s firm.⁶¹ Only a month earlier the entire regiment had enrolled in a six-week course taught by an officer from the Armoured Fighting Vehicles School at Camp Borden. Summer camp was supposed to practise these would-be tankers’ skills but once again marauding thunderstorms and a lack of suitable equipment frustrated their best intentions. Later that summer a group of officers and men who could manage time off work (five of the twenty-five slots went unfilled) set off for Camp Borden to complete the practical portion of the earlier course.⁶² The highlight of the year, certainly on the morale front, came when the men were issued their new regimental shoulder flashes and tankers’ signature black berets.⁶³ “This change from the regulation infantry cap at least designated the Regiment as a tank unit,” the annual report noted with more than a little sarcasm, “as there is still some doubt in [our] minds ... whether or not we actually are.”⁶⁴

Indeed, it was hard to be tankers without tanks, and the enterprise shown in overcoming this shortcoming was impressive. During the winter of 1938–39 some of the mechanically inclined members cobbled together the regiment’s first stand-in tanks, basically motorcycles around which frames covered in burlap had been rigged, and armed with a light machine-gun firing blanks. The contraptions were deemed safe enough to operate on the armoury parade floor, and soon sparked the idea of more capable dummy tanks for outdoor training. The solution was ingenious:

Six old Chevrolet cars were bought, stripped to their chassis and the engines overhauled [in the local RCMP detachment’s garage]. A frame of angle-iron was welded on and sheet metal was bolted to the angle-iron [to give them a tank-like appearance]. In all of the vehicles a machine gun was mounted. The work was all done

by members of the unit, and cars and material bought ... without any expense to the government.⁶⁵

Some of the men had worked three or more nights a week through the spring to get them ready for summer camp, where they added some realism to the training and combined operations exercises. The regiment also managed to acquire an old Caterpillar tractor, loaned by a local business, which they armed with a machine gun. Nicknamed "Snow White"—to go with the Chevy conversions, the "Six Dwarfs"—it gave the crews some experience operating a tracked vehicle.

A Royal Visit on the Cusp of War

The royal tour of Canada undertaken by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in the late spring of 1939 was an opportunity for Canadians to see their new monarchs but, even more, for ordinary citizens to come together in the face of now-certain war. The royal couple passed through Calgary on May 26 and practically the entire population turned out to cheer them. All of the NPAM and regular units from southern Alberta provided honour guards along the parade route. The band of the Calgary Regiment (Tank) were given the honour of playing "O Canada" as their highnesses stopped at city hall, while the rest of the regiment lined 7th Avenue as far west as 1st Street East.⁶⁶

Once Again

It was hard to imagine a country more unprepared for war than Canada had been in 1914, but somehow in 1939 Canadians had managed it. The army numbered barely 10,000 officers and men, and although armoured units had been established three years earlier, none possessed a single modern tank. While the regulars would constitute the nucleus of the inevitable expeditionary force, Canada would depend on the militia's 40,000-odd "Saturday soldiers,"⁶⁷ not to mention many tens of thousands more volunteers with no military training whatsoever, to fill its ranks.⁶⁸ Obviously it would be several years before this force would threaten anybody. There were no illusions during those warm days of early September about what war would mean for the country or its families—the Great War had put paid to illusions. Faith in the justice of the cause, coupled with a grim determination to see it through, would need to suffice now.

Despite selfless efforts by members of the Calgary Regiment (Tank) during its three-year existence, little useful armoured training had been possible, and nothing much changed during the first months of the war. Yet the tone of everything that mattered had changed fundamentally. The same day Britain declared war, the Mackenzie King government proclaimed a state of

apprehension. From the militia's point of view, Canada *was* at war—waiting a week for the parliamentary declaration was a formality, though an important one for national unity's sake.⁶⁹ In fact the Calgary Regiment (Tank) had actually been put on active service on August 26 in order to guard Mewata Armoury and some facilities at Sarcee Camp, even though the regiment was not parading (that is, active) during the summer. Maj. Purdy and Beggs had actually driven around the city in their own cars to alert their comrades. By September 8, most of the officers were on duty (though still unpaid). The regiment soon took over responsibility for guarding the Seebe internment camp, and the men not called to active service resumed weekly training.

Initially hopes were high that the regiment would be designated part of the Canadian Active Service Force (the overseas army).⁷⁰ But once it became clear that this would be delayed, officers openly encouraged their men to enlist elsewhere. Many did exactly that, many of the younger officers joining them, so that within a few months, ten of them along with 150 other ranks had “gone active,” including quite a number of the training personnel. As the economy quickly improved, others found better jobs but had to give up part-time soldiering. And numbers of the older men joined the Veterans Home Guard.⁷¹ For now, the regiment was not allowed to recruit above its peacetime establishment, which for NCOs and especially other ranks was well below “active” strength.⁷² There was no way to mask the disappointing start to the regiment's war, and it grated that both the Calgary Highlanders and Edmonton Regiment had been included in the first wave of mobilization. The lone consolation during those early months was Ottawa's pledge that when (or if) the regiment was mobilized it would be as a tank unit.

Limited Liabilities ... Then Total War

Initially, Ottawa had no intention of raising an expeditionary force on the scale of the Great War, preferring to emphasize economic production (which had the added benefit of putting the unemployed back to work) and a sizable commitment of air power. Keeping the overseas army small(er) promised lower casualties, which might spare the country another conscription crisis. At the time, this policy of “limited liabilities” was sensible and initially popular. Of course events—specifically the fall of France in the spring of 1940, which left Britain standing alone with only meagre help from a neutral United States, the Dominions, and the Empire—led the Mackenzie King government to accept total war. This meant a much-expanded economic effort and, by 1941, a much larger overseas army (of which the Calgary Regiment [Tank] would be a part). But all that lay in the future.

Gearing Up

In June 1940, the mobilization of the South Alberta Regiment siphoned off five more officers and 179 other ranks.⁷³ A month later, orders came to reorganize the regiment as a Reserve unit of the Canadian Army and to recruit to war establishment (though Ottawa still couldn't guarantee every recruit would be issued a uniform). Jull was ecstatic, but given that the Army, RCAF, and RCN had already recruited pretty intensively in Calgary, finding the men would be easier said than done. The farms and small centres of Central Alberta were a largely untapped source, and Jull and others in the regiment were convinced that many of them would possess the mechanical skills tank units required. He pressed the army to let him decentralize his recruiting, and they quickly agreed. Henceforth, the Calgary Regiment (Tank)'s Headquarters Squadron would be based in Calgary, with A, B, and C Squadrons operating out of Red Deer, Stettler, and Olds, respectively. The CO's hunch would be vindicated, as waves of volunteers from the new locales stepped forward to enlist.⁷⁴

A substantially increased budget for NPAM (now Reserve) units and sheer demand turned September 1940's Sarcee Camp into the biggest training event in MD 13's history, involving some 5,500 men over two fifteen-day sessions. Officers and NCOs still had to work around serious equipment shortages, but even the men forced to train in their civvies showed plenty of enthusiasm. The Calgary Regiment (Tank) sent 477 all ranks, including 110 from Stettler, forty from Red Deer and seventy from Olds, "a very good showing ... considering the numbers in the regiment who were [occupied in harvest] operations at that time of year."⁷⁵ The honorary colonel gave the regiment a large cheque, a goodly part of which went toward a wind-up party in the officers' mess, while A. E. Cross entertained the NCOs at his brewery.⁷⁶ In just five months, the majority of those sweating under the prairie sun, trying to master the basics of tank warfare sans tanks, would "go active" with their regiment. Without formal announcement, their great adventure had begun that September, for the friendships forged at the 1940 camp would carry them through Dieppe and beyond, to Italy and the Low Countries.⁷⁷

The Last Months of Part-time Soldiering

Through the autumn and into the winter of 1940–41 training proceeded apace at Mewata Armoury and the regiment's various small-town outposts. Though the bulk of the training evenings were still unpaid, C Squadron regularly saw as many as 200 men turn out for the twice-weekly parades at Olds. There were remarkable stories of dedication—men managing to get to Sundre by horseback or car, then riding into Olds in the back of an open truck. Invariably, those who

lived close by passed the hat to pay for their gas and a meal. Even the onset of a prairie winter barely put a dent in the turnout. Many of the instructors had to commute from Calgary. Maj. Begg, the second-in-command, not only ran a school for officers and NCOs in the city that autumn, but offered a compressed version in Olds, Stettler, and Red Deer as well.⁷⁸ What could be achieved by way of training was still pretty limited, but there was no lack of enthusiasm. As one man proudly put it, “we train to become efficient in the use of arms for the defence of our country, and previously have not restricted our training to the number of nights for which the government have been able to provide funds.”⁷⁹

The Big Army Plan

The ditching of “limited liability” after the fall of France transformed the army’s role in the national war effort. When the so-called “big army plan” was finalized late in 1941, Canada had committed itself to an expeditionary force of three infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, and two additional tank brigades⁸⁰—altogether twelve armoured regiments instead of the three originally planned.⁸¹ This would have all but guaranteed the eventual mobilization of the Calgary Regiment, but in fact the decision came much earlier.

Mobilization

Regimental myth tells us that Brig. Frank Worthington, the father of the Canadian Armoured Corps and commanding officer of the 1st Army Tank Brigade, asked a number of reserve tank units how quickly they could form an active unit. Instead of responding with questions or vague assurances, Lt.-Col. Jull’s telegram read simply: “When do you wish me to report?”⁸² Not only did Worthington immediately order them to Camp Borden, but he retained a soft spot in his heart for the Calgary Regiment thereafter. Reality was a bit more prosaic—when the brigade came into being at Camp Borden on February 4, Worthington promptly incorporated the two tank units already training there—the 11th (Ontario) and the 12th (Three Rivers) Regiments. Likely, the Calgary Regiment was simply rated the best-prepared of the rest, while also providing a desirable geographical balance. Regardless of how it happened, authorization to mobilize the 14th Army Tank Battalion (The Calgary Regiment) followed nine days later.

When the headquarters squadron, which was drawn from the city as well as the nearby High River and Okotoks districts, paraded on the evening of the 15th, Jull announced the news. Amid rousing cheers, twenty-nine men volunteered on the spot.⁸³ Given the army intended to move the regiment to Camp Borden around March 7, there was no time to waste in bringing numbers up to the establishment of thirty-two officers and 625 other ranks.⁸⁴ And there was

an additional hurdle—beyond the army’s universal age, fitness, and educational requirements, all ranks in armoured units were expected to possess “technical aptitude.”⁸⁵ With his adjutant, the MD 13 recruiting officer and a medical board in tow, the CO immediately set off to visit the outlying units, starting with Olds. Drawing mostly from the reserve unit (C Squadron), sixty-two men, including the town’s entire senior hockey team, enlisted within the week.⁸⁶ By February 23 they had managed to recruit a further 157 men from the Red Deer and Stettler districts (home of A and B Squadrons, respectively), and successful forays had been made to the Nanton, High River, Brooks, and Bassano areas, too. Within a fortnight an impressive sixteen officers and 400 other ranks from the reserve unit had gone active, while other members tried, but either failed the medical or were over-age.⁸⁷

On February 25, Worthington appointed Maj. Gerard Bradbrooke, a decorated Great War veteran and army regular, to replace Lt.-Col. Jull. The latter’s loss of an eye during a training accident at one of the summer camps precluded his going overseas.⁸⁸ Bradbrooke’s first task required him to interview all the current officers, turning down any he deemed “deficient in mechanical aptitude or temperamentally unsuitable.”⁸⁹ They volunteered to a man, and many were crushed when he selected just thirteen.⁹⁰ To make up the remaining manpower shortfall, the regiment chose officers and NCOs from training facilities in Calgary, Red Deer, Camrose, and Edmonton, including 120 from the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada who were completing their infantry training at Currie Barracks.⁹¹

By the first week of March, all personnel were concentrated in Calgary preparatory to setting out for the East. The now Lt.-Col. Bradbrooke addressed his command for the first time on March 4.⁹² Two days later, the majority of officers and other ranks were granted a 96-hour embarkation leave. Upon their return, various inspections and formal social events helped fill the remaining time.⁹³

On the afternoon of the 17th, all ranks got word they would be heading east in a matter of hours. At 1800, they formed up in full kit and marched the short distance from the armoury to a siding on the main line between 11th and 14th Streets along 9th Avenue where their CPR troop train, and nearly 3,000 well-wishers, were waiting expectantly. The 14th Reserve Army Tank Battalion, many of them old comrades, provided an honour guard. Only after they had boarded were family and friends permitted to approach the train for last goodbyes. The locomotive, pulling eighteen passenger cars, steamed out of the city just before 1900, the soulful sound of its whistle a familiar—and

haunting—sound to anyone raised on the Prairies.⁹⁴ Including the advance party already at Camp Borden, the 14th was still thirty-eight men under-strength, and a small recruiting detachment remained behind to deal with this shortfall.⁹⁵

The Calgary Regiment That Was Left Behind

On the evening of 3 July 1942, an invading force advancing from Cochrane overwhelmed the city's defenders after a sharp fight and captured Mewata Armoury. The victorious assault, complete with smoke screens, rifle fire and thunder flashes mimicking artillery, was spearheaded by the reconnaissance squadron of the Calgary Regiment, riding in universal carriers borrowed from Currie Barracks. Throngs of city residents gathered along the route to watch the battle unfold, listening to the running commentary provided by a mobile public address system.⁹⁶ Such actions draw a wry smile now, but publicizing the war effort by trying to give ordinary citizens a taste of what absent fathers, sons and husbands overseas would soon risk their lives doing was one of the very public faces of the reserve forces during wartime.

Few today are aware that the 2nd Battalion of the Calgary Regiment remained active throughout the war. The former militia unit, most of whose men had quickly enlisted in the 14th Army Tank Battalion (The Calgary Regiment), was redesignated the 14th Reserve Army Tank Battalion (The Calgary Regiment) on March 22, with Jull, its commanding officer through the remainder of the war, immediately told to bring his unit up to strength.⁹⁷ Reorganization was the first priority. Red Deer had been so depleted that it was no longer possible to base a squadron there. Olds and district (which now included the shrunken Red Deer detachment) became A Squadron, while Stettler and the surrounding area manned B Squadron and C Squadron was formed around newly established detachments in the communities of Coronation, Consort, Veteran, and Alliance. These new arrangements were in place in time for the 1941 summer camp where 400 officers and men from the regiment participated, overwhelmingly new recruits, and with just under half of them from the city.⁹⁸

In the following months, Jull and his senior officers scoured the province for recruits, knowing full well many they found would soon move on to active service. By year's end, the reserve battalion numbered twenty-five officers and 521 other ranks, including a large veterans' detachment.⁹⁹ In the summer of 1942 the 14th Reserve Army Tank Battalion, along with the other reserve tank units, began training as a reconnaissance regiment. Surging war production enabled them to acquire a few of their own universal carriers, 6-pounder anti-tank guns and Bren guns along with some radio sets and other basic equipment which raised the training standard substantially.¹⁰⁰ The major purpose

of reserve units was to provide trained men to other Alberta formations in the Active Army. It is worth noting that during the course of the war, Jull's unit funnelled more men into the regular army than any other reserve battalion in Military District 13. Beginning in 1943, recruiting began to concentrate on high school students, while maintaining enough older officers and other ranks to ensure continuity. Anyone fit and young enough to go active was strongly encouraged to do so, with many enlisting as soon as they reached eighteen. Altogether, seventy-seven officers and over 1,500 other ranks passed through the regiment's reserve battalion into the three active services during the war years, a praiseworthy record, indeed.¹⁰¹

Camp Borden

In the censored obfuscation of contemporary press releases, the Calgary Regiment had departed "for an armoured vehicles training centre in Eastern Canada."¹⁰² The train ride east from Calgary, surely the longest journey many of the men had ever made, went uneventfully. Mostly they spent their time sleeping, making the acquaintance of new comrades, and just staring out the windows at the countryside for whose occupants they had volunteered to give their lives. Sixty-two hours after pulling out of Calgary, they detrained at Camp Borden, their home for the next three months. Deemed "very fit and of [a] good type" by welcoming brigade officers, the new arrivals marched to their assigned complex of officers', sergeants', and men's quarters, messes, storage facilities, offices, and lecture halls adjacent to the training area of the Ontarios.¹⁰³

With a well-deserved reputation as a taskmaster, Brig. Frank Worthington wasted no time outlining to the new officers precisely what he expected of them—getting their unit combat-ready as quickly as possible.¹⁰⁴ Within eight days of arriving, the men received their first training tanks—fifteen obsolete M-1917s.¹⁰⁵ With only a two-man crew and a top speed of barely 5 mph, these 6-ton tankettes offered limited potential for tactical training, but at least one could learn the basics of driving and maintaining a tracked vehicle and gain some gunnery experience.¹⁰⁶ Training was soon humming, with select groups being tabbed for more specialized instruction at other army schools in Ontario, or in one instance, England.¹⁰⁷ When they paraded for inspection on April 23, officers and other ranks beamed with pride as they wore their pale blue shoulder flashes bearing the inscription *Canada—The Calgary Regiment* for the first time.¹⁰⁸ As April wound down, the first Valentine tank arrived at Camp Borden. This was a modern infantry (i.e., heavy) tank of the type the British were actually using in North Africa. Such a precious training commodity required parcelling out, each squadron having the use of it for a few days at a time.¹⁰⁹ That same day, Lt. F. T. Ward returned from leave, having used the opportunity

to marry his nurse sweetheart, Miss Ivy Dunlap, appropriately enough on St. George's Day.¹¹⁰ He was the third member of the battalion to wed since mobilization, a reassuring sign that even amidst the uncertainties of war, love, and faith in a shared future prevailed.

In May, the training intensified, albeit with every sort of equipment still in depressingly short supply. A three-day convoy and harbouring exercise through the heart of Ontario's cottage country was carried out by the whole brigade.¹¹¹ Lt.-Col. Bradbrooke managed to assemble almost two-thirds of his wheeled vehicle establishment, though only by scrounging from other units. Trucks had to serve in lieu of tanks which, save for the training specimens, still had to be imagined. Worthington's staff pulled no punches. Very poor use had been made of cover when stopped. Furthermore marching discipline was "appalling." At momentary halts men "dismounted at free will, lit cigarettes, ate their rations, drank from water bottles, relieved themselves, then scrambled wildly for their vehicles as the column moved on—very much like a troop of boy scouts on a day's outing." As for the officers, many had clearly failed to grasp "that in a very few months, they will be playing 'for keeps' and that they are responsible for the lives of their men."¹¹² In fairness, the scheme was too ambitious, but that's how lessons are learned.¹¹³

Officers and men had just begun the laborious process of moving out of their barracks and under canvas for the summer when on May 29 the news came that everyone was desperate to hear—they were heading overseas.¹¹⁴ Embarkation leaves commenced the following morning, and by day's end, their encampment was more or less a ghost town.¹¹⁵ To ensure that those without plans did not stray into the fleshpots of Toronto, the army promptly declared ten hotels and another ten restaurants, the latter all in "Chinatown," off limits.¹¹⁶

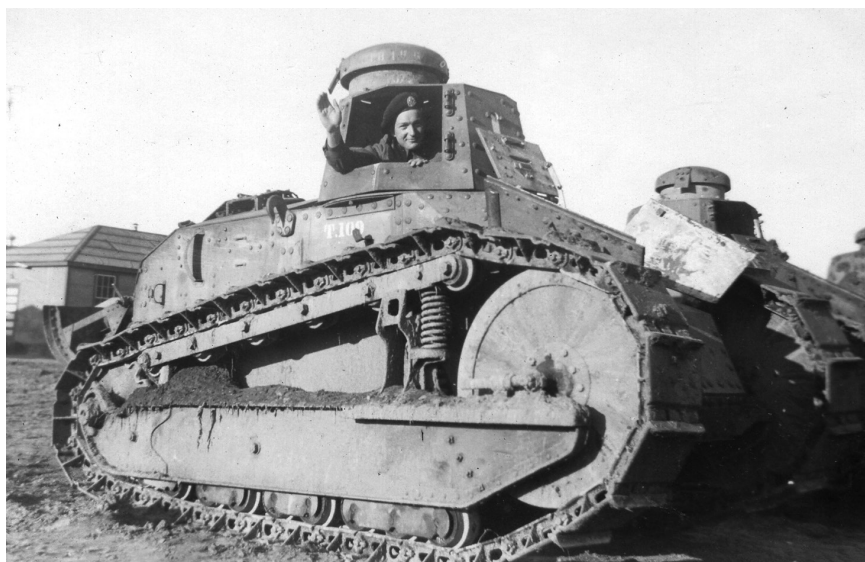
Keeping the Faith

Keeping the military spirit and institutions alive during the interwar years was no easy task. A country that had fought the Great War did not expect to repeat the experience ever, let alone within a generation. Furthermore, it was almost universally felt that that war had been won by an army of citizen soldiers, men with the requisite qualities of courage, duty and self-sacrifice but no military background at all. Even most veterans felt that way. Under such circumstances, what was the point in playing soldier? Post-war, a revived militia faced long odds merely to survive, let alone thrive. That the Calgary Regiment managed to make it through the post-war decade and the Great Depression years was an achievement.

When war came, survival was small consolation. Like the rest of the militia units the country looked to in September 1939, the Calgary Regiment could

offer a few hundred men who possessed only modest military skills, but an abundance of grit, determination, and courage. While no army in being, they were assuredly a potential army if circumstances provided them with the time and resources consistently denied them in peacetime.

Good intentions may have been in abundant supply over the next two years, but little else was. When the 14th Army Tank Battalion headed overseas in June 1941, it was an armoured unit in name only. Still, the human capital of a regiment had been assembled. Once in England, they would have no choice but to learn quickly, and they would prove quick learners. In a little more than a year, the men would find themselves in deadly combat on the shores of France. The Dieppe raid would be a disaster for the Canadians in every way one could measure. For the Calgary Regiment, it would mean the loss of their commanding officer and nearly half of their fighting personnel, mostly to prisoner of war camps, in a matter of a few hours.



4.1 An unidentified member of the Calgary Regiment explores his first tank at Camp Borden, April 1941. The 20-year-old American variant of the WWI Renault light tank was totally obsolete but Canada's tank crews had to start somewhere. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0170)



4.2 The great adventure begins. Soldiers of the Calgary Regiment entrain at Camp Borden bound for "an eastern Canadian port" and thence overseas, 18 June 1941. (KOCRA, P-500-10-0089)



4.3 The unidentified crew of a Churchill tank taking a break, probably while on a training exercise. As is evident in this picture taken in 1942 (but before the Dieppe raid), parade-ground spit and polish was neither a priority (nor a possibility) for tank crews on the move. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0208)



4.4 Standing (L-R) Stoney Richardson (CO 1944-45), Don Taylor, John Begg (CO 1942-43), Debruce Trotter (killed at Motta Montecorvino), Pim Watkins, Bill Hunt and Doug McIndoe, and kneeling (L-R) Bill Payne, Laurence "Doc" Alexander, Dave Clapperton, Chester McDonald and Bob Taylor. Seaford, 1942. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0214)



4.5 The Lord Mayor greets a party of the Calgary Regiment in Birmingham, 17 July 1941. In their semi-strained state the men were hardly a “dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin,” but the Canadian Corps’ sterling Great War reputation preceded them. British authorities felt such public appearances by the latest wave of Canadians would give a welcome morale boost to soldiers and civilians alike, and they were right. (LAC, PA-196826)



4.6 W.C. Love (L) and Herb Knodel walking along a residential street in Worthing, 1942. During the “long wait,” first in Seaford and then Worthing, members of the regiment got to mix with the locals, in the process cementing warm relationships with the British people. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0253)



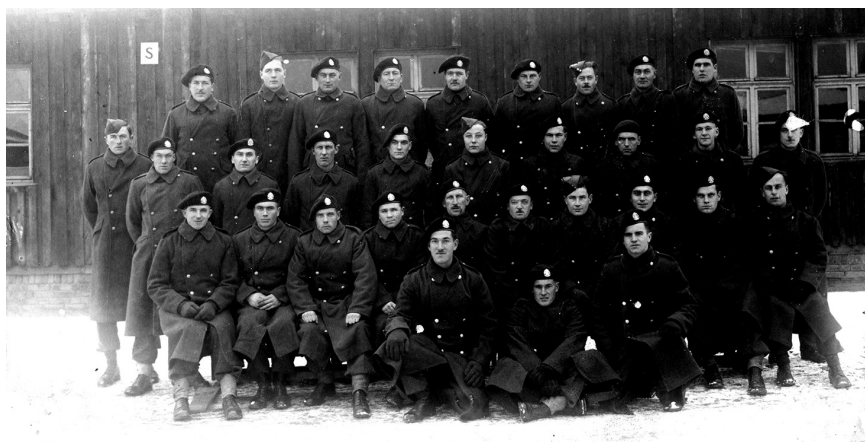
4.7 (L-R) Frank Bevan, Ed Bennett, Archie Anderson, Bill Stannard and Bobby Cornelssen pose in front of their Churchill, April 1942. Lt. Bennett's crew, with L. Storvold having replaced Bevan, landed at Dieppe in "Bellicose" where Cornelssen was killed and the rest taken prisoner. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0101)



4.8 Death and devastation—"Blossom" and TLC 5 that ferried it along with "Buttercup" and "Bluebell" to the beach at Dieppe. "Blossom" was commanded by Lt. Marcel Lambert who, with his entire crew, was captured. (LAC, C-014160)



4.9 Immobilized on the promenade beyond the sea wall after losing a track, "Bert" receives a thorough examination from German soldiers keen to gather intelligence on the newest British tank. Its crew of Squadron Sgt.-Maj. G. M. Menzies and Tprs. N. A. McArthur, T. A. Dunsmore, W. G. Stewart and F. H. Noel were all taken prisoner. (LAC, C-029878)



4.10 This photograph was taken in 1943 or 1944 at Stalag VIII-B, either by the Germans or representatives of the Swiss Red Cross. It shows (mostly) Calgary Regiment prisoners, easily distinguishable in their black tanker berets. No doubt, camp guards would have preferred more smiling. (KOCRA, P-400-20-0051)

4.11 L/Cpl. Gus Nelson was held at Stalag II D in July 1944 when he slipped away from a work detail and escaped to Sweden. Nelson had been the driver of Lt.-Col. Andrews' tank "Regiment" at Dieppe. (KOCRA, P-400-20-0029)



4.12 Capt. Tony Kingsmill c. 1943-44. An engineer and CO of the 61st Light Aid Detachment attached to the Calgary Regiment, he developed a novel method to quickly get a fully assembled Bailey bridge pushed across the Gari River and speed the tanks into action. (KOCRA, P-400-30-0220)





4.13 George Thring arrived as a reinforcement just prior to Motta Montecorvino and served with the Calgary Regiment through the end of the war, rising in rank from sergeant to captain. His transformation from civilian to soldier, repeated by many thousands of his countrymen, was the key to creating a formidable Canadian army during both World Wars. (KOCRA, P-400-30-0038)



4.14 Mrs. Dorothy Thring in 1941. Engaged in the autumn of 1939, they were married in December 1941 during George's Christmas leave. Sixteen months later he went overseas, and they were only reunited in December 1945. The common thread of their married life had been separation, an underappreciated sacrifice a great many married (or engaged) couples made for their country during both wars. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0315)



4.15 H.M. King George VI reviewing the Calgary Regiment, 23 March 1943. Flanking him (L-R) are Vincent Massey (Canadian High Commissioner, behind the others), Brig. Robert Wyman, Lt.-Gen. Andrew McNaughton, Maj.-Gen. J. H. "Ham" Roberts and Lt.-Col. John Begg. Being reviewed by the king was a signal honour, but the 'spit and polish' preparations required were onerous. (Glenbow Archives, pa-1599-385b-15)



4.16 Capt. "Doc" Alexander (L) and Lt.-Col. John Begg pose outside Buckingham Palace in late 1942 after both received the Military Cross. The king had told Laurence "it was a dirty thing" and he was right about Dieppe. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0265)



4.17 Rebuilding the regiment after the losses of the Dieppe raid required a great deal of determination and a lot of work. An unidentified crew enjoy a welcome break from the exertions of Exercise Spartan, March 1943. (KOCRA, P-400-10-0311)