

TROOPING THE COLOUR MAY 31, 1958

One of the great events in the life of The Regiment is the annual Trooping of The Colour - at least it has been an annual event for the last few years - in honour of The Queen's Birthday. And since Her Majesty is Colonel-in-Chief of The 48th it is right and fitting that this should be done.

It is a most colourful and interesting ceremony from the standpoint of the spectators and for those participating it is an excellent exercise in precision drill. Hence the careful preparation for months before. And this preparation is seen in the steadiness and accuracy of movements. Of course The Pipe and Drums and The Military Band provide stirring music to which the various movements are carried out and these bands provided another example of the very high standard of military music which they always provide.

The Trooping was reviewed by The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Lt. Col. The Hon. J. Keiller MacKay, D.S.O., V.D. and old friend of The 48th who was received by the Royal Salute and who inspected the troops.

The Officers, Warrant Officers, N.C.O.'s and men are to be congratulated on this splendid event. The large number of spectators who are thrilled by it every year indicates its appeal and the high regard in which the 48th is held by thousands of the citizens of Toronto. It is hoped that in 1959 The Queen, herself, will be present to honour The Regiment and to receive a further evidence of our loyalty to the Crown and to Her personally.

"A" COMPANY BLETHERS

Since the last issue of "The Falcon" there have been various changes within the Regiment - the changes affecting us are too numerous to mention, but to those who have gone we would say "Haste ye back", and to the new arrivals "Welcome to "A" Company".

Congratulations to Cpl. Welsh on having taken the plunge; we hope his wife and he will be very happy.

At the time of going to press we are just beginning a new system of training in the Regiment. This, being a completely different method to that used in previous years, promises to be very interesting and practicable, and we shall be able to give fuller details in the next issue.

Recruiting in the Company is still flourishing and three times since the beginning of the season we have held right of the line, twice on Friday dismissals and also on the annual Church Parade on Sunday, October 19th.

Owing to the writer having been in the company for only a few short weeks, these notes are rather sparse this time, however this will be rectified in the next issue.

CHARLIE CHATTER

Since the Falcon last appeared "C" Coy has been to Camp, had a summer vacation, and returned to action with some major changes both in personnel and policy.

Camp Ipperwash was a decided success, and we went to Camp the strongest Company in The Regiment. Our Instructors, were Officers and N.C.O.'s of 1 R.C.R. and all ranks agreed that it was the best "training camp" ever. Up early in the morning with schemes on into the night. The Company shook down well, and by the end of a strenuous week showed the benefit of a lot of hard work. RCR Instructors were most generous in their assesment of our efforts, and many compliments were heard as to the standard of our training. The regular force unit bent over backwards in their efforts to assist us and we all would like very much to return.

From all reports a good vacation was enjoyed by all, in spite of the two special parades which were called. For the visit of HRH Princess Margaret we once again far exceeded the rest of the unit in numbers on parade, and all participating deserved and got a message of commendation from the Area Commander. A good turn-out at Wynona Rifle Ranges was the climax of our activities.

Personnel-wise we have had some important changes, Lt. Oster has left us to become Quarter Master, and we wish him well in his new and important position. To take his place we have been fortunate in having Lt. R. W. H. Binnie assigned to us as 2IC. Also departing were 2/Lt. D. Johnstone, O/C W. Stark, and Sgt. J. Saunders. The two-officers went to other Companies and our best wishes follow them. Sgt. Saunders received his promotion to Warrant rank; and is no CSM of "B" Coy. "C" Coy's loss was a definite gain for "B" Coy and he leaves with sincere congratulations from all his old friends in Charlie Coy.

The Company Orderly Room now sports a new low ceiling with flush lighting and a sanded and polished floor, courtesy of interior decorators, Cpl. Durne and L/Cpl. Bowman. The Room is also adorned with twenty of the new long, long-awaited 7.62 mm. FN (O1) rifles.

Under the new training plan; in which the Battalion is divided into Recruit, Basic and Advanced Infantry Training Courses, Civil Defence Course, and Special Courses; C Coy officers and NCO's are responsible for the administration and instruction of the Basic Infantry Training Course.

On the evening of Friday, 24 Oct. 58, following parade, Charlie's Champs, the Company baseball team will be in action on the Parade Square against a Cocky group from "B" Coy who have challenged no to meet them on the field of honour.

#7 PLATOON NEWS

As in "C" Coy as a whole, #7 Platoon has experienced a good many changes since "The Falcon's" readers last heard from us.

O/C W. Stark who commanded #7 Platoon last year has gone to "A" Coy to be replaced by O/C K. G. McVittie.

The Platoon has a new Platoon Sergeant in L/Sgt. K. Fowlston, previously of Support Company's Mortar Platoon.

Cpl. J. Durne and Cpl. W. Tonks are #7 Platoon's Section Commanders.

We are sorry to lose a member who has been through a good number of years with "C" Company but Pte. Speight's health will not allow him to continue parading with us.

We shall also lose the services of Pte. Egerton until an injury which he received with the Unit at Camp Ipperwash this summer is sufficiently healed up to allow him to parade again.

#7 Platoon has in it this year the entire Men's Committee:

Pte. Willinsky, President; Pte. Turpin, Secretary; Pte. Birnie, Treasurer.

The advisor to the Men's Committee is L/Sgt. Fowlston.

The Men's Committee has planned a Christmas Party.

\$1.50 Per Couple Saturday, December 13, 1958, at 8.30 p.m.

"C" COMPANY

CHRISTMAS FROLIC

Dance, Entertainment, University Avenue Armouries, Men's Canteen

48th Highlanders, past and present, and all friends of the Regiment are invited to this party. Tickets may be obtained from anyone in "C" Company.

Pte. Andrew Birnie has added to the social prestige of #7 Platoon by having a photograph of Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant-Major Wignall fitting him with a new scarlet doublet published in The Globe and Mail on Wednesday morning, 15. October 1958.

#8 PLATOON DOINGS

#8 Platoon is now commanded by O/C Brady, newly transferred from "A" Coy. He assures us that he has the Platoon's best interests at heart. The Platoon Sgt. is Sgt. McLeary who has been transferred from #7 Platoon to make sure the Platoon

takes O/C Brady's interests to heart. Having only one full Cpl. in the Platoon, Cpl. Snow, will have to keep his eye on both sections. To assist him are L/Cpl. Stan Bowman, an old hand in "C" Coy and a very able Section Leader, and L/Cpl. Cyril Rands, who has just been promoted to that rank and who should prove to be a great asset to the Platoon (he's a policeman)!

Our men are young and keen, mainly recruits, but already proving that you don't have to be an old soldier to be a good one. Many are on Recruit Training and a few on Basic.

Our aim is to make the platoon the most efficient in the Company, which in time will make us the best in the Regiment!

Nominal Roll - #8 Platoon, "C" Coy:

O/C Brady, Sgt. J. McLeary, Cpl. R. Snow, L/Cpl. S. Bowman, L/Cpl. C. Rands, Ptes. Acheson, Belanger, Smart, Stork, MacDonald, Crawford, Bialowas, Madden, Butryn, Vernor, Butler.

"D" COMPANY NEWS

The company had a tough time this year in promoting privates to Junior N.C.O.'s! L/Cpl. T. (for trooper) Martin suffered a fractured knee cap before he reached camp to complete part two of the course. As a result of this injury, he spent a vacation of six balmy weeks at Sunnybrook Military Hospital, courtesy of the army. (I understand that he's not quite as keen on Judo lessons as he once was.)

L/Cpl. Norm Ballentine got to camp, but a leg injury forced him to leave the course near the beginning. He also spent time in the hospital because of his injury. I've heard of people avoiding promotion, but these two are ridiculous.

Private J. Parker finished the course, but he is no longer with the company. In all this tragedy, Corporal Bill Dinsmore emerges as our one bright light.

He managed to finish the course, get promoted, and to stay with the Company. Congratulations Bill!

Congratulations are also due to two other N.C.O.'s in the Company. L/Sgt. J. Eden is now Sgt. J. Eden and Corporal J. Boggis is now L/Sgt. J. Boggis. New additions in the officers bracket are Lt. Mathers, the new 2 IC and 2nd Lt. Johnston.

The Company personnel has had a one third change since summer, so we will take this opportunity of informing everyone new and older members alike, that the social and entertainment committees are being changed in the near future.

SUPPORT COY

Support Coy, 58/59!! Tremendous! Terrific!! Colossal! Great!! Take any one, it all boils down to one thing. SUPPORT COY IS GOOD! With recruiting at an all time peak, training going at a full blast, new Officers moulding in Sr. NCO assigned to new Platoon. More trucks for transport, rehearsal for the Royal Winter Fair, Cl rifle drill for everyone. Bustling with activity I'm sure we're giving the BHO a close run for 1st place.

Summer camp at Ipperwash was an overwhelming success for everyone. The RCR can be justly proud of themselves for the tremendous job which they did. All courses were run with executive efficiency and a high calibre of interest was kept by us at all times. Ipperwash was a far cry from old Camp Niagara--- no leaky tents, no 2nd class meals and most of all (Sgt. Kelly and Sgt. Chappel) NO MUD. Our battalion was the only one at Camp to have a wiener roast on the sandy beaches of Lake Huron. On the overnite scheme the 48th support Coy was credited with the major portion of the victory.

Why recruits joined Support: During the Summer, Sgt. Major Jones appeared at convenient times to spread the word for Support. Sgt. Major Jones' sparkling personality and lively tales of the doings of Support, along with continued

assurance that Support was The Company, ensured that every single recruit who stayed with The Regiment, joined Support Company.

Since joining the Coy everyone has been convinced that his decision was a wise one. Work is just starting on the weapons and it's proving extremely interesting. One outstanding feature this year is, that as the recruits have had drill on the new C.I. rifle, and have it over the rest of the Regiment when it comes to rifle drill.

"All right back there?" called the conductor, from the front of the car.

"Hold on!" came a feminine voice.

"Wait till I get my clothes on."

The entire carful turned and craned their necks expectantly. A girl got on with a basket of laundry.

A lady, bragging about her new house, with all the superlatives in the book, finally ended up her oration with "and the bathroom is out of this world!"

Bored Listener: "That makes it slightly inconvenient doesn't it?"

OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION NEWS

Blimey! It sure does seem a long time ago since we cluttered up The Falcon. Some how or another something would happen and we just couldn't make press. However, my apologies, and I'll attempt to put you in the picture insofar as your Club is concerned. For those of you in the Regiment whom we haven't seen around the Club please be advised that your Club is still at 519 Church St. - even the stoppage of the flow of the good old froth failed to dampen our spirits (in more ways than one), - and we do sincerely invite you to drop in and enjoy yourselves. Nobody will bite you. Getting back to the beer strike, like everybody else that handles that commodity, we took a financial beating BUT we still have a few sheekles in the bank. During the slack period, our manager, Harry Shepherd and Andy Anderson got the staff working on giving the Club a good cleaning down and believe you me, they did a pretty good job - nice, fresh and cozy. So much for the physical condition of the place. Here's what is going on around the Club. On October 9th, at the last general meeting, the following were nominated for office, to be elected at your next general meeting on November 13th (make note you fellahs) and these boys may conduct the affairs of your Club for 1959:

For President: Jim Lawrie and Jim Shepherd

For Vice-Pres.- Jim Brannan, Leith (Charlie) Querie and Eddie Elliott.

For Treasurer: Jim Lawrie, George Lovegrove, and Bill Eccles.

For Secretary: Wally Moore

For Marshal: C. J. "Polly" Kramp, George Hermitage, Jock Edmondson and Maurice Tracey.

For Executive: Sam Leake, Bob Nicholson, Art Johnson, John Coulson, Ken Craig, Dickie Boyle, Dick Kenzie, Bert Williams, Joe McPhail, Charlie Mitchell, Fred Wilstrop, Jim Brannan.

That's it - the rest is up to you. Vote as you like but PLEASE DO VOTE at the next general meeting on THURSDAY, November 13, 1958, at your Club. If you are interested in who is going to handle the affairs of your club for next year, the you'll be there!!! Nuff said.

On October 25 the usual trip to "Belleville" took place. At this "do" the members of the Club compete against the AN&AF Vets in Belleville in Darts, Crib and Rifle Shooting. Any past sessions have been really enjoyed by all concerned.

The Mixed Dart League at the Club and also the House Dart League will soon be underway around the 1st of November. All members are invited to participate in this winter sport around the Club. You'll have more fun than a barrel of monkeys -

- besides you may win a trophy at the end of the season. The House Dart League fire fifteen minutes after three every Saturday afternoon at the Club - usually in the Pine Room and the boys spend a couple of hours trying to beat Joe Blow's brains out at darts and enjoying every minute of it. So if you would like to join in this real good comradeship and keen competition, come on down to the Club and somebody'll see that you get put on a team. Now the Mixed Dart League propose meeting at the Club every second Friday of the Month or two Fridays in the month (I'm not sure which, however, you can always inquire at the Club) and this is when you give the wife the opportunity of beating you - at darts! I understand they are a keen and lively bunch that participate and I'm sure that if you are interested you and your wife, they'll be only too pleased to make you welcome into your club. Good hunting boys!

Bob Nicholson reminds me that the crib teams are also underway for the season so if you are at all interested - contact the Club. Gord Keeler wants me to remind you that the Rifle Team Dance will be held at the Club on Friday, November 7. Tickets may be obtained from him or Len Falkner. The price is \$1.00. Graby your pants and come on down that night.

ARMISTICE DINNER - Saturday, Nov. 8th, - 7.00 p.m. - at the Club. All members in good standing are invited to attend this dinner. If you ever donned the tartan of the Regiment, you'll be at this function. In order to control the attendance, we request that you pick up your tickets well in advance of the dinner. First come - first served - and you must have a ticket to gain admission. The only charge is your paid-up membership for 1958 - otherwise it doesn't cost you a dime. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Padre East and I'm sure he will receive a typical 48th Highlander welcome to his Club and on this occasion. Why not be there to receive him?

ARMISTICE PARADE - Sunday, Nov. 9 - Fall-in at the Armouries at around 2.15 - medals shining, glens and blazers. All vets of the regiment are invited to be "on parade". At the present time we are trying to arrange to have a lecture room put aside for the boys who take part in the parade - a place where you may enjoy a cold beer and a shot in the arm after the march, without crowding out the Sergeants' and Officers' Messes. Admission by ticket only. See you on the 9th.

CHRISTMAS TREE DRAW - all members of the Club will be receiving a book of tickets in the mail very shortly. There will be a covering letter with it explaining all the why's and wherefore's of this endeavour of raising money. All we ask is your support in this "deal". Send your dough to little "Joe" at the Club. Who knows you may win one of those lovely prizes. A book of tickets will cost you \$2.00. How about that? If you require books, give us a holler at the Club and we'll fulfill your order in a jiffy. We do hope the boys in the Regiment will push this raffle for the O.C.A. I might mention that there's a cash prize to the lad that sells the most tickets from the Regiment. So get creek'n deek'n. The prize will be mighty handy around about Santa Clause time huh?

Too late at this printing to invite you to bring the kiddies to the HALLOWE'EN PARTY, October 30. Sorry, this issue wasn't out sooner!

KIDDIES' CHRISTMAS TREE PARTY - will be held at the Club on Sunday, December 21 - from about 2.00 p.m. to 5.00. Cards must be returned as soon as possible, with the names of your children and their ages noted on them. When they arrive at the Club they'll be directed as to whether they go upstairs or downstairs according to their age group. Don't forget this date for the kids huh? They always have a good time at this affair.

REGIMENTAL HISTORY - I have read this book a number of times and I enjoy it immensely. Have you got your copy yet? They are still available you know? Bear this in mind when you are making up your Christmas List huh? It's a peach of a gift to someone or anyone who ever served. Just give us a buzz and we'll send it along to pronto. Price is \$4.75 -- Kim Beattie really did a job on this one, pal.

REGIMENTAL MEMORIAL MUSEUM - Lt. Col. "Mike" George and his hard-working crew are endeavouring to have this museum properly set-up by the time Armistice Dinner time rolls around. So far they have done a magnificent job and are to be congratulated on their efforts. Hank "Goldie" Goldberg donated a lovely plaque which is over the door in the main hall of the Club. For this Goldie, thank you very much. Anytime you are down at the Club just drop in and take a peek at this. Before closing if any person has First War Personal Gas Equipment which they would like to donate to the Museum, do not hesitate to call the Club. We'll look after the business of picking it up.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS 1952 - are now available at the Club. Arrange to pick yours up and start the New Year with a clean slate huh? Same price - \$2.00 - to be a member of the finest veterans' club in T.O.

NEW YEAR'S PARTY - if you propose to take this in at the Club, it would be a good idea to make arrangements early. Notices will be appearing in the monthly bulletin so just keep your eyes peeled fellah. And that's just about it Gang - it's been so good talking to you again. I hope you have digested all I have said and I'll see you around - like a fitba! Cheers Old Timer.

A guardsman was boasting of the drill of his regiment - "With the Guards it's just 'click, click, click'. A smaller man listening smiled and the Guardsman nettled said "You aren't a guardsman".

"No" was the reply, "I was in the Lancashire Fusiliers and with us it's 'click, click, tinkle'." "What the hell do you mean 'tinkle'?" Whereupon the son of Lancashire smiled and said brightly yet quietly, "Medals, you know."

Editor's note: Every Canadian has reason to be proud of the heritage which is his: and every Canadian soldier can look back with reverence and deep respect to the great deeds of Canadian soldiers in our brief history. Especially in the World Wars this regiment and many others distinguished themselves in vital engagements and heroic action. Here is an account of one of the engagements of World War II which involved several regiments and which meant much in the long range strategy of the conquest of Europe.

DIEPPE

by J. Thomas McWilliams.

Dieppe 1958 -- a quiet, peaceful coastal resort -- Dieppe 1942 -- fire, death, courage, blood. Canadians will always remember Dieppe -- ask anyone about Dieppe. . . "A waste of Canadian boys . . . top brass bungling . . . bloody, useless carnage . . ." But what are the facts?

We lost 907 men killed and 2,460 wounded. Pretty rough for an engagement that lasted just over nine hours.

Was it worth it? Over and over this question was and is still being asked.

There is no refuting the lessons we learned at Dieppe. . .

An assault on a well defended position must have close and heavy fire support to keep the heads of the defenders down until the troops get off the beach . . . a permanent naval assault force should be formed to thoroughly familiarize navy personnel with the operation of landing craft . . . frontal assaults on strongpoints are suicidal . . . communications between leading elements and the Force Commander should be of the highest standard so that early successes may be exploited by the commitment of reserve forces . . . These lessons and many more were put to good use during the invasion of Normandy in 1944.

Also, The Raid persuaded the Germans to focus most of their attention on the coast of France, thus enabling the invasion of North Africa in November to come off successfully.

Let us then, look briefly at this operation, which has caused so much controversy. In the months preceding it, the Germans had reinforced generally the

whole coast of France, Crack troops were moved in and the entire defence system alerted. Captured records show, however, that the enemy had no foreknowledge of this specific raid.

While crossing the channel, the eastern group collided with a German convoy, but it seems that the noise only alerted the eastern sector of the coast. This is where No. 3 Commando was to land and destroy the Berneval Battery:

The bumping of the convoy had scattered the landing boats and only 7 of the 23 reached shore. Six landed at Yellow I and the men were unable to reach their objective. Outnumbered, they were soon overwhelmed, the Germans captured 82. However, the other craft with 20 aboard, landed west of the objective at Yellow II. This small force worked its way up to within 200 yds. of the battery and sniped away for over 2½ hours effectively neutralizing the guns.

At the western end, No. 4 Commando landed without a hitch. A small party put in at Orange I, close to the Varengeville Battery and engaged the enemy with a 2" mortar, blowing up an ammo pile. Meanwhile, the main party went in at Orange II, and circled around to the rear. They assaulted the battery with fixed bayonets, cutting the garrison to pieces. They blew up the guns before departing. This group was the only party in the whole operation to carry its objectives as originally planned.

Now, we go back to the eastern sector where the Royal Regt. of Canada was to land at Blue beach. Theirs was to clear the eastern headland of mg. posts, batteries, etc., and then form a perimeter and sit tight. This was very important since the position overlooked the main beaches of Dieppe. The first wave came in at 5:10, 20 minutes late, without the cover of darkness. They ran into a wall of fire. The 2nd & 3rd waves came in behind them and were pinned down by the murderous fire which raked the beaches. They couldn't get over the seawall. There most of the battalion remained for the rest of the morning, suffering tremendous casualties. Failure to clear the headland influenced the whole operation.

Things were a little better at Fourville, Green beach. The South Saskatchewan Regiment went in at 4:50, on time, and achieved a certain amount of surprise. However, the companies with objectives on the east side of the river Scie, were landed on the west. Instead of being able to attack their objectives immediately, they had to first cross the river. By the time they got to the bridge, the Germans were in their positions, raking it with fire. It was here that Lt. Col. Merritt distinguished himself, winning the V.C.

The Cameron Highlanders, in the original plan were to land and pass through the South Saskatchewan, and push on to Bois de Vertes, there to link up with tanks which were to come from Dieppe. The battalion was landed astride the river. A small group on the east side linked up with a few of the South Saskatchewans who had managed to cross the bridge. The rest of the battalion moved inland on the west side about a mile. They hoped to make contact with the tanks (which as we will see were still cooling their heels behind impassable roadblocks). This was the furthest penetration of the day, but the group soon became hard pressed and had to return to the beaches.

The frontal assault on Dieppe was a massacre for the RHLL and the Essex Scottish. The infantry landed just as an attack on the town by Hurricanes ended. But the tanks were landed late. The advantage was lost in the first few minutes. The infantry without support couldn't move. The withering fire of the defenders soon changed the attacking force into one of defence. The RHLL cleared the Casino and a few parties got into the town, clashing with enemy patrols. The Essex had had no feature like the Casino to afford them cover and so could not get off the beach.

The tanks finally landed about 15 minutes late. The Calgary Regiment was equipped with Churchills. They stood up stoutly against the main German anti-tank weapon -- the 37 mm. In all 29 tanks were landed -- 2 "drowned" in deep water -- of the remaining 27 about 15 made it across the sea-wall to the promenade. They approached the town, but found their way barred by concrete roadblocks. Eventually the tanks were immobilized but they continued to operate as pillboxes, supporting

the infantry while they were evacuated.

If the operation had been a success, there would have been no controversy, just glory. Was there a chance of it succeeding? Yes, the plan basically was a good one. Were the Canadian troops too green and "gutless"? No, captured German reports show they highly regarded the fighting ability of the Canadians in this operation. They could not see how the Allied commanders expected to succeed with such inadequate fire support.

Yes, with a couple of breaks it could have been a different story . . . if there had been no collision with the the German convey . . . if the navy had landed the Royals at the right time (and subsequently, if they could have cleared the eastern headland) . . . if the navy had landed the S. Saskatchewan on the right side of the River Soie . . . if the tanks had been landed on time . . . if the engineers had blown the roadblocks . . . if the reserves (the Fusiliers de Mont Royal) had been landed at the Casino or at Pourville instead of along the whole length of the beach . . . if.

Was it a necessary operation? If wars and killing and suffering and maiming are necessary, then this too was necessary.

Back in East Texas, a group of leading citizens met for a country conference one Saturday night. The conference was well under way when Doctor Smith, one of the oldest physicians, drew aces back to back in a game of stud poker. Everybody stayed. The Doc drew another ace.

At this moment one of the ranchers stood up, bent over double, and went down with a heart attack. The Doc was with him in a flash. It was too late.

The other players stood around, dumbfounded, while Doc laid him out on a bench and covered him with a coat.

"It's awful," one of them muttered. "What'll we do now?"

"Well, out of respect for old George," Doc suggested, "maybe we'd better finish this hand standing up."

Smith got married. The evening of his first pay-day he gave his bride \$40 out of his \$45 wage and kept \$5 himself.

But the second pay day Smith gave his wife \$5 and kept \$40 himself.

"Why, John," cried his bride in injured tones, "how on earth do you think I can manage for a whole week on a paltry five dollars?"

"Darned if I know," he answered. "I had a rotten time myself last week. It's your turn now."

A Texas tycoon driving his air-conditioned limousine up to New York, rebelled at paying a fifty-cent toll to cross the George Washington Bridge.

"Son," he informed the attendant, "I never carry anything less than a \$500 bill. How much do you want for the bridge?"

Editor's Note:

We warmly welcome touring British Regiments and Bands. The Scots' Guards have been here twice. They bring us the result of the best training and tradition in the world. They show us something of our own best heritage which should be honoured and cherished and renewed by these excellent contacts. In September 1957 The Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch toured extensively in Canada and The U.S.A. Here, reprinted from The Red Hackle are some excerpts of their impressions of that tour.

The first letter in the Bands' Tour File is dated 2nd February 1956 and by 12th September 1957, when the Bands flew out of London Airport, a thick pile of 500 odd letters and cables had accumulated. This in itself will give some idea of the enormous amount of preparatory work needed to set the Bands off on the three-month tour. It is no exaggeration to say that such success as the Bands achieved must be attributed in very great measure to this thorough and detailed spade work by Brigadier Baker-Baker.

Major C. M. Moir, who commanded the Bands on the tour and who, for the six weeks previous had handed over command of "A" Company and set up his sign as "O.I.C. Bands' Tour," left Berlin on 15th August, crossed the Atlantic in R.M.S. "Media" and found himself thrust into a three weeks advance publicity tour. The Baggage Party under Band Sergeant McLean left Southampton in R.M.S. "Queen Elizabeth" on 6th September and, by the time they arrived in Washington, Major Moir had returned from his first wanderings with 3,000 miles of travel in Canada and the United States already behind him. The Main Body under Captain W. D. Arbuthnot, the Administrative Officer, flew into Washington in two flights arriving on Friday, 13th September. An auspicious date on which to start such a venture!

The party consisted of the two officers; Bandmaster Baker and the Military Band, 49 strong; Pipe Major McNicol and Drum Major Dear with 27 pipers, 11 drummers and 8 dancers. A total of exactly one hundred all ranks. The Bands arrived to find Washington oppressed by an overpowering and unexpected heat and humidity which made the first few outdoor parades something of an ordeal.

With Washington and Philadelphia under our belts and with the opportunity for a full rehearsal before the first performance in Madison Square Garden, New York, it was a very much happier and more confident party that awaited the dimming of the lights on 21st September and the verdict of the capacity crowd of 17,500.

And so to Canada: Montreal, where we were given a great welcome by the Black Watch, Royal Highlanders of Canada, of whom more anon; Ottawa, where the Bands marched through the city and to the impressive Parliament Buildings where, at the foot of the Peace Tower, Lieutenant-General Graham, Chief of Staff of the Canadian Army took the salute on behalf of the Prime Minister; Toronto, and the ministrations of the powerful and active Branch of the Black Watch Association; back then across the unguarded frontier after a view of Niagara, to Buffalo, Rochester and Troy in Northern New York State -- Troy, where, arriving to rehearse an hour and a half before the show, the Bands found the first of the faithful already firmly seated; not too bad in itself, but made rather trying when two hours later the performance hadn't even started because people were still coming in in a steady stream; Boston, where we had the first of several very pleasant contacts with the English Speaking Union as sponsors of the performance, any profit from the venture going towards some scholarship to further Anglo-American relations--here there was a capacity house, standing room sold out and a disappointed crowd unable to get in--here also the Bands were prevented from coming on for an Encore as the audience had swarmed over the rails and onto the arena as they marched off; Hartford, Connecticut and an all too short night in New York.

Detroit brought out a terrific crowd, many of them Canadians who, at this point, have to go North to get into the States, and General Sir Archibald Nye came and spoke to the senior ranks in the interval and was clearly delighted with the performance; the exertion of this evening was too much for Piper Alves who pitched into Major Moir's arms in a dead faint as the Bands marched off for the last time.

Fort Wayne, which is not one of the familiar Army posts as might be supposed from its name, brought severe competition in the shape of two needle ball games both being televised at the same time as our matinee and it was a disappointment that the lovely new arena was not full; Louisville, Kentucky, scene of the Kentucky Derby, gave everyone a new thrill with a shortened morning performance before 17,000 delighted children who arrived in about 250 buses--the noise as the Bands marched off had to be heard to be believed--this was followed by a short march through the streets and the full show in the evening. And of course in Louisville we achieved a new reputation by our drawing Elvis Presley who was in the competition that day!

The next port of call was Milwaukee, home of the "Braves" who had captured the World Series (the equivalent of winning the Cup Final) only a short time before; here the Bands played at half time at the "Homecoming" football game of Marquette University; Drummer Stewart achieved lasting fame by blowing the American "charge" at a crucial moment of the game--unfortunately the visiting team was attacking ... for many of the party the week-end in Milwaukee was the high spot of the tour; for all of us it holds memories of wonderful hospitality.

Minneapolis. . . . a wildly cheering, packed house. Moorhead, Minnesota and a 75 per cent, Scandinavian audience--slow at first to respond, but as insistent as any in their demand for encores. And so, on 30th October, back into Canada--Winnipeg with Stewart McPherson introducing the Premier of Manitoba in the arena and the Cameron Highlanders of Canada entertaining us right royally; the town of Brandon where the Bands were dispersed over five hotels and the YMCA, where it was Hallowe'en and the local lads let the air out of the tyres of about fifty cars while their owners were watching the show, where the arena floor was ice covered with sawdust, flooded and frozen--and quite excellent--and where the Mayor and Councillors entertained us all; to Regina, and snow, and a respite from hospitality; then Saskatoon, where it was the turn of the Saskatoon Light Infantry to push the boat out for us and where two of our number spent the few remaining hours of the night in a police cell, arrested and accused of "attempting to steal a car"--on investigation, said car was found to be a 1927 veteran, unlicensed, unregistered, with neither petrol, oil nor water, and that the combined efforts of the two heroes had succeeded in moving it five yards from its place of honourable retirement.

Our old friends from Korea, the P.P.C.L.I. made us free of their ultra-modern and most luxurious Barracks in the fast growing city of Edmonton; and in Calgary, after the performance in the picturesquely named Stampede Corral, the Lord Strathcona's Horse, more friends from Korea, gave us a very warm welcome and must have caused Mr. Baker a few anxious moments lest some of his Bandsmen should decide to transfer their allegiance.

. . . . Shreveport, Louisiana, where, in spite (or was it because of?) a two day publicity visit by Major Moir, we had our smallest audience of the tour; Ruston, and so in to New Orleans and a promoter in despair with a demand for ten thousand--yes! I said thousand--more tickets than there were seats available; and then our longest day's drive of 408 miles to Memphis, Tennessee, where, as if 48 hours' teeming rain were not enough to wreck advance bookings, we had a cloudburst in the hour before the show.

...And so we had come full circle and by midnight on St. Andrew's Night we were back in Washington--rather tired but now tried veterans of over sixty performances. Our Marine friends arrived to entertain us again and it was hard to tear ourselves away when the time came to go on again to Philadelphia.

One more performance in Madison Square Garden on 1st December and the tour was over. . . or should have been, but in fact we went off again on a short extension. To Syracuse, N.Y., and Providence, Rhode Island, (which isn't an island at all), a fifth and last performance in the Garden and then North for the last time to New Haven for the final show of all...and what a show it was! By great good fortune we have the whole of that last two hours recorded on tape--it will be fun to listen to in years to come; and for those who would have some inkling of the wonderful reception of the performances by the American audiences, this recording does begin

to give a real idea. Back to New York, income tax forms, customs forms, packing, last minute buying, delayed in all we tried to do by a frustrated New York trying to hurry in the rain with the subways on strike--quicker, far quicker to walk!

A few statistics here might help to dispel any ideas that the whole thing was just a three month jolly and leave. If the tour had been made in Europe and the Mediterranean area, the limits of the journey in America would have stretched from Lisbon to Rostov and from Edinburgh to Tobruk.

In some places, particularly in Canada, the reaction of the audiences was terrific; they sang the songs, joined in the cheers in the "Black Bear" and did everything short of joining the Bands on the arena. This wonderful enthusiasm extended to the intervals and after the performances when there was always a great crowd around the Jocks and particularly around the dancers whom Major Moir or Captain Arbuthnott usually had to round up before the start of the second half. It is no exaggeration to say that more good was done for Anglo-Canadian and Anglo-American relations in those 15 minute intervals than in a hundred years of diplomatic exchanges. Autograph were a feature of these intervals--in the early stages the Jocks found it a joke and a novelty to autograph souvenir books, house programmes, diaries, address books and scraps of paper but the novelty palled as the time of leaving the arena at the end of the show became later and later.

Everywhere we went, great interest was shown in the history, origins and dress of the Regiment and any place and any person with any previous connection with the Black Watch was quick to point it out. At Pittsburgh, in a message to the Bands, the Governor of Pennsylvania recalled that the Black Watch had been there in 1763 after the battle of Bushy Run when they marched to the relief of Fort Pitt, a block-house of which still stands at the junction where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers become the Ohio.

And finally, a ragbag of impressions. These impressions are no doubt coloured by the personal opinions of the writers and it should be made clear at the start that against any unkind remarks or bad impressions set down here should be balanced the consistently spontaneous kindness and hospitality shown to the Bands where-ever they went. There seems to be an inexhaustible fund of goodwill towards anything Scottish (if not always towards all things British). If there was much ignorance about the Black Watch, there was certainly a tremendous interest and this was not just an interest in something quaint and "out of this world" but a genuine desire to learn more about something envied and admired. How many people said, "Ah yes, Scotland, I've always wanted to visit Scotland." Did I mention ignorance earlier? "Say, Major, what is this Black Scotch Watch Group? Do you spend all your time touring?" "Dear Sir. I much regret that I cannot arrange accommodation for the Black Watch in my hotel as we have a very strict rule about accepting coloured folk in Alabama hotels." "Do these boys speak any English?" "Do you have T.V. in Scotland?"

What other impressions did we bring back? The almost complete absence of bicycles and motor cycles; the noise of traffic that seems to go on all night in every town; the incessant police and fire sirens; the enormous size of the country and the goods trains; the speed at which Americans dashed around and the little distance they seemed to gain; the food and the helpful, friendly waitresses; ("No, don't have that, it'll burn you up! "); the ease of air travel; the speed efficiency and clarity of the long distance telephone system (private enterprise).
