



48TH HIGHLANDERS—OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

THE CONTENTS OF THIS BULLETIN ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND HAVE
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FIRST BATTALION

The following letters from Lt.-Col. J.R.C. Counsell, D.S.O., continues the Regimental narrative:

Holland, 28 Apr. 45.

"After an uneventful trip of 30 hours we disembarked at MARSEILLES, embussed in TCVs and were taken to a large staging camp 15 miles out of the city. The stay there was a short one and after a day spent in marrying up with our transport which had preceded the bn from LEHORN the long convoy started on its journey to BELGIUM leaving the camp in the cold dark hour of 0500.

The trip across FRANCE into BELGIUM took six days! The staging camps were well spaced giving us no more than 140 mile drive each day. On reaching our destination, OOSTMALLE, a small town 9 miles EAST of ANTWERP, the coys were able to go right into billets that had been arranged for by our advance party. Billets that were a real comfort to the men who for the past two weeks had been sleeping under canvas, a cold and uncomfortable proposition so early in the year. After spending a day shaking ourselves out coys got down to some training which must always carry on. The surrounding country was all under cultivation and thickly populated so training areas were limited, however a certain amount was accomplished, at least leg muscles were limbered up and feet hardened by long route marches. Our stay in OOSTMALLE was very pleasant. The people were hospitable, the homes and farms clean, such a nice contrast after filthy ITALY and the beer weak but plentiful as were the pubs. Many men made some very good friends there and have since returned to spend a spot of leave with them. Leave to U.K. was allowed almost immediately on our arrival in BELGIUM. Generous allotments were given to the bn so many men and officers were going around in great spirits and happy faces with the anticipation of seeing good old England and Scotland again.

It was with a great deal of reluctance we left this delightful area for the devastated area we were moved to prior to being concentrated near the scene of our coming operation. The Bde was bivouaced in the REICHSWALD FOREST near CLEVE and if the destruction to bldgs, etc. was any indication of the fighting that took place in this sector it must have been heavy, as there was not a building intact.

Fortunately only four days was spent in this desolation. The bn was then moved to an area just SOUTH-EAST of DEVENIER, HOLLAND where plans were made for the crossing of the River IJSSSEL. This operation called for 2 Cdn Inf Bde to make the bridgehead on the WEST bank and 1 Cdn Inf Bde to make the breakout, proceed to and capture APELDOORN. The 48th were picked to make the breakout, swing NORTH, capture HOVEN and then proceed in a WESTERLY direction towards APELDOORN. This action although successful was very costly as the Commanding Officer was killed in the first few hours of fighting during the breakout phase.

The fighting up to and including APELDOORN was stiff but with good support from a sqn of 1st Hussars tanks we folded the enemy back taking many prisoners and accounting for plenty with our weapons.

After APELDOORN fell we were pushed on at once towards AMERSFOORT. During this stage we were moving forward quickly meeting only light opposition. Tks were used to move tps forward and our carrier pl did a stellar job of protecting our flanks and scouting in front of our column. We came to a halt at the small village of STROE where we have settled down for a short rest and refit. No rest, as training must go on.

Hope this is of some interest and will be the closing Chapter of our Battle experiences for World War II but I doubt it, because as I sit here in my Computer signing this the Guns have started to bang away again after a short Armistice while food was taken into Amsterdam and The Hague. The war becomes phoney again. I do hope no more lives are sacrificed."

The Hague, Holland,
2 June 1945.

"When last you heard we were settling down in the tiny hamlet of STROE near APELDOORN. The second and third brigades, still in the line, holding a broad front with little or no activity on many sectors; each day the operational picture became more confused. At the outset we were given a group of 200 Dutch Partisans who were to be fed by us and employed to clear some woods near our bn area. It had been reported that Dutch farmers in the vicinity had been plundered by a few armed Germans presumably sheltered during the daylight hours in the wooded area in the neighbourhood. The clearing patrols were not successful but their enthusiasm was demonstrated when they offered the modest suggestion that we turn two or three German PW loose to add interest for further patrols.

Shortly after this there were indications that a truce had been declared, presumably only temporary in order to get food to the civilians. It appeared that the German heart was softening and our fighting days might be over. Then we heard that the Germans in Holland intended to carry on hostilities as soon as the food situation had been cleared. And this was not just idle rumour because our bde ordered us to carry out a reconnaissance for a stop-gap role in the event of a possible break-out attempt. We all wondered to where the Germans would imagine they could break but the orders were complied with and billets requisitioned in and about a small town called VOORTHUIJEN 5 to 6 miles west of STROE. On the night of the 4th of May at eight o'clock news came over the radio that the Germans in Holland and Northwest Germany had capitulated. It is understandable that this came as no great shock; the truce for delivery of food to the civilians, and a recent conference held by senior allied and German officers had appeared to most of us the logical fore-runners of an inevitable and not too distant collapse. On Sunday morning a true thanksgiving service was held by Hon Capt Rapson in the bn area. And at 1200 hrs we were placed under command of 3 C.I.B. First Bde H.Q. we learned, were slated for occupational duties in Berlin, with under command the Edmonton Regt and others at this time not disclosed. The NFER and RCR were accordingly u/c 2 C.I.B.

Knowing we would have a definite occupational role to play, and with the VOORTHUIJEN job washed out, the bn stood ready to move to the west of Holland. Needless to say rumours were rife; the Maple Leaf, 'feeling its oats' with the recent relaxation on security regulations had us destined for Rotterdam, another school of speculators spoke of victory marches in Amsterdam.

Finally on the morning of the 7th we received the greatest message of all, short and with no trace of ambiguity - "The unconditional surrender of the German Forces was signed at 0141 this date to be effective at 0001 on the ninth. All offensive action by the AEF is now finished". And that night we received orders for the move; with scarcely time to draw a breath (or heave a long sigh of relief) we completed loading and our convoy passed a bde point at 0630 hrs the following morning.

Our destination was DREFT, small and historic village five miles SE of THE HAGUE. The brigadier had cautioned us that the people were in a frenzy of excitement - he had been one of the first of the Allied Officers to visit THE HAGUE area the previous day, and two of the windows of his staff car had been smashed by the pressure of the crowds.

Crawling at slow convoy speed along the north bank of the NETHER RHINE, in the grey dawn, and moving through ghost towns laid waste by shell fire from Allied positions across the river, we were quite unprepared for the events that followed. For several miles the road was lined with rations of every description - awaiting transportation to the greater populated areas - but still no civilians. Then we began to see them. Happy, smiling, gay with the royal colour orange. We saw them first in tiny groups by the roadside in front of their houses, waving flags, shouting, cheering, and tossing flowers. Then as we drew closer to UTRECHT and the larger cities great crowds pressed about us, at times bringing the lead vehicles to a stand still.

We finally reached DELFT like a whole battalion of 'Lindbergs' and made our camp in a large school with more than enough space to accommodate the bn. We were plagued by people wanting food, cigarettes, and autographs. We had eaten a meal by half past three and felt better prepared to deal with a continuous stream of civilians old and young alike. Some were seeking employment, others extended invitations, and a great many were carrying valuables - watches, rings, jewellery of every description - to barter for cigarettes. "Smoking for father" became the all too familiar cry from the children who had been refused cigarettes on grounds of juvenility.

During the late afternoon the Brigadier was able to give the general picture regarding our part in the unconditional surrender; the bde had been given the not too unpleasant task of collecting and detaining a portion of the Wehrmacht in Holland. This was to be carried out by concentrating the Army, the Navy and the Paramilitary

forces in separate sectors, disarming them, and denuding them of all war materials. This phase completed, they were to be marched by land route to Germany with only sufficient tpt and supplies to expedite their departure. Our particular allotment was to be the Paramilitarists viz the S.S. both German and Dutch, and the Gestapo.

With this in mind, and after a brief reconnaissance for accommodation on the perimeter of the concentration area the bn pulled up stakes and moved into the Hague the morning of the ninth. Here again the flag waving and cheering continued, only more intense than ever.

The evening of our arrival direct liaison was established with Gen. SCHUNGGARTHE, the head of the SS in Holland. His headquarters were in the wealthy residential section of SCHEVINGEN which the Germans had 'roped off' as a huge fortress area surrounded with an anti-tank ditch and innumerable obstacles and bounded on one side by the ocean. And here, with the aid of an interpreter the orders were given. The German chief seemed only too willing to co-operate to the utmost and without any intimation of fraternal regard it must be admitted that they complied implicitly with the instructions given them.

It had been the policy from the beginning to have the Germans do as much of their own administrative work as possible. In the disarming, stacking and listing of amm, weapons and supplies, we as supervisors were well accommodated with German fatigue men.

The disarming process began on the morning of the 10th with Sup Coy in charge, and continued for the next few days with various SS and Gestapo groups coming in from outlying districts. Each day Bde H.Q. demanded a 'parade state' of the number already in camp and disarmed, and the number expected in - this was prepared and submitted by the Germans themselves.

On Sunday the 13th all members of the bn not busy with guard duties attended a victory Thanksgiving Church Service held after the civilian service in a Protestant Church. Is it necessary to say, that, even in its rather depleted state after Canada leave, the pipe band aroused wide interest and unprecedented applause.

Ideas for personal justice and revenge, quite justifiable, in consideration, resulted in a number of shootings and attempts on SS personnel which were a great source of trouble to the allied forces; and this was an itch rather difficult to scratch as we could not exercise the Nazi type of iron discipline which might terminate such behaviour. We did however, post proclamations to the Dutch which were an appeal, with no pretense at threatening where we couldn't stand behind our threats. Fortunately this was productive and no other incidents were reported in our area with the exception of one attempt to steal rations from a German dump. With the majority of our charges behind wire they were ready for the second phase - namely, the extraction by Field Security of persons already classified as war criminals. This was carried out very efficiently; some of the high ranks and arch criminals in point of fact, were not called out at this time but left for employment by us.

The next feature event was the Victory Parade held here in the Hague and attended by representative groups of Cdn, Br, and Dutch forces; D coy and members of the pipe band represented the bn. The parade seemed doomed to only partial success from the outset. Queen Wilhelmina was not able to be present and the weather man favoured us with a very wet continual rain. But if the victory parade left us unmoved we were able to shake this lethargic state at a very spirited officers dance held the same night. Highland dancing was a particular feature of the evening; ballerinas from a dancing school in the Hague put to shame the most agile of the junior officers even though the former had had only a very few lessons.

This last week had brought us near the end of our task in the surrender operations and all eyes are looking to the west. Now one thought dominates, one wish is the common wish; one questions prevails - may we soon go home.

Perhaps this will be the last of the letter reports but you should all be well warned to prepare for long evenings of one way conversation - then all the necessary omissions and deletions from this and previous letters will be told and retold. So get your grains of salt ready and your tongues in your cheeks."

12th June, 1945.

"We are still in The Hague but expect to move to a Div Concentration area very soon and go back under Comd 1st Bde.

1st Cdn Div. had a tremendous parade in ROTTERDAM last Sunday 10 June. The Bn looked very smart. So far we have won the Bde & Divisional Sports Meet by big margins. Army Sports Day is next week. Had an exceptionally fine Officers Regimental dinner on Sunday night last, 10 June. Brigadier Johnston, Lt.-Col. Parker, Lt.-Col. Renison, Major Benton and several other 48th officers serving outside the Bn were there. It was good to see the Brigadier and Parker again. We put them up for the night or I should say morning and they left in the afternoon for their

respective HQ, Parker having a four hour drive.

We are losing quite a number of personnel from time to time by Repatriation Drafts, Far East Drafts and Occupational Troop Drafts, but still more men keep pouring up from the Reinforcement Centres. The strength of the Bn at the present time is 1085, 54 being officers. We are all striving to make them good 48th personnel.

Give my best regards to everyone back home and the best of success to the Assn. We all do appreciate so much what it has done for this Bn in the past."

Brig. W. W. Southam, E.D., arrived in Toronto early in June. He seems fully recovered from wounds received at Dieppe but has been seriously ill almost ever since. Fortunately he is much better and all hope for a speedy recovery. Lt.-Col. T. Warren, Lt. Ian Douglas, Col. C. D. Gossage and Capt. Peter Griffin, M.C., have returned to Toronto. Major A. F. Macpherson has retired. Major Douglas Deeks is 2 i/c Regt.; Lt.-Col. W. W. Darling, D.S.O., is on staff Transit Camp near NIJMEGEN, HOLLAND.

There have been statements in the Press that the Regt. will be among those proceeding to the Far East.

48th CHAPTER I.O.D.E.

Carnival a great success, resulting in a profit of about \$7,000.

48th HIGHLANDERS' ASSOCIATION

Plans are being formulated for the reception of the Regt. on its return but cannot be finalized because of lack of information as to how and when this will be. A task for the near future is the finding of suitable jobs for those requiring them and we are all asked to do our utmost individually to assist. If you know of suitable jobs, call the 2nd Bn. Orderly Room, Wa. 7509, or the Secretary, 48th Highlanders Old Comrades Association, 97 Yonge Street, Ad. 5535.

SECOND BATTALION

Lt.-Col. H. Cassells, M.B.E. and Officers extend the hope that all officers from Overseas will visit and use the Mess. Word has been received of the safe arrival of 50 kilts sent to the Regt. Overseas. These give the Regt. a total of 100 and we are advised permits all men going on leave to be properly outfitted. Capt. John Slatter, M.B.E., and Lt.-Col. R. Cory, O.B.E., were decorated at an investiture held in Toronto, 17 June.

48th OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Lt.-Col. George Alexander, M.C., has retired; Captains Christie Clark, Graeme Watson and W. C. Barclay have been appointed to the Regt. Reception Committee; Lt.-Col. J. A. Densereau having served in many appointments from August 1940 to August 1944, has retired; He was C.O. A-13 Training Centre, ARVIDA Area Defences, 21 Cdn. Inf. Bde. and lastly at Longue-Pointe Ordnance Depot. He is now with Quebec Gov't Dept. of Lands & Forests. He extends an invitation to look him up when in Quebec City and offers to do anything he can for the Regt.

The period of publication of The Bulletin is probably drawing to a close. All of us are deeply indebted to those C.O.'s and other officers who have taken the time and trouble to write so fully and thus made it possible for those at home to be kept informed of Overseas developments.

M. F. NEWMAN,
Secretary.



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NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Association to receive reports, elect a Committee and consider other business will be held in the Mess at 8.30 P.M. FRIDAY, 17 MARCH, 1944.

First Battalion

Lt.-Col. Ian Johnston has been awarded the D.S.O., Lieut. B. S. Eby the M.C. and Sgt. Ellison, the M.M.

Major J. S. P. Armstrong has been appointed Agent General for Province of Ontario in U.K.; A/Lt.-Col. T. Warren to staff General Montgomery; Capt. M. Stearns to A.D.C., G.O.C. 2nd Cdn. Corps; Major Alec MacPherson, C.O. "H" Wing, No. 4. G.I.R. Unit; Capt. Wilson Catto recently received the E.D. Major George Renison is G.S.O.2, 1st Div. Coy, Commanders in January were - "H.Q." Capt. G. W. Beal, "Support" Capt. J. A. Wilson, "A" Major J. C. Clarke, "B" Major F. C. McLaren, "C" Major E. C. Rawlings. "D" Major J. R. O. Counsell.

Among the much regretted casualties was Capt. E. N. Heighington, who was killed in action. He was a son of Angus Heighington, a former Officer of the Regiment.

Letters have been received from Lt.-Col. Johnston, D.S.O., and Major Alec MacPherson, thanking the Association for gifts and assistance. Christmas parcels have reached the Reinforcement Coy. and latest advice is that those for Bn. and Advanced Base Coy. are safely en route.

Best wishes have been received from Brig. E. W. Haldenby, M.C., Lt.-Col. J. E. Ganong and Col. J. E. Willis.

Our Base Depot Reinforcement Coy. is commanded by Capt. D. S. Mills, formerly of the Q.O.R. He is doing a splendid job of inculcating the 48th tradition into reinforcements. In fact, he hopes to be absorbed into the 48th himself shortly!!

The following letter recently received tells of the Regiment's activities since the last report.

"9 Jan. 44

"I am not the least bit ashamed of not having written to anyone since the end of November - we have had other things to do. I believe my last letter to you was written from Campobasso early in Nov. when I was just getting over jaundice. I don't mind who you show my letters to if they give any person any pleasure or interest - that is what they are for. I trust you to do any necessary editing.

Campobasso itself was not much of a rest area for us. Immediately we got there we started feeling forward with patrols and in no time we had Companies out in contact again. Before I had recovered the Bn. was ordered to capture a town called Torella, Banton commanding. This was no easy feat as it was across a deep valley from our forward position and was the top of a high promontory some twelve miles away. As it happened Gerry did not hold the intervening ground in strength so after a couple of days manoeuvring Banton was in position to attack the town itself. A Coy. supported with tanks, was engaged for a time on a frontal attack but B. Coy. going around the right flank got on some valuable ground without trouble and Gerry had to retire. The fighting wasn't very stiff and the town itself was not held. The Hastings then went through and knocked off a town on our left named Molise. These towns were the forward outposts to Campobasso which was to be an important base for some time to come. For ten days we sat in the cellars of the town and were shelled, sometimes with some pretty heavy stuff - a pretty demoralizing experience as you can do nothing about it. Eventually another Division passed us on our left and Gerry had to withdraw his guns.

For the next three weeks we became very Regimental, reorganized and re-equipped. Never has the Unit been so "Regimental" as then. Spit and polish parades, billet inspections, flags and bands. Emerging from our cellars we found Torella a particularly dirty little mountain town which the shelling had not improved. The natives had either stayed throughout or returned as soon as it was quiet, so what with a housing shortage created by blast, it was fairly difficult to find cover for the Bn. -

however it had to be done as the weather was turning - and it was done. The natives were fairly friendly as they always are to either side but soon started the racket of blaming us for stealing all sorts of amazing things. During this time most of the men got 48 hrs. leave in Campobasso where they were put up at the "Beaver Club" run by the Auxiliary Services, could see a movie and an E.N.S.A. show and generally get some rest. For the officers there was a hotel run by Forbes Thrasher and an officers' Club. There was nothing to buy in the town, no restaurants except military ones and the town was dry except for some very bad wine at the officers' Club. However it was a damn good effort on the part of A branch and I think the men appreciated it. During this same period George Ronison and I went to Naples.

At the end of November we got orders to move to the Adriatic coast just after the Sangro crossing. We moved in M. T. to just in front of Termoli and marched up in easy stages waiting for our chance to go through the British Division that did the crossing. As the British had them on the run they didn't wait for us to go through until we had reached the Moro. This was an entirely new operation so we puttered about for a couple of days under shell fire waiting for the operation to be teed up. It was an unusual operation, the river itself presented no obstacle to infantry but it lay in a deep ravine which was defended. The operation on a Div. scale was pretty complicated so I will only describe our part in it. On 8 Dec. we crossed the river at dusk and much to our surprise gained our objective with very little opposition but some casualties from shell fire. Our objective was the shoulder of high ground formed by the valley of the Moro and a deep gully about the size of the Rosedale ravine running into it. On the other side of the gully was a town, S. Leonardo which was the key to the situation. S. Leonardo was taken by the R. C. R. about two days later. In the meantime we were not too comfortable being shelled continuously, being supplied by mule, being subject to counter attack and without A/Tk defence. The worst part was the shelling - again that helpless feeling and some of the men began to get awfully fed up with the inside of a slit trench. However it worked out all right in the end. After the capture of S. Leonardo I had to send two Coys. to defend it, then another Coy. to capture a small town called Latorre which was found to be abandoned. Finally I sent C. Coy., my last Coy., up beyond Latorre to some high ground overlooking the main Ortona lateral road. This Coy. under Bob Handley had some good fun - they arrived on their position after dark and dug in - heard other troops digging in - assumed them to be friendly and sent a man to contact them - he was captured and escaped within the hour with full details on Gerry. Handley sought permission to attack which was refused - was attacked at 0700. The Coy. held its fire beautifully, opened at close quarters and accounted for 27 Gerry without a scratch to themselves. After this I was able to assemble the Bn near S. Leonardo while we teed up for the next attack. It was a terrific show being a right hook to get in behind a crossroad where Gerry was hanging on very grimly. We had every possible kind of supporting arms, 27 officers attending my orders of which about seven were from the Unit. Most of this support made a noise of some sort so at zero all hell broke loose. We moved up very close under the barrage, sometimes right in it, and such enemy as stuck it out were too dazed to fight when we got there. The unit supposed to go through us got away to a bad start but made it the next day and the crossroads was ours. Again we sat in slit trenches with no vehicles, no guns and rations by mule with much shelling.

Some days later we emerged from our slits and prepared to attack again, this time with the intent of cutting the coast road running North from Ortona, the operation to be done in several phases. The Hastings to go first, then ourselves in the same day and then probably the R.C.R. I was very anxious to get on to my objective in daylight and was very disappointed when the Hastings were still engaged at dusk. However, Spry the new Bd. Comd. ordered us up in the dark which was the best thing that ever happened. A Coy. led and found 19 Gerys opening Christmas parcels (Dec.23) without any guards and put them all in the bag. We got lost, but didn't know it and landed square on our objective purely by mistake. I sent a Coy. back to clear a route for the supply mules but by this time the enemy were on their toes and we were cut off. For the next two days the other two Units tried to cross the same country we had in daylight without success. On Christmas Eve and Day we were entirely cut off with no supplies of any sort and once again were in slit trenches being shelled - however the local farms supplied some food and no man went really hungry. Clarkson's batman cooked us a oake out of cornmeal with a melted emergency ration for chocolate icing and walnuts found in a farm house as decoration with "Merry Xmas" written on it with his finger. On Christmas night the R.C.R. made contact with us and our rations and ammo came through. The next morning the Germans counterattacked with two Bns. and we fought them off all morning. At noon three tanks joined us and we proceeded to smear him, killing 45, capturing 27 and wounding an untold number at the cost of four killed, three wounded. This type of thing helps morale after you have been shelled for a long time. The next day Ortona fell and we think we had something to do with it.

We stayed in that position a few more days, then got orders to attack

across a valley to capture the towns of S. Nicola and S. Tommaso. I was back at rear H.Q. having a rest when the order came through so let Wallace my new 2 I/O handle it. The Bn. crossed the valley before first light with no opposition and took the towns on in daylight - dirty hand to hand village fighting which the boys did very well at their first experience. We occupied these towns under very heavy shelling for ten days and moved out today to a comparative rest area.

I am afraid the above is a very sketchy and not very clear account of the battle. It touches the main actions only and does not mention the constant patrolling and the minor brushes with the enemy that were taking place constantly. I will elaborate not to seek sympathy or admiration but simply to show what a magnificent soldier the Canadian private is. Since crossing the More the fighting has been constant, unrelenting and heavy with varying degrees but constant shelling or mortaring. The country is very close, flat with deep ravines - a perfect playground for paratroops who are thin on the ground, very determined and have to be dug out from behind every tree or he pops up behind you. The weather has been cold and very wet with unbelievable mud. On New Year's Eve every trench was filled with water to the lip and the men had to abandon them. For over a month even I didn't change my underwear and I had my boots off twice and I am a pampered baby compared to the men. They had no greatcoats, no blankets, no pup tents, no ground sheets - only a gas cape. Through all this I have never heard one grouse or complaint and their spirits are just as high now as when we started.

For myself I got along all right - I need a light to work with at night so always grab the best house. I can always find business in the rear area when I want to get away from it and I can always find someone to spare me off when I want sleep.

I am terribly proud to be associated with these men."

Second Battalion

Members are requested to use their influence to obtain recruits.

Associate Member Mess Fees - Resident \$5.00; Non-resident \$2.00 annually - are now due and should be sent to Lieut. W.E. Parker, 15 King St. W., Toronto. Members who do not now belong to the Mess are invited to join.

Heartiest congratulations are extended to Capt. John Slatter who celebrated his 80th birthday recently. He and his band are going strong.

Association

G. B. Chisholm, M.C., D.M.S. has been promoted to Major General. Brig. J. P. Girvan, D.S.O. appointed Commandant at Brockville; Lt.-Col. Philip Tidy, M.C., Central Ordnance Officer, Toronto; Lt.-Col. J. A. Dansereau, from whom best wishes were recently received, is now stationed at Longue Pointe Ordnance Depot.

Best wishes have been received from Col. P. P. Hutchison, Commandant The Black Watch, (R.H.R.) of Canada. The Black Watch Bulletin is sent to the undersigned and can be seen at his office.

The Secretary would appreciate learning the addresses of Ronald G. Archer, S. Clemett, Lt.-Col. V.D. Guilford, W.O. Jones, Major N. F. McKee, Capt. M.M. Phillips and W. B. Venner. Mail addressed to these officers has been returned.

We are again appealing to our Members and friends for funds in order to carry on. We are anxious to do more this year and feel sure every one who can afford to do so will desire to help. Contributions, which under existing laws, are free of Dominion Income Tax, should be sent to R. S. Dunlop, M.C., Financial Secretary, 469 King Street West, Toronto. The enclosed form may be used and contributions are equally as satisfactory if made in instalments. To date this year contributions totalling \$1632.50 have been received from 40 members. Last year 51 members contributed \$2,605.85.

A large turn-out is particularly desired for the Annual Meeting. It will be the first gathering of the Association in some time and will provide an opportunity of making suggestions which will be welcomed. An effort is being made to obtain a returned Officer to address us following the Meeting. MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE -- FRIDAY, 17 MARCH, 8.30 P.M., ST. PATRICK'S DAY, in honour of Lt.-Col. Malone!

The Secretary will appreciate receiving items of interest for inclusion in future bulletins and advice if you are incorrectly addressed.

M. F. NEWMAN

Secretary.



48TH HIGHLANDERS—OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Bulletin No. 23
22 May, 1945

Secretary's Office,
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LT.-COL. J. R. O. COUNSELL, D. S. O

Joined the Reg't in 1939. Graduated from "Maybines Military Academy". Proceeded overseas in AUG. 1940 and has served with the Reg't almost continuously since, as platoon officer, adjutant and Co'y Commander, becoming C.O. in April 1945. Home--Toronto; Married.

FIRST BATTALION

Among the greatly regretted casualties in Holland - Lt.-Col. D.A. Mackenzie, D.S.O., Capt. Harold McCutcheon, Lieut. J. F. Williams, killed in action.

Lt.-Col. Mackenzie succeeded Brig. I. S. Johnston in Command of the Reg't and wrote the letters appearing in Bulletins 19 and 22. To his family and those of all other fallen members of the Reg't, the Officers' Assn. extends sincerest sympathy.

Lts. J. Pickering and H. R. Grant
have been awarded M.C.

Col. Beverley Matthews has been appointed A/Brig; Lt.-Col. G. Renison, C.O. Hastings & Prince Edward Reg't; Major Harry Parker, late 2 I/C Lake Superior Reg't, to A/Lt.-Col. in command divisional school. Major Blair Eby, M.C., formerly adjutant and staff Captain 12th Bde., now commands 48th base Co'y, Major Hamish MacIntosh is Bde. Major and Major H. H. Cassels, Staff Capt. on Cdn. Bde. chosen to go to Berlin; Capt. W. Catto attached Cdn. Army staff, Washington; Capt. J. L. Henderson, retired. Major Alec MacPherson has returned to Canada. Brig. W. W. Southam was liberated 25 April by U.S. 3rd Army and is expected home in the near future. Lieuts. Ian Douglas and S. B. Reid are reported also liberated.

The following letter written at Sea, by Lt.-Col. Mackenzie, D.S.O., continues the narrative of the Reg't's experiences. It was forwarded by Lt.-Col. Counsell after Lt.-Col. Mackenzie's unfortunate death.

At Sea, 12 Mar. 45.

"The Italian episode is over. Only a few moments ago the shores of this unfortunate country faded from view, for this morning the bn set sail from Italy and without, I might add, any noticeable regret on the part of anyone. In this letter I shall describe to you the events which have filled the past two and a half months and the rather nomadic wanderings which directly preceded our embarkation.

At the close of my last letter I mentioned that the bn had moved into reserve just before the New Year. This made it possible to celebrate the advent of 1945 in a pleasant, though mild, sort of way. For some little time the men had been in the habit of liberating domestic livestock on deserted farms and sending it back to "X" Area where a 48th Ranch had in this way been established. Now all chickens, ducks and Turkeys were killed, plucked and cleaned and brought forward to add to the already generous supply of baby beef from the same source. Fowl and beef combined with EFI beer made a most successful dinner followed by a C.W.A.C. show and moving pictures for the men. The Warrant Officers and Sgts gathered at the invitation of the officers in a cold bleak barn of a place where their hearts were quickly warmed by sherry, gin and cognac. As you may recall operations near ORTONA forced us to abandon this happy custom last year.

On 3 Jan 45 we had to get down to business again and therefore moved forward to a position just outside of BAGNACAVALLLO where the bn was to be employed in a counter-attack role to repulse the enemy should he attempt to cross at any of the three launching sites that he had prepared on the WEST side of the SENIO RIVER. This was definitely a good go because enemy activity was very light and permitted us to commence training reinforcement who had arrived in large numbers, and to hold a PIAT

and 2" mortar competition; the first won by Capt. George BEALE'S Coy ("A") and the second by Lloyd SMITH'S Coy ("D"). It was at this time, too, that Padre EAST and RSM CROSSLEY, each in his own way an outstanding and almost legendary figure in the bn, left on medical grounds and have since returned to England.

Mid-January saw the bn in close contact with the enemy, after relieving the West Nova Scotia Regt on the EAST bank of the SENIO RIVER. As it was not at that time the intention to launch an attack across the river, activity was confined to sending out recon, fighting and standing patrols and sniping teams as well as laying on harrassing fire tasks with 3" mortar, 25 pdr and MMG. The German units on our front were not lacking in aggressiveness and, as they adopted the same tactics as we were employing, our three weeks in this sector were very lively indeed, and comprised a long series of scraps between small groups of Highlanders and Germans. On one occasion a German patrol crossed the river, climbed over the dyke on our side and took two prisoners, one of whom eluded his captors by breaking away and rolling down the dyke wall, though he was wounded slightly while doing so. Emboldened by this incident, the enemy attempted a more daring attack. After being subjected to a heavy concentration of mortar and shell fire, the outpost position of "B" Coy (commanded by Capt. M.E. GEORGE) was attacked on both flanks by a strong enemy force which crawled over the dyke onto "B" Coy's positions. The outpost opened fire and despite the darkness destroyed a large part of the force and drove the remainder back to their own lines. However, Jerry did not confine himself to climbing over the dyke, but on one occasion burrowed 30 feet through the base of it. An O.P. from "D" Coy discovered the opening on our side of the dyke and the resultant fighting patrol, finding the tunnel occupied, noted out the fate that all good NAZIS deserve.

Such incidents as these kept us busy day and night until our relief on 27 Jan. 45 when we moved to the town of RUSSI for a period of rest. The word "rest" probably does not adequately describe the period, for in actual fact the whole battalion was a veritable hive of activity from Reveille until Lights Out, the days being filled with routine inspections, training, bath parades, shows, etc. Each coy vied with the other to produce the cleanest billets, the best turned out men, and the smartest guard. Ceremonial guards were mounted every day in the town square folled by retreat played by the pipe band. Our stay in RUSSI, was very short but, on the last evening there, 1 Feb 45, we managed to hold a mess dinner. The P.M.C. George BENISON and the rest of the committee made a concerted and eventually successful effort to convert a rather war scarred Fascist public building into a true Gaelic Banquet Hall. Among those piped into the hall from the crowded bars (of which there were two) were Lt-Col D. C. CAMERON of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment and Major A.S.A. GALLOWAY, 2i/c of the R.C.R. This dinner turned out to be one of the happiest and most amusing we have had in this theatre.

The next day the bn went into the line SW of RAVENNA. As in the last position we were not called upon to put in an attack and during the whole of three weeks we were in Ede reserve; our chief role consisted of manning a switch line position to be occupied by the bn in the event of an enemy breakthrough on Italian-held positions on the right flank and an attempt to enfilade us from the NE. Other positions were also reced to be used in case of enemy penetration between the two forward bns of the Bde. At this time Lt Paul FENLAND, Pioneer Officer, had his hands full attempting to maintain the one and only route by which supplies could be brought forward. The road deteriorated so quickly that within 72 hours of our arrival it was impassable to all vehs except jeeps. We seldom have cause to complain of inaction, but so little happened during our tour here that everyone found life a little dull and were accordingly delighted when plans for our relief on 23 Feb were finalized.

When the relief was completed the bn moved off in TCV's to a concentration area on the coast of the ADRIATIC; later we again moved off, in packets of 10 to 12 vehicles each, driving SOUTH through RIMINI, RICCIONE and on to ANCONA then WEST mile after mile to the foothills of the snow capped mountains far above us. We reached finally, far up in the mountains, the remote, medieval village of MONTALTO. This is a strange town. In size it is quite capable of housing two thousand souls but the population has diminished of recent years until a scant 500 remain. By far the strongest influence is wielded by the Monastery of the Holy Order of St Salvador, situated on the highest part of the town and commanding a view on every side. From here as many as 72 separate towns and villages may be seen on the surrounding hills and in the valley below. The town dwellers, regardless of how poor they may appear to be, all own plots of land on the hillsides, land worked by the less fortunate who live on it and till it and deliver to the owner in town the larger proportion of the profits and produce.

Some wit dubbed the monks the "MONTALTO HIGHLANDERS". One afternoon during our stay a game of volley ball was arranged between our rough and rugged Scouts and Snipe Pl and the meek looking monks in their long flowing robes. The monks won! From the Monastery a narrow cobbled incredibly steep roadway leads down to a public square and it was here that the bn guard of 21 was mounted each day followed by the playing of "RETREAT" by the pipers, a spectacle which never failed to draw the entire population of the town. It was Doug DEEKS, now commanding "C" Coy, who was the first to mount his guard in the kilt - something that had NOT been done sine the landing in SICILY.

We left MONTALTO on 3 Mar 45 - just eight days ago - and have spent the intervening time largely on long vehicle moves and on final preparations for embarkation, which was carried out at the Port of LEGHORN. The bn embarking on four different ships. Cns Liberty and three LSTs."

The following is an extract from a letter dated 26 April, from Lt.-Col. Counsell, D.S.O., in which he sends his best wishes to our Assn.-

"You can well imagine it was also a terrific shock to all of us when Don was killed. He was a very fine chap and an excellent commanding officer. His loss to the Bn is a great one as he held the respect and confidence of every one who served under him. To-day we held a memorial service at the small cemetery in which all the men are buried who were killed during this last action, 18 in all. The graves are in a row along the top of a dyke and Don's grave is in the centre of the row. The cemetery is located in the small village of Wilp, Holland and before the service which was at 1030 hours the local Dutch people decorated the graves with hundreds of flowers. It really was a beautiful sight and a very nice gesture. Pictures will be forthcoming and although the colouring won't show up, one can use their imagination. A dozen different varieties of freshly cut flowers amply placed on every grave helped to make the service a very impressive one. Brig Smith attended along with 18 officers and 120 ORs and the Pipe Band. I will mail you a program immediately and send forward photographs when they are available.

I have been given command of the Bn for which I am very proud. It is not a nice way to get the promotion, but that is war. I intend to work hard at making a job of it and if I can do half as well as my predecessors I will feel quite happy. Every commanding officer of the Bn during my short career has been an excellent one and have set a very high standard. I will strive to keep or reach that standard.

Fortunately for me the Bn is in fine shape so I have no ground work to do. The officer personnel is excellent and they have pledged me their support."

SECOND BATTALION

Capt. John Slatter attended his 50th consecutive annual Church Parade with the Reg't. on Sunday 29 April. Lt.-Col. J. E. F. Seagram has retired as C.O. being succeeded by Lt.-Col. H. Cassells with Major G. C. Hendrie a/2 I/C. Annual baseball night held May 15th. Camp dates June 17 - 30. Associate Mess membership Annual fees are now due and should be sent to W. E. Parker, 15 King St. West. Resident - \$5.00, Non Resident - \$2.00.

48th CHAPTER I.O.D.E.

Annual Carnival will be held in Maple Leaf Gardens, Saturday, 2nd June. All members of the Assn. are urged to give support by attending if possible.

48th HIGHLANDERS OLD COMRADES' ASSN.

97 Yonge Street

Officers for 1945 are:- G. Loveridge, Pres.; H. Ralph, V.P.; J. Campbell, Tibb Treas.; James Fleming, Sec'y. Annual dues \$2.00.

REGIMENTAL ACCESSORIES

Rathbone & Co., have wide webb belts in Reg'l colours at \$2.50, Rayon Reg'l ties at \$2.00. The Q.M. 2nd Bn has glengarries; Reg't ties in wool at \$1.25; swagger sticks; falcons; buttons, etc.

48TH OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Retirements: Lt.-Col. E. W. Brookfield, C.O. Res. Bn. 2/10 Dragoons; Lt.-Col. Geoffrey Machell, No. 10 I.T.C.; Major R. M. Murray, R. C. Engineers; Major W. H. Boswell, Trades School, Hamilton,

We regret to announce the death of F. L. Cook, 20th April 1945 and S. Clemett about 18 months ago.

The Annual meeting was held in the Mess 13th April.

Major C. M. King, in absence of C.O. 2nd Bn, welcomed the members and thanked them for their support. Major H. W. Murray in opening the meeting, requested that all 1st and 2nd Bn Officers be informed that they are members of the Ass'n. All 48th

Officers, past and present, and regardless of original unit, are members automatically, subject only to approval of the Committee. The financial statement for 1944 was presented and showed receipts from 107 members (including \$1,300. from Officers of 2nd Bn.) of \$4,042.61, from friends \$2,620.65 and profit from "Baseball Night" and interest of \$1,075.88. After expenditures of \$4,686.70 the balance brought forward amounted to \$4,201.39. The President expressed keen regret at the absence of Col. Michie, our Honourary President, through illness. He paid tribute to the work of the I.O.D.E., The Old Comrades' Assn. and their Ladies Auxiliary, expressing the belief that the newly formed 48th Highlanders Assn. consisting of representatives of the Reg't, I.O.D.E. Old Comrades' Assn, Old Comrades' Ladies Auxiliary and our Assn. would perform a very important function. In conclusion, he thanked the members for the financial and other support in the past, called for its continuance as the need for funds will probably increase in the future. He asked each member to take unto himself the personal responsibility of doing everything possible to aid in the rehabilitation of men of the Reg't by assisting in finding suitable peacetime employment, etc. A Committee of about 20 was chosen for the current year of which the following constitute the Executive Committee:-

Major H. W. Murray, Pres.	Major E. V. Chambers, M.C., 1st Vice-Pres.
Capt. C. T. Clark, V.D., 2nd Vice-Pres.	Major E. W. Bickie, V.D., Treas.
Lieut. R. S. Dunlop, M.C., Financial Secretary	Capt. W. Proudfoot, M.C.
Capt. M. F. Newman, Secretary	

Major Chambers and Capt. Proudfoot appointed representatives to 48th High's Assn.

We are greatly indebted to the Can. Red Cross Society for purchasing and shipping parcels on our behalf and to Messrs. Clarkson, Gordon, Dilworth and Nash for again auditing our books without charge.

A shipment of chocolate and soap is being sent to Reg't.

The Secretary should be advised of changes in address, corrections, etc., if you wish to receive future bulletins.

M. F. NEWMAN,
Secretary.

NOTICE

We regret that in all probability the lists in the Bulletins of those killed and of those decorated are not complete. Omissions will be included in future issues on receipt of particulars.



48TH HIGHLANDERS—OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Bulletin No. 22
3 April, 1945.

Secretary's Office,
605 Dominion Bank Bldg.,
Toronto 1, Ontario,
AD. 9161.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS BULLETIN ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND HAVE
BEEN PASSED BY THE REGIONAL CENSORS OF PUBLICATIONS

FIRST BATTALION

Lieut.-Col. D. A. Mackenzie was recently awarded D.S.O., A/Col. B. Matthews "Mention in Dispatches", Col. J. A. Macfarlane has been promoted to A./Brig.

The following letter from C.O. continues the narrative of the Regiment's experiences in Italy:

28 February, 1945.

"I believe my last letter recorded events up to our move into rest just SOUTH of RIMINI. Here we hoped to stay for a fairly long period while the armour of Eighth Army "swanned" out onto the PO VALLEY. However, in this we were doomed to disappointment and by the second week in October it became obvious that the SOLDIERS were needed once more. Thus it was that on the 9th October we were forced to give up our comfortable and pleasant billets on the ADRIATIC and move to a concentration area near SANTARCANGELO prior to forming a bridgehead over the FIUMICINO R.

The plan for the op necessitated this Bde relieving a British Bde which had reached the line of the river about a week previously, then crossing the obstacle and forming a bridgehead on the other side. The plan from there was not fixed and depended on the amount of opposition which we encountered in the initial crossing. It was thought that once the bridgehead had been established another formation would be passed through us moving up Highway 9 and astride it with an axis of the Highway itself. The Bde plan called for a two bn bridgehead with the RGRs on the right and ourselves on the left.

During the morning of 10 October in a drizzling rain, a recon was made, from an excellent but rather "hot" OP of the ground over which the bn was to fight. As the day wore on, it became more and more obvious that the Boche had pulled out and by evening our suspicions of at least a slight withdrawal were confirmed. At an "O" Op held at Bde HQ that evening we learned that certain modifications in previous plans had been brought about by the suspected withdrawal of the enemy, the most important of which was the commencing of construction of a Class 40 bridge which it was hoped would be completed by first light. This would prevent the necessity of having to man pack everything we owned, particularly heavy wireless eqpt which is awkward to carry, in the initial assault.

As it turned out, the two assaulting coys crossed at first light without opposition and by 1300 hrs the bn was firm in its outer bridgehead position. We were then told that our Bde would break out of the bridgehead and advance up Highway 9. This battle from the bridgehead position to the outskirts of CESENA wasn't duck soup but certainly had all the variety of Heintz best vegetables. It included an advance to contact, the breaching of minefields, night advances and set piece daylight attacks, enemy counter attacks and counter attacks by ourselves. Everyone in the forward area incl "F" Ech experienced NERBELWERFER and Arty Stonks rivalling our own in intensity.

Mines, booby traps and road blocks were all encountered, the first in considerable quantity. On one occasion our Pioneer Officer, Ken HUDSON, and a small party of pioneers removed as many as 55 box mines from a 200 yard stretch of road. An enemy time bomb which we fortunately discovered was also a feature in his diabolical obstacle line. Time bombs are one instrument of war which, until then, we had never encountered and because of this and its unique character considerable interest was aroused. Our first information was a message in code from higher formation stating that an enemy wireless communication had been intercepted and that this communication made inference to a time demolition in the area occupied by the bn. All coys were

warned accordingly. Half an hour later a stick of plastic HE was found in some rubble surrounding a cistern in the cellar of a house used as B Coy HQ. "Mike" GEORGE, commanding B coy, at once ordered the house to be cleared and the cistern to be investigated. The search was not in vain. Some 50 boxes of plastic HE (each containing 25 sticks) were found and together with them enough gun cotton charges to fill a receptacle 3 ft high and 2 ft in diameter. Under the charges had been placed 20 rounds of 88 mm HE with the nose caps removed and in the midst of them, wrapped in cloth, was a time charge with a "clock window". Later examination showed that, at the time of discovery, the clock had only a few hours to run before the explosion was due to take place. The enemy's intention, in this very elaborate subterfuge, was doubtless to destroy a command post or headquarters of some sort because the building, large, well-built, with a basement impregnable to shell fire was ideally suited as a headquarters.

During the earlier stages of the battle the ground was somewhat reminiscent of the battle for RIMINI in that the enemy held high ground which enabled him to cause us some very unpleasant moments indeed. However, when we gained possession of the ridge on our left we were able to offer Jerry no small dose of his own bitter pills. Although our coys were mainly on the flat ground, our TAC HQ with its host of supporting arms representatives had a commanding view of the battle field and despite the enemy's efforts to raze it to the ground, the observation post remained intact and invaluable for the direction and control of fire support. It was at this stage that we were able to use to very good effect the tanks which had previously been too greatly hampered by mines to be of any real assistance. This battle, while it did not result in a very extensive advance, did, however, give us the satisfaction of having inflicted severe casualties upon the enemy.

After our relief during the night of 19/20 October the bn moved back by march route and RCASC transport into a reserve role between RIMINI and SANTARCANGELO. We now invariably refer to this area as the "Mud Hole". It was little else. The bn was on low flat ground which was completely inundated by torrential rains during our first week there. As there was not more than one small house in each coy locality most of the men were under canvas or such other shelter as they were able to improvise. However, in spite of the elements we got along somehow. The bn was very spread out and it was impossible to carry out any degree of refitting or reorganization. It was here that Freddie McLAREN gave a dinner party so successful and entertaining that such parties have now become the normal practice in all coys after a tour in the line. It was essentially the men's party. They were seated in a barn at rude tables made from planks, a partition of blankets separating the festive band from 4 white oxen and about 20 pigs and the whole scene illuminated by candle-light. The senior NCO's acted as mess waiters and there was beer and music in abundance - 2 pipers, a piano and an accordion.

We had at this time what was somewhat grandiloquently described as an "Officer's Lounge" consisting of two very small, windowless rooms; adjoining was a wee cubby hole from which, fortunately, there came a fairly constant stream of cognac, kummel, strega and the inevitable "Itie Gin", every drop of which was required to make us oblivious of the cold as there was no means of heating the place. On one occasion we invited a number of officers in the Bde, including the Bde Comd, to an "AT HOME". This consisted of a moving picture in a large marquee, that was blown down shortly afterwards, and a buffet supper in the lounge.

On 4 NOV. 44 we moved and the remainder of the month was passed quickly and pleasantly with the bn in a rest area between RIMINI and RICCIONE, the same area in fact where we concentrated after the Battle of RIMINI in September. After the initial refitting and reorganizing of the bn had been accomplished a fairly rigorous syllabus of training was followed, considerable emphasis being placed on assault river crossings - a phase of training which we were destined to practise later with the hated Hun as the chief spectator. In addition to such training our days and nights were crowded with tactical demonstrations, study groups on all levels, lectures for officers and NCO's, visits by the Bde Commander and the GOC, company dinners, moving pictures, a memorial service on 11 NOV. attended by Bde HQ, the other two battalions and ourselves and, for some, leave to ROME or FLORENCE. We were told to despatch as many as 80 men at one time which enabled nearly everyone who was due for leave to get away. Also, during this period a Mess Dinner was held at which guests of honour were Brig. JOHNSTON and Lt-Col. DARLING then commanding the PLDG. The Brig made a very amusing speech after many false starts caused by everyone singing "See Him Smiling" and "Old Ian Johnston is a good old soul" whenever he tried to make a beginning.

During our stay between RIMINI and RICCIONE the whole battalion was very comfortably installed in billets. As December and the cold weather approached makeshift stoves of every conceivable design made their appearance throughout the area. Oil drums and 2" mortar boxes with drain pipes used as chimneys appeared to be the favourite models. Together with the cold weather came orders to move NORTH again

into action; and thus it was, our rest ended, the bn commenced a series of short moves from one concentration area to another that brought us on 5 DEC. 44 to a point NORTH of the recently captured town of RUSSI, and a few miles SW of RAVENNA near the famous (to us at any rate) LAMONE RIVER.

It was not originally planned that this bn would attack across the LAMONE RIVER but several unforeseen developments early on 5 DEC. 44 resulted in the 48 Highlanders being placed under command 3 Cdn Inf Bde whose intention it was to cross the LAMONE RIVER to secure and expand a bridgehead on which further operations to the WEST would be based. The Bde was to attack on a three bn front with the 48th Highlanders on the left. The river itself was very deep, fast flowing and about 60 feet wide at the places selected as launching points. Thirty foot dykes, on either side of the river, dropping steeply in the water, promised to hamper both our initial launching and the assault on the opposite shore. Nor did it add to our happiness to know that the line of the river and dykes was one of Jerry's registered defensive fire tasks. The terrain both on his side of the river and ours was incredibly flat, having few useful points of vantage from which Arty, mortar and MG fire could be directed across the river. The enemy had one very useful OP, a church tower which he did not fail to employ even after our tanks had shot away the top half including the church bells.

It was at this stage when preparations were being made to launch our attack across the LAMONE that Major F. G. McLAREN was fatally wounded. His last message to the men of his coy ("C" Coy) was one of good cheer and encouragement to get on with the battle.

The bn plan which was communicated to the coy comds at 1400 hrs 6 DEC. 44 provided for a crossing on a two coy front with "B" Coy crossing on the right and "A" Coy on the left. Both Coys were initially to form a tight bridgehead and subsequently fan out to the NORTH and WEST, with "C" Coy then crossing the river to take up a position between "A" and "B" Coys. When the bridgehead was again firm with these three coys across the river, "D" Coy was to cross with a two fold role of protecting the crossing point and of providing a counter attack force to aid the three forward coys. The assault power of "A" Coy was increased by the attachment to it of 16 pl from "D" Coy, and "D" Coy itself, with under command the Scouts and Snipers, made a very formidable counter attack coy. The bn was to be supported in this venture, particularly in the opening phases, with a very comprehensive fire plan which included two regiments of field and medium guns, 3" and Hvy mortars, and MMG's. Assault equipment bridging, Mac West life preservers, and a Class II raft, this last to be constructed by an RCE Fd Coy after the bridgehead was firm and to be used primarily and initially to get 2 pdr A/Tk guns with jeep 5 cwt towers into the bridgehead.

At 1800 hrs on 6 DEC. 44 as the coys were preparing to move to their respective forming up places prior to the attack, H-Hour was postponed, for 24 hours. On the following day the operation was again postponed, this time indefinitely. For the next few days the coy positions remained unchanged and the days passed almost without incident. The weather had deteriorated somewhat and rain had caused the already swollen river to rise still further. Enemy activity consisted mainly of heavy arty stonks and sporadic MG fire and other small arms fire from the dykes along the far side of the river where the enemy were well reinforced and entrenched.

H-Hour for the attack was finally fixed for 2130 hrs 10 DEC 44. By midnight three coys were across despite the fact that our metal foot bridge had not been a success and a number of boats had been sunk by enemy fire. By first light on 11 DEC the situation was well in hand and our bridgehead positions consolidated. Our bag of prisoners already numbered close upon a hundred and was steadily increasing.

The next phase involved expansion of the bridgehead and exploitation to the VECCHIO CANAL about two miles to the WEST of the LAMONE RIVER. Many factors at this stage limited our advance. Chief among these was the enemy, and not least was the unreliable communications with the EAST side of the LAMONE. By the afternoon of 11 DEC only one Mk III Assault Boat remained in operation, the Class II raft had been sunk and so often was the pontoon bridge (which succeeded the raft) knocked out by shell fire that it could not be relied upon as a channel by which supplies could be brought forward and casualties and prisoners evacuated. Other limiting factors were the lack of good observation posts for the FOC's and the impracticability of employing tanks off the road because of the muddy condition of the ground.

The next 10 days seemed to be a never ending round of fighting patrols, standing patrols, short night advances, set piece daylight attacks and strong, determined, enemy counter attacks - a period of stiff hand to hand fighting against a very stubborn enemy, who, when he was overpowered, had the unpleasant habit of leaving the area liberally strewn with Schu mines and box mines.

The day before Xmas I was able to move three coys back several hundred yards to a reserve position - much to their delight and mine. There they spent Xmas day, had a bottle of EFI beer and chocolate sent by the Officers Association, saw one or

two moving pictures, opened their Xmas parcels, which had accumulated during the battle, and had a much needed bath. "A" Coy, meanwhile, was still in close contact with the enemy across the VECCHIO giving flank protection to the unit on our right that had established a bridgehead there two days before. Their Xmas dinner and EFI bear reached them by means of a large volunteer carrying party before first light on Xmas day. While we could not relax completely on the 25th, yet this brief respite was very much appreciated.

And so we came to the end of the year 1944 which saw the bn once more out of the line and which seems to be the logical point at which to conclude this instalment"

SECOND BATTALION

The presentation of Testimonials by the City of Toronto to Next-of-Kin of approximately 150 fallen Toronto members of the Regiment was a great success. A company of approximately 125, all ranks from 1st Bn. under command of Major K. T. Whyte paraded with the 2nd Bn. It is estimated that there were over 1,200 in all at the ceremony. Lt.-Cols. Nicol and Lambert and Major Parker were officiating chaplains. Following dismissal coffee and sandwiches were served to all. Seventeen officers of the 1st Bn. including Major T. Mackie and Capt. H. E. Cameron who just recently returned to Toronto, were among those present in the mess.

OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

If you wish to receive the Bulletin advise the secretary of change in address. Your name is removed from list if mail return. The Bulletin is sent on request to 48th Officers not now receiving it.

It is hoped that some recently returned officers will address the annual meeting of the Officers' Association to be held in the Mess at 8:30 P.M. on.

FRIDAY 13TH APRIL 1945

M. F. NEWMAN,
Secretary.



48TH HIGHLANDERS—OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

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FIRST BATTALION

Among the much regretted casualties reported since the last Bulletin were - Lieut. D. M. Dickie, Lieut. D. S. Snively, Capt. J. A. Wilson and Major R. P. Lyon - all killed in action.

Lt.-Col. I. S. Johnston, D.S.O., E.D., has been promoted to Brigadier, and Major Alec MacPherson to Lieutenant Colonel. Major J. C. Clarke has been awarded the D.S.O. and Lieut. J. M. E. Clarkson the M.C. Major R. L. Merry, E.D., recently retired on medical grounds. Col. J. E. Willis is on sick leave pending probable retirement.

The retirement of Brig. Johnston from Command of the Regiment is greatly regretted by all ranks who realize, however, that his promotion was well earned. Brig. Haldenby, in a recent letter, advises that a farewell Mess dinner was held on 23 June in an Italian Palazzo located on a hill top. The Great Hall provided space for a U-shaped table, and for the Pipe Band to perform. Among the senior Regimental Officers at the dinner were - Major D. A. Mackenzie; Major D. W. Banton; Capt. E. S. Eby, M. C. Adj.; Capt. G. A. Fraser, R.Q.Co.; Capt. G. W. Beal, "A" Co.; Capt. D. B. Deeks "B" Co.; Major E. C. Rawlings "C" Co.; Capt. L. G. Smith "D" Co.; Major J. R. O. Counsell "Sup." Co.

The following letter dated 28 June continues the narrative of the Regiment's experiences in Italy:

"As you will have been told, I have left the Bn to take comd of a Brigade. It is Jan. since I wrote you a full account of our doings, the delay was caused because we were static during the winter and I did not want to write about operations still going on and until now I have hesitated to write about the Gustav and Adolf Hitler lines. I see that the memo of the Bn has been released in connection with this action so I can now write about it.

My last letter was written when the Bn was in Bde reserve early in Jan. A couple of days later we relieved an Indian Bn in a static roll forward of Villa Grande. This was not a particularly happy area and we were there for some weeks. The area was some thousand yds short of the Arielli River - the country fairly open with Gerry well dug in on the steep bank on our side of the river. The far bank was higher than the ground we were on and the country fairly open so that we were under observation in daylight - at least the three forward Coys were. This meant that the men lived in their slit trenches during the day - not moving unless there were covered approaches to their trenches. When we first arrived the shelling was fairly heavy but it let up gradually and there were few casualties owing to the slit trenches. At night we did a lot of patrolling to dominate the "No Man's Land". There was no defensive wire or continuous trenches or anything of that sort - simply Coy areas laid out in defensive localities for all around defence, one or two men to a slit trench. While in this area the weather was fairly decent. It was here that Ted Heighington was killed on a patrol. - I have already told you the details of that.

After about three weeks of that we moved back to the reserve Bn position again and had about a week in an area where there was little shelling and we could clean up a bit and have a look at each other in daylight.

Then the whole Bde was pulled out for ten days to an area on the coast beyond long range Arty fire. This proved to be fairly miserable as the weather turned very bad with continuous rain, the roads into the area becoming quagmires and requiring a tremendous amount of work to enable our maintenance vehicles to get in. After about a week in this area our Bn moved back some distance to practise river crossings on the Biferno River. This was a good go for five days. All the men billeted in solid buildings in a comparatively clean town more or less by-passed by the war. To get right away from the scenes of destruction was a good morale builder. Also the training in small boats was good fun and interesting.

After our tour there we returned to the Ortona area for a further spell in the line. The Bde was on the coast with two bns up and one in reserve. All Bn admin areas being in Ortona itself. Now started the long grind two weeks in each Bn area then start all over again. In the forward areas the troops were again under enemy observation and no movement was permitted during the day. But the shelling had lessened considerably and the weather was so foul that pl positions were sighted near buildings rather than tactically, and most of the men spent most of their time in these buildings. There was a good deal of night patrolling to be done and we gained complete domination of "No Man's Land" but failed to capture many Germans. Gerry was well dug into rather strong positions and he just didn't move at all. We made a few attempts to inch forward on a small scale without much success. By this time it was recognised by all that we had bogged in the mud for the winter and there was no serious attempt to push on. In the reserve Bn area things were considerably brighter - the houses were better and we could move quite freely and there was little if any shelling. Throughout this whole period casualties were very light but it was a demoralising period with the weather and the seeming lack of success.

Towards the end of April we were at last relieved and went to Campobasso for a week training in mountain warfare then we moved near Foggia for a week's training with a British Army Tank Reg. Then to an area on the Volturno near Caserta for a week's river crossing training. By this time the weather had definitely broken for fair and Spring was with us. Leave parties were sent to Bari, Pompey and Naples. We were rid of the filthy Italian houses and living outdoors again. We became very Regimental. Morale went way up. The training was interesting.

Then came the 11 May and we know things had started. Very soon we moved up behind Casino and the next day crossed the Gari River to relieve the Indians who had made the crossing. Our approach to the Gari was over a dirt track which was maintaining 2 Divs so it was not an easy operation. However we motored up in lorries. When making my recon of the crossing I was just behind the jeep that Dave Dickie and George Rennison were in. This made us all very mine conscious which was not too happy as the area we moved into on the other side of the river was lousy with mines including the new shmine made of wood which is best detected by stepping on it. However we were lucky and had no casualties from mines until the very last day we were in action.

There was a bit of jockeying for two days while we passed through the other Division. Then we pushed off from a position where contact had been lost. We moved along the road in a normal approach march formation each of the two leading Coys supported by a troop of tanks. On our left flank was the Liri River and on our right a ridge about two hundred feet high. The road running in the centre of a flat strip beside the river about 1000 yds wide. We had gone about two miles when we bumped light opposition. This was fairly easily overcome but the Coys lost touch with the tanks and pushed on without support to the Bn objective. Here young Snively and Ballard with their pls met some rather heavy opposition which they defeated capturing considerable equipment, handling their pls extremely well. In the meantime having located the enemy I sent a Coy up onto the ridge on our right. Here they met a considerable force of enemy in very strong positions that they could not overcome. I reinforced with another Coy who attacked without much success just before night-fall. The fourth Coy went up on to the Bn objective so for the night we were split in two. After nightfall the Germans counter attacked the two Coys on the objective with a pl of Inf and 2 S P Guns on Mark 4 special tanks. For the first time the A/Tk Pl fired a shot in anger and by the light of 2" Mortar flares were able to knock out two of the tanks. The infantry were then beaten off with 36 grenades.

In the morning the enemy had withdrawn from off our front altogether. We had pushed him back, knocked out two tanks, captured four guns and a half track vehicle, killed many and captured about fifty. Our own casualties had not been anything like what we had inflicted on him - morale ran high. We consolidated on the Bn objective and then pushed on in bounds taking up a position just before dark which overlooked the Hitler Line. That day we met no enemy except Dave Duncan and two others who were on a patrol. Dave and one other being captured. That night we were shelled and mortared and received some M M G fire but casualties were light.

The following day we moved up to a closer position overlooking the Hitler Line where we sat for some two days. Tps on the fwd slope were under observation and we had to be careful of movement in the whole area but for once we had better observation of Gerry than he had of us. There was a certain amount of sporadic shelling and we took some casualties but we shelled him every time he moved which was fun. The area immediately in front of us was low land with wire and an A/Tk ditch overlooked on the Gerry side by high ground on two sides. It was more or less conceded that this was not the best place to attack and the people on our right teed up and were ordered to move into position by a certain time. One of our patrols in broad daylight got inside the enemy wire and came back with some excellent information. A

Unit on our left patrolled right up to his wire and stayed there.

One evening about 2200 hrs I was called to an O'Op and told that according to information received there was a possibility that a show of force would make the enemy withdraw. We were the only Unit positioned for attack and we were to attack early the next day supported by a Sqn of tanks. There was little time to button up all the details for a set piece attack but we got started somehow and succeeded in entering the wire and crossing the tk ditch and making a bridgehead in the line. The tanks however had difficulty with mines and the ditch etc and could only give us fire support from some distance. We got hell from Gerry mortars waiting for the Tks and finally I decided the bridgehead was untenable for troops crowded as we were and to push on without tks. The ground as I say was low, overlooked by Gerry and well fortified. We should have been massacred but actually the casualties weren't anything like they might have been. The attack however was not very successful and we ended up for the night very much where we had started.

On the following day a Sqn of tanks joined us in the bridgehead and we started off again, this time with more success but it was very sticky going all day. By noon we were almost at the top of the hill which was our initial objective but we had great difficulty in getting on. That morning the main attack previously mentioned was put on by the other tps and towards evening the whole thing cracked wide open and in the morning another formation moved through us.

We stayed where we were for a couple of days and had an opportunity to study the defences which might interest you. The A/Tk ditch was about 12 ft wide and 10 deep with rather saggy mud walls and it is still in doubt as to whether it was a real obstacle. The wire was 20 ft wide, one coil of darnert high front and back with single strand wire in the middle - it was no real obstacle to infantry. In the area we captured there were 12 "mobile" steel two man pillboxes with M M G mounted. These things are portable but once on the ground are not mobile and not traversible, the gun having about 12° only - they have a light steel door in rear and can easily be blown in by men who can get around them. They are sighted to cover each others rear but actually the occupants had departed abandoning their guns before we ever approached them. There were three deep concrete and steel construction dugouts with some kind of weapon mounting but we never found the weapons - Possibly A.A. There was one deep concrete and steel construction dugout with panther tank turret mounting a 88 gun. This gave us considerable trouble and was only knocked out by having the Mediums knock the rubble off then piercing the turret with an A.P. weapon.

We rested for a few days then the chase began again this time with few enemy but some hard marching. We made contact a couple of times but he went away very quickly. Eventually we came to a halt and another formation went through us and we have taken it quiet ever since.

I am afraid the above is all very sketchy but it covers a considerable period and there are many details as to dates, places and the various Units who fought with us that I do not think should be mentioned yet. For the historians there will be the War Diary and Reports on all actions which have already been prepared.

It has been a considerable wrench to leave the old Bn. They gave me a dinner before I left which vied with any I have ever attended in the old Mess, so they haven't changed much - one excuse is as good as another."

In a recent letter Brigadier Johnston expressed his sincere thanks to the Association for its backing and support during his tenure of command. He pointed out that the knowledge of this support was a great help to the morale of the Regiment.

48TH HEADQUARTERS IN LONDON, ENGLAND

Organised largely by Lt.-Col. Alec Macpherson, a Regimental Centre has been established at the Maple Leaf Club, Moreton Street, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1, in charge of a group headed by Miss Jane McLaren. Regimental accessories may be purchased and information obtained regarding all ranks in U. K. Members and friends of the Regiment when arriving in England are requested to communicate with Miss McLaren at this address. This Centre should fill the great need for a central clearing house for information etc. in London.

SECOND BATTALION

Capt. John Slatter was recently awarded the M.B.E.

The Mess recently received the gift of a sideboard from Mr. R. Rae, late President of St. Andrews Society. This is a most welcome addition to the Mess furniture.

SECOND BATTALION(Cont'd.)

The retirement is announced with regret of Capt. W. W. Ferguson, Capt. G. R. Marani and Lieut. R. A. Stewart. The Battalion completed a very successful Camp at Niagara on 30 June. A final wind-up was a baseball game played at the Armouries - Sergeants 18, Officers 16. Parades are discontinued until Friday, 16 Sept., and during this period the Mess will be closed. It is the sincere wish of the C.O. and Officers that members of the Association make greater use of the Mess by coming down more frequently and in greater numbers.

Discussion is underway with the hope that something in the nature of a meeting place, or a programme of social evenings, can be arranged for men returned from Overseas.

48TH CHAPTER I.O.D.E.

The Carnival was a great success, resulting in a profit of about \$5,600. A shipment of cigarettes was sent recently to the Regiment.

OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION - 97 Yonge Street.

Returning members of the Regiment are extended a cordial invitation to make use of the Club Rooms. All are welcome and Officers in a position to do so are requested to make this known.

ASSOCIATION

We regret to announce the death during May of Brig. G. H. Cassels, C.M.G.

Lt.-Col. L. M. R. Sinclair, D.S.O., M.C., has been appointed G.S.O. 1, M.D. 2.

The Baseball game resulted in a profit of about \$1,200. This satisfactory result was almost entirely due to the efforts by all ranks of the 2nd Battalion and the members of the Old Comrades Association. The Association is greatly indebted to these Organizations for their wholehearted support. A shipment of chocolate, razor blades and gum is en route to the Regiment. We have been advised of the safe arrival of 50 kilts sent Overseas some time ago for use of the men going on leave.

The Secretary will appreciate learning the addresses of the following:

Major P. P. Aoland, M.C.
Major D. M. Campbell, M.C.
Lieut. W. M. Smith, M.C.

Please advise the Secretary if you are incorrectly addressed, and pass your copy of the Bulletin to other Officers not on the mailing list, who may be interested. Names will be added to the list on request.

M. F. NEWMAN,

Secretary.



ALLIED WITH THE
SCOTTISH HIGHLANDERS

48TH HIGHLANDERS—OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Bulletin No. 16
10th April, 1944.

Secretary's Office,
605 Dominion Bank Bldg.,
Toronto 1, Ontario.
AD. 9161.

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REGIONAL CENSORS OF PUBLICATIONS

LT.-COL. IAN S. JOHNSTON, D.S.O.

A son of the late Strachan Johnston, K.C. Educated at Ridley College, R.M.C., Osgoode Hall, Lawyer, (Johnston, Heighington & Johnston), single. Joined the Regiment in 1930. Proceeded overseas as Capt. and Adjutant Dec., 1939, subsequently becoming Coy. Commander in Sept. 1940, and later 2 i/c., Awarded D.S.O. for gallantry and leadership in Italy. His older brother, R. W. S. Johnston, is a Coy. Commander, 2nd Bn.

First Battalion

Held first mess dinner since leaving England on Feb. 19. About fifty-five officers attended and from all accounts more than maintained the standard set for such affairs by the 15th Bn. Senior officers at the time were Major D. A. MacKenzie, 2 i/c., Capt. B. S. Eby, M.C., Adj.; Capt. L. G. Smith, H.Q. Coy.; Capt. G. W. Beal, "A"; Capt. J. A. Wilson, "B"; Major E. C. Rawlings, "C"; Major J. R. O. Counsell, "D"; Major I. S. Wallace, "Support".

Brig. Haldenby advises that he visited the Bn. which, from reports received by him, has made a wonderful reputation. A letter has been received from O.C., the Base Coy., commenting on the splendid type of reinforcements coming forward. He mentioned, also, how well they were outfitted with Reg'l. accessories. This is most important in view of the present system of reinforcing, and the Reg't. is greatly indebted to the I.O.D.E., who have sent overseas a constant supply of touries, blue puttees, etc., which otherwise could only have been obtained with great difficulty if at all. C. D. Gossage has been promoted Colonel and is A.D.M.S., 4th Division.

The following is an extract from a letter dated 28th Feb. 1944:-

"We have settled down to a queer sort of existence which must be rather like the last war and is in many ways like regimental life in England. Owing to the dirty weather and mud conditions, there is virtually no fighting with a static line and some patrol activity with considerable shelling on both sides. Insofar as is possible, all men live in houses as cover from the weather, and we shift Units and formations to take turns at the good and bad areas. The forward areas are uncomfortable and wet with patrols to be organized and men standing to at night. In the rear areas we clean up, have baths and movies and drill parades and study groups and tactical exercises just as in England. All pretty dull compared to the race through Sicily and up Southern Italy. Presumably when the weather improves we will get on the move again. Our answer to the armchair critics is that they are bloody impatient. If they had known in July that by February we would be where we are with Italy surrendered, they would have been pleased. Julius Caesar had more sense than to try to fight in the winter, and he had no vehicles to move."

Second Battalion

The Quartermaster has an enquiry for claymores, dirks and skean dhus, and would like to hear of any that can be purchased. He has for sale officers' buttons, cast falcons, swagger canes, glengarries and some second-hand uniforms.

48th HIGHLANDER CHAPTER I.O.D.E.

Spent \$7,370 in 1943 providing comforts for men overseas and for casualties returned to Canada. Are holding annual carnival in Maple Leaf Gardens on Saturday, 3rd June, beginning at 6 P.M. All members are urged to support this event as it is the Chapter's principal source of revenue. Come yourself and bring friends.

48th Highlanders Old Comrades Assn.

A. A. Scully, President 97 Yonge Street H. Ralph, Chairman House Committee

In addition to maintaining Club rooms for members only, this association has sent large quantities of cigarettes and tobacco regularly every three months to the Bn. overseas. A Committee visits the hospitals. Advice is given on pension problems. The paid up membership is over 760. It administers The Heather Rifle Club of which Capt. Jno. Slatter and Geo. Stewart (one time winner of Bayonet fighting championship of British Empire for the Reg't.) are sole surviving charter members. All present and ex-members of 1st and 2nd Bns. are eligible for membership and officers in a position to do so are requested to make this known, particularly to those returning from overseas. Members of our Association are invited to join - annual fee \$2.00.

ASSOCIATION

A card has been received from Brig. Southam thanking us for gift of a sweat shirt bearing Reg'l. crest and sending best wishes to all. It is unfortunate that, owing to regulations, we cannot send parcels to the extent we should like. He will appreciate letters from friends. His address Number 4001, OFLAG VII B, Germany.

The annual meeting was held on 17th March. About forty-five in attendance. Major H. W. Murray in the Chair. The treasurer's statement showed receipts of \$4,460, expenditures of \$4,489. The response this year to that date was \$1,795 from forty-four members and \$1,855 from friends and relatives. The President expressed hope that parcels could be sent overseas oftener. He appealed for support from all and stated that Lt.-Col. Seagram and officers of 2nd Bn. would generously contribute a minimum of \$1,500 in the current year, which would be of great assistance. He regretted it was not practical for the Association to do anything with respect to next-of-kin of those killed or visit casualties due to the method of reporting. He understood, however, the 2nd Bn. and I.O.D.E. were doing all they could in this regard, and was pleased that this important activity was not being neglected. Major Cassels in the absence of Lt.-Col. Seagram, through illness, thanked the Association for its support of 2nd Bn. He hoped members would join and make use of the mess. The Committee was re-elected and following the meeting Capt. Hamish MacIntosh described the Regiment's experiences in Sicily and Italy in a most interesting manner.

Committee and Officers for this year are as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Col. J. F. Michie, V.D. - Hon. President | Lieut.Col. E. Hibbert |
| Major H. W. Murray - President | Lieut.Col. J. E. F. Seagram |
| Major E. V. Chambers, M.C. - 1st Vice-President | Major Hamilton Cassels |
| Capt. Christie T. Clark, V.D. 2nd Vice-President | Major C. M. King, E.D. |
| Major E. W. Bickle, V.D. - Treasurer | Major R. L. Merry, E.D. |
| Lieut. R. S. Dunlop, M.C. - Financial Secretary | Major H. G. Pepall |
| Capt. M. F. Newman - Secretary | Major A. C. Snively |
| Col. K. R. Marshall, C.M.G. D.S.O. V.D. | Capt. H. J. McLaughlin |
| Lieut.Col. G. T. Chisholm, V.D. | Capt. W. Proudfoot, M.C. |
| Lieut.Col. J. H. Chipman, M.C. V.D. | Capt. Graeme Watson |
| Lieut.Col. G. M. Malone, M.C. E.D. | |

Plans are being made to hold a baseball night on 17th May (in the event of rain, the following night) - Toronto vs Newark. Tickets from Orderly Room 2nd Bn. WA. 7509, E. V. Chambers, EL. 2118, W. Proudfoot, AD. 9317, H. G. Pepall, AD 4563, A very generous proposal has been made by the Baseball Club through Capt. Peter Campbell. The 2nd Bn. will parade with bands. It is hoped that a substantial sum for comforts will be raised on this occasion but to ensure success the support of all will be required.

It is proposed to send a shipment to the 1st Bn. in the very near future.

A letter has been received signed by all the recipients at the Reinforcement Coy. and the Battle School thanking us for Christmas parcels. Col. K. R. Marshall, C.M.G., D.S.O., has been on duty with the Active Army for several periods since 1939 in connection with Courts Martial and Courts of Enquiry. He completed three weeks in February last. Lt.-Col. Ian Sinclair, D.S.O., M.C., is now with the Officer Selection Board, Atlantic Command. Capt. R. G. Archer recently retired from the R.C.A.F., Capt. W. O. Jones from R.C.O.C.

Officers' ties in rayon and in wool are on sale at Rathbone & Co., 92 Yonge Street.

It will be appreciated if recipients of the Bulletin overseas and in Training Centres, etc., will pass their copies to other 48th Officers who may be interested as comparatively few on Active Service are on the mailing list. Any desiring to be included should advise the Secretary.

M. F. NEWMAN,
Secretary.

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FIRST BATTALION

Brigadier E.W. Haldenby, M.C. now commands Can. Base Reinforcement Group. He narrowly escaped drowning some months ago when the ship he was on was torpedoed; Lt. Col. W.B. Hendrie is commanding Can. Army Mountain Climbing School; Majors J.S.S. Armstrong and J.M. Rowan are taking an AMGOT course; Major Remison is B.M. 1st Brigade; Major T. Warren, G.S.O.E. 1st Div.; Major D.A. Mackenzie, G.S.O.E. 2nd Div.; Capt. C.J.W. Proctor, G.S.O.E. 3rd Div.; Capt. F. Wood, Liaison Officer 2nd Div.; Major Don. Banton is taking a Senior Officers course; Major K.F. Whyte, Capt. Eardley Wright and Lt. Mochurg have been transferred from the Bn. to another unit; Major Ian Wallace is noting 2 1/2; Major Crawford Brown, Major W.H. Aird and Capt. Jack Brown are in Canada; Major H.S. Rawlings of The Black Watch has joined the Bn.

Among the much regretted casualties in Italy was Lieut. W.H. Magee who died of wounds. He was a son-in-law of the late Major F.W. Grant.

The following letter from the G.O. describes the Battalion's experience in Italy:

"19th Oct. 43

"There is an apparent lull in the fighting so it would appear to be a good time to continue my discourse. My last to you was written from our rest area in Sicily towards the end of August. Well we sat in that area for about three weeks deteriorating quickly for lack of anything to do. It was astonishing how many men acquired minor ailments just doing nothing. Eventually I was called to Div. and told the new picture and some days later drove up to Messina and had a look at our objectives through my glasses. It was an extraordinary feeling to be able to sit in Sicily under peacetime conditions and look at the objective for a combined operation. The last one we had planned at some thousand miles distance. By comparison the Italian landing was a very haphazard affair - mainly because the enemy were in a mobile condition so our intelligence was necessarily vague and our plan correspondingly so. However it all went swimmingly - we were follow-up Bde and by the time we embarked we knew that there was little opposition on the beaches so we sailed across the straits on a beautiful sunny day cooking a meal as we went. On landing we found our objectives had already been taken so we pushed right on inland up into the mountains past a couple of demolitions and finally found some enemy on the top the following morning. These faded pretty quickly, and we sent a Coy chasing them on captured bicycles but we lost touch owing to the demolitions so settled down in a lovely skiing resort to wait for the engineers to fix the roads to enable radios, rations and supporting arms to catch up. While waiting there we got the news of the collapse of Italy. By the time the roads were through it became apparent that there were no Germans left in the toe and the show at Naples was the big thing. By now they had sufficient vehicles ashore to lift us so we were taken back to Reggio again and moved slowly up the E coast of the toe. This was a fairly interesting operation as we were supplied from the Sea but Gerry managed to keep us at arm's length by road demolitions. By the time we got to Taranto the British had already landed so we by-passed the heel and moved on to the Foggia area which was considered important on account of the airfields. Still no enemy and all this taking some time as we didn't want to get ahead of our supply lines. At last about ten days ago we made contact for virtually the first time since arrival in Italy. The first bump at Reggio had been very minor - we were leading Bn. were very thin on the ground - couldn't even get our Bn supporting arms up - I sent two Coys, one up each of two routes and kept two in hand, the two Coys doing in effect a wide pincer movement of five miles width. They both contacted the left under Ian Wallace being mortared and having two men wounded but Gerry fled and they never came to grips. The right did contact and claim to have killed a couple of Italians but the Germans didn't wait there either. We chased him beyond the limit of communications but no result.

"Well ten days or so ago we had been moving up in transport when the unit ahead of us made contact with some force. We debussed and waited and during the night marched up to position. The enemy had faded again in front of the leading unit after a nice little scrap. At first light we pushed through and without any difficulty took the next town right on Gerry's heels getting a few shots at him as he prepared his last demolitions. As in every other show it was mountainous country with fantastic hairpin roads and as usual the battle was for the roads. As usual, also, a couple of demolitions held up all our transport and once again we were out on our own with nothing but small arms and were soon beyond the range of wireless. Gerry had made a nasty mess of the

roads and had used both shrapnel and A T k mines, the former of which thank God we by-passed and left the civilians to blow themselves up on.

"We finally found him in a very strong position lightly held with bodies but some nice long range weapons that kept us at arms length. He sat on a long crest with open valleys on two sides of him which would not enable us to get within range with our smaller arms. He pinned two pls. to the ground for the afternoon and mortared hell out of the rest of us - however we suffered few casualties. That night a couple of jeeps got through to us and in evacuating some wounded one was blown up on a mine and Chester Boughton with 3 G.R.'s was killed. I didn't attack at night as he held a much larger feature on our right which would have made it most uncomfortable in the morning and our patrols saw reinforcements coming in by road. The next day he mortared us again and we did nothing and that night another unit attacked the feature on the right with an Arty barrage and we walked onto our bit without opposition - it had been a sticky couple of days. In the meantime a Coy under Ian Wallace had been working on their own about seven miles on the right and had had a good show with the tanks who had at last found a small bit of country they could work in - they accounted for quite a few Gories and undoubtedly had a lot to do with causing Gorry to withdraw from his main position.

"Another Brigade then passed through us and took him on for a couple of days while we pulled ourselves together. In the midst of doing so I was ordered to take a perfect bitch of a feature 1500 ft. high on the right flank of this other Brigade. It was a feature one would normally think of as a Sde objective not a Bn - Gorry had been there the day before but there was no real information on him - the attack was to be supported by two Field and one Mod Regt observed fire only. A really big show. I took it all up with a sinking heart then had the pleasure of watching the unit attack it without firing a shot. As usual he had gone. This wasn't a comfortable place to rest as all rations, blankets, etc. had to be carried to the top of this bloody great hill where it rained and blew like hell. No sooner had we got them all up there, stealing the local mules to do so, when we got the order to move and down they all came again and on we went. The aforementioned Brigade had pushed on several miles apparently meeting with some casualties and moving quite slowly, mostly across country. We caught up to them in transport, debussed and I was ordered to move up about another seven miles the next day. Everyone laughed sarcastically but we moved on the road up to the first demolition by night and pushed off across country at first light. I don't think Gorry saw us coming and we made our objective by 11:30 but as usual were well out in front of everything with only our small arms and communications broken down as usual. When Gorry saw us there he shelled us unmercifully and for the first time in our experience counterattacked with one pl. and, of all things, a S.P. gun. With all this our casualties were light - one killed and four wounded whereas we killed three of his attackers and wounded several more. That night the roads behind us were repaired and the big stuff has been pouring past us ever since. It is an awfully nice feeling to have the Medium guns ahead of you and the Rear Div. Commandos across the road.

"Well that is our simple story in Italy to date. It is incredible that we should have been here for six weeks and be as far North as Naples without more fighting.

"You will notice that a good deal of our movement has been in vehicles which has meant long periods of quiet with nothing to do. During these periods we resort to normal training just as in England. Officers study periods, N.C.O. schools etc. with more and more stress on smartness and the usual disciplinary measures. On these occasions the band is a tremendous help, small though it is - and peculiarly enough the natives love it. We didn't bring anything like a complete band equipment owing to the austerity of the combined op and the memory of our losses in France but we have the bare essentials of 10 sets of pipes, a bass and three side drums.

"Whether owing to our move North, our being in the mountains or the lateness of the year, I am not sure which, but the weather is definitely cooler and at nights is cold. We have changed from K.D. to battle dress and pup tents are in process of being issued, one for two men to keep them dry in the rainy season which has begun. Also men now have three blankets. This is just that much more to carry and worry about in a war of movement but is a great relief to most of the men. Personally I never minded the heat particularly unless I had to move around in it too much and it was a blessing to know it was never going to rain at night. We are now faced with the same old problem of looking for billets wherever we go.

"The country has changed to something more like our own. The arid wastes seem to have been left behind. Here it is mountainous and green but we seem to have passed out of the fruit belt which is a pity. The peasants are the same dirty, filthy, stupid creatures but there are more fair-sized modern towns with civilized people in them - not very attractive either - more the Times Square type. For the first time in the last few days the men have been allowed into one of these towns and they are behaving very well.

mainly I am afraid because Gerry got away with most of the Vics. There is nothing in these terms for the men to do but when they were always out of bounds of course distant fields looked green.

"The Iti army was a bit of a problem for a time, after the surrender we didn't quite know what to do with them as they were so damn many we weren't prepared to guard and feed them all. They seem to have solved the problem for themselves though - for about two weeks they were everywhere going in all directions with great packs on their backs. Now there are none and presumably they are all where they always wanted to be, in bed with their wives, children, donkey, pigs and chickens."

SECOND BATTALION

Held a dance at the Amarauea on Friday, 17th December for all ranks including families of 1st Bn. About 1,800 in attendance. Since mobilisation 38 officers and approximately 1000 men have gone to the active services. Major Sinclair Johnston, late of the 1st Bn., has been appointed Training Officer.

I.O.D.S.

Have purchased the material and are making up Blue Puttees and Tournies for the 1st Bn. reinforcements, in addition to sending Christmas parcels to the Bn. and reinforcement companies overseas.

ASSOCIATION

Retirements: Col. G.E. Bent, C.M.G. from command 3rd Reserve Bn. Canadian Engineers; Col. Ma. Maybin, M.C., some months ago, from Ordnance; Major Ilox, Sinclair from staff Camp Borden; Major W.G. Robura from Pay Corps.

Brigadier James Moss is Deputy Adjutant-General at H.Q. Ottawa; Lieut. Col. J.M.R. Sinclair, D.S.O. is Provost Marshall H.Q. B.; Major G.L. Booth is Brigade Major 3rd Can. Infantry Brigade; Capt. S.G. Osler is attached H.Q. H.Q., Ottawa; Pfc. - Lt. Angus Sinclair recently returned from Overseas, Col. J.K. Willie some weeks ago visited Kiaka.

Committee 1943

Col. J.F. Michie, V.D., Hon. Pres.
Major H.W. Murray, Pres.
Major E.V. Chambers, M.C., 1st V.P.
Capt. Christie T. Clark, V.D., 2nd V.P.
Major E.W. Bickle, Treas.
R.S. Dunlop, M.C., Financial Secy.
Capt. M.P. Newman, Secy.
Col. E.R. Marshall, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.
Lieut. Col. J.H. Chipman, M.C., V.D.

Lieut. Col. G.T. Chisholm, V.D.
Lieut. Col. G.M. Malone, M.C., E.D.
Major Hamilton Cassels
Capt. H.J. McLaughlin
Major R.L. Kerry, E.D.
Major H.G. Popall
Capt. W. Proudfoot, M.C.
Major A.C. Snively
Capt. Ormrod Watson

At the request of the C.O. 1st Bn., we are purchasing and will ship overseas 50 new kilts. These are for use of men going on leave. We have sent 250 to the C.O. Reinforcing Coy. to enable him to purchase accessories for reinforcements and when required for casualties. Christmas parcels sent overseas divided among Bn. and Reinforcement Coys. consisted of - 200,000 cigarettes, 3,800 chocolate bars, 3,800 packages razor blades, 3,800 bars of soap and 3800 packages shaving gum.

The Association will end this year with a very small bank balance and any members who have been contemplating making a subscription to apply on 1943 are urged to do so now. Contributions, which under present laws are free of Dominion Income Tax, should be sent to R. S. Dunlop, M.C., Financial Secretary, 488 King St. West, Toronto, who will send an official receipt for tax purposes. To avoid mistakes it should be specified if to apply on 1943. It is pointed out that all expenditures are passed upon by the Committee and that the Association is financed by voluntary contributions. There are no annual fees.

Officers desiring to have their names added to the mailing list should advise the Secretary. Please advise if incorrectly addressed.

A Merry Christmas, a Happy and Victorious New Year.

R. F. Newman,
Secretary.