

MEMOIRS



*4 CANADIAN ARMoured TROOPS WORKSHOP
R.C.E.M.E.
1942-1945*

Memoirs
of
4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop
Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Prepared by members of the unit at Enschede, Holland, September 1945, as a memento and to commemorate their life and activities from mobilization in Toronto, Canada, on 12 May 1942, throughout their training and active operations, up to the cessation of hostilities on 8 May 1945, at which time the unit was in the above location.

Dedication

This humble souvenir booklet is respectfully dedicated to Craftsmen J. Loewen, R.C. Martin, and L.N. Graham, who were killed in action while serving with this unit.

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Preface

Although we have tried to keep these Memoirs as accurate as possible, you will perhaps recall certain incidents which we have omitted, or possibly find some slight exaggerations. Due to the repatriation of several of the staff, it was found necessary to complete this book in the short space of ten days time, which will account for any discrepancies or omissions.

We hope that all members of the unit will take full advantage of the nominal roll with home addresses which appears in another part of these Memoirs, so that the grand fellowship and co-operation which existed in the 4th Armoured during our service overseas will be continued in the years to come.

If you derive as much pleasure from reading this book as did we in writing it, then we shall consider our efforts well rewarded.

“The Staff”

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Roll Of Honour

Killed

F9985	Cfn	Martin, RC	Caen, France, 4 August 1944
A58918	Cfn	Graham, LN	Antwerp, Belgium, 16 December 1944

Died of Wounds

L65386	Cfn	Loewen, J	Caen, France, 4 August 1944
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Wounded

Caen, France, 4 August 1944

M62362	Armt/QMS	Bristow, JE	M67529	Cfn	Gully, E L
A55640	Cfn	Blazejewski, JR	B53553	Cpl	Harrison, CF
A106837	Pte	Black, HS	D6923	Cfn	Labelle, F
H25037	Cfn	Bickell, WH	P16428	CSM	Lee, FA
K76105	Sgt	Burns, JA	L59709	Cpl	Lutz, JH
B53136	L/Cpl	Buchin, B	U2079	Cfn	Moreton, LFW
L9474	Cfn	Charlesworth, JW	L9802	L/Cpl	Musgrave, CT
G53056	Pte	Fanjoy, HD	L22925	S/Sgt	Sloan, SM
C98406	Cfn	Oscar, AO			

Antwerp, Belgium, 30 October 1944

D23269	ASM	Sloan, H
B94776	QMS	McCallum, EC
A59303	L/Cpl	Drouillard, WJ
F87205	Pte	Doucette, G F
B2816	Cfn	Foster, C
G22095	Cfn	Goodine, CV
M50783	Cfn	Holland, L L
F87646	Cpl	McLaughlin, L A
M45185	Sgt	McGuire, HT
B72670	Cfn	Roebuck, S
B58914	Sgt	Silver, M

Antwerp, Belgium, 9 November 1944

B88562	Armt/Ssgt	Garnham, H
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Antwerp, Belgium, 16 December 1944

A59676	Cfn	Amy, R E
C94111	Cfn	Mayer, J R
H65309	Cfn	Thompson, FE

Foreword by Lt-Col H.B. McAdam

The Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corps is youngest of all Corps in the Canadian Army, coming into being on 15 May 1944. Prior to this date it functioned as part of the RCOC, but without its own identity.

The function of RCEME is to maintain, inspect and repair all equipments of each arm of the services that are used by the Canadian Army, and to give direction on how best to use equipment from a maintenance viewpoint. Part of this equipment includes guns, tanks, machine guns, small arms, radar, telecommunications equipment, fire control instruments, binoculars, watches, all types of wheeled and tracked vehicles, engineering equipment, and workshop electrical and mechanical equipment. Its function also includes recovery and repair of battle casualties, and the control and operation of back-loading points and reclamation sections.

The 4th Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop has, from the time it was organized, taken a very active part in training schemes, exercises, and the training of personnel in preparation for that long-awaited D-Day. From the time the unit landed in Normandy until VE-Day, its contribution to the successful conclusion of the campaign is well known, especially in the field of quality and production and, no less, in the field of competitive sports.

To the members of the unit, past and present, you have a heritage to cherish and respect. May it never be said you were not equal to the occasion in the fuller life of peace for which you have all given so much to perpetuate. Good luck to you all!

H.B. McAdam,
Lt-Colonel
Officer Commanding

8 May 1945
Holland

Foreword by Lt-Col E.G. Pallister, M.B.E.

I first became associated with 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop when, as No. 4 Section Canadian Armoured Corps Ordnance Workshop, it was formed in Toronto early in 1942. We came to England under Lt-Col E. Stuart Johnstone, MC, and by September 1942 we were well established in Beaumont Barracks, Aldershot..

In February 1943, the unit was reorganized and we lost our recovery section, which went to Italy. The unit became a major's command, Lt-Col Johnstone returned to Canada, and I took over. I spent the next eight months with the unit, and these were some of the happiest days of my time in the army. 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop was always a happy unit and all ranks enjoyed life during the time in Worthing, where we spent the summer of 1943. It was with a feeling of regret that I left the unit to go to 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade.

Since then, I've followed the fortunes of this unit. I watched them move in north of Caen, and saw them bombed by enemy planes. I visited them in Antwerp where the shop was under fire from V1s. I've seen them in Eindhoven, when they were working long hours preparing equipment for the Nijmegen "push". The morale was always high and, in spite of very long hours, the boys managed to turn out the work, and keep their reputation of being the best third echelon shop in the theatre.

I consider it an honour to have belonged to this unit and, in years to come, I hope to meet, in civilian life, my friends from 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop.

Foreword by Lt-Col William Mckinlay, O.B.E.

I hardly deserve the honour of being invited to contribute to this history of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, as my association with the unit was of such short duration. Nevertheless, I shall remember the events of those few weeks long after I have forgotten most of the other episodes which went to make up my six years in the army.

When I first made the acquaintance of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, it was located in Caen, and a few miles to the south the Canadian infantry and armour were fighting desperately to break through to Falaise. When I left the unit two months later, we were established in Antwerp, after one of the most decisive victories and one of the most rapid advances in the history of warfare.

Those were stirring days, and I shall never forget them or the grand bunch of lads with whom I shared them.

Those of you who served throughout the war with the unit will have many other memories to take back with you, memories of happy days in the South of England, memories of Eindhoven and Enschede, and memories of many comrades whom I never met. But there is not one of you who is prouder to have been a member of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop than I am.

To all of you, wherever you may go, and to all the folks in Canada about whom I heard so much, the very best of luck always.

Former Commanding Officers

It is regretted that, at the time this book went to press, messages of greetings from the following former officers commanding this unit, who have since returned to Canada, were not available.

Lt-Col E. Stuart Johnstone, MC,	12 May 1942 - 12 February 1943
Major M.H. Hastings	6 September 1943 - 27 December 1943
Major R.A. Mitchell	28 December 1943 - 5 August 1944
Lt-Col B.H. Miller, E.D.	31 October 1944 - 21 December 1944

Notes on the Current (Digital) Edition

At the end of the Second World War in Europe, each unit in the Canadian Army Overseas was required to write a brief history of the unit. Some histories were very brief, and others dragged on to a hundred pages or more, depending on the interest and skill of the amateur historians. The RCEME unit histories have been previously published as *A Collection of RCEME Individual Unit Histories in North-West Europe in World War II*, The EME Guild Charitable Trust, 2007.

A very few units also produced a commemorative document for members of the unit, such as this book published by 1st Canadian Mobile Printing Section, RCAD, for 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop. The original book is in the Canadian War Museum Library under the catalogue number D 768.165 4th M456. The book was scanned and the raw scanner output edited into readable form by LCol (Ret'd) L.L. Hellemans. The illustrations were scanned and inserted, and some minor grammatical and punctuation editing was carried out. [Additional clarification that might be required by a modern reader was added in square brackets.] A glossary was also added that did not exist in the original. Apart from that, this is the story of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, in their words.

Doug Knight
April 2008

Glossary

[This generic glossary has been compiled for a modern audience and did not appear in the original document.]

Ranks

Gen	General
Lt-Gen	Lieutenant-General
Maj-Gen	Major-General
Brig	Brigadier
Col	Colonel
Lt-Col	Lieutenant-Colonel
Maj	Major
Capt	Captain
Lt	Lieutenant
WO1	Warrant Officer (Class 1)
WO2	Warrant Officer (Class 2)
AQMS	Artificer Quartermaster Sergeant
QMS	Quartermaster Sergeant
S/Sgt	Staff-Sergeant
Sgt	Sergeant
Cpl	Corporal
L/Cpl	Lance-Corporal
Pte	Private
Cfn	Craftsman, Craftsmen

Terms

2i/c	Second-in-Command
AA	Anti-aircraft – also known as “ack-ack”
AA&QMG	Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General – the senior administrative and logistic officer in a division
“A” Vehicles	Armoured fighting vehicles – tanks, armoured cars, scout cars, etc
Adm O	Administrative Order
AFV	Armoured Fighting Vehicle
AGRA	Army Group Royal Artillery – a group of artillery regiments at Corps or Army level. It had no fixed organisation, unlike the division artillery.
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
ARV	Armoured Recovery Vehicle
Att	Attached to
AWD	Advanced Workshop Detachment
“B” Vehicles	Non-armoured vehicles - trucks, cars, motorcycles, etc
BARV	Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle

BEME	Brigade Electrical and Mechanical Engineer [Senior RCEME officer in a brigade]
BLR	Beyond Local Repair
BRAC	Brigadier, Royal Armoured Corps
BRS	Beach Recovery Section
Cwt	hundredweight – equal to 112 pounds (50.9 kg)
CAB	Canadian Armoured Brigade
CAD	Canadian Armoured Division
CAO	Canadian Army Order
CAOS	Canadian Army Overseas
CAR	Canadian Armoured Regiment
CBP	Corps Backloading Point
CDC	Canadian Dental Corps
CFEF	Canadian Far East Force [The Canadian contribution to the war against Japan formed from the NWE forces. The war ended before it could be deployed.]
CIB	Canadian Infantry Brigade
CID	Canadian Infantry Division
CMF	Central Mediterranean Forces
CMHQ	Canadian Military Headquarters [in London]
CO	Commanding Officer
CREME	Commander, Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers [Senior RCEME officer in a division]
DA and QMG	Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General [the senior logistics officer at corps headquarters]
DADEME	Deputy Assistant Director, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering
DADME	Deputy Assistant Director, Mechanical Engineering
DBP	Division Backloading Point
DD	Duplex Drive [a tank with propellers for operating in the water]
DDME	Deputy Director, Mechanical Engineering [the senior RCEME officer at Army Headquarters]
DDOS	Deputy Director Ordnance Services
DVP	Drowned Vehicle Park
FAMTO	First Aid Motor Transportation Outfit
GO	General Order
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HQ	Headquarters
LAD	Light Aid Detachment
L of C	Line(s) of Communication
LRS	Light Repair Section
LST	Landing Ship (Tank)
MT	Motor (or Mechanical) Transport

NMRU	Naval Mobile Recovery Unit
NPAM	Non-Permanent Active Militia
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NWE	North-west Europe
OC	Officer Commanding
OFP	Ordnance Field Park
OME	Ordnance Mechanical Engineer
OR	Other rank [non officer]
PAM	Permanent Active Militia
POL	Petrol, Oil, and Lubricants
POW	Prisoner of War
PWD	Port Workshop Detachment
RCA	Royal Canadian Artillery
RCOC	Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps
Recce	Reconnaissance
REME	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers [British]
RCEME	Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
RMA	Rear Maintenance Area
RP	Recovery Post
SP	Self-propelled

Memoirs

Birth of a Unit

No. 4 Section, Canadian Armoured Corps Ordnance Workshop, RCOC, as this unit was originally known, was formed in Barriefield Camp in April 1942, under the command of Lt-Col E. Stuart Johnstone, MC.

The personnel of this unit were carefully selected by Lt-Col Johnstone and Lt W. Strachan according to trades qualifications and military efficiency. It was this nucleus of highly skilled craftsmen that later contributed largely to the success of this unit under actual war conditions.

First of the Many

In the first of many moves made by the unit, two officers and 162 other ranks entrained for Toronto on 12 May 1942. On arrival, the north wing of the Government Building in the Exhibition Grounds was taken over. Training now began in earnest, and all ranks were subjected to a specialized syllabus to prepare them for overseas service.

Flying Low

The most popular phase of this training was the motorcycle course, under the supervision of Sgt Alec McCoig, who later distinguished himself in Italy, winning the Military Medal. This training was abruptly terminated when Pte Simons, accompanied by the intrepid Pte Bubis, smashed spectacularly through a double board fence and crash-landed in the midst of a group of airmen on parade, resulting in a broken collar-bone for Bubis, and an interview with the OC [officer commanding] for Simons.

Blisters

Considerably less popular were the “Bunion Derbies”, which became a regular feature of the training program, much to the consternation of the men. The longest of these endurance contests was a jaunt of 25 miles in battle order, led by Col Johnstone who set an all-too-lively pace.

These route marches, combined with a rigorous routine training schedule, occupied the unit’s time during its sojourn in Toronto.

1098 And All That

On 7 May 1942 the unit stores and transport were drawn as per scale of issue for 350 men, documentation was completed, and the unit prepared to move overseas [the army 1098 form detailed the unit’s entitlement to stores and equipment]. On the eve of departure, the overseas movement order was cancelled, and the unit moved to Camp Borden to await further instructions.

Little Sahara

All vehicles were driven to Borden by the transport section, and the remainder of the personnel travelled by train. On arrival we were attached to A-19 Training Centre for rations and the “wet canteen”. For five whole weeks, “PT” and softball were the order of the day, and work was conspicuous by its absence. After a few days embarkation leave, the men returned well-provided with the necessary wherewithal for a hilarious journey to the coast.

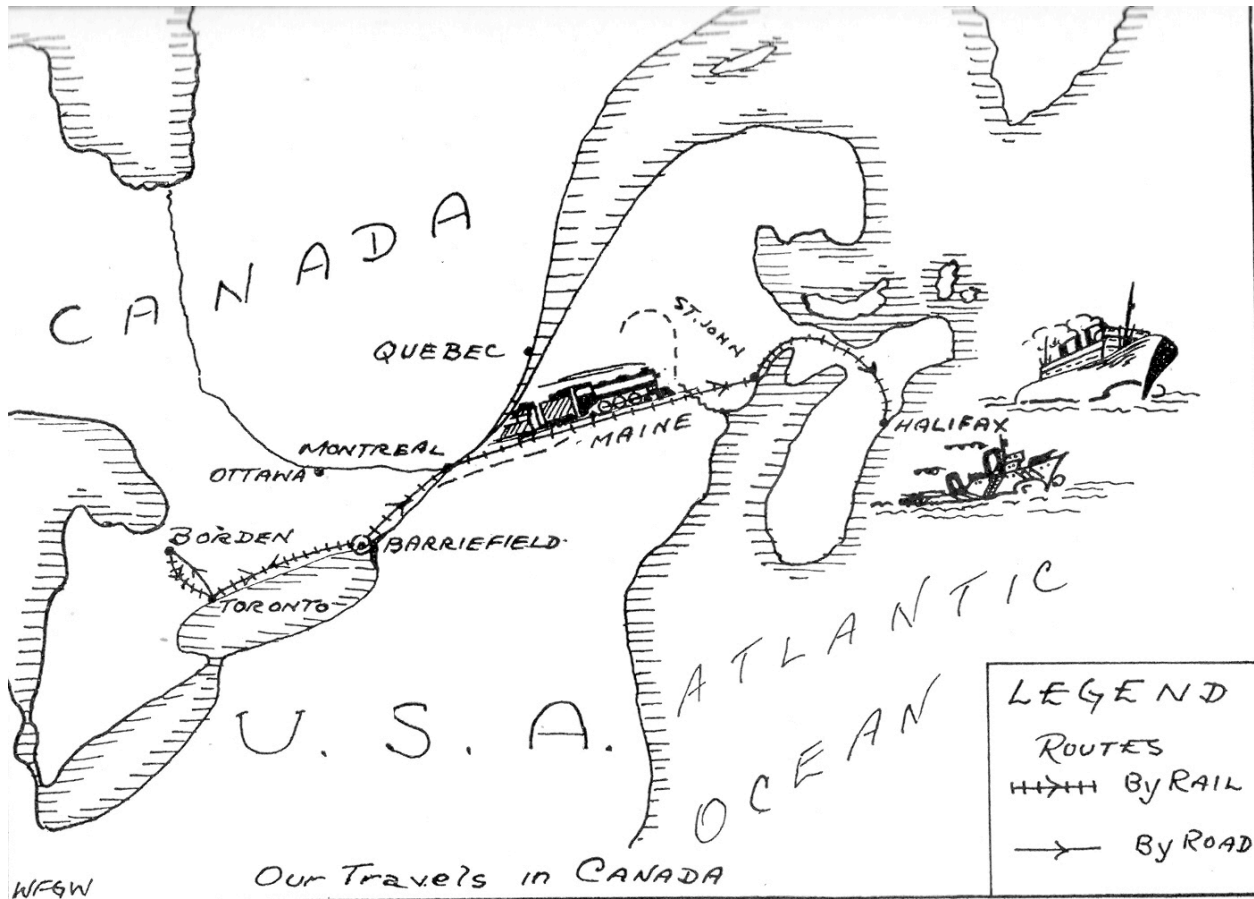


Figure 1 - Travels of 4 CATW in Canada

Blighty Bound

Two days elapsed between our boarding the ship and the weighing of anchor by the *SS Cameronia*. We sailed from Halifax harbour on 8 August 1942, and joined the main convoy in the marshalling area. Accommodations were extremely crowded. This was evident as everyone appeared for breakfast, not due to the quality of the meals, but because the mess tables and floor were used as beds.

An interesting episode was the smuggling on board of the unit's mascot, the Colonel's dog, much to annoyance of the other officers, who unwillingly accepted him as a cabin companion, "or else!!!" The most popular pastime on board was that foremost of all army sports, "Galloping Dominoes". Land was sighted on the morning of 17 August, and the ship docked at Glasgow that afternoon.

You Cawn't Miss It!

At Glasgow we entrained for Borden, the size and appearance of the trains causing much amusement amongst the boys. At first we didn't think the train would make the trip, but before the 30-hour journey was half over, we decided the train would outlast us. Our first impressions of England were not improved by the outward appearance of Borden. There we received our initiation into English life under wartime conditions —blackouts, queues, NAAFI tea, mild and bitter [beer], shillings and pence, press button "A"- and "you just cawn't miss it" !

Stalag No. 1

If there was ever a place we would rather have missed, it was Aldershot, with its depressing rows of ancient stone buildings, seemingly endless queues, and literally thousands and thousands of troops. There, for the first time, shop was set up, and work commenced in the repair and maintenance of 4th Canadian Armoured Division vehicles and equipment.

With some 200 ATS [The Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was the women's branch of the British Army during the Second World War] as our guests, we celebrated our first Christmas overseas. A turkey dinner was served by the officers and senior NCOs, and several personnel were heard to remark that the officers made better waiters than they did officers.

On 11 January 1943, the unit title was changed to the present name - 4th Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop (4 CATW). One month later, to conform to a new war establishment [the document defining the organization, strength and major equipment of a unit], the recovery section left to join 1st Canadian Recovery Company, which later went to Italy. The OC, Lt-Col Johnstone, M.C., was then recalled to Canada, and the 2ic [second in command], Major E.G. Pallister, took over command of the unit. Military training continued, with a memorable 10½ mile forced march in battle order, which was completed in just over two hours. Variety was introduced in a number of schemes, with practice moves to field locations. Experience here proved invaluable in later moves on the continent.

Reprieve

On 1 June 1943, the unit's confinement in Aldershot ended, and we moved in convoy to the comparative freedom of Worthing. As there was no building available large enough to house the whole unit, HQ took up residence in the convalescent home, "A" Vehicles established themselves in the station garage, and Ancillary in Forresters' Hall. Stores Section occupied Briggs' Garage, while "B" Vehicles set up in a car park. Being so widely scattered, each section was almost an independent body, and not only worked as such, but were billeted in a like manner.

In Worthing, 4 CATW witnessed its first actual air raid, but fortunately escaped without damage. Our opinion of England changed for the better here, due to the friendliness and hospitality of the natives, a welcome change from Borden and Aldershot. Accustomed to seeing almost empty stores and shops, and pubs "sans" beer, Worthing appeared to us a veritable land of plenty.

From Worthing, an AWD [Advanced Workshop Detachment] of 30 men under Capt J.J. Legate was dispatched to Wales to attend to the repair and maintenance of tanks engaged in range practice. On their return a similar AWD, again under command of Capt Legate, proceeded to Inverary, Scotland, to service tanks engaged in beach-landing practice. On the work program, tanks and carriers were the chief items, and here the unit received its initiation into the very important job of waterproofing.

The highlight of our social (?) life was the marriage of the OC, Major Pallister to a Canadian Nursing Sister, Lieutenant (Naval Service) Mary T.G. Brown. A suitable gift, on behalf of the unit, was presented to the OC's new boss by Quartermaster Sergeant (QMS) A.L. Barks. Shortly after this, S/Sgt Moore, and "Q" McCallum discovered that station wagons were not designed to be driven through stone walls, and several "B" vehicle men later passed trade tests as stone masons, rebuilding the wall.

The Battle of Warnham (23 August 1943 - 24 July 1944)

"Next stop Warnham - all out for Warnham!" For the next eleven months, this was to become a very familiar call to all members of 4 CATW. The workshop was established at the Sussex Brick Works, just north of Warnham. Personnel lived in tents at "Graylands", a half mile up the hill, until Nissen huts were built. Work was plentiful. First and Fifth Divisions, on their departure for Italy, bequeathed us a huge

backlog of “B” vehicles for repair. Sherman tanks first made their appearance in the shop at this time, replacing the Ram tanks that we had formerly worked on. In preparation for the invasion, waterproofing of all vehicles and tanks was given top priority, and every member of the unit participated in this important task.

On 6 September 1943, Major Pallister was appointed DADME of 2 Canadian Armoured Brigade, and relinquished command of this unit to Major M.H. Hastings, who remained as CO until 27 December of that year. On that date, Major Hastings left to attend a staff course, and his place was taken by Major R.A. Mitchell, who stayed until the days of Caen.

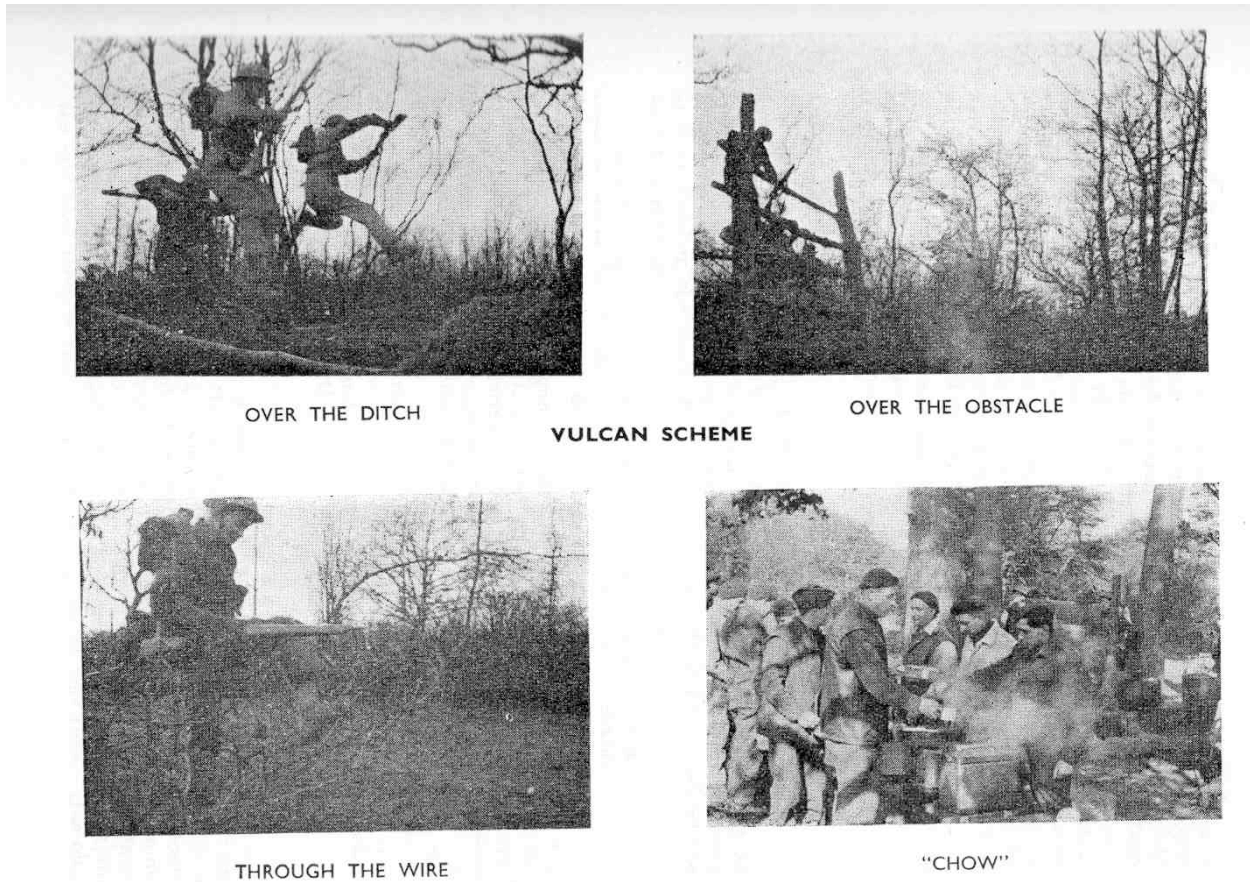


Figure 2 - Exercise Vulcan

Training again occupied a large percentage of the time. The monotony of foot and arms drill was broken with the introduction of a full scale battle course, consisting mostly of mud, barbed wire, and much swearing. Mock attacks on the shop were carried out, with half the unit attacking and the remainder defending. In each case the latter were judged the winners. Night schemes were carried out regularly, in preparation for Exercise *Vulcan*, later won by this unit.

While under the command of Major Hastings, a large number of all ranks were dispatched on several waterproofing AWDs throughout the southern part of England. Another detachment, under Capt H.L. Beanlands, proceeded to Scotland to repair and maintain Sherman tanks.

In conjunction with the important job of waterproofing, came our short visit to Maresfield. Here began a period of intense activity with a time limit before us, and the word “Production” haunting everyone. From 25 April to 31 May 1944, long lines of vehicles were checked, waterproofed, and given their final run through the testing tank. Capt F.G. Stewart, who was to remain as our Protestant Padre until the end of the

war, here conducted his first service for the unit, and simultaneously Capt J. Sweeney became Father to all Roman Catholics. In Maresfield came our transfer from RCOC to RCEME, a corps just inaugurated into the Canadian Army. The stores section and cooks remained in RCOC and RCASC respectively.

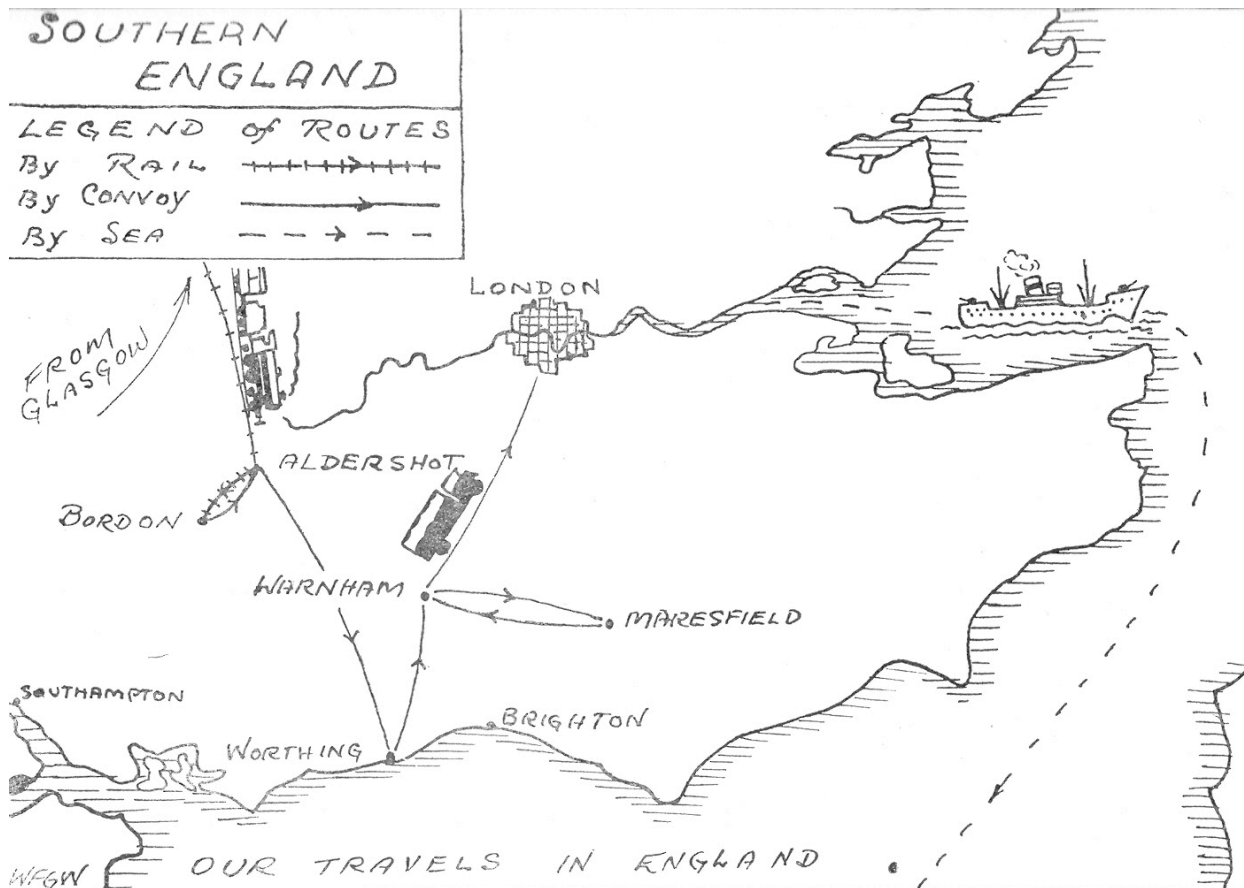


Figure 3 - Travels of 4 CATW in England

After the unit returned to Warnham we received our first taste of “V1s”, more commonly known as “Doodlebugs”. The first one came over on 15 June 1944, and they continued in ever increasing numbers as long as we remained in England. One of the notable individual achievements was the amount of “scrounging” done by Fred McCullagh for the unit. At one time, it was arguable who had control of more material, Mac or the garrison engineers. In addition to being chief plumber and handyman, he also became the butter and egg tycoon of the unit. “Q” McCallum also gained recognition when he shot the OC with a blank round, “Just a case of mistaken identity”, as the “Q” said later.

Christmas dinner is the only annual army event where the cooks really go all out to make it a memorable meal, and Christmas 1943 was no exception. There was turkey, chicken, pork, mince pie etc., all washed down with good old English ale. Officers and Senior NCOs strained to answer our every whim, for the first time since the previous Christmas. There was also a floor show which featured Staff Moore, who gave a fine imitation of a cowboy riding a bronco at the Calgary Stampede. It was unfortunate that “Al” lost his balance and fell into a pot of steaming gravy. He looked so appetizing that we had to sneak him out quickly before the boys ate him.

A large portion of the entertainment for the unit while in this location was organized by the ladies of the nearby town of Ruser, under the direction of Mrs. Wickham. Each week, movies, dances, and whist drives were held in the Ruser school hall, and unit transport was provided. A canteen under the able management of Pte McWhinney supplied the unit at camp. Many a pleasant evening was spent in our

favourite “local” attempting to defeat the masters of “Ye Olde Dart Board”, and with some success. Foremost among these were the Wheatsheaf, Dog and Duck, and the Sussex Oaks. The hospitality extended by them was greatly appreciated, and we were always sorry to hear that old familiar cry of “Time, Gentlemen, Please”, which expelled all elbow benders from these enjoyable haunts.

International relations were sometimes badly strained on the journeys to and from London, when we attempted, and often succeeded in, reducing travelling rates on the Southern Railway.

Out of the Frying Pan

At 0200 hrs on 25 July 1944, the word for which we had waited so long finally arrived. Our orders were to move off at 1300 hrs the next day for the continent, so the next few hours were filled with feverish activity in preparation for our departure. We moved off exactly on schedule, arriving at East London, the marshalling area, at dusk. That night, and all the next day, was spent preparing for the coming voyage across the channel.

An amusing, but nerve-wracking incident occurred while in this area, when a Doodlebug decided to play tag with 4 CATW, circling over the camp several times before disappearing in the darkness.

Next morning we began to embark on the *Empire Duke*, the *Samarousk* and landing craft, tank, *LCT B24*; the latter craft sailing that evening and the remainder departing for Normandy the following evening. Under cover of darkness, we slipped through the Straits of Dover. There we witnessed an endless queue of Doodlebugs crossing the channel, the majority of which were shot down or exploded in the air by the crack anti-aircraft (AA) batteries on the English coast. On the morning of 29 July we sighted the beaches of Courselles, and landed via LCTs that afternoon. At the dispersal area, the convoy reassembled and proceeded to its new location in a valley approximately two miles north of Caen.

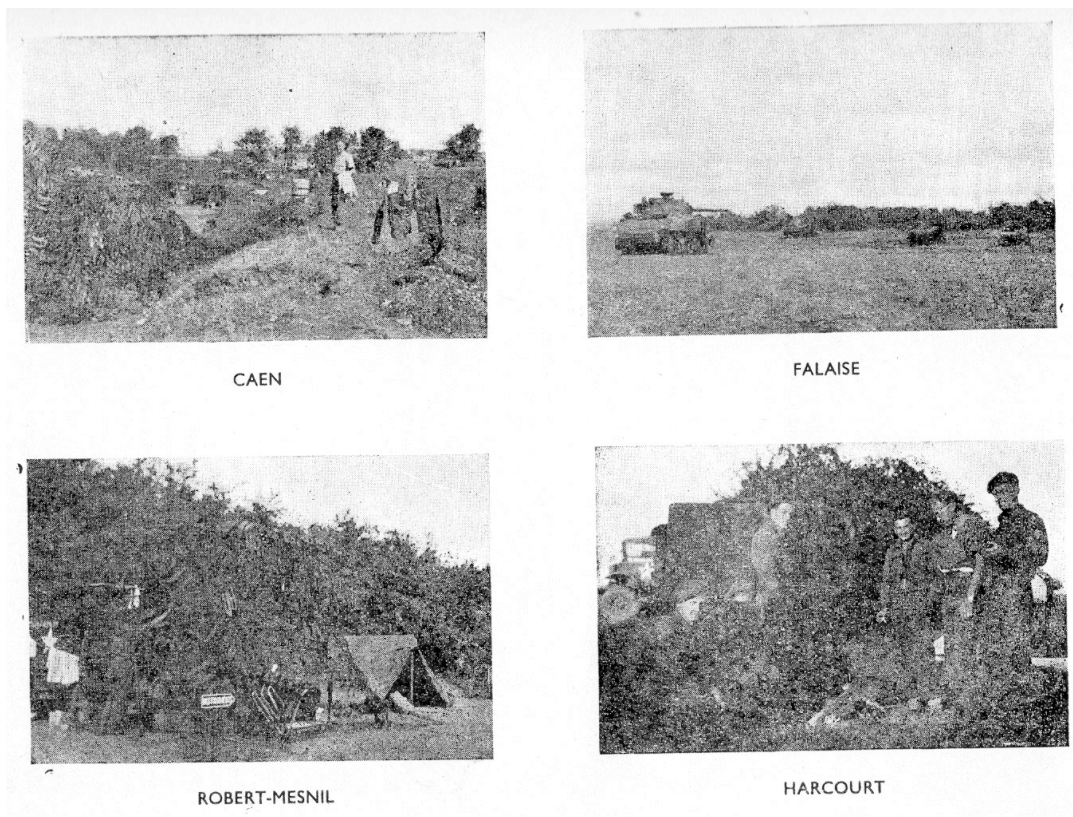


Figure 4 - Normandy

Death Valley

The comparative quiet of our first night in Caen pleasantly surprised us, but proved to be only the lull before the storm. For, at 0115 hrs on 4 August 1945, “Jerry” eluded a terrific ack-ack barrage and dove through a smoke screen to pay us a visit. Five enemy planes plastered us with hundreds of anti-personnel bombs, plus a few high explosives thrown in for good measure; then machine-gunned up and down the valley. Casualties resulting from this raid were extremely light, totalling two killed and twenty injured, despite the fact that most of the unit was under canvas at this time. Our own vehicles were severely damaged, necessitating an increase in our already strained repair schedule. Next day, picks and shovels were at a premium, and dug-outs and fox-holes became our new residences for the remainder of our stay in Caen.

Captains G.F. Grainger and A.B. Otto with 60 men left on a composite AWD to Bayeux to modify the armoured vehicles that later aided in the break-through at the Falaise Gap. At the same time S/Sgt J.A. Pfoh and seventeen other ranks were sent to a backloading point near Cormelles. This was the first backloading point to be established on the continent. Shortly after this, Major Mitchell was posted to 9 Canadian Infantry Brigade Workshop and Lt-Col William McKinlay became our new OC. At this time, “A” vehicle personnel, assisted by “B” vehicle personnel, worked day and night to repair tanks urgently needed at the front line.

Our ships along the coast fired salvoes over our heads into the enemy lines, and “Jerry” 88s retaliated, dropping shells much too close for comfort. Cognac and “vin rouge” were more than plentiful, with everyone taking full advantage of same. Here in Normandy, the inevitable request by the children was “Cigarette pour Papa?” the most overworked phrase in the French language.

Tanks Please

Answering an urgent appeal from CREME Army Troops [Senior RCEME officer in the forces directly under command of First Canadian Army Headquarters] for a rush repair of tanks knocked out at Falaise, the unit hurriedly packed and moved to Robert-Mesnil, near St. Pierre-sur-Dives, in the Falaise area, to reclaim as many tanks as possible from a huge park of crippled AFVs established there. From these battle casualties they hoped to, and did, reclaim a sufficient number to ease the burden placed on tank delivery. “A” vehicles men continued to work until our new camp was set up, so that very little working time was lost during the move.

Entertainment was at a minimum, but souvenir hunters had a field day in the Falaise battlefields. Our quota of twenty tanks was accomplished in exactly one week, and the unit then prepared for another move.

Across the Seine

While enroute to our new location on 2 September 1944, a message was received from HQ that we were to remain mobile and await further instructions, as our destination had been changed. That night was spent at Harcourt, and early next morning we received orders to continue the convoy.

That afternoon we crossed over the Seine River via a pontoon bridge, and proceeded to St. Andre, near Rouen. We set up camp in an apple orchard and in several fields which, after the first heavy rain, became a veritable sea of mud.

From St. Andre we had several opportunities to visit Rouen, and found plenty to eat and drink, but at fantastically high prices. There we got our first good view of a Doodlebug launching site, a huge, massive affair of concrete and steel. Work was again plentiful, but there were no rush orders, such as we encountered in Caen and Falaise.

An interesting point to note is that 4 CATW was the first workshop in our formation, to cross the Seine, the remainder of the shops following almost a week later. It was in St. Andre that our cooks, under Sgt A.R. Rice, really excelled themselves making a wonderful job of cooking the chickens, geese, etc., “procured” by the unit.

It was found, when loading for the next move, that it was impossible to transport all unit stores and equipment in one convoy, despite the fact they had been cut to an absolute minimum, so a shuttle service was put into operation.

In St. Andre, “Q” Barks almost liquidated the “R & I” [receipt and inspection] office and staff, when he accidentally fired the gun of a tank being tested, and the shell whistled just over the office tent. Artificer Sergeant-Major M. Sloan, who was in the “R & I” at the time, claims this is where he lost his hair!

You Bring the Duck

From St. Andre our next stop was Campagne les Hesdin, where we set up shop in the record time of exactly five hours. Due to the lengthened supply lines, spare parts were extremely difficult to obtain, and cannibalization of BLRd [beyond local repair] vehicles became a necessity for the first time. An emergency call for the immediate repair of 6 Canadian General Hospital’s X-ray generator was promptly met by unit electricians.

At night, as shop activity ceased, we could clearly hear the guns at Boulogne, and hoped for the liberation of that city and the opening of its harbour, which would greatly aid the shortage of supplies. Approximately half our transport section was attached to the RCASC to convoy petrol, ammo, and other vitally needed materials from Bayeux to the front lines. Heavy rains caused unit operations to slow down considerably, and several times recovery work was necessary in our own lines.

The highlights of our gastronomical activities were our famous duck dinners, prepared to perfection by our cooks, and enjoyed immensely by all. The ducks and other ingredients were obtained by exchanging soap, “Woodbines” [cigarettes], and what have you, with the farmers in the surrounding countryside, sometimes! The villagers were invited to movies held for the unit in the town hall, and in turn extended great hospitality to us at all times. A number of personnel were anxious to visit Vimy Ridge, and took advantage of two recreational trips through that sector. They were pleased to find that the memorial was undamaged, contrary to all previous reports.

A few minutes after midnight on 29 September, orders for our next move to Antwerp came and the unit was quickly formed into two sections. One section was composed of vehicles which could make the 180-mile trip in one day, while heavier and slower vehicles comprised the second section.

Rocketville

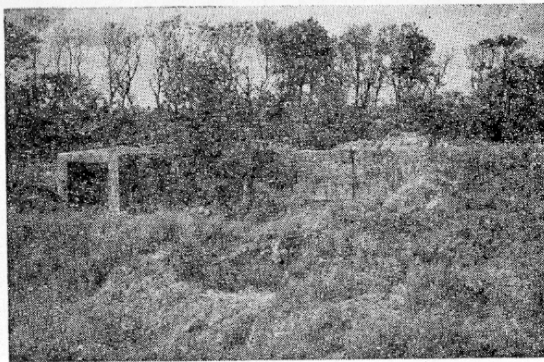
The first section of the convoy completed their trip to Mortsel, a suburb of Antwerp, in eleven hours, excellent time considering the length of the journey and the size of the convoy. The heavy machinery lorries, over-burdened stores trucks, and wreckers were forced to stop overnight at Halluin, a small town on the France-Belgium border. The following morning they continued to Mortsel where, for the first time since our landing on the continent, the entire shop was set up indoors at the Daimler-Benz factory.

As we were to be responsible for the maintenance of 200 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) on their way to Antwerp from the coast, it was necessary to despatch nineteen trucks to Bayeux for additional spare parts. While waiting for these carriers to arrive at Mortsel, unit personnel went to St. Nicholas, about 40 miles away, to bring tanks in to the shop for repair. These later became our only work as the front line units demanded more tanks, and the APCs were turned over to another workshop.

At the same time, the planning of the first pilot model Ram Wasp [a flamethrower mounted on a Ram tank chassis] was being done in the shop. A little later, the first two smoke generators were installed on APCs and the result was highly successful.

Doodlebugs first appeared in this area on 23 October 1944, to be followed by their sister terror, the V2s (rockets) shortly after. Some idea of the terrific bombardment Antwerp was subjected to may be gained from the following official statistics. During the period between 23 October 1944 and 30 March 1945, when the final Doodlebug fell in Mortsel, 4,248 V1s and 1,712 V2s landed in Antwerp and its suburbs, making a grand total of 5,960 bombs in all.

Night work in the shop was abruptly terminated on 30 October 1944, when a V1 landed a mere 50 feet from the shop, destroying all blackouts and most of the roof. Casualties were heavy, scores of personnel sustained minor injuries from flying glass, and fifteen more seriously wounded were admitted to hospital. Three of these, all attached personnel, later succumbed to their injuries.

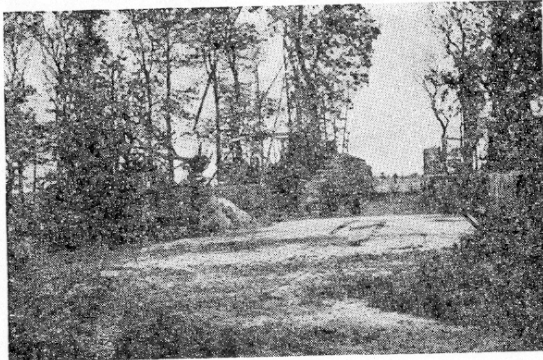


V-1 STORAGE SHELTER

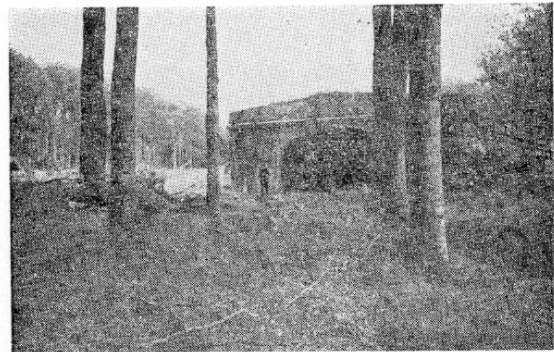


STORAGE SHELTER—FINIS

V-1 FLYING BOMB SITE



V-1 LAUNCHING RAMP



V-1 WORKSHOP

Figure 5 - V-1 Flying Bomb Site

Nearly three weeks later a rocket landed on a house some 200 yards from the shop. The blast was terrific and destroyed most of the roof over our mess hall. The house was completely demolished, and a family of three, including a six-month-old baby, was trapped in the basement. Men from this unit laboured for over two hours to remove the debris, and finally rescued all three unharmed. We later received a letter of gratitude from this family.

One month later, another rocket bomb flattened the houses just vacated by "A" vehicle section and the officers. At this time we were occupying another shop in the same area and, on 26 November, a

Doodlebug landed on the roadway directly behind the motorcycle bay. Two sections of the roof caved in, but Cfn Robicheau emerged unharmed from under the debris, his pipe still in his mouth.

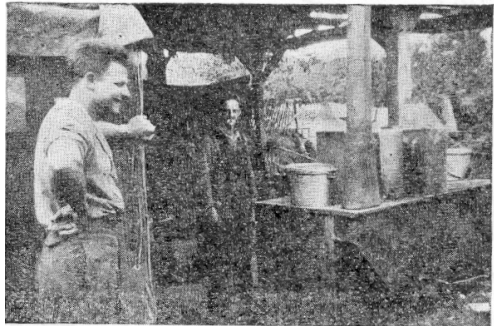
On 16 December one man from 4 CATW was killed and three others seriously injured, when the Rex Theatre in downtown Antwerp received a direct hit by a V2. Our welders toiled all that night cutting huge steel girders to rescue victims trapped underneath.



SWILL REMOVAL



POTS AND PANS



COOKHOUSE



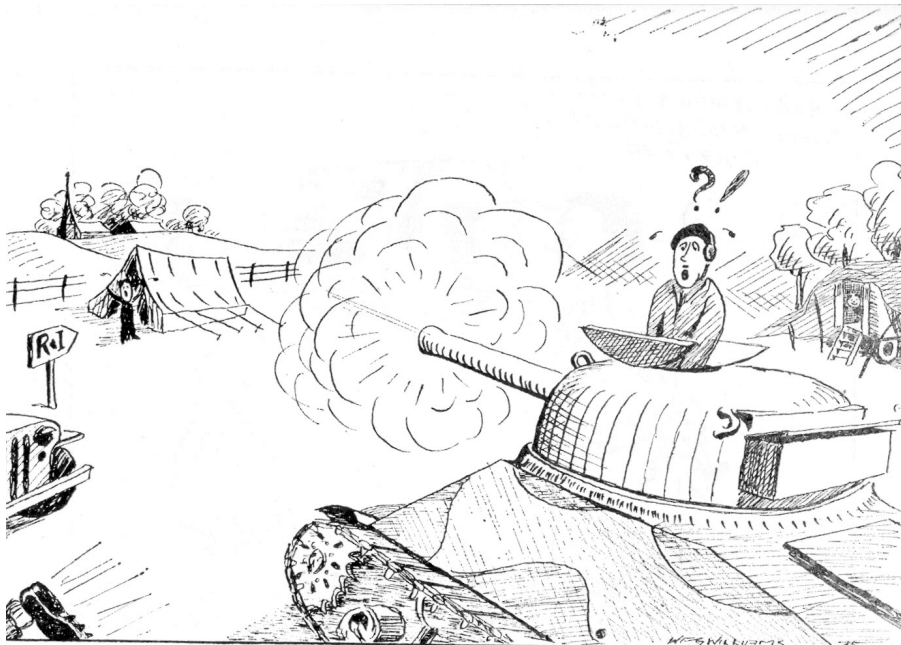
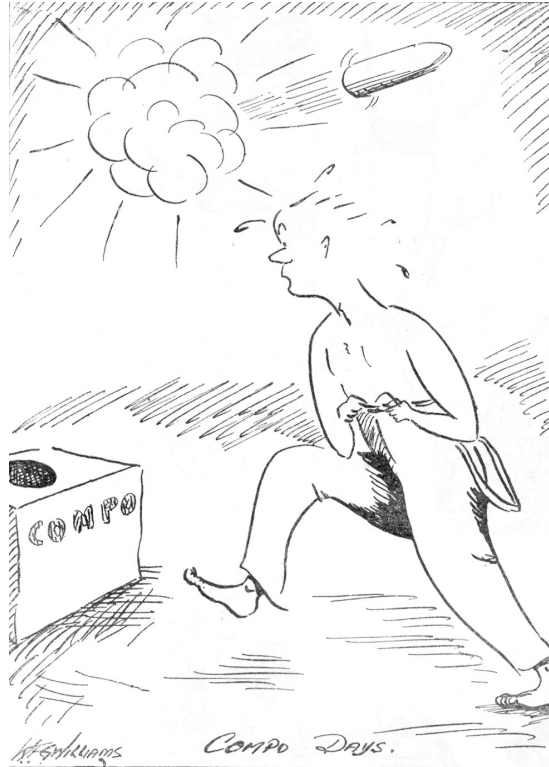
KITCHEN LORRY

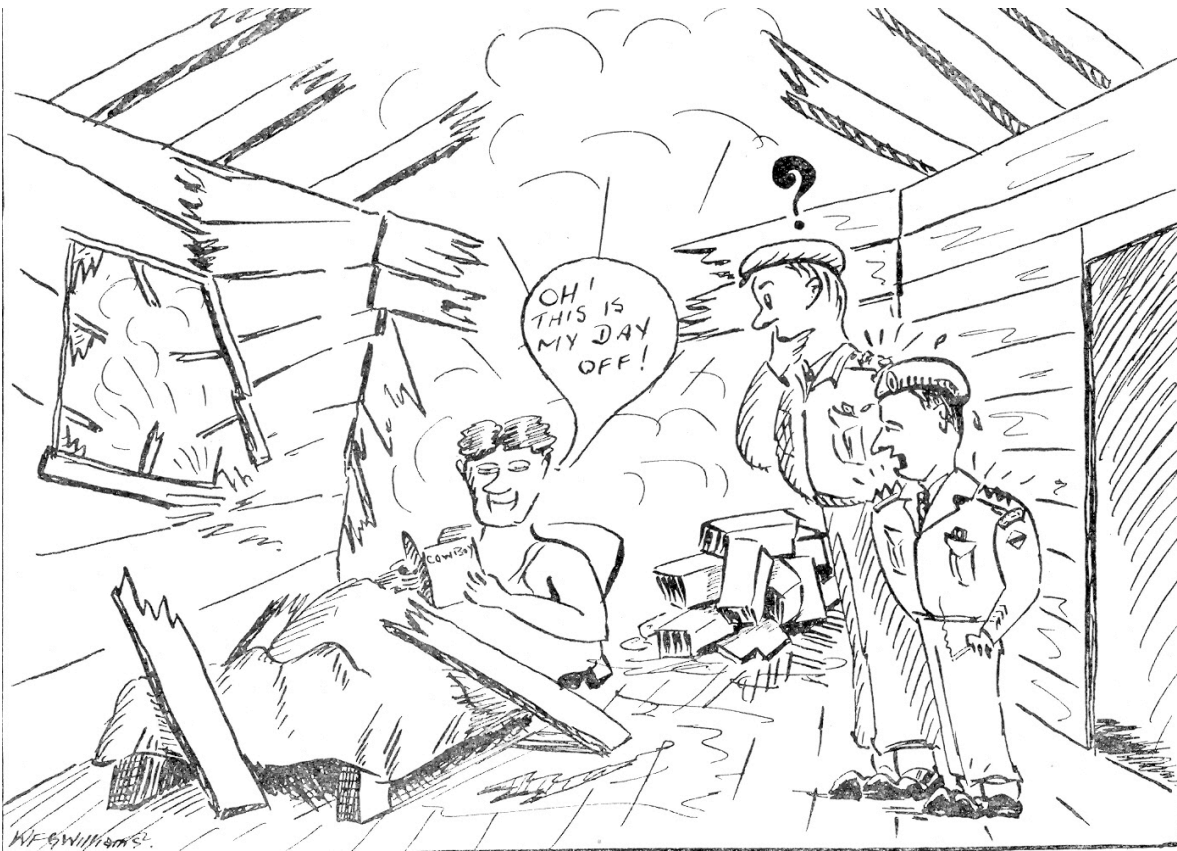
Figure 6 - The Cooks

The first dance on the continent was held by the unit 18 October, and a number of CWACs [Canadian Women's Army Corps] were invited. When Lt-Col W. McKinlay was appointed CREME First Canadian Army Troops on 30 October, a well deserved promotion, Lt-Col B.H. Miller, ED, replaced him, and remained as CO until his recall to Canada on 21 December. Lt-Col H.B. McAdam then assumed command, and remained with us throughout the remainder of the campaign.

1944 was our only Christmas on the continent, and will long be remembered by all. We enjoyed the usual army Christmas menu, and this was supplemented with plenty of cognac and other liquid refreshments necessary for a Merry Christmas. New Year's Eve was celebrated in the usual Canadian style, with the usual Canadian hangover the next day. On our return to camp, we received emergency "stand to" orders, as the Germans were expected to launch a paratroop attack that night, in conjunction with the Ardennes offensive. Fortunately for us, this attack failed to materialize in any strength, although several "Jerry" paratroopers were captured in Mortsel the same night. The following morning, New Year's Day, approximately 30 enemy fighter planes roared over and strafed the main streets, airport and dock installations, causing much excitement but little damage.

On 12 January 1945 movement orders arrived, and we left war-scarred Antwerp the following day.







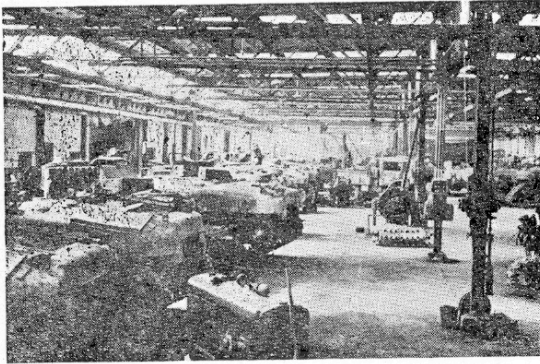
Grindhoven

On 13 January 1945 our convoy crossed the Belgian border into Holland, and proceeded to Eindhoven, where the shop was to be located for the next fourteen weeks. Here, we were to open shop in a part of the huge Phillips factory, but a few days later instructions were received to take up temporary quarters in some vacant schools until a more suitable shop was available. A small advance party which had come to Eindhoven earlier in January had about twenty tanks lined up for repairs.

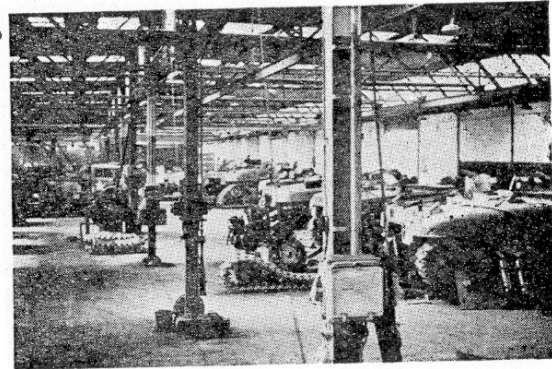
Finally, HQ, "A" Vehicles, and Ancillary were sent to the DAF works, and billeted with civilians, while "B" vehicles were completely established in the station garage. Kangaroos [APCs] were our first job, as they now held top priority. While "A" vehicles finished the first group of these, "B" section converted 40 Universal Carriers into armoured trailers, which were to be towed into action by tanks. The shop worked every night until this job was completed, and then reverted to normal work and hours.

The second rush of work came approximately a month later, at which time the task was to completely overhaul 79 APCs in the short time of fifteen days. These were completed two days ahead of schedule, again due to considerable night work. Movies were shown twice a week after work had ceased, so that everyone had the opportunity of seeing them.

While in Eindhoven, the wintry weather changed to spring, and heavy bombers, engaged in a softening-up program in preparation for the crossing of the Rhine, flew overhead incessantly.

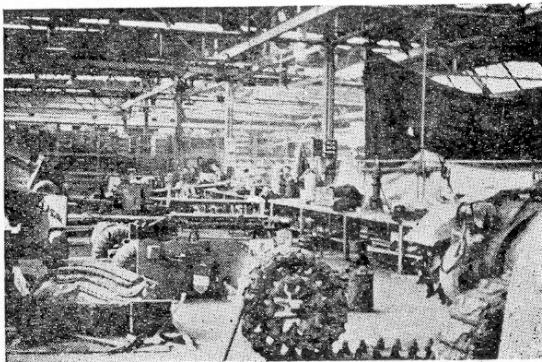


TANK SHOP—KANGAROO FLAP

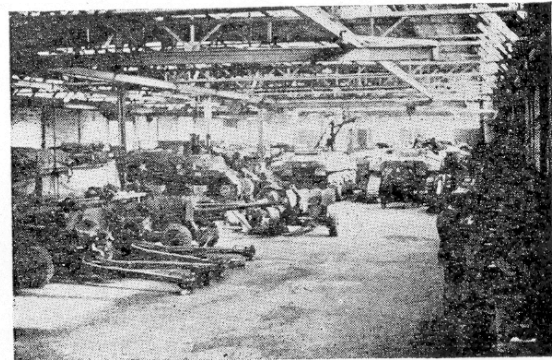


TANK SHOP—KANGAROO FLAP

EINDHOVEN



ANCILLARY SHOP



GUN SHOP

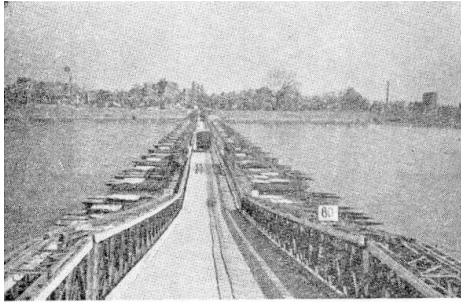
Figure 7 - Eindhoven

Alles Kaput

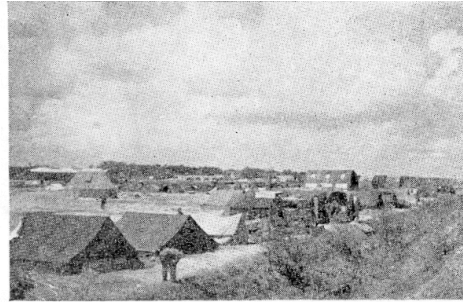
After living in civilian homes for the first time since the unit left Canada, we departed from Eindhoven on 26 April 1945. We travelled through the Reichswald Forest and what was left of the Siegfried Line, and were pleased to see the long delayed washing finally hanging there. We then passed through what remained of Cleves, aptly described by a sign on the outskirts which read "Rubble Heap Ahead!"

The Rhine was crossed by means of the longest pontoon bridge on the continent, a truly remarkable feat by Allied engineers. The city of Emmerich originally stood across the Rhine from Cleves, but when we drove through it, we were amazed by the complete devastation wrought by the allied air armada. We now became familiar with the non-fraternisation signs which greeted us, and from the sullen looks of the inhabitants who still remained, we knew that the so-called Master Race had tasted the humiliation of defeat.

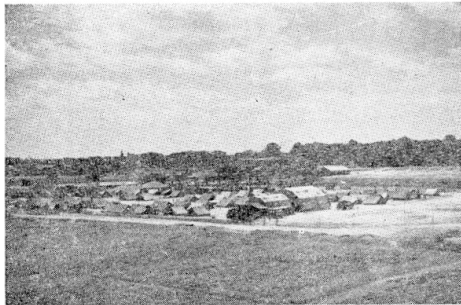
As the First Canadian Army was at this time fighting in Northern Holland, we were to establish the shop in Enschede. The camp was located in Sesam's warehouses at the end of the Twensche Canal. It had been formerly occupied by German troops, who were forced to vacate so hastily that they had no opportunity to destroy the dock installations. Tents again became our homes, and were erected on a sandy plateau close to the shop. Work was plentiful, as No. 15 ABP had been previously set up in our area, with thousands of vehicles awaiting repairs.



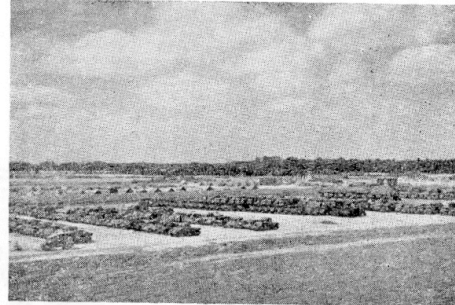
RHINE BRIDGE—EMMERICH



OFFICERS' LINES—ENSCHEDÉ

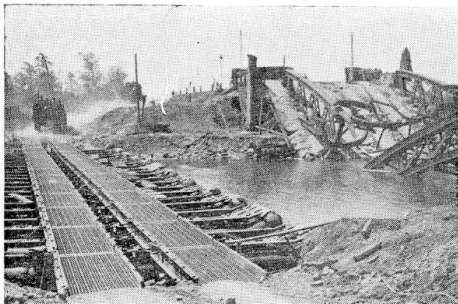


VIEW OF CAMP—ENSCHEDÉ



CROCK PARK—ENSCHEDÉ

Figure 8 - Crossing the Rhine, Enschede

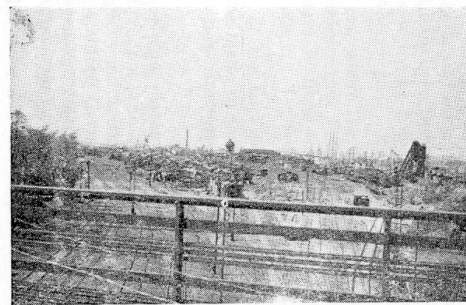


RHUR BRIDGE

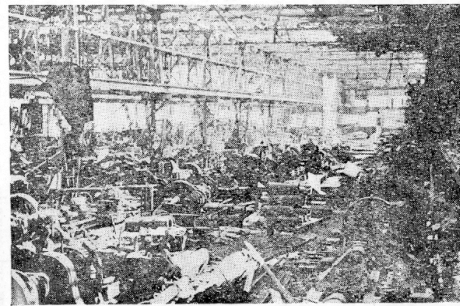


RUINS OF ESSEN

RHUR VALLEY



MARSHALLING YARDS—ESSEN



KRUPPS—KAPUT

Figure 9 - Ruhr Valley

Many and varied were the rumours concerning peace that were circulating in the area during the first week in May. These were confirmed on 5 May when it was officially announced that Holland, the Frisian Islands, Denmark, and North-west Germany had capitulated. Victory in Europe became absolute on 8 May 45, when the unconditional surrender of all enemy forces was confirmed.

“Alles Kaput!”

Production

Statements and statistics in this production summary cover the 9½-month campaign period specifically. The words “production” and “activity” register very important figures on paper, and they have also rendered excellent results to those “physical figures” (the former wrecks of manhood and mechanical fighting equipment).

Long hours of conscientious labour, and the application of each individual’s ability in his particular trade of our well-organized shop was required to achieve our fine record, and the co-operation of sections, including our stores section (RCOC) who supplied our every demand, could not be excelled in any such organization. Conditions for operation of a 3rd Echelon Armoured Workshop were most erratic, from the “never to be forgotten” valley of Caen to the concrete-floored warehouse at Enschede, The hot sun and the torrential rains made it compulsory to improvise to the best of our natural abilities, and we do not hesitate to say that recovery work in our unit lines could very often be compared with recovery at the front under the most climatically difficult conditions. Throughout the entire campaign, however, we experienced no fatalities or even serious accidents from neglect or carelessness in carrying out our various duties, a record of which we are rightly proud.

We have been rewarded for our efforts with complete victory, which was, of course, our sole objective, but on the rugged road to that climax we were encouraged by many fine compliments directed personally to our unit, verbally and otherwise, from such outstanding men as General H.D.G Crerar [Commander, First Canadian Army], Lt-Gen GG. Simonds {Commander, 2 Canadian Corps}, Maj-Gen Sir Percy C.S. Hobart (GOC 79th British Armoured Division) and others.

We feel sure that anyone who has been actively associated with this unit would be interested at this time to know the amount of work credited to his particular department, so we have perused the records and compiled accurate statistics on production, from our first jobs in Caen, to the beautiful conclusion of hostilities - VE day in Enschede - for your approval and information.

Tanks completed	525
“B” Vehicles	1387
Motorcycles	216
Artillery equipment	129
Small arms	2901
Wireless sets	634
Instruments and watches	1981
Ancillary	(Comprised of sheet metal workers, fitters, machinists and turners, carpenters, welders, blacksmiths and textile workers) Details were not recorded for their individual jobs, but it is not necessary to state how very important was the work contributed by this section).

The word “Armoured” suggests our featured category of repairs centred on the tank section, which is quite true, and the total figure of tanks completed verifies that “A” section were a credit to the unit and to the Canadian Army as a whole. Their first big-time test was requested a few short days following arrival at Caen, when Lt-Gen Simonds had the problem of converting a large number of Priest self-propelled 105-mm guns to APCs (Armoured Personnel Carriers) in six short days, for the use of the infantry in smashing the Falaise stronghold. Qualified personnel were urgently summoned to Bayeux for this important task. Our complete section, together with other RCEME personnel rolled into action as never before, working from daybreak to nightfall, and General Simonds had the pleasure of witnessing a successful conclusion to his request on the fourth day.

Long hours were necessary that summer, but the armoured fighting men were equipped with the best possible tanks in the best running condition, and we must admit RCEME boys were so interested in the performance of these AFVs that (is it true?) they ran alongside those armoured monsters into action to convince themselves that their work was of the highest calibre. For the month of March 1945, in preparation for the crossing of the Rhine, our “A” section reached its peak in production when 119 tanks were completely overhauled, 45 engine replacements were performed, and all major repairs done.

To sum up our activity in “A” section, we repaired enough tanks to equip 26 fighting squadrons.

The armament section (not including small arms) were always supplied with work, for whenever they were up-to-date with the servicing of tank guns, which in itself was a full time job, there was always that waiting line of artillery pieces. The gun fitters are to be complimented on their close harmony with “A” section, as no tank was ever held up because of its gun work. Barrel replacements, recuperator and buffer parts, packing, etc., all required much work, and new modifications seemed to pour in daily. But always they were up to scratch, and we might mention that there was not a single instance when a tank gun or artillery piece was turned back because of a defect.

In addition to the tanks, the gun-fitters completed 129 artillery pieces (approximately 90 percent of their work originated from Army Backloading Points) which included 6 and 17 pounder anti-tank guns, 25 pounder field guns, 40-mm Ack-Ack guns, and 5.5-inch medium guns. They completed, on average, 45 guns per month during the entire campaign.

“B” vehicles and motorcycles were recorded for production figures separately, but operated together at all times. The floor of our shop, whether in the field (literally) or under a roof was always filled. The reception line was never vacant and the completed line always active. Jeeps, sedans, load-carriers of all weights, recovery vehicles, transporters, and armoured vehicles such as carriers, armoured cars, and scout cars were their commitments.

The mechanical work varied from first echelon repairs to the reconstruction of a 3-ton truck around the horn button, but the largest percentage of work was definitely complete inspections and overhauls, and certainly ABPs were utilized by this section in obtaining parts that were not in the stores. In this section, more than in any other, was the term “priority” used, and much overtime was necessary for work under this category, but when a top priority job was begun, concentration was practised to the utmost, and units received their requests.

Our paint shop, also featured in “B” section, was always a hive of activity, and many a “Brig” [Brigadier] saw super paint jobs on his caravan and sedan.

“B” Section, including the motorcycle shop, averaged more than 41 vehicles per week for the campaign which included unit moves, men on AWDs, and every day a working day - a truly fine record. In the month of March, they completed 227 “B” vehicles and 24 motorcycles.

Wireless has played a very important role in this war on land, on sea, and in the air. On land, an armoured column thrusting forward to its objective would be at a disadvantage without complete intercommunication by radio. Our unit wireless experts have proved themselves indispensable in that they

checked, tested and repaired 634 sets for the AFVs and headquarters of various fighting units. Their top production for a 28-day period was 108 sets, or an average of almost four sets per day. This section is the youngest of our unit, becoming fully organized only a short time prior to our departure for France, and their co-operation blended perfectly into the smooth operation of the unit.

The infantry, armoured personnel, the services, and officers are all issued with small arms of some description, so we come to another important section - the armourers. In their daily duties (inspections, maintenance, and repair) many types of weapons received their attention. Enough rifles, Stens [sub-machine guns], Brens [light machine guns], .30 and .50 calibre Brownings [medium/heavy machine guns], revolvers, pistols, etc., were serviced to equip approximately four infantry regiments, plus the machine-guns on all the tanks completed by the unit. Their top production month was February with a total of 422 pieces.

Each tank is equipped with periscopes, telescopes, compasses, etc.; each artillery unit with range-finders, gunners' quadrants, directors, etc.; and infantry with compasses, watches, etc., which requires an instrument repair section. Their work required highly skilled and trained men, and the word "bubbles" to them did not indicate the pretty blonde in the local cafe - on the contrary, it signified intricate work on compasses getting those air bubbles removed. They produced a fine record of 1,981 pieces during the campaign period, including those watches GS [general service] that salvage acquired from somewhere, and they registered 291 pieces for their high production month.

Ancillary section, as we mentioned previously, was organized to involve many trades, and without each of them, other sections would have been crippled. The welders played an important role in tank work, such as fender repairs and replacements, headlight guards, plate welding, brackets, etc. The machinists and turners [lathe operators] acted as the manufacturers for our unit, producing tools, special nuts and bolts, steel shafts, machined gears, etc. Our blacksmiths not only won fame in inter-unit competitions, but also produced tools, vehicle springs, and wheel pullers, in fact almost anything was within their scope - from souvenir daggers for OCs to ground rakes for GDs [general duties men].

Do you recall LP stoves, latrines, fire equipment, boxes for test stands, metal pipes, files, and file baskets - all of these items were completed by the sheet metal workers, and we hate to mention the word "radiator" as so many of these were repaired by this section that we feel sure they must repair them in their nightmares. If anyone should ask DDME if their work was satisfactory—just mention those local pattern stoves!!!

Are YOU sleeping on a comfortable wooden bed? OK, we now think of the carpenters and the assistance they rendered to our personal comforts. They manufactured and repaired floors, tent poles, handles for various tools, crates or boxes for BLR'd [beyond local repair] assemblies, vehicle body work, modifications on the interior of caravans, tables and many more items, always a busy twosome and always giving a cheerful service.

When work was received from the machinists and welders, very often precision work was required by the fitters, who also exercised their training in such work as repairing various types of cookers, lamps, modifications required in lowering the chemical tanks on flame throwers, modifications to headlamp blackouts, and numerous jobs where hand filing was necessary.

The "Omar the Tent-makers" or textile shop had the responsibility of keeping the roofs over our heads whilst in the field, and will they ever forget the "holey mess" of the canvas after Caen? Tarps of all sizes, jeep tops, and all canvas work kept their machines busy, and excellent work was accomplished throughout the pressing months.

The stores section operated independently, but in close collaboration with individual sections at all times. The demands on them amounted to large numbers, but to stores it was much more. It was a close accounting of scaling [the expected usage of parts that determines stock levels], plus the space in which to store those many small parts and the larger assemblies. Where to locate parts and assemblies was no small

problem. They contacted RCOC units over wide areas, and made every effort to obtain and supply our every demand. Their bins were filled when supplies were limited, due entirely to their resourcefulness. We (RCEME) acknowledge the stores section's efficiency and vote them a hearty "thanks"!

During the campaign, this unit acted as a Trade Testing Sub Board for Army Troops Area under Capt H.L. Beanlands as member I/C. A grand total of 1,422 applications were recorded through this office and arrangements were made whereby each applicant was advised as to which unit would test him and the date he was to report. At the same time, the unit to whom he was assigned was also notified as to when he would report. All records were maintained permanently by this unit, but the physical testing was shared by the six army troops workshops. We tested a total of 383 hopeful tradesmen during the active period of hostilities, which was not allowed to interfere in any way with the normal function of the shop.

The following letters of commendation are mementos of the excellent work done by personnel of this shop.

10 Feb 45

From: Maj Gen Sir Percy C. S. Hobart KBE, CB, DSO, MC,
Headquarters, 79th Armoured Division, BLA.

Brigadier G.M. Grant
DME First Canadian Army

PERSONAL

Dear Grant:

I feel I would like to write and thank you for the great help given us by Lt-Col H.B. McAdam, MBE, of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, and by Major Painter of 2 Canadian Tank Troops Workshop, and all ranks under their orders, who have worked long hours "all out" to overhaul our Kangaroos [Armoured Personnel Carriers].

Had it not been for this inspiring effort on their part, it would not have been possible to have the Kangaroos ready in time to assist the Canadian Army in current operations.

It is not only the efficiency of their work, but the cheerful and ready spirit they have shown that we all appreciate so much.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) P.C.S. Hobart

10 Feb 45

My Dear McAdam,

I would very much like to thank you and those under you for the wholehearted assistance given us with our Kangaroos.

In 15 days your unit overhauled 57 of our tanks, in spite of a number of difficulties as regards spare parts and other matters.

It is not only the efficiency and speed with which the task was achieved, but the ungrudging and cheerful spirit in which their cooperation was given which makes us appreciate it all the more.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) P.C.S. Hobart

Headquarters
First Canadian Army

26 Jul 45

Dear Grant:

I would like you to pass on to Lt-Col H.B. McAdam, MBE, the OC of the 4 Cdn Armd Troops Wksp, RCEME, and to those under him who contributed their time and skill, my appreciation of the cigarette box which the unit presented to me. It really is a beautiful design and a very fine bit of craftsmanship and I shall always greatly treasure it as a reminder of these recent months of great accomplishments and fine comradeship.

Yours

(Signed) H.D.G. Crerar

Advanced Workshop Detachments (AWDs)

The first operational AWD to leave the unit was composed of 30 other ranks (ORs) under the command of Capt J.J. Legate. It left on 28 June 1943, and after travelling in convoy for two days, arrived at Marrion Camp, near Barry, South Wales. The job here was to keep three complete squadrons of Ram tanks (60 vehicles) mechanically fit, while their crews took target practice and battle manoeuvres. This was an easy task for the men of this shop, and only one tank was grounded during the four-week "shoot".

Those who did not have to work every day enjoyed a "back to the land" movement, or the wider pleasures of beach parties. An advanced battle course was carried out under 2 Canadian Armoured Brigade supervision. Our workshop personnel were credited as being the most outstanding. The entire group returned to Worthing on 1 August.

Capt Legate then formed another AWD of 30 ORs, and immediately departed by rail for Inverary, Scotland. The duties this time were the maintenance and repair of twenty Ram tanks which were being used in conjunction with LCTs, for loading and beach-landing practice. These tanks had to be ready for immediate action at all times, and one fitter was required to be present whenever a practice was being carried out. Working knee-deep in water and being drenched by rain were the chief complaints.

Capt Legate was recalled and posted as Major commanding First Canadian Corps Troops Workshop, and Lt C.H. Neill replaced him at Inverary. In spite of adverse conditions, the tanks were kept in operation at all times. Satisfied with a job well done, the detachment rejoined the unit at Warnham on 26 September.

From 1 October 1943 onwards, detachments of personnel experienced at waterproofing were dispatched in varying numbers to numerous units. Most of these personnel were classed as inspectors and supervised the waterproofing of unit vehicles. The largest of these was composed of some 55 men who went to Gosport and Southampton to form a part of a composite AWD to waterproof several hundred carriers and numerous types of "B" vehicles. Here it became necessary to divide the composite detachment into a day and a night shift, with a time limit set for the completion of the job. Record times were established, and the job completed as per the needs of the army.

This type of work was our main function until D-Day preparations were completed, and again the men showed their adaptability to any type of work.

According to orders received, Capt H.L. Beanlands, Armt/QMS M. Clements, and eighteen ORs proceeded on a composite AWD on 26 March. This detachment was formed from several units and went to Kirkcudbright, Scotland. Their work was the maintenance of Sherman tanks which had been equipped with the new 17-pounder guns. These guns were to be given their severest tests on the ranges to prove

their worth. Many tank and gun modifications were made, and the entire composite AWD returned to their respective units on 29 April.

Just three days after our disembarking at Courselles beach, Normandy, 60 men of all trades were dispatched as a part of an AWD to a park near Bayeux. Here, Maj-Gen Simonds gave them the job of converting 200 American M7 Self-Propelled Gun Mounts to APCs (Armoured Personnel Carriers), and having them overhauled mechanically in six days. This was the largest of all detachments, being composed of men from 10 different RCEME units. They completed the job in four days, which gave the Canadian Army a two-day jump on the Germans at the Falaise Gap.

Supplemented by Capt G. F. Grainger's first-class job in obtaining the necessary parts, these vehicles were completed by an all out daylight-to-dark working day.



Educational Tours

Those of us who took advantage of a series of educational tours at the close of the war, when we toured the Ruhr Valley in Germany and parts of Holland, will no doubt find this short synopsis of these journeys to be of interest in days to come.

The total mileage covered for eight trips was 1,642 miles, with 251 men taking part in at least one of the trips. Complete reports were submitted for each trip and these have been filed with the war diary. Unit camera enthusiasts took advantage of the many opportunities provided by these trips and many fine photos were obtained.

The main places of interest visited were such places as Munster, Gelsenkirchen, Essen, Mulheim, Duisburg, Wesel, Bocholt, Meppen, Udem, Calcar, Xanten, and Rees, all in Germany. In Holland we visited such places as Haaksbergen, Deventer, Apeldoorn, Barneveld, Amersfoort, Soestdyk, Utrecht, Zeist, Doorn, Wageningen, Arnhem, Zutphen, Lochem, Hengelo, Nijmegen, S'Hertogenbosch, Vught, Tilburg, Breda, Groesbeek, Aalten, Groenlo, Goor, Hilversum, Bussum, Weesp, Amsterdam, Eindhoven,

and Enschede, many of which are now familiar to us, especially Eindhoven and Enschede where we have lived for long periods.

It was on our first trip on Sunday, 6 May 45, that we visited Munster and saw at first hand the results of the RAF bombing, which to say the least, were most impressive. Although the war was not officially over, fighting had ceased on 21 Army Group Front, and as a consequence, the great rail centre of Munster was choked with trains on all the repaired lines in every direction. They were all at a standstill. North-bound trains were filled with bombs and war stores, while vast numbers of prisoners languished on the down trains. As far as one could see, wreckage spread in all directions, with only the main roads open. The only evidence of the presence of the Allies was the odd American GI on guard or point duty at strategic points, who seemed only too happy to pass the time of day with us.

Our second trip on 13 May was to Essen, the home of the notorious German Arms firm of Krupps. Again the story was the same; utter destruction and a grand job well done. Here was one of the reasons we had won the war, here was the evidence of the destruction of the machine that had helped Germany on the road to conquest, death and destruction. But here the monster lay in the agony of death before our very eyes, and there was no lament.

Perhaps the greatest thrill of all was the discovery of tons of silver money in great boxes amidst the ruined machines, truly the answer to an old pirates' dream. These silver coins had come from France, Italy, Belgium, and Holland and were now all defaced in preparation for use with alloys for the manufacture of weapons of war. Strangely enough there were also some nickel ingots from our own Falconbridge Mines.

In many places the going was slow, due to routes through wrecked towns and villages being blocked by piles of rubble, meaning rough diversions. Bailey bridges were very much in evidence for river crossings, and scarcely an undamaged bridge was to be seen.

This was a long trip, and once again there were many wandering Germans on the roads, and what an unhappy lot they were. No doubt some were displaced persons or freed prisoners of war—mostly Russians. All types of transport were being used, but for the most part they tramped or cycled, carrying with them what belongings they had. At intervals, weary bodies could be seen sleeping at the side of the road. It was at Duisburg that we had to double back on the famous Autobahn, because a wrecked railway bridge blocked our passage.

At Recklinghausen we had a hot lunch and a few minute's rest before continuing our journey, the children who flocked about the trucks were well dressed, and apparently seemed fully aware of the "no fraternization" rule. Earlier in the day, on the approaches to Dorsten from the north, a well-camouflaged oil refinery had received expert attention from the air force.

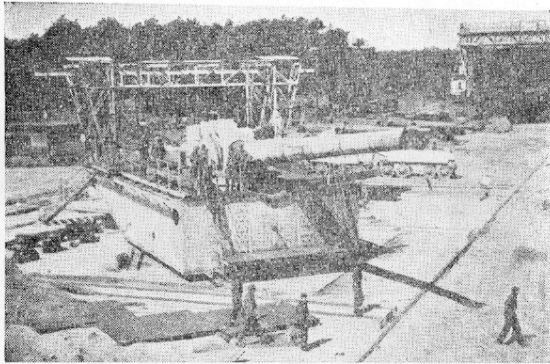
Wreckage was the principal thing to be seen in such towns as Ahaus, Stadtlohn, Borken, Gelsenkirchen, Essen, Mulheim, Duisburg, Wesel, and Bocholt. In the area of Wesel, great numbers of Allied gliders, apparently in good shape, were herded together awaiting salvage, while dotted about the nearby fields were the charred remains of some less fortunate aircraft.

The third trip, on Sunday, 20 May, served as a change by way of a trip to Utrecht. This trip was under the direction of Lt R.W. Kennedy and took us through the Netherlands National Park, Hoenderlo, Otterlo, and Barneveld with its vast areas of sand, hills and trees. At Soesdijk, we saw Princess Juliana's Palace, a large dazzling white building in picturesque surroundings. Near Zeist we had the opportunity of seeing vast quantities of enemy stores and equipment in the *Eclipse* dumps [Operation *Eclipse* was the plan for the occupation and disarming of Germany]. From here the route took us through Doom, where we saw the ex-Kaiser's house situated in a wooded estate some distance from the road.

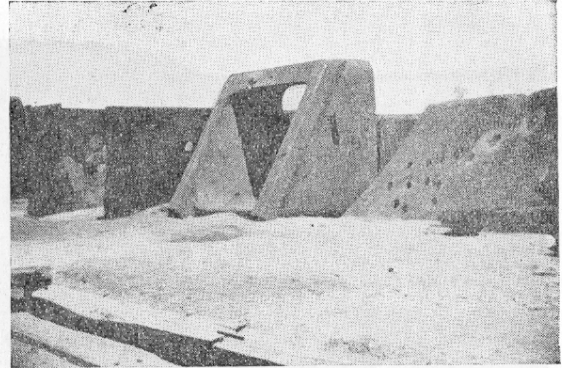
In the area of Wageningen, we saw where the battles of 1940 had been fought, and the new wreckage of more recent fighting. We explored the Hotel de Wereld where Lt-Gen Foulkes accepted the surrender of the German 15th Army.

On the week-end of 26 May 1945, the trip was to Antwerp to enable many of us to renew acquaintances made in our long stay there during the latter part of 1944, and to see how Antwerp had finally fared under the "V1" and "V2" attacks.

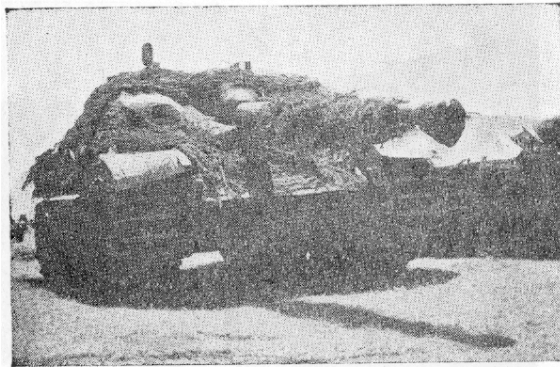
Meppen and Osnabruck were the chief places of interest visited on our trip of 3 June, and again we were favoured with the best of weather. The enemy gun park at Krupps' testing ground north of Meppen, was of great interest, and here we lingered and examined German weapons of all types, great pieces of armour plate and even two gigantic tank hulls with 8-inch armour for the turret and 4-inch armour on the hull.



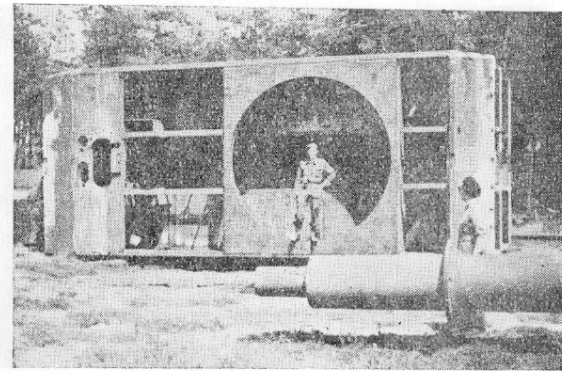
COAST DEFENSE GUN—MEPPEN



ARMOUR PLATE



GERMAN "88" S.P.



LARGE TANK HULLS

At Lingen we crossed the Ems River and the Dortmund-Ems Canal via two Bailey bridges, the "Li'l Abner" and the "Daisy Mae". At Krupps, we lunched amidst the vast array of all types of enemy guns and tanks.

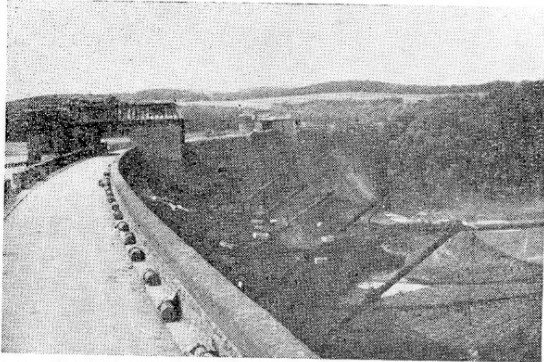
The road to Osnabruck was rough and dusty, the worst road we encountered in all our trips. Osnabruck itself was in ruins, but the surrounding countryside was very picturesque and totally untouched by war. At the approaches to Osnabruck, near Bramsche, were the remains of a huge German airfield, complete with a narrow-gauge railway to serve its greatly dispersed installations. The wrecked machines were all that could be seen of the once proud Luftwaffe - Goering's pride and hope!

Passing on from Osnabruck after a short drive around the ruins, we had a wonderful vista for miles around, from a height of about 200 metres. And so on to Iburg and Lingerich with its completely wrecked rail yard.

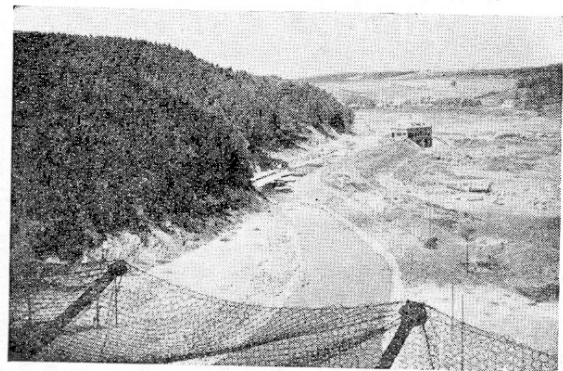
Our camera fiends, especially QMS Amy, got some shots in Tecklenburg, which proved to be a very quaint village and still intact. The inhabitants seemed to be very much interested in us. A short halt was

made here due to a small mechanical failure of one of the trucks. From here, we continued on to Ibbenburen, passing through a valley where the signs of bitter fighting were still quite evident, and tank tracks were still visible through the green fields.

Rheine's wreckage was approached by way of a diversion, due to a blown bridge across the famous Dortmund-Ems Canal, which was now all but dry.

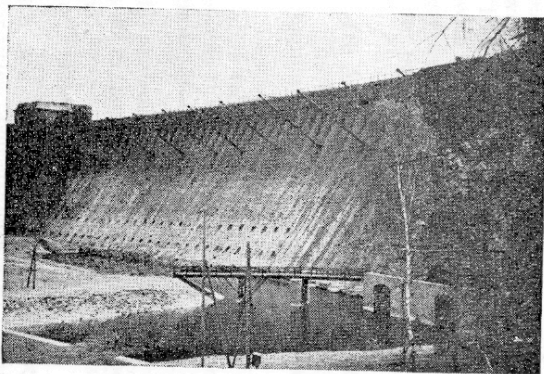


ROAD ACROSS TOP OF DAM

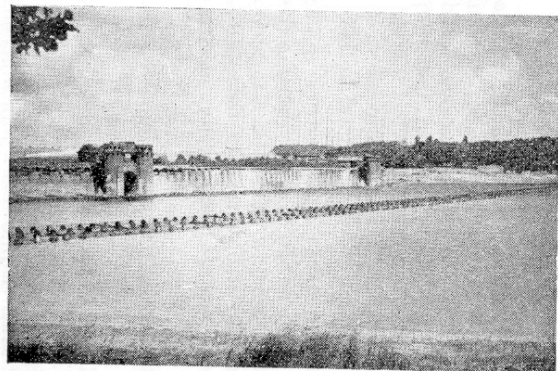


VIEW DOWNSTREAM FROM TOP OF DAM

MOHNE DAM



VIEW OF FACE OF DAM



BACK OF DAM SHOWING TORPEDO NETS

Figure 10 - Mohne Dam

Sunday, 10 June, saw us off at 0800 hrs as usual, and this time to see the Mohne Dam, scene of the famous Dam Busters' raid and thence to Dortmund. This trip took us once again through Munster, which this time showed more signs of life, and from here the journey took us to Hamm where the same scene of destruction greeted us. We then drove through rich country with its vistas of rolling hills to Werle and thence began the long climb to Niederense overlooking the Ruhr River. We followed the river and could plainly see the effects of the flood which had swept all before it. As we approached the dam we could see the extent of the damage. The dam had been rebuilt, but the new part, built of concrete, stood out from the older parts of the dam which were built of stone. We drove across the dam and lunched on the grassy slopes of the hills on the far bank.

Two huge towers of steel, one on either side of the dam formed part of the dam's defences. A great cable stretched between them, and from this cable more steel wires were suspended vertically almost touching the water. Out in the lake was a triple torpedo net, and a further set of three at the edge of the dam. On the sloping face of the dam, huge chain nets were erected to detonate any bombs before they could strike the dam itself.

From the Mohne Dam, we proceeded to Soest stopping at the Bismark monument, which commands a fine view of the country surrounding the dam. It had been used as a radar station and observation tower, and the style and architecture were typically Nazi.

Our trip now took us down the fertile Ruhr valley to Dortmund, passing through Werl and Unna on the way. It was now afternoon, and the roads were crowded with the incessant trek of bedraggled humans - the master race! Master of its own fate.

Dortmund presented the usual depressing sight of ruin and wreckage, and here we stopped at the square, in the centre of what was once a proud city. An unmolested Lancaster bomber droned overhead, gloating in the sight of its hard won victories. The empty hulks of once-great architectural works were all there was to look upon. We moved on to the docks, for this was once a great inland port, served by that oft-mentioned Dortmund-Ems Canal. The giant cranes once again were lofty perches for the camera enthusiasts. The innards of a close-by locomotive shed were also of much interest to all, and the stock seemed to be in good repair although the surrounding marshalling yards were in ruins.

We returned via unbombed Herne with streets alive with well dressed people, and there were pretty frauleins aplenty - but alas we could not fraternize!

The scene of the Rhine Crossings and the battle areas of Emmerich, Clove, the Reichswald, and Hochwald forests received our attention on 17 June. On this trip we covered 210 miles, and as a result were able to piece together the events of the recent campaigns which had been fought in this area. Here too at Groesbeek we saw the vast array of gliders wrecked in the glorious assault of the previous September to save the Arnhem and Nijmegen Bridges. Here, we could only stand and look at the signs that said "Mines! - Danger!", and we did not dispute their warnings.

Following lunch in the Reichswald, we went on to Goch, Weeze, and Udem, names which had become famous a few short months previously and thence to Calcar, Xanten, and Wesel.

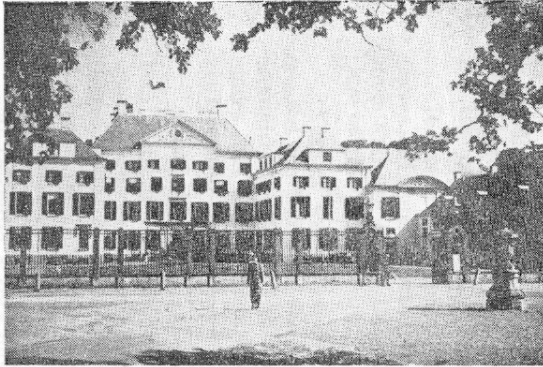
It was in the Hochwald overlooking Calcar that we saw many Canadian graves and signs of bitter struggles. The Algonquins, the Argyle and Sutherlands, and the Royal Canadian Artillery had once again written a bloody page of glory for Canada, but at what a price!

Xanten was reached and from there we went to Wesel where we crossed the Rhine on the Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. We had quite a run around trying to get back into Holland, for the frontier was closed in many places, but finally made it near Aalten and so continued on to Enschede via Groenlo.

Amsterdam was the main point of interest on our last educational trip of 15 July 1945. The mileage for the round trip was 210 miles and the weather was excellent. This trip took us through Hengelo, Goor, Markel, Hulten, Deventer, Apeldoorn, Amersfoort, Hilversum, Bussum, and Weesp. We found the Dutch towns very clean and tidy, and many modern buildings were to be seen.

At Deventer, a very modern and unusual type of bridge had carried the highway across the Ijssel river, but like most other bridges in this part of the world, the main span had been destroyed. Entering Apeldoorn there was evidence of some shelling, but the city itself was not badly damaged. Beyond this town the route climbed through wooded land, which had been the Royal Hunting Grounds, but which was used by the Germans as an ammunition dump.

After a smooth trip on good roads, we reached Amsterdam and got our first sight of its many canals and bridges. Here we found what we would call ultra-modern buildings, but which to the natives were quite commonplace. We saw that the wooden paving blocks were missing and were told that they had been used for fuel the previous winter, and many vacant houses were apparently used for the same purpose. We also learned that one of the staple foods of last winter was tulip bulbs!



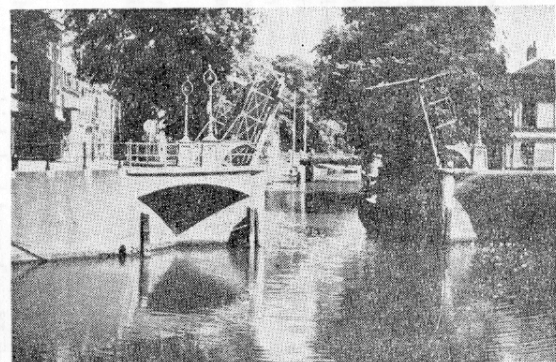
QUEEN WILHELMINA'S PALACE



MODERN DEPARTMENT STORE—UTRECHT



HOTEL DE WERELD—WAGENINGEN



CANAL SCENE—UTRECHT

On the return journey we stopped at an Army Refreshment Centre, formerly a “posh” road house, for a welcome cup of tea and some delicious cakes - all for free - what an Army!

The following are a few statistics of the trips made by personnel of this unit:

Trip to	Date	Personnel	Miles
Munster	6 May 1945	60	124
Essen	13 May 1945	130	177
Utrecht	20 May 1945	60	180
Antwerp	26/27 May 1945	109	350
Meppen / Osnabruck	3 June 1945	61	183
Dortmund / Mohne Dam	10 June 1945	74	208
Rhine Battle Area	17 June 1945	34	210
Amsterdam	15 July 1945	34	210

Sports

The history of 4 CATW could not be complete without some mention of the fine record gained in the field of sports. In all types of athletics, men of this workshop have been prominent. Within the unit, keen competition and sportsmanship of high quality were always evident, and in outside competition our athletes enjoyed a reputation second to none. This spirit and enthusiasm was carried into sports further afield, and brought many honours to rest in 4 CATW's hall of fame.

A few lines must be devoted to our softball house league. Many of these games will long be remembered, not only because of the great games they were, but also for the great amount of legal tender which used to pass back and forth. Then again there was that other baseball classic, East versus West. Well, I see that the old argument has started already, so nothing more need be said.

Here are some of the highlights in the sports activities of 4 CATW.

At Redbill, England, in 1943, this workshop participated in a field day and demonstration in competition with other workshops in the RCEME Army Troops formation. At the conclusion of the day, it was found that the glorious 4th was the undisputed winner of the show, and was promptly awarded the coveted trophy. At the same time, a second cup was awarded for being the best workshop to take part in the *Vulcan* Scheme which had taken place some weeks before. Certain observers present that day are probably still shaking their heads after watching our crew erect an Aldershot shelter in the almost unbelievable time of 26 minutes. At this point, I ask the members of that crew to take a well-deserved bow and enjoy a round of applause. Our OC, Major M.H. Hastings, who won an impressive victory in the bicycle race, shared honours with Cpl W.D. Scott, winner of the blacksmithing contest. If my memory serves me correctly, I recall that 4th Armd was also complimented on their fine performance during the march-past of that day.

At Warnham, England in 1944, 4th Armd placed second in the RCEME Army Troops track and field meet. The tug-of-war team regained our reputation however, by stretching the manila to out-pull all opposition presented at that time.

Then came a lull in the sports while 4th Armd exerted their full energy to a more important task. Then, having seen that job to its successful conclusion, sports were again resumed in Enschede, Holland in the year 1945.

Tabloid sports were favoured for the commencement of athletic hostilities, and 4th Armoured Troops were victorious in the first inter-workshop meet to be staged. Two members of this team were on the RCEME all-stars which later won the First Canadian Army Troops tabloid sports meet.

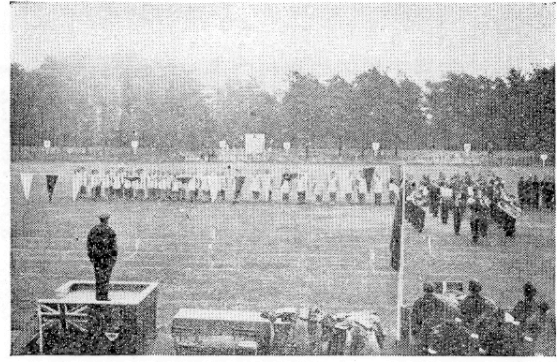
At about the same period, 4th Armd were winners of the RCEME Army Troops volleyball and tug-of-war titles. Our athletes also participated in a meet in competition with Dutch civilians and RAF personnel while at Enschede. Several of the boys received handsome diplomas which will no doubt be the topic of conversation on many occasions when they return to Canada.

Members of this unit made a creditable showing in later sports meets, and S/Sgt C.L. Borden, while competing in the Canadian Army Track and Field Championship, broke the standing-broad-jump record with a tremendous leap of ten feet, ¼ inches.

In softball, 4th Armd never seemed to be able to produce a winning team, but at all times offered the best of opposition.

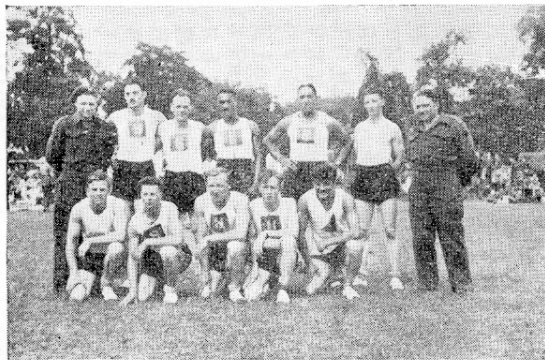


MARCH PAST

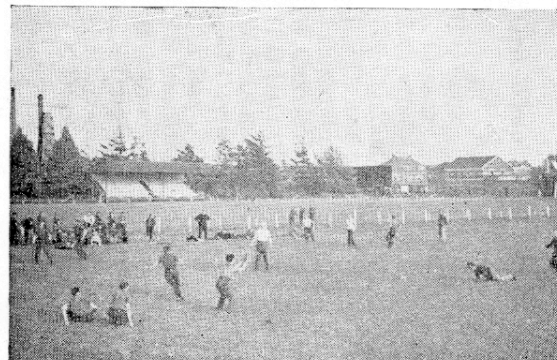


ARMY SPORTS MEET—APELDOORN

CANADIAN ARMY SPORTS



ARMY TROOPS SPORTS TEAM



SOFTBALL GAME AT ENSCHEDE

Figure 11 - Canadian Army Sports

During two seasons of hockey, 4th Armd succeeded in gaining a second and a third place. I believe the greatest memories of hockey will concern the games played at Antwerp, Belgium during the 1944-45 season. I think everyone will remember the slight pauses in play while waiting for a Doodle-bug to make up its mind to continue on its journey or take a hand in the game. 4th Armd had the distinction of being represented by three players on the RCEME All-stars aggregation, which won the Canadian Army Hockey Championship of North-west Europe in 1945. No doubt the flashing blades and exceptional playing of Jack Lambrecht, Pete Belanger, and Norm Raike were great factors in this victory.

4th Armoured Troops Workshop may well be proud of its athletes. Space will not permit the names of them all, but each of them contributed highly to the great record in sports held by this unit during its life in World War II.

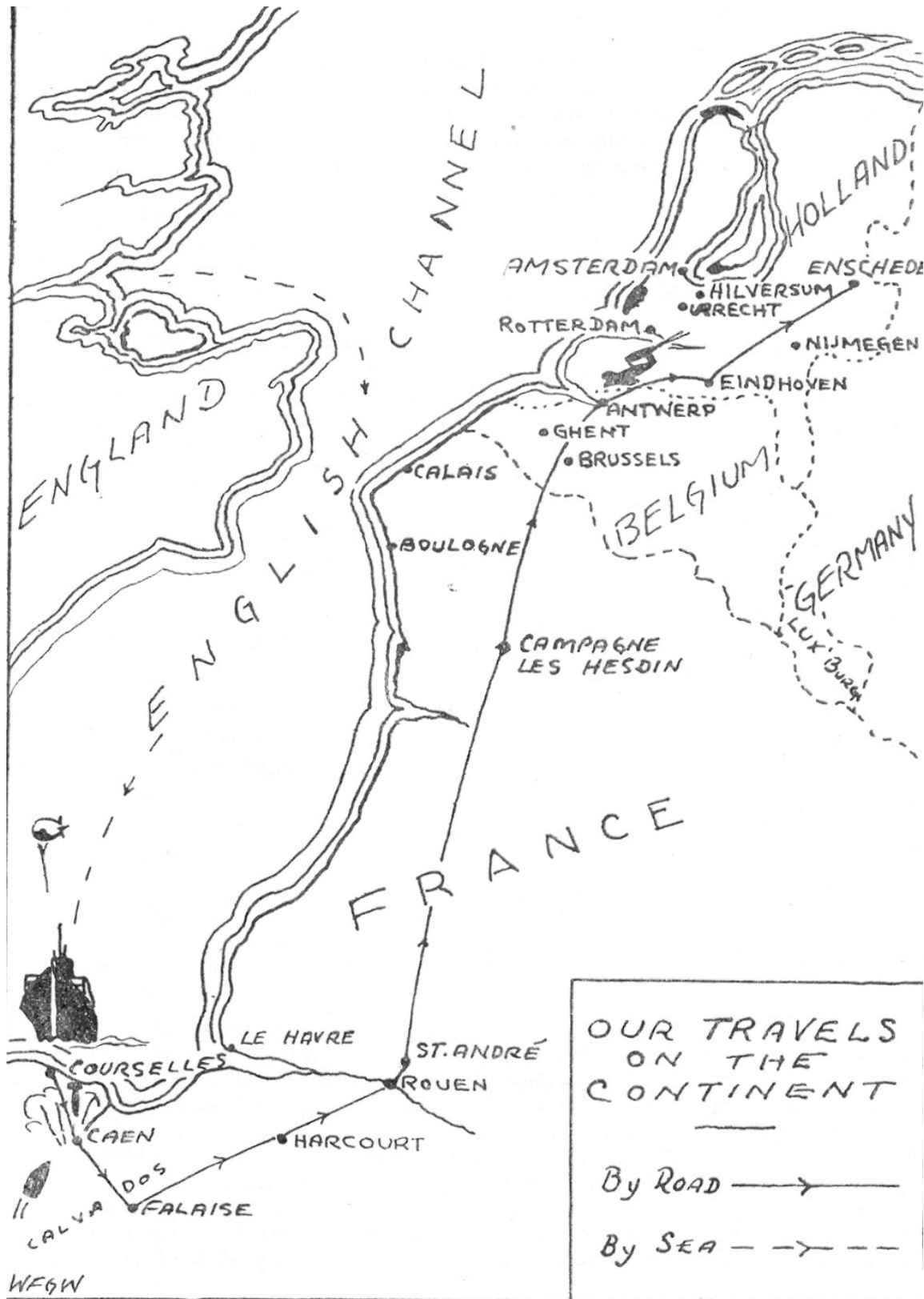


Figure 12 - Travels of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop on the Continent

**Nominal Roll of No. 4 Section
Canadian Armoured Corps Ordnance Workshop
8 August 1942**

NOMINAL ROLL	
No. 4 Sec Cdn Armd Corps Ord Wksp — 8 Aug 42	
B R AMY	H C COOK
M L ALJOE	K CORSON
F E ALYWARD	R COTTINGHAM
E V ARMSTRONG	V V CROXALL
R G ARBUTHNOT	H J CUMMINS
D G ARNOLD	J CUNNINGHAM
T A BAILEY	W CHRYSTIAN
A P BAKER	H D DALLAIRE
L G BAKER	W H DARROCH
S BAKKEN	E G DAVIE
A L BARKS	C A DAY
W O BARNES	S S DECLAIRE
H J BASARABA	H A DEMONE
R A BASSETT	P S DEMONE
H L BEANLANDS	G DESROCHES
W G BILLINGS	J E DEYO
M BOIRE	K DINWOODIE
P A BOISVENUE	A DONALDSON
L J BOYCE	F F DONOVAN
F E BRAUN	G F DOUCETTE
A C BRIERLEY	S DOW
R W BRIGGS	A W DUNBAR
T H BRIGGS	D A DUNBAR
C BRODTHAGEN	E S DUSHARM
A R BROWN	H J EALING
M W BROWN	R EAST
N BUBIS	F A EGAN
B BUCHIN	W ESTES
J A BURNS	J N FALL
R P CALAGUIRO	B A FARQUHAR
N R CAMPBELL	J C FARRELL
D CANNING	V J FERGUSON
S H CAREW	C V FOSS
C G CARLSON	E FOSTER
F G CARTER	J FRANK
S C CASE	R J FRANKLIN
W E CAVELL	R B FREER
J J CHAMBERS	H R FREMLIN
E J R CHAMPOUX	P G GARWOOD
H J J CLARK	J E GENTLES
G A CLARKE	J GIESBRECHT
M CLEMENTS	H GRAHAM
R C COATES	F E GRAVES
C A COLLIN	A G GRAY

J R G GREEN
 C H GREGORY
 K C GREGORY
 F GRIER
 J W GRIFFITH
 W D GUSTAFSON
 E HANSEN
 G E A HARRIS
 C F HARRISON
 A L HASLETT
 C J HEARD
 L HEFKEY
 S M HERRICK
 L H HODGE
 A C HUTCHINSON
 L W JONASSON
 W A JOHNSON
 H L JOHNSTON
 E S JOHNSTONE MC
 J S JOHNSTONE
 G B JONES
 H JONVICK
 A J JURY
 P KALUZNIAK
 A R KELLER
 C H KELLBERG
 S H KERR
 J W KERNER
 G KINSLOW
 L W KISLING
 D D KNAGGS
 G H KROEKER
 M LACELLE
 D T LADE
 J P LAMBRECHT
 M E C LAPISH
 R M LAURIE
 F A LEE
 W C LEE
 K A LESLIE
 A LEVESQUE
 J S LINNELL
 F LORAN
 G D MACKIE
 B B MACKIN
 R J MAGNAN
 P C MALONEY
 J R MARCY
 E F MARTIN

J A MARTIN
 H W MARTINDALE
 A A MEECHAM
 A MEYERS
 W T MILES
 H L MILLS
 G B MITCHELL
 C E MOORE
 J A MOORE
 W D MOORE
 E J MORENCY
 J L MURPHY
 A C MURRAY
 C T MUSGRAVE
 D N MacBEAN
 R A MacDONALD
 L B R MacTAVISH
 J M McALPINE
 G T McAULIFFE
 E C McCALLUM
 J A McCOIG
 L B F McCOOL
 C F McCULLAGH
 L D McCUTCHEON
 S McDERMID
 C McGUIRE
 H T McGUIRE
 W McKENZIE
 D H McKIBBON
 W R McKINNON
 L F McLAUGHLIN
 N McLEOD
 W J McLEOD
 R J M McMATH
 R J McQUATT
 I McPHERSON
 K K McQUAIG
 R P NEWELL
 J J O'BRIEN
 R OLSEN
 C D ORCHARD
 J P ORDGE
 L G OSCAR
 D S OUDERKIRK
 E G PALLISTER
 N J PATEICHUK
 L G PEARSON
 H PENNER
 F PETERS

J A PFOH	S C SPRINGSTEEL
M PHILLIPCHUK	G STENHOUSE
A PIGGOTT	F A STOBBS
E PITTMAN	E J STRACK
N J POWELL	W J STRACHAN
A E PRATT	W J STRONG
W RADDATZ	F C STUART
J A RAVENHILL	J P SWEENEY
M E RAWDING	C H THIBIDEAU
J REEDMAN	J W TILLIE
C B RENDALL	W J TRAK
C W RENFREW	R TRENCHARD
W REYNOLDS	J M TURNER
C L ROSS	G W TWIGGER
M C ROULSTON	G H WARE
R V SANDS	H WELCHER
R E SARGENT	C M WELLINGTON
N F SAVARD	C K WHEELER
L SCHOTT	A WHITESIDE
A F SCOTT	W WILLIAMS
C C SCOTT	H S WILSON
W D SCOTT	J A WILSON
R O SEALE	H F WILTSIE
D C SELBY	H G WIMPERIS
S SHAPKA	D A WINTER
C A SHROPSHIRE	K C WINTER
M SILVER	L S WOODSIDE
A G SIMONS	A F A WORBY
W J SIMPSON	H B WORDEN
G SIPCHENKO	N W WORNE
A SKAGFELD	C S WORSSELL
H SLOAN	J D WOYWODA
S M SLOAN	F E WRIGHT
G SMITH	L G WRIGHT
J A SMITH	J H YOELL
C A SPENCE	L C YOUNG

Nominal Roll of 4 Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, RCEME 8 May 1945

NOMINAL ROLL

4 Cdn Armd Tps Wksp RCEME, — 8 May 45

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Appendix – Extract from The Collection of Individual RCEME Unit Histories 4th Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, RCEME

[This appendix has been extracted from the Collection of Individual RCEME Unit Histories published in November 2007. Although produced by the unit, it was not part of the original Memoirs – ed].

4th Canadian Armoured Troops Workshop, RCEME was one of the last shops in First Canadian Army Troops to cease work in England; and was taking in and doing repairs right up to the day before proceeding to London to embark for France. From the time of the warning order, the unit vehicles had been waterproofed and each section had been completely packed and on wheels.

The workshop arrived off the coast of France at Courseulles on 30 July 1944. The disembarkation took most of the day, and the vehicles assembled about a mile from the beach and were joined by the marching party. At approximately 2400 hours, the convoy moved to the first unit location on the Caen/Basly road, one mile north of Caen, dispersed the vehicles, and bedded down for the night.

The location was a poor one, a long valley with practically no flat ground with the exception of the road running down the middle of the camp. The unit dug in to some extent, and the sections set up in their allotted portions of the area. Second Corps CBP was about a mile north of the unit and tanks and guns were drawn from there to work on. Repairable “B” vehicles in the BLP were non-existent, all being complete washouts, so the “B” vehicle personnel were used to work on tanks. The weather throughout the unit’s stay there was hot and dry, bringing with it the dust, which is so familiar to all troops who stayed in that sector. Then came the flies and wasps to make life miserable, and last but by no means least, the “Normandy Glide” was rampant and spared no one. On 4 August, shortly after midnight, the camp was attacked by three enemy aircraft, which dropped anti-personnel bombs and strafed the area. The camp was dug in but the men sleeping in the tents didn’t have sufficient time to take cover. Twenty were wounded and one killed; and the next day, another died of wounds. For the remainder of the period at this location, the majority of the camp slept below ground level. On the same day, Lt-Col W. McKinlay took over command of the workshop, Maj R.A. Mitchell going to 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade Workshop.

At this time, an AWD of 60 men was sent to Bayeaux to assist in converting M7 SP gun mounts to armoured personnel carriers, which were used very successfully in the advance on Falaise. Personnel from the unit under Lt H. B. Charters set up 2nd Canadian Corps BLP at Cormelles and administered the point until the Recovery Company took it over. Twenty-two pioneers were attached to the unit at this time to do reclamation work at the BLP and stayed until after VE-Day.

This was the first time that battle casualty equipments were repaired in the shop, and difficulty was encountered in obtaining spare parts for items which would normally outlast the life of the equipment, but which were damaged by shellfire. Reclamation from crock parks proved to be the only solution, as it was impossible to predict the items that the stores section should be scaled for.

On 21 August, a move was started to Robertmesnil, just south of Caen on the Caen-Falaise highway. Service Corps transport was unavailable so the unit moved in sections, some trucks running a shuttle service. In the new location, 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Troops Workshop, 2nd Canadian Tank Troops Workshop, and this unit were grouped in the one area around an Army BLP. The location was a good one with lots of room and level ground. At this point, an intensive tank programme was completed to supply armour for the drive to Falaise and 20 tanks, 5 SPs and one armoured OP vehicle were completed in twelve days. By this time, the “A” vehicle section had modified a Sherman III tank with a damaged turret into an ARV, which proved invaluable as time went on.

Work continued in the shop seven days a week, but the commanding officer started a plan whereby a fraction of the unit was off each day, giving each man one day's rest a week. This was greatly appreciated and the work benefited from it.

The next move on 2 September, was a long one from Robertmesnil to Cailly, twelve miles north-east of Rouen. The reception given the convoy by the French people was tremendous. After this third move, the process of unloading was so well organized that work could be started four hours after arriving at the site and after one day, everything was in full swing.

The workshop was now in the centre of farming country and dairy and farm products provided a welcome supplement to army rations. On off days, visits were made to Rouen where the main attractions seemed to be ice cream, perfumes, and other liquids of unknown character but none the less an improvement over Calvados. Prices seemed high, but were only a fraction of those encountered later.

Since the war was moving quickly and transport was scarce, it was decided to make the unit fully mobile, and ten load carriers from the BLP were repaired and taken into use in the unit.

The Canadian Legion supervisor, Mr. Churchill, did a good job in supplying entertainment and comforts for the unit and a canteen of sorts had always been maintained.

On 13 September, the workshop moved to Campagne-les-Hesdin in the Pas de Calais area. Here the workshop was situated in a large field and was a good site until rains made the footing too soft for tanks and mud holes developed at each entrance. An International half-track was taken into use where wheeled vehicles could not get around. At this point, the "B" vehicle work increased. The vehicles that had been in service since D-Day were finding their way back to the crotch parks in a repairable condition. Tank work was normal, but gun work fell off.

The next unit location was Antwerp, where a programme overhauling Ram armoured personnel carriers was expected. In order to obtain spares, a unit convoy was run to Bayeux from Hesdin to 14 AOD. The trip to Antwerp came up very suddenly on 29 September and the workshop moved on eight hours notice. A light convoy started at 0800 hours and arrived in one day. The heavier vehicles stayed overnight on the Belgian border. This location was in a former Messerschmitt repair shop in South Antwerp. The area was shared with 2nd Canadian Advanced Base Workshop for a week, and then the unit occupied the whole building. Here, for the first time on the continent, the workshop was completely under cover, and the men housed in buildings. There were washrooms, showers, and offices all prepared. The expected tank programme did not come off, but there was plenty of both "A" and "B" vehicle in the nearby ABP. The First Canadian Army Vehicle Park had moved their gun park to Boom and as a result of exposure to the weather, no maintenance, and transportation, well over a hundred guns needed workshop repairs. Second echelon work was done on some SAR tanks and "E" Squadron of 25th Canadian Armoured Delivery Regiment supplied a large percentage. Second echelon work on "B" vehicles increased tremendously as there were many units in the area. Army HQ was nearby, and brought with it its quota of caravan work.

By the end of two weeks, V-2 rockets started to land in the city, but not much was known about them, and as none had landed near, no one was particularly worried. On 25 October, Lt-Col McKinlay took over duties as CREME First Canadian Army Troops, and Lt-Col E. H. Miller became commanding officer of the workshop. On the afternoon of 30 October, a V-1 landed in the middle of the camp area.

Approximately 25 men were injured by flying glass, three went to hospital and three were confined to bed in the MIR. Nine-days later a V-2 rocket hit a house right behind the workshop. A rescue crew was organized and got the inhabitants out of the house safely.

Building maintenance and repair occupied a lot of time in the ancillary section as frequently happens in semi-static positions, but production in all sections increased steadily with improved working conditions. Salvage dumps supplied off-time work for the instrument section and the armourers.

A prototype was made here of a modified Wasp flame thrower, experiments were carried out with the Squid exhaust smoke discharger, and an experimental personnel-carrying sled was built to tow behind tanks.

On 21 November, the workshop moved to another part of the factory to make room for 21 Advanced Base Workshop. Up to this time, expendable stores such as sheet metal steel plate, strap and angle iron had been unobtainable in quantity from Ordnance, but this had caused no particular trouble as German or local stock had always been available near the workshop location. But in a static position, these stocks had become used up and it was only with great difficulty that this material was obtained.

Civilian labour was first employed here and was very useful for general duty tasks, releasing army personnel for other jobs. Gun work from 1st Canadian Army Vehicle Park increased and 73 artillery equipments were overhauled in 2½ months.

Unit dances became a weekly affair, and Christmas and New Year's celebrations were as enthusiastic as those in England. Forty-eight hour passes to Brussels started that fall.

On 19 December, Lt-Col K. B. McAdam, MBE, took over command of the workshop and Lt-Col B. H. Miller left to return to Canada.

On 8 January, the unit moved to Eindoven. A tank AWD under Capt H. L. Beanlands, had been there for a week and had cleaned up a site for the "B" vehicle shop. The area allotted for the rest of the unit was in the meantime given to a Service Corps supply point so the remainder of the unit was billeted in two schools, which were none too comfortable having had no heat for months. The plumbing conveniences, designed for small children, created quite a problem for six-foot men. After two weeks, space was found in a "B" vehicle section and the men were billeted in private homes in the neighbourhood. The "B" vehicle section was set up as a complete unit in their original location.

Tank work reached its peak in this location, doing two refitment and overhaul programmes for armoured personnel carrier regiments. Fifty-seven "A" vehicles were completed in thirteen days and 77 tanks overhauled in the second flap in twelve days. For these programmes, men from "B" vehicle and armament sections worked on tanks and the whole unit went full out seven days a week and three evenings a week. The remainder of the tank work was taken in exclusively from 3 AFV Servicing Unit (British). Production on "B" vehicles reached sixty vehicles a week. Several Ram Wasps were modified here, and the flame equipment overhauled and tested.

In April, preparations started for a move into the field again. Thirty tents were manufactured and camp equipment overhauled, and on 28 April, the unit moved to Enschede. The shop site was a large warehouse with good standings but the tent lines were on a sandy field, which was not the best for living conditions. The whole shop personnel worked for a week cleaning the area and fencing it off from the civilians, who came around in droves to barter or buy cigarettes or food. But the work was worthwhile, as the working area was good, and a good recreation hall was cleaned out. Work was drawn in from 15 ABP and was continuing when VE-Day arrived.

Throughout the whole campaign, very little third echelon work was done. Repair was mainly replacement of assemblies and overflow from second line workshops. The advantage of larger shops and fewer moves showed up in the production as the following summary of work from the continent shows:

"A" vehicles	684	Small arms	3,011
"B" vehicles	1,907	Misc	45
Artillery equipment	126		
Telecommunication sets	677		
Instruments	2,057		