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**THE VOICES OF THOSE WHO SERVED:
THE EARLY WAR YEARS AND THE MEN OF THE
1ST BATTALION, CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA (MG)**

by

Gloria A. Morrison

**Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
M.A. degree in History.**

Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

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ABSTRACT

THE VOICES OF THOSE WHO SERVED:
THE EARLY WAR YEARS AND THE MEN OF THE
1ST BATTALION, CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA (MG)

Gloria A. Morrison
University of Ottawa, 2001

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The intent of this endeavor is to consider the Second World War from the perspective of one group of men who served with a machine gun regiment based out of Ottawa. The objective is to rediscover what the early war experience was like for these Canadian soldiers. All the questions considered in this undertaking may be subsumed into three basic queries: Who were these men who came forward to serve? Why had they 'volunteered' to go to war? And, what were the early war years like for these predominantly young Canadians? The third query comprises the bulk of the attention in this thesis. The time period under review is from September 1939 until May of 1941. This covers the mobilization period in Ottawa and the unit's first overseas posting in Iceland. This time frame concerns an overlooked aspect of war service—the induction and foundation period for Canadian Armed Forces.

Two principal sources have been relied upon to provide the evidence from which this thesis draws its conclusions: recent, recorded oral history interviews with twenty veterans who lived the events under consideration, and the contemporary war diary accounts penned by officers of the unit. Other primary sources considered in this research are records and reports held by the Department of National Defence, the Canadian

Government War Cabinet Minutes, diary accounts of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, a variety of Canadian Government departmental files, in particular those of the Department of External Affairs, a selection of veterans personal files, pertinent regimental histories, photographs and newspaper articles.

Although this effort is largely a reflection of primary sources, the secondary source material that does exist on the topic has been reviewed and considered. This thesis involves a reversal in the customary methodological approach, with first hand accounts providing the guiding and principal research material and documentary evidence serving in a comparative and corroborating role. The oral history interviews and the war diary accounts outline and define the reality and historical significance of the events for the individuals involved. The documents, official reports, and secondary literature offer the recorded facts and the official interpretation of events against which to compare these first hand accounts.

This work returns the individual soldier to the forefront of a pivotal moment in Canada's recent history. Their story is not a monolithic account. The veterans interviewed held varying opinions on key issues. Out of respect and appreciation for their individual points of view, this work offers a range of interpretations on events and their meaning. In presenting a more complete understanding of a period in our history it can inform not only the historical record, but also assist Canadians in considering the role of military forces in present and future undertakings.

Acknowledgements

This effort is an expression of the knowledge gained over many years of study at the University of Ottawa. Each professor that I have worked under deserves a measure of individual thanks for any demonstrated skills that this work portrays. A special word of gratitude is offered to those professors in the Department of History who have provided me with much 'dry and long burning fuel' for my interest in mankind's past. I would be remiss if I did not also mention the importance of the History Department's support and secretarial staff to the academic success of all students. In this regard a special note of thanks is due to Anne St. Jacques, the undergraduate academic advisor whose efforts contributes mightily to seeing us through the process.

Financial support has been generous, encouraging and crucial to the completion of this thesis. Both the University of Ottawa's School of Graduate Studies, and the Department of History provided this, in the form of scholarships and Teaching Assistantships. The Department of National Defence, through the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, also awarded a generous one-year scholarship.

For the thesis undertaking itself, Professor Brian Loring Villa provided the initial interest in our military past and the encouragement and counsel necessary to see the work to its completion. To the late Mr. Peter Pym-Hember, Curator of the museum for *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*, I owe a great debt for his generosity, not only with museum resources but for his unstinting support of my efforts. Dr. Vic Weatherall, the President of the Association for *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* at the outset of this venture, also extended support in the form of an open invitation to the monthly

association meetings, a speaking engagement at the yearly convention and ongoing enthusiasm for this work.

The staffs of the National Archives of Canada, and the Directorate of Heritage and History have been generous and helpful in providing the requisite sources and necessary aid. Of particular note in this regard is the assistance provided by Dr. Stephen Harris, Director of the Directorate of Heritage and History, and Mr. Robert Plant of the Military Personnel Section of the National Archives of Canada.

To my husband Frank, and my children Michael, Andrew, and Barbara who have persevered in their efforts to support and encourage an often distracted and busy wife and mother, my eternal gratitude. To my dear friends, both on and off campus who have always listened and encouraged me, I thank you. A particular note of thanks to Dr. Steven High who in spite of his own demanding schedule was unstinting in his enthusiasm, encouragement and counsel—even from afar. I have indeed been blessed.

For the thesis itself, I owe the greatest debt and thanks to the Cameron men; both those of the 1st battalion, the unit under review and those of the Association who offered advise, support, friendship and a generous welcome to this eager but fledgling student. To the twenty-one men who agreed to the interview process and shared their war memories, I will remain forever humbled by their trust, sagacity, maturity and inspiring attitudes. The time I spent with them, listening to their recollections and reflections, has been one of the most inspiring learning experiences of my entire life.

Preface

My father was a Canadian Veteran of World War Two. He died young, at the age of 51. Like so many men who returned from the experience of war he did not ‘tell’ of the war years. On the odd occasion he would recount an amusing tale but otherwise he kept his war memories to himself.

He was a rather quiet man, thoughtful, who loved his family and was well liked by his many friends. He walked tall, with his shoulders back and his gaze direct. He believed in honesty, in integrity, in earning one’s way, and not shirking one’s duties. He accepted others as equals and expected the same in return.

I remember how he liked to drink his tea black and strong. He would laugh and say that he had acquired that liking in the army. He also would not eat anything that was ‘mixed together.’ He referred to casseroles and the like as ‘a dog’s breakfast.’ Later, I would come to understand the meaning of these dietary preferences.

Years after his death his eldest sister told of how he had changed when he returned from overseas. The pre-war young man liked to tell jokes and play childhood pranks. He was known as the life of any party he attended. But after the war he was a much quieter, more reserved man, still likeable—but different.

This topic was originally chosen as a means of learning about what my father, as a soldier with *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* had done during the war. What was not anticipated at the outset is that it would also lead to a much fuller and more enlightened understanding of who my father was, and explain why he remains the most significant influence in my life.

Although my father provided the incentive to embark upon this topic it has been his brother Cameron Highlanders that I have met along the journey, both in print and most assuredly in the flesh, who have inspired me to persevere to the end. For this reason, this work is respectfully dedicated to all the men of the 1st battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, (MG) who served during the early war years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
PREFACE.....	VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VIII
LIST OF TABLES.....	IX
LIST OF MAPS.....	X
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Historiography.....	7
Methodology and Sources.....	16
CHAPTER 1: THE CAMERON MEN.....	27
CHAPTER 2: LIFE AT THE CATTLE CASTLE.....	46
CHAPTER 3: “BABY TAKE DOWN DOWN THE WALLPAPER”.....	73
CHAPTER 4: ICELAND.....	95
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	148
APPENDIX 1: NOMINAL ROLL.....	161
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	169
APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM.....	172
APPENDIX 4: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.....	174
APPENDIX 5: SCALE OF RATIONS.....	175
APPENDIX 6: NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS REPORT.....	177
APPENDIX 7: PHOTOGRAPHS.....	179
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	153
1. Archival Sources	
2. Oral History Interviews	
3. Unpublished Writings	
4. Dissertations	
5. Regimental Histories	
6. Secondary Sources	

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Family History.....	31
TABLE 2: Personal Background.....	35
TABLE 3: Recruitment Results, September 1939.....	38
TABLE 4: Syllabus of Training.....	55
TABLE 5: Officer Profile.....	86
TABLE 6: Troops in Hospital.....	141

LIST OF MAPS

MAP 1: Iceland.....	146
MAP 2: Postings in Iceland.....	147

INTRODUCTION

On September 1, 1939 the momentous telegram ordering Commanding Officer G. H. Rogers to mobilize his regiment was received at the Cartier Square Drill Hall, in Ottawa.¹ That same evening when the call went out to the officers of *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* to join the colors and prepare for war, not a single man abstained.² By the end of September the Camerons had 769 men who had volunteered to fight for 'king and country'. This was two beyond the authorized strength for the unit and notwithstanding that the recruiting campaign had been toned down as the month progressed.

As we look back from the 21st century to this cataclysmic world event of more than sixty years past, we are puzzled and uncomprehending as to why men flocked to recruiting stations, not only in Ottawa but across the breadth of this vast country. Why, with a mere twenty years separating the populace from the horrors and devastation of World War I, would Canadian men so willingly submit, nay even offer themselves to be a part of another world war? Who were these men?³ Where did they hail from, and what were their circumstances? Did their families, in particular their parents, not try and hold them back—protesting that their sons should go to a war not of their making, in a land afar? And was there a reason, specifically, that attracted these young men to the Scottish army regiment known as *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*? What did these eager

¹ The original telegram is on display in the Camerons museum located at the Cartier Square Drill Hall on Laurier Avenue in Ottawa. Also see D.H.H. 145.2C2 003 D1 where it shows that the C.H.of O. were called out on active service under General Order No. 135 of 1939 as part of 2nd Canadian Division. C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army In Canada, Britain and the Pacific*, Vol. 1 Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, 3rd Printing (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1957), 42-45. W.A.B. Douglas, & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 22.

² Richard M. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)* (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1947) 7. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 63, 64.

³ The search to locate a complete list of the names of those who served during this period has taken almost three years to yield results. It seems that for World War II society's interest has been in knowing the names of those who died; whereas, for the Great War it was very important to know who served. Jonathan F.

recruits expect when they so willingly amassed at the Drill Hall and then later Lansdowne Park, their home base in Ottawa? Even when they had a second chance to rethink their commitment, when a second signature was required in late September in order to send men overseas, all willingly recommitted their lives in the service of their country. Why, we ask from the safety and comfort of our present day, in our land of plenty—why did they serve?

No one expects combat service to be an experience a normal human being will enjoy or speak fondly of. As veterans often tell us, no one can fully comprehend in advance what it would be like. But what was the preparatory phase like, before the horrors of combat? In the case under review most men did not engage in actual combat until June of 1944. What were their military lives like prior to action in the field? Was it what they had expected? Does the noteworthy history of World War II begin with the days in Normandy, as the vast array of literature on the North West campaign would suggest, or are there valuable lessons to be learned and deeds to be reflected upon, in the years of pre-combat preparation?⁴

This thesis will consider these questions as they relate to the mobilization period and the first overseas posting for the *1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)*, a machine gun regiment. Each of the two periods under review comprises a period of ten months duration. Mobilization entailed a task that ranged from recruiting and basic training to imbuing the all important regimental allegiance and brotherly commitment among a disparate group of mostly strangers. This mobilization phase took place in

Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1997), 117-119.

⁴ Dr. Vic Weatherall, President of the Association for the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa reflected on this point when he requested that I speak to a group of the present-day militia. He said that it would be beneficial for them to appreciate that World War II did not begin with the Normandy Invasion.

Ottawa, with a brief five-week stay in Camp Borden prior to leaving Canada. On July 1st 1940 the Camerons departed from Halifax for their first posting overseas. They became members of 'Z Force' a Canadian brigade comprising 2653 men who served as part of the British occupation force on the island of Iceland. This battalion would continue in this posting until the end of April 1941, the only Canadians to remain over the winter in this isolated region.⁵

Information on the mobilization of the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II is ample and readily available to interested readers. Historical works on this topic indulge freely in emphasizing Canada's lack of preparedness for war.⁶ What is not so abundantly accessible is an understanding of how the soldiers coped on a daily basis with the shortages and deprivations for every imaginable need. How did these men feel about the circumstances they found themselves in after they had joined?

Of the second ten-month period under consideration, the posting to the island of Iceland in the North Atlantic, almost nothing is known. Although the strategic importance of Iceland is undisputed, the allied occupation of this neutral state in May of 1940 has received a perplexing lack of historical interest. Of the experience for the Canadians who served on this posting we know even less. Only one American historian, Donald F. Bittner has written of the experience to date. His work focuses on the political and military issues and highlights the British perspective.

This thesis research is an attempt to bring forward Canada's involvement in the occupation of Iceland as part of the nation's war history; that the event will not remain as

⁵ The brigade headquarters and the other two battalions, *Les Fusiliers Mont Royal* and *The Royal Regiment of Canada* left Iceland at the end of October 1940.

⁶ What is often not highlighted with the same energy is the reality that other countries, major players such as Britain, France and the United States were as equally unprepared in the early years. In truth the only country that was in a position to undertake a war was Germany.

simply ‘facts of the past’ lost in the annals of history.⁷ The focus of this endeavour is to capture the perspective of those who experienced the events under review. Two sources have made this possible. The war diaries of the Camerons, penned on a daily basis by an officer of the unit, were expressly prepared for the benefit of posterity. These accounts provide a contemporary view of events as they unfolded and represent the on-site leaderships impressions. Implicit in the use of this source is the understanding that the perspective and details recorded reflect the interpretation that the leadership believed to be noteworthy and appropriate.

The second crucial source that will be relied upon is recent oral tape-recorded accounts by men who served at the ground level, primarily soldiers who held the rank of private. It was against military rules to keep a diary during the war and all letters home were censored. With the ending of hostilities men focused on the present and future and on building new lives. Understandably, few contemporary written accounts have been found to indicate what these initial two years were like from the viewpoint of the average Cameron soldier.⁸

Fortunately though, twenty Cameron veterans agreed to taped interviews whereby they reflected upon these events for the benefit of academic and public consideration. Other Camerons, who for a multitude of reasons were unable to contribute to the formal taped interview process, also made important contributions.⁹ The inclusion and

⁷ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), 135.

⁸ Regimental histories do offer pertinent evidence regarding the lives of troops and these will be considered in this account but, as these were written by officers they are viewed in the same light as the war diaries. Also several newspaper articles, excerpts from censored mail received by family members in Ottawa, have been located. They fall under the same category as censored mail.

⁹ Special thanks to Mr. Charles St. Germain, a Cameron veteran who supplied pictures, pieces of poetry and his reflections for this work. Thanks also to family members of deceased Camerons who passed along helpful information and memorabilia. To the many ‘unnamed’ Camerons, a heartfelt *thank you*.

highlighting of the oral history account,¹⁰ recorded sixty years after the event, entails specific and thoughtful consideration. The issues of long-term memory, later life experiences, and existing published historical interpretations have their relative validity and must be addressed. To the degree possible, the objective is to establish an understanding of what 'the facts' were, and to gain an appreciation of how events were understood at the time and on the long term, by the men who were participants in this history.¹¹

While a variety of issues and topics will be discussed, three themes will traverse this work. These include the allegiance to one's regiment, the importance of comradeship to the soldier, and the matter of 'choice' in military service. In a reversal of the typical use of primary sources where government and other official documents supply the critical facts and outline the parameters of the research, in this thesis they will be used as supporting or corroborating evidence to the war diaries and oral history accounts. For the most part references to the official documents will be found in the footnotes section where they will perform an important but 'backstage' function.

Besides the intent of laying claim to an aspect of Canadian military heritage that until now has been unknown, this undertaking offers data in other areas. What these veterans remember about what they experienced and how they have interpreted those experiences over the course of their lives can reveal important insight for present and future military considerations. For unlike technology where the means of conducting

¹⁰ The definition of 'oral history' accepted for this research undertaking is taken from Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, editors, *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), intro ix. "The interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction."

¹¹ Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 67. "Subjectivity is as much the business of history as are the more visible 'facts.' What informants believe is indeed a historical fact, (that is, the fact that they believe it) as much as what really happened."

warfare can change with breathtaking speed, what serves the human spirit—to foster loyalty and respect, dignity and growth, and engender cohesion and unbreakable bonds is timeless.

Considering the war experience of *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* is a case study that in many respects embodies a Canadian story. As the Nation's Capital is a converging point for two primary Canadian cultures this regiment, with its Scottish lineage and *His Majesty King George the VI* as its supreme commander, attracted men from many communities. Cities and towns like Buckingham and Pembroke, Hull and Perth, Wakefield and Sudbury, as well as Ottawa all contributed their finest to the cause. The records show that Protestant and Roman Catholic, Jew and Gentile, French and English, Canadian and American, German born and native bred all served together under the colors of *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*.

This thesis is specifically about examining the early war years for one group of Canadians who served; yet it also offers insight into the value of evidence from representatives of all groups, and from a broad range of sources. Although not envisioned at the outset, this is also a study that reveals the possibilities inherent in tapping the treasures guarded in the human long-term memory bank. Most of all this is a work that clearly demonstrates how the recorded replies from those who participated in the events of war can illuminate, substantiate, and at times offer a corrective to the documents of history. This research suggests this is what is required if we are to improve our understanding of the past and hence impact, in a positive way, upon our present and future military decisions.

Historiography

As is the case with the majority of Canadian military regiments, the only published record specifically related to the Cameron's wartime activities is found in the unit's regimental history. Published in 1947, *The History of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, (M.G.)* was written by Lieutenant-Colonel Richard M. Ross, the commander of the unit at war's end. His work, penned from reference to the company war diaries, summarizes the battalion's experiences from the call to mobilize in September 1939 until the unit was demobilized on December 12th 1945. Of the experience from the individual soldier's perspective, we learn little in this history whose function is dedicated to the portrayal of the unit as a whole. As is explained in the preface, ". . . with some two thousand men passing through the Battalion, it would be difficult to mention many names."¹²

The first chapter, 'Mobilization and Growing Pains' confirms the traditional historical view that emphasizes Canada's lack of preparation for war. The unit was housed at Lansdowne Park in the Horse Coliseum, crowded into accommodation recently vacated by horses, cows and pigs. The lack of equipment and proper clothing is documented along with the tedium of many months where the days were filled with 'grueling route marches and dull routine.' The following chapter 'Life Near the Arctic Circle' relates the unit's ten-month posting in Iceland. It carefully describes where each company was located on the island, states which unit within the British Force they were aligned with, and in a general fashion describes what the duties of the various companies were. This posting is described as being 'dull, monotonous and requiring routine garrison work' of

¹² Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, Preface p. 5. Trying to locate a nominal roll has been one of the most difficult aspects of this work. Finally a list of the men who served was found among the reference papers related to *The Empress of Australia*, the ship that transported the unit to Iceland. See Appendix 1.

the troops. From its reading one has the impression of a situation where the weather, decidedly trying at times, provided the only challenge in an otherwise ‘hum drum existence.’ Iceland would appear to be simply an interlude in the regiment’s travels “on the road to Berlin.”¹³ The chapter concludes with a few lines devoted to each of the three Cameron men who died while serving in Iceland. Their names can also be found on the ‘Roll of Honour’ at the conclusion of the regimental history.

Although there are a considerable number of historical works that reflect on the period of mobilization in Canada, three monographs authored by Colonel C. P. Stacey and published under the authority of the Minister of National Defence continue to form the basis from which Canadians draw their knowledge.¹⁴ Beginning in 1948 with *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*¹⁵ Colonel Stacey offered Canadians what he referred to as an ‘official historical summary.’ This was followed in 1955 with Volume I of the Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War titled, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific*.¹⁶ In 1970 this effort to explain Canada’s policies and contributions during World War II concluded with *Arms Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945*.¹⁷ Colonel Stacey stated that he now believed that “the essentials of the story are here.”¹⁸

The facts related to the mobilization phase have consistently remained the same throughout Colonel Stacey’s writings. Although Canada was somewhat better organized

¹³ Ross, p. 18.

¹⁴ George F. Stanley, *Canada’s Soldiers, The Military History of an Unmilitary People* 3rd edition (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), 359. “This is not the place to tell the story of Canada’s Army in the war of 1939-1945. For the details of this story the reader must search the pages of the Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War.”

¹⁵ C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1948).

¹⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific*, 3rd Printing (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1957).

in September 1939 than she had been at the outset of the Great War, the country was in no way prepared to participate in a world war. The existing small permanent force of 4,261 men and the Non-Permanent Active Militia of an additional 51,480 reserves had safeguarded and nurtured, as best they could during the drought days of the Depression Era, fundamental military knowledge and regimental traditions.¹⁷ From this nucleus the essential *esprit de corps* and individual soldier training were propagated, relatively quickly, throughout the mobilized regiments. And due to the continued high unemployment still prevalent throughout Canada, volunteers were plentiful. Therefore finding men, inducting them into their new military families, and providing basic troop instruction were not the most pressing of Canada's military problems. Far more serious was the complete absence of modern equipment, clothing, and living accommodation for these troops. Without any industrial plans in place to address these requirements, Canada's inability to follow through in any tangible form to her declaration of war against Germany was painfully obvious. As Colonel Stacey's work makes clear, the greatest need was for modern equipment to both train and equip men for war. Without the industrial capacity to address this fundamental requirement Canada could not hope to play a significant role for several years to come.

One recent article considers Canada's early mobilization challenges in relationship to the performance of the Canadian troops sent to Iceland. Entitled "Canadian Militia Mobilization and Deployment for War: The Iceland Experience of 1940" it draws on entries in the war diaries from all three regiments that served on this expedition. As well,

¹⁷ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: the War Policies of Canada 1939-1945* (Ottawa:Queen's Printer, 1970).

¹⁸ Stacey, *Arms*, preface.

¹⁹ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 34. The figure of 4,261 all ranks is from July 1939 and 51,480 all ranks is for Dec. 31, 1938.

it includes personal interview statements and letter extracts from Canadian officers of the three units. Author Donald F. Bittner states that Canada “. . . sent militarily unprepared units overseas. . .” and the problems encountered in Iceland were the result of what occurs “. . . when ill-trained and ill-equipped forces are dispatched abroad into an operational area.” Bittner’s work makes direct references to *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* and offers both evidence and conclusions that invite serious consideration in this thesis undertaking.²⁰

Unlike the historical attention that the mobilization period in Canada’s war period has received, the involvement of Canadian troops in the occupation of Iceland has attracted little interest. With the exception of American historian Donald Bittner, the occupation by the British of the neutral nation in the North Atlantic has not been the subject of significant historical research in any land.²¹ Even in Colonel Stacey’s official histories Iceland has received the briefest of coverage, usually taking up no more than one page of review.²² The emphasis is on the strategic importance of the island with comments related to political and military considerations. The conditions and challenges experienced by the troops may receive as little as a one-line reference.²³

The objective of Colonel Stacey’s official historical accounts was clearly stated in the introduction to his books. In *The Canadian Army 1939-1945* we read that the “main concern must of course be their battles. . .” In the more thorough account published later

²⁰ Donald Bittner, “Canadian Militia Mobilization and Deployment for War: The Iceland Experience of 1940.” *Armed Forces and Society* Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring 1992): 343-361. See chapter 4 on Iceland in this thesis for a comparison with Bittner’s findings. In sum, there is little agreement with Dr. Bittner’s findings.

²¹ Extensive data base searches were undertaken in both *American History and Life* and *Historical Abstracts*.

²² For example, Stacey, *Arms*, pgs. 35 & 41; *The Canadian Army*, pgs, 24, 25.

in 1955 we were told that the object of the work was “to tell the Canadian citizen what his army accomplished in the last war. . .”²⁴ From these statements one could draw the conclusion that the lack of details relating to Iceland results from the fact that no concerted attack by axis powers occurred. The other implication in the lack of coverage is that, perhaps, nothing of note was accomplished during this garrison duty.²⁵

Yet a review of Stacey’s works reveals other war-related ventures involving Canadians that have been allotted more detailed coverage and would appear to be of no greater ‘importance’ than the Iceland duty.²⁶ Nor can the absence of interest in the Iceland posting be explained by a lack of records or oversight on the part of military historians. An extensive and well-documented report prepared in 1949 by Captain J. C. Newlands, a member of Colonel Stacey’s staff, provides detailed coverage and analysis of the Iceland operation. Entitled *Z Force in Iceland: An account of the dispatch of Canadian troops to Iceland and their subsequent operations there*, its 31 pages discusses the disposition, duties and training of the force and comments on a variety of challenges, including troop morale and health concerns. Not surprisingly, other historical works

²³ Stacey, *The Canadian Army*, 25. In *Six Years of War* the Iceland occupation is covered in a total of 3 pages including a one-line reference to the Camerons spending the winter there. They were the only Canadian regiment to do so.

²⁴ Stacey, *The Canadian Army*, preface xi.

²⁵ D.H.H. 145.2C2 (D1) C dated Nov. 27, 1947 on regimental history of the unit. In relation to Iceland the report states simply “Here for 10 months it carried out garrison duties.” A later report dated Oct. 26, 1964 D.H.H. 112.3H1.009 (D119) repeats this scanty reference. Also, D.H.H. 145.2C2 2003 D1.

²⁶ Two examples: The ten day expedition to Spitzbergen in late August and early September of 1941 where approximately 550 Canadians were involved in the demolition or removal of mining facilities from the coal mines. As well, approximately 3000 people were evacuated by the troops. Even the coverage of the duties of several hundred Canadian men who worked on drilling tunnels in the fortress of Gibraltar from late 1940 until the end of 1942 is more fully described than the situation of the 2653 that served in Iceland. See Stacey, *The Canadian Army*, pgs. 35 to 39.

reflecting on Canadian involvement in World War II have not gone beyond Colonel Stacey's assessment.²⁷

As already indicated, the one exception to this dearth of interest in what took place on this solitary island in the North Atlantic during World War II is American historian Donald F. Bittner. Professor Bittner's interest began as a result of his posting to Iceland while serving as a young marine lieutenant in 1964. Beginning in 1974 with his massive 1000 page doctoral thesis,²⁸ followed by numerous articles,²⁹ and then in 1984 by the publication of *The Lion and the White Falcon: Britain and Iceland in the World War II Era*,³⁰ Dr Bittner has researched and written extensively on this topic. His research efforts in Great Britain, the United States and Canada provided the foundation from which this present thesis was able to proceed.

The scope of Bittner's work is far broader than the present undertaking. Written from the perspective of the British, Professor Bittner's focus is on the military and political considerations that initiated the occupation and then resulted in Britain's ongoing commitment to the operation. The conditions and challenges faced by troops are also addressed from a number of perspectives. Included in his writings is a review of the Canadian contribution on this assignment.

Much of Bittner's attention regarding Canada's contribution addresses the political and military context that resulted in the sending of a Canadian brigade to serve on the

²⁷ For example, J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War, 1939-1945*. W.A.B. Douglas & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977).

²⁸ Donald F. Bittner, "The British Occupation Of Iceland, 1940-1942," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1974).

²⁹ Donald F. Bittner, "The British Occupation of Iceland, 1940-1946," *The Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 103 1 (Oct. 1972): 81-90; "A Final appraisal of the British Occupation of Iceland, 1940-42," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* [Great Britain] 120 4 (1975): 45-53; "A Maple Leaf in the North Atlantic: Canada and the Defence of Iceland, 1940," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* (Autumn 1977): 48-53, 57.

isle. Prime Minister King's stated policy of doing all Canada could to assist Britain explains why the Canadian Dominion initially agreed to assist in the occupation. Within a period of one month, the initial commitment of several battalions grew to a request for all of Second Division, with the further suggestion that Canada assume complete responsibility for the garrison assignment. According to Bittner, Canada then refused to honour her previous commitment to Iceland. The upheaval caused by the war events in June of 1940 resulted in the Canadian government's priority switching to internal security and defense of its own borders. The eagerness of the Canadian military to establish a Canadian Corps as quickly as possible was also a contributing factor. Bittner concludes that Winston Churchill himself intervened in the controversy; with the result that London relented and opted, instead, to request of Canada a much smaller, temporary, force. Bittner assumes that Churchill's action avoided a major rift between Great Britain and her Commonwealth Ally.

Although in Bittner's writings the references to challenges faced by troops are usually made in relation to British troops, in fact, many of Bittner's examples are drawn from Canadian records. Canadian war records were far more accessible in the early 1970s when the bulk of Bittner's research was conducted. As troop morale is cited as a principal concern during both the British and American phases of the occupation, the challenges of arranging for living accommodation and conducting work duties, training, and recreational activities are discussed in some detail. Bittner concludes that the excellent leadership, sound discipline, and the character of the British soldier were responsible for the high morale and positive attitude that the men were able to maintain. This is pointed out in stark contrast to the situation that resulted once the American

³⁰ Donald F. Bittner, *The Lion and the White Falcon: Britain and Iceland in the World War Era* (Hamden,

troops took over. For British soldiers this posting is assessed as having been instrumental in developing personal discipline, maturity, unit cohesiveness, solidarity and in general, having thus prepared soldiers for combat.

On the other hand, the theme that appears regularly throughout all of Bittner's writings in relation to Canada's contribution is how ill-prepared and untrained the Canadian soldiers sent to Iceland were. On the topic of Canadian morale, once again Bittner cites strong leadership and discipline as having been responsible for an equally positive experience.

Other writings that have illuminated this research include an array of articles written about the occupation, several doctoral thesis that reflect on the American phase of the undertaking, and a selection of British and Canadian regimental histories that comment on the experience of other units that served on this assignment. For example, two articles that address the conditions that existed for troops were written by the British Chief of Staff of the Iceland Defence Force, Major General Davis³¹ and Lieutenant Colonel John L. Zimmerman of the United States Marine Corps Reserve, respectively.³² An insightful work penned by the British War Correspondent, Eric Linklater, draws from contemporary interviews and personal observations to describe the challenges for troops in Iceland. Of particular note are his reflections regarding why the troops persevered on this assignment.³³ A 1979 article by Ernest Watkins reviews the events of the occupation and

Connecticut: Archon Books, 1983).

³¹ Major-General H. L. Davies, "Iceland Key to the North Atlantic," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 101 602 (1956): 230-234.

³² Lieutenant Colonel John L. Zimmerman, "Force in Readiness," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 83 2 (1957): 165-171.

³³ Eric Linklater, *The Northern Garrisons: the Army at War* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1941).

reflects on British political and military considerations involved in the decision to occupy the neutral and sovereign nation.³⁴

Included in the assessment for this thesis for the purposes of comparison as well as providing contextual understanding, are a number of articles that consider the American phase of the occupation. These address the issues of neutrality; both that of Iceland and that of the United States. Points of interest are America's right and ability to assume command in July of 1941 and the long-term implications and ramifications that have ensued for the nation of Iceland. This background is helpful in providing an understanding of the Icelanders attitudes towards their occupiers during 1940 and 1941.³⁵

A doctoral thesis entitled "The United States Occupation of Iceland 1941-1946" has been useful in outlining the American military concerns and problems resulting from their assumption of the occupation duties beginning in mid 1941. Written in 1966 by John J. Hunt with the support and assistance of such prominent historians as Dr. Stetson Conn and Dr. Byron Fairchild, this thesis states that troop morale was the most serious problem of the American occupation. Hunt's thesis also discusses the strategic importance of the island, the level of perceived risk of invasion, and the likelihood of German success if Hitler had decided to launch an attack.³⁶ Other articles consider the history of the island with particular reference to the topics of neutrality and independence, from the Icelandic perspective.³⁷

³⁴ Ernest Watkins, "The Invasion of Iceland," *The Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 109 4 (Oct. 1970): 457-466.

³⁵ Michael T. Corgan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the American Occupation of Iceland," *Naval War College Review* 45 4 (1992): 34-54; Peter H. Krosby, "The United States and the Nordic Countries, 1940-1945," *Revue Internationale D'Histoire Militaire* 53 (1982): 125-148.

³⁶ Joseph J. Hunt "The United States Occupation of Iceland 1941-1946," (Ph. D. diss., Georgetown Univ., 1966).

³⁷ Jensdottir Solrun B. Hardarson, "The 'Republic of Iceland' 1940-44: Anglo-American Attitudes and Influences," *Contemporary History* 9 4 (1974): 27-56; Sigurdur A. Magnusson, "Iceland and the American Presence," *Queen's Quarterly* 85 1 (1978): 79-85; *Iceland in a Nutshell* (Isafoldarprentsmidja HR. 1943).

The one point of convergence for all the authors who have written on the topic of the occupation is the strategic importance of the island. Its crucial significance to the eventual allied success in the war is cited as being so obvious that it is sometimes given as the reason for the lack of historical analysis regarding Iceland.

Sources and Methodology

As indicated in the preface, this research began with a daughter's interest in her father's war experience. As the only available published source on the unit was their regimental history, this quest quickly led to the primary sources held at the National Archives of Canada, in Ottawa. And it was there, as this researcher sat ensconced within the pages of the battalion's war diaries, that the questions, the parameters, and the approach to this subject were developed. Over the course of many hours and days during the summer of 1998 the entries recorded sixty years past were considered and noted. As the pleasant summer days passed a world previously unknown to this researcher took form and came to life. Within the diary pages were revealed an existence based on order and rank, discipline and duty; a lifestyle where every period of the day was planned and accounted for, as was every man who made up the multitude who had joined the colours of the Cameron Highlanders. The daily routine of training and drill, inspections and guard duty, recreation and leisure, along with the associated rules and regulations—even hopes and concerns are found noted with care.

When the more ambitious plan to consider all of the battalion's World War II experience was reluctantly set aside for a more realistic and feasible Master's undertaking, the present study was decided upon. Both the time period under review, September 1939 until May of 1941, and the decision to conduct and highlight the oral

history interviews came as a result of the following diary notation. Penned on April 1, 1941 by the adjutant who was writing from battalion headquarters in 'Bytown Camp, Iceland' it reads:

The nicer weather lately is having a good effect on the morale of the men. It was not until the weather improved that we realized just how the short dark days had depressed everybody to a rather serious level. It is to the credit of every man in the unit that the last five months have been safely negotiated without any more serious trouble than was experienced. The trying conditions were such as can never be appreciated except by those who have gone through the trials and tribulation of the past nine months.³⁸

Written less than one month prior to the regiment's departure from Iceland, the adjutant was most likely fully aware of the impending departure date. Previous diary entries had made reference to the challenges, in particular those of weather and terrain that the island presented to all of its inhabitants. Also noted in brief one-line comments were statements regarding the deaths of three men of the unit.

Yet, the adjutant's notation implied much more than the sum of the daily entries. Added to the sense that the Iceland posting was more complex than the daily entries would lead one to understand, was the reaction of some Cameron veterans when the topic was raised.³⁹ The mention of the word 'Iceland' often evoked shrugs and facial expressions that implied an 'unknowable' and 'unexplainable' experience.

For these reasons Iceland was chosen as the focal point of the present undertaking, with the prior mobilization phase serving as the contextual background to this first overseas posting. And again, because of the adjutant's counsel that "the trying conditions were such as can never be appreciated except by those who have been through the trials and tribulations of the past nine months" the decision was made to go directly to men

³⁸ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, April 1, 1941.

who had served on this assignment. The obvious medium was the 'oral history interview.'⁴⁰

Invariably on the first telephone contact veterans expressed concerns regarding their memory and knowledge of the topic. They would remind me of their advanced age, the number of years that had passed since the war, and on occasion, their opinion that they were not as knowledgeable as others on the topic. They would often suggest other veterans, often one who had held a higher rank, as being a more suitable interview candidate. Again on the day prior to the interview beginning, the veteran would reiterate that he had concerns regarding his ability to advance my work but 'he would try and answer my questions.'

Every one of these twenty interviews was successful in that each increased the research base and added valuable insight into the topic. At the close of these interviews men would often express their own surprise at how much they had remembered, at the details that had 'come to mind.' When a copy of the written transcript was presented recently to one veteran he expressed genuine disbelief that he had actually had that much to say.

The experience of this case study confirms much of what the vast literature on the topic of oral history claims. Advanced age and the passage of even sixty years was not a grave impediment to memory recall for the types of information collected in this study.⁴¹

³⁹ Throughout the fall and winter of 1998/1999 I attended the monthly association meetings for the Cameron Highlander of Ottawa held at the Cartier Square Drill Hall. This is where I first noted the reaction, often more in body language than expressed words, of Iceland veterans.

⁴⁰ Nigel Cross and Rhiannon Barker "The Sahol Oral History Project," in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, editors *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1977) 246; "Oral history is both a methodology and an academic discipline."

⁴¹ Celia Hitch, *Conducting an Oral History Interview: Approaching Ontario's Past, No. 7* (Willowdale, Ontario: The Ontario Historical Society, 1988) p. 3. "...Psychologists largely agree that the human memory can easily recall something that happened many years ago—as long as it was a continual or repetitious act. Often habitual acts of 60 years ago can be better remembered than one-time acts of a year ago." Valerie

In this undertaking the objective was to obtain an understanding of how men perceived their situation and how they functioned in an unusual circumstance.⁴² And although verifying dates and numerical facts was not the purpose of the interview, it was astounding how many of the men had excellent recall of just such details.⁴³ When surprise regarding this recall was intimated by the interviewer the veteran sometimes explained how he had been ‘thinking over’ his early war years, trying to bring it forward in his mind in preparation for our discussion.⁴⁴

The concerns of bias and retrospective evidence are also valid issues to be addressed. One of the greatest advantages of a senior interviewee is their candor and honesty. The importance of honest reflection appears to be more relevant as we age. Historian Valerie Yow explains this reality:

Near the end of a life, there is a need to look at things as honestly as possible, to make sense of experiences over a lifetime: This need strongly competes with the need to make oneself look good.⁴⁵

Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc. 1994) 20, 21. Characteristics of events that lead to well-recalled personal memories are uniqueness, consequentiality, unexpectedness, emotional provocation, events that are important to survival and single incidents that affected a life. Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 21. “Memory has always proven difficult for historians to confront, committed as they are to notions of objectivity....” Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 117. See Interview with George Fouchard, Jan. 14th 2000, trans. pgs. 38, 39, 49 for references to recall of details from the distant past. Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, trans. p. 23, “I can still see him sitting on the bunk playing it and we’d be all listening around you know.”⁴² Yow, 4. “The seeking and recording in some manner of answers to questions in an effort to understand is the oldest kind of research.” For the benefit of researchers interested in the oral history methodology embraced in this case study see Yow pgs. 1-10. It falls under the definition of the qualitative method as described by Yow. The term ‘grounded theory’ applies in that the hypothesis in this study was not formed at the outset but rather the research itself led to the conclusions. As well, a larger number of testimonies involving a greater variety in detail and contrasting opinions were collected and considered, rather than a single testimony. This is what is defined by Yow as a ‘thick description.’

⁴³ Bill McNeil, *Voices of a War Remembered: An Oral history of Canadians in World War Two* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1991), xi. As stated by author McNeil, “I was tremendously impressed by their recall of events half a century ago right down to the tiniest detail.”

⁴⁴ Interview with George Fouchard, trans. p. 48 “Of course I’ve been doing a lot of thinking since I talked to you first, to bring back some of these memories.”

⁴⁵ Yow, 18.

No doubt the first two years of their war duties has on occasion come to mind for the men interviewed. But the lack of historical interest in Iceland, coupled with the absence of knowledge on the island by people in general, has denied these men much opportunity for discussion and review of their time there. Hence, their reflections and opinions are not affected by literature or public review, as may be the case with their later and better-known war experiences.⁴⁶ It became obvious during the course of these interviews that for most, their early war experiences had not been discussed in many years. One veteran who declined an interview did concede that among his comrades, 'the men who served in Iceland never even discussed the topic among themselves.'

Anyone who embarks upon an oral history project must at some point decide what the saturation point is; the number of interviews that will constitute a sufficient base of evidence to advance conclusions. According to Historian Yow when the material begins to be repetitive, usually somewhere between 20 to 30 interviews, one can be assured of its validity.⁴⁷ Again this case supported the literature. Although an attempt was made to halt the research and begin the writing aspect of this work after fourteen interviews, it was found that there were still too many unanswered questions. With the completion of another six interviews this sense of an unacceptable void no longer existed.

Conducting the oral history interviews has been the most rewarding and satisfying aspect of this endeavour. Yet the process of seeking out sources, preparing to interview, conducting the interviews, and then documenting and analyzing the evidence is demanding and not to be undertaken lightly.⁴⁸ It is extremely time-consuming, requires

⁴⁶ These veterans were all involved in the Normandy Campaign and the fighting in well-known battles such as the closing of the Falaise Gap and the battle of the Scheldt.

⁴⁷ Yow, 48.

⁴⁸ Prior to beginning these interviews I consulted with the Oral History specialist in the Department of History, Professor Nicole St. Onge. I also read extensively on the topic. To further enhance my knowledge and skill I took a course entitled 'Oral History Methodologies' and conducted a micro research project.

extensive prior preparation as well as follow-up, and is a skill that is only acquired with practice and dedication over time.⁴⁹

For the present undertaking twenty-one veterans agreed to the formal taped interview process, and twenty have been used in this work. One of these men had not joined the Camerons until after Iceland and therefore, although valuable for comparative purposes, his remarks do not reflect directly on the period under assessment.⁵⁰ A number of other veterans did agree to meet and discuss the topic but were not comfortable with the aspect of being recorded. Although these unrecorded sessions were most helpful in advancing an understanding of the issues under review, specific comments and details from these discussions are not included in this thesis.⁵¹

The tapes have not been edited in any respect.⁵² To date five completed paper transcripts have been prepared, committing to paper the expressive sounds and words found on the tape recordings.⁵³ The questions asked during these interviews were

Titled "World War Two: The Story of Three Wives Who Waited for their Soldier-Husbands to Return" it added to my general understanding and sensitivity for the present work. This paper is available through the History Department at the University of Ottawa. For information contact Professor N. St Onge. As well I met with other researchers who had particular expertise with this methodology. Special thanks for their interest and advise on this matter to Dr. Steven High, and to doctoral candidates Kimberly Berry, Cynthia Toman and Ivana Caccia. Robert Perks, and Alistair Thomson, editors, *The Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 40, 47, 49. An article in this edited work by Ronald J. Grele, *Movement Without Aim: Methodological & Theoretical Problems in Oral History* states, "In many projects, much too little time is devoted to the research necessary to prepare for an interview."

⁴⁹ Robert Perks, and Alistair Thomson, editors, *The Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Routledge, 1997) Two writings within this edited work address this issue: "On Oral History Interviewing" by Charles R. Morrissey and "Learning to Listen" by Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack.

⁵⁰ Interview with Mr. George Banning conducted on June 9th 1999 at the Perley Rideau Veterans' Hospital. This tape will be filed with the other interviews conducted for this project.

⁵¹ The veterans who did not go through the taped interview were not asked to sign a consent form. Others who did accept to be recorded did ask, at times, that the tape recorder be turned off before they divulged certain information. Only the information recorded on tape has been used in the present review.

⁵² A complete reproduction of all words and sounds found during an interview may surprise someone who is not accustomed to reading transcripts. They appear at times to be wordy, and may contain many sentence fragments, only partially explained thoughts, and what may appear to be poorly verbalized ideas. In order to address the concerns of bias and context it is important that every detail be noted in written reproductions of the oral interview. Also the character and beauty of verbal communication is found within the delivery and expression, 'such as it is.'

⁵³ If both a tape and a transcript are available both will be noted showing the page reference in the transcript. Otherwise only the name of the individual interviewed will be shown.

decided upon as a result of reading the war diaries; either to fill in gaps in information or to confirm and compare the views expressed by the officer group that the war diaries represent, with those of the troops. [Appendix 2] The question often considered was, 'would the men see the situation the same way as their officers had?'

Prior to contacting veterans, approval was sought from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa, on the proposed list of questions and the approach to be used. As the interviews continued into a second year of research, an extension was also requested and received, this time from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board. It was through contact with *The Association for The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* that possible candidates for this research were identified. Most helpful in this cause was an association membership list that included addresses and telephone numbers that I was allowed to use. From this list I compared names to a 1940's voting list that I had discovered in the war diaries. Through this process a possible list of candidates was compiled. On their own initiative the Association also ran a notice in their monthly newsletter advising their membership of my work. One veteran initiated the contact because of this notice.⁵⁴ Only one of the individuals interviewed was not on the association's membership list.⁵⁵ Although the remaining nineteen receive the monthly newsletter not all are active in the association.

The initial contact was made via the telephone. If the individual had served in Iceland and was willing to consider the request for an interview, they were mailed a consent form, outlining the research and conditions, [see Appendix 3], a brief outline of the proposed topics for discussion, [see Appendix 4] and the letter of approval from the

⁵⁴ Mr. George Fouchard telephoned me directly as a result of reading the notice in the Association newsletter.

⁵⁵ This is Mr. Esmond Acton from Kirkland Lake. He is the President of the Legion in that location.

Ethics Committee. Approximately one week later a second call was made to inquire if the veteran had any questions and if they were agreeable to a taped interview. If so, then a convenient appointment time was arranged. All interviews were conducted at the veteran's residence. Usually they were alone. In one instance a joint interview was held where two veterans told their stories in tandem.⁵⁶

A review of the consent form highlights some of the ethical issues that were considered in this aspect of the research. It was important that the veterans feel comfortable to decline to answer any question or to withdraw from the process at any point. This is pointed out on the form and was reviewed prior to the commencement of the interview. As the average age of the men interviewed was eighty, health risks due to fatigue or stress were a primary concern. For this reason in a number of cases short interview segments were conducted over a number of appointments.⁵⁷ The average interview ran approximately one and one-half hours. All interviewees opted for disclosure; therefore their names will be used in conjunction with their remarks where this is deemed appropriate. Also every veteran agreed to copies of the tapes being deposited for future reference. As follow up to the interview, messages of thanks were sent and if pictures⁵⁸ or mementoes had been borrowed for reproduction, these were returned. At the completion of this thesis undertaking each participant will be advised and if interested, arrangements will be made whereby they may view the final product.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mr. Esmond Acton and Mr. Ray Hamilton of Kirkland Lake on Nov. 13th 2000.

⁵⁷ For example in the case of Mr. Marcel Guevin, the interview was shortened and conducted in approximately two twenty-minute segments.

⁵⁸ A collection of over 100 pictures has been collected as a result of these interviews and the kindness of the veterans. Held in the author's possession, a negative and a picture have been made of each and will also be deposited with the tapes and transcripts. These are of archival quality.

The role of the researcher during the interview process is also one that must be examined in weighing the evidence brought forward. By the design of the questions,⁵⁹ the order of their presentation, and the tone and manner in which the interview is conducted the mark of the interviewer is evident and influential.⁶⁰ In this thesis the process was viewed as a partnership and a sharing of information. The researcher was in all respects 'the student' seeking knowledge from those who had the experience and wisdom to inform the historical undertaking. In this partnership the researcher shared her background and her interest in the topic. The gaps that existed in her research were defined by the questions asked. The veterans had the opportunity of contributing information to fill those gaps. They also were encouraged to advance any points of interest they felt inclined to share; issues that they felt had been overlooked or not properly addressed. Also, several veterans had comments related to other aspects of the war that they took the opportunity to review.⁶¹ As the tape recorder was usually left running past the formal aspect of the interview, a fuller appreciation of the tone and context of each meeting is available for review. Often the photograph collection of the veteran was reviewed during this time. In one case, the questions regarding consent and final disposition of the tape recordings are discussed.⁶²

The war diaries are the second of the two principal sources consulted in this endeavour. They are pivotal in several respects. Written during the period under

⁵⁹ I am the daughter of a Cameron veteran (deceased) and I have two sons in their twenties. These questions are the ones that as a daughter and as a mother I would want to ask. This reality cannot be separated from this research endeavour.

⁶⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1991), pgs. 30-32. On page 30 we read, "the roles of observer and observed are more fluid than it might appear at first glance."

⁶¹ For example Mr. Harry David took the opportunity to describe the heroism of Lieutenant R. Ashman during the Normandy invasion. Although Mr. Ashman was decorated for his valor by the French government, our country has yet to acknowledge his deeds. Mr. David wanted this recorded for posterity.

⁶² See interview with G. Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript pgs. 44, 45, 49, 50, 51.

consideration they represent the contemporary understanding of events—written without the benefit of hindsight. Through them one gains an appreciation of what were viewed as the military priorities, and what were seen as the most appropriate and expedient solutions to the problems faced on a day-by-day basis. War diaries were written by an officer of the unit, usually the adjutant, and approved by his Commanding Officer. As such they represent the views of the leadership at the battalion level.

The purpose of the war diary is explicitly spelled out on the front and back cover of the file folders in which these accounts are held. They are described as a secret document that performs the function of the historical record, while a unit is on active service. Three principal objectives are cited for their maintenance: first, to supply authentic material for the history of the unit; second, to furnish a historical record of operations; and third, to provide data upon which to base improvements in training, equipment, organization and administration. Within the folder covers of a war diary one may discover anything from routine orders, reports, dispatches, maps, the employment and operations of the unit, to pictures, poetry, menus and anything else which the unit leadership felt would be of historical value. Most important in these diaries are the daily entries written in paragraph form highlighting the thoughts and concerns of the officer penning the report. Item 9 of the instructions states that “a good war diary makes possible the accurate and detailed reconstruction of circumstances, conditions and actions.”⁶³

Besides the interviews and the war diaries many other primary documents have been consulted in this research. These include the War Diaries of the Canadian Brigade, ‘Z Force’ which covers the period from June through to November of 1940; the daily Journal of Brigadier L. F. Page, Commander of Z Force; reports pertaining to the

⁶³ See the instructions on the front and back cover of the manila folders that hold the war diaries.

Auxiliary Services organizations in Iceland; military files held by the Directorate of History and Heritage; records found at the National Archives of Canada in the RG 24 and RG 25 groups, the Department of National Defence Documents; as well as relevant documents found in the files of the Department of External Affairs.

Pictures have been used as both a memory refresher and as an aid to a visual reconstruction of events under review. Veterans generously loaned their pictures in order that copies could be prepared. Mr. Bill Roud who passed away in August 1999 bequeathed his photographs on Iceland for the benefit of this work. A collection of over 100 excellent photographs now exists, to accompany this effort. [Sample, Appendix 7] Also, newspaper research has aided in providing a cultural reconstruction of this period in Canada, and particularly in Ottawa. And finally ten personal files of soldiers of this regiment have been reviewed. Together, these sources present the early war years of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG).

CHAPTER 1

THE CAMERON MEN

The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa is a well-known and long-established infantry regiment whose roots spread far out into the valley communities surrounding the nation's capital city. The regiment's history as a loyal protector of freedom and democracy begins as far back as 1861 when a number of militia companies were organized as a result of *The Trent Affair*; the diplomatic altercation between Great Britain and the United States that led many to believe that war seemed probable. Five years later the concern regarding Fenian raids across the Canada-U.S. border prompted the amalgamation of nine valley infantry companies resulting in the formation of the 43rd *Carleton Battalion of Infantry*.⁶⁴ In 1867 the 43rd then popularly known as '*the Carleton Blazers*,' provided the guard of honor for the opening of the first parliament of the new Dominion of Canada. This began a long tradition whereby this colorful regiment has often served in similar public and prestigious functions. For example, a number of the men interviewed mentioned having participated in the guard of honor for His Majesty King George VI and Queen Elizabeth when they visited Ottawa in May of 1939.⁶⁵

Throughout the regiments history there have been numerous name changes and with each the accomplishments of the disbanded unit have been passed on, adding to the luster and heritage of its successor.⁶⁶ For instance, in 1899 men from what was then '*the Ottawa and Carleton Battalion of Rifles*' served in the regiment's first overseas posting, the Boer War. In 1914 the 43rd contributed soldiers to the 2nd Battalion, Canadian

⁶⁴ Major Michael Mitchell, *Ducimus: The Regiments of the Canadian Infantry* (Canada: The Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment, 1992), 148-150.

⁶⁵ See interviews of G. Brown June 3rd 1999, R. Rowley June 20th 2000, J. McManus June 22nd 1999 and H. David June 15th 1999.

⁶⁶ D.H.H. 145.2C2 003 D1; D.H.H. 145.2C2 (D1) C; D.H.H. 112.3H1.009 (D119).

Expeditionary Force and then recruited for the 38th and 207th Battalions. The 38th in particular was recognized as one of the famous battalions of World War I.⁶⁷

Between the wars the unit reverted to militia status and it was during this period that it became a Highland (kilted) Unit; in September 1922 being designated ‘*the Ottawa Highlanders*’ and then in August of 1933 ‘*the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*.’ These name changes symbolized the unit’s new alliance with *the Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders* of the British Army.⁶⁸ In 1936 the regiment amalgamated with B Company, 4th machine gun battalion of the Canadian Army Corps to become *the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.)*, the title the 1st battalion carried throughout World War II.⁶⁹

On July 27th 1945 a proud hometown newspaper, *The Ottawa Journal* reported “that the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.) fought in every operation carried out by 3rd Canadian Infantry Division between D-Day and V-E Day.”⁷⁰ The unit’s battle honors include such famous names as the Normandy Landing, (the Camerons being the only Ottawa regiment to participate in Operation Overlord), the Breskens Pocket, the Falaise Gap and the Scheldt Estuary. Through these campaigns the 1st Battalion proudly wore the motto of the City of Ottawa, *Advance*, a privilege initially granted to one of its lineage back in 1882. In May of 1969 the regiment was accorded the privilege of *Freedom of the City of Ottawa*. More recently, on June 6th of 1998, mayor Jim Watson bestowed a

⁶⁷ D.H.H. 145.2C2(D1)C for example the 38th saw action on the Somme in 1916, at Vimy, Hill 70 and Passchendaele in 1917, and Amiens, the Valenciennes and on the Sambre. “One of the Battalion’s hardest-fought engagements was the attack and capture of Desire Trench on 18 Nov. 1916, commemorated by the Battle Honour, Ancre, 1916.”

⁶⁸ Mitchell, 150. Richard Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)* (Ottawa:Runge Press, 1947) 10.

⁶⁹ The 1st battalion is the unit under review in this study. The regiment also formed the 2nd Battalion (Reserve) in 1940 and in 1945 the 3rd Battalion was organized and sent to Germany as part of the occupation forces. See Mitchell, 150.

⁷⁰ D.H.H 145.2C2 003 D1

special honor on the regiment declaring, “for over a century of service in peace, war and natural disasters, *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* are hereby recognized as Ottawa’s Regiment.”⁷¹

We now turn from the history of the regiment to the background of the men who volunteered to serve with this unit in 1939; the first of the three principal questions under consideration. Who were the men who joined the ranks of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa in the early war years?⁷² Through the voices of twenty veterans a picture of the family background and circumstances of the individual soldier is revealed. Although no two life histories are identical and each is deserving of particular consideration,⁷³ there are similarities and comparisons that when drawn out can benefit our understanding of the past. With this goal in mind this thesis will consider the histories of these twenty men on both an individual, as well as a composite level.

Of the twenty men interviewed, thirteen were born in Ottawa or one of its valley communities.⁷⁴ Two of the twenty were born outside of Canada, in England. In fact Fred Smith, born in Leeds England, immigrated on his own to Canada at the age of fourteen. By the outbreak of war fourteen of these men were living in Ottawa, with the remaining 6 traveling from Ontario communities as distant as Kirkland Lake and Sudbury to join the

⁷¹ City of Ottawa; display in the foyer of City Hall on Sussex Drive, during the summer of 1998. This was also highlighted in a brochure prepared by the city.

⁷² For a complete list of the names of the men who sailed to Iceland on July 1st 1940 see Appendix 1; also the war diary RG 24, Vol. 15,022 Feb. 29th 1940 contains a nominal role for the federal election in March of that year. Note that this second source is missing some names.

⁷³ This is the reason why the individual oral recorded testimony deposited in archives for future research consideration is so valuable.

⁷⁴ See table 1 for details. In summary, 10 were born in Ottawa, and 1 each in the communities of Renfrew, Perth, and Aylmer (Quebec).

cause.⁷⁵ When they enlisted for war service all but two were single and without dependants.⁷⁶ Sixteen of the twenty were residing with either their nuclear families or their spouses when they volunteered.⁷⁷

When considering the family makeup and the occupations of the parents of these men, we find that a broad cross section of Canadian society is represented. [Table 1] Their nuclear families ranged from the traditional two-parent family with as many as a dozen children, to guardian situations where one relative brought up a single child. Although more than half of the men still resided at home with both of their birth parents at the time that they volunteered, five of the twenty left widowed mothers.⁷⁸ In the case of five of these families two sons joined the ranks of the Camerons in 1939. Robert Young's widowed mother would eventually see a third son leave to become a Cameron Highlander of Ottawa.⁷⁹

The types of employment engaged in by parents and guardians reflect the tenor of the era and the circumstances of the region. For example, Graham Brown's father was a long-time employee of the Federal Civil Service in Ottawa.⁸⁰ Fred Hick's widowed mother supported her family by working as a cook at the snack bar in Woolworth's on

⁷⁵ E. Acton – Kirkland Lake; R. Hamilton – Sudbury; F. Davis – Carp; G. Latendresse – Renfrew, in June of 1940; G. West – Carleton Place; R. Young – Perth.

⁷⁶ R. Rowley had been married for several years and had an infant daughter. S. Joynt who had married in 1938 did not have children when he joined. His wife delivered their first child, a girl, shortly after he arrived in Iceland.

⁷⁷ M. Guevin and F. Smith resided on the Ottawa valley farms where they were employed as farm labourers. R. Hamilton shared an apartment with his brother in Sudbury where they were both employed and L. Lacroix was working and living in Three Rivers, Quebec.

⁷⁸ Two of the five were already married. R. Rowley and his only sibling both joined leaving not only their spouses, but their widowed mother. (John Rowley was killed in March of 1945). Stan Joynt, also married, left his widowed aunt who had raised him. It is most likely that the single men would have assigned the stipend \$20. per month which privates were allowed to have forwarded from their pay to their dependent home provider. For instance Fred Hicks mentions assigning this to his mother, but then like many he later married while he was in England. Mothers would then lose their support.

⁷⁹ George Fouchard and his brother Thomas; Louis Lacroix and his brother Arthur (who was later killed in North Africa); George West and his brother Wilfred; R. Rowley and his brother John (killed in Bienen, Germany); and Robert Young and his brothers Elwin and later Ogie.

Sparks Street. George Latendresse's father was employed in the O'Brien Woolen Mill in Renfrew. George Fouchard's father supported his large household working as a stationery engineer in Ottawa.

Table 1 Family History

Name	Date of Birth	Birth Place	Nuclear Family	Position in Family	Parents Occupations
Esmond George Acton	May 17, 1921	Jolicoeur, New Brunswick	Parents 4 Boys, 1 Girl	Youngest	Father: United Church Minister Mother: at home
Graham Ayton Brown	Jan. 10, 1921	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 1 Boy	Only Child	Father: Civil Servant Mother: at home
Harry Joseph David	Oct. 19, 1919	Cochrane, Ontario	Mother Father in U.S. 4 Boys, 1 Girl	2 nd Youngest	Mother: Cleaned houses
Thomas Hamnet Franklin Davis	May 20, 1919	Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan	Parents Aunt & Uncle 1 Boy	Only Child	Father & Mother Farmers
Allan Featherston-Haugh	Aug. 25, 1919	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 4 Boys	Oldest	Father: Ketchum Mfg. Mother: at home
George Fouchard	Jan. 01, 1922	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents Grandmother 3 Boys, 6 Girls	Middle	Father: Stationary Eng. Mother: at home
Louis Napoleon Guertin	May 22, 1921	Aylmer, Quebec	Parents 9 Boys, 2 Girls [girls died]	5 th Child	Father: Messenger House of Commons Mother: at home
Marcel Guevin	Feb. 19, 1920	Montreal, Quebec	Father Stepmother 3 step-siblings	Youngest	Father: Roofer Stepmother: Employed
Wellington Raymond Hamilton	Oct. 14, 1921	Barrie, Ontario	Father Stepmother 6 Boys, 1 Girl 3 step-siblings	Youngest	Father: Railroader C.P.R.
Frederick G. Hicks	Feb. 17, 1921	Clarkstown, Ottawa, Ontario	Mother Father[deceased] 1 Boy, 1 Girl	Youngest	Mother:Cook [Father:Sulphite Cook J.R.Booth]
Stanley Joynt	April 9, 1913	Ottawa, Ontario	Aunt 1 Boy	Only Child	Aunt: Dress-maker, Eatons
Louis George Lacroix	April 28, 1918	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 5 Boys, 3 Girls	Second Oldest	Father: Splicing Foreman/Bell Mother: at home

⁸⁰ At the close of World War I his father was sent back to Canada in charge of documents being sent to Ottawa. As a result of this task he was offered employment in the Federal Civil Service.

George John Latendresse	Mar. 26, 1921	Renfrew, Ontario	Parents 6 Boys, 6 Girls	Middle	Father: Woolen Mill Mother: at home
John James McManus	Dec. 21, 1921	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 10 Children	2 nd Oldest	Father: Bell Telephone Mother: at home
Albert Daniel Nolan	Feb. 26, 1917	Lebreton Flats, Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 1 Boy, 4 Girls [1 girl deceased]	Oldest [of living children]	Father: Canadian Transfer Mother: at home
Allan Quinn	Nov. 27, 1916	Ottawa, Ontario	Parents 5 Boys, 1 Girl	2 nd Oldest	Parents: Fish Shop
Roger Rowley	June 12, 1914	Ottawa, Ontario	Mother Father[deceased] 2 Boys	Youngest	[Father: Pres. E. B. Eddy] Mother: Charity Efforts
Fred Smith	Jan. 17, 1915	Leeds, England	Father, Uncle [In England]	Raised as only Child	Father: looked After boilers
George West	Feb. 11, 1917	England	Parents 7 Boys, 5 Girls	One of Youngest	Father: Shoemaker Mother: at home
Robert William Young	May 27, 1918	Perth, Ontario	Mother: Father[deceased] 13 Children [not all survived]	Number 5	[Father: Shoe Factory] Mother: at home

Note: Square brackets indicate parent was deceased at time of enlistment.

When considering the background of the men themselves, the subjects of education and employment offer an appreciation of their worldly knowledge. At the time that they volunteered these men ranged in age from seventeen years to twenty-six years, with fourteen of the men being under the age of twenty-two.⁸¹ On average, they had acquired an elementary school education with perhaps a year or two of high school. Four of the men had completed their secondary education and one had begun post-secondary studies.⁸²

When reviewing previous work experience two interesting facts are revealed. [Table 2] Every gentleman interviewed commented upon the difficulties of the Depression Era, in particular the lack of employment and the level of poverty experienced by many

⁸¹ Age of 17=3; 18=3; 19=4; 20=2; 21=2; 22=3; 24=1; 25=1; 26=1. Note G. Brown did not volunteer with the Camerons until Feb. of 1940 and G. Latendresse joined in June of 1940.

Canadians.⁸³ Yet, sixteen of these twenty men were gainfully employed at the time that they volunteered. Three others were students.⁸⁴ Only one was not employed on a regular basis when he signed up with the Camerons.⁸⁵

As far as wages were concerned Fred Smith, employed as a farm laborer earning \$15.00 per month, was the only employed man who clearly would benefit from a soldier's wages of \$1.30 per day. Although Stan Joynt suggested that he felt he might financially improve his situation by signing up in reality his increase in earnings, at least at the outset, would have been negligible.⁸⁶ A comment expressed by Harry David reflects the sentiments of this particular group of men; "at that time I was earning the large sum of \$9.00 a week, which wasn't a heck of a lot of money in those days. They were offering me a \$1.10 a day. So why not."⁸⁷ What the evidence from this study suggests is that the aspect of employment or army wages was not the principal motivation that drew these men to enlist at the outset of World War II.⁸⁸

⁸² Interesting to note that this was the one query that appeared to cause a degree of embarrassment and even elicited apologies among the veterans. They would often couch their response by beginning with "Education? Not very good." or "It was the depression you know."

⁸³ W.A.B. Douglas, & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Uv. Press, 1977), 257. In 1939 more than 10% of the Canadian labour force was out of work.

⁸⁴ George Fouchard, R. Rowley and Graham Brown would most likely have continued on with their studies had they not gone to war.

⁸⁵ L. Guertin stated that lack of employment and income was his principal reason for volunteering. From the context of the interview it is obvious that his love of British military history would also have been an important contributing factor.

⁸⁶ Stan Joynt earned \$12 per week as a plumber's helper. The separation allowance given to his wife was \$35.00 per month of which \$20.00 was drawn from Stan's wages. *The Ottawa Journal* on September 2nd 1939, on page 5, gives the following monetary particulars regarding employment in the Canadian Active Service Force. Private soldiers earned \$1.30 per day as compared to \$1.10 during World War I. The separation allowance for a wife (or supporter of the home) was \$35.00 per month, of which \$20.00 was deducted from the soldier's wages. \$12.00 was given for each dependent boy up to 16 years of age and each dependent girl up to 17. The monthly allowance for officers wives was as follows: Lieutenant = \$45; Captain = \$50; Major = \$55; Colonel = \$60. There was no variation according to rank for children. The daily pay for officers was Major = \$7.75; Captain = \$6.50; Lieutenant = \$3.00.

⁸⁷ The discrepancy between Harry David's reference to \$1.10 and the newspaper quote of \$1.30 may be as a result of mess fees and other miscellaneous deductions which were routinely taken from a soldier's pay.

⁸⁸ This is not to suggest though that lack of employment or better wages was not a factor for others. See interviews with R. Rowley, transcript p. 12, J. McManus, F. Davis, trans. p. 10, and A. Featherstonhaugh. All of these men reflected upon the destitute conditions that prevailed for many Canadians, including men

A family history linked to war service had a measure of influence on these young men. Only four veterans did not indicate that they had close relatives who had served in World War I. In seven instances their fathers had served in the Great War, and in the case of three men a close relative had been lost. In fact, both A. Nolan and G. Fouchard's fathers joined the cause with their sons.

Prior service with the Non Permanent Active Militia was an important influence in the decision to volunteer within this group of men. Thirteen of the twenty were involved with the NPAM during the 1930s. Several mentioned that they had begun their military experience as a 'boy soldier' or were with the cadets when the program was part of the school curriculum.⁸⁹ Each of the men with a militia background had at least one year of experience. Their combined militia service totaled approximately 51 years of training and exposure to the military lifestyle. [Table 2]

Jim McManus offers us an understanding of the appeal of the militia for some young men in the following comment. Mr. McManus enlisted in the NPAM with the Camerons in May of 1937 at the age of 15, claiming to be 18.

Why did I join the Cameron Highlanders? This provided an opportunity to be associated with a group of people – it was a place you could go to where it didn't cost you money and the thrill of wearing a Highland outfit-kilt etc.

Being a member of B Company of the Camerons I attended Parade nights at the Armouries, located at Cartier Square, twice a week, normally Monday and Thursday evenings where we were exposed to drill and machine gun training. The Battalion went to camp each year, under canvas – bell tents, at Connaught Range, just outside of Ottawa, for a week

who joined the forces. See Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Year 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home & Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1974), 400 for an example much like the men in this study.

⁸⁹A. Featherstonhaugh stated that he was 9 years old when he joined the cadets in elementary school and it was a fact that influenced him in his later decision to join the army. Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1997), 31. Vance's work makes reference to cadet training in public schools in 1925. A. Quinn dates his first military experience back to 1931 when he was a boy soldier with the Camerons. According to F. Hicks, 'boy soldier' is what we today refer to as a cadet--those too young for the militia.

[of] training consisting of drills, rifle firing and machine gun firing on the outdoor range. We received the large sum of 25 cents a day while at camp. There were no parade nights at the Armouries during July and August but you had the opportunity to go to Connaught Range every Saturday and fire your rifle at the different ranges, 100 yards to 600 yards. The soldiers who were able to take advantage of this were issued with their own rifle and were required to look after it at home. You had to find your own way via street car to a point where a army truck picked you up and took you to Connaught Range.⁹⁰

Louis Lacroix also fondly recalled his summers spent at the rifle range.

Every summer we used to go to Connaught Range....One of the last instructors we had for summer camp was Paul Triquette, the guy that won the VC, Victoria Cross with the Royal 22nd in Italy. I remember him. He was a good soldier too. Very strict you know and all that.⁹¹

Table 2 Personal Background

Name	Education	Employment	Family War History [WWI]	Militia Experience	*Enlistment Date
Esmond George Acton	Grade 8	Family Business Plumbing/Heat.	Father	No	Sept. 22, 1939
Graham Ayton Brown	Grade 12	Student Usher at theatre	Father	Yes 31/2 years	Feb. 1940
Harry Joseph David	Grade 8	Office Clerk Dept. Store	No	Yes 31/2 years	Sept. 2, 1939
Thomas H. F. Davis	Grade 8	Family Farm	No	No	Sept. 4, 1939
Allan Featherston-haugh	Grade 7	Independent Coal & Lumber	Father & many others in family	Yes 71/2 years incl. Cadets	Sept. 1939 [1 st week]
George Fouchard	Grade 12	Student Bus boy/Cottage Helper	Uncles	Yes 1 year	Sept. 1939 [1 st week]
Louis Napoleon Guertin	Grade 10	Bowling alley	No	Yes 21/2 years	Sept. 16, 1939
Marcel Guevin	Grade 10	Farm labourer	No	No	Sept. 7, 1939
Wellington R. Hamilton	Grade 12	Dish Washer [pearl diver]	Many relatives	Yes 1 year	Sept. 16, 1939
Frederick G. Hicks	Grade 10	Ottawa Sand & Gravel/Grocery Deliveries/	Father Uncle killed	Yes 41/2 years	Sept. 1939 [1 st week]
Stanley Joynt	Grade 10	Plumber's Helper	Uncle Cousin killed	Yes 1 year	Sept. 9, 1939

⁹⁰ Interview with J. McManus on June 22, 1999. This quote is taken from a five page written summary that Mr. McManus had prepared in relation to his interview. This passage appears on pages 1 and 2 of the summary.

⁹¹ Interview L. Lacroix. Also see interview with F. Hicks who refers fondly to his militia years.

Louis George Lacroix	Grade 11	Bell/splicing Helper	Uncle killed	Yes 4 1/2 years	Sept. 4, 1939
George John Latendresse	Grade 10	O'Brien's Woolen mills	Uncle	No	June 7, 1940
John James McManus	Grade 8	Dry Cleaning Company	Father	Yes 2 1/2 years	Sept. 2, 1939
Albert Daniel Nolan	Grade 8	Chalk River	Father	Yes 5 1/2 years	Sept. 15, 1939
Allan Quinn	Grade 10	Jeweler Apprentice	Uncles	Yes 8 1/2 years	Sept. 9, 1939
Roger Rowley	1 st year Uv. Dalhousie	Student	3 Uncles [1 was General Hodgins]	Yes 5 1/2 years	Sept. 1, 1939
Fred Smith	Grade 7	Farm labourer	Uncle Father, merchant Navy	No	Sept. 5, 1939
George West	Grade 8	Lineman for Hydro/Farm Labourer	Father Uncles	No	Sept. 1939
Robert William Young	Grade 8	Shoe Factory	Uncle	No	Sept. 1939

*Interesting to note that 14 of the men knew the exact date that they had enlisted. 3 others knew it was within the first week of September. The remaining three knew it was in the month of September.

All but two of the men interviewed signed up for war service with the Camerons during the month of September in 1939. The two exceptions were Graham Brown and George Latendresse. Although Mr. Brown had served in the signal section with the Camerons from 1936, when war was declared he decided to join the Navy. By February of 1940 his love of the pipes drew him back to the Camerons.⁹² Mr. Latendresse was one of a group of approximately 200 reinforcements that signed on in June of 1940 with the 1st battalion.

The battalion's war diary for September of 1939 indicates that the strength of the regiment on September 2nd, one day after the order was received to mobilize, was 27 officers and 345 other ranks. The entry states, "Parade at 1400 hrs....No one was medically examined as medical board not available." On the 4th of September we read:

⁹² Graham Brown served as a member of the pipe band with the regiment throughout his military career.

Transferred to non-effective strength of the Regimental Depot, all who were over age, under age or had too many dependents effective 2-9-39. 119 other ranks of the NPAM unit were accepted and taken on the strength of the CASF this day. Some new recruits were taken on strength.⁹³

The implication is that of the 345 other ranks offering their services, only 119 or one third were accepted.⁹⁴ This selected group would have served a crucial role in instilling the fundamental *esprit de corps* and regimental pride among the new recruits now being admitted to the Cameron ranks.⁹⁵

As for the leadership of the Cameron unit, officers and non commissioned officers, these were all drawn from the NPAM group.⁹⁶ The diary entry for September 3rd lists by name each officer who is not being accepted along with the reason why he is being declined. Roger Rowley, who represents the officers among the interview group, responded with the following when asked if he had friends who had joined with him;

⁹³ War Diary, RG 24 Vol. 15,022 September 2 & 4 1939. C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army In Canada, Britain and the Pacific* 3rd Printing (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1957), 112-115 outlines the guidelines for mobilization and the requirements regarding recruits.

⁹⁴ Of the group in this study likely 6 were among the 119; H. David, A. Featherstonhaugh, G. Fouchard, F. Hicks, L. Lacroix, and J. McManus.

⁹⁵ C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1948) 3; C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 51. In his later work Stacey states that the NPAM provided an invaluable nucleus of partially-trained non commissioned officers and soldiers who were useful in getting the machinery of mobilization going. They provided the framework for the unit, setting up solid connections between the militia regiment and the service battalion which served to maintain the integrity of the regiment's spirit and traditions. Stacey makes the point that it would be difficult to overestimate the debt of the wartime army to the NPAM. Also see Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: Uv. Of Toronto Press, 1988), 94, 106.

⁹⁶ C.P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945* 3, 4. This work states, "...nearly all the officers and a considerable proportion of the other ranks of the units mobilized in 1939 came directly from the Active Militia." In his later work, the official history of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, *Six Years of War*, page 51, he alters his remarks to state that the Militia provided practically all the commissioned officers and warrant officers for units mobilized in 1939 but of other ranks only a minority usually came from the Militia. Yet the statistics provided on page 50 of the latter book reinforce the view of the earlier work; 58,337 men and women joined the Active Service Force in September 1939 with almost half having served in the Permanent Force or the Non-Permanent Active Militia, 4,986 in the Permanent Force and 24,089 in the NPAM.

“Well all my brother officers....not one of them failed to sign.”⁹⁷ The war diary confirms his memory of the facts. Although all offered not every one was accepted.

Table 3 indicates the speed at which the battalion was able to fill its ranks. Although the unit received the order to mobilize on the 1st of September, war was not officially declared by Canada until the 10th.

Table 3 Recruitment results for the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa during the month of September 1939

Week ending	Officers	Other Ranks
9/9/39	21	179
16/9/39	21	565
23/9/39	21	737
30/0/39	21	769

The figure of 769 on the 30th of September was 3 other ranks over strength, or beyond the establishment quota set for the unit.⁹⁸

The second principal question that this research has evolved around is why did men volunteer to serve in World War II?⁹⁹ As historical documents fail to address this issue in any substantive manner, it requires the oral interview with men who joined to ascertain the accuracy of existing scholarship.¹⁰⁰ When the question was asked of these twenty

⁹⁷ R. Rowley interview, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 7.

⁹⁸ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, page 53 states that September 1939 was by far the largest single month for enlistments of the whole war. Page 49 defines ‘establishment’ as the authorized composition of a unit expressed in numbers and ranks of personnel, numbers and types of weapons and transport. In this case the reference is only to personnel.

⁹⁹ Desmond Morton, *When your Number’s Up: the Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993), 50 – 52. Here the same question is asked in regards to World War One. Morton states that cynics claimed that a cold winter and unemployment drove men to the recruiting stations. His work adds that, “The army attracted all kinds, but idealists were more common than idlers.” Bill McNeil, *Voices of a War Remembered: An Oral History of Canadians in World War Two* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1991), 1, 2, 6 & 7. In this work McNeil stresses the lack of employment as the principal reason men volunteered at the outset in 1939. Yet, McNeil also points to the sense of adventure, the aspect of dignity and the importance of the uniform. William Horrocks, *In Their Own Words* (Ottawa: Rideau Veterans Home Residents Council, 1993), 68-71.

¹⁰⁰ Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*, page 310; “the typical Canadian fighting man of 1939-45 was a volunteer, who came forward of his own free will to do a duty which he did not find pleasant but which, he knew, had to be done. He forsook civil life with reluctance, and when the victory was won he returned to it

veterans three principal reasons were cited. The most frequent response related to friendships and affiliations as a result of involvement in the militia system. Louis Lacroix explains how this came about in his neighborhood. The question asked was “Do you remember why you signed up?” The query was in reference to World War II. Mr. Lacroix begins with “Oh I don’t know.” Several phrases later he returns to his militia experience and shares the following with us:

Why did I join? Hey, why did I join?? When I joined there was a guy, my neighbor, back yard neighbor. Oh what the hell was his name now? I forget. But anyway he spoke to me. “Why don’t you come and join with me.” I said, “okay I’ll do that.” That was around 35 you know what I mean. Then after that I recruited, holy jesus, I think I had about half of Lowertown. They all come to my place, on Desjardins Street. And I’d have about, I never went to the Drill Hall alone, walking. We all walked that. Nobody had a car or nothing in those days you know. And a, they all kept in step. I got them in file, two, like you know in twos, like on the sidewalk and that. And marched them to the Drill Hall, and after the parade well, certain nights we’d slip over to Hull for the few beers you know. But then a lot of those guys, most of those guys joined up though. Oh ya¹⁰¹

A second reason often advanced reflected feelings of patriotism or a responsibility to do one’s share. Allan Quinn speaks on behalf of at least eight men in this group.

What motivated you to enlist? I think kids in those days, I think had a deeper feeling of patriotism than the kids do today. Ah to me, to me it was a duty that had to be performed as well as being patriotic. It was just

with alacrity.” J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, 1989), also states that Canadians went ‘hesitantly and without enthusiasm.’ W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Uv. Press, 1977), 36 tells us that the men of the 1st Division were known as ‘breadliners’ because the war had offered countless unemployed men the chance to join the army. *Out of the Shadows* quotes one soldier as saying, “I wasn’t patriotic. None of my buddies were. I just wanted some good clothes and hot showers and three decent meals a day and a few dollars for tobacco and beer...you found out later that the others wanted other things...the high school kids wanted adventure, and...that is probably what we was all looking for. Not adventure maybe, but a new life.” Barry Broadfoot, *Six War years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1974) 14-19. In the author’s introduction to the section entitled ‘Joining up’ he states the following based on his oral interviews with veterans; “For most of them, joining up was a great opportunity to be useful again (or for the first time) to get away from the Depression and wear clean clothes and eat 3 good meals a day. Some were men running away from their previous lives for a 100 different personal reasons; but they all eagerly lined up in the thousands for what was in fact a chance to die.”

¹⁰¹ Interview with L. Lacroix, June 24th 1999.

something that, it was a natural thing to do....Every friend that I knew joined up. As brothers became old enough to join, they joined....All my friends joined the Cameron Highlanders....¹⁰²

Later in the interview, and related to a different issue, Mr. Quinn would clearly state his position with the following remark, "I'm a monarchist. I believe in the British Empire and that's all there is to it."

The third response most often offered to explain their reasons for volunteering was, they saw it as an opportunity for adventure and travel.¹⁰³ Harry David ventured the following remark,

I had some good acquaintances in the unit. We got along famously and we all figured, we'll sit down in a café somewhere and have a coffee and then come back to that café and the war's over and da, just tell all our stories."¹⁰⁴

Three men responded by drawing links to their militia background, and stating that they enjoyed army life. Three others pointed to their family history as an important influencing factor for them. For example, Allan Featherstonhaugh made the following remark when asked, "How did your family feel about you joining?"

Dad being a soldier in the Camerons, he said you do what you want. You want to go you'll learn....the family were pretty proud of me going.¹⁰⁵

Robert Young and George West, two men who did not have militia experience said they joined because their brothers had and encouraged them to join too. Of the remaining five men without a militia background, three mentioned the opportunity to travel and get away, while patriotism and the appeal of serving with friends were influencing factors for two men.

¹⁰² Interview with Allen Quinn, June 23rd 1999.

¹⁰³ Douglas, *Out of the Shadows*, 266; More than a million men and women in the armed forces had come from a profoundly innocent generation with very little travel experience.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 1999.

The decision as to which regiment to join was not a difficult one for the men who had served in the Non Permanent Active Militia with the Camerons. Their allegiance to the regiment and their established friendships within the unit were powerful elements. Lou Guertin had not served his militia time with the Camerons. His explanation for joining this Scottish regiment rings true for a number of men.

I had been a member of *The Governor General Foot Guards*.
And the reason I didn't go back...was that they weren't mobilizing.
That's why I went to the Cameron Highlanders.¹⁰⁶

Besides the fact that the Camerons were mobilizing, it was the distinctly Scottish traditions of this Highland regiment that attracted some men to its ranks. Abby Nolan expresses the sentiment of at least five men within this group.

I wanted to be with the Camerons. There used to be a fellow I used to see. He was an old, old Cameron, Rainy Joevais. And he married a girl on Albert Street and I used to see him Monday nights in his kilt and that and everything else and I, that, that's for me. Finally I got signed up...

When asked if the kilt was the big attraction, he adds:

Oh yes, I loved the kilt. Oh ya...and everything, the traditions and everything else. The pipes and drums and everything was ideal. I loved the Camerons.¹⁰⁷

But not everyone was as discerning in their choice of regiment. George Latendresse explains how he and a friend from Renfrew made their decision to volunteer and join the Camerons in June of 1940.

Ah I worked for the woolen mills, the O'Brien Woolen Mills. And I was running a twister machine and making a yarn for the weavers to run on the looms and this day, ah this night we were sittin around talking and so four of us said, "well what do you say, let's hit the road and join the army." So there was myself, and Tommy Laforce, and [two others named]. We were all about the same age. So we said, "well, okay you know Monday we'll head down to Ottawa and join."

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Louis Guertin, June 21, 27, & Aug. 3, 2000. Transcript pgs. 5, 6.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Albert Nolan, June 10th 1999. Others who specifically mentioned the attraction of the Scottish kilt were E. Acton and F. Davis.

So Monday morning came and [2 named] chickened out. So that left Tommy Laforce and myself, so. We hitchhiked, hitchhiked down to Ottawa and went to Lansdowne Park and da, so we just went in and they were looking for people then. It was like there was no problem. Didn't even have to bring your birth certificate. We had zip all....

When asked why the Cameron Highlanders, Mr. Latendresse responded with, "We just went and joined the army. We didn't know what outfit we were getting into. We didn't care. We just went to join the army."¹⁰⁸

Nothing was found during the preliminary research to indicate how parents may have reacted to a son's decision to volunteer.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the veterans were asked about the response of their parents. Of the fifteen men who commented, in ten instances the answer ranged from pleased to neutral—their parents did not say. Three explained that although their parents were disappointed they accepted their son's decision. Only Ray Hamilton's father and step-mother attempted to have their son's decision rescinded, but to no avail. In the case of the two men with spouses, Stan Joynt said his wife didn't say, one way or the other.¹¹⁰ We do not know how Roger Rowley's wife responded but he did comment that his mother was behind her sons 'all the way.'¹¹¹

A composite overview of the histories of these twenty veterans would result in an individual with the following background. Born and raised in Ottawa he would be eighteen years of age and still residing with his nuclear family. He would have been raised by his birth parents in a family of six children, 4 boys and 2 girls, and would be neither the oldest nor the youngest child in the family. His mother would have been a homemaker while his father would have been employed in a factory or communications

¹⁰⁸ Interview with George Latendresse, June 15, 2000; transcript pgs.4 & 7.

¹⁰⁹ Being the mother of two sons the ages of these volunteers sparked my interest in this topic.

¹¹⁰ Stan's wife was present for the interview and she added, "I don't think I was even asked."

industry. Our hypothetical young man would be single, without dependants and have completed his elementary school education. Prior to joining he would have been employed in manual labor or in an entry-level position of a company. He would have earned slightly more than what he was being offered by the army, although with his room and board covered, he might reason that his disposable income would remain the same. His father or uncle would have served in World War I while our volunteer would have approximately four years of militia experience. He would have made his decision and 'signed up' during the first week of September, prior to Canada officially declaring war against Germany. His reasons for joining would include one or more of the following three factors: His eagerness to serve with his militia friends who would often be neighborhood acquaintances; a sense of duty to his country, as well as a belief in his responsibility to do his part; and his keenness to embark on an adventure. His attraction to the Camerons would be as a result of his militia background. The initial interest in joining the NPAM, and specifically the Camerons, was due to the example of others, coupled with the regiment's Scottish uniform and traditions.

Of course our hypothetical volunteer does not encompass, nor indeed do justice to the reality for a significant number of the men within this group of twenty; hence the value in considering the individual experience before forming any judgments. What does come forward in both the individual as well as the composite profile is the significance of the militia experience in preparing the young man to volunteer. Reinforcing this is the fact that for this group of men employment and wages were not the principal incentives for offering their services for war duty.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, trans. p. 6.

¹¹² Morton, *When Your Number's Up*. 51, 52, . Morton's World War I book makes a number of points that reflect the findings of this case study. For example on page 52 we read that "most of the men who joined in

Would the factors surrounding a man's decision to volunteer have changed during the course of the war? Although the query goes beyond the parameters of this work George Banning's story may be offered for comparison purposes. One recorded interview completed for this undertaking has not been considered to date, that of Mr. George Banning. Only after the interview had begun was it realized that Mr. Banning had not served in Iceland, a mandatory condition for this study. Born on March 1st of 1924 he was not of enlistment age in 1939. But the particulars of his story make for an interesting comparison with our hypothetical young man of 1939.

George Banning was born and raised in Ottawa. At the time that he volunteered, in 1942, he was 18 years of age and living at home with his parents. He had 4 siblings, 3 brothers and 1 sister. He was the youngest of the boys with his sister being the youngest in the family. His mother was a homemaker while his father worked for W. C. Edwards as a lumber grader. George was single, with no dependents. He had a grade seven education. Prior to signing up for overseas service he worked with the CPR Railroad in a section gang. He had 2 uncles who had served in World War I. He also proudly mentioned that his mother had been employed during the Great War at Woods Manufacturing, making uniforms for troops. Two of his brothers and several cousins had enlisted for this war. One cousin had been killed by the time Mr. Banning enlisted. George joined the Militia with the Camerons in 1940 at the age of 16. It was the appeal of the kilt and the bagpipes that attracted him to the Scottish regiment. He gives this account of what happened when he went to enlist for overseas duty in 1942:

The chaplain or whatever that I had to sign the paper for said "young lad you're not eighteen and a half yet" he said. "Your two weeks away from it."¹¹³

1915 left good jobs behind them." In regards to patriotism page 52 states, "That consciousness of duty owed much to pre-war education and upbringing." Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, 245.

¹¹³ Lying about one's age was typical of the era. Mr. McManus 'adjusted' his age by several years.

I said, “my mom said, my dad said its okay cause I got two brothers in the service.” He said “okay we’ll let you go through then.” I thought, oh gee I’m going to have to start all over again. But he let me in.¹¹⁴

Later in the interview Mr. Banning admitted that his parents did not know that he was joining until after the fact. His reasons for joining reflect those of his predecessors. He spoke of a sense of duty, feelings of patriotism and “to be with my chums. If they were willing to go, I was willing to go too.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Interview with George Banning, June 9th 1999.

¹¹⁵ George Banning joined up with the Camerons in England in February 1943. He participated in ‘Operation Overlord’, the landing in France on D Day, June 6th 1944. On June 8th on his way to pick up more ammunition he stepped on a land mine. After surgery in both Britain and Canada he lost all of one leg. He was 20 years old. After rehabilitation he was employed at the Royal Canadian Mint. He retired early though, as his body never had accepted the prosthesis and the discomfort became intolerable. After retiring he sold his home and moved in with the veterans at the Rideau Veterans Residence. Today he resides at the new facility, *The Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Center* in Ottawa where he assists with the programs for his fellow veterans. He remains a bachelor with strong family connections.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE AT THE CATTLE CASTLE

We now consider the third question in this thesis; namely, what were the early war years like for the men who served? This chapter will focus on the mobilization phase in Ottawa, from September 1, 1939 until May 24, 1940. Thirteen topics will present the material related to this time period. In many respects we find a repetition of the conditions that existed at the outset of World War I.¹¹⁶

With respect to the men interviewed, not every question was posed to each of the twenty veterans. For a variety of reasons the total number of responses per topic may be less than twenty but in no situation are they less than fourteen.¹¹⁷ The veteran authors of all quotes will be cited with the exception of where there is a concern that by doing so may cause a degree of discomfort or embarrassment to the individual.¹¹⁸

We begin with the most basic human needs: accommodation, food, clothing, and in this situation—equipment. In the early days of September 1939 local men lived at home or were billeted out, until tents could be brought in from Connaught Range and set up in Lansdowne Park.¹¹⁹ A historic landmark in Ottawa, Lansdowne Park is associated with the summer Ottawa fair, consumer shows, sporting events and concerts.¹²⁰ But in the fall

¹¹⁶ Desmond Morton, *When Your Numbers Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993). Although Morton's topic is World War I, the present work often reflects the physical conditions as well as the responses from troops, in his study.

¹¹⁷ For any number of the following reasons a particular query may have less than twenty responses. If a question was always receiving the same response and was not felt to be crucial in establishing continuity within the interview context, it may have been purposely skipped. If the veteran appeared frail then the focus shifted to those questions that were deemed to be of a greater priority. At times, because of what had already been discussed, the response was presumed and the question was not deemed to be required. Lastly, on occasion through an oversight on the interviewer's part a question was 'missed.'

¹¹⁸ For example if the issue is deemed to be a sensitive one, or if one individual has expressed an opinion that differs from the majority of his fellow Camerons, this will be cited anonymously.

¹¹⁹ Interview with F. Davis, July 22nd 1999, trans. p. 13.

¹²⁰ As a child I looked forward with great anticipation to the 'Ottawa Exhibition.' During one summer in my teen years, I worked twelve-hour days standing on the scorching pavement serving hot dogs and fries for 25 cents an hour. All the while I never knew what this place had meant to my father and so many

of 1939 the building that had housed livestock during the August exhibition was hurriedly converted into living quarters for hundreds of Cameron men.¹²¹ The war diary indicates that the regiment officially moved into tents on the grounds at Lansdowne on the 21st of September. As early as September 12th groups of men had been posted there for rations and quarters. By the 3rd of October they were able to begin moving indoors for sleeping. The temperature recorded for that day was 59 degrees Farenheight. It was an unusually cool fall in Ottawa that year. By the 17th of October when all ranks were finally able to be quartered in the coliseum, the temperature had dropped to 38 degrees.

The following is a sample of how the veterans responded when asked, what was the accommodation like?

Accommodation? Put us in the hen house. We started out with tents. I was in charge of going out to the rifle range. Everything was out there, all ready rolled out. It took a long time for hundreds and hundreds of tents. So we spent about a week out there loading and then when we got into Ottawa...I was in charge of that....We moved out of the tents into the horse stable and the chicken coup and the pigery downstairs. that's where we ate.¹²²

Graham Brown, a member of the pipe band describes the accommodation with these words:

The horse palace, what was then the stadium. The band ended up in the canary room which I thought was kind of appropriate. On the top floor in the canary room.¹²³

Another band member, Fred Hicks adds the following:

Wasn't the best in the West. We were in the canary cage. We had double bunks, all double bunks but other than that, and then you know what the heck, everybody sleeping together, but that's military. That's the way it is. It wasn't that bad. I didn't think it was that bad anyway. Course I was young, anything goes.¹²⁴

others of his generation. As I recall, my father made no reference to the park and its meaning to his past. I don't recall his ever attending the exhibition either.

¹²¹ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific*, 3rd Printing (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1957), 26. It indicates that lodging troops in exhibition facilities was a common practice.

¹²² Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 28th and 31st 1999.

¹²³ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999.

Harry David has this perspective on their accommodation:

Considering how quickly they had to mobilize and move people out to Lansdowne to take over after the fall fair, I thought it was reasonable. That you couldn't expect palaces or military barracks like they had at Kingston or anything of that sort. But they developed to a point where it was quite satisfactory. Except that you were in a huge dormitory. The whole building, the inside of the building, there were no walls or anything....One quickly got used to it.¹²⁵

The Orderly Officer's report for the 19th of September gives us an appreciation of the difficulties faced by the leadership in converting animal quarters into troop lodgings. We read:

Some of the meat is bad, several men had complained. Lavatories had been washed down with water and the Sergeant Major said they had been in a 'shocking condition' earlier in the day; very dirty, without paper, excreta on floor and seats of latrines and also in bowl of wash basins. No disinfectant of any kind had been used anywhere within the building. The whole premises is infected with swarms of flies. There are no lights in the lavatories and they are needed as some men are suffering from diarrhea. The washing arrangements are inadequate. There is only one wash basin for every 6 men and they are without shaving equipment or toothbrushes.¹²⁶

Moving indoors, although welcomed by the men, brought health concerns to the fore. The Orderly Officer's report dated October 16th makes reference to the camp Medical Officer's instructions stating that the bunks must be placed at least three inches apart. The record also notes that in order to prevent contamination between bunks the bed linen should not be touching. These directives are again noted on October the 17th and 19th.¹²⁷

The reference to 'bed linen' invites an interesting excerpt from Abby Nolan's interview. He is responding to a query regarding the type of blankets troops were provided with:

¹²⁴ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999.

¹²⁵ Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999.

Blankets? We had a palliasse and you stuffed it with straw. That was the mattress. You usually filled it about half and then spread it out. And some kind of cover you put over it. But we never got sheets. The air force were the only people with sheets and pillow cases.¹²⁸

Bathing facilities became a serious dilemma that the City of Ottawa helped resolve.

The entry for October 4th reads, "The City of Ottawa offered bathing facilities for certain hours of the week. Offer gratefully accepted." On the 6th of October we note, "each company has a specified time and day of week for bathing at YMCA." On the fourth of January 1940 the issue of bathing is again commented upon.

The bathing parades to the YMCA continued and were it not for these parades the men would not be able to bath as often as they do, as the bathing facilities in Barracks are not adequate for a unit of this size.¹²⁹

During the fall of 1939 all of the men were medically re-examined. They were given a chest x-ray, a series of three inoculations and a dental check up. In December 1939, the medical re-assessment found only one man, who required a hernia operation, unfit for service. Yet the crowded and poor living conditions in the converted building resulted in health concerns throughout the winter of 1939 and 1940. The most serious problem was the dry air within the Lansdowne Barracks. On the 12th of January the Medical Officer himself, Lieutenant W. R. Muirhead was hospitalized with serious influenza. On January the 29th the diary entry notes:

There is probably more sickness in the Regiment now than there has been before. We have 64¹³⁰ men in hospital and in addition to that, Lieutenant

¹²⁶ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, Sept. 19, 1939. Report signed by J.W.H. Rowley. W.A.B. Douglas & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Uv. Press, 1977) 26; describes several similar situations, one in Toronto and one in Bridgewater.

¹²⁷ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, Oct. 16th 17th 19th 1939. Report signed by A. S. Whiteacre.

¹²⁸ Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999. This is one example to indicate how little had changed between the two World Wars. In historian Morton's recent work on World War I we read, "The new soldier received blankets and a palliasse cover, to be filled with straw. Then he bedded down in his unit's 'barracks'—often the floor of the local armouries or the horse palace at the local fairground." Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 72.

¹²⁹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, Oct. 4th 6th 1939 & Jan. 4th 1940. Initialed by A. S. Whiteacre on all 3 occasions.

¹³⁰ The strength of the regiment on January 31st 1940 was 655 all ranks. RG 24, Vol. 15,022.

Ross is now in hospital. Lieutenant E. G. Jamieson is at home sick and Major Cosh has just returned and can only do light duty for sometime. According to the Medical Officer, the air is so very dry that there will be sickness as long as we are here. There are some cases of measles at present, but they have been sent to the Strathcona Isolation Hospital.¹³¹

In one interview, that of Fred Smith, the problem of illness related to dry air was discussed. His recall of this problem likely explains why he was the only veteran to use the word ‘terrible’ to describe the accommodation at Lansdowne.

The conditions were terrible. Were in the horse stable and in steel bunk beds and one time there was an outbreak of sore throats and I was one of them. I went to the doctor, the Camerons, and told him that I wasn’t feeling [well]. [He] told them to give me a glass of hot castor oil. So they did and I drank it.¹³² The next day I went again. He looked down my throat and started to call them all in. Look here! Look here! My throat was real bad. I ended up in the hospital and it affected my kidneys. I wondered why they kept me in after my throat was better. When I was in the army overseas in England and in Iceland I took the same disease again there. It seemed like tonsillitis and I was in the hospital there [Iceland]. And in England the same thing, about the same time of the year. After I got out of the army they took my tonsils out.¹³³

Between the leaderships’ efforts to improve living conditions and the spring weather, health problems were eventually overcome. On May 23rd the diary entry notes that the men were medically examined prior to their move to Camp Borden and the medical officer declared that, “on examination it was found that the general well-being of the troops and physical fitness was very high.”¹³⁴

On the topic of food, the veterans were asked how they found the food while at Lansdowne; was there enough and was it good? From the seventeen responses given to

¹³¹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, Jan. 29th 1940. Initialed by A. S. Whiteacre. Although living in tents is not a realistic alternative it is worthy of note that men are healthier living outdoors in the elements than indoors in confined spaces. This fact is later noted by the medical officer in Iceland, when the men are moved from tents into Nissan huts.

¹³² Morton, *When Your Number’s Up*, 196. A quote taken from a letter between a soldier and his wife in 1916 indicates that castor oil was a remedy often used in the previous war. “Frank Maheux, troubled by a painful ear, warned his wife, ‘I’ll have to see the Doctor but the doctor anything wrong with you it makes no matter if it was sore eyes he always give Castor Oil we call him Castor Oil King.”

¹³³ Interview with Fred Smith, Nov. 24th 2000.

this query, sixteen answered with positive comments that ranged from ‘good’ to ‘wasn’t bad.’ Only one person described the food as terrible. Several veterans, such as Esmond Acton cited personal statistics to buttress their remarks.

Let’s put it this way. When I first went into the army I was 131 pounds soaking wet. That was in September. I went home at Christmas time and I weighed 152 and I had grown almost 2 inches.¹³⁵

The Orderly Officers Report for October 27th 1939 reinforces the sentiment that there was no lack of food for the troops at Lansdowne.

Noted that a considerable quantity of food is left on the men’s plates. They tell me that they cannot get smaller helpings. Suggest that smaller helpings be given and remainder used for seconds for men who want more.¹³⁶

The situation regarding the outfitting of the Cameron troops with uniforms mirrors that found in the existing literature for the military in Canada.¹³⁷ The war diary for this unit testifies to the shortages and how proper clothing and footwear began ‘trickling in’ on the 11th of October of 1939. All the troops would not be properly dressed until April of 1940. George Fouchard begins this review.

It was quite a mismatch then. Oh my goodness, ya. We started out with kilts, and then that didn’t work over so great, when you’re on guard at forty below zero with a kilt. It didn’t work at all. So took the kilts and they give us breeches with the big puttees you know, up to your knees. And for, just for the warmth more than anything. And then we went into, eventually went into the battle dress. But [] it was a mismatch like some people had brown shoes, some people had black boots and oh, it was a real mess you know [laugh] ah dear.¹³⁸

Veteran Robert Young remembers the situation this way:

¹³⁴ RG 24 Vol. 15,022, May 23rd 1940.

¹³⁵ Interview with Esmond Acton, November 13th 2000.

¹³⁶ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 dated Oct. 27th 1940 and signed by Mersereau. See appendix 5 for the scale of rations, C.A.S.F. (Canadian Active Service Force) filed in the diary in the month of February 1940.

¹³⁷ C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1948), 4; J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and The Second World War, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Ltd., 1989), 15.

Lansdowne Park was kind of like a comedy show, I'd say. We were wearing some of the boots of the 1914, 1918 war.... We looked like a bunch of clowns at times. One fella would be wearing army boots and a khaki sweater. And that's all he had of equipment on him to show that he was in the army. Or he'd have a khaki shirt and a Balmoral, Tam O'Shanter they called them, on. When we went out to go on leave or pass, the first few months we had the kilt and puttees. Then they took them off and gave us the battle dress. I mean until we actually got to the battle dress I don't think they were all uniformly dressed at any time then. They were wearing a little bit of this and a little bit of that and, but it was all army equipment but each one with a different piece of it to show they were in the army.¹³⁹

Roger Rowley, a junior officer at the time under review, adds the following commentary:

Most of our private soldiers were wearing World War I riding britches, can you believe that? And puttees and a World War I jacket and a Glengarry hat you know, I mean it was really, unbelievably unmilitary....But we stomped around and went on route marches and did all the things we had to do.¹⁴⁰

It is the remarks by Lou Guertin that offer us the understanding to appreciate how the individual soldier managed under these circumstances.

I was one of the fortunate ones that had a full uniform. Now ah, there were some of our lads getting married because they had joined the Army. My uniform, without me, went to six or seven weddings. Ah my uniform went to the B'nai Brith. We had a chap with us by the name of Sam Smith. He was an older brother to Smith who owns the place next door on Rideau Street. And they had a party for him and Sam didn't have a uniform so I loaned him my uniform, but...I was going out that night on a date and I met Sam at the Rideau Bowling Alley at about 5:30 or 6:00 o'clock at night and in the washroom we changed clothes, so I could get my uniform back to go on my date.¹⁴¹

Details found in the war diary describe the acute shortages and the difficulties this lack of proper clothing could present. The entry for the 1st of December reads, "boots are in bad condition. Have trained shoe-makers but lacking material and equipment to repair them."

¹³⁸ Interview with George Fouchard, Jan. 14th 2000, transcript p. 9.

¹³⁹ Interview with Robert Young, June 27th 1999. See Douglas, *Out of the Shadows*, 26 where the clothing troops were wearing is also described as a 'comic opera.'

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 8.

By the 20th of the month the diarist notes that route marches are being skipped and adds, “...men’s boots are in such bad state of repair, that it is not possible to do the route marching we would like to do.”¹⁴²

By the late Spring, with the regiment now properly outfitted, the following is recorded:

The Regiment paraded in their newly acquired Balmoral’s today. It was interesting to note that now that they are equipped with web equipment, side arms and a uniform headdress, their esprit-de-corps is already rising to a much higher level than it was during the winter.¹⁴³

Considering that the subject under review is troops and their preparation for warfare, no issue points out Canada’s lack of preparedness as clearly as that of equipment.¹⁴⁴ The majority of the men who joined the Camerons had no previous military experience. The 1st Battalion spent nine months in Ottawa preparing to go overseas, and possibly, front-line combat.¹⁴⁵ This was their opportunity to acquire the skills for warfare. Allen Quinn begins our review of this topic:

We were trained on the Lewis gun which was the going thing before the Bren Gun. I think we had two Lewis guns in the battalion, over 700 men. Maybe the riflemen were, half of them didn’t have rifles. The Lee Enfield 303 was the standard rifle but they didn’t have enough of them. A lot of our men had Ross rifles which were pre 1914, I believe.¹⁴⁶

In the joint interview with Mr. Acton and Mr. Hamilton they responded with the following to the query, “do you recall what kind of equipment you had to train with in the fall of 39?”

¹⁴¹ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21st 27th Aug. 3rd 2000, transcript pgs. 7, 8.

¹⁴² RG 24, Vol. 15,022, December 1 and 20, 1939.

¹⁴³ RG 24, Vol. 15,022, April 17, 1940.

¹⁴⁴ Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*, 2; Granatstein, *A Nation*, 7, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Morton, *When Your Number’s Up*, 78. In World War I, “soldiers had an average of 8 months from enlistment to departure from Canada.”

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999.

[Acton] Old Ross rifle

[Hamilton] They never did work and all of our machine guns were drill purpose guns..the rifling in the barrels was as smooth as that coffee cup. [referring to a cup on the table] Everything was worn.¹⁴⁷

The following remark from Fred Hicks highlights the acute shortage of weapons for training in unequivocal terms.

We first started I'm gonna tell ya and I'm not kidding...some of them had to use brooms too for guns for training. Because we just didn't have the equipment....They didn't do any marching with them no, they wouldn't march with a broom but taking rifle drill like, you know slope arms and all this stuff. They had to use something.¹⁴⁸

On a regular basis the war diary notes the receipt of equipment for training. This includes references to Ross rifles, bayonets and scabbards, Lee Enfield rifles and one range finder. On occasion it indicates that items received are only on loan and later we find a reference to them being returned. The entry for May 13th of 1940 is indicative of the importance of the limited stocks of weaponry to the regiment's training program:

Word received from Ordnance that 17 of our 29 guns were to be returned. This came as a distinct surprise and somewhat as a shock to us in view of the fact the loss of these guns would entail considerable change in our training plans and we will now have to revamp our schedules in such a manner as to make the fullest use of what guns we have left. Instructions of NDHQ as to what will be issued to us as replacements for the guns returned to Ordnance is still unknown.¹⁴⁹

Table 4 **Syllabus of Training**¹⁵⁰, the week of March 18th 1940

March	Mon. 18th	Tues. 19th	Wed. 20th	Thurs. 21st	Fri. 22nd	Sat. 23 rd
No. 1 Co. 0900-1200	Recapitulation	Miniature Range Rifle M.G. Pistol	12 M.G. Platoon Drill	Lecture Room	Tactical Exercise	Bn. Drill Route March

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Esmond Acton and Ray Hamilton, Nov. 13th 2000. See note #340 in this thesis.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999.

¹⁴⁹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 May 15th 1940. Douglas, *Out of the Shadows*, . 27 In reference to the shortages this work states that, "The militia was not fit to go to war nor would it be for many months." Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: Uv. of Toronto Press, 1988) 190.

¹⁵⁰ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 March 18th 1940

1400-1600	12 M.G. Sec. Drill	Same as Above	Recreational Training	Bayonet Drill 4 M.G. E.G.D.	Company Drill D.A.G.	Recreational Training
No. 2 Co. 0900-1200	Lecture Room	Tactical Exercise	Recapitulation	Miniature Range Rifle M.G. Pistol	12 M.G. Platoon Drill	Bn. Drill Route March
1400-1600	12 M.G. Sec. Drill	Company Drill D.A.G.	Recreational Training	Same as Above	Bayonet Drill 4 M.G. E.G.D.	Recreational Training
No. 3 Co. 0900-1200	12 M.G. Platoon Drill	Bayonet Drill 4 M.G. E.G.D. Co. Drill	Tactical Exercise	Recapitulation	Lecture Room	Bn. Drill Route March
1400-1600	Lecture Room	12 M.G. Sec. Drill	Recreational Trg.	12 M.G.	D.A.G. 12 M.G.	Recreational Trg.
No. 4 Co. 0900-1200	12 M.G. Sec. Drill	Lecture Room	12 M.G. 1A Ind. & Recog. 1A	Tactical Exercise	Recapitulation	Bn. Drill Route March
1400-1600	Bayonet Drill 4 M.G. E.G.D.	12 M.G. Platoon Drill	Recreational Training	Company Drill D.A.G.	Lecture Room	Recreational Training

The veterans were asked to reflect upon the lifestyle adjustments that were required by them when they joined the regiment in 1939. Was the structure, routine and discipline a difficult transition? Of the nineteen veterans who responded to this query¹⁵¹ eleven admitted that it was. Four of these eleven had volunteered without any previous military background. Of the eleven, nine felt that they had adjusted in a relatively short period of time. Two had more difficulty adapting to the military lifestyle. Of the eight who said that they did not find it difficult, all but one had served in the Non Permanent Active Militia, and four men mentioned this fact in their responses. Abby Nolan is an example from this latter group:

I didn't find it hard cause I was quite used to it by the time we got into it real serious. It didn't bother me a bit. Do as your told and you'd be alright.¹⁵²

For Robert Young who had not served in the militia the transition was more challenging. He explains that, "it was definitely a big change....At times I did find it difficult to adjust to, but I did. I was in a position where I had no alternative."¹⁵³

The following remark by Roger Rowley implies that previous militia service did not mean that the transition to the Canadian Active Service Force would be without its challenges. When asked if there was a dramatic change for him, he responded in the affirmative. When asked to explain in what ways, he offered the following:

Well you weren't your own master. That's the first and most important thing. You did what you were told to do and what the regulations specified for you. And if it says you don't go to Hull, then you don't go to Hull. You know what I mean? ...It's pretty straight forward. You know **exactly** what was right and **exactly** what was wrong. There were no gray areas, as far as discipline and behavior and routines and so on. It was all very cut and dried and as simple as it could be, and still remain effective. I never had any problems with the Queen's Regulations for the Canadian Army or the rest of [the] textbooksif you studied that and understood it and were prepared to go along with it, which I was, you a weren't in trouble.¹⁵⁴

The following schedule for the soldier's average day during this period gives an appreciation of the routine:¹⁵⁵

Reveille	0630	Bn. Parade	1400
Bn Sick Parade	0645	Bn. Supper	1700
Breakfast	0730	Retreat	1700
Bn. Parade	0845	First Post	2130
Dinner	1215	Last Post	2230
		Lights Out	2230

¹⁵¹ George Latendresse who joined several weeks before the unit went to Iceland has not been included in the analysis on this point. It was felt that his experience was somewhat different and therefore not a fair comparison could be made.

¹⁵² Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999.

¹⁵³ Interview with Robert Young, June 27th 1999.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript pgs 10, 11.

¹⁵⁵ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Jan. 25th 1940.

The war diaries contain ample evidence of the efforts made to provide for a variety of recreational and leisure activities to occupy the troops. The intent would be twofold: to keep the men occupied while they awaited their tour of duty overseas¹⁵⁶ and to improve and maintain their physical well-being. The variety of offerings ranged from sports events where the troops were participants, as in the case of the battalion hockey team, or as viewers in the grandstand of the exhibition grounds, to concerts, films, dances, parties and educational classes. The task of providing these activities was a joint effort between the military and the community at large. A report submitted by the officer in charge of entertainment for the battalion, Lieutenant G. W. Mersereau, covers the period from October 1939 until the end of March 1940. It reports as follows:

In October a Central Entertainment Committee was formed by the War Services Association, and most of the entertainment of the unit has been carried out under the auspices and with the cooperation of this body. Nearly every week has brought free entertainment of some sort to a varying number of Camerons. This entertainment falls roughly under the following heads:

1. Clubs

The St. Giles men's club has been the most outstanding. Twenty-five to thirty-five men are entertained there every Wednesday evening. On the first Wednesday of each month they are given a supper before the evening's activities. This has been enjoyed by a considerable number of men. Other clubs and associations, such as the Knights of Columbus, the McLeod Street Church, the Stewarton United Church and others, have entertained groups of our men at different times.

2. Dances

Both the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. have entertained groups of fifty men, on several occasions at dances. These have been enjoyed and we have very favourable reports of the conduct of the men.

3. Concerts

Several concerts have been given by the men themselves in our own quarters. They have been well attended and enthusiastically received. Outside talent as well as refreshments have been provided by the Central

¹⁵⁶ Restlessness to embark on the overseas journey and see action is an issue that the diary reflects upon and will be briefly commented on later in this work.

Entertainment Committee. Tickets to other concerts have been handed to us and distributed. The Legion concert in the Coliseum in November was the largest of these. But men have also been invited to attend performances at the Little Theatre and at the War Services Theatre in Lansdowne Park, as well as the quarters of other units here....¹⁵⁷

The following notice taken from Regimental Orders, Part 1 dated the 6th of April 1940 lists the activities available to the Camerons for the upcoming week.

Sunday	Hymn Sing	All Saints Church
Monday	Movies	War Services Theatre
Tuesday	Concert	War Services Theatre
Wednesday	Educational Studies	War Service Theatre
Thursday	Variety Show	Knights of Columbus
Friday	Entertainments	Recreation Rooms
Saturday	Quiz Contest	YMCA

Open house for troops by invitation on Wednesday evening, 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, 4:00 p.m. in the Y.M.C.A.¹⁵⁸

A report submitted by the Regimental Sports Officer in April covering the activities of the Regiment in the field of sports since October mentions organized teams in track and field, hockey, basketball, assaults-at-arms, broomball and ping pong. It states that the Camerons placed "high in spirit and in wins."¹⁵⁹

What is intriguing regarding this topic is that in contrast to other questions asked, in general, very little was remembered by the veterans regarding these organized events. This was so prevalent that after a few interviews this question was sometimes skipped. Of the fourteen men who were queried, five did mention the efforts of one or more of the Auxiliary Services groups such as the YMCA or the Red Cross. Usually the fragments that veterans offered were linked to them personally. For example, Esmond Acton who has resided in Kirkland Lake for most of his life responded with the following:

I can remember, I believe Lemkey... he was from Kirkland also. He signed

¹⁵⁷ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 dated Mar 31st, 1940.

¹⁵⁸ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 dated April 1940.

¹⁵⁹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 April 4th 1940.

up after we did. But he was in a kilt and we had running or sports like that. He was just the shortest little fellow. He wasn't anymore than oh 5 foot 3, 5 foot 4. And he took off in the race there, the 100 yard dash and he was so far ahead like that, he was looking around....¹⁶⁰

The other significant point in this regard is that what was recalled could include the minutest of detail, with impressive accuracy. For instance, consider the response of Ray Hamilton. On being asked what he remembered regarding recreational and sports activities at Lansdowne at first he responded with "no recall" and then he remembered the following:

Oh, I beg your pardon, ah it was September 39, no not September 39 but in the fall of 39 the Grey Cup was played in Ottawa between the Ottawa Rough Riders and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, remember that? [turning to his friend Mr. Acton] And I can recall... They erected all the bleachers and so on at the opposite end of the grandstand area and that was free entry for the men of the service who were then in Lansdowne Park, and that's all that I can recall.¹⁶¹

It is noteworthy to compare the detail in this remark to two entries found in the diary.

The first is dated November the 4th and states that, "the Ottawa Football Club has invited the troops to attend the game on Saturday November 4th, 1939 and occupy the bleachers at each end of the field." On December the 12th we find, "many officers and men attended the football game in p.m. The Winnipeg Blue Bombers beat the Ottawa Rough Riders by a score of 7 to 6; thereby killing Ottawa's hopes of being Dominion Champions for 1939."¹⁶²

The following two questions relate to expectations that the men had upon volunteering to serve: The first pertains to the rank they were assigned upon entering the service; the second considers when they expected to see action. Fifteen of these men were assigned

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Esmond Acton, Nov. 13th 2000.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Ray Hamilton, Nov. 13th 2000.

the rank of private when they enlisted, three were appointed corporals, Jim McManus was promoted to sergeant within the first month, and Roger Rowley was commissioned as a Lieutenant. Of these assignments fifteen men said they were satisfied with the initial rank they were assigned. From a further two the interview tapes do not indicate a clear response. But three men indicated that they were not satisfied with their initial rank assignment. All three had previous militia experience. In time all three did receive promotions.

Roger Rowley's remarks on this subject, perhaps, hint at a personal trait that motivates some men to seek promotion and not others. In September 1939 he was enlisted as a Lieutenant. He remained in the military for all of his working life and retired with the rank of Major General. He was asked, "Were you satisfied with that rank [Lieutenant]?" His response was "I've never been satisfied with that rank. There's always one on top [of] that I thought, figured I needed."¹⁶³

Graham Brown, who returned to join the Camerons in February 1940 because of his love of the pipes, accepted that as a member of the band he would remain as a private with no opportunity for promotion.¹⁶⁴ When asked if promotion was important to him his response advances a point not previously considered:

Obviously not, I made no attempt. As I found out later [in] life, that's the first thing they wanted to know when you applied for a job. [The attitude of the prospective employer often was] 'Oh was that as far as you got?... [I] never considered leaving the pipe band. I was happy doing that. I had no reason to believe that it would have any impact on my future life, but obviously it could have, had I been able

¹⁶² RG 24, Vol. 15,022 Nov. 4th and Dec. 9th 1939. This surprising degree of detail is consistent throughout the majority of these interviews. It is because of the war diaries and the detail that they record that a strong confidence, regarding the integrity and reliability of the interviews, is possible.

¹⁶³ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, trans. p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ The members of the band were a small group and the structure was such that the majority were privates with no opportunity for advancement. If promotion was important one would have to leave the band.

to say that I'd been an NCO or an officer or something like that.¹⁶⁵

Several recent historical works that reflect upon the expectations of Canadian troops when they volunteered for World War I, indicate the impatience of men to get into action.¹⁶⁶ In this case study the veterans were asked if they expected to see action soon.¹⁶⁷ Out of fifteen responses, eight said or implied yes, three said they didn't know what to expect, and four said no. For example Abby Nolan replied, "well we hoped. That was the main issue with everybody. They wanted to get overseas."¹⁶⁸ Marcel Guevin stated, "well everybody was anxious to travel and go."¹⁶⁹ Graham Brown's reply mirrored the concerns of World War I veterans when he stated, "some fellows were afraid it would be over before we got there. As I joined in February I didn't have time to worry."¹⁷⁰ Once again the war diary expands on our appreciation of how the troops felt. On the 30th of January 1940 the diarist notes the following:

There has been quite a bit of discontent among the men of the Regiment because of the enforced stay of the Unit in Canada. Having enlisted in September, they had anticipated being out of the country and doing extensive training in England before this. The Officer Commanding and Officers are doing their best to counteract this feeling in every way possible. There have been a great number of requests for transfers to other Units but practically everyone is without reason and they are not being considered.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. Four of the men interviewed in this study were members of the pipe band; besides Mr. Brown they were Allan Quinn, Fred Hicks and beginning in 1942, Frank Davis.

¹⁶⁶ Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1997) 115; Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 78.

¹⁶⁷ In hindsight it was realized that the word 'soon' is relative and not the most helpful in gaining a clear appreciation of what people expected. Fortunately most of the veterans qualified their answers.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Marcel Guevin, June 14th Sept. 9th 1999.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999.

¹⁷¹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 Jan. 30th 1940. Also see Regimental Orders, Part I, Jan. 29th 1940, Order No. 104 Topic – Transfers Other Ranks.

We now consider the question which solicited the most emphatic and unequivocal response of any in this study; the importance of friendship.¹⁷² All seventeen men who responded to this query gave a resounding yes—it was very important. In regards to the mobilization phase the following is offered. Robert Young from the valley community of Perth begins with this remark:

You made new friends when you joined the service. People that you never knew or seen before...like not being in the city before they were a little different too.¹⁷³

Ray Hamilton adds the following, “well we were all strangers...it didn’t take too long before the buddy system came into being.” The Interviewer then asks, “and I guess what I’m getting at was how important was that buddy system?”

It became pretty important. I remember with Larry Jones, we became the gold dust twins in later years. So if Larry would lie, I’d swear to it. That’s where the buddy system came in. Always knew where you were, why you were, what condition you were in, did you have any money, were you drunk the night before, etc.”¹⁷⁴

A diary entry for January 17th 1940 gives an explicit example to support Mr. Hamilton’s point. It cites a possible case of alcohol poisoning and states that the ill man was very agitated and kept calling out for his friend. “As soon as this man [his friend, Fern Lamothe] was in his presence he kept quiet and wanted to go to sleep.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, translation A. W. When (New York: Fawcett Crest, Seventh Printing, 1984, original printing 1928), 29. “So we were put through every conceivable refinement of parade-ground soldiering till we often howled with rage. Many of us became ill through it. Wolf actually died of inflammation of the lung. But we would have felt ridiculous had we hauled down our colours....But by far the most important result was that it awakened in us a strong practical sense of esprit de corps which in the field developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war, comradeship.” Page 87-89, 238.

¹⁷³ Interview with Robert Young, June 27th 1999.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Ray Hamilton, Nov. 13th 2000. Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 3, 5, 39; Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home & Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1975) 231.

¹⁷⁵ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 Jan. 17th 1940.

Allan Quinn gives us a sense of the long-term implications in a veteran's life of these friendships. The question asked is significant here and therefore we begin with the interviewer's query. Note that the topic under review is not specific to friendship.

That first ten months in Ottawa, that experience at Lansdowne, looking back at it...was it worthwhile to you as a starting [point]?

I would say so, yes because you made friends there; you made friends that lasted a lifetime. I still have friends who I was in the army with that I see almost every day of the week, Fred Hicks, Al Featherstonhaugh, two of the people that I see all of the time. And they were there, right from the start.¹⁷⁶

The vast literature that exists on the topic of men and war supports what these men have advanced; how crucial comradeship is to the average soldier.¹⁷⁷

On the topic of promotion the interviewees were asked if this was important to them.¹⁷⁸ Out of seventeen responses eleven men said no, five said yes, and one gentleman said not at the start, but it became so later. The following responses are reflective of the reasons for their respective positions. We begin with Fred Smith who states:

No, I didn't like being a corporal. I wanted to be one of the boys. I know I could of if I had wanted to soldier, I could have been

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999. Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript pgs. 12, 13. Mr. Latendresse also speaks at length on this issue citing a number of close friendships that he maintained up until recently, when death has parted all of them from him. The late Abby Nolan makes reference to contact he had all of his life with a good friend from New Brunswick. They sent yearly Christmas Cards and spent holidays together.

¹⁷⁷ Examples drawn from sources used in this research are Erich M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 29. Vance, *Death So Noble*, pgs 49, 77-80, 111; Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, pgs. 73,77, pictures, 240, 265; Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, pgs. 231; Terkel, *The Good War*, pgs. 5, 39, 60, 159, 175, 199, 272. Paul Fussell *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic* (Toronto: Little Brown & Company, 1996), 90 states, "at OGS I made no permanent friends and indeed I made none in the army." This is striking in that it appears to be highly unusual for a military person. Does it explain something significant regarding Fussell's writings?

¹⁷⁸ Nothing was found in the existing literature to specifically address the subject of promotion. RG 24 Vol. 15,024 Appendix #1 No. 4 Co. [misfiled material] Nov. 20th 1940 reference to P.S.M Ryan being promoted to C.S.M. but in another Company. He refused the promotion because he did not want to transfer and leave his present company.

a sergeant....I was a corporal about five times....they offered it to me just as the war ended, I said no.¹⁷⁹

Allan Featherstonhaugh adds the following, again returning to the importance of friendship:

Yes and no. Yes it was better being promoted because you were better positioned than when you were a private. But not really to me because I made friends eh. Like your dad there, him and I, we chummed together near all the time....¹⁸⁰

Both of these comments hint at the choice a soldier might have to make between friendship and promotion. Abby Nolan, who began as a corporal and was promoted to sergeant in Iceland, refers to this choice in the next remark. To appreciate the context of his comment, two questions are also cited:

Interviewer: Your friends and making new friends, was that an important aspect of the lifestyle for you?

Oh ya...but they used to frown on senior NCOs fraternizing with the lower ranks. Well I told them outright. I said, 'these are all my friends. If I want to fraternize, they're gonna maybe die with me.' And I said, like Roy Shea was like a brother to me. How the hell could I turn around and ignore him, you know. I told them straight. I said, 'If that's the way it is, take my stripes because' I said, 'I don't intend to ignore my friends.'

How did they respond?

They were pretty lenient. They understood. Gangs were coming in and they were all friends for years. Damn hard to ignore somebody that you thought the world of.¹⁸¹

Robert Young imparts another view also held by several of his peers:

Well, I didn't see anything particular that I was crazy about at all. I was there and I had to do it, and that was it. I wasn't

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Fred Smith, Nov. 24th 2000. William Horrocks, *In Their Own Words* (Ottawa: Rideau Veterans Home Residents Council, 1993), 186.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 28th 31st 1999. He is referring to my father, Earl McHugh. He and Allan were very good friends.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999. In Allan Featherstonhaugh's interview he was asked, "do you think ...you'd rather stay with your friends than be promoted?" His response, "Oh yes, if it come to that."

out for to roar at somebody else either. I didn't like to be that, and I didn't expect to want to do it to somebody else either. But somebody had to be a sergeant and so on.¹⁸²

On a previous query Mr. Young had mentioned that he “never did like anybody yelling, roaring at me to do this or do that. Some of them were just in their glory when they got their big mouths going, motor mouths I'd say.”

This brings us to the all-important topic of the officer-soldier relationship, which is discussed in the existing literature on both World Wars.¹⁸³ The question asked of these veterans was simple and direct; what was their impression of their leadership? This question was asked regarding the initial mobilization phase and again repeated with some veterans in relation to the Iceland posting. It immediately became apparent that most veterans were guarded and very careful in choosing their words when giving their reply. The typical response was, ‘some were good and some were not.’¹⁸⁴ Out of respect for the position of these veterans, a brief introduction was subsequently added when presenting this query. It was mentioned that this was a standard question, asked of all veterans, and did they wish to make any comments.¹⁸⁵ In general the view shared was that the majority among the leadership at Lansdowne Park were seen to be ‘good.’ It should be noted that the word ‘leadership’ may be interpreted to mean officers and, or non commissioned officers. Depending on a person's frame of reference this could

¹⁸² Interview with Robert Young, June 27th 1999. Studs Terkel, *The Good War*, 378. Interview with Richard Leacock, “Could very easily have become an officer....I didn't want to tell somebody else how to get killed....I didn't want to be the guy telling other guys what to do.”

¹⁸³ Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up*; Stephen Harris, *Canadian Brass*, pgs. 119, 120; Studs Terkel, *The Good War*, 43, 67.

¹⁸⁴ Out of 16 responses 7 were of this nature.

¹⁸⁵ This would allow for the situation where it was important for a veteran to express his views while not making other men feel obliged or uncomfortable by not contributing.

include a range of positions from corporal to the Commanding Officer of the unit. For an appreciation of this topic we have the counsel of private Graham Brown:

I think a soldier can pick out the good ones and the bad ones, you know -not necessarily the bad ones but...There are some officers that can exert discipline and yet you like them. Roger Rowley was one like that. He could bawl you out but you took it. Other guys would, we had a young officer in the battalion who used to go out drinking with the boys and we had no respect for him at all. So you appreciated the discipline but there was a certain way of giving it that you either thought he was a good officer or something else again.¹⁸⁶

Roger Rowley was among a number of officers who were often mentioned with the utmost of respect during these interviews. It is most fortunate that Mr. Rowley is one of the veterans who agreed to be interviewed and we may now turn to him for his views on this topic.

The officer-soldier relationship is terribly important. Ah, we used to have a thing called, the platoon afternoon. Every Wednesday we had the whole [afternoon], after the mid-day meal, with your platoon.¹⁸⁷ And it was called a make and mend situation. Where they had to turn out their gear and you inspected it and if their socks needed some, [mending], you supervised it while they got their gear in good shape. And we also had during that period [an opportunity to], bring them up to date on what was going on in the world...each platoon commander had his little book and every soldier in his platoon had a page [clapping of one hand against the other for emphasis] and you knew who he was, what his wife's name was, how many kids he had. All of this stuff in the platoon. As a platoon officer I had a book like that on every man in my platoon. And so did everybody else. I mean there wasn't anything **unique** about Roger Rowley there. Everybody did it. And you brought them up to date on the current war situation or if there was something that you needed to tell them, you did it during that Wednesday afternoon. And da, you made sure that they darned their socks and did all [that], you know you were kind of a granny situation. But ta, it was a marvelous thing, because I knew **everything** about every man in my platoon. So did all the officers....well I think it was [an important responsibility] to every fella if he was worth his salt. And da, like they really were

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3, 1999.

¹⁸⁷ See Table 4 entitled Syllabus of Training. Confirming Mr. Rowley's recollection, Wednesday afternoon is set aside for what is called 'recreational training.' It should be noted that at the time of this interview Mr. Rowley was 86 years of age and reflecting back over 60 years. This is another example to show the capability of the long term memory and how age is not necessarily an impediment to excellent recall.

proud of their officers, I think. And I was sure as hell proud of my guys.
Always was.....¹⁸⁸

In summary to this phase of the interview, two final questions were asked of these veterans regarding the mobilization period. First, did they view this period at Lansdowne as being of value to them on the long term—in the context of their total war experience. Only in listening to the individual tapes may one gain an appreciation of the thoughtful consideration given to questions such as this. All of the men interviewed served for the duration of the war with the exception of George Latendresse. He was injured in September 1944 and subsequently lost his arm. He was returned home in January of 1945. Although the extent of the battle experience of these veterans was not directly questioned, a review of the interviews confirms that it was indeed extensive and involved the most difficult battles in Western Europe.¹⁸⁹ Of the seventeen responses, fifteen veterans said yes; because of the drill, conditioning, instilling of discipline and the bonding and development of comradeship the period at Lansdowne was viewed as valuable in their development.¹⁹⁰ Of the two who said no, one was George Latendresse

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Roger Rowley on June 20th 2000, transcript pgs. 12-14. Several repetitive words have been omitted and the bold print indicates verbal emphasis found on the tape. One example will serve to highlight what the qualities of a fine officer were, as defined by these veterans. A number of veterans remembered Joseph William Courtright. He was killed on the 8th of June 1944 during the Normandy Campaign. He had worked his way up the ranks and had received his commission as a lieutenant in November 1940, while in Iceland. A number of men cited 'Joe Courtright' as an example of the opportunities that did exist for men in the services. It was in the interview with George Banning where specifics related to the type of man and officer Joe Courtright was that allow us to understand why Captain Courtright is still remembered, and highly respected by the men he served with. Mr. Banning was discussing the landing on the beaches of Normandy on June 6th 1944. "...that's when we caught up with Joe, Mr. Courtright and all that. And as bad as it was...[well we called him 'starling Joe.' The machine gun, that was your life, as far as Joe was concerned. Working on the machine gun was more important than getting your meal, as far as he was concerned.] But you know, the old bugger he had like, we were in water, our socks were wet and boots. He had dry socks for us and he even had a chocolate bar for each one of us. He had carried it in for us, in his pack.He was our captain [C Company] all the way through....quite the guy...he was fair....he was military....Couldn't ask for a better guy than Joe Courtright....

¹⁸⁹ Also see the regimental history for this unit, R. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.)* (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1947).

¹⁹⁰ Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Can. Ltd. 1974) 38. Author Broadfoot, based on his extensive interviews conducted with World

who joined only in June of 1940 and therefore his few weeks at Lansdowne did not permit enough time for development. Of the second veteran who said no, the following explanation was given. We begin with the question as posed:

On the long term, that initial phase in Ottawa, do you feel that it gave you the basics, when you think back to that initial nine, ten months?

No because a lot of this you've got to experience under fire before you realize what's going on. You don't know things. You don't know enough...experience does a lot for you when you have to do it and your life is depending on it, boy you'll hug the ground... you learn very quickly...¹⁹¹

What Mr. David's answer points out is the prism of experience through which a question is refracted has a great deal to do with the response.

The second question asked was when they left Ottawa on May 24th 1940, were they still satisfied with their decision to join? Of the fifteen responses recorded, thirteen were an emphatic 'yes.' The replies of the remaining two veterans will be considered individually. Stanley Joynt, the eldest of the interviewees is a well liked and highly respected Cameron veteran. A lifelong member of the Cameron Association, in the year 2000 he was recognized by the City of Ottawa for his service to the community. When he volunteered in September of 1939 he was newly married, and by the time he left Ottawa in May of 1940 he and his wife Jean were expecting their first child. Mr. Joynt responded with the following when asked, "were you still satisfied with your decision to join at the time that you left Ottawa?"

War II veterans, comes to a similar conclusion; "all those hours and days and weeks of training, apparently meaningless, all came together."

¹⁹¹ Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999.

You have absolutely no choice. Once you get on the boat, on the train, you're gonna go whether you like it or not. You have no choice. The only way you could quit is if you fell off the boat, or the train. When you joined you knew you would have to stay and do your job, couldn't quit.¹⁹²

Stanley Joynt's response presents an image which has repeatedly surfaced during this research; that of the volunteer as a prisoner and without the option of choice. Although it should be made clear that not a single veteran portrayed himself in such terms, for this researcher the image has been striking and prevalent. Through the testimonies and the photographs, images of high wire fences¹⁹³ and words such as *no choice*, *all fenced in*, *locked in*, *gated up* have created an impression of men who became prisoners of the military system, once they had 'volunteered' to serve. This theme will be returned to later in this work.¹⁹⁴

The second response that we will now consider is that of Robert Young. The quote includes several questions by the interviewer. Mr. Young's reply is honest and straightforward:

No, I thought it was the most crazy thing I ever did in my life. Cause after I got in the army I seen the way they used you and what they done and this and that. It wasn't to my liking whatsoever.

Interviewer: Did you try and get out?

No I didn't. I thought, well my brother was there and I'd see it through.

Interviewer: And what about your brother, do you know if he felt the same way?

No, he never voiced his opinion that way.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Interview with Stanley Joynt, June 1, 1999. The topic of 'choice' is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁹³ See Appendix 7 Photograph Collection. Note the high fence in the Lansdowne scene of May 24th 1940.

¹⁹⁴ Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 165. "The camp is surrounded with high barbed-wire fences."

The subject of Canada's lack of preparation to join the war effort has been discussed and debated for over half a century. What the present review brings forward is how some of the soldiers who had to deal with those limitations viewed their situation and coped. In summation we now turn to comments made by Roger Rowley. His position was that of a junior officer at the time under review. By war's end he was a Commanding Officer on the front line.¹⁹⁶ These facts, as well as his later rank of Major General in the Canadian Armed Forces makes him a most reputable source to offer an overview on the mobilization phase for the Cameron men of the 1st Battalion. Both a number of the queries made during the interview and Mr. Rowley's responses will be stated. Several of these questions were unique to this interview. Although perhaps lengthier than what is normally quoted, Mr. Rowley's opinions are viewed to be of inestimable value in this review.¹⁹⁷

Interviewer: The period in Ottawa, that nine months you spent at Lansdowne, ahm, if I asked you if you enjoyed that period of your experience [Mr. Rowley breaks in at this point]

Ya, ask me that. Yes I did.

Interviewer: Can you tell me why?

Well because it was rewarding. These guys worked like hell. They were all volunteers. They all knew what they were in for. They worked with whatever they had. And I, I tell, you know having explained this grotesque character in World War I riding britches with a blue stripe going down the side and puttees and a doublet, if he was lucky, and a Glengarry hat on top of his head. I mean, come on, it's got to be...pretty hard nosed to go along with that. But you don't look like a soldier. But these guys were crashing and banging on the parade square and doing all the right stuff and they

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Robert Young, June 27, 1999.

¹⁹⁶ His position as Lieutenant Colonel was with another Canadian regiment.

¹⁹⁷ Roger Rowley was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Military Science, from the Royal Military College. This was as a result of his work that saw a complete overhaul of the College's curricula related to the training of professional officers in Canada. The report came forward as the Rowley Report. See Interview with R. Rowley, conducted by Aloma Jardine, July 22nd 1999. Tape, video and transcript available through the Museum of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa at the Cartier Square Drill Hall in Ottawa.

were keen. And they were good, as history records....¹⁹⁸

Interviewer: That nine months in Ottawa at Lansdowne, thinking back, on the long term was it of value?

Well let me put it this way... There were no other options. If you wanted to stay and go to war as a soldier, that's where you had to be. And it was the same for everybody. I mean, there weren't any options. You were either a soldier and you went where you were told. And you made the best of it. And that's the criteria.

Interviewer: The training that you were able to get in Ottawa, at Lansdowne, in spite of a lack of equipment and da

Yes, of course it was useful. It built the regiment. It tied it all up into one efficient organization where every man, by that time, was beginning to know what he had to do....and I'm gonna tell ya something...when we,...when that regiment walked through the city of Ottawa, on a march, like to the station to leave, it was something else....

Interviewer: I'd just like to get your opinion. You have probably, as I have, seen some historians' works where they reflect on Canada, how ill prepared we were for war...[Mr. Rowley breaks in at this point]

We could hardly, let me answer that question before you go any further. We could hardly have been in worse shape [reflective pause] to go and fight for our country. The goods weren't there. The people weren't there. The equipment wasn't there. The uniforms weren't there. I mean it was a mess. And the regular forces, such as they were, like the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Princess Patricia's, the Royal 22nd were **first class soldiers, absolutely first class**. And they trained us, and a lot of those non-commissioned officers were commissioned straight away, and sent out to the units to help train them. What army we had before the war was absolutely first class.¹⁹⁹ They trained all of us. They got us ready for war, which was a small miracle because we had nothing. And they were so small, but they were terrific.

Interviewer: So by the time you left Lansdowne do you feel you had

¹⁹⁸ In an earlier interview, Mr. Rowley was asked if it was prestigious to be part of the Camerons? His response reflects on the total war experience. Roger Rowley did serve with other units as well. "...they couldn't have been any better. They were the best-dressed, the most sternly disciplined, and obedient, and they were proud, proud guys. They were so proud of their unit. And they were the best. And they looked better than anybody else. There was none of this stuff with hats on the back of their heads you know and their battle dresses open when they shouldn't be and stuff like that. They were a top-line unit. I was always very proud of them." Interview conducted by Aloma Jardine. Material held at the Museum of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, Cartier Square Drill Hall.

¹⁹⁹ Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*, 3.

a, considering, a decent start...?

Well we had as good a start as this country could provide, let me put it that way. It was far below the, above the zero mark but it wasn't anywhere near the top. But we were well disciplined. Ah we knew what we were doing and we were doing it well. And da, you know that all of this is very different from battle. [little chuckle]²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript pgs. 16-18.

CHAPTER 3

“BABY TAKE DOWN THE WALLPAPER, WE’RE MOVING!”²⁰¹

Those of us born after the war do not ‘understand’ the sentiments, immediacy, even aspirations of wartimes. With a sense of logic and reason that derives from our own experiences we attempt to assess what is, in reality, beyond our realm of reference. In Timothy Findley’s *The Wars*, a principal character, Lady D’Orsey gives the following advice that seems appropriate to this work:

You live when you live.
 No one else can ever live your life
 and no one else will ever know what you know.
 Then was then. Unique.
 And how does one explain?
 You had a war.²⁰²

The solution to this dilemma is to allow our reflective vision to be adjusted and colored by those who lived in past times. For Canadian baby boomers and later generations the word ‘war’ denotes brutality, destruction, fear and unspeakable pain. It is unlikely that a single soldier interviewed in this study would take exception with the association of each of these words with ‘his war.’ But war may be associated with other words too; important words like duty, adventure, sharing, comrades, honour, integrity, fairness, courage, love and other—peoples, cultures, languages, lands. As this work now prepares to move beyond Canada, it is important that we are cognizant of this point.

This chapter will discuss the five-week period beginning with the battalion’s departure from Lansdowne Park in Ottawa until their arrival in Iceland. Three queries direct this assessment: How did the men feel when it came time to leave their home community?

²⁰¹ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. He is referring to an expression used by Fred Burgess in Headquarters Company when the battalion was moving from one location to another.

And, it is suggested that part of this can be explained by the veterans, but a portion of our understanding must come from an appreciation of the context in which they ‘took their leave.’ The second query relates to their five weeks in Borden and what was noteworthy during this period. And third, what was the voyage like on the cruise ship, *The Empress of Australia*? These issues will also allow an opportunity to address two themes of this thesis: the allegiance to one’s regiment and the aspect of ‘choice’ in military service.

It seems to be the common experience of soldiers not to know where they are going when they are moved.²⁰³ Graham Brown makes a humorous comment in this regard.

There’s always people in the regiment who seem to have their ear to the ground and always know what is happening. Fred Burgess in Headquarters Company always knew what was happening. Another fellow, Art Beckworth [was known as baby and we’d hear] ‘baby take down the wallpaper were moving’ bellowed across the camp. And sure enough we’d get the orders that we were moving.²⁰⁴

In this situation the men did know they were on route to Borden for additional training, prior to going overseas. As voiced by Allan Quinn, “we knew we were going to Borden for training. We had hoped we wouldn’t be too long once the training was finished.”²⁰⁵ The young man’s eagerness to move on, and exasperation with waiting, is difficult for us to comprehend today. But undeniable evidence of the eager anticipation felt by the troops is offered, both by the veterans and in the war diary.²⁰⁶ Only one man interviewed recalled any distress regarding his departure from Ottawa. On the contrary, they were finally on their way. Allan Featherstonhaugh explains:

²⁰² Timothy Findley, *The Wars* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company limited, 1977), 115. Robert Collins, *You Had To Be There: An Intimate Portrait of the Generation that Survived the Depression, Won the War, and Re-Invented Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997) See preface quote and chapter II.

²⁰³ Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home & Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1974) 335.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999.

²⁰⁵ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999.

²⁰⁶ This topic was reviewed in the previous chapter. See war diary references RG 24, Vol. 15,022 January 30th 1940 and Regimental Orders, Part I Jan. 29th 1940 No. 111 ‘transfers, other ranks.’

Interviewer: Do you remember how you felt when you left Ottawa?

Well we were moving...Everybody was happy. Come on let's go, no matter where were going, get the hell out of this place here, people living in the hen house and pig pen, you know.

Interviewer: Did you feel badly about leaving family and that? No, no

Interviewer: Were you worried about never coming home?

Oh, never thought of that. No that's one thing you don't, cause if you do, you wouldn't live.²⁰⁷

Lou Guertin was the one veteran to recall feelings of anxiety and disappointment.

It was in the evening, and we were going to board the trains. And we were going to Camp Borden...ya the family was there you know. And you're looking at em and you want to smile but the NCOs are barking at you, you know, 'pick up the step!' and ahm, ya it's a lot of time, a long time ago but I still remember the, the feeling in your stomach about that....

The only thing that I really resented, and I do to this day, was that when we marched from Lansdowne Park to the Union Station to board trains, we had some men doing detention for having got drunk and they were marched up there in handcuffs.

Interviewer: Is that right?...

Ya [softly] Now I wasn't one of them. [noticeable sigh—emotion in the voice] But I can imagine how they must of felt if any of their family was there.²⁰⁸

We now consider accounts of the parting of the Camerons from their families and their community. Although during their short stay in Borden some men did meet again with family members, either in Borden or on a weekend pass back home, for most this was their final goodbye.²⁰⁹ The war diary offers a poignant description:

Tonight the Battalion formed up on the parade ground for what we imagine will be the last parade here for quite some time. Full marching order was carried and at 2000 hours we swung out of the barracks starting a mile and a half march to the Union Station along the Driveway which was lined on both sides the full distance by people waiting to

²⁰⁷ Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 28th and 31st 1999.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21st, 27th and Aug. 3rd 2000, transcript pgs. 20, 21.

²⁰⁹ The majority of the Camerons, who were not lost in battle, returned in the latter months of 1945.

see the boys leave. Crowds that lined the route multiplied the numbers of those already present on the Plaza and the vicinity of the Station. All in all it was a magnificent send off, and one of which any regiment could feel proud. Twenty minutes or so before the train actually left, the station gates were opened and relatives and friends of the officers and men were permitted to come onto the station platform. Finally the train pulled out about 2130 hours. As is usual with most troop trains the final scenes were very moving. The train rapidly gathered speed and we were on our way to Borden.²¹⁰

The two Ottawa newspapers devoted extensive coverage to the Cameron's departure, including front-page photographs.²¹¹ A review of the newspaper articles aids in our comprehension of this experience, from the perspective of those who lived it. By the words chosen and the sentiments expressed we are offered a window into the past.²¹² The following is a sample of excerpts from the coverage of *The Ottawa Journal*:

²¹⁰ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 May 24th 1940. See appendix 7.

²¹¹ *The Ottawa Evening Journal* Saturday, May 25th 1940 shows a large photograph of two handsome young Cameron men in full uniform with the title, 'Brothers-in-Arms' and the caption, "Lieut. Roger Rowley, left, and his brother, Captain John Rowley, photographed at Lansdowne Park last night immediately before parading with their unit, the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (M.G.) who left for Camp Borden. They are the sons of Mrs. Rowley of Ottawa and the late W. H. Rowley." The placement of this photograph and its size imply that it was considered by the editor to represent that day's major story. See Glen R. Wilkinson, "At the Coal-Face of History: Personal Reflections on Using Newspapers as a Source," *Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History, 1995 Annual* Greenwood Publishing, 1997, 215, 218; William A. Hachten, *The Troubles of Journalism: A Critical Look at What's Right and Wrong With the Press* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998) 2.

²¹² In preparation for this thesis undertaking, the use of newspapers as a source was a subject of research for this student under the tutelage of Professor Gaffield. Roberto Franzosi, "The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers," *Historical Methods* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter 1987): 6; Catherine L. Covert, "Jumbled, Disparate, and Trivial: Problems in the Use of Newspapers as Historical Evidence," *The Maryland Historian* Vol. 12, No. 1 (1981), 47 where the author states, "Recently the press has assumed new importance for social and cultural historians intent on clarifying the historical experience of ordinary individuals. Few paths lead back to that obscure terrain." Jennifer Tebbe, "Print and American Culture," *American Culture* Vol 32 (1980), 259. Brings forward the old axiom that what a society writes, publishes, and reads is a guide to its culture; Wilkinson, "At the Coal-Face of History," 214-216. Wilkinson makes the point that often newspapers are more representative of a larger group than other sources such as personal papers, government documents or diaries. He identifies the importance of newspapers if one is in need of assessing the mood of the country or cultural practices; David L. Eason, "The New Social History of the Newspaper," *Communication Research* Vol. 11, No. 1 (January 1984), 149. An important contribution that newspapers can make is specifically because they are not written for the benefit of historical analysis or posterity. Their focus is on the present and attracting the interest of present-day readers. Although they may not entirely reflect the society of their day, in order to survive they certainly would have to find a degree of acceptance within their readership. In the case of *The Ottawa Journal* extensive research was undertaken regarding the editors of this local newspaper. It would appear that the citizens of Ottawa had a most respected and ethical individual, Gratton O'Leary, at the helm of their major daily during the war years. See Norman I Smith, *The Journal Men: P.D. Ross, E. Norman*

In the gathering dusk and under graying skies, the Cameron Highlanders Of Ottawa (M.G.) swung into Union Station Friday night, the first of three units from Ottawa Area Command to entrain for new centers.... Thousands of relatives, and friends thronged Union Station on its approaches to bid farewell to the Highlanders. Their approaches was heralded by the pipers skirling 'Happy We've Been All Together.' As the long column marching in threes proudly marched over the bridge to Union Station "The March of the Cameron Men' was played....

The Highlanders under Lieut. Colonel G. H. Rogers entered the waiting trains, which stretched almost to Laurier Avenue bridge before the general public was admitted to the platforms. When the signal was given hundreds of people surged through the gates to say their farewells, bringing smokes and other gifts to their loved ones....

Experienced observers believed that the gathering was one of the most spontaneous and demonstrative in the history of Ottawa....

When the warning whistle was sounded people were asked to stand clear of the cars. They did so with reluctance. Then the troop train moved slowly out amid cheers and tears. As the engine gathered speed Highlanders waved frantically until the last car disappeared in the darkness.²¹³

Veteran Chummy Lacroix renders a touching, as well as humorous account of his parting with his parents at Union Station on this evening. His brother Arthur was also leaving with the Camerons. The question asked is, did Mr. Lacroix inform his parents before he volunteered?

I guess they knew.

Interviewer: Did they say anything?

Not at the moment. But when we left Ottawa though. Oh [pause] at the Union Station there. The old man come along to me, give me \$5.00. He says, 'don't, don't tell your mother [whisper] or anybody bout that.' I said 'okay.' Arthur got the same from him and then he turned around, you know, and he's kind of, not crying, but kind of. Then my mother come over. She had a five. She said, 'don't tell your father.' Give me a \$5.00 Give a \$5.00 to Arthur. And the best of all is the weekend after we managed to get a taxi.

Smith and Gratton O'Leary of The Ottawa Journal (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1974), 151-154. Page 62, "For years *The Journal* had been the most quoted editorial page in Canada."

²¹³ *The Ottawa Journal* Saturday May 25th 1940, pages 3, 22. Also see the *Ottawa Evening Citizen* Saturday May 25th 1940, front page and page 9.

Put six of us in a taxi and we had about three taxis, from Camp Borden. We took that taxi, he brought us to Ottawa.²¹⁴

Although the press coverage indicates a large throng was on hand to see the Camerons off, it also mentions that the general public was not aware that the troops were to leave that night. A diary extract from the writings of Marjorie Roud, wife of Cameron Bill Roud relates her experience as she frantically tries to say goodbye to her husband:²¹⁵

Your dad had heard the troops were moving out and I had hoped to see you at least once before you left. My sister May looked after the kids and your Mom and I headed for Smiths Falls hoping to see you. What a trip! I'm sick every 5 miles; 'my God I'm pregnant.' No time for that, we are going to miss the train. There it is; we see George on board and you and he are buddies but where are you? Gone on the other line. Everyone is shouting their goodbyes and heading for Brockville hoping to catch the other train but I can't. I'm too sick, 'just get me home, it's too late.'²¹⁶

It is in this act of 'taking leave' that two themes now rise to the forefront in this thesis: the allegiance to one's regiment²¹⁷ and the view of the volunteer as having lost their

²¹⁴ Interview with C. Lacroix June 24th 1999. Brother Arthur did not return from the war.

²¹⁵ Jean Bruce, *Back the Attack: Canadian Women During the Second World War—at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1985), 2. Because of war censorship regarding the movement of troops, not knowing when your spouse would leave was 'a fact of life' for wives.

²¹⁶ Marjorie Roud, "Time Capsule." Thanks to Marjorie's daughter, Mrs. Elaine Green for permission to quote from Mrs. Roud's writings. A paper entitled "World War Two: The Story of Three Wives Who Waited for their Soldier-Husbands to Return" held by the Department of History at the University of Ottawa addresses the situation of waiting wives. [It is possible that Marjorie's trip to say good-bye to her husband was made when the troops were transported from Borden at the end of June, and not in May.]

²¹⁷ Other expressions that refer to the same sentiment are 'esprit de corps' and regimental spirit and the morale of the regiment. Richard Ross, *the History of the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)* (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1947) 10. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 140. "It took me darn near a whole war to figure what I was fighting for, reports one soldier. It was the other guy. Your outfit, the guys in your company, but especially your platoon..." Pages 143, 144, 150. Morale is defined. There are two understandings. One relates to a definition from 1936, Webster's Collegiate Dictionary – "Condition as affected by or dependent upon, such mental or moral factors as zeal, spirit, hope, confidence etc; mental state, as of an army. In the 1951 revised edition the word takes on a greater meaning. "Prevailing mood and spirit, conducive to willing and dependable performance, steady self-control, and courageous determined conduct despite danger and privations, based upon a conviction of being in the right and on the way to success and upon faith in the cause or program and in the leadership, usually connoting, esp. when qualified by the adjective high, a confident, aggressive, resolute, often buoyant, spirit of wholehearted co-operation in a common effort, often attended particularly by zeal, self sacrifice or indomitableness. Lt. Col. C. J. Corrigan, "The Demise of Military Ehtos: The Canadian Military-An Institution Devalued?" (M.A. Thesis, King's College, London, 1997), 3, 8. Quote from General Sir Micheal Rose, "No matter how just the cause, soldiers do not die for the UN. They die for their comrades – their section, platoon/troop, battalion/regiment, and country – in that order."

freedom of 'choice' in military service. The preceding excerpts, as well as R. Rowley's previous remarks regarding his pride in this regiment, offer evidence of the honour awarded these men through their membership in the unit.²¹⁸ In the newspaper excerpts references to the Highland pipe band were made. Four of the interviewees in this study were proud members of the band. Wherever the Camerons were, their music was a fundamental aspect of their persona. Nowhere is this more striking and the implications more obvious than when this battalion landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6th 1944. As Roger Rowley explains:

The boss [Lt. Col.] he landed in the morning with his piper, Sammy Scott, who was our pipe major. And he landed in his kilt, Sam Scott did, playing *The March of the Cameron Men*, on the beach. Believe me, that was something.²¹⁹

We now consider the theme of 'choice in service', the view of the volunteer as prisoner.²²⁰ [Once again, please note that this is an interpretation drawn by this researcher and not necessarily supported by the interviewees.] For a period of time before troops were moved they were routinely 'locked in' or 'gated in.' War diary references are made to this action before their departure in Ottawa and again in Borden. Also these words are heard during the interviews.²²¹ George Latendresse was part of the reinforcement group that joined up with the Camerons prior to their sailing to Iceland. In the telling of his story of departure from Ottawa in June of 1940 we are allowed an

²¹⁸ The newspaper coverage makes frequent reference to the past war honors and the lineage accorded the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa. Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 199. Interview with John Ciardi. "I don't think it was patriotism. It think it was a certain amount of pride. The unit was the crew. You belong to eleven men. You're trained together, you're bound together." Lt. Col. Corrigan, *The Demise of Military Ethos*, 20. In his thesis Colonel Corrigan reflects on what happened when the Canadian military created one force with one uniform and one rank structure. "However, in discarding the open symbols of pride, customs and traditions, acquired over three centuries and forged in battle, much of the proud heritage, tradition, esprit, ethos, and resultant military operational effectiveness has been irretrievably lost."

²¹⁹ Interview with Roger Rowley, conducted by Aloma Jardine, July 22, 1999. Tape, transcript and video held in the museum of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, Cartier Square Drill Hall, Ottawa.

²²⁰ Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, 337, 338.

understanding of what being 'gated in' could mean. George had thought he would be in Ottawa at least six months before being shipped out. In fact he had less than one month.

Interviewer: Did you know what day you'd be leaving? Did you have advance notice?

Yes...we were fenced in for about a week. They wouldn't let anybody out of the place...the first weekend we had a weekend. We hitchhiked to Renfrew, then it was a piece of cake to hitchhike. If you had a uniform on now anybody and everybody would pick you up....Then the next weekend we thought we'd get up but they said no way, you know like. So they kept everybody in barracks. Because we were gonna load on and I guess they didn't want any of us leaving and not coming back eh. [laugh]

Interviewer: When you left, were any of your family [there]? Did they come down? How did that work?

Ya, they came down...when I couldn't go, come up to see the family. They came down that Sunday and we were talking through the fence eh. And da, that's the last I saw of them for just about five years, well four and a half years.

Interviewer: I'm going to just step back here to something you just said. We were talking through the fence...Were you able, actually, to come around that fence?

No, no we were just on the side of the fence and the gates were locked And you couldn't get out eh....

Interviewer: So if you were locked in and you said the fence was between you, so that means you couldn't even come around and give your mother a hug?

No, no you just kind of put your finger through a hole and [pause] that was it.²²²

²²¹ These are common words heard frequently in the interviews. Refer to interviews with R. Rowley, S. Joynt, and G. Latendresse for examples.

²²² Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript pgs. 8-10. See interview with Stan Joynt for a similar reference when he said goodbye to his pregnant wife 'through the fence' at Lansdowne. Also available are Mrs. Joynt's feelings regarding this parting where she also mentions the fence. See tape #155 held in the Department of History, University of Ottawa. At this point in the interview schedule this interviewer was already listening for references to being locked in. This is an ideal example to point out how an interviewer cannot separate who they are from the act of conducting oral history research. Being the mother of two young adult sons and sitting across from this veteran who has lived all of his adult life with only one arm, one reality struck me with profound meaning. After that parting at the fence, George Latendresse would never again have the opportunity to hug his mother 'with both arms.'

At the outset of this research it was presumed that with the act of volunteering a man retained the right to change his mind and opt out of the service. This was an incorrect assumption. As Graham Brown explained, “oh no way, you couldn’t leave. No, no leaving wasn’t an option. If you weren’t happy, too bad.”²²³

The story of Franklin Davis allows us to consider the full implications of what it meant to volunteer for World War II. In order to appreciate his story a few remarks regarding the man and the context of the interview are required. Frankly Davis is a most pleasant and agreeable gentleman who resides with his wife in the community of Almonte. During the course of his interview one could still ‘hear’ in Mr. Davis’ voice, the young man’s determination to comply with the army structure, as well as the awe struck wonder regarding the landscape and cultural differences presented by his posting in Iceland. In no respect did he intimate the slightest reservations regarding his past military service. Beginning in 1942 he was a member of the Cameron regimental pipe band, a role he very much enjoyed. Today he is still involved with community bands.

At the close of this interview, as the tape was being allowed to ‘run out’ we were discussing Mr. Davis’ employment after his war service. He explained that he did not take over the family farm because it had been sold. He then went on to tell how his mother had died in early 1940 from cancer. She was sixty-one years old. At the time he was stationed at Lansdowne and was able to attend her funeral. He was not aware that she had cancer when he volunteered for service. After his mother’s death his father then

²²³ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. As this researcher had difficulty accepting this, the point was brought up with other veterans. Many other interviewees patiently explained that there was ‘absolutely’ no way out. See for example discussion with A. Featherstonhaugh, May 28th 31st 1999. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 282. For every front-line soldier there is the “slowly dawning and dreadful realization that

needed his son's help on the farm. Franklin had no siblings and his parents had assumed the care of a handicapped brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Mr. Davis' family hired a lawyer in order to persuade the authorities to release him from his war commitment. Mr. Davis stated that they even had 'high placed people speaking on my behalf.' Yet in spite of his father's sixty-five years and having the sole responsibility of the farm, as well as the care of his handicapped brother-in-law and sister-in-law, the military would not agree to release his son from duty. In approximately 1942 the elder Mr. Davis died of a heart attack. Franklin was stationed in England and his father had already been buried before he learned of his father's death. Because of the needs of his aunt and uncle, Mr. Davis agreed that the farm could be sold. When Franklin Davis returned to his home base at Lansdowne Park, after the war, the family farm was gone. All of his family's household possessions had been auctioned off. When asked if there was anyone waiting there to meet him, he responded with a quiet 'no.' He said he called a friend to come and pick him up.

Perhaps what is most revealing about this sad affair is that Mr. Davis never brought it up during the interview. At no point had he expressed any personal regrets regarding his decision to volunteer. It would appear that Mr. Davis' sense of duty and his attitude of making the best of things tempered his reaction. Do we understand and appreciate these selfless qualities in our veterans?

The main party of the Camerons traveled overnight on the train to Borden on May 25th 1940. The war diary records that they arrived at 0630 hours after a rather uncomfortable train journey. We read in the diary that, "drizzling rain started just as we arrived.

there was no way out..." This did lead to self-inflicted injuries. There is evidence that this occurred in

However the men were in excellent spirits.”²²⁴ Later, on the 28th of June they embarked on trains, once again, for their journey to Halifax to board the awaiting, *Empress of Australia*.

The veterans were asked why they went to Borden; specifically, “what training did they give you in Borden that they couldn’t give you here in Ottawa, do you know?”²²⁵

Allan Quinn explains:

Well ah machine gun practice, anti aircraft gun practice, throwing grenades. There’s no place in Ottawa that you can do that I don’t think. There may be now but at that time there was nothin in Ottawa to take care of shooting of firearms of any kind, really. They had a rifle range down at the back of the Drill Hall but all you could fire there was 22s. At Connaught Ranges there was a rifle range there. You could do small arms there but nothing big, nothing at all.

Roger Rowley, when asked the same question, responded with the following:

Oh you couldn’t do anything in Ottawa. You couldn’t deploy...by that I mean you, you could have a mock battle at Borden, a wonderful training area where you say the enemy is there and were gonna go here and were gonna open up flanking fire and you know, and deploy. We had never been able to deploy. All we were able to do in Ottawa was square bashing and putting a Vicker’s machine gun on the floor, well come on!...ya but it didn’t last long enough for us to do much of that... and we didn’t have our guns....²²⁶

Of the month spent in Borden there appears to be one overriding image that has remained with these veterans—that of sand. We return to Allan Quinn’s remarks. The question posed, “was the time in Borden long enough to get what you needed?”

Well it was a good place to get out of. No, no it was terrible. You’re miles away from anything. You’re completely isolated. Sand, completely sandy. We were living in tents at that time. It was terrible.²²⁷

Fred Hicks offers us the following thoughts regarding Borden:

Iceland as well.

²²⁴ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 May 25, 1940. Again reaffirming the mood of the troops as they left their home base.

²²⁵ Question taken from the interview with Mr. Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999.

²²⁶ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript pgs. 20, 21.

²²⁷ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999.

We didn't have any idea how long we were going to be in Borden. The high echelon might have known but they never told us. We used to have what they used to call forced route marches there. We'd go out and march all night. And da, boy I'll tell ya we did some walking around that place in the sand.

Interviewer: Did it help?

Ya it helped.²²⁸

Franklin Davis adds a comment that perhaps best explains why the memory of the sand has remained. We begin with the question asked. Also note his response in relation to his personal story previously recounted.

Interviewer: When you left Ottawa were you still happy with your decision to join? Oh ya.

Interviewer: You didn't think it was a big mistake?

The only place I didn't like was Borden. Ahh [pause] we're in tents then. And, it was all sand up there. Oh my goodness. You go to get your meals and I'm telling ya, by the time you got back to the tent there was enough sand in your, in your food [small laugh] gritting in your teeth. Ah man, it was wild, ya.²²⁹

As Roger Rowley has already explained, the period of time in Borden didn't last long enough to do much training. He also has brought forward the important fact that they didn't have their machine guns. These they would not see until they actually landed in Iceland.

There was one event in Borden that this thesis will now consider. On June 13th the District Officer Commanding Military District #2, Brigadier R. O. Alexander, conducted an inspection of the entire unit. As noted in the diary the battalion was first advised of this impending review on June 10th. This inspection included a review of the personal and military background of the officers, the state of preparation and training of the troops,

²²⁸ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999.

²²⁹ Interview with Franklyn Davis, July 22nd 1999.

as well as an in depth analysis of all quarter master and orderly room books and records.

A diary notation makes clear that there is no undue concern regarding how the unit would fare in this review. Penned on the eleventh of June, we read the following comment:

The Unit undertook considerable amount of preparatory drilling in order to put on as smart an inspection as possible for the D.O.C. As the Battalion has achieved for itself more than a local reputation for smartness and excellent discipline, it is really only necessary to touch up a few of the rough edges in order to have the troops present a very fine appearance.²³⁰

It would appear that the above sentiment was realistic. The diary recorded the following after the visit of the inspector:

The D.O.C. and his staff arrived as scheduled at 0930 hours. It appeared quite obvious from his later remarks that he was very much impressed with the Battalion as it carried out routine drill and a march-past. It is felt that after these various inspections and the recommendations the unit received, that an additional amount of prestige is always added to the already existing excellent record. In the afternoon the Staff officers, accompanied by the D.O.C. went over the unit books, orderly room records, Q.M. stores with the various Officer Personnel immediately concerned with these branches. It was indeed gratifying to note that these branches of the Battalion received high commendation.²³¹

A matter of importance in these last two diary entries is what the expectations regarding the troops were. The emphasis is on discipline, behaviour and 'smartness' in appearance. As Mr. Rowley indicated in his previous remarks, without the time and the equipment to train these soldiers for combat, this was the best Canada could provide.

Table 5 lists the Cameron officers who traveled to Iceland with this battalion. In summary, officers ranged in age from twenty-six to forty-eight. Fifteen of the twenty two

²³⁰ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 June 11th 1940. Interesting to note in this passage that the emphasis is on appearance and discipline. This is of import when considering what would be required in their first overseas posting, that of Iceland.

²³¹ RG 24, Vol. 15,022 dated June 13th 1940. Interesting to consider the entry for the night of June 12th "During the night an extremely heavy downpour of rain flooded out quite a few of the tents and the men had to spend the rest of the night in the ablution rooms on higher ground." This was the night prior to their inspection.

were under the age of forty. In education, thirteen had completed High School with the remaining nine having some University or College experience. Six of these men had served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during World War One. Three of these six had qualified for the position of Lieutenant Colonel.

Table 5 **Officer Profile**²³²

Please Note: The order of the names is as listed on the report

Name	Age	Civil Occupation	Education	Military Exp. Qualifications
Lt. Col G.H. Rogers	44	Funeral Director	High School 5 years banking	C.E.F. 1915-19 ChofO 1921-39 Qualified Lt. Col
Major A.G. Fisher	46	Insurance Broker	Civil Engineer	C.E.F. 1914-19 ChofO 1922-39 Qualified Lt. Col
Major R.F.R. Cosh	48	Customs Appraiser	High School Mechanical Eng. Accountancy	C.E.F. 1914-19 H.Q. 1919-21 ChofO 1921-39 Qualified Lt. Col
Major G.F. Clingan	46	Civil Servant Dept Agr.	High School	C.E.F. ChofO 1936-39 Advanced Staff Course
Major A.L. Fortey	32	Civil Servant Map Drafting	High School	ChofO V/T Signals
Captain W.S. MacKenzie	31	Bond Salesman	High School	ChofO
Captain A.S. Pettapiece	32	Barrister & Solicitor	Queens Uv. Osgoode Hall	ChofO Rangetakers course
Captain A. S. Whiteacre	47	Civil Servant	High School	C.E.F ChofO Quartermaster
Captain J.W.H. Rowley	28	Barrister & Solicitor	B.A. & L.L.D English & French	ChofO
Captain C.H. Cook	28	Civil Servant	High School	ChofO 1936-39

²³² D.H.H. 325.009 (D510)

Lieutenant H.L. Boyd	33	Civil Servant Science Service	Analytical Chemistry (Arts) Chemical Photography	ChofO 1936-39 Defence Against Gas
Lieutenant E.C.N. Browne	32	Clerk-Fin. Dept. City of Ottawa	High School	ChofO Range Takers
Lieutenant R. Rowley	26	Investment Dealer	Dalhousie Uv. 1 year	ChofO
Lieutenant G. Armstrong	47	Civil Servant	High School	C.E.F. 1915-19 Special V/Toc. Signals ChofO
Lieutenant L.V.Perry	28	Clerk-Met. Life Insurance	High School	ChofO
Lieutenant E.G.Jamieson	38	Accounting Officer R.C.M.P.	High School	ChofO
Lieutenant R.M.Ross	31	Mill Operator	High School	ChofO R.C.N.V.R. 1924-29
Lieutenant G.W.Mersereau	34	Life Underwriter	B.A. -B.S.C. (Econ) French, German	Carl. & York Regt.
Lieutenant J.M. Carson	26	Banker	Victoria College U.B.C. 2 yrs. Com. & Fin.	ChofO att'd from Irish Regt. Feb. 1939-Sept.
Captain G.H. Browne	41	Civil Servant	High School	ChofO Quartermaster
Lieutenant R.J. Dickson	34	Bookkeeper Met. Life	Campion College Accounting	ChofO
Captain W.R. Muirhead	35	Physician	M.D.	R.C.A.M.C. Queen's Uv.

This report also contains a remarks column and each officer has been ranked. All of the above were individually rated as 'satisfactory' with the exception of the Lieutenant Colonel where the column has been left blank. One other officer, not listed in the above, was rated as 'not satisfactory as a regimental officer' and did not accompany the unit to Iceland.

In the 'Overall Summary' the officers were rated as 'good.' The Warrant Officers and Sergeants were shown as 'very good' with a further notation that there are 'a lot of

NCOs.’ Of particular significance in a battalion is the person who holds the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major.²³³ In this case the RSM, Andrew B. Currie is rated as ‘Excellent.’ The report lists a total of fifty-nine Non Commissioned Officers who went on to serve in Iceland. For each of these men we have an entry showing their age, rank, military qualifications and remarks, where we find an individual rating. [Sample Company, Appendix 6]. In this report we also find the training that the troops have received by type of weapon. The training for other related combat functions such as stretcher-bearer, first aid, and intelligence is also itemized. In a number of cases the notation is made ‘theoretical training.’ The concluding item #34 on the report entitled ‘remarks’ states, “Discipline-Very Good; Administration-Orderly Room, well run...” This report is helpful in that it affirms Mr. Rowley’s assessment that the unit was well disciplined and well organized. It also is clear that equipment and manuals for the purposes of training have been in very short supply. The significance of this report is that it gives a complete overview of the makeup and caliber of the men in this unit, as well as their degree of training just prior to their departure for Iceland.²³⁴

²³³ Interview with R. Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 9. “The adjutant [pause] and perhaps I shouldn’t say this but it’s in fact true, the adjutant and the regimental sergeant major run the regiment at the grass roots.”

²³⁴ This report is evidence to consider in relation to Bittner’s 1992 article that states that the problems in Iceland, for Canadians, were as a result of ill-trained and ill-equipped forces. His remarks, of course, reflect on all three units that served. Donald Bittner, “Canadian Militia Mobilization and Deployment for War: The Iceland Experience of 1940. *Armed Forces and Society* Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring 1992):343-361. Works which describe the Americans or the British as being much less prepared than the Canadian troops sent are the following: Donald Bittner, *The Lion and the White Falcon: Britain and Iceland in the World War Era* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1983), 40-46, 56, 57. Donald Bittner, “A Final Appraisal of the British Occupation of Iceland, 1940-42,” Vol. 120, No. 4 (1975): 52. Donald Bittner, “The British Occupation of Iceland, 1940-42” (Ph. D. diss., Uv. of Missouri, 1974), 170, 171, 176-193, 203. Bittner, “Canadian Militia” 351. Lt. Col. John L. Zimmerman, “Force in Readiness,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*. Vol. 83, No. 2 (1957): 165, 167, 170. Ernest Watkins, “The Invasion of Iceland,” *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* Vol. 109, No. 4 (Oct. 1979): 459. A. P. Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish: The Black Watch-Royal Highland Regiment* (Perth, Scotland: Balhouse Castle, 1947), 27. David Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War: The History of the Durham Light Infantry 1939-1945*. (Brancepeth Castle, County Durham: The Depot, The Durham Light Infantry, 1952), 76.

Before leaving Borden the two Rowley brothers had a conversation where they exchanged personal views regarding their impending war service. The outlook of these two Cameron officers is important in allowing us to gain an understanding of what men expected when they undertook the responsibilities of soldiering. We begin with the context of their exchange:

I was still adjutant when we were in Camp Borden...and I knew what was happening. A lot of the other officers didn't. I knew we were going to move out.

Interviewer: Did you know to where?

No, I have no clue.²³⁵ But I knew that we were about to be on the move and I told my brother. And his wife and my wife and my mum came up to Barrie.²³⁶ I told him I thought they ought to come up, we were lonely for them...just to get them there and make sure they didn't know we were gonna move....didn't want to give the secret away.... And da, this is kind of poignant. And it shows how different people can be. When we left them, I knew we were leaving the next day. And so did my brother. And we were in my car cause I, we were locked in to the place, bars were on the gates and da, being the adjutant I was able to go back and forth...²³⁷ and so I said to him... "I guess that's the last we'll see of the girls, for awhile." And he said, "Delete that for awhile." He said, "Our chances of coming back from this war are very, very slim and I think you ought to understand that."²³⁸ And I said, "I'm

²³⁵ It is interesting to note that the war diary states in two different entries that it is likely that the regiment was going to be posted to Iceland. Roger Rowley as adjutant was responsible for the war diary and may even have penned these entries. See RG 24 Vol. 15,022 for June 18th and 19th 1940.

²³⁶ Family members have been most helpful in this research effort. Due to a referral by Mr. Kenneth Ross, son of the late Lt. Col. Richard Ross, I was able to contact the wife of John Rowley. Mrs. Audrey MacDonald [previously Mrs. John Rowley] graciously agreed to an untapped interview. During the interview she mentioned her time in Borden to visit her husband. They had married on March 5th of 1940 and there are a number of references in the War Diary regarding these nuptials. On the 27th of February it is noted that John was presented with a silver tray from his brother officers and on the 2nd of March he received a silver cigarette box from the members of No. 4 Company. It indicates that he was granted a leave of absence from March 2nd until March 15th for his wedding. Mrs. MacDonald showed me the silver cigarette box which she had on a table in her living room, when I visited with her. Stanley Joynt mentioned the wedding of this couple during his interview. As the batman and driver for one of the officers who attended the wedding, Mr. Joynt was invited in for a refreshment.

²³⁷ Note again the aspect of being 'locked in' and bars on the gates. The war diary confirms that no one was allowed off the grounds. RG 24 Vol, 15,022 June 27th 1940; Regimental Orders Part I June 22nd reads "Notice - All ranks will be allowed to proceed out of the area as far as the YWCA Hostess Huts where they may visit their families. There will be no leave granted to enter the town of Barrie. A Regiment Picquet will be posted outside the area to ensure that this order is adhered to." This was a public area where troops could meet with family and friends but certainly would not allow for privacy or overnight visits.

²³⁸ These brothers were 18 months apart in age with John being the elder of the two.

not gonna approach it with that negative thought in my, back of my head. I intend to come back.” And he said, “well you’ll be very lucky if you did.” He’d obviously thought about it deeply because he knew what the statistics were from World War I. And we had **just lost** the war in Germany. All those troops had come back and [pause] he was right. He never did come back. He was killed.²³⁹

Although some men interviewed indicated they never considered the possibility of death when they enlisted, others stated that it was a topic one never discussed, not even with comrades. Officers like the Rowley brothers were often older than the average private soldier, with more education and worldly experience. Six of the officers in this unit had World War One experience and the others, one would assume, had to be very cognizant of the losses of the previous war. It is important for us to understand that some of these men did indeed comprehend what the risks were and knowingly accepted them.

The last aspect of this period of movement for the Camerons relates to their trip aboard *The Empress of Australia*,²⁴⁰ from the port at Halifax harbour to the island of

²³⁹ Interview with R. Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 19. Richard Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)* (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1947), 85. “Late that night the North Shore Regiment was rushed across and the next morning the Nos. 9 and 10 Platoons shot them into Millengen. It was here that Lieut. Colonel John Rowley was killed while leading his Battalion, the North Shore Regiment, in the attack. He was a brilliant officer and, though he wore the shoulder titles of the unit of his adoption he was always considered a Cameron by ourselves, and the Battalion mourned the loss of one of its own.” John Rowley is listed on the Cameron Honour Roll as one of the members of the regiment lost during World War Two. Quite by chance, a number of references were found regarding John Rowley in another personal account of the war. See, Rev. R. M. Hickey, *The Scarlet Dawn* (Campbellton, N.B. Tribune Publishers Limited, 1949) 252. “The regiment will always remember Bienen, for here we lost Colonel Rowley. The German shelling got so heavy that the Colonel moved the battalion headquarters. Unable to contact the Highland Light Infantry by wireless to tell them of the change, he started off over open country to contact them himself. He leaped up on one of our tanks that was passing and, as he did, a German shell picked him off. In that moment the regiment lost one of the greatest men it ever had.” [The date was March 24th 1945] In July 1941 Mrs. Rowley, as a volunteer with the Canadian Red Cross, had followed her husband to England. They had a daughter in late 42 and then in December 43 a son was born. After her husband was killed, her brother-in-law, Roger Rowley arranged for her return to Canada. She recalled sailing on a Norwegian freighter and being in the channel on VE Day. Mrs. MacDonald did not wish her interview to be taped; therefore, although notes were taken during this interview they are not available for review. Roger Rowley did mention the topic of his sister-in-law during his taped interview in 1999. See Interview with Roger Rowley, conducted by Aloma Jardine, June 22nd 1999. Held at the Cartier Square Drill Hall, Cameron Museum, Ottawa.

²⁴⁰ W.A.B. Douglas & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 11.

Iceland. The ship sailed on the morning of July 1st 1940. It was overloaded. Aboard were 1698 men. Besides the 779 Camerons this total included a battalion from Valcartier Quebec, *Les Fusiliers Mont Royal*, an Infantry Signal Section from Kingston and 7 personnel of the Z Brigade Staff. The admiralty's maximum allowable capacity for this ship was 1600 people. Loading problems along with the shortage of space resulted in the motor transport vehicles, large tanks, lumber, and other building materials all being left behind.²⁴¹ When initially reported to National Defence Headquarters by the embarkation staff officer in Halifax, it was indicated that all "rations, meats, stores, equipment and fuels were shipped."²⁴² Yet a letter dated January 30th 1941 states:

There were considerable shortages in the shipments of food supplies that went forward to Iceland and thence to England...An inquiry is being instituted at Halifax as to the method of handling when loading took place, but there is one point we would like to clear, i.e. was the cargo broached for any reason en route?²⁴³

The lack of food provisions and equipment would result in serious consequences for the men sent to Iceland. But on July 1st these problems existed only as the seeds of future trials and were not part of the scenario of that day. The War Diary offers a beautiful description of the scene as the ship left the harbour:

At approximately 0800 hours *The Empress* was tugged into the channel and within a few minutes, under her own steam, rounded McNabs Island. Duties were for the moment forgotten as the entire personnel on board swarmed the upper decks to bid Canada farewell. The mixed feeling that were permeating the thoughts of all of us as we took a final look at the panorama spread in front and below us; Halifax, its harbour, the large citadel hill directly behind the city, hundreds of hands in nearby windows waving, and voices calling faintly across the water "God speed and Bon Voyage" would be heard to chronicle. The pipers formed on the upper deck and to the tunes of the 'Cameron Men' and 'Will ye no come back

²⁴¹ RG 24 Reel C5610, file HQS 63-302-46 note dated June 20th 1940 "...admiralty permitted only 1,600 to be carried on this ship and was very doubtful whether this number could be exceeded."

²⁴² Ibid., Letter to Movement Control, National Defence Head Quarters, Ottawa from Embarkation staff officer Halifax June 30th 1940. Item 5.

²⁴³ Ibid., Letter dated Jan. 30th 1941 to Mr. T. C. Lockwood Controller of Transport, Montreal P.Q. from Lt. Col A.Q.M.G.

Again' the C. H. of O. (MG) were on their way. As we headed for the opening in the submarine boom, two sleek little Canadian Destroyers slipped up in front of us; H.M.S. 'Devonshire' pulled out into line behind us and in a few minutes H.M.S. 'Furious' Aircraft Carrier, who is also to form part of our convoy for some of the way, joined us. With the two Canucks cutting through the water on either side of us and the two larger boats astern, we passed the boom and started to lower the paravanes. One of the younger officers of the *Fusiliers de Mont-Royal* reported to the Orderly Room with a signaler in tow, whom he charged with having signaled to a girl in a nearby hotel window. The lad in explanation said he was just waving 'goodbye' and the matter was dropped.

On the following day we read:

Sailed out to the open sea; a beautiful sunny day and the entire personnel on the ship in excellent spirits.²⁴⁴

The Camerons were selected as the Unit to provide the ship's staff. This meant that Lieutenant-Colonel Rogers became the Officer Commanding on board ship with Roger Rowley assigned as the ship's adjutant. When Mr. Rowley was asked during his interview if he recalled sailing out of Halifax harbour he responded with the following account:

Ya, I was the ship's adjutant. My C.O was the ship's Commanding Officer. They always appointed a commander from the audience as I say....And he got to sleep in the Queen's quarters and I slept in Prince Philip's quarters²⁴⁵ cause he was C.O. of the ship and I was the Ship's adjutant. It was great....and it was still vitted with the supplies that had been unused by the Queen and the Royal troop when they had come to Canada that Spring, Spring of 1939.²⁴⁶

Harry David as a Sergeant at the time remembers his accommodations and crossing: Senior NCOs, we had first class accommodation. Waiters and everything, it was like a cruise. Except Lord Haw Haw announced over the radio that *The Empress of Australia* had been sent to the bottom of the sea, and he mentioned the units, *the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*, and we had a French unit with us, *Fusiliers de Mont Royal* and they were all gone, according to Lord Haw, Haw.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ RG 24, Vol 15,022 July 1, 2. Captain Lucien A. Dumais, *Un Canadien Francais a Dieppe* (Paris: Editions France-Empire, 1968), 38, 39.

²⁴⁵ Mr. Rowley, of course, is referring to the King's quarters.

When Abby Nolan brought up these reports regarding Lord Haw Haw's broadcasts he was asked if this made him nervous? He responded with, "Oh ya, a lot of fellows slept off on deck the whole trip."²⁴⁸

Chummy Lacroix, also a newly promoted sergeant for his trip over adds the following humorous description:

I had a butler, this Limy, all dressed in white with a towel and the soap, 'wakee, wakee Canada, wakee, wakee, you know what I mean. Then he'd take me to the showers [pause] and I was in a god damn bed. I could put half the regiment in my bed. Great big bed, private room too. The king and queen was on that ship before I was.²⁴⁹

Yet not all were exposed to the same service. In fact it is at this point that a major shift is noted regarding the experiences of these men. No longer do we find consistent and comparable accounts of the conditions and lifestyles for the troops. It is a reality of military life that position is rewarded with privileges and degrees of creature comforts.²⁵⁰ But what now comes to the fore is a wide range of conditions even between men of the same rank, depending on their location. This is prevalent throughout the Iceland posting and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. On board ship certainly rank was rewarded with vastly different accommodations. Yet even men with the rank of private

²⁴⁶ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 22. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 13. "The officers, quite frankly, lived in the lap of luxury." Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993), 23, 24, 35, 93, 104.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999. Fussell, *Wartime*, 101. "William Joyce's final Lord Haw Haw broadcast from Hambur on April 30th 1945." He was hung by the conquerors. Mac Johnston. *Corvettes Canada: Convoy Veterans of WWII Tell Their True Stories* (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1994), 9. William Horrocks, *In Their Own Words* (Ottawa: Rideau Veterans Home Residents Council, 1993), 145, 146. His real name was Lord Joyce. He was an English traitor.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999. Ross, *the History of the 1st Battalion*, 13.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Chummy Lacroix, June 24th 1999.

²⁵⁰ Studs Terkel, *The Good War*, 289, 290. Interview with Frieda Wolff, concert singer during the war, "We came over on the Queen Elizabeth. There were 30,000 troops on the ship. Because of the crowding....they took 8 hour turns sleeping on the decks. The officers had marvelous food. The GI's had fish heads."

experienced a range of difference. Franklin Davis had a regular bunk in a cabin and thoroughly enjoyed his sea voyage. He was also fortunate that he was not seasick.²⁵¹

Many others were not so fortunate and no doubt this made the crowded quarters all that much more uncomfortable. Fred Hicks, a private, represents this other group:

Interviewer: What was it like on *The Empress of Australia*?

Crowded. It wasn't the best. Most of us slept in hammocks down below. If I can remember right they were just these string things. You know you get on a great big ship like that and you're thinking, oh we'll get a nice cabin [laugh]. No cabins, no no. Everybody all together with hammocks going this way and that way. If you ever had to get up in the middle of the night you'd kill yourself trying to get out of there. On no it wasn't [the best] accommodation on board ship, of course they were putting an awful lot of men on one ship, and equipment.

Interviewer: Were you sick? I was going over yes....²⁵²

Two days out to sea Lieutenant Colonel Rogers opened his instructions regarding their destination. It was not England, Norway, Hong Kong, Hawaii or even Bermuda as rumours had predicted. The destination was the island of Iceland near the Arctic Circle.

²⁵¹ Interview with Franklin Davis, July 22nd 1999, transcript p.27.

²⁵² Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999.

CHAPTER 4

ICELAND

Iceland was an extremely difficult posting. To declare this is to understate the hardships involved in this assignment and the consequences that some endured because of their decision to join the war effort. This conclusion is based upon evidence drawn from all sources included in this review. No one source alone could validate this finding. Some veterans may be 'uncomfortable' with such an open declaration. After all, they were not involved in actual 'combat' during this posting and they did, indeed, find ways to make the best of things. Most endured or suffered through and went on to other battles, but not all. There were three deaths in Iceland and a significant number of men were sent home for medical reasons: physical or emotional. For some, time may have softened some of the harshest realities. They rather remember how they coped or laugh about some of their challenges.²⁵³

The documents have been useful in testifying to the magnitude of the hardships that some veterans have either forgotten or have chosen not to divulge. This posting was the first shared by their new military family—they were brothers-in-arms. And just as in many family circles, one does not casually share some of the most difficult challenges with those who are outside of the group. Although this is a sentiment that we are beginning to appreciate in terms of front-line battle conditions, I believe it also applies to situations like the Iceland posting. Yet, the documents alone could not elucidate the conditions in Iceland. It is in the marriage of the documents and the first hand accounts that one is able to achieve 'a measure of understanding.'

²⁵³ Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning & the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 76. States that veterans focus on the positive not the misery, they remember the funny things in war.

The work of Dr. Bittner, although useful in many respects, has failed to fully address the social conditions of this assignment—at least from the Canadian perspective.²⁵⁴ Also, his writings do not accurately represent the political and military realities from the Canadian perspective. In order to fully appreciate the social context of the Iceland occupation one must have a thorough grasp of the political and military realities. These cannot be separated.

Having said this, the requirements of this thesis undertaking demand that the findings be pared down to a limited number of pages. Therefore, although the research included all three components—the political, military, and social, the decision made was to continue to tell this history from the point of view of those who served. Unfortunately, even this aspect can receive only selected coverage.²⁵⁵ A full review of the Canadian experience in Iceland must await a future endeavour.

On May 10th 1940 less than one thousand British marines seized military control of Iceland. The decision to occupy the island was made by Winston Churchill. As the Icelandic state had no military force or weapons of defence, Icelanders did not try and resist this invasion force. What the ramifications of this decision would entail, in terms of troops, equipment and supplies, the British never envisioned at the outset. Several weeks later as France succumbed to German pressure, and Italy prepared to join the axis

²⁵⁴ From a review of regimental histories for British units that served in Iceland, as well as the several Ph. D. dissertations related to the American experience, it appears that things were not much different for other soldiers who served in Iceland.

²⁵⁵ Examples of significant topics that the interviewees discussed but are not reviewed in this thesis: Reflections on the Icelandic culture and its people, the troops relationships with members of the community including romantic alliances, moral standards and behavior, the natural wonders of the land, Iceland's history, the military structure, the spitfire fund, comradeship in Iceland, medical treatment and hospital services, the laundry service provided for the troops, the relationship between the sexes, polygamy, the pro-nazi community, the yearly sheep roundup, the fishing community in Budareyri, the drinking of anti-freeze,

cause, even Churchill wavered in his determination that Iceland not fall under Hitler's control.²⁵⁶ It was during these anxious days in May 1940 that the Canadian Government first became involved with the British occupation in Iceland.

The contextual aspect of this research was focused around the following questions: What had precipitated Britain's decision to seize Iceland?²⁵⁷ What were the factors fueling Iceland's adamant claim to the right of neutrality, a claim that they have never varied from?²⁵⁸ Under what circumstances had Canada become involved in the occupation effort?²⁵⁹ What factors had finally determined the level of Canadian involvement? Canada had agreed to assume complete responsibility for the garrison,²⁶⁰ and committed the manpower of one division to this task. It then pulled back from this heavy commitment. Why had Canada's support been radically reduced at the final stage

'the Budareyri Snooper' short arm inspections, rank and fairness, the catholic faith, illegitimate births, venereal disease, and issues related to the later war period.

²⁵⁶ Ernest Watkins, "The Invasion of Iceland," *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* Vol. 109, No. 4 (Oct. 1979): 464.

²⁵⁷ Sources which discuss why Churchill decided to occupy Iceland: Report from Consul General Bowering to Viscount Halifax dated May 15th 1939 NAC. RG 25 Vol. 1903 File 329. Donald F. Bittner, *The Lion and the White Falcon: Britain and Iceland in the World War Era* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1983), 18-27, 38. Donald Bittner, "The British Occupation of Iceland, 1940-1946," *The Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* Vol. 103, No 1 (Oct. 1972): 82. Solrun B. Jensdottir Hardarson, "The 'Republic of Iceland' 1940-44: Anglo-American Attitudes and Influences." *Contemporary History* Vol. 9, No. 4 (1974): 31-34. John C. Griffiths, *Modern Iceland* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 41. The strategic importance of this area is discussed in W.A.B. Douglas & Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Uv. Press, 1977), 36, 38. "...the one lifeline that had to be kept open at all costs if Britain was to survive a European war: the North Atlantic." Page 59 states that the best routes across the Atlantic were the northern ones, shortest and least accessible to German naval forces. The disadvantage was the terrible climate. "The North Atlantic, where it is not tempered by the Gulf Stream is one of the most inhospitable places on the face of the earth....Bridging the Atlantic was the key to strategic supply." Page 66 "The loss of ships ...was partly solved by establishing new bases for ships & aircraft in Iceland & Newfoundland early in 1941." Mac Johnston, *Corvettes Canada: Convoy Veterans of WWII Tell Their True Stories* (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1994), Intro vii, 1, 19, 41.

²⁵⁸ Sources which discuss Iceland's neutrality status: John Robin Fairlamb, *The Evolution of Icelandic Defense Decision Making 1944-1981* (PhD Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1977). Bittner, *The Lion* 40-48. Bittner, "The British Occupation of Iceland" 87. Benedikt Grondal, *Iceland: From Neutrality to Nato Membership* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), 10-25. Hardarson, 27-34.

²⁵⁹ RG 25 Vol. 2749 File 501-A-40.

²⁶⁰ This point is never clearly stated in Bittner's work.

of negotiations? Why had the Camerons, in particular, been sent?²⁶¹ This review provides important information that enhances one's appreciation for the situation that the Cameron men became a part of when they landed on July 7th 1940.

These questions are addressed in Professor Bittner's writings. For a number of reasons the present research findings do not support significant conclusions drawn in Bittner's work.²⁶² He conducted his research in the late sixties and early seventies, whereas this endeavour began in the summer of 1998. As is to be expected, new sources have

²⁶¹ Most of the material related to the final three queries can be reviewed in RG 25 Vol. 2749 File 501-A-40; RG 24 Vol 3919 File 1037-6-1; RG 2 7C Vol. 1 Reel C11,789; MG 26 J13.

²⁶² In terms of the Canadian Government's role in the British occupation in Iceland, this research confirms much of Bittner's work as it relates to significant dates, the sequence of events and some of the key issues involved. What is new in this review is the impact certain individuals had on developments. The most important of these is Major-General Victor Odlum, General Officer Commanding the Second Canadian Division. He is briefly mentioned in Bittner's Ph D Thesis and one article, "A Maple Leaf in the North Atlantic: Canada and the Defence of Iceland, 1940" 50, 52. The present review indicates Odlum had a significant influence on the decisions relating to Iceland. For example, see RG 2 7C Vol. 1 Reel C11,789; Roger Odlum, *Victor Odlum: A Memoir By Roger Odlum* (Vancouver: Petrokile-Tor Publications, 1995), 104. Associated with Odlum's influence is the sudden death of the Minister of National Defence, Norman Rogers on June 10th 1940. His replacement, J. R. Ralston held the Finance portfolio at the time of Rogers' death and did not assume the defence portfolio until July 5th. The period in between Rogers' death and Ralston's assuming control is when the changes were made in Canada's commitment to Iceland. Norman Rogers is not mentioned in Bittner's writings. The third group of individuals within the Government context whose views are considered influential are the leaders within the Department of External Affairs. The renowned O. D. Skelton was the voice of External Affairs on the War Cabinet Committee in June of 1940. There is a reference to Skelton in Bittner's *Lion*, 119, and the "Maple Leaf" article, page 51. Yet primary sources reflect a significant influence by External Affairs in regards to Canadian commitments in Iceland. For example, RG 25 Vol. 2749 File 501-A-40, memo to O.D.Skelton dated July 2nd 1940; RG 2 7C Vol. 1 C11,789 June 14th. Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: Uv. of Toronto Press, 1988), 117, 160, 162. W.A.B. Douglas & Brereton Greenhous *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford Uv. Press, 1977), 20. Each of the above named individuals had an impact on the decision related to the conditions under which Canada agreed to send troops, the size of the force sent, and ultimately which troops would be chosen. A further issue of import relates to the United States interest in Iceland. Bittner's explanation as to why Canada was suddenly released from its commitment to supply 346 officers and 8464 other ranks does not withstand close scrutiny. Bittner, *Lion*, 121, 122, 179, 180. Although this issue requires further review, the evidence points to a connection with President Roosevelt's war aims. RG 25 Vol. 2749, File 501-A-40, June 15, 1940 Telegram No. 749. For some historians the fact that Roosevelt personally intervened and offered U.S. troops to assume responsibility for the occupation of Iceland in May of 1941, with the first group of troops arriving in July, changes the date of America's entry into the war from Dec. 7th to July 1941. For example, J. W. Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record Vol. 1 1939-1944* (Toronto: The Uv. of Toronto Press, 1960) 128, 195, 208. Michael T. Corgan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the American Occupation of Iceland," *Naval War College Review* Vol. 45, No. 4 (1992):34-54. Peter H. Krosby, "The United States and the Nordic Countries, 1940-1945," *Revue Internationale D'Histoire Militaire* Vol 53 (1982): 125-148. Fred E. Pollock, "Roosevelt, the Ogdensburg Agreement, and the British Fleet: All Done with Mirrors," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 5 No. 3 (1981): 212-213. Johnston, *Corvettes*, 42. Bittner, *Lion*, 125-139. Bittner, "Thesis" 660, 773.

surfaced. Although Dr. Bittner conducted interviews in Canada among a few members of the officer group who served in Iceland, many of the present methodologies regarding oral history interviews were not prevalent at the time of his research. As these earlier tapes remain in the author's possession, particulars pertaining to the overall integrity and contextual background of these earlier interviews cannot be verified.²⁶³

The focus of Bittner's work is much broader, assumes the British perspective, and is written from the viewpoint of an author with previous military experience, including post-war garrison duty in Iceland. The present endeavour focuses on the Canadian experience, at the level of one group of soldiers who served, and is undertaken by a researcher who cannot rely on personal experience, either with the military or with Iceland. Instead this effort must return to those who were direct participants in the events under review, either through the interview process or by way of the war diaries and the documents. This thesis has considered questions that are fundamentally different from previous reviews. Even in the case where the same queries are posed, a different perspective has altered the outcome.

Iceland, along with Newfoundland, Greenland and the Faeroe islands is part of a geological ridge, most of which lies beneath the surface of the sea. Called the land of 'frost and fire' Iceland is one of the most volcanic portions of the earth, while also having snowfields that cover vast areas of its surface. The volcanic forces that rage beneath the surface have many outlets and this explains the island's world famous geysers and hot

²⁶³ Bittner, "Thesis" 263, 264. Quotes Canadian officers' comments from interviews conducted in 1970, including Lieutenant Ross and Major R. M. Armstrong of the C.H.ofO. The remarks are not supported by the evidence considered in this research endeavour.

springs that are found everywhere, including in rivers.²⁶⁴ The island is essentially a rugged plateau of volcanic rock pierced on all sides by fjords and valleys. Its land area measures approximately 40,000 square miles, and as such is one-fifth larger than Ireland. Yet four-fifths of this territory is not suitable for human habitation, being almost all-volcanic rock. Lying within the fringes of the Arctic circle, Iceland is the coldest country in Europe. The island is without trees, coal, oil, lead, tin or any other metals of importance in the modern industrial world. In 1940 this lack of natural resources meant that all fuel, building materials, most food products and all military supplies had to be shipped in.

Iceland has 3,731 miles of coastline and at the time of the occupation it was impossible to circumnavigate this territory by land; it had stretches of quicksand on the South coast and the harsh winters blocked routes in the North. Other than in the capital of Reykjavik and its immediate vicinity, there were no roads that would easily allow for vehicle passage.²⁶⁵ It is also blanketed in almost complete darkness for three to four months in winter and gale force winds in summer can impede humans being able to move about. Considering all of these issues reveals the parameters of the task that the occupying force was faced with, in attempting to defend this territory.²⁶⁶

Although a total of 2,653 Canadian troops had shared in the initial commitment, by October 31st the Camerons were the lone battalion left to winter over, along with the

²⁶⁴ Natasha Singer, "Iceland Cometh" *Vogue* (March 2000): 414-417, 420.

²⁶⁵ Most roads outside of the capital were nothing more than 'cow paths.' For a battalion dispersed across all posts on the island the lack of suitable roads for movement of troops and supplies was a serious hardship.

²⁶⁶ William Charles Chamberlin, *Economic Development of Iceland Through World War II* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 8,9. Bittner, "Thesis," 30, 31. *Renfrew Mercury*, Letter from private E. Dupuis to his sister, written on Feb. 19th 1941. It gives an excellent description of the physical surroundings in Iceland. *Thank You* to Mr. Harold Pretty for arranging for a copy of this newspaper article to be included in this research review.

20,000 man British force.²⁶⁷ Even Brigadier Page and the staff of the Canadian ‘Z Brigade’ had turned over their duties to Lieutenant-Colonel Rogers, the Commanding Officer for the Camerons, and sailed with the other two battalions. The Camerons were left as the sole machine gun support group on the island, and as such did not operate as a unit but were divided up over the defended territory. This meant that all areas seen to be at risk of invasion were detailed with groups of Cameron men; possibly as small as a single section with sixteen soldiers, to a complete company of approximately one hundred troops. This resulted in increased isolation and the removal of the one aspect of security and comfort that troops normally can depend on—their regimental family.

Filed in the war diary material is an anonymously written poem expressing how one soldier felt as the Camerons faced the oncoming winter in Iceland.

ODE TO ICELAND

Somewhere in dear old Iceland, there’s a wilderness of lava rock,
Where sheep in countless numbers, can be found in every block.
We can go to the movies, it’s not too far away,
But after we have reached there, we wished we had ‘hit the hay.’
God should have spent another day, and spent it really well,
But perhaps he kept this place like this, to show us part of hell.
The snow is more than ten feet deep, the sun is never hot,
At night you nearly freeze to death, while lying on your cot.

And now that winter is on its way, by gee we’re on the spot,
But the Cameron men can stick it out, in this land that God forgot.²⁶⁸

Certainly the veterans interviewed have not forgotten their Iceland experience. For most, the passage of sixty years has not obliterated the recall of the emotions they

²⁶⁷ C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1948), 25. The Canadians were known as Z Brigade and were commanded by Brigadier L. F. Page. Besides the headquarters staff, this Brigade was comprised of *The Royal Regiment of Canada*, from the Toronto area; *Les Fusiliers Mont Royal*, from Montreal; and *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa (MG)*. Most of the Brigade staff along with the Royal Regiment of Canada arrived on June 16th whereas the Camerons and *Les Fusiliers Mont Royal* arrived together on July the 7th. It had been intentional that both an English and a French regiment would serve along with a machine gun unit.

experienced, or the details on a surprising number of issues. Allan Featherstonhaugh summarizes the Iceland experience for most:

See, we had a different war there altogether; freezing and going crazy and all that. A year there, it would drive you crazy.

[and then Mr. Featherstonhaugh adds the other significant aspect of this experience—although not all would agree]

But don't forget, we had fun too.²⁶⁹

The scale measuring these two variables, that of hardship and that of fun, fluctuates with the personal experience of the veteran interviewed. Where they were posted on the island was, perhaps, the most significant aspect in determining the weight of these variables.²⁷⁰ There were four principal enemies²⁷¹ in their war in Iceland: The weather conditions that prevailed on the island were the single greatest adversary for troops.²⁷²

²⁶⁸ RG 24 Vol. 15,025 Nov. 29, 1943. Appendix #12. This is one of a number of pieces of poetry related to Iceland that was filed during a much later period. Johnston, *Corvettes*, 34, 35.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 27, 31 1999. He was in No. 3 Company and therefore part of the group sent to Budareyri, arguably the harshest of all the Canadian postings. See Appendix 7 Photographs.

²⁷⁰ David Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War: The History of the Durham Light Infantry 1939-1945* (Brancepeth Castle, County Durham: The Depot, The Durham Light Infantry, 1952), 76. "Each company depended on its own ingenuity for even the bare necessities of life." Some were 'cut off' from the remainder of the British forces for several months during the winter and relied on reserve rations.

²⁷¹ Bittner, *The Lion and the White Falcon*, 87. This is how Bittner assesses the duty on the island for British troops: "Although not considered a combat area, for the untrained, inexperienced, and oblivious person, Iceland posed a dire threat to life. Alertness and training were necessary for survival, for the environment could kill as quickly as and became more of a threat than, the German enemy. At a minimum, 128 men lost their lives in Iceland. In addition to medical reasons, casualties resulted from aircraft accidents, winter warfare training exercises, action against the enemy, carelessness, and stupidity. Psychological casualties also appeared, as mental disorders unsuspected at home became apparent while serving on the North Atlantic island; these ranged from suicides to attempts to swim back home. Vigilance and planning were necessary for survival, as were preparations for action against the enemy, physical fitness, and morale."

²⁷² Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 14-15. RG 24 15,022, Aug. 19th 1940. "The weather today is exceptionally bad. Continued bad weather is not doing the morale of the troops any good. Their feelings in this connection are quite noticeable. It might be stated here that it is not only damaging their morale but the continued dampness can in no way be beneficial to the health of the men." Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home & Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Can. Ltd., 1974), 100. "Its killing ground was the North Atlantic, one of the world's dirtiest and meanest oceans, where it [RCN] hunted the German submarines, the U-boats which Churchill feared most of all." Johnston, *Corvettes*, 34, 94. B.V.C. Harpur, B. R. Wood, J. J. Evans, S. Jacobson, R. J. Cannon, *The Kernsingtons: Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment, Second World War* (Aylesbury: Regimental Old Comrades' Association, 1951), 266.

Cyclone level winds would literally pick men and their vehicles up and blow them off the roads.²⁷³ Incessant rain persisted for weeks on end.²⁷⁴ Certainly the long months of darkness, where a man stood guard against an invasion force that he would never be able 'to see' was a strain.²⁷⁵ A second enemy for many was the isolation: from home, culture, language and even other people beyond the immediate group. The third enemy may be broadly defined as that of 'worry.' There were many factors that aided and abetted this enemy. Concern regarding home conditions back in Canada; anxiety related to the static defensive role troops held, while intermittent 'stand to' orders maintained a sense of peril. For some, there was also a fear that danger might materialize from among the very people they were there to protect. The final enemy in Iceland was that of boredom,²⁷⁶ in terms of a lack of entertainment or break from the monotony of guard duty and hard manual labor some were called upon to perform.²⁷⁷ We are clearly able to draw links

²⁷³ RG 24, Vol. 15,024 Appendix #3 No 2 Co. [misfiled] March 1st 1941, "...high velocity wind [] experienced here the last 3 days. Velocity reached 12 that is generally considered the strongest a wind obtains in Iceland. Surrounding damage includes the wrecking of two freight carrying vessels on the Reykjavik shore and casualties of one soldier blown into the sea while on guard at the Grotta." It would appear that this soldier who was drowned was British. David Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War: The History of the Durham Light Infantry 1939-1945* (Brancepeth Castle, County Durham: The Depot, The Durham Light Infantry, 1952), 78.

²⁷⁴ RG 24, Vol. 15,024 Appendix #3 No 2 Co. [misfiled] July 20th 1940 discusses the problem of getting corrugated iron which is needed to roof part of the gun emplacements, trying to keep dry. "It has been extremely wet and uncomfortable for the gun numbers on duty. They have no change of clothes and no place to dry their clothes in. The crawl trenches for the most part are down to bed rock and when it rains, which it seems to every day, they fill with water very quickly." Aug. 1st "2 i/c (in command) and Intelligence Officer made a trip to #4 platoon at Kaldadarnes. The gunpits are 36 inches deep and there is 30 inches of water in them. Needless to say the gun crews are not kept on the guns at all times."

²⁷⁵ Johnston, *Corvettes*, 34. A. P. Whitehead, *the 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish: The Black Watch-Royal Highland Regiment*. (Perth, Scotland: Balhouse Castle, 1957), 30.

²⁷⁶ Lord Birdwood, Lieut. Col. M.V.O., *The Worcestershire Regiment 1922-1950* Aldershot, Hampshire: Gale & Polden Ltd., 1952), 240, 241. "Boredom was perhaps the first enemy."

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, "As time passed and the dull monotony of routine garrison work became almost unbearable..." RG 24 Vol 15,024 Appendix #3 No. 2 Company, July 15th 1940 [misfiled material], "Pay day for the troops and much less trouble than is usually experienced. The boys are too busy and too tired and only 25% of personnel are allowed on pass at one time."

between the living conditions in Iceland and the degree to which each of these enemies influenced the stamina and endurance of these troops.²⁷⁸

To a certain extent, Canadians also had to contend with a 'fair weather friend' among certain individuals within the British forces stationed with them.²⁷⁹ On paper, the position of the Canadian forces vis-a-vis their British counterpart was straightforward. Z force was to co-operate with British forces; they were not under British command but were a separate entity under the command of Brigadier Page. With the title of Director Staff Operations, Page reported directly to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa.²⁸⁰ Reality often blurred these distinctions. After the bulk of the Canadian forces left in the fall, the Cameron battalion of approximately 750 men versus the 20,000 British troops left little room for doubt as to the relationship of command and control. Roger Rowley reflects the sentiments of his fellow interviewees with the following remark related to leadership and control in Iceland: "You see we were part of 49 Div. when we were in Iceland. We weren't on our own."²⁸¹ The unit's history explains the order of command, "...Brigade came under command of Alabaster Force or British Garrison Force

²⁷⁸ All the regimental histories consulted in this research support the view that Iceland was a most difficult posting. Only a few other works will be listed here. John Joseph Hunt, "The United States Occupation of Iceland, 1941-1945," (Ph. D. diss., Georgetown Univ., 1966), 75-125. American troops were not able to handle these enemies as well as the men they replaced, with tragic consequences. Erik Linklater, *The Northern Garrisons: The Army at War*. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1941), 27, 28. Major-General H. L. Davies, "Iceland: Key to the North Atlantic," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* Vol. 101 No. 602 (1956): 234. "No doubt the winter of 1940-41 was hell for the troops."

²⁷⁹ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Aug. 28th 1940. "This afternoon we drew supplies from the NAAFI. It was gratifying to see that for the first time our allotment reached a proportion that is almost worthwhile. There is no use denying the fact that facilities as supplied by the organization leave much to be desired at the moment. It is felt that these shortages are governed by sources over which we, nor they, have any control."

²⁸⁰ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 September 25, 1940; Operation Order #9. RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 'Auxiliary Services Report' Sept. 2nd 1940 item e. "The supervisors were instructed that Z Force CASF operates under orders from the Dept. of National Defence at Ottawa and it is not under orders from Canadian Military H.Q. in London..."

²⁸¹ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 25. The wording in the unit war diary leaves no doubt as to who had the power in the Iceland operation. From the war diary account this does not usually appear to pose a problem.

commanded by Major General Curtis, which was made up primarily of 49 (WR) Division...²⁸²

Evidence from a variety of sources supports the view that the Canadians were not always dealt with fairly by individual members within the British force. The Canadian government assumed full financial responsibility for its troops and all their related expenses while on duty in Iceland. This resulted in a sharing of costs in some areas. References, for example in Brigadier Page's correspondence to Ottawa, express concern that Canada is being overcharged. A war diary entry also suggests that the troops were receiving less than their stipulated wage when their earnings were converted from the Canadian dollar to the Icelandic Kromer.²⁸³ What is not clear is who would have benefited from this discrepancy.

Large amounts of supplies shipped from Canada for the benefit of her troops went missing. Interview evidence suggests that some of these supplies ended up with British personnel. [this will be reviewed later] Documents confirm that important supplies that were sent, never reached the Canadian troops. Besides the problem of congestion at the dock accounting for some shipments being cancelled and others being rerouted to England,²⁸⁴ an excerpt from an Auxiliary Services report explains how easily 'anyone' could help themselves to items being offloaded:

On December 15, I received word of supplies aboard S. S. Katin and on the following day went to the shipping yards to learn that

²⁸² Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion* 13. On page 16 this work then adds, "Since we were the only Canadians left on the island we continued to be known as Z Force and were directly accountable to National Defence H.Q. instead of Canadian Military H.Q. in England. Thus Lt.-Col. Rogers covered off two vacancies, C.O. of the Camerons, and Senior Officer Commanding Z Force."

²⁸³ RG 24 Vol 15,024 Appendix # No 4 Co. July 15th 1940 [misfiled] "The pay is at 5.26 Kromer per dollar. This seems a little low as the bank pays 5.80..."

²⁸⁴ The poor docking facilities appear to be the major reason for the acute shortage of supplies. Often ships that would have to wait months to unload were instructed to deliver their cargo to England instead. The other factor relates to 'lost' supplies. The congestion and confusion at port may have helped in supplies not arriving at their intended destination, although they may have certainly been unloaded in Iceland.

the goods had not been unloaded. On the 17th, some of our lads, without bills of lading or any authority, brought to camp, unbeknown, 20 cases of Hamper Fund Overseas League cigarettes and 10 cases of cigarettes from “y”. That is an example of “scrouging.” The lads turned everything over to us. The whole idea in the army seems to be, “Take it—if you don’t somebody else will.”²⁸⁵

The Canadian government arranged for Auxiliary Services Personnel from four organizations to be a part of the support system for Canadian troops in Iceland. Mr. Charles Box representing the YMCA was assigned to *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*.²⁸⁶ His reports indicate that in his personal dealings with specific British officers to co-ordinate joint sporting events, he and the troops he represented were disregarded, and not welcomed.²⁸⁷ In the war diaries there are a number of entries that indicate that in two areas, the handling of Canadian mail,²⁸⁸ and situations of aid related to Icelandic living conditions, there was a lack of fairness and helpfulness towards the Canadians. It should be stated that there are also references that reflect the opposite scenario; situations where British support was unstintingly offered, and gratefully received.

²⁸⁵ RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4 Report of C. Box Aux Services. For period ending 31st Dec. 1940. This report is stamped ‘received’ on Feb. 11 1941. On March 17th a letter was sent to Canadian Military headquarters in London from Major-General, Adjutant-General (assume Ottawa) referring to this report. It states, “It would appear that Box does not completely understand his duties as a Supervisor and perhaps the Senior Representative of the YMCA after discussion might be of assistance to him.” No later reports were found in the military files. There were several found among the records of the Auxiliary Services Organization itself. David Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War: the History of the Durham Light Infantry 1939-1945* (Brancepeth Castle, County Durham: The Depot, The Durham Light Infantry, 1952), 77. “Naafi supplies had a way of vanishing into thin air.”

²⁸⁶ Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990), 243. Refers to the importance of the YMCA in World War I for the troops.

²⁸⁷ RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4, Auxiliary Services Report Oct 1-31st 1940 Z Force pgs. 1, 2. Examples, “In the evening our boxers of which there were seven, met in the Brigade matches. The Highlanders stole the show by piping their men to and from the ring. Five of the seven won their bouts and instilled into the minds of the English that the Canadians are to be respected.” Report for the period ending November 30 p. 1 “The English sports officer, ... was met on November 7 and promised to send a memo of the sporting activities planned for the month, and also for the winter months. As yet, no report has reached us although each time he is seen he promises. It looks as if the Canadians are not wanted in their events.”

²⁸⁸ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 YMCA report Z Force Aug.30th to Sept. 9th 1940 “The men are of the opinion that a representative of the Canadian regiment should be placed in the post office to see that mail from our boys gets the same consideration as does the British.

Under the circumstances one would expect some friction between individuals within the two forces. Yet in the conditions that existed in Iceland, significant consequences for Canadian troops resulted from a lack of cooperation, or disinterest in the welfare of the other. One example will serve to highlight this point. When Canadian men were up on a military charge and sent into detention they were usually under the care of the British. Two interviewed veterans spent at least one month each, in confinement, under the British system.²⁸⁹ The first example serves to underline the less than positive attitude of some British guards towards their Canadian brethren.

Now I was in detention in Iceland. The detention was run by the British Army which was very, very different from our army. Ah, it seems to me that their remarks were demeaning and belittling to the people....

Interviewer: 28 days seems like a long time too.

Oh yes. Particularly, you went down to the Brits. And they gave you this, task. They called it a bed task you know, polishing. And we were out working on the roads with picks and shovels all day. And of course you lost your pay....

And I'm trying to think of this guy's name, he was a cook with us. Oh god he must have been six and a half foot tall with shoulders like that on him. And he was French and one of these British sergeants, they called em staffs you see. You had to address them all as staffs, got going at me for something or another and this great big Frenchman said, "**hey you, you leave him alone or I deal with you**" [spoken with French accent]...to this day, when I think of this, I think why didn't they do something to him for that, for threatening that staff...But they didn't. Ah, I have an idea that they only had so much authority over us. And when they went beyond, it could have caused problems.... Ah, but ah, we were called f----- bloody Canadians and colonials and you know. They really took strips off eh.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ For ethical reasons, due to the sensitive nature of this material the two veterans involved will be consulted and given an opportunity to read this thesis prior to their names being sited with their remarks. If they prefer to remain anonymous then their taped interviews and transcripts will be treated accordingly.

²⁹⁰ This veteran's offence involved a misunderstanding between himself and his sergeant regarding instructions he was given pertaining to a minor matter. Although this private had two witnesses to support his understanding of what he was supposed to do, the officer who judged the situation accepted the sergeant's point of view.

The second interviewee who spent time in detention was involved in an altercation with two British personnel over the purchase of Brenevin, an alcohol that the troops were forbidden to drink. He describes the outcome:

They landed up, they give me 28 days in the glass house, which was an English glass house. From the time you went in there you run on the spot until you're discharged and out...you run on the spot. When you're in there first thing in the morning they take you just down in your army shorts, your underwear, and run you down to the beach and they make you move a big stone or this or that. And then they tell you to stop, put it down and you go back, get cleaned up. You'd have your breakfast and then they'd run [you] back down again. If you didn't put it back in the same place again, they'd give you another day in the glass house. Or every time they spoke to you, if you didn't say yes staff, no staff, they'd give you another day in the glass house. I heard they'd [Canadian officer] said to the officer in charge of the glass house, they were either to make or break me. They figured well they were gonna make an example of me. They were either to make or break me. Well I figured they weren't gonna break me at all. I'd be damn lucky if I got out of there... I got the 28 days in the glass house and I got out.

Interviewer: You didn't get any extra [time]?

...I got three days extra one time cause I didn't yes staff him or something. They put me down in the hole, what they call the hole. It was a cement floor about 8 foot square. Nothing in the room at all only a pail, a slop pail. Every hour they come round and throw a pail of water on the floor so you couldn't sit down or lay down. I was in there for three days. And you got very skimpy meals when you were in there, bread and water. And this was part of the make or break me, you see. Well they weren't still gonna break me, not from my way of thinking.²⁹¹

My impression in speaking with this gentleman was that they had indeed not broken him.

Although he stayed with the Camerons and fought during the hard battles of World War

II, he has not forgotten his detention experience, nor forgiven those he believes were

responsible for his ill treatment.²⁹²

²⁹¹ Again until the veteran gives his approval to have his named included, this will remain as an anonymous reference. Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Translated by A. W. Wheen (New York: Fawcett Crest, Seventh Printing, 1984, original publication 1928), Page 28, "... We have trembled at the mere sound of his voice but this runaway post-horse never got the better of us." Page 44, "the army is based on that; one man must always have power over the other. The mischief is merely that each one has much too much power." Also see page 84, reference to 'the cellar.'

Canadians are grounded by the physical characteristics of their own country. The trees, mountains, streams, lakes and large expanses of open land are fundamental to who we are.²⁹³ During the war these Cameron men traversed through many of the countries in Western Europe. But no land was as different from their native Canada as that of Iceland—their first foray from home. The war diary offers the first impression of one Cameron officer as the ship neared the dock of the capital city:

Reykjavik presented a city very unlike any Canadian city. There being very little soil on the island the houses are built up and there are very few with dug basements. The houses are nearly all square and for the most part not over two stories. The view from the boat reminded one of many coloured shoe boxes set around and on a hill. There are a goodly number of new apartment houses of two and three stories done in the modernistic architecture.²⁹⁴

Sixty years later this is how George Fouchard remembered his first view from the ship:

Barren, it's the feeling I got. There's no trees. There was these pretty little houses and all this, but I mean there was no a, it's a rugged country. I think it would be like Newfoundland. I don't know, I haven't been to Newfoundland....but ta, there was no trees. This was the thing that got me in Iceland....and when I say no trees, I mean no wild trees...there was no forest, no trees like we think [of] here, everywhere we look you see trees here, there everywhere you look there was no trees.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993) 84. "The mantle of authority and discipline cloaked the brutality and sadism of all military punishment. An unfair conviction for 'impertinence' when he tried to answer a charge and a week of detention...transformed Will Bird...from a soldier proud to be in uniform to one knowing there was not justice whatever in the army." Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 244. "For there is a very great deal of fraud, injustice and baseness in the army." Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 80. Author Fussell lists behavior that makes military life worse than it need be: "Petty harassment of the weak by the strong; open scrimmage for power and authority and prestige; sadism thinly disguised as necessary discipline; constant paying off of old scores; insistence on the letter rather than the spirit of ordinances." These are all said to have nothing to do with the winning of the war. Capitaine L. Dumais, *Un Canadien Français A Dieppe* (Paris: Editions France-Empire, 1968), 50, 51.

²⁹³ The physical link between the land and what it means to be Canadian is a common theme in the country's theatre, art, poetry and literature. Two people who symbolize this link in their work is philosopher and write, George Grant and author Margaret Atwood.

²⁹⁴ RG 24, 15,024, July 7th 1940. This has been filed in the diary material for August 1943. *The Renfrew Mercury*, Published letter from Pte. E. Dupuis.

²⁹⁵ Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript p. 18. Most interviewees commented on the absence of trees. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 19. "It was wonderful just to see trees again." In his interview Marcel Guevin states, "When we got off the boat they took us to Greenwich Scotland. And everybody is looking at the trees and the grass. Oh ya, it was amazing."

George Latendresse is more to the point:

Yes it was bleery, it was, well it wasn't real nice, really. We thought no trees, what the hell gives here. Came from a country where there's trees all over the place, no trees, ya.²⁹⁶

The other physical condition of the island that received much comment from the veterans was the constant daylight that prevailed when they arrived in July. Graham Brown remembered the call for 'lights out' at the close of his first day there:

But the thing that stuck in my mind and stuck in the mind of a lot of Camerons that were there was the fact that after being there and getting sorted out for some time, the bugler marched out and played lights out and the sun was up in the middle of the heavens....we had no idea what the time was.²⁹⁷

Stanley Joynt presented the other aspect of this new time zone:

Something new and different. In the middle of June, snow on the mountains. Sunshine twenty-four hours a day for two or three months and then all of a sudden it turned black. About twenty-four hours a day. At noon we went on guard and black as toby's ass, jesus was it black!²⁹⁸

Marcel Guevin's recollections of his new homeland lead into another startling reality for these soldiers:

And what surprised me was they give us tents to live in. There was no drill hall or barracks or anything like that. There wasn't a main kitchen and they used to bring out the food. They told us to put up the tents and that was it. We were in the harbor. We had the guns on the shoreline. We stayed there the whole time.²⁹⁹

One of the first problems encountered by any ship approaching the small port in Reykjavik was that of unloading. Whether it was cargo or troops, the island facilities were not designed to accommodate wartime needs. Graham Brown describes the process of disembarking from the ship:

²⁹⁶ Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript p. 16. Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War*, 77.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. This was mentioned by many veterans and is also noted in the regimental history account. Dumais, *Un Canadien Francais A Dieppe*, 40.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Stanley Joynt, June 1st 1999.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Marcel Guevin, June 14th, Sept. 9th 1999.

That was a toughy really, getting off. We had to go down one of these jacob's ladders, off the side of the ship carrying like full marching order, plus a kit bag plus a set of pipes. It's a wonder some of us didn't fall into the sea....we were going to a staging camp which was just a brief stay until we got sorted out, until we went to a permanent camp.³⁰⁰

An issue of interest in the existing literature is how Icelanders received these Canadian troops. The question of whether the Canadians were liked, or at least were more acceptable to the locals than the British or the American troops who would follow them, seems to be a matter of import. Brigadier Page in his reports to Ottawa stated that the Icelandic community was very impressed by the Pipe Band.³⁰¹ His reports were also positive in terms of the impact that the Canadians were having within the community. Yet most interviewees portray a different picture; that on the long term perhaps some Icelanders did come to appreciate these Canadians but their arrival was anything but welcoming.³⁰²

They were sort of pro German, the people were, really. When we hit Iceland we paraded off the ship ah, the Camerons and we had the bagpipe band and we...followed right through Reykjavik and there must have been maybe five or ten people watching us. They just weren't interested. Didn't want us in there, did they. But we went right through. Then when we left, hey man there wasn't enough room for the people to bid us good bye when we left. After ten months they got kind of used to us. We weren't half bad

³⁰⁰ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. They likely disembarked in this manner because of the inaccessibility to the dock that would be crowded with many other vessels in the process of unloading.

³⁰¹ The unit war diary also mentions how the locals were very interested in the unit as they marched into the capital. See RG 24 Vol. 15,022, July 7th 1940.

³⁰² Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 15. "The Icelanders for the most part resented our occupation which was only natural. The greater bulk of the people were isolationists and wanted nothing to do with troops of any nationality...On leaving Iceland...many civilians flocked to the Company H.Q's and even to quayside to wish us well." Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War*, 1952), 77, 78. Icelanders very independent and not friendly. Birdwood, *The Worcestershire Regiment*, 242. "The Icelanders were not at first very forthcoming hosts." This battalion arrived in Iceland on the 8th of June 1941, therefore this implies that the Icelanders did not change their mind about being occupied. John Joseph Hunt, *The United States Occupation of Iceland, 1941-1946* (Ph. D. Diss., Georgetown Univ., 1966) 314. States that the Icelanders never adjusted nor accepted the American troops. Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion*, 25, 27. Lt. Col. E. W. C. Sandes, *From Pyramid to Pagoda: The Story of the West Yorkshire Regiment in the War, 1939-1945* (London: F. T. Parsons Ltd., 1951), 240. Dumais, *Un Canadien Francais A Dieppe*, 41.

you know. [laugh]³⁰³

Allan Quinn was stationed in the capital and recalls his experience with Icelanders:

We had lots of chance to get into town. As a matter of fact we could go in almost every night. It was lots of fun but the Icelanders didn't like us. Some of them made friends with us but most of them were very cold.

Interviewer: Were they openly hostile? Oh ya.

Interviewer: Would they say things to you?

...If they could speak English they would. Used to [tell us to] go home and things like that. Some of them even went so far as to spit. One night one of our truck drivers was impaled on an iron picket fence. He survived but he's dead now. But he was very, very badly injured and it was Icelanders that done that.³⁰⁴

Robert Young also recalled a distinct coldness towards the Canadians upon their arrival:

Well at first I found them very, very distant. They wouldn't even walk on the same side of the street where you are if you were in the city of Reykjavik. They'd go across to the other side of the street and they wouldn't even look at you.³⁰⁵

None of the Canadians interviewed expressed great concern over the attitude of their new neighbours. Some like George Fouchard understood both sides and offered the following rationale:

My feeling was, I don't blame these people if they don't want us here....We shouldn't really be doing this but, we had no choice. It has to be done. And da, so let's do it, you know.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Allan Quinn June 23rd 1999. Although nothing was found recorded regarding this incident there is a notation on July 18th to indicate Camerons were subject to "unpleasant behavior" by Icelanders. RG 24 Vol. 15,022.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Robert Young, June 27th 1999.

³⁰⁶ Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript p. 18. These remarks reflect a significant discussion that exists in the literature, namely the position of the Icelandic nation regarding the war and its right to neutrality. In brief, under international law Iceland had the legal right to declare itself as a neutral country. Prior to being occupied the island was most diligent in abiding by proper trade policies and relations as they applied to neutral nations. Iceland's priority was to maintain cordial trade relations with both Germany and Great Britain, where possible. Iceland resisted all British attempts to induce the island to join the allied cause. From the Icelandic perspective they were not a military people and had no cause to take a position against the German Reich. In fact, since Hitler had come to power in 1933 Germany had made considerable efforts to befriend the island. The German interest towards Iceland was one of the

Due to being overloaded on *The Empress of Australia* the Camerons arrived without the lumber and other building supplies that the military had arranged to accompany them to their destination.³⁰⁷ [see previous chapter regarding leaving Halifax] Even if these construction materials had arrived with them, the unloading problems at the quay would have seriously delayed the soldiers' access to reasonable accommodation. The other impeding factor was the 'tug of war' that was waged between Canadian Brigadier Page and British General Curtis, regarding which activity should take priority; training or building of accommodation. The General Officer Commanding wanted the focus of the troops on training; preparation for the likelihood of a German landing was the priority of the man in charge of the defence of Iceland. Page, who was well aware of the needs of the Canadian troops, saw things differently. The following excerpt of a letter sent to Curtis by Page on August 4th 1940, addresses the dilemma:

The remark was made at the conference that unless the troops know how to fight the enemy, there will be none left to be hutted. While I am in agreement with this I cannot help but feel that the converse holds good, i.e. if accommodation is not provided there will be no troops to do the fighting.³⁰⁸

principal reasons Churchill decided to occupy. By the act of occupying the allies had opened up the possibility of war taking place right on Icelandic soil—the worst of all possible scenarios for the 130,000 inhabitants of this normally isolated and marginal territory.

³⁰⁷ RG 24 File 8591-6 Reel C8366 Letter to Governor General in Council from Minister of National Defence Aug. 28th 1940. "That on May 28th 1940 the Government of Canada agreed to assume responsibility for the defence of Iceland and for that purpose to send to Iceland a force of appx. 8000 all ranks....As it had been reported that no facilities for accommodation existed in Iceland...steps were immediately taken to purchase through the Department of Munitions and Supply a considerable quantity of lumber and other building materials, together with tractors, excavators, pumps and other construction equipment in order that hutments could be built for the Canadian forces at the earliest possible date. The total value of all materials and equipment purchased was appx. \$1,618,000.00. Four freight ships which were immediately available were chartered for the purpose of transporting material to Iceland and were loaded and dispatched as rapidly as materials could be delivered at the docks. While these ships were in transit, the policy in regard to the defence of Iceland was altered and instructions were issued that Canadian troops would be relieved by British troops during the summer period. As a result two of the freight ships were unloaded at Iceland while the other two were diverted to England where the cargoes will be taken over jointly by the Canadian forces in England and the British authorities." What happened to these materials? No evidence was located to indicate what was unloaded and who received the articles on these two Canadian freight ships.

³⁰⁸ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel T10,570 Letter to G.O.C Curtis from Page, Aug. 4th 1940.

No existing structures, of any nature, were available for most of the Canadian troops. Therefore, in spite of diligent efforts by Brigadier Page it was well into October before most Camerons had shelter beyond their Bell tents.³⁰⁹ Remaining dry and warm were challenges that troops did not usually have the means to overcome.³¹⁰ The following examples do point to the problem and the types of solutions desperate troops resorted to.

There's a case where guys adapted. We were in these tents, bell tents which are a useless sort of thing because all the room is at the top instead of at the bottom where it should be [laugh]. And da, it was getting kind of cool so they started making stoves out of a biscuit tins and carnation tins for the stovepipe. So there was a few tents caught fire [laugh].³¹¹

Fred Hicks recalls what he and his group did:

What we did in the tents at the foot of the mountain there...we'd take, we had square gasoline cans, used to get our gasoline in. We'd take those and clean them all out and then we'd cut a hole in the top, a hole in the side. Some we'd cut up and roll up and make stove pipes and we'd put them in the middle of the tent. We burned a few tents down. Oh ya, to keep warm. Oh ya, we burnt down a few tents.³¹²

³⁰⁹ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel T10,570 Weekly Report to Ottawa from Z Force, Aug. 5th 1940 item 3, "...the situation out here as regards accommodation is becoming increasingly pressing. Item 8. Everything possible is being done to improve living conditions by the issue of lumber to provide floors for the tents and the erection of temporary sheds for drying purposes. It must be born in mind that there is no accommodation available such as existed in France in the last war. Farms are poor and widely scattered and what few barns there are, are now filled with hay." Included in this report is a letter sent to General Curtis regarding the accommodation situation. In the opening paragraph of this letter dated Aug. 4th, "I cannot help but feel that it is my duty both to my men and to my government to once again draw your attention to what I consider the very grave situation at present existing in Iceland from an administrative point of view....It would appear that either I failed at your conference on Aug. 1st to make myself entirely clear or that you are not fully aware of the acuteness of the situation which faces me." In a telegram from Page to Ottawa dated Aug. 3rd he describes the hutting problems as having reached the 'acute stage' and warns that something must be done quickly in order to prevent a repeat of the 'Salisbury Plain' of 1914. He closes the telegram with "**desire to impress on department that situation is becoming extremely, repeat extremely urgent...**" On the 8th of August a further telegram reads, "It appears situation in Iceland definitely not comprehended in Canada." This is in reference to the problem of the unloading of ships and again the need is for supplies that are on the ships. Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: the Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993) 26, 27.

³¹⁰ Sandes, *From Pyramid to Pagoda*, 242.

³¹¹ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. Brigade diary accounts, as well as memos from Alabaster Force show that this was likely a common practice with tragic results where men were severely burnt.

³¹² Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999. Mr. Hicks was a driver in Iceland and therefore would have had access to gasoline cans.

Abby Nolan and his men who were guarding the RAF planes at Kaldadarness resorted to similar action to keep from freezing in their cold posting:

At Kaldadarness when we were on, take over the guard house, [they] had the five gallon can of Aviation gas and we used to go and sneak one of them. We'd pour it into the stove and it would go up the chimney like a rocket you know. [We'd hear the pilots exclaim] "those bloody Canadians are on guard again!"³¹³

George Fouchard, also at Kaldadarness, admits to another solution that he and some of his friends resorted to. "We used to steal the officers coal once in a while...they had good coal [laugh]. We had soft coal and ya, we'd go and change bags once in a while, ya."³¹⁴

All postings certainly shared equally in some of the Icelandic challenges.³¹⁵ But for No. 4 platoon at Kaldadarness, approximately sixty miles from the battalion headquarters, the eight and one-half months that they served there was unique in terms of isolation.³¹⁶

³¹³ Interview with Abby Nolan, June 10th 1999.

³¹⁴ Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript p. 24.

³¹⁵ The particular postings the Camerons were assigned to after several days spent in staging camp A & B were as follows: No 1 Company moved to Hafnarfjordur. No. 4 platoon under Lt. E.C.N. Browne proceeded to Kaldadarness, the most distant from the battalion headquarters. (Later in December when No 3 company was sent to Budareyri, on the far east coast, they would then become the most isolated and distant group). No. 5 platoon under PSM W. H. Armstrong proceeded to the Hvaleyrri sector, south west of Hafnarfjordur. No. 6 platoon under PSM Stewart proceeded to Gardar Sector which was north west of Hamarfjordur. The Company Head Quarters took up quarters in a house at 19th street in Hafnarfjordur. No. 2 Company and Base Company accompanied by the band marched to new positions at Kollafjordur, also known as 'Windy Valley.' No 3 Company moved into their Head Quarters on Tower Hill. No. 10 platoon was in the area known as Howitzer Hill, No 11 platoon was located on Tower Hill and No. 12 platoon positioned one section behind the British Minister's house and one about 2 miles away at the end of Skerafjordur. No. 4 Company moved off to the Grotta Peninsula area. Company Head Quarters was situated in a blue house on the south side of the main road leading from Reykjavik. No. 13 and 15 platoons were on the Peninsula proper, No. 14 had one section on Orfirlsey island and one in the city of Reykjavik. RG 24. Vol. 15,024 July 10th 1940, filed as appendix #2. This is misfiled with material from August 1943. See map #2 in this thesis for further information. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 13, 14.

³¹⁶ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Oct. 3rd 1940; "Comander Z (Page) visited Kaldadarness to see the Coy F.M.R. & the platoon of Chof O at the airport. Living conditions very bad due to wet weather." RG 24 Vol. 15,022, Dec. 10th Road conditions to Kaldadarness are at a point that communication may be cut off completely. RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Appendix #4, Platoon #4 July 10th "All 33 all ranks and stores destined for the farthest position that the ChofO will man, appx. 60 miles away over very poor roads. July 12thimpossible to dig over two feet without striking water....July 13th As the men had had insufficient to eat and were very wet, they were called upon to make only the daily routine check of all rifles and guns, for the balance of the day, they were kept in their tents. July 14th Appx. 0030 Sgt. Gauvreau arrived from the Battalion Headquarters with rations." It looks like these men had very little food for several days anyway.

When we got there, there was nothing. Absolutely nothing. Just a bare, flat, open, windy area. [small chuckle] And da, put our tents up and we had to finally build sods up around our tents to keep them in, on the ground. You know things would take off. The winds are wild up there. And da we stayed in those until, oh I guess it was either October or November and we were just freezing there, you know.³¹⁷

Later in the interview when Mr. Fouchard was asked, “your memories of Iceland, how would they compare with your memories of any other period of the war? Would there be a difference with Iceland?” He responded with, “Well I think the isolation was something that we never had before and never had since, you know.”³¹⁸

There are countless references to the horrific weather conditions that these troops experienced. Fred Hicks explains one windstorm in early September that is well documented at the battalion and brigade level. Among the Canadian troops the Camerons suffered the greatest losses during this cyclone.

When we first went to Iceland we got tents and we were down at the Foot of Mount Heckla...while we were in that camp there at the foot of the mountain, holy smokes. We had a real storm there...cause we got up for breakfast and there was nothing left. Everything got blown away. Oh ya kitchen gone, went for breakfast no kitchen. Matter of fact, a lot of guys had no tents neither.³¹⁹

In the previous week there were severe windstorms but it seems that this one topped the others for destruction.

Today Friday the 13th will be a memorable one to all ranks who had the misfortune to be in either of the two camps at Kollafjordur. Our storm of the 7th would be considered as a gentle breeze in comparison with the cyclone that ravaged our camp last night and today. The wind commenced in earnest at approximately 0200 hours on the 13th and continued with ever increasing violence throughout the night....the Quarter Master Stores came down at approximately 0400 hours and

Mr. Fouchard mentioned in his interview that sometimes they were down to ‘iron rations.’ Davis, “Iceland,” 232.

³¹⁷ Interview with George Fouchard, Jan. 14th 2000, transcript p. 18.

³¹⁸ Ibid., transcript p. 33.

³¹⁹ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999.

had it not been for the seriousness of the situation it would have been most amusing to witness several dozen pairs of socks blowing out to sea flying at altitudes of from 10 to 40 feet. 45 gallon gasoline drums were indiscriminately blown out to sea. The men's kitchen only lately constructed, departed this world in 2 pieces; first the roof followed closely by the 4 walls.³²⁰

Brigadier Page visited the camp the next morning and recorded the following:

Greeted with news that Camerons were in bad shape. Went down to see them. Camp pretty well flattened. Officers seemed very helpless. Arranged to get the men under cover by closing up Reserve Coy and giving them hut at Brigade H. Q. Stories of storm seem incredible. Kitchen blown away. Packing cases of socks etc. rolled into sea. Bundles of shingles (125 lb) blown in air.³²¹

By the end of October the Camerons were finally lodged in Nissan huts with a pot-bellied stove in the center to provide heating. Acquiring and erecting the 'silo like' metal building was one thing. Obtaining the heating source was another. Harry David explains:

We had Nissan huts. They were cold until we got our own Canadian CPR Pot-bellied stoves. Prior to that we had Nissan hut stoves that only the British Army would think of using. It took somebody finding out that the pot bellied stoves had been issued by Canadian ordinance to the British ordinance for issue to the Canadian forces in Iceland. But we never did, until there was an official complaint put through about them. Then we got back our pot-bellied stoves and we got back our sheep skin jackets. Other than that we had British sowwesters that in sleet and rain were deadly. There's no heat in them at all. They just froze solid on you....The rest of our clothing was quite adequate...all Canadian army clothing...When the British officers had these, [Canadian issue winter coats] they used to strut around in them. So we found out that they were Canadian army issue and we didn't have them.

Interviewer: Did they literally have to take them off their back?

I'm sure they did.³²²

Listed as cargo shipped on *The Empress* in July with the troops, is 113 cooking stoves, 25 round stoves, 280 heaters, 1706 bundles of stove pipe and 1 case of stove parts.

³²⁰ RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Sept. 13th 1940.

³²¹ Daily Journal Brigadier L. F. Page D.H.H. 000.9 (D133). Rissik, *The D.L.I. at War*, 76.

³²² Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999. RG 24 Vol 13,813 Reel 10,570 Weekly Progress report from Z Force to Ottawa Oct. 12th "495 sheepskin-lined received from Canada."

Also itemized are several items one finds identified in the Cameron war diary as being urgently needed: Blankets, 33,000 pounds worth,³²³ and one case of binoculars.³²⁴ On the positive side one can say that the Canadian Government and the Canadian Army did show foresight and made arrangements to provide for their troops. Why the troops did not receive these provisions awaits a thorough review.

Although the war diary has numerous references to the lack of proper clothing to keep the troops dry in the early months, none of the interviewees mentioned this problem.³²⁵

When asked about clothing all agreed that they were well provided for during the winter months. Lou Guertin describes their cold weather clothing:

But you got to give the Canadian army credit, we were all issued sheepskin lined coats. They were a thick canvas coat with a sheepskin lining from the knees up and big mountain cloth hat with earflaps that you could pull down and tuck under your chin. Ahm we were issued shoe packs; you know rubber bottoms, leather tops and felt insoles. And we always had two pair of socks in em. And we had horsehide mitts with woolen mitts inside.³²⁶

The food the troops were allotted was entirely another matter.³²⁷ As troops in some locations had no access to food other than what the military provided, this could be a

³²³ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10, 570 Sept. 20th "No comforts as yet received, and same urgently required. On the 21st, 'blankets urgently requested.'

³²⁴ Reel 5610 File H.Q.S. 63-302-46. Files along with Nominal Role of troops that sailed to Iceland aboard *The Empress of Australia*. RG 24 Vol 15,024 Appendix 3 July 24th No 2 Co. [misfiled] "As the A.A. posts (3) have only one telescope the Intelligence officer gave his binoculars to one of the posts. It is too bad that so many senior NCOs are wearing glasses that [they] have no need for them while our A.A. posts, the only look-outs we have, have no glasses at all."

³²⁵ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Report YMCA Z force Aug. 30th to Sept. 9th item 5. "Much will be gained in every way when the men are put into huts where they will be able to have dry clothes and a dry bed." Dumais, *Un Canadien Francais A Dieppe*, 52, 53.

³²⁶ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21, 27 and Aug. 3rd 2000. transcript p. 37.

³²⁷ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Report YMCA, Z Force for the period of Aug 30th to Sept 9th 1940. Item 3 states "The men have said that they are being served better meals here than in Canada..." No Camerons interviewed in this review would have concurred with this remark. Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Translated by A. W. Wheen, (New York: Fawcett Crest, Seventh Printing, 1984, original publication 1928), 124. "Two things a soldier needs for contentment: good food and rest. Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (Great Britain: Basic Books, 1998), 350-357.

serious issue.³²⁸ Although the cargo list from *The Empress of Australia* itemizes items such as beef (20,000 lbs), bacon (17,000 lbs.), butter (11,000 pds.) and jam (11,850 lbs.) these troops don't appear to have received these foodstuffs. The first meal was particularly memorable. Allan Quinn speaks on behalf of many:

Our first meal after getting off the ship at Reykjavik...we were fed it was either, I'm sure it was mutton and if anybody ever showed me a piece of mutton again, I think I'd a thrown it at them. It was the most horrible meal that I ever had in my life. It was cooked in grease. All you got was this thing in our mess tins. This piece of, you couldn't really call it meat. It was fat and grisaille and ah...³²⁹

Mutton was the principal staple in their diet. There were a lot of sheep in Iceland but many of the men insisted that what they received was imported from Australia. Some claimed to have personally seen the word 'Australia' stamped on the hides. Others, in disgust, commented that even the wool was still attached to the meat.³³⁰

We were fed lamb, ram and mutton so much. ahm, I remember a cook by the name of Sammy Charette and they pulled up with a ration truck and the first thing they unloaded was a mutton carcass and he threw it in the ocean. He got 28 days detention for it. Ah, I have never willingly ate lamb, ram or mutton since.³³¹

Fred Hicks explains the benefits of being assigned as a driver and how a fortunate few were able to survive the Icelandic diet.

We always ended up with mutton, there was enough if you liked it... See I drove the H.Q. ration truck. I used to manage to talk them into a couple of five pound pails of jam or something on the side and bring it back and then everybody'd eat. I'd go into the town and buy bread, and everybody ate bread and jam instead of their mutton.³³²

³²⁸ Dumais, *Un Canadien Francais A Dieppe*, 43 – 46, 51.

³²⁹ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999. The particularly poor quality of this first meal is also mentioned in the war diary, minus the specific details of Mr. Quinn's account.

³³⁰ The fact that the wool was still attached was mentioned by a number of veterans. See Acton/Hamilton interview.

³³¹ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21, 27 & Aug. 3, 2000. Transcript p. 46.

³³² Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999. Johnston, *Corvettes*, 34, 35. "I also traded jam and tea to English Army cooks in Iceland....the English were very poorly fed. They would watch our ship come in and very soon they would row out for exchanges."

If one was fortunate and had a cook on site, then the food was better than if it was prepared at a central location. Of course the diet still consisted of the same staple ingredients but with a skillful cook one had better fare.

The food was terrible in Iceland. Mutton that's all we could get, New Zealand mutton. When we were in sections we had the cook. He used to trade the mutton for fish. It was quite a change.

He'd cook the mutton, roast it and we had it cold and it was much better than when the battlion was cooking it. It was stew they were bringing us.³³³

Esmond Acton and Ray Hamilton were in full agreement on the subject of food in Iceland. Their comments offer some interesting thoughts on what may have been going on with food supplies. The phrasing of the query was, "If you think back, did you have enough food, decent food in Iceland?" Mr. Acton begins:

No we didn't. Because all our food was prepared up at our base at Alafoss and they brought it down to us, especially that World War I food that we got there in the big cans.

[Interviewer] Did you think it was left over from World War I?

[Both men in unison]: **It was!**

[Mr. Acton] and some of the cans you would open there and you couldn't stand the smell. You'd just up and fire them.

[Mr. Hamilton] M and V they called it. They said it was meat and vegetable stew but we had a name for that. It's called muck and vomit, canned.

[Interviewer] Did that food improve later on?

[Mr. Acton] Yes, but you'd always get back to it. And the British were in charge of all the gal darn food and anything that was good, that was coming in from Canada for us, we didn't see it.

[Mr. Hamilton] that's right. The SRD was on top of the hill there. Right in the middle of Reykjavik, you know the Service Ration Depot and whenever the quarter master would go out and get the battalion rations and that type of thing, he'd have to take what was given to him....From my point of view, a loaf of bread and a can of margarine, whenever I could get my hands on

³³³ Interview with Fred Smith, Nov. 24th 2000.

some of that, that was important. Particularly in a Nissan hut and so on where you could stick a piece of bread against a Quebec heater and lots of margarine which was, I'm sure, was actual grease left over from the First World War.³³⁴

In late October Ray Hamilton was transferred to No. 3 Company as the medical person to accompany the unit to Budareyri. He describes the rations that went with the men on the craft:

I can recall being sick and I brought up everything except the soles of my shoes and we just had biscuit, hard tack and that sort of thing. And if we got really hungry we could knock the biscuits like that and the maggots could drop out, cause they'd been there during the First World War.³³⁵

The responsibility of this unit was to provide the machine gun defence for the force, therefore by late fall, once the huts were assembled and the camps established, they were primarily occupied with guard duties. Graham Brown describes some of their early tasks:

It [Windy Valley] became a bog with the rain. So the colonel had work parties out and I was involved. Going to the beach and getting gravel in order to make it a little more passable for trucks. And so the guys used to say the M.G. didn't stand for machine gun, it stood for more gravel, cause the colonel used to say 'more gravel'!³³⁶

During this period there was a great deal of hard manual labor required and very few available labourers on the island.³³⁷ The troops often became the work force for the construction of airports, roads and naval bases. Although a few interviewees mentioned being detailed to construction tasks most were principally involved in preparing camp

³³⁴ Interview with Acton/Hamilton, November 13th 2000. Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 87. "Canadians learned to know but seldom to love margarine, English sausages, suet pudding and Pink's jam." Note this is in relation to World War I. The veterans mentioned the quality of the sausages in particular, and the pink jam they were able to get on the odd occasion.

³³⁵ Interview with Acton/Hamilton, November 13th 2000. Mr. Acton agreed with his friend. These men were deadly serious when they were recounting this.

³³⁶ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999. Chummy Lacroix also describes this process in his interview.

³³⁷ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570, YMCA report for Sept 10th to 30th "...the men are working seven days a week & daylight is becoming less and less each day." RG 24 Vol 15,022 Dec. 26th 1940 "The medical officer states that the men's resistance has been considerably lowered by the arduous tasks which they have been called upon to perform. The lack of exercise, fresh vegetables and sunshine contributes for the fact

areas, constructing defensive positions, erecting structures, including their Nissan huts, and guard duties.³³⁸ One platoon, No. 8 was designated as the work platoon. As George Latendresse explains, they delivered coal and food and “whatever dirty job was done, we had to do it.” Interestingly, no interviewees voiced any objections to the tasks they were asked to perform in Iceland. They all seemed to agree that at least they had something to do.³³⁹

The topic of the equipment provided for the troops in Iceland is important and must be considered in any review of the occupation—regardless whether the interest is a political, military or social one. George Fouchard comments:

The guns we took up there were the old Vickers guns we had in the Drill Hall....they worked.³⁴⁰

that so many of the men are in hospital.” No hospital reports were found to give further data on this comment.

³³⁸ See interview with George Latendresse and Lou Guertin regarding constructions duties. RG 24, Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Weekly Progress Reports Week ending Oct 5th Z Force to Ottawa Training “The Chof O having 3 companies in static postions on beaches, etc., cannot carry out any Field training...” RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4 Report of C. Box Aux. Svcs. Period ending Nov. 30th. These reports from the YMCA representative refers on a number of occasions to the very hard work that these troops are required to do and how demanding the guard duty is. e.g. p. 3 “The cinema is the best type of entertainment for these lads, especially in the outlying posts where the men work hard being on guard 24 out of every 48 hours and during the hours when off guard they must clean their web equipment etc. to be ready to go on the following day. They are so tired that they do not wish to take part in any physically active past-time. This guard duty has been their lot now for five months and, believe me, it is hard.”

³³⁹ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 YMCA Report Z Force Aug 30th to Sept. 9th 1940 Item 5. “This regiment like every other on the island has become a labour unit having to dig, carry rocks etc. Leather mitts should be given to the men to protect their hands but there are none.” The Camerons supervisor, Charles Box was the YMCA representative. The supervisors reported for duty on Sept. 2nd 1940. RG24 Vol 15,024, Appendix #3 No. 2 Co. July 16th 1940 “the lack of equipment is certainly a terrific handicap and the jobs that have been accomplished with what little there is on hand bears well for the ingenious mind and hand of the Canadian soldier.”

³⁴⁰ Interview with Ray Hamilton, November 13th 2000. Mr. Hamilton described the drill purpose guns in the Drill Hall as follows: “the rifling in the barrels was as smooth as that coffee cup. Everything was worn.” When I heard this I did not understand what Mr. Hamilton meant. In my experience at the University of Ottawa, I have had the pleasure of working as a teaching assistant for the course entitled ‘Technology, Society and the Environment since 1800.’ It is predominantly students from the faculty of engineering who are enrolled. I have received permission to quote from one student’s work. His paper reflects on the development of the technology of rifling. Paul Scanlan, “The Development and Use of Rifles in North America and Around the World,” History 2129, March 2001. “The development that began the change was rifling. Rifling refers to the internal spiraling grooves in the gun barrel. The rifling caused the projectile to spin when the powder was ignited. This works in the same way as a thrown football. The football, if it is thrown with a spiral, will have greater distance and improved accuracy, compared to a

Interviewer: So what were your duties...?

We were ground defense for that whole airport. And air defense for them. See we had, used to have big guns there, ack ack guns. They took those out to put them in England, when England started to get hammered and they put wooden ones up in their place, you see.³⁴¹ Looked exactly like the other ones, and they didn't fool a soul. The Germans were over the next day to have a look and see... [laugh] They knew right away that the guns had gone...of course the people there were informing them of every move we made, I'm sure they were, you know.³⁴²

At this point Mr. Fouchard and his platoon were guarding the sole airport with the only planes that the occupation force had at their disposal. His remarks reflect, in general, the state of the equipment available in the event of an attack.³⁴³ Harry David explains what type of equipment they were retrained on when they arrived in England in 1941, after their time in Iceland.

The machine guns [in Iceland] were World War I. When we got to England we were issued new machine guns, much more elaborate looking than the

football thrown without spiral. The rifling was performed by machinists on the smooth inside of the barrel, called the bore. They used specialized milling tools that would slowly take shavings out of the bore, creating grooves that would allow the projectile to spin as it was propelled out through the barrel. Up until this point in time, all firearms had smooth bores. A recognizable occurrence in the often Hollywood-romanticized muzzle-load is the pistol duel. The reality was that very often no one was killed simply because the weapons were so inaccurate. The rifling inside the barrel improved range, stability and accuracy in flight. This meant that the rifle became more effective, in that it would hit its target with greater precision and thus the value of the rifle as a tool greatly increased. With the development of cartridges, that is, a bullet with a metal case filled with powder attached, repeat firing was possible." Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 14 "...of the 48 machine guns brought to Iceland by the Battalion 44 were drill purpose guns...they were quite capable of firing accurately but it is doubtful whether they would have lasted for any length of time during a sustained shoot." Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Translated by A. W. Wheen, (New York: Fawcett Crest, Seventh Printing, 1984, original publication 1928), 92. "If it were simply a mistake in aim no one would say anything, but the truth is that the barrels are worn out."

³⁴¹ Paul Fussell, *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic*. (Toronto: Little Brown & Company, 1996), 84. Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years 1939-1945: Memories of Canadians at Home & Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday Can. Ltd., 1974), 48. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5. Johnston, *Corvettes*, 7 – 10. All make references to using wooden rifles and guns.

³⁴² Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript p. 21. RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Jan. 31st 1940 "Further investigation revealed a badly damaged tail surface that could not have been caused by the wind. Sabotage was suspected and Force H.Q. advised."

³⁴³ RG 24 Vol 15,022 Feb. 22 1941. "The G.O.C. today visited No. 4 Coy along with Brig. Lammie and ordered the sentry at No. 2 area to fire the gun. The gun would not fire in bursts, only a single shot. The G.O.C. was quite upset. The main reason put forth for the fact that the gun would not fire is the intense cold and the fact that the guns had not been fired since coming to Iceland except for the odd target practice.

old World War One, much more refined. And we had dial sites, just like the Artillery had to fire their heavy artillery. These dial sites you could put on your range, your angle of site...they were terrific. Whereas we had been using the old clinometer and bar foresight which is real antiquity from World War One. Had there been any kind of a real invasion of Iceland by the Germans with our inexperience and the equipment that we had, I don't think we could have withstood it, not that I thought it [then]. This is sort of an afterthought after the war. At the time we felt that we could have withstood anything that came our way [pause] that's the way it was, but in hindsight.³⁴⁴

Although the question of how well these veterans believe they could have held their position against an invasion force was not a planned query, most offered their opinion on the topic. Not one veteran interviewed felt they were well equipped. Others suggested, as Mr. David has pointed out, that they had not received sufficient training to be able to defend that territory.³⁴⁵ A number simply stated, 'we would not have stood a chance.'³⁴⁶

Roger Rowley puts forward an officer's view on the perceived risk of invasion and the odds of the troops being able to deny this territory to the enemy.

Interviewer: From your perspective, thinking back, how real was the possibility of a German invasion when you were there?

Oh very real. We were getting aerial photos of their assault craft in the Skagerrak, in the Kattegat, and a build up of soldiers there. And don't forget they'd just kicked us out, kicked the British guards out of Norway.

³⁴⁴ Interview with Harry David, June 15, 1999.

³⁴⁵ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Sept. 30th 1940 "This was the first opportunity units of Z force had been given of training with the use of live ammunition and the lessons learned were invaluable." RG 24, Vol. 15,024 Appendix #3 No. 2 Co. [misfiled material] July 13th 1940 "The emplacements are all on the coast and they bring in a new phase of M.G. work that has not been touched on to date v12 - "Coastal Defence". This throws all the knowledge as gleaned from the pamphlets into [] hat. The arcs of fire in most cases are 180 degrees or 150 degrees more than we have been taught to use. Our men can do the job, even if they think they could do the tasks better from positions they picked out themselves. Brigadier Lammie chose the positions himself and as Major Fortey found out to-day he does not like to be told the jobs could be done much better from different positions." This issue of who would make the calls regarding the positioning of the guns, the British or Canadian leadership, was mentioned by several veterans.

³⁴⁶ Interview with Acton/Hamilton, November 13th 2000. Both agreed. Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon books, 1984), 194. An interview with General William Buster which shows that Iceland was not a unique situation in terms of training or equipment: "When we went into North Africa on Nov. 8 1942, we had absolutely untrained troops. They were green & we had to train them from scratch....the boys on the ship had no ideas where they were going....I didn't know until we were at sea. The ship was loaded with all these crates of weapons that nobody had ever seen before." Hunt, *The United States Occupation of Iceland, 1941-1946*, 194. Author also supports the view that Hitler could have easily taken the island.

Things were, it was the hot corner.³⁴⁷

Interviewer: So you weren't sitting there thinking, we're just babysitting for no reason?

No, no bloody way. I don't know what the private soldier would have thought of that because you know they didn't, they weren't in the know....

[Later in the interview] Well, but if they had ever decided to invade England we would have had it in my book. We were inadequately prepared. There weren't enough soldiers there. It was too inhospitable a land....all they had to do was kill a few fellas before they got into the mountains. And take Reykjavik and Akureyri and a couple of other places and the war was over. Bomb the airfield you know with a couple of stoukas. They could have put it out. There was a single runway. And we had built it. There was no, no other air base in Iceland when we got there. So you know, I mean it was pitifully underdeveloped from a military point of view.³⁴⁸

Although the island was under German surveillance and the occasional strafing by single planes did happen, no German invasion ever occurred.³⁴⁹ However, Germany did consider it. The plan of invading Iceland, code named *Operation Ikarus*, was brought

³⁴⁷ RG 24 Vol. 13, 813 Reel 10.570 Report to Secretary of National Defence from Z Force, Sept. 9th 1940 1. "That the situation is viewed seriously is indicated by the movement of considerable British Naval forces to Icelandic waters." 2. "The conditions under which "Z" force are working are very definitely those of Active Service. All coast watching stations are constantly manned and all defensive posts are held by a nucleus of the garrison with 'stand to' morning and night." Sept 16th "...further period of vigilance have been imposed due to unidentified planes having been heard in the vicinity of Reykjavik. These periods of vigilance, while imposing some physical hardships on the troops due to climatic conditions, are of considerable value from a training stand point and have the additional benefit of keeping the men keyed up." RG 24 Vol. 15,022 Mar. 29th 1941 War diary entry regarding Germany's announcement that it has increased its blockaded area and has included Iceland. Icelandic press very upset. Hunt, *the United States Occupation of Iceland, 1941-1946*, thesis supports the opinion that Iceland was at high risk of invasion, particularly before July 1941. Sandes, *From Pyramid to Pagoda*, 242.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p.26, 27, 33. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 14. Situation described as 'the constant threat of invasion...'

³⁴⁹ Allied guns in Iceland were engaged against an enemy plane or planes on Nov. 3rd 1940 (Heinkel III) Feb. 9th and Mar. 30th 1941. Enemy aircraft were heard but the visibility was very poor and the 'stand to' order was given on September 10, November 17th and December 16th 1940. Intelligence reports from the War Office showing increased activity in Norway with concern regarding preparation for invasion of Iceland are recorded for the period July 17th through to the 27th & Aug. 9th. On September 8th and 9th a state of extreme vigilance was declared. A report of Mar 11th 1941 indicates that attempts to land enemy agents may be expected. The waters around Iceland were extremely dangerous due to enemy submarine activity. Shipwrecked crews and the debris from sunken craft often landed on the shores of the island. Reports of enemy submarines and ships in the area were recorded on February 9th March 12th and March 30 1941. The above information is recorded in the unit diary RG 24 Vol. 15,022. Some entries may also be found in the Brigade Diary. Frank Harvey, "Ocean Operation" Joan Donaldson-Yarmey, editor, *50 Personal WWII Stories: By the Men and Women Who Were There* (Edmonton: Jomet Publishing, 1995), 62, 63. Johnston, *Corvettes*, 18-34, 41, 42, 94-97.

forward by Hitler prior to the British occupation. The Fuhrer was still contemplating a sudden seizure of the island as late as 1942.³⁵⁰

George Fouchard situated at the aerodrome at Kaldadarness recounts his experience with German surveillance.

We couldn't handle any aircraft up high. The only thing we could handle was stuff down low...ah but you know [little laugh] I think if Germans had landed there in force, there wasn't a lot we could have done to stop them but ta, I don't know...

Interviewer: Did you see a lot of German activity?

Just once. He came down and he strafed the aerodrome and then he shot things up... We shot at him and da, we hit the aircraft and ...he stopped immediately. And then he took off so whether he knew that we'd hit him or whether he just decided to go home...But ta we fully expected then that we're gonna get a bombing raid here, for sure...I don't know why but it never came off....

Interviewer: Would the expectation of some kind of a German invasion have been a constant concern?

No, I think things would suddenly bring it to mind, you know. I wonder, ah, like an aircraft would fly over, maybe it was a German aircraft would fly over, really up high. And da, you'd think what's he lookin for...what can we expect from him you know. And this one that came in low and gunned the place up, ah what's gonna happen after he gets back you know. Or, if he gets back are we gonna get hammered you know. Ah but it wasn't something you thought about all the time. Just something would bring it to mind you know, once in a while that, you know we could be in trouble here [laugh]. Cause we only had one bridge. And da, if that went down, that's it.

Interviewer: Where were you going, [to do] if that went down?

We weren't going anywhere. So I mean a, it was sa, you know, we were in a tight spot there if anything had *really* of happened you know but fortunately it didn't, ha, ha....

Interviewer: did you ever get instructions if your bridge was taken out, what to do?

Oh, oh we knew if the bridge went, we were gone too. [little laugh] You know so we didn't need worry about the bridge, we forgot that one. But ta, there

³⁵⁰ Bittner, Lion, 50-54. Germany's plans to invade Iceland is a topic which requires re-investigation.

was some ah British soldiers on that bridge when this aircraft went over and he gave them a rough time...they were crossing the bridge when he a went after them...and ya there was some killed in that one, ya.³⁵¹

As the issue of alcohol was one that almost every interviewee advanced, it deserves discussion in this review. The policy in Iceland for the Canadian troops was clear. Officers and senior non-commissioned officers could purchase two bottles of hard liquor a week at a nominal rate from NAAFI.³⁵² Anyone below the rank of sergeant was not allowed to consume hard liquor.³⁵³ They could not acquire it from the army outlets and were forbidden to purchase it from any other source. They were allowed to consume beer but, unfortunately, a Canadian product does not appear to have been available. There was a very poor quality local beer that had a miniscule alcohol content, as well as a homebrew liquor known as 'Black Death.' Because of the potency of this latter product, the troops were warned of its life threatening properties,³⁵⁴ as well as being forbidden to consume it.

As one might expect, almost every veteran interviewed admitted to drinking Black Death. They agreed that it was potent and likely harmful but they defended their actions by asking, "what choice did we have? There was nothing else."³⁵⁵ Coupled with this was

³⁵¹ Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript pgs. 21-24. This incident is discussed by Abby Nolan, the sergeant who gave the fire order. Also reviewed in the unit's history. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 16. As the plane was identified by Mr. Nolan as a Heinkel 111 it likely is the incident recorded in the diary on November 3rd 1940. RG 24, Vol. 15,022. Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish*, 30.

³⁵² Bittner, "Thesis," 532-535. Fussell, *Wartime*, 103.

³⁵³ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Sept. 23rd 1940 Routine Orders No 321 (4) "It should be noted that NAAFI is only permitted to sell spirits by the bottle to duly constituted officers & sergeants messes and that the sale thereof to individuals is prohibited." RG 24, Vol 15,022 Routine Order No. 276 Nov. 9th 1940 "The possession of, procuring or consumption of spirits – whiskey Gin or Black Death, by other ranks below the rank of L/Sgt. from either military or civilian sources is strictly forbidden."

³⁵⁴ RG 24 Vol 15,022 Routine Order #30 July 18th 1940. "Alcohol All ranks are warned of the dangerous effects of the local spirit known as 'Black Death' It may be very sudden in its effects. Personnel found in possession of this spirit or knowingly drinking it will be severely punished."

³⁵⁵ One veteran spoke of his comrades in Budareyri drinking the anti-freeze from the machine guns. Paul Fussell writes that troops were so eager for drink that they consumed methyl alcohol and died. Paul Fussell, *Wartime*, 102, 103.

the fact that the most a man could hope to receive in 'time off' was a few hours in the evening to go into the capital. Troops were not permitted to stay overnight in the city. Of course even this option did not apply to the men in outlying locations. The real issue would appear to be what was perceived as the unfairness in this policy. The majority of the men were in a situation where they could not have 'real time off', for example a weekend pass, or a night away from the camp. Therefore for a rule that would grant some men the perceived pleasure and escape that alcohol offered, because of their rank, while the majority were denied, is still a sensitive area.

The other issue related to amusements that is remembered relates to the policy that restricted the one 'swank' hotel on the island, *The Borg*, for the officers' enjoyment only.³⁵⁶ In late October the Camerons completed construction of quarters for their officers in *Bytown Camp*³⁵⁷, also known as *Kronur Castle*.³⁵⁸ The building was given the title of *Ottawa House*. The war diary describes the opening party and the praise awarded the fine accommodation.³⁵⁹ The British unit that took over Bytown Camp when the Camerons left also had high praise and described the site as "...the most comfortable and

³⁵⁶ Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 17 "The officers patronized the city's one swank hotel, the Borg." RG24 Vol 15,024 Appendix #3 Company War Diary No 2 Company [misfiled material] July 8th 1940. "Several of the officers to-night attended the Hotel Borg. This hotel has been reserved for officers only and houses at this time Z Brigade, Head Quarters and Staff. There is dancing every night. The local Icelandic girls come to the hotel and sit by themselves. Generally upon being asked, they will dance with the officers but will not talk to them altho' most of them can talk some English and understand more. For a girl to be seen on the streets with a Canadian or English man or officer is to be instantly branded as a prostitute." Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish*, 29. "It [Borg] was an astounding outcrop of 'civilisation' in that remote and barren land."

³⁵⁷ RG 24 Vol 15,022 Reference of Oct. 14th "Work still progressing at Battalion Head Quarters. The name of the camp is Bytown Camp, Bytown being the original name of Ottawa before it was changed by Queen Victoria when it was made the capital of Canada. The officers' Mess is to be called Ottawa House.

³⁵⁸ RG 24 Vol 15,022 In a reference on Sept 24th. it states that Red House Hill is locally known as Kronur Castle.

³⁵⁹ RG 24 Vol 15,022 Oct 23rd 1940. "Ottawa House was formally opened today by a Sherry Party at 1800 hours. The numerous guests all remarked on the beauty and spaciousness of the building. It was the first occasion since arriving in Iceland that all the officers have been together." On the 31st of Oct. we read, "Ottawa House finally completed and all the officers moved in. RG 24 Vol 15,024 Appendix jacket #1 [misfiled with Aug. 1943] War Diary for # 4 Co. Nov. 9th 1940 "The battalion officers mess held its first informal opening night."

luxurious camp on the island, civilized to the extent of the Officers' Mess having electric light and running hot and cold water installed."³⁶⁰ The discrepancy between what was available to the officers versus what was provided to the troops is another sensitive issue.³⁶¹

The rum ration was the one exception to alcohol consumption. As is the norm in the service, in extreme weather conditions or times when men need a morale-booster, the army provided a rum ration.³⁶² The rum ration was frequently administered in Iceland. Roger Rowley describes delivering the ration to his men.

It was no picnic in Iceland. You can't imagine what it's like, when your making your rounds to your troops with a jug of SRD, an earthenware jug of SRD, which is issued rum, strapped on your back and going around and visiting your gun positions in the dark. And it's four o'clock in the afternoon....It was unbelievable. Really it was untrue....However, there was always the NAFI you know where you could get some refreshments.³⁶³

Allan Featherstonhaugh was a member of No 3 Company, the group that was posted in the late fall to Budareyri. This posting has acquired almost a mythical quality to it regarding the challenges and fortitude that were required to endure the cold, and

³⁶⁰ Harpur, *The Kensingtons*, 266. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 17. "Bytown Camp proved to be a very popular spot and many officers of 147 Brigade and Alabaster Force H.Q. not to mention the Navy from H.M.S. Baldor and flying types from 98 Bomber Squadron, R.A.F., found occasion to drop in and see the Canadians. Not by any means least of the parties at this Camp was the customary Childrens' Christmas Party." In the documents there are several indepth accounts describing a Christmas party that was held for the local children. Although the troops were involved in this affair few interviewees mentioned this party. Some of the men interviewed did refer to other parties at this building, but these were for officers only. During Mr. Rowley's interview, he mentioned both the Borg hotel and inviting the British nursing sisters over to the Officers' Mess, if they had a party. Interview with R. Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 25, 26.

³⁶¹ Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 265 "Ex-soldiers remembered their resentment at the barriers of rank and the unearned privileges of the officer class."

³⁶² Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 239, 265. "Rum fuelled soldiers before attacks and during harsh winters. Officers had limitless access to liquor and mess life revolved around the bar." Fussell, *Wartime*, 101.

³⁶³ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript p. 24, 25. When Mr. Rowley was questioned on this point regarding the fact that the men could not acquire alcohol at the NAFI he seemed surprised and admitted that he did not recall.

isolation.³⁶⁴ Mr. Featherstonhaugh believes that the reason his company was chosen for this assignment is because they were being punished for taking liberties with the rum ration.

When they stole the rum I was on guard that night again. Everybody in the camp was drunk....they had the rum in their water bottles. The whole camp, I lost my guard, the whole guard was gone and they were all drunk. There was myself, the first aid guy, he was alright, he never drank. That's the only three guys we had in the whole camp that wasn't drunk..... So two days after that we were all packed up to go to Budereyri. That's what they done to us.

A soldier with a good sense of humor captured the significance of this event.

Midnight Raid of No. 3

WE've taken our fun where we've found it,
WE've roamed and we've ranged in our time,
WE've tried every drink that is bottled,
And most of the lot was prime.

Some swear by old Spanish brandy,
Some dream of a French winery,
But you'll have to go some to beat army rum,
And don't think the bloody stuff's free.

That night it was dark and stormy,
In the stores all alone sat the rum,
Somebody's fingers were itching,
For the feel of the crocks of stone.

³⁶⁴ Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 17. "With the coming of the long winter nights it was considered that the east coast was too lightly held against possible enemy landings. Part of 146 Brigade whose responsibility was the north and east of Iceland were spread rather thinly on the ground so on the 18th December 1940 No. 3 company was dispatched, by Icelandic trawler, to Budereyri on Seydisfjordur in support of the 1/5 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The general consensus of opinion in No. 3 company was that if the boche had landed there he would have been quite welcome to it. This lonely outpost had nothing to offer but snow, ice and howling gales." The records appear to be either non-existent or missing for the period after the Brigade staff left Iceland. According to Brigadier Page's final report, Lieutenant-Colonel Rogers was informed of the need to continue to forward reports and status updates to Ottawa. Yet there are none dated after Brigadier Page's departure. The unit war diary account for the Camerons is also much reduced for this period. On the Budereyri posting there is almost no comment. An extensive research effort was put forth for information on the five months No. 3 Company spent there. A full report on Budereyri will be left for a future endeavour. See Appendix 7, Photographs. Lt. Col. Walter Hingston, *History of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry: Never Give Up, Vol. V* (London: Lund Humphries & co. Ltd., 1950), 134-142. This work is particularly explicit regarding the extreme hardships experienced by British troops stationed on the East coast. Sandes, *From Pyramid to Pagoda*, 243. "The bitter winter of 1940-41 will long be remembered by those who experienced it..."

In the army all movements are secret,
 So none can figure how come,
 But from under the nose of the sentry,
 They lifted five gallons of rum.

Then with the dawn came the payoff,
 The empties were all gathered in,
 The boys thought the evidence covered,
 But the Major was clever as sin.

He said, "OH YOU SWEET BUNCH OF POSIES!"
 "YOU BATTERED UP RUM HOUNDS!" said he,
 "WITH ALL THE BLACK EYES AND SKINNED NOSES",
 "THE CULPRITS ARE NOT HARD TO SEE."

The CPL's and SGT's were questioned,
 More evidence sent to bring in,
 And when the great round up was over,
 They all swore they knew not a thing.

There isn't a stool in the company,
 Together we'll stand or we'll fall,
 But down in the heart of the major,
 What in hell does he think of us all.

Now we've taken our fun where we've found it,
 And now we must pay for our fun,
 ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY gold dollars,
 Is the price of a gallon of rum.

And the end of it, sitting and thinking,
 GOD DAMN IT! No pay day there'll be,
 So be warned by our lot, which I know you will not,
 And don't think army rum is free.³⁶⁵

A review of the questions posed during the interviews will confirm that there were no specific queries related to fun or amusements in Iceland. Yet without exception every

³⁶⁵ Thanks to Mr. Charles St. Germain, a veteran Cameron Highlander for passing this poetry on for the benefit of this work. The issue of support for one's friends and keeping each others secrets, was apparent in a number of interviews. The soldier who spent time in the glass house was given a harsher penalty because he refused to incriminate his friends. Alcohol was also involved in that situation. In the glass house affair the veteran explained the situation this way: "And he asked me who was with me, the other three lads. Well I knew one of them was gonna be sent back for to come through for an officer. He was a good friend of mine. Well I knew if I told he was with me, he'd lose that chance. No way was I gonna tell him. He asked me well who was with me. I said I was pleading drunk. 'Well' I said 'who was with me' I

veteran spoke on the subject.³⁶⁶ Fred Hicks, on being asked how he felt about Iceland, responded with the following Information:

Well it didn't bother me at first. But boy after we were there a bit and found out you weren't in, you know, [in] the best of places. You had to be careful there too. You had to watch yourself. And da, of course people got fed up with Iceland. So did I. But what could you do? You could play baseball at one o'clock in the morning. You know, That was different. But there wasn't much. They finally decided to let you go into town. But you had to go in pairs. And you had to carry weapons and they had to be loaded. And da, then you weren't allowed to fraternize with any women....so there was nothing you could do. If there's gonna be a dance, you weren't going to dance with the guy next to you. Of course I played guitar and a couple of other guys, one guy there came in played a violin and we used to jazz the thing up there, get a party going, sing a bunch of old army songs from the First World War and that kind of stuff you know. Just for something to do, create an evening....made our own entertainment, that's exactly it.³⁶⁷

Graham Brown who also was in the region of Reykjavik adds the following:

In Iceland they did have a picture show and you could go and get drunk if you were that way inclined. Otherwise, it was just camp life and mixing with the boys all the time. Some fellows, I was never a gambler either, used to spend their whole months pay just gambling. Golly, poker games.³⁶⁸

said 'I don't remember now I was drunk.' So he throws another charge against me, as dumb insolence and remanded me to the colonel then."

³⁶⁶ One event well described by Mr. Box, the Aux. Svcs. Supervisor, in his December 31st report is the Christmas party that the Camerons sponsored on behalf of the local children. Although not clearly stated it appears that it took place on Sunday Dec. 22nd in the afternoon at the Battalion Head Quarters Recreation Hall. 115 Icelandic children attended. Army vehicles picked the children up at 2 p.m. and the soldiers were each assigned certain children to care for. The program included Icelandic songs, followed by cowboy songs. They had a pianist, a guitar player and one man played the mouth organ. The pipe Major piped one Scotch tune as well. One Corporal sang Holy Night 'beautifully.' Mr. Box showed a Zoo short and a Mickey Mouse short film which 'was a big hit.' Later there was a Santa with gifts for all. Santa's outfit was a riot - "Long underwear dyed tomato-soup-red, a pillow stuck inside, the Pipe Major's belt choking the pillow, cotton batting whiskers, and hat dyed red, made from mosquito netting sent out to this country of no mosquitoes by the Canadian government (It's the best use of it to date) Each child received a bag of fruit and candy as well as a toy. Afterwards the children were fed Canadian made cake and hot cocoa. It was a huge success. Men were seen with kids on their shoulders. It did not seem to matter that neither understood the other. Much good comment was heard and received from the townspeople." RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4 Report for period ending Dec. 31st 1940. This would explain in part the change in attitude towards Canadian troops.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999. At the end of Oct. the order was lifted regarding being fully armed when one went into town. Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish*, 28.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Graham Brown, June 3rd 1999.

Mr. Chummy Lacroix mentioned the following:

[we'd put] some of the tents, put them in a big circle. Open it all up. Then you had good musicians. They made their own banjos, cigar boxes, you know what I mean, and good voices too. On avait un homme Perrier. Il chantait des vieilles chansons francaises.³⁶⁹

Mr. Lacroix was in No. 2 Company. It was nicknamed the French Foreign Legion because of the large number of men who were French Canadians. Mr. Lacroix explained how the isolation in Iceland aided in the development of language skills.

And then when we left Iceland the Englishmen that couldn't speak French could have a conversation with the other guy that couldn't speak English. Ils parlaient. Ils parlaient pas comme, mais ca fait rien.³⁷⁰

George Fouchard tells us how he and his group survived the loneliness and boredom. Besides the important factual information he shares, this excerpt is an example of what was often observed during these interviews. Once the veterans became comfortable with the interview process, and after we had spent about an hour reconstructing the context of the Iceland experience, their recall of this long past period proved to be quite extraordinary.³⁷¹

....So our job was to protect these aircraft. And so it was pretty, pretty boring work. You're roaming around there at night. Well, [laugh] day or night it was dark. And da, but once, but once the daylight came back which was, you know fairly early, it was about February I think it, something like that. Well we had a hockey team and we used to go play hockey and we were right beside a big river. You know when I think of it today I think how nuts we were. We were playing hockey and there's open water right there, you know [laugh]. And, never even gave it a thought you know. But ta, ya, it ta, during those, those dark days it, it was sa, you know it was pretty hard to, you woke up you didn't know whether it was eight o'clock in the morning or eight o'clock at night. You know, and you were doing all odd shifts and that. There wasn't really a lot of amusement. You had to make your own fun like you know.

³⁶⁹ Chummy Lacroix, June 24th 1999. [We had a man by the name of Perrier. He sang old French songs.] Mr. Lacroix is a francophone Canadian and our interview alternated between the English and French language.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. They spoke [to each other]. They spoke not like [implying not without mistakes perhaps], but that didn't matter. Also see interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh for similar comments.

³⁷¹ This was only fully appreciated in the process of comparing the interview evidence to the documentary sources.

Pretty hard to make fun in pitch dark all the time [little laugh], windy and cold. But ta, we used to swim. And they had the hot springs out there for us. And there was a little village not too far from us that had a pool, outdoor pool, so we'd all go down to [the] change room, and we didn't wear any bathing suits. We went bare naked [again little laugh]. One guy would open the door and we'd all charge into the pool. [Mr. Fouchard claps his hands together]. I said one day this guy is gonna shut the hot water off and were all gonna die of cold, [laugh] when we hit that pool. But ta, and then when you just kind of snuggle under the water [rubbing his hands together] and keep warm and then when you, you'd had enough you made one mad dash for that change room again. But ta, that was about our only recreation really, you know. We'd go in there and we'd stop in the village and, and we could have a horsemeat steak and, one, one of these little ponies you know and da. That was our day out. It was a fun day [laugh].³⁷²

For the group sent to Budareyri over the winter, Allan Featherstonhaugh explains how they entertained themselves:

...don't forget you made your own fun. And that's the only thing that carried [pause] we did a lot...Put on a show and all that, well I did. And they come to like it. Things were a little stupid, that was alright. We even got the English guys from our back door come in to watch it. Oh they wanted to watch it. Some wanted to sing too. We had one guy with a fiddle, and mouth organ. Even put on a boxing bout, in the barn.³⁷³

George Latendresse in the following account brings up a situation involving one ingenious soldier that a number of other interviewees also mentioned.

Well, we made our own fun, eh. Like a, we had a corporal Brown there, Brownie we called him....he was quite a musician and he made a little ukulele out of a cigar box. And he'd play and we'd all sing you know, whatever, you know. We had a, another thing I meant to tell ya too. We had a little crank gramophone. One record. And we played that record til it just wouldn't play anymore.

Interviewer: What record was it, do you recall?

³⁷² Interview with George Fouchard, January 14th 2000, transcript p. 22. This is approximately 3/4 of the comment made at this point in the interview. This monologue was delivered without interruption where the interviewer simply listened with no comments or questions posed. If we pay attention to the repetitive words and expressions added, to give time for reflection, we can appreciate how the human long term memory reconstructs. These outings are also described by Mr. Oren Stanley in an article in the C.H.of O. Association Newsletter, Jan. 2001. Thank You to Mr. St. Germain for bringing this article to my attention.

³⁷³ Interview with Allan Featherstonhaugh, May 28th, 31st, 1999. There were British troops stationed in this area as well as the Canadian machine gunners. Although this reference implies contact, other sources suggest an uneasy relationship.

Ah, every time I hear it on the radio I, but I just can't remember the name of the tune. But we played it and played it cause that's all we had. It's not like today where you got radios and everything but they didn't have zip all then....

But ta, this guy was pretty handy and he made a little ukulele out of a cigar box and got the strings and whatever, he fixed it up and used to pluck it. I can still see him sitting on the bunk playing it and we'd be all listening around you know.³⁷⁴

The crank gramophone was an article left for this group by Mr. Box the Auxiliary Services supervisor. A complete list of all games, writing material, books, radios and gramophones supplied to the troops is documented. Mr. Latendresse's account regarding the gramophone is absolutely accurate. His unit received one of the two gramophones allotted, along with a single record.³⁷⁵

Lou Guertin adds the following regarding amusements:

Now one thing I learnt in Iceland and I never forgot it and always enjoyed it, was how to play cribbage. [laugh] In this period of total darkness my god we played a lot of cribbage [ho, ho, ha]. There was nothing else to do.

....See I can remember one time being out at the school house on the peninsula up above Reykjavik. Getting all dressed and walking all the way to town and just turning around and walking back.

Interviewer: Just for something to do?

There was nothing else to do. So you played cribbage and yes, we played poker, and yes we played crap. Ah, it was [pause] god it was a terrible period in my opinion. Ah, I didn't enjoy Iceland.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript p. 22, 23. This excerpt is also rich in material regarding the memory process. Note Mr. Latendresse's reference to "I can still see him sitting on the bunk playing it..." Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, 29, 234 "Funny how you remember the little things..."

³⁷⁵ The other group to receive a gramophone was Headquarters Company and they received '1 gramophone with 28 records.' RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 YMCA report, Z Force, Aug. 30th to Sept. 9th There is a complete list showing all the articles (games, writing paper, radios etc.) distributed by Auxiliary Services. This is another example to show the astounding ability for the human memory to retain details. It also highlights the wealth of material available through the avenue of oral history interviews.

³⁷⁶ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21st, 27th, Aug. 3rd 2000, transcript pgs. 37 & 48. Any form of gambling was illegal in the military. Previous to this discussion I had queried Mr. Guertin about gambling;

The subject of 'mail in Iceland' was almost the equivalent in importance of comradeship covered in the mobilization period. There is a wealth of material from a wide variety of primary sources that speak on this topic in Iceland. The mail service was a problem on the island. Ships carrying the mail were sometimes sunk on route, mail was often sent to England or Greenland by mistake,³⁷⁷ and there appears to have been a sorting problem in the British mailroom. Then there was the issue of censoring which resulted in a list of rules stipulating what topics the troops could discuss in their letters.³⁷⁸ As well, a soldier's officer would read every letter and approve its contents before it was mailed.³⁷⁹ The example of Mr. Latendresse demonstrates the efforts of families back home³⁸⁰ to stay in touch with their soldier:

...I had sisters and brothers that were writing and my mother and father. And da, they were sending pictures of over here eh. To me like a, when I was a kid my father was quite a hunter. You know and we used to go hunting in the fall of the year eh. And they'd take us up, cause we were just kids then and but ta. Then when I was away every fall they'd go hunting deer and they'd take pictures of the deer and the, my hunt, the friends that I hunted with and my father, they'd send them all over to me you know, so which was kind of good. Kept you in touch eh, was good.³⁸¹

Did they gamble? Was it allowed? Were they ever penalized? He had somewhat sidestepped the issue at the earlier point.

³⁷⁷ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Brigade War Diary Oct 1st "Mail constantly arriving here for 1st & 2nd Divisions." Cable Z148 Oct 1st

³⁷⁸ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 Routine Order #300 Sept. 20th 1940 'Censorship' Regulations: Censorship matter which should always be deleted includes: 1. Reference to the location, strength or movement of naval, military and air force units. 2. Reference to armaments, equipment or communications. 3. Rumours, plans and forecasts of future operations. 4. Defeatist views, or unduly pessimistic opinions on local conditions likely to cause despondency at home and to encourage the enemy.

³⁷⁹ RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4 Report of Charles Box Aux. Sevs. Oct 1-31. A number of references to mail and its importance. Pages 5, 6 refer to the need of green envelopes; "...for the purpose of giving the men an opportunity of writing one letter home without having the searching eye of their own officers read the epistle. The letter would be censored however in England." Report of November 30th p. 1 "Mail has not been received in any quantity for over a month. Many of the lads have gone without any in that time...The mail problem is serious. These lads have ample time to sit and think the worst of things at home and in a few cases it has affected their sanity. Cables in some cases have been used to get [] from those at home."

³⁸⁰ RG 24 Vol. 13,813 Reel 10,570 YMCA report for the period Sept. 10th to 30th "It was reported to the government reporter that the greatest service that the people of Canada could perform for the boys was to make certain that letters were written regularly." Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 238.

³⁸¹ Interview with George Latendresse, June 15th 2000, transcript p. 25.

When Lou Guertin was asked if being away from home was a difficult adjustment, he responded with the following moving account:

Oh! Never having been away from home, I wind up in Iceland. Now I was homesick, **Oh my god!!** And though I'm living with a bunch of other men that are in the same predicament and everything, I feel that I'm a special case. Well now I'm gonna tell ya a story...Christmas ah 1940 we're in Iceland and as you know Iceland around Christmas is dark 24 hours a day...ah here it was, it started maybe two weeks before Christmas. The guys started to get some Christmas mail in. And I wasn't getting anything. And every day I was getting worse and worse you know. Homesick, now I've been abandoned. See I'm not getting anything. The guys were pretty generous. They'd get a parcel from home and they would give me something and. But I got so bad that I wouldn't take anything from anybody. I was just so disappointed. And on Christmas Day, about ten in the morning Captain----drove up...and he had about a half a bag of mail. And he was all laughs. And he said, "here's your mail. I've been saving it for you."

Interviewer: Why did he do that? [incredulous tone]

I think he thought it was a joke. But it wasn't to me. Because to this day when Christmas comes around, oh boy. Affected me all my life...Now, and I can assure you as a buck private, he's a captain, you can't complain. But if he only knew what he did to every Christmas since.³⁸²

Later in his interview Mr. Guertin gives us a comparison between the importance of mail for the troops in Iceland versus the later period when they were in England:

Ah in Iceland when you got a letter you read and reread it, and reread it and you hoarded it. It was your connection to Canada. As to where, when you got to England we could speak to the population. We all had a common cause. Ah so you would discuss your letters with somebody else. Saying you know, "my kid brother's doing this or that" or "one of my other brother's has joined up" but in Iceland it was a different feeling and it was sa, you [pause] you see, first posting away from home, homesickness, ah, different feeling all together...I can remember one time, somebody got a copy of *The Ottawa Journal*. And it was passed around our hut, I think I read that paper three times, from the front page to the back, you know. Ah, [laugh].³⁸³

³⁸² Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21st, 27th & Aug. 3rd. Transcript pgs. 16, 17. Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 376. Interview with Richard Leacock, "I was quite shocked by a lot of that, but I was a private and my opinions were neither sought nor of interest to anybody."

Roger Rowley was involved in the censoring task.

...every night of my life in Iceland I read letters....that was the worst job of all in Iceland was reading other people's mail and writing your name on the back of it and sealing it, and sending it off. That was the worst. I **hated** that....you know some of those letters, it, the fact that it was gonna be censored and read by your own officer inhibited a lot of the fellows. Not, not in the military secrets areas but they couldn't, didn't feel able to write what they, what I could tell was in the back of their heads. Cause they, it would have been too embarrassed. And, kind of afraid of their wife coming back and said, "I see somebody read your letter to me" cause you had to sign it.³⁸⁴

The precious writings of one spouse, Mrs. Marjorie Roud, give us insight into how a wife felt on the receiving end of those letters. The tone of these excerpts suggest that they were likely diary writings and not necessarily thoughts expressed to her husband Bill in Iceland. Marjorie's sons were approximately one and two years old when her husband left with *The Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa*. She gave birth to their daughter in November 1940. This excerpt was penned in September 1940.

You have been gone now 3 months. Time goes fast the children taking my days and nights. How can you make love through the mail, you can't verbalize it close up, it's a touch, a look, a spark, and feelings close close feelings. The letters are dull everything of substance is censored.

Some time later she wrote:

I have stopped going to parades as the pipes make me weepy, everything makes me weepy. The letters from Iceland are censored, your Lieutenant

³⁸³ Ibid., transcript pgs. 40, 41. RG 24 Vol 15,024 appendix #3 No. 2 Co. [misfiled material] Sunday, July 28th 1940. "Most of the boys spent the day re-reading their mail and studying the newspapers received." Broadfoot, *Six War Years*, 186 "I lived for her letters...those letters meant everything. Home, Ontario, fishing, tobogganing, baseball....her letters were a link with sanity....he'd read that letter five times, ten times...." Brigadier General Guy Gauvreau, *Cent ans d'histoire d'un Regiment canadien-francais: Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal 1869-1969* (Montreal: Editions du Jour, 1971), 101.

³⁸⁴ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 20th 2000, transcript pgs. 28, 29. None of the interviewees mentioned the censoring restrictions. Morton, *When Your Number's Up*, 238 "Part of a soldier's humiliation was the knowledge that his officers read every word of his personal letters and as mess waiters knew, sometimes joked about them with brother officers." Fussell, *Doing Battle*, 102, 155. Terkel, *The Good War*, 373. Interview with Garson Kanin, playwright, memoirist. "I had an assignment as mail censor....We had little razor blades to cut out any line or word that might make any reference to a possible invasion. It was one of the most important literary experiences of my life. They were writing to their parents, their wives, their sweetheart, their friends. I read some of the greatest prose in the English language, written by 18 year old kids who couldn't spell. It didn't matter. It was the feeling."

cuts out all the tender parts. I guess it's a question of conserving paper as both sides are used and whatever is verboten is cut out, and this erases the message on the front and the back of the page. Which side should I not know? The whole message loses a lot in translation....³⁸⁵

Your letters and the radio are my life force, everything else is happening around me, I have become an onlooker at my own life involved but waiting. The British are being bombed and blasted while you are wasted on that fishy, stoney, windswept island in the middle of the Arctic Circle, Iceland. Is that where this war is going to be fought?....

March is over, it is almost a year and we have survived. This is no way to live, shut off from the world listening to life on a radio, obsessed by the news, waiting for mail, for people, for what? I'm a vacuum surrounded by cares. There is not enough money but how can I burden you with that? And what can you do about it on your forsaken atoll beyond the world?³⁸⁶

Remarks by Mr. Rowley reflect on the connection between mail and health problems in Iceland.

But in Iceland that [was] pretty tricky cause they were sinking all the ships and you'd go for a long, long time without hearing from anybody at home and you start to fuss about that, you know. And it was too, Iceland was too much for a lot of the soldiers. They went kind of squirly. And one I remember jumping in the ocean and trying to swim home. I mean that was an extreme case but....the wind never stopped blowing in Iceland. And people, like solid citizens like my brother who was a **tough guy** ah, It really got to him...that endless wind and stuff. Well not seriously I mean... I guess it got to all of us, up to a point.³⁸⁷

When Fred Hicks was asked if the conditions in Iceland affected the health and morale of the troops he responded with the following:

Oh ya, it affected, it did affect some of them ya. They'd go stark raving mad. We had a couple of them go pretty wonky, ya....It's just like, you're pretty well in a concentration camp. Because you can't do nothing or go nowhere. And what they give ya, you have to take because that's all there is. And you know and even though you're in the army, you're

³⁸⁵ Because of war time conservation efforts troops were instructed to write on both sides of all paper. When the censor decided that something was inappropriate, for any number of reasons, he would cut out the section. This of course would remove material from both sides of the page.

³⁸⁶ Marjorie Roud, "Time Capsule," unpublished diary and letter accounts. Restricted access. Terkel, *The Good War*, 236. Interview with Sheril Cunning, "It was a house with a woman and child growing up all those years alone and living on letters."

³⁸⁷ Interview with Roger Rowley, June 15th 2000, transcript p.16. Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 14, 15.

earning money, you can't run down and buy stuff even. We could now, like I could get out quite often and get into town and go buy stuff but all the other guys couldn't you know. And all the guys that were out in these other outposts hey, no they were just going crazy, especially the one that was way out in the end of nowhere there. So you know I can understand them going crazy. And I used to say that if we were there much longer, we'd all go crazy but, its not, it wasn't a good place to be, I'll tell ya.³⁸⁸

As in all battles, there were casualties in Iceland. Although the records are scattered and cover primarily the period up until the Brigade staff left, some details may be offered. Between the weeks of August 13th 1940 and October 31st weekly medical reports showing the number of troops in hospital were forwarded to Ottawa. [See Table # 6] Other than these reports there are entries in the unit's diary indicating that men have been sent back to Canada, or that men are ill. According to the unit's diary, thirty-four men were returned to Canada during their time in Iceland; thirty-three were classified as not physically or mentally able to serve overseas and one was returned home on compassionate grounds.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Interview with Fred Hicks, June 11th 1999. MG 28, I 95, Vol. 105, File 19 National YMCA War Services Committee Report of the War Services Executive Committee Nov. 30th 1940 'Operations Iceland' p. 11, 12; "In mid-summer of this year the Directorate of Auxiliary Services advised us that there would be an urgent demand for our services among Canadians in Iceland where British troops had been on Active Service since the collapse of France. In due course, Captain Charles Box of Toronto was dispatched... His two reports which have come to hand thus far indicate that the needs of the Canadians are as great, if not greater, than in any other area where our troops are now on duty." MG 28, I 95, Vol. 106, File 3. Executive Committee of YMCA National War Services Committee report, March 19th 1941 'Iceland' "...Charles V. Box tells of a steady round of visits to Company posts, to hospitals, and to detached units, some visits necessarily by boats, some over almost impossible roads. The Canadian soldiers very urgently need and are very grateful for the cheer and the comforts, the entertainment and the inspiration which go with these visits..." RG 24 Vol 15,024 Appendix #3 No. 2 Co. [misfiled material] July 29th 1940. "Major Fisher made a recce of the areas of Nos. 1 & 4 Coys. They are in great need of stoves, latrine buckets, sand bags, lumber, coal, corrugated iron, etc." Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 281. "In war it is not just the weak soldiers, or the sensitive ones or the highly imaginative or cowardly ones who will break down. Inevitably all will break down if in combat long enough – now defined by physicians and psychiatrists as between 200 & 240 days." The Camerons were in Iceland just under 300 days.

³⁸⁹ Using the total of 779 (all ranks shown on the nominal roll that sailed to Iceland) 34 returned =4.36%. If one compares the same figure of 779 to the total that left the Island at the end of April (727) minus those sent to England for training who appear to not have returned (8) = 5.39%.

Legend: 1 = Respiratory Infections 4 = Gastro-Intestinal 7 = Mental
 2 = Rheumatism 5 = Other
 3 = Infections (boils etc.) 6 = Venereal Disease

Table # 6 Troops in Hospital^{390*}

Date	Chof O	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3	Cat. 4	Cat. 5	Cat. 6	Cat. 7	FMR*	RRC*
Aug. 17	13	3	1	2	3	4	0	0	8	27
Aug. 24	5	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	18	23
Aug. 31	7	0	1	1	0	3	1	1	13	26
Sept 7	14	4	1	1	1	5	1	1	13	14
Sept 14	20	3	3	0	2	7	4	1	22	17
Sept 21	14	2	0	1	1	5	4	1	17	9
Sept 28	13	3	0	1	1	6	1	1	25	9
Oct. 05	17	7	0	0	0	7	2	1	29	10
Oct. 12	15	7	0	0	0	6	2	0	25	11
Oct. 19	19	7	1	2	0	7	2	0	19	12
Oct. 26	33	7	2	3	1	17	1	0	1	6

The *Royal Regiment of Canada* arrived three weeks prior to the other two units, therefore this may explain their higher illness rate in August. The brigade's medical officer in his report of Aug. 17th wrote that the "incidence of respiratory infections has decreased ... men have acquired in one manner or another wooden boards or slate to put under their beds. Possibly they are becoming acclimatized to the dampness." He also noted that rheumatism conditions had doubled.³⁹¹ Also of interest in the above table is how the health of the two units that were leaving at the end of October took a dramatic leap for the better just prior to their departure, whereas the health of the Cameron unit plummeted. To be left for the winter was, without doubt, a sad event for the Camerons.

Three Cameron men died and are buried in military plots on the island. Lance Corporal K. J. Monaghan, Regimental Sergeant Major Andrew Currie, and Lance

³⁹⁰ Information contained in the Brigade War Diary and the Unit War Diary RG24 Vol. 15,022. *FMR refers to the *Les Fusiliers Mont Royal* and RRC is *The Royal Regiment of Canada*.

³⁹¹ Brigade War Diary, health report of Aug. 17th 1940.

Corporal Langman 'were lost' during the winter period. All were victims of one or more of the 'enemies' they faced in Iceland. But this is not obvious from a review of either the war diary or the unit history. Corporal Monaghan is shown to have succumbed to respiratory bronchitis.³⁹² The unit's diary says little regarding Mr. Currie's passing other than he died 'unexpectedly.'³⁹³ Corporal Langman died in Budareyri of a gunshot wound. The diary does not record any reference to this incident in the daily entry section. It is mentioned in Routine Orders #88 regarding a Field General Court Martial where a private is shown to have been charged with manslaughter in the death of Corporal Langman.³⁹⁴ *The History of the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* states, "the third casualty was due to the discharge of a firearm when Lance Corporal E. A. Langman, a very bright and popular N.C.O was accidentally killed."³⁹⁵

The men who gave their lives in Iceland were excellent soldiers. Their personal files confirm this. In the Borden assessment completed just prior to the unit's departure for Iceland, the RSM is particularly singled out as 'excellent.' Two of these men were married with children. The third was the oldest child and principal support for his widowed mother and brothers and sisters. Most of the men interviewed spoke of their

³⁹² Ross, *The History of the First Battalion*, 18. "Our first fatal casualty came when Lance Corporal Monaghan the popular young clerk of No. 4 Company succumbed to pneumonia in early December." Noted in RG 24 Vol. 15,022 on Dec. 11th 1940. RG 24 Vol 15,024 appendix #1 War diary No. 4 Co. [misfiled material] Nov. 28th "Captain Muirhead called and ordered L/Cpl. Monaghan to hospital. He was taken away as a stretcher case in the ambulance." RG 24 Reel C5235 File 8538-4 Report of C. Box Aux. Svcs. Period ending Dec. 31st 1940 p. 10 "Monaghan was buried on Dec. 14. The first member of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa to be put to rest in Iceland. It had a rather stunning effect on the men. There was a very beautiful and impressive service."

³⁹³ Ross, *The History of the First Battalion*, 18. "The next death came as a distinct shock to the Battalion when the Regimental Sergeant Major Andy Currie (The Little Iron Man) died suddenly after a very short illness and on the eve of his repatriation to Canada. He was the junior officers' counselor and guide and a very strict and fair R.S.M. Company Sergeant Major." RG 24 Vol. 15,022 for Jan. 3rd 1941.

³⁹⁴ Budareyri, a fishing village located on the east coast of the island was as much as a six day boat trip from the capital area where the other Cameron troops and headquarters staff were located. There is almost no mention of this posting in the diary other than for several notations related to a plane trip there by Major Fisher and Major Heard GSO II (Iceland Force). The trip was cut short on the first attempt but several days later they did successfully reach the isolated Budareyri. The reason for the trip is not stated but it was made four days after Langman's death.

lost comrades. One veteran, George West, explained how on his return to Canada he went to visit the widow of his good friend. He later married this woman and helped raise her son.³⁹⁶

What do the veterans interviewed believe Canadians should know about their experience in Iceland? Harry David responded with the following when asked, how important was the occupation of Iceland?

I'd say it was a great necessity. If they had not...had the Germans got hold of Iceland they could have built air strips in there and bombed the daylight out of England and Scotland and Northern Ireland. And it would have been a terrible disaster for the British Government and the whole of the armed forces. They needed that strip and while, had the Germans only realized how poorly we were trained up to that point, that we were still green behind the ears and we knew pretty well nothing, had they put in a raiding force in there, I'm sure they would have taken that island without any trouble at all. And they would have had a terrific base to bomb Britain from.

Interviewer: Do you think at the time you had a sense of that?

The Government did, I'm sure. Both England and Canada knew that this was a strategic position. We weren't the real professional soldiers. We were all NPAM and then just call ups from the street that were in the area. Nevertheless there was certainly a dedication to service. We were willing to go in and face whatever consequences there were at the time...

Interviewer: What is most important for Canadians today to know about your service in Iceland?

Well...it probably wouldn't appear overly important even to other people who hadn't served in Iceland, and including senior officers and generals and what not. Even though we were supplied, just sort of pushed into the thing willy nilly, just to sort of bolster the defences of the country, and make it appear that we had a first class force there. As far as training we didn't. We had a first class force there of personnel, people...they [others who did not serve there] didn't realize just how valuable that little

³⁹⁵ Ross, *The History of the 1st Battalion*, 18.

³⁹⁶ It is not known whether this returned soldier was present when his friend was killed but they were billeted in the same Nissan hut. Mr. West did indicate that Corporal Langman was a good friend, a nice guy and "so is his son." Studs Terkel, *The Good War*, 264. Interview with Rosemary Hanley, "My present husband was his very best buddy. They were together when Kevin was killed."

strip of land was, that island....³⁹⁷

Allan Quinn voiced another point that others also raised:

We did serve a tremendous service up there, I think. Even though we never got any recognition of it...as far as I know, all the British troops that were in Iceland got their campaign medals for Iceland. We never did because we were a lost battalion, as far as the Canadian Government was concerned. Why I don't know but...actually we were more under the gun at that time than a lot of the people that are getting medals today.....We were a forgotten battalion.³⁹⁸

Lou Guertin, an avid military history buff adds this remark:

Well I think they should know that we served in Iceland. Ahm, in reality war history, it doesn't go down and describe the individual's feelings. It describes what certain armies, companies, regiments did. We operated machine guns along the coast in support of the coastal guns. I think Canadians should know that.³⁹⁹

Poetry was obviously an important means of recording emotions and thoughts for some of the Cameron men. This was written in commemoration of one comrade lost in the war in Iceland.

In Memory of Corporal Langman

With deepest regrets, we pause to think
Of a soldier who died unsung,
While doing his duty on foreign soil
In the land of the midnight sun.
Back in September of thirty-nine,
He volunteered with the rest,
And won the respect of all the lads;
As a friend he was the best.

He was given a stripe at Lansdowne,
But he still remained the same;
He treated one and all alike,
And gave favours as they came.

³⁹⁷ Interview with Harry David, June 15th 1999.

³⁹⁸ Interview with Allan Quinn, June 23rd 1999. This issue regarding the awarding of a medal, the Atlantic Medal was mentioned by a number of veterans and warrants a review. Whitehead, *The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish*, 30. Implication is that a medal was not awarded to British troops for service in Iceland.

³⁹⁹ Interview with Lou Guertin, June 21, 27th and Aug. 3rd 2000, transcript p.51. H. Stuart Hughes, *History as Art and as Science: Twin Vistas on the Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 71, 72. Terkel, *The Good War*, 65. Interview with E.B.Sledge "In all my reading about the civil war, I never read about how the troops felt and what it was like from day to day. We knew how the genera's felt and what they ate."

He was with us in Camp Borden,
In the sweltering heat and sand;
He took his duties with a smile,
And would always lend a hand.

He wasn't long in Iceland,
When he got his second set,
But he still remained the same old Bert—
The Bert, we'll not forget.

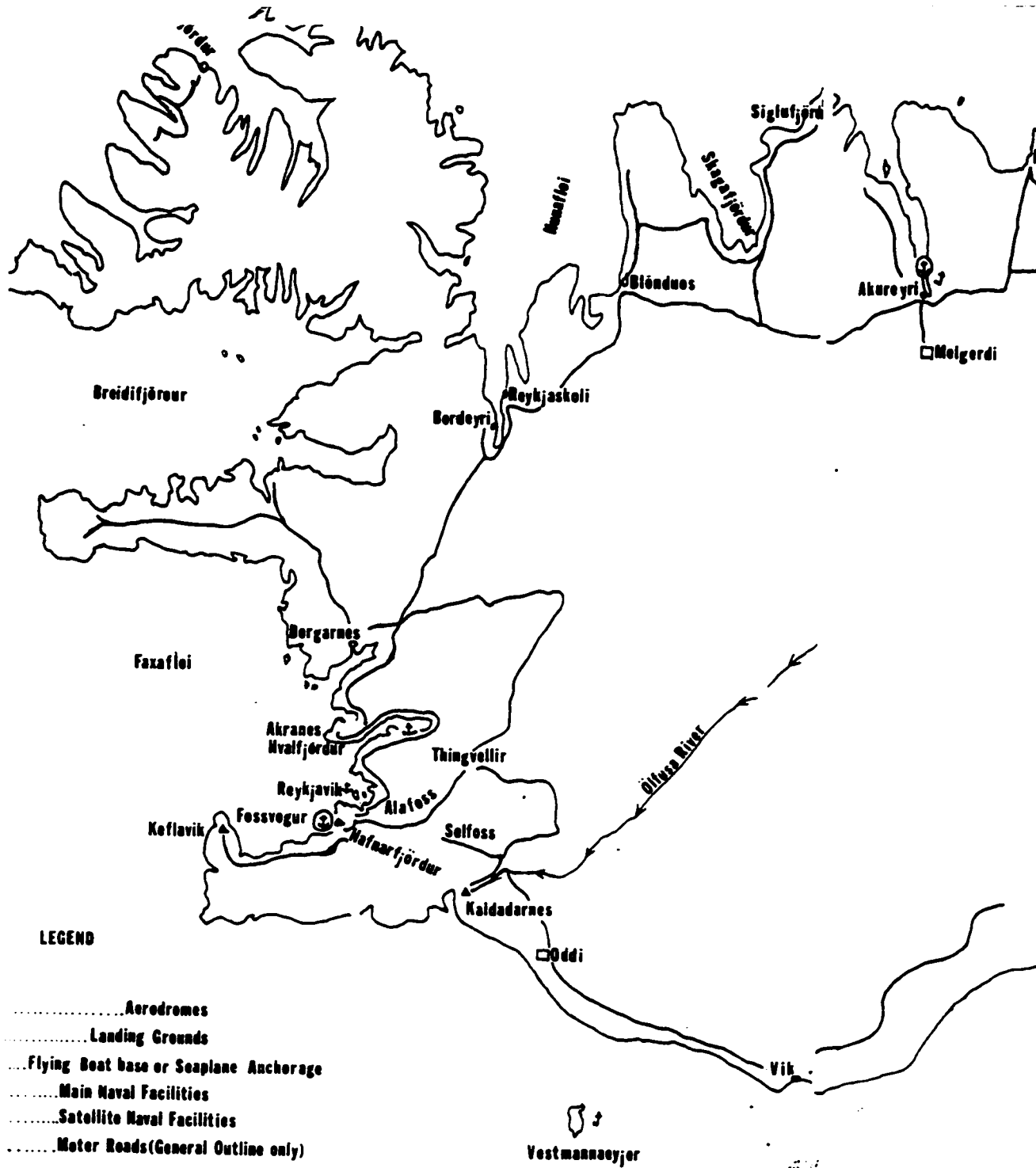
After eight months in this barren land,
Death struck suddenly one night,
For he was accidentally killed,
As any soldier might.

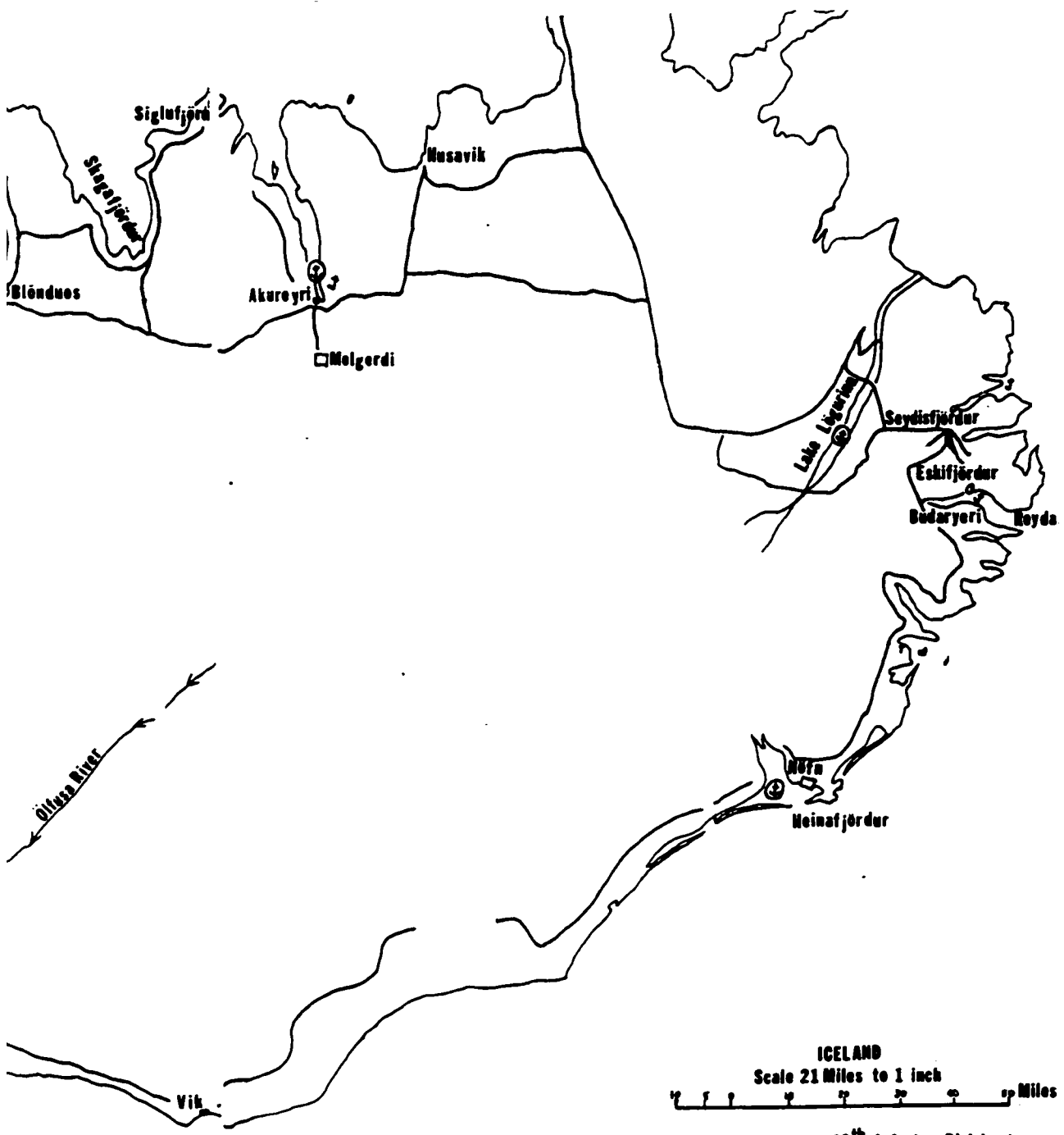
We buried him one Sunday,
In a small grave on a hill,
Though we'll never see his face again,
Our thoughts are of him still.

We'll remember him as always,
Great memories will he bring;
He died for wife and only son,
In the service of the King.

T.H.G⁴⁰⁰.

⁴⁰⁰ Initials are the only signature here. Thanks to veteran Mr. Charles St. Germain for providing us with this poetry and giving permission for inclusion in this work.



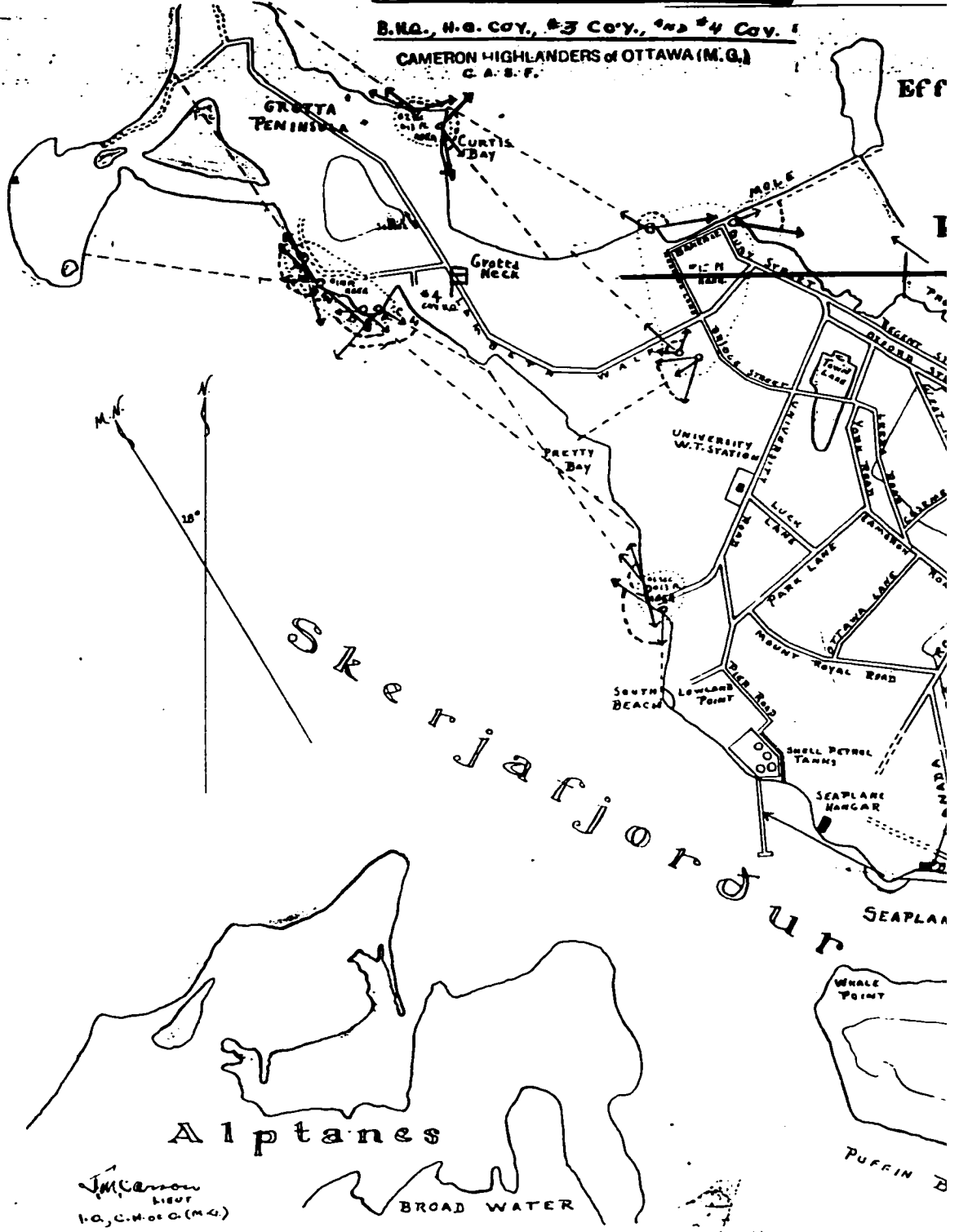


(Source - War Diaries, 49th Infantry Division.)

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B.N.O., H.O. COY., 3rd COY., 4th COY. 1
CAMERON HIGHLANDERS of OTTAWA (M.G.)
C.A.S.F.



J. Cameron
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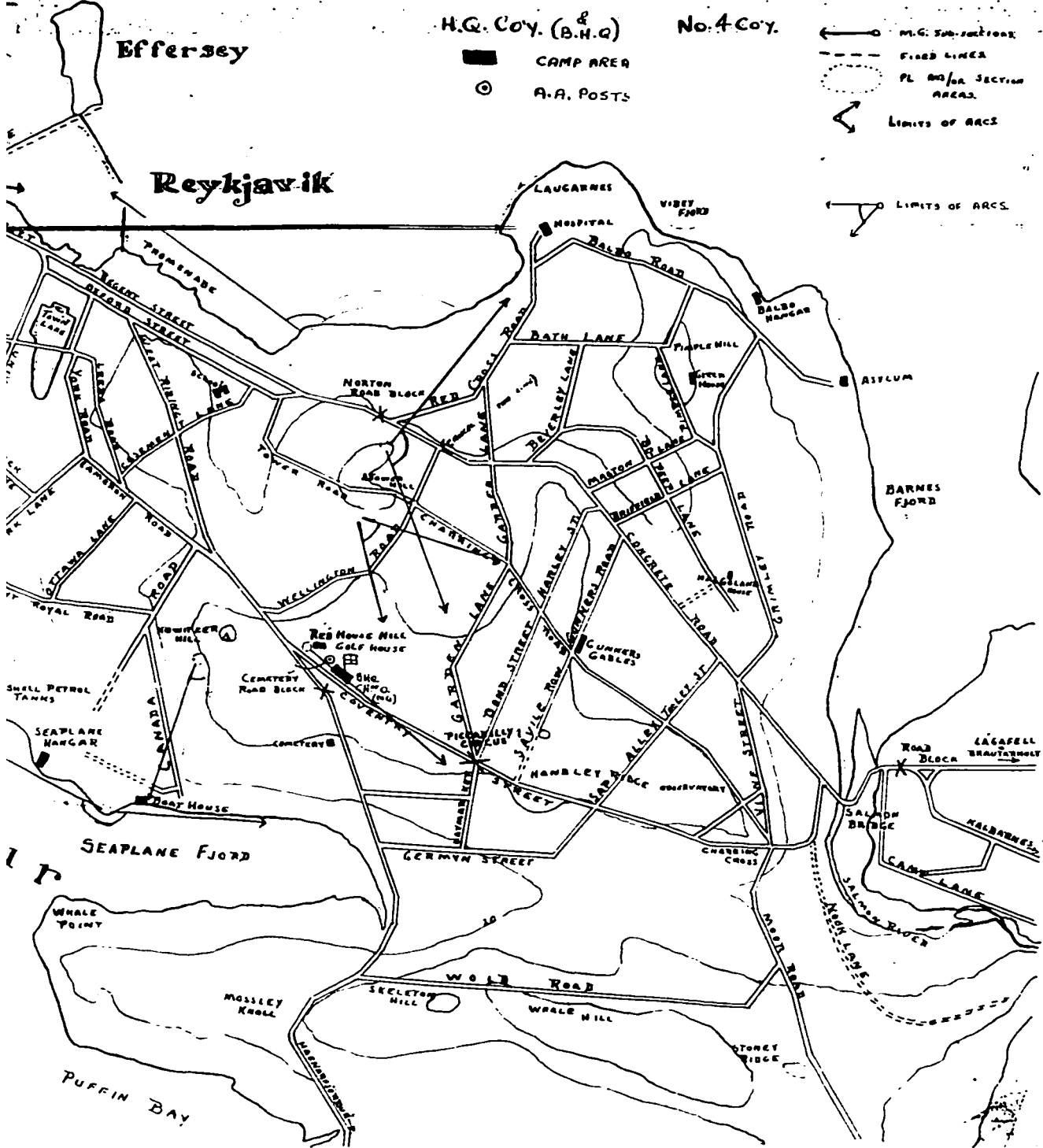
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- ← M.G. SUB-SECTION
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- ↙ LIMITS OF ARCS

LIMITS OF ARCS



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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The value of this work may be measured by the degree that it reflects each man's story. The hope is that each Cameron veteran may find, within the pages of this thesis, *his story*.⁴⁰¹ If in some tangible way this is true, then this effort warrants the title of *history*. For what is history if it does not reflect the past for those who lived it?⁴⁰²

Three straightforward and basic queries guided the research and development of this thesis: Who were the men that served with this unit, during this time period? Why had they volunteered? What was their experience of war service? There are no all-encompassing, one-line answers to these questions. The responses are as numerous as they are varied. It would be an injustice to the evidence presented to attempt to reduce its richness to a few simple responses.⁴⁰³

Yet, some observations may be made. The militia system, as it existed in the first half of this century, was an important influence in the decision men made to assume the task of their nation's military commitments. Age-old sentiments such as duty, patriotism, and courage were factors in explaining why men volunteered in World War Two.⁴⁰⁴ The belief that lack of employment and opportunity forced men into service is not generally applicable to this group of soldiers.⁴⁰⁵ This work underscores and reinforces the strength

⁴⁰¹ H. Stuart Hughes, *History as Art and as Science: Twin Vistas on the Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 69.

⁴⁰² Hughes, *History as Art*, 5, 6, 7. Page 27 "Vico taught us to pay attention to the still-living or visible manifestations of the past as opposed to an exclusive reliance on the documents."

⁴⁰³ Robert Perks, and Alistair Thomson, editors, *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24. From an excerpt included in this work authored by Paul Thompson and entitled *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988,) "Reality is complex and many-sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history to a much greater extent than most sources that it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated."

⁴⁰⁴ William Horrocks, *In Their Own Words* (Ottawa: Rideau Veterans Home Residents Council, 1993), viii.

⁴⁰⁵ Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning & the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 3. Quote from Philip Child's *God's Sparrows* on WWI. "The thousands went into battle not ignobly, not as driven sheep or hired murderers—in many moods doubtless—but as free men with a corporate if

and meaning of the bonds of comradeship. It also highlights with undeniable clarity the pride men feel in their regiment.⁴⁰⁶

Of the period in Iceland, this may serve as an introduction to a previously unknown period of Canadian war service. Why the topic has not been reviewed in the past remains a puzzle. In January of 1941 C. P. Stacey was in England and had a chance meeting with Brigadier Page, who had recently returned from his duties in Iceland. For fear that Page would not write his intended memoirs on this topic,⁴⁰⁷ Stacey sent a report of their conversation to the Historical Section of the Department of National Defence, in Ottawa. What is intriguing about his remarks is that they do not deal with the concerns of defence, but rather highlight the hardships of the living conditions for the troops, the lack of welcome from Icelanders, and the attitude of dominance by the British command. Colonel Stacey's report comments on Page's frustration in trying to convince others that the Iceland posting was not 'a sort of picnic.' One thing is clear, Stacey was informed regarding the conditions in Iceland. Why he chose not to include a more thorough review of this posting in the account of Canada's war contribution is intriguing.

What the evidence on Iceland shows is that the 'enemies' were as real and foreboding as any these soldiers would later face.⁴⁰⁸ Some may take exception with this.

Nevertheless, it is the combination of personal background, experience, and the confines

vague feeling of brotherhood because of a tradition they shared & an honest belief that they were doing their duty in a necessary task. He who says otherwise lies, or has forgotten."

⁴⁰⁶ Vance, *Death* 79, 80. Horrocks, *In Their Own Words*, 11.

⁴⁰⁷ Brigadier Page was killed in a plane accident several years after this chance encounter with C. P. Stacey. His intended review of Iceland was never written.

⁴⁰⁸ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (Great Britain: Basic Books, 1998) 350- 357. In this work that reflects on World War I it states that, "...the best accounts of army life during the First World War emphasize the importance of quite humdrum things in keeping men going." The list of seven comforts that mattered the most are startling in terms of the Iceland experience: **Warm and comfortable clothing; Decent Accommodation; Food; Drugs**, "without alcohol and perhaps also without tobacco, the First World War could not have been fought....Had it not been for the rum ration, one medical officer later declared, I do not think we should have won the war;" **Rest; Leisure; and Leave**. Every single one of these seven was a problem to some degree, in Iceland!

of place, time, and circumstance that explain differences in perception. The experience in Iceland varied a great deal depending on where one was posted and on one's personal circumstances and ability to endure.

The review of Iceland has uncovered evidence that deserves to be more fully investigated. This is not for the purposes of apportioning blame but for the value of benefiting our soldiers of today and tomorrow. Iceland presents new material that can aid in our deliberations regarding broader issues. Some of the challenges in Iceland, such as weather and terrain could not be avoided. Yet, the well-being and security of her defence force was the nation's responsibility when she agreed to send troops to Iceland. When men signed up to serve, in effect, they signed away their individual freedom and rights over to the state, for the benefit of a greater cause. They had a right to expect a reasonable degree of support, succor and protection in return. Neither side could have known in advance all that the agreement would entail. This is a fact of all military commitments. Yet, the ultimate question remains: What is our obligation as a nation to the well-being and security of our military men and women?

The evidence on Iceland does show that supplies were ordered, paid for, and sent on behalf of the Canadian nation for the benefit of her soldiers. This will no doubt be a welcome surprise to those veterans who served on what appeared to be a forgotten assignment. The question for further discussion is what happened that the troops were not the beneficiaries of what their government had provided?

In the area of equipment for defence, there are issues for deliberation. It was made clear at the outset of the negotiations with Britain the limitations of what Canada could provide, in terms of equipment. The troops were sent on the condition that England

would supply the remaining required equipment. Ultimately, war conditions affected the degree to which promises could be kept. To what degree does this fact absolve any government for taking responsibility to provide for her troops? Does the circumstance of war supersede a nation's obligation to her soldiers?

With the benefit of hindsight what can we learn from this experience? To what degree was the Iceland posting unique in its challenges or hardships? How can we use this knowledge to the benefit of our military undertakings of the present and future?

The strength of this work lies in the interview material. To the degree that the questions allowed for—the events, their impact, and their long-term significance, as understood by those who were involved, is preserved for future review through the tape recordings and transcripts. This is the real evidence of history.⁴⁰⁹

In the eulogy speech delivered at the funeral for Canada's Unknown Soldier, the Commander-in Chief of the Canadian Forces, Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, spoke eloquently on behalf of all Canadians. She spoke of all the things we would never know about the soldier buried that day: Who he was? Where he came from? What were his interests and hobbies? Was he married? What were his dreams and plans? Governor General Clarkson stated the indisputable—we can't, it's too late.

But do Canadians know a great deal more about most of their soldiers who have served in the past or who serve today? Other than their name, rank and serial number, what do we know about Canadian soldiers, as individuals or as a collective? We may know of their battles but what do we understand of the men who fought them?⁴¹⁰ How

⁴⁰⁹ Robert Perks, & Alistair Thomson, editors, *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 41. Article by Ronald J. Grele, *Movement Without Aim: Methodological & Theoretical Problems in Oral History* "...in the long run the interviews themselves will prove much more useful to scholars than the texts grafted upon them."

⁴¹⁰ H. Stuart Hughes, *History as Art and as Science: Twin Vistas on the Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964,) 42, 64.

can we pay homage to these soldiers, and their deeds, if we know not what their challenges entailed? Although this thesis relates to one group of men who were involved in one operation that occurred during one war, its import applies to all soldiers, who take up all causes on behalf of their countries, on all battlefields.

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APPENDIX 1

RG 24 Reel 5610, File HQS 63-302-46

Total: 22 Officers and 757 Other Ranks

Please note that due to the poor quality of the microfilm from which the following names were taken, approximately 10 names are missing and others may be misspelled.

Nominal Roll –	A/L/Sgt. A.J. O’Connell	Pte. A. Quinn
Personnel of special	A/L/Sgt. A. H. M. Scott	Pte. N. Robillard
CNR Train 30	A/Sgt. J. McManus	Pte. A. A. Scott
C.H.of O. (MG)	A/Sgt. L. Henderson	Pte. G. W. Stewart
C.A.S.F.	A/Sgt. F. Doyle	Pte. R. A. Charter
	A/L/Sgt. L. Lacroix	Pte. W. H. Dagg
Lt. Col. G. Rogers	A/Sgt. L. J. Arnett	Pte. M. W. Dolman
Major A. G. Fisher	A/Sgt. L. M. Doyle	Pte. R. A. Lee
Major G. F. Clingan	A/L/Sgt. T. Fouchard	Pte. O. Myette
Capt. S. MacKenzie	A/L/Sgt. G. Love	Pte. R. W. Nichol
Capt. A. S. Pettapiece	A/L/Sgt. J.M. Robillard	Pte. J. H. Nisbett
Capt. J. W. H. Rowley	A/Sgt. F. W. Dickinson	Pte. F. Ward
Capt. C. H. Cook		
Lieut. R. Rowley	Battalion	
Lieut. L. V. Perry	Headquarters	
Lieut. J. M. Carson		
Lieut. R. M. Ross	A/Cpl. S. G. Davis	
	A/Cpl. A. J. Howden	
R.S.M. A. B. Currie	A/L/Cpl. J. A. Dawson	
(W.O. 1)	A/L/Cpl. D. MacKenzie	
	A/L/Cpl. A. Hammell	
CSM J. W. Courtright	A/L/Cpl W. T. Hewitt	
CSM L. D. Brunet	A/Cpl. W. S. Mattice	
CSM A. Heatherington	Pte. S. E. Bailey	
	Pte. G. A. Brown	
PSM R. P. Stewart	Pte. G. H. Burns	
PSM W. H. Armstrong	Pte. P. C. Cooper	
PSM L. G. C. Hart	Pte. H. Fayder	
PSM R. G. Armstrong	Pte. H. W. Flowers	
PSM L. L. Davy	Pte. W. Froot	
PSM T. A. James	Pte. H. T. J. George	
	Pte. T. Hoggan	
S/Sgt. D.D. McLaughlin	Pte. W. Hunter	
CQMS F. W. Stewart	Pte. J. G. Johnson	
CQMS A. E. Thomas	Pte. L. M. Johnson	
CQMS H. C. Kemp	Pte. W. R. Hamilton	
	Pte. T. Low	
A/Sgt. T. L. Moore	Pte. F. G. Hicks	
A/Sgt. S. Scott	Pte. B. G. Millar	

Major R. F. R. Cosh
 Major A. L. Fortey
 Capt. G. L. Browne
 Lieut. G. Armstrong
 Lieut. E. G. Jamieson
 Lieut. R. J. Dickson
 Lieut. E. C. N. Browne
 RQMA B.A. Beckworth
 CSM W. J. Gill
 PSM G. K. Mather
 PSM L. A. Jones
 PSM R. R. Ryan
 CQMS R. L. McIlwain
 CQMS WA Donaldson
 Sgt. H. L. Edge
 Sgt. H. J. Gauvreau
 Sgt. A. S. Ferris
 Sgt. E. R. T. Herbert
 Sgt. A. A. J. Liddiard
 Sgt. M.H. MacDiarmid
 Sgt. S.A. MacDiarmid
 Sgt. A. B. Nellis
 Sgt. R. H. Osborne
 Sgt. J. Campbell
 Sgt. R. Beaudry
 Sgt. G. F. Irons
 Sgt. H. S. Young
 Sgt. G. O. Morel
 Sgt. T. C. Moore
 Sgt. I. T. Burr
 Sgt. H. B. Gonder
 Sgt. J.P.C. MacPherson
 L/Sgt. J. Bailey
 L/Sgt. H. J. David

**Headquarters
 Company**

A/Cpl. C.W. Charlebois
 A/Cpl. H. W. Hay
 A/Cpl. R.M. McKittrick
 A/Cpl. S. A. McMillan
 A/Cpl. S. D. Partridge
 A/Cpl. B. E. Gardiner
 A/Cpl. F. Corbin
 A/Cpl. J. W. Wiseman
 A/L/Cpl. G. A. Buck

A/L/Cpl. JA Charlebois
 A/L/Cpl. J.E.W. Bailey
 A/L/Cpl. T.A. Chapman
 A/L/Cpl. E. Johnson
 Pte. H. J. Charbonneau
 A/L/Cpl. J. Purcell
 A/L/Cpl. R. M. Bell
 A/L/Cpl. A. Kennedy
 A/L/Cpl. W. Roberts
 A/L/Cpl. J. W. Sawers
 Pte. A. Armstrong
 Pte. H. Artus
 Pte. G. Balderston
 Pte. C. G. Black
 Pte. A. L. Beckworth
 Pte. A. W. Bowes
 Pte. E. J. Box
 Pte. P. Brady
 Pte. C. B. Broadbent
 Pte. R. Brindamour
 Pte. J. Bullock
 Pte. W. T. Cantwell
 Pte. P. M. Cameron
 Pte. S. Campbell
 Pte. W. I. Canning
 Pte. A. C. Cole
 Pte. J. L. Currier
 Pte. A. Danis
 Pte. V. E. Flood
 Pte. E. G. Garland
 Pte. E. F. Genge
 Pte. L. Giroux
 Pte. S. Gray
 Pte. U. Guertin
 Pte. E. T. Hodge
 Pte. J. Holtby
 Pte. G. S. Hodgson
 Pte. J. I. Hutchinson
 Pte. C. D. Ingram
 Pte. C. F. Keeler
 Pte. R. A. Larocque
 Pte. G. L. Ling
 Pte. F. Lowery, Lowrey
 Pte. H. MacIver
 Pte. H. A. MacKinnon
 Pte. D. MacLellan
 Pte. D.W. MacKinney

Pte. P. L. MacNeely
 Or L. F. McNeeley
 Pte. F. S. Macrae
 Pte. J. C. Murphy
 Pte. D. J. Moyneur
 Pte. L. Neron
 Pte. J. G. O'Link
 Pte. H. L. Parker
 Pte. R. C. Preece
 Pte. C. W. Race
 Pte. D. R. Richardson
 Pte. A. Sabourin
 Pte. J. H. Schultz
 Pte. J. L. Scott
 Pte. P. G. Shorkey
 Pte. J. D. Sullivan
 Pte. J. F. Stewart
 Pte. C. St. Germain
 Pte. F. E. C. Taylor
 Pte. L. L. Topping
 Pte. G. Villeneuve
 Pte. L. J. A. Villeneuve
 Pte. S. C. Wilson
 Pte. W. J. Wynne
 Pte. K. G. Young
 Pte. H. T. Young
 Pte. J. Yuill, Yill
 Pte. T. A. Wiles
 Pte. F. W. Nicholas
 Pte. E. Laurin
 Pte. M. A. Johnston
 Pte. J. H. Morris
 Pte. R. G. Whitty

No. 1 Company

A/Cpl. A. R. Lane
 A/Cpl. C. N. Angel
 A/Cpl. A. D. Nolan
 A/L/Cpl. E. A. Crosbie
 A/L/Cpl. T. Dobson
 A/L/Cpl. O. Stanley
 A/L/Cpl. G. Elliott
 A/L/Cpl. G. A. Ness
 A/L/Cpl. F. S. Wood
 A/L/Cpl/ A. J. Draper

Pte. G. J. Woods
 Pte. J. A. Munro
 Pte. W. G. Power
 Pte. J. W. Adams
 Pte. W. Bilodeau
 Pte. E. Boucher
 Pte. N. A. Cooper
 Pte. O. A. Cooper
 Pte. G. Cuillierier
 Pte. J. Cunningham
 Pte. G. Dalton
 Pte. L. Daviau
 Pte. E. J. Davis
 Pte. J. B. Davis
 Pte. T. H. F. Davis
 Pte. W. J. Dean
 Pte. P. E. Decarie
 Pte. D. R. Delorme
 Pte. R. Desroches
 Pte. J. B. Dick
 Pte. A. Dugas
 Pte. W. J. Foley
 Pte. W. A. Foster
 Pte. G. Fouchard
 Pte. E. J. J. Franey
 Pte. W. P. V. Franey
 Pte. F. Frobél
 Pte. A. A. Fulford
 Pte. A. Goderre
 Pte. E. Goderre
 Pte. C. H. Goulet
 Pte. P. R. Grover
 Pte. J. H. Hamelin
 Pte. J. Hamelin

Pte. F. W. Harris
 Pte. W. Harry
 Pte. W. Henson
 Pte. A. C. Hill
 Pte. R. Humble
 Pte. R. Hutton
 Pte. S. Joynt
 Pte. R. Kidd
 Pte. W. H. F. King
 Pte. A. Lacroix
 Pte. A. J. M. Landry
 Pte. E. O. Lang
 Pte. F. A. Larocque
 Pte. H. Laviolette
 Pte. G. L. Lawrence
 Pte. W. Leavere
 Pte. W. G. McAllister
 Or Mac
 Pte. J. R. McKinstry
 Pte. T. McKortel
 Pte. G. McMillan
 Pte. J. Mantha
 Pte. J. Marks
 Pte. E. M. Miriguay
 Pte. H. F. Montgomery
 Pte. A. Newton
 Pte. A. Paquette
 Pte. G. B. Perry
 Pte. F. Proulx
 Pte. L. S. Quinn
 Pte. L. A. M. Reid
 Pte. G. W. Rourke
 Pte. G. Sallaway
 Pte. E. J. Scobie
 Pte. R. P. R. Shea
 Pte. A. Sigouin
 Pte. E. A. Sonntag
 Pte. M. L. Soucie
 Pte. D. Spears
 Pte. A. Steen
 Pte. A. K. Stewart
 Pte. J. B. Tessier
 Pte. B. J. Turcotte
 Pte. W. L. Wacey
 Pte. M. Wallace
 Pte. E. F. Westwood
 Pte. A. W. White

Pte. G. Wood
 Pte. T. A. Wright
 Pte. R. Young

No. 2 Company

A/Cpl. A. Beaudry
 A/Cpl. J. B. Scharfe
 A/Cpl. C. Blair
 A/Cpl. F. King
 A/Cpl. J. F. Dicks
 A/Cpl. J. Zumprelle
 A/L/Cpl. E. Lascelles
 A/L/Cpl. E. Bateman
 A/L/Cpl. S. Howarth

Pte. K. Balderston
 Pte. R. Stethen
 Pte. J. Arial
 Pte. R. Aubin
 Pte. L. A. Barnaby
 Pte. Y. O. Belanger
 Pte. O. Boucher
 Pte. L. J. Burgeois
 Pte. E. C. Browne
 Pte. W. O. Brown
 Pte. D. Caldwell
 Pte. J. J. Cameron
 Pte. J. Chevassu
 Pte. W. F. Denniston
 Pte. L. Denommee
 Pte. H. J. Dubois
 Pte. E. C. Dupuis
 Pte. W. J. Fleury
 Pte. G. Gayton
 Pte. P. Gerard
 Pte. F. Gravelle
 Pte. W. L. E. Harrison
 Pte. R. Henderson
 Pte. A. O. Irwin
 Pte. R. Jobin
 Pte. E. Labranche
 Pte. A. Landry
 Pte. E. Lee
 Pte. A. K. Leeson
 Pte. E. Lefebvre
 Pte. G. Lefebvre
 Pte. J. L. G. Lemieux
 Pte. C. E. Leslie
 Pte. W. Loney
 Pte. S. J. Mackin

Pte. W. L. McAdam
 Pte. A. G. Moffatt
 Pte. M. L. Morris
 Pte. H. F. Nolan
 Pte. C. Papineau
 Pte. F. Parent
 Pte. F. Poirier
 Pte. R. Raymond
 Pte. A. S. C. Reed
 Pte. J. F. Rhodes
 Pte. F. G. Riddell
 Pte. W. G. Roud
 Pte. E. K. Salter
 Pte. A. J. Singer
 Pte. N. Smiley
 Pte. J. Smythe
 Pte. F. Stille
 Pte. A. J. Stroulger
 Pte. G. Sutcliffe
 Pte. G. M. Taylor
 Pte. R. R. Thebarga
 Pte. P. Thiboault
 Pte. P. Touchette
 Pte. G. F. Towers
 Pte. D. C. Troke
 Pte. M. Trudeau
 Pte. C. R. Tuck
 Pte. S. Warren
 Pte. H. Wass
 Pte. W. Waugh
 Pte. L. Whissell
 Pte. H. J. Whitmore
 Pte. K. G. Willoughby
 Pte. R. D. Wilson
 Pte. J. N. Wiswell

No. 3 Company

A/Cpl. W. J. Daley
 A/Cpl. D. J. Forbes
 A/Cpl. B. G. Fox
 A/Cpl. L. N. Gervais
 A/Cpl. J. D. Pearce
 A/Cpl. A.
 Featherstonhaugh
 A/L/Cpl. H. A. James
 A/L/Cpl. F. Lamothe
 A/L/Cpl. H. A. Langman
 A/L/Cpl. R. A. Todd
 Pte. T. H. Allen
 Pte. P. E. Finch
 Pte. J. A. Barbeau
 Pte. G. E. J. Belanger
 Pte. R. Belanger
 Pte. W. J. Belanger
 Pte. C. G. Brown
 Pte. J. M. Brown
 Pte. A. F. Cameron
 Pte. A. W. Cardiff
 Pte. S. H. Charette
 Pte. J. Cochrane
 Pte. F. P. Collier
 Pte. R. J. Collins
 Pte. A. A. Comeau
 Pte. R. J. Conway
 Pte. B. Corneil
 Pte. J. C. Cummings
 Pte. A. A. Daley
 Pte. G. S. Dalzell
 Pte. W. A. Depledge

 Pte. L. Dion
 Pte. W. J. Donnelly
 Pte. J. Downie
 Pte. J. A. Foy
 Pte. C. L. Fraser
 Pte. A. W. Gemmill
 Pte. T. H. Gill
 Pte. M. S. Goodfellow
 Pte. J. S. Greer
 Pte. P. Hamelin
 Pte. J. G. Hansen
 Pte. J. Harrison

Pte. J. Hook
 Pte. J. M. Hunter
 Pte. E. D. Ireland
 Pte. A. J. Kelford
 Pte. C. T. Ketchell
 Pte. C. G. F. Lahey
 Pte. E. G. Lauder
 Pte. R. A. Lesway
 Pte. R. C. Lesway
 Pte. R. S. MacIndoo
 Pte. J. J. Mainville
 Pte. M. Martin
 Pte. G. J. Masse
 Pte. A. Massia
 Pte. A. J. Massia
 Pte. J. D. McDonald
 Pte. E. J. McHugh
 Pte. W. H. McLaren
 Pte. G. J. Montgomery
 Pte. M. Morrow
 Pte. D. Morrison
 Pte. M. S. O'Connell
 Pte. W. J. O'Prey
 Pte. A. Pouliotte
 Pte. R. Renaud
 Pte. C. K. Saunders
 Pte. J. R. Sherrard
 Pte. H. Smith
 Pte. W. J. Smith
 Pte. V. A. Splane
 Pte. J. O Stang
 Pte. E. Stark
 Pte. J. J. Stevens
 Pte. A. J. Trottier
 Pte. G. A. Walkley
 Pte. G. West
 Pte. W. West
 Pte. C. Woods
 Pte. J. A. Boyce

No. 4 Company

Cpl. H. McLaren
 Cpl. B.G.C. McGibbon
 Cpl. T. E. Layng
 Cpl. T. M. Buckley
 Cpl. T. S. Barr
 Cpl. P. R. Ashton
 A/L/Cpl. A. R. Goodall
 A/L/Cpl. K.J.Monaghan
 A/L/Cpl. D. Roberts
 A/L/Cpl. D. E. Roberts
 Pte. R. E. MacDonald
 Pte. L. P. Alarie
 Pte. A. E. Boucher
 Pte. H. R. Boyer
 Pte. F. S. Cashman
 Pte. R. Champoux
 Pte. C. G. Clark
 Pte. G. E. Clarke
 Pte. P. D. Currie
 Pte. J. J. Darwin
 Pte. D. Davie
 Pte. J. E. Davis
 Pte. F. Decareau
 Pte. W. W. Emond
 Pte. J. Epton
 Pte. A. Fonget
 Pte. W. D. Gardner
 Pte. S. Goldie
 Pte. J. M. Grant
 Pte. J. M. Groulx
 Pte. J. J. Groves
 Pte. M. Guevin
 Pte. A. Hamel
 Pte. L. Hamel
 Pte. R. Handy
 Pte. A. E. M. Higgins
 Pte. L. G. Hughes
 Pte. D. J. Huneault
 Pte. J. Hunter
 Pte. J. A. Kennedy
 Pte. G. F. Kirkpatrick
 Pte. A. J. H. Larmon
 Pte. H. W. Lavery
 Pte. N. Leafloor
 Pte. A. G. MacKenzie

Pte. W. E. McAllister
 Pte. R. B. McCullough
 Pte. C. J. McDonald
 Pte. T. S. McGuinness
 Pte. S. Mcmurdo
 Pte. L. M. May
 Pte. F. G. Miskelly
 Pte. C. J. Moran
 Pte. A. Morel
 Pte. E. Normand
 Pte. A. Pallister
 Pte. C.F.W. Plumb
 Pte. L. C. C. Price
 Pte. A. R. Proulx
 Pte. W. A. Row
 Pte. R. Robinson
 Pte. G. C. Sheffield
 Pte. M. H. Skelton
 Pte. G. Simpson
 Pte. C. Smith
 Pte. F. Smith
 Pte. G. H. Smith
 Pte. C. A. Spratt
 Pte. C. A. Tongue
 Pte. S. A. Townsend
 Pte. G. H. Tremblay
 Pte. N. Tremblay
 Pte. J. E. Turner
 Pte. W. D. Walters
 Pte. W. Watts
 Pte. J. T. Willson
 Pte. K. M. Wilson
 Pte. L. Woodlock
 Pte. R. W. Young

**Reinforcements and
men left in Ottawa
during June 1940**

Capt. A. S. Whiteacre
Lieut. H. L. Boyd
Lieut. G. S. Mersereau

CSM J. J. Darwin
Sgt. C. J. Mitchell
Cpl. R. G. Aseman
Cpl. W. A. Cory
Cpl. C. S. Lawford
Cpl. W. R. Patterson
Pte. N. Abboud
Pte. E. G. Acton
Pte. L. Albert
Pte. C. J. Alexander
Pte. A. N. Ames
Pte. H. C. Anderson
Pte. C. R. Anderson
Pte. H. S. Angel
Pte. D. Attwell
Pte. R. J. Barbeau
Pte. R.J.C. Barbour
Pte. G. W. Barnaby
Pte. C. E. Barr
Pte. V. J. Baulne
Pte. A. Beauregard

Pte. J. O. A. Bedard
Pte. C. E. Bletcrer
Pte. L. T. Boucher
Pte. H. J. Brousseau
Pte. C. M. Bull
Pte. F. G. Burgess
Pte. P. W. Burt
Pte. H. F. Cain
Pte. J. D. Cardiff
Pte. J. H. Charlebois
Pte. L. Chartrand
Pte. D. J. Childs
Pte. A. Clement
Pte. G. H. Class
Pte. J. H. Cloutier
Pte. J. M. Cloutier
Pte. G. R. Cole

Pte. J. E. Connolly
Pte. A. J. Cooper
Pte. W. J. Cooper
Pte. J. D. Couture
Pte. O. D. Couvrette
Pte. S. C. Craig
Pte. R. C. Crawford
Pte. S. Crepin
Pte. P. C. Crombie
Pte. M. Crouse
Pte. C.R.G. Carmichael
Pte. R. E. Dale
Pte. T. P. Danis
Pte. W. I. Darling
Pte. R. Dauray
Pte. M. A. Davey
Pte. J. F. Day
Pte. M. j. Deacey
Pte. L.G. Debellefeuille
Pte. A. L. Deighton
Pte. A. J. R. Demeule
Pte. E. V. J. Demoors
Pte. A. Desnoyers
Pte. L. C. Devine
Pte. G. Dixie
Pte. D. J. M. Dodds
Pte. J. E. Driskell
Pte. G. A. J. Dubois
Pte. R. M. Duncan
Pte. E. L. Dunn
Pte. H. C. Eady
Pte. E. L. Easter
Pte. M. C. Flynn
Pte. L. J. J. Fontaine
Pte. G. J. Fournier
Pte. G. C. Fraser
Pte. G. G. Fraser
Pte. R. Freed
Pte. A. Friend
Pte. K. H. Friedy
Pte. P. A. Gagnse
Pte. J. A. George
Pte. J. W. Gilligas
Pte. A. J. Godin
Pte. J. R. Gosson
Pte. A. N. Graham
Pte. T. Graham

Pte. G. G. Graves
Pte. W. G. Grakey
Pte. D. J. Guertin
Pte. E. D. Guilbeault
Pte. T. Halley
Pte. S. I. Halliday
Pte. M. Hamilton
Pte. W. M. Hamilton
Pte. A. S. Harding
Pte. H. Harrower
Pte. E. E. Harsant
Pte. A. H. G. Hewitt
Pte. G. C. Hicnas
Pte. R. G. F. Hill
Pte. S. R. Horse
Pte. B. A. Imlach
Pte. A. M. Jackson
Pte. O. J. Jette
Pte. C. A. Jewett
Pte. E. J. Johnson
Pte. G. Johnson
Pte. R. Jones
Pte. B. L. Kehoe
Pte. G. F. Kelley
Pte. W. P. Kelly
Pte. R. Kennedy
Pte. A. J. Kilmartin
Pte. J. A. Lebron
Pte. E. J. Lachance
Pte. J. A. Laderoute
Pte. T. J. Laforce
Pte. E. A. Lajeunesse
Pte. J. J. Lambert
Pte. L. J. Lambertus
Pte. W. H. Lang
Pte. E.J.H. Larocque
Pte. L. Larocque
Pte. N. Lascelle
Pte. G. Latendresse
Pte. F. Lauzon
Pte. L. B. Leafloor
Pte. K. C. Lecompte
Pte. A. Lecufer
Pte. J.M.R. Lefebvre
Pte. J.W.E. Leger
Pte. F. Lepage
Pte. O. Lepine

Pte. C. J. Little
 Pte. F. E. Little
 Pte. E. Leonard
 Pte. J. M. Levere
 Pte. J. T. Loftus
 Pte. E. R. MacDonald
 Pte. W. J. MacLaren
 Pte. K. A. MacLaren
 Pte. W. J. McCarthy
 Pte. F. McCulloch
 Pte. H. E. McCulloch
 Pte. D. McKinnon
 Pte. R. McKinnon
 Pte. J. J. McGale
 Pte. T. A. McFarlane
 Pte. N.D.M. McIntosh
 Pte. W. T. McPerk
 Pte. P. L. Marion
 Pte. E. R. Mayotte
 Pte. J. R. Mercer
 Pte. G.H.A. Milne
 Pte. J.T.E. Mongeon
 Pte. F. G. Moreno
 Pte. J. Morin
 Pte. P. N. Morrow
 Pte. W.J.L. Morrow
 Pte. F. m. Mulvey
 Pte. E. J. Mulvey
 Pte. R. S. Murray
 Pte. R. Neron
 Pte. G. N. Nikon
 Pte. F. E. O'Callaghan
 Pte. J. H. Owens
 Pte. A. T. Patterson
 Pte. C. L. Pappin
 Pte. F. J. Periard
 Pte. P. L. Plonte
 Pte. A. Poitras
 Pte. E. J. Pommerville
 Pte. L. A. Porteous
 Pte. G. Portieous
 Pte. J. H. Portieous
 Pte. E. Potvin
 Pte. J. S. Prime
 Pte. J. A. Primeau
 Pte. W. M. Prisdville
 Pte. J. F. Proulx

Pte. W. Prudhomme
 Pte. J. Putnam
 Pte. M.J.T. Quinn
 Pte. W. J. Rawlins
 Pte. H. J. Reasbeck
 Pte. J. J. Riendeau
 Pte. C. E. Reynolds
 Pte. J. Roach
 Pte. S. Robisson
 Pte. A. Robert
 Pte. F. A. Roberts
 Pte. P. E. Rochette
 Pte. J.T.R. Rochon
 Pte. C. E. Rodgers
 Pte. H. R. Ross
 Pte. O. Savard
 Pte. L. L. Scott
 Pte. A. J. Shaw
 Pte. D. E. Shirreffs
 Pte. E. T. Shornwise
 Pte. P. Smellie
 Pte. S. Smith
 Pte. L. Smirle
 Pte. L. C. Smith
 Pte. J. A. Spinks
 Pte. J. L. Staples
 Pte. R. St. Aubin
 Pte. H. Stearns
 Pte. R. Steele
 Pte. E. C. Still
 Pte. M.A.J. St. Louis
 Pte. B. A. Storey
 Pte. P. H. E. Snider
 Pte. M. L. Sullivan
 Pte. W. J. Sullivan
 Pte. J. C. Thompson
 Pte. E. S. Thompson
 Pte. G. F. Treasure
 Pte. C. Turgeon
 Pte. E. W. Vilon
 Pte. F. L. Wakerell
 Pte. R. B. Walker
 Pte. G. H. Walters
 Pte. H. T. Walters
 Pte. O. H. Walters
 Pte. T. A. Waters
 Pte. C. E. Weatherall

Pte. L. J. Weatherall
 Pte. J. H. West
 Pte. J. C. White
 Pte. W. R. Wilson
 Pte. W. E. Yade
 Pte. G. L. Young
 Pte. H.J.J. Charbonneau

APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions

Background Questions:

What is your full name and date of birth?
 Where were you born?
 When did you first become involved in the military?
 When did you volunteer to serve in World War Two?

At the time that you volunteered:

What was the makeup of your birth family?
 What was your position in the family structure?
 What were your parents' occupations?
 Were you married and did you have children?
 What was your level of education?
 What work experience had you acquired?
 Were any members of your family involved in the military?
 Had any family members served in World War I?

Enlistment:

Where did you sign up for service?
 What rank did you begin with and was this satisfactory to you?
 What were the conditions surrounding your decision to enlist?
 Did you encounter any barriers or encouragement regarding your decision to enlist?
 Were the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa your first choice?
 Did you have friends with the regiment and if so, did this affect your decision?

Lansdowne Park

What was the accommodation like?
 What was the food like?
 Describe the equipment that you trained with?
 What type of clothing were you supplied with?
 What do you recall regarding recreation and leisure time activities?
 Was the army routine, structure and discipline much different from what you were accustomed to?
 Did you expect to see action overseas, in the short term?
 Was promotion important to you?
 Were friendships important to you?
 Was being away from home difficult for you?
 What were your impressions regarding your leadership?
 Was the initial phase in Ottawa of value on the long term?

Were you still satisfied with your decision to join when you left Ottawa?

Leaving Ottawa:

When you departed on May 24th 1940, did you know where you were going?
What do you recall of your feelings as you left Ottawa?

What do you recall about Camp Borden?

What were the conditions like on *The Empress of Australia*?
Where did you think you were going?

Iceland:

When did you learn that you were going to Iceland?
How did you feel regarding this posting?
What were your first impressions of Iceland?
Were you aware that you were part of an occupying force?
What were your views regarding your role as part of this force?

Where were you located on the island?
How large was the group that you were with?
What were your living arrangements like?
Did you have adequate food, clothing and equipment?
What did your duties involve?
How did you feel regarding what was demanded of you?

How much contact did you have with the local population?
What was the relationship like?
Did you develop any enduring links?
Describe your recollections regarding the landscape and weather conditions?
What kind of challenges did these present?
Did these challenges affect the moral and health of the troops?
Did you expect a German invasion?
How important was mail from home?
Did it affect morale?
Was mail more important in Iceland than later in your war experience?

How much contact did you have with the other two Canadian battalions?
How much contact did you have with the British forces stationed in Iceland?
How much contact did you have with the other Cameron Highlanders, outside of your group?
Describe the relationship among the Cameron men that you served with?
Did the conditions in Iceland affect the development of friendships?
What was the relationship like between the Cameron men and their officers?

Looking Back:

How do your memories of this period compare with other periods of your war experience?

Did the Iceland experience benefit or retard your development as a soldier?

How important do you feel the occupation was to the eventual allied success?

What is important today for Canadians to realize about your service in Iceland?

APPENDIX 3

Consent Form

Project: Canada and the Occupation of Iceland During World War II

Investigator: Gloria Morrison
764 Wingate Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 1S3
(613) 737-3292
Email gloria@magma.ca

Supervisor: Professor Brian Villa
Department of History
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5800 ext. 1304
Email bvilla@uottawa.ca

This project is conducted as part of the requirements for the M.A. in history at the University of Ottawa. The results of this research will be used in a thesis to be submitted by Gloria A. Morrison. Publication in the form of articles and or a monograph may also ensue.

In general, the objective of this thesis project is to consider an important, yet almost forgotten aspect of Canada's involvement in World War II-the allied occupation of Iceland in 1940. The focus of this particular aspect of the project is to consider the experience from the perspective of the Canadian men who served on this assignment.

Canadian veterans who served in Iceland will be interviewed in order to compile information regarding the demands, complexities and consequences of this period in their war service. In order to put this information into context, questions relating to their personal history, including prior military experience will be requested of each veteran.

This project involves no physical risk. Veterans will be asked to answer a series of questions that they are welcome to peruse ahead of time if they so desire. Subjects may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without risk of prejudice.

Due to the number of questions involved and the age of the subjects, every consideration will be given for their comfort and energy level. If more than one interview is preferable, this may be arranged.

Please note, no compensation will be given for participation in this project.

The investigator may quote from interviews or use the interviews in other accepted forms. It is recognized that some veterans may wish to remain anonymous, whereas others may prefer to be recognized for their opinions and reflections. The wishes of the subjects will be requested and respected. Please indicate your choice at the bottom of the page.

As this research is being conducted as part of a master's thesis, once approved the thesis will be available for perusal at Ottawa University. All subjects will be advised when this work will be completed and available for consultation.

Once the thesis work has been completed and successfully defended, the tapes will be either turned over to the regimental museum as part of their historical collection, or held under lock in the office of the research supervisor for five years. There is also the possibility of depositing the tapes at the National Archives of Canada to be accessible for future research endeavors. The disposition of each tape will be based on the wishes of the veteran who was interviewed. Once again, please indicate your choice below.

Questions concerning the ethical performance of the research may be addressed to the Secretary of the University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/o School of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5; telephone: (613) 562-5972.

Investigator's signature:

I have received a copy of this form and I agree to the conditions stated above.

Specifically:

1. I agree to being interviewed and taped. Yes No
2. I agree to these tapes being turned over to the regimental museum once the academic process has been completed. Yes No
3. I agree to a copy of these tapes being deposited with the National Archives of Canada. Yes No
4. In the situation where I have loaned pictures from my personal collection for the purposes of reproduction, I agree that these photographs may be included in the thesis, as well as in articles or monographs that may ensue from this endeavor.
Yes No
5. I agree to having my name used where it is deemed appropriate by the investigator.
Yes No

Subject's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 4

Topics for Discussion

Proposed topics for discussion during the interview regarding the experience of the men who served with the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa between September 1939 and April 1941:

Personal Background, for example, family situation at the time of enlistment

Enlistment Details, for instance, why did you join the C.H.of O.?

Lansdowne Park in 1939 and early 1940, what was it like for you?

Leaving Ottawa, questions covering the departure and the weeks prior to arrival in
Iceland

Iceland, questions related to the conditions of service there, including the weather,
the people, and the isolation

Your views regarding the importance of the allied effort to secure Iceland during
World War Two.

Please note: Veterans are also invited to discuss important personal reflections related to this time frame which may not necessarily be covered in the proposed list of topics.

It is anticipated that the interview will require at least one hour of time. If more than two hours are required then a second interview period will be arranged. At any time, if the veteran feels fatigued then the interview will be terminated and another time period will be scheduled to conclude the interview.

APPENDIX 5

Scale of Rations C.A.S.F.

Standard Ration		Alternatives		No. of Issues Auth. Per Wk.
Commodity	Quantity	Commodity	Quantity	
Beef	14 oz.	Mutton or Fresh Pork	14 oz.	1
		Preserved Meat	8 oz.	As desired
		Fish, Fresh or Frozen	12 oz.	As desired
		Fish, Canned, Dried or Filletted, (smoked),		As desired
	(other than shell fish)	8 oz.	As desired	
Bread, white or Brown	14 oz.	Flour plus	14 oz.	As desired
		Shortening	4 oz.	As desired
		Baking Powder	½ oz.	As desired
Note: 14 oz. of biscuit may be issued in lieu of bread, but only in sufficient issues to keep an emergency ration on hand with a periodical turnover.				
Bacon	3 oz.	Eggs	2 only	2
		Salt Pork	3 oz.	As desired
Cheese	1 oz.	-		As desired
Rice	2 oz.	Rolled or Cracked Wheat,	2 oz.	As desired
		Rolled Oats		
		Macaroni	4 oz.	As desired
Jam	2 oz.	Raisins, Corn Syrup, Prunes	2 oz.	As desired
		Molasses or Honey	2 oz.	As desired
Butter	2	-		As desired
Milk, evaporated Irradiated, whole	5 oz.	Milk, fresh pasteurized (up to 50% of Evaporated milk authorized)	10 oz.	As desired
Tea	¼ oz.	Two rations of either Tea or Coffee in lieu of one ration of each. Chocolate (in lieu of one ration of either tea or coffee)		As desired
Coffee	1/3 oz.			As desired
				As desired
Potatoes, fresh	16 oz.	-		

Vegetables, fresh	8 oz.	Tomatoes, canned		Compulsory Issue twice Per week
Apples, raw	5 oz.			
When unobtainable		Apples, canned	½ oz.	As Required
		Apple Pie filler	2-1/2 oz.	1
		Pumpkin, canned	3-1/2 oz.	1
Peas, split	½ oz.	Beans	1 oz.	As Required
Sugar, white gran.	3 oz.	-		As Required
Salt, Iodized.	1/2	-		As Required
Pepper	1/36 oz.			As Required

Note: In duplicating this form, the attempt has been made to replicate the layout and details of the original

APPENDIX 6

Non Commissioned Officers Report [June 13th 1940] Company No. 3

Name, Rank, Age	Military Qualifications
J. W. Courtright, C.S.M.	2 4 th Bn. C.M.G.C. 5 yrs. 1932-1940 C.H.of O. (MG) 4 yrs. Cpl. Cert. (Inf. & MG) Barriefield '33 Sgt. Cert. (Inf. & MG) St. Jean, Que. '37 'B' wing C.S.A.S. 1938 Instructor Prov. School 1936 (CMGC) Instructor Prov. School 1937 C.H.ofO. (MG) Instructor Prov. School 1938 C.H.ofO. (MG) Instructor Prov. School 1939 C.H.ofO. (MG) Instrutor Regt'l F.U.C.C. 1939 #2 C.H.ofO. Regt'l WO's & NCO's Course 1939
H. C. Kemp C.W.M.S.	3 G.G.F.G., 1919 to 1925 C.H.of O. (MG) 1930 to 1940 Sgt's Course Part 1, 1934 Q.M. course, 1938 Regt'l Q.M.Course, Nov. 1939
L. L. Davy A/PSM	4 C.H.of O. (MG) 1935 to 1940 Sgt. Cert. (Inf. & M.G.) St. Jean, 1938 Instructor Regt'l Cadre Course, 1939 Regt'l W.O.'s & NCO's Course, 1939
T. A. James A/PSM	Regt'l Cadre Course, 1939 Instructor Regtl. F.U.C.C. #1, 1939 Regt'l W.O.'s & NCO's course, 1939
L. J. Arnett A/Sgt.	2 Regt'l Cadre Course, 1939 Regt'l D.A.G. Course, 1939
G. F. Irons A/Sgt.	2 RCHA, 1927 to 1929 (Bmbdr) Dist. Regt'l Instr. Course, #2, 1939 Regt'l F.U.C. Course, #2, 1939
L. M. Doyle A/Sgt.	2 C.H.ofO. (MG) 1934 to 1940 P.T. course, Kingston, Sept. 1939 Regt'l Cadre Course, 1939
J. M. Robillard, A/Sgt.	4 th Bn. C.M.G.C. 1928 to 1934 Sgt. Cert. (Inf. & MG) Kingston, 1931 "B" Wing C.S.A.S. 1934 Dist. Regt'l Instr. Course, #2, 1939

		Regt'l F.U.C.C., #2, 1939
G. Love,	A/L/Sgt.	4 th Bn. C.M.G.C. & C.H.ofO. (MG) from 1937 to 1940 Sgt's Course Part 1, Prov. School, '38 Regt'l F.U.C.C., #2, 1939
T. Fouchard	A/L/Sgt.	4 th Bn. C.M.G.C. & C.H.ofO. (MG) from 1934 to 1940 Sgt. Cert. (Inf. & MG) Toronto, '38 "B" wing C.S.A.S., 1939 Instructor Regt'l Cadre Course, '39 Regt'l F.U.C.C., #1, 1939 Regt'l W.O's & NCO's Course, 1939

Of these ten NCOs, 2 were rated as Very Good, five were seen as Good, and three were classed as Fair.

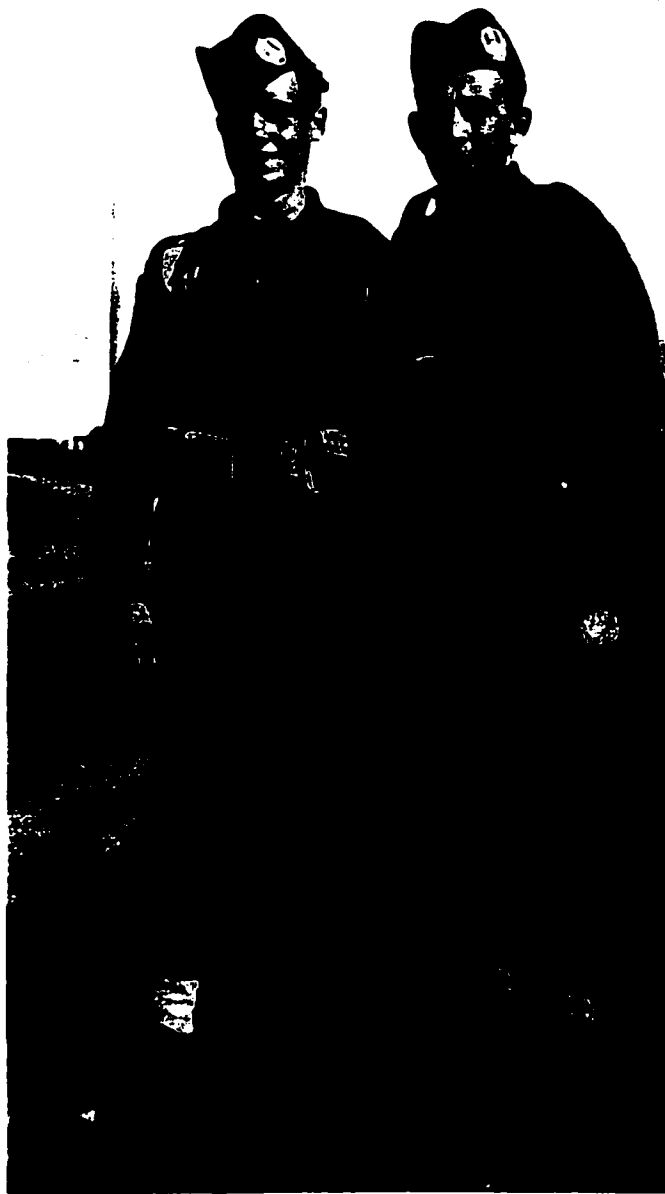
Report filed at D.H.H. 325.009 (510)

APPENDIX 7

Photographs

Number	Location	Identity	Date	Donated by
1.	Lansdowne Park	No. 3 Company	April 1940	CHof O Museum
2.	Lansdowne Park	'Leaving Home'	May 1940	CHof O Museum
3.	Iceland [left] [right]	Windy Valley Base Co. Natural Archway Helgafell	July 1940 1941	Sam Labranche CHof O Museum H. J. David
4.	Iceland [left] Iceland [right]	Slingsby Camp Harnerfjord PSM H. Gonder 'Life of busy PSM' Kaldadarness G. Fouchard [left] Irving Dunn [right] 'Home in a Nissan Hut'	March 41	H. J. David G. Fouchard
5.	Iceland	Gerry Belanger [left] Earl McHugh [right] 'Comrades in Iceland'		A. Featherston- haugh
6.	Iceland [left] [right]	'Laundry Day' [Hot Springs] H. Artus [left] C. St. Germain [right] 'winter coats'		CHof O Museum C. St. Germain
7.	Iceland	Budareyri [left] over 11 feet of snow [right] #11 Platoon		Renaud Collection CHofO Museum
8.	Iceland	Mail Delivery		CHofO Museum
9.	Iceland	Dock at Reykjavik		H. J. David

G. BELANGER E. McHUGH



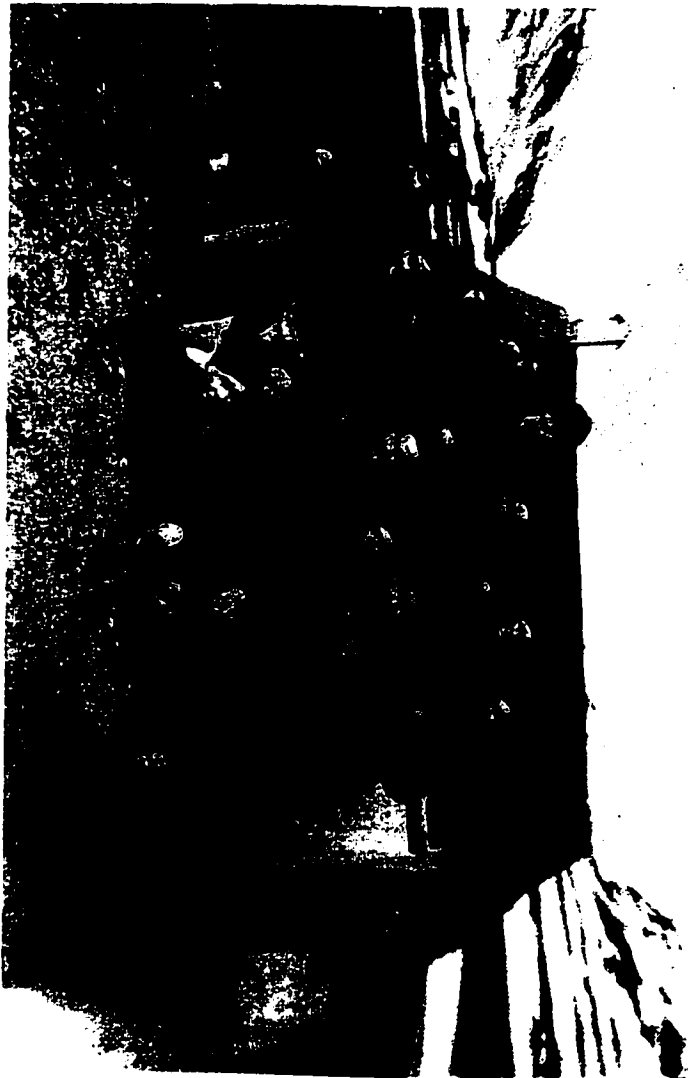
"LAUNDRY DAY"



H. ARTUS C. ST. GERMAIN



BRIDGEMAN





REYKJAVIK DOEK

