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# Camp Niagara Remembered

A history of the Canadian military training  
camp at Niagara-on-the-lake

Camp Niagara was a happy camp remembered fondly by most of those who were there. This is the oral history of those who trained and served there over the years. This is their Camp Niagara Remembered.



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## Editor's Note

This edition is presented as a digitized version of an unpublished, marked up, manuscript held in the library of the Niagara Historical Society Museum. Handwritten, edits that were written into the margins of the existing copy have been included in this edited version. Where obvious typographical errors have been made, they have been corrected.

## Preface

This book began as an Oral History. Two years ago we were given the names of six people who had responded to a notice in the *Legion*, the magazine of the Royal Canadian Legion. At that time we knew of no others who had been at Camp Niagara. Over the past two years we were able to expand this list to some hundreds of names.

We were able to interview some sixty or seventy of these people and spoke with perhaps two hundred more. The people we interviewed represented every rank from Private to Lieutenant General. The youngest person interviewed was in his thirties. The most senior has just celebrated his one hundredth birthday. It is very largely the recollections of these people that are represented here.

While we have augmented the story by referring to written documents and official records, the story is largely one of spoken anecdotes. It is necessarily incomplete and some of the recollections might have become a little fuzzy over the decades. But if the small inaccuracies inherent in the oral history approach can be forgiven, the ambience of the times described is real. Camp Niagara was a happy camp remembered fondly by most of those who were there. This is their Camp Niagara Remembered.

## CHAPTER I - Camp Niagara to 1914

### REVEILLE<sup>1</sup>



It is 0600 hours and the Common at Camp Niagara, almost invisible in the early summer morning mist is Quiet. The solitude is broken only by the sound of the fire picquet's pacing and the whinnying of the horses tethered in the cavalry lines. Then the sunrise silence is pierced by the Duty Bugler playing Reveille followed by the

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<sup>1</sup> In the Canadian army, reveille is pronounced in the Imperial manner as reh-valley rather than reh-velley as is done in the American army .

bugler or trumpeter of each regiment and piper of each Highland Regiment, sounding in turn, his own regimental call and then Reveille. And from across the river, from a country that was once an adversary drifts the muted sound of Reveille at Fort Niagara. So begins another day of militia training at the Brigade Camp at Camp Niagara.

We used to get up half an hour before everybody else and blow Reveille. That's why they used to like us! Six o'clock in the morning.

RSM John W. Finnimore  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Toronto, Ontario

Camp Niagara has been home over the past one and a quarter centuries, to tens of thousands of Canadian men and women of the Canadian Army, both Militia /Reserve and Expeditionary/Active Service Forces. Indeed, throughout most of Canada' s history there has been a military presence at Niagara-an-the-Lake.

The land at Niagara was secured by a treaty negotiated by Sir William Johnson with the Seneca Indians in 1764. The land was a narrow strip which began at Fort Niagara, extended south to the creek above Fort Schlosser (Little Niagara), with land on both sides of the strait, extending approximately four miles in width and fourteen miles in length. In addition to settlement and timbering the acquisition of this land was for defence.

In 1792 Niagara became the capital of the new province of Upper Canada. Shortly after, Niagara was incorporated as a town. In 1795, a site was selected on the high ground commanding a view of the river mouth for the erection of various buildings, with approval for the construction of Fort George being received in 1799. A reconstruction of this fort stands beside the Camp Niagara Common today.

Navy Hall, which today sits overlooking the river, has been restored and sheathed in stone. Built to serve the Provincial Marine on lake Ontario, it was originally wood sheathed, and was, in fact, a collection of four buildings. All these buildings were destroyed in the War of 1812. The current building which stands today is one of the replacement buildings erected after the war.

The town was variously called Niagara, then Newark in 1792, when Governor Simcoe chose it as the capital of the new province of Upper Canada, again Niagara when Simcoe left, and subsequently, to prevent confusing it with Niagara Falls, it was designated by the Canadian Post Office as Niagara-on-the-Lake, a name that has persisted to this present-day.

Much of the early fighting to defend Canada as a nation occurred in the Niagara area, with such well known battles as those of Ridgeway and Queenston Heights. At the dedication of Brock's monument in 1853, there was a protest by one significant group, the First Nation's, which felt its efforts in the many battles in which they fought were unrecognized by the ceremony.

My grandmother used to tell a story about her grandmother who attended a celebration in Niagara-on-the-Lake, specifically Queenston, but camping, staying along the Niagara River in the area on the occasion of the unveiling of Brock's Monument. And the reason they went to Niagara was really quite Interesting. They walked, all the women and wives walked, from Mohawk Village and from Six Nations to Niagara. They actually went in a sort of protest. I guess they were a little bit disappointed in the Brock's Monument not paying homage to the role the Six Nations played in the war of 1812. The Mohawk women who had lost their husbands and sons in that war were particularly concerned. The people that went to this celebration went in a kind of very subtle protest. They walked dressed in black. They went in mourning.

Tom Hill, Director  
Woodland Cultural Centre  
Brantford, Ontario



From the date of the earliest organization of Upper Canada's militia, the town of Niagara had been the headquarters of the No. 1 Company Niagara Volunteers, and in earlier days, the First Regiment of the Lincoln Militia, This regiment assembled annually, as did most militia regiments, for muster and enrolment on June 4, honouring the birthday of King George III. This continued until 1837, the year of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne when the date of the annual muster was changed to the 24th of May.

Not until 1871, four years after Canada's confederation, and the year in which the last of the British regiments left Canada except for those defending such British crown property as sea ports) was the Niagara Common selected as a training ground for large bodies of troops , The Report of the State of the Militia for 1871 comment on the selection of the site and on the preparation of the camp at Niagara "as a point of strategic importance on the frontier for the training of the Militia of Military District No.2,"

On June 6 and 7 of 1871, the first Brigade Camp was held at Camp Niagara (sometimes referred to as Niagara Camp). That first camp was attended by nearly five thousand uniformed men from Military District No, 2, headquartered in Toronto. There

were seven troops of cavalry, with 511 horses. Three batteries of field artillery with their cannons attended as did eleven battalions of infantry. The XIII<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Infantry from Hamilton was there with its band. Their official photograph shows a proud battalion formed up, a battalion that brought with it the Battle Honour of Ridgeway, and that more than seventy years later, would, as The Royal Hamilton light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment), add Dieppe to its guidon as one of its many Honours.

The rifle range west of Fort Mississauga was in use at that first camp, and the targets and, butt supplies were stored in the old Fort Mississauga tower. There being only service and support buildings such as kitchens, workshops and warehouses the men lived under canvas in the soon to be familiar bell tent.

The second camp at Niagara was a sixteen-day camp beginning June 12, 1872 attended by 435 officers and 5,438 men. The units at camp were the 2nd Regiment of Cavalry, three field batteries of artillery and fifteen battalions of infantry formed as three brigades. The *Canadian Illustrated News* published a sketch of Camp Niagara showing the locations on the Camp Common of the various infantry battalion, the artillery and the cavalry and showing the Common to be a mass of bell tents in which the men lived.

The marquee tent, rectangular rather than round, and with higher side walls, was used at this camp for use as Officers' Messes. Unfortunately, the camp was marred that year by the accidental death of John A. Macaulay of No. 2 Coy (Company), 13th Regiment, who drowned while bathing in a dangerous part of the Niagara River.

There was no camp in 1873. This was attributed to a lack of sufficient funds. In 1874, a twelve-day Brigade Camp was held, comprising the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Field Battery, the Welland Field Battery, and the 13th, 19th, 20th, 38th, 44th and 77th Battalions of Infantry. Again, The *Canadian Illustrated News* was there, and again in woodcut form, portrayed the camp with the artillery's guns in order and the cavalry riding in the background.

Camps continued to be held at more or less regular intervals throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century prior to the Great War. And always, time was spent in drill, musketry, and cavalry exercises.

Attending these camps were other units, perhaps less visible, but not less important. Units such as the Army Service Corps, Army Medical Corps and Field Ambulance Units, the Chaplains and the Engineers.

Camp Niagara was a pleasant place with its mild climate, its grass, trees and water. But it was, nonetheless, somewhat peculiarly located for a training camp. Rather than

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being sited, as might be expected, in the centre of the Military District it served, it was located at the tip of a peninsula. Many militiamen had to travel long distances to reach it. Few were close enough to march to camp or drive their horse drawn- wagons there. Camp Niagara was most easily reached from Toronto, headquarters of the Military District it served, and points east by steamer. One of the early boats to be used to transport the militia to camp was the *S.S. Chicora*, built in Liverpool, England in 1864 as a Confederate blockade runner.

For those who came from the west of Niagara, the early railways provided the easiest access. The railroad, of necessity, coordinated its schedules with those of the lake steamers with interconnections being made at the dock in Niagara.

The rail line, which was ultimately absorbed by the Michigan Central Railroad, passed the camp, with its tracks on the east side of King Street abutting the camp property. The railroad continued along King Street curving to the east at Ricardo Street, and ending parallel to the river at the dock. There a turntable, the remains of which are still visible allowed the engine to be turned around for the return trip.

A spur line branched off the mainline as it approached the town. This line entered Paradise Grove at the east end of the camp. These two branches were interconnected

by a line running through the camp between John Street and Shaeffe Road. A siding from this spur served the ordnance buildings.

This interconnecting line provided the railroad with a way which permitted whole trains to be turned around and in addition, provided a large facility for more than one troop train to be handled simultaneously. Ultimately the Paradise Grove spur and its wye link in camp were abandoned. The siding serving the ordnance buildings would remain until the end of rail service to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the 1960s.

In 1887, when Gunner John W. Gilchrist made the long trip with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Field Battery from Guelph to Camp Niagara, he made the journey by train and by boat. In his memoirs written in 1936 he recalled that journey. "The gunners ran the guns out of the gun shed and the drivers harnessed up and hooked in. A march of a mile or more to the freight station and had my first experience of loading cannon up a platform and onto flat cars. The drivers attended to loading the horses. After loading the guns, we had to place blocks under the wheels and spike them down with heavy spikes, and march to our own cars. We were none too soon this morning as we were no more than through when a severe thunderstorm arrived. We travelled Grand Trunk [Railway] to Toronto Freight Sheds and the unloading commenced, and running the guns by hand over a long platform, hooking, a long march to the dock where the old *Chicora* was

impatiently waiting. We had less work loading onto the boat and then across Lake Ontario to Niagara. We were served on the boat with a much needed lunch. Unloaded and another march to Camp, arriving shortly before sunset."

As well as a keen rivalry between batteries, there was also a spirit of cooperation as related by Gunner Gilchrist, who continued "conditions upon arriving in camp were not so well arranged as in after years. Our location was not laid out. which took some time. However, when the tent stakes were set the gunners from the other batteries helped us to get up our tents; the cooks had supper ready, bread, cheese and tea, and we were set for the night."

The hometown newspapers described their militia units as looking very smart and military. The *Toronto World* reported in their July 3, 1899 issue that "The 13th from Hamilton landed in the grove by the T.H.&B. [Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway) at 9 o'clock, and had but 50 yards to march to reach their tents. They are a neat looking lot of fellows. There is no surplus garments to retard their movements, and if they do not look as picturesque as the stalwart Highlanders. They look as smart and drill as steadily and precisely as any men that donned a red tunic. In marching the ranks

move as one man do not crowd and give lots of space for swinging of arms. They did the best marching of the camp today and were not the least frequently cheered."

The old army joke of "Too big enough" seemed to be in vogue even then for as Gunner John W. Gilchrist wrote of the 1887 camp. "if the soldier had the article, the number did not matter. That issue was too large for most of our chaps. Remember a small driver who did not care how he was dressed, as long as he got his pay. Being told that if he had buttons on his shirt collar he would not need suspenders at all. The helmets were also large; a common expression that if the wearer's mouth could be seen, it fitted."

The men were not always supplied with rations or full clothing issue. The most glaring deficiency was the lack of suitable footwear. No marching boot was available, and the men wore white summer boots or high-heeled, narrow soled boots. For the 1875 camp, each non-commissioned officer and man of the XI 11th Battalion from Hamilton was required to take to camp according to Battalion Orders of May 28, 1875, one change of shirt, 1 extra pair of socks, 1 extra pair of boots or shoes, knife, fork and spoon, a towel and piece of soap, needle and thread, and a tin plate and cup ... one day's cooked rations and a water bottle of tea.

Daily rations about this time, according to 20th Lorne Rifles records, consisted per man, of "1 1/2 lbs. bread, 1 lb. meat, 1 lb. potatoes, 1/3 oz. coffee or tea, 2 ozs. sugar, 1 oz. pearl barley, 1/16 oz. pepper and 1 oz. of cheese. "

Each camp seemed to have its share of characters who stood out in memory. One who attended the 1887 camp was an old Irish soldier who had been in India during the Mutiny, and who entertained the younger men with tales and demonstrations of his talents with the bayonet. But he had another very great talent, that of rank misrepresentation. Gunner Gilchrist reported that "He was the colonel's orderly and thoroughly understood his duties. He needed to, as the colonel was of the old School and had plenty swank. When we got settled down in Niagara, he of course got orders to get the colonel's uniforms in proper shape. But what did old John Flemming do but dress himself up in the Colonel's mess uniform, a very showy outfit, and visited several canteens, claiming to be an inspector. I did not see this but heard about the adventure talked about often enough. He was quite regimental about his doings. Marched straight into a canteen, informed the steward or bartender, stated his inspection, and invited all present to a drink, and when he drank his own, expressed his satisfaction and charged the account to Colonel McDonald, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Field Artillery."



For his actions, he was relieved of his post. But his skills were much in demand and it was not long before he was appointed to a similar office by another colonel.

There were also some very real inspectors at camp. Gilchrist explained. "At each camp near the end there was a serious inspection by an experienced Department Senior Officer. All the accoutrements were cleaned up and put on view, and guns and harness especially. The parade for inspection was in marching order, and that meant much work besides the cleaning; knapsacks strapped about guns and limbers, and round sort of valises on the horses as well as extra parts; any defect from any cause, a loss of points, and as the competition was keen, all did their best the battery was then moved to parade on the ground already selected and marched past in different formations, minutely detailed in the drill book."

Important events were celebrated using the special skills of the militia.

In 1887, Queen Victoria celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her ascension to the throne. A battery from Camp Niagara was chosen to fire the royal salute. The crowd was especially pleased when one of the guns produced a smoke ring.

Important visitors came to inspect the troops. In 1901, the Duke of York (to become King George V) and the Duchess visited, in 1910, when there were 10,000 men under canvas at Camp Niagara, Sir John French later the Earl of Ypres, and a Great War commander of the British forces in France) arrived to review the troops.

On the Common, the militia had their own special events, including competitions to test the skills *of* men and horses. Gilchrist described one competition. "Three pairs *of* stakes were placed a considerable distance apart, one inch wider than the gun axles, and through these the drivers circled and tried to drive without touching. The guns came into action twice and the gunners went through the motions of loading and firing . It was a thorough test and the subdivisions taking the least time won a small money prize and the drivers badges."

To be able to perform well in the camp competitions, it was necessary to have a full complement of men. Having the full number of men required was a matter of pride. But sometimes, a regiment was under complement. The *Whitby Keystone* of August 24, 1905 told how Mr. Hamar Greenwood, who had been at Camp Niagara in his younger days when he had been known as Tom solved his regiment's problem of insufficient numbers. "Tom had been captain of the cadet corps in his native town of Whitby. Afterwards he joined No. 1 Company of the 34th Regiment and became an officer in

the regiment, under Captain Henderson ... A day or two prior to the date set for the regiment to go to Niagara camp, Captain Henderson found that his company was about twenty men short. He spoke of the *tact* to young Greenwood and wondered how the gap could be filled. Tom grasped the situation and without speaking to anybody stole to Toronto. He rented what was then Huron Hall, gathered a crowd there, and harangued them. He was only a youngster of seventeen, but so effective were his eloquence and enthusiasm that he, with little trouble enrolled the necessary number of recruits. These he marched down Yonge Street. The next morning Captain Henderson's company was full strength, while most of the city companies were still begging for men."

The Lorne Rifles attended camp in 1911. Before camp, they too were below full strength. Their regimental history reported that "Recruiting in the county was very difficult so men were taken from Toronto and Hamilton. This poaching on the reserves of the 34th Ontario Regiment and 36th Peel Regiment led to an investigation, and talk of re-organization of the 36th and 20th."

Sometimes, the shortage was not just of "other ranks", but also of officers. In 1906 Major Anson G. Henderson had to meet this particular problem. His situation was

described by The *Uxbridge Journal* in its January 31, 1907 issue. "Owing to the illness of [the Commanding Officer]. Major Henderson was virtually in command of the battalion and the last year at Camp Niagara was a severe test of his versatility and administrative ability. The regiment marched into camp with the colonel, adjutant, quartermaster, paymaster and several captains "on leave" and all unqualified officers under orders to attend a class of instruction, leaving one officer per company, five of whom were lieutenants, to work the regiment. It is whispered that the acting DC took to camp with him a prayer book and a box of pills, so that should the chaplain and the surgeon go the way of all the rest, the regiment would still be found doing duty at the old stand .

More and more effort was placed in tactical exercises such as sham battles with "opposing forces" as far away as Queenston, St. Davids, or Virgil. The sham battle and other activities at the 1899 camp were described in detail in articles in the July 3, 1899 issues of the *Hamilton Spectator* and the *Toronto Globe*. "The general idea of the fight was: A force (blue) had crossed the river and disembarked at Fort George. It had taken up a line of outposts and was preparing to encamp at Fort George. A force (red) had been pushing forward from the main body at Drummondville with orders to defeat the force (blue) before it could be reinforced. No cavalry was available. The ground

being generally unsuitable for the employment of artillery, no guns were detailed. The first engagement took place at the junction of the Pancake Road and the East West Road, where the Q.D.R. and a portion of the Grenadiers had an encounter with the Highlanders and a section of the Thirteenth. The firing lasted for some time and could be heard for miles around."

One injury was reported. The Toronto *Globe* continued "Private Bassett of the 19th gave a notable example of a sense of duty. He was told off beforehand to be a "casualty", i.e., to present himself with an imaginary wound for the ambulance corps to bandage. His wound was to be in the leg. Before his time to fall arrived his rifle jammed, and in working with it he received a blank charge in the leg. He is the only person not amused at the incident."

Ten thousand visitors watched the sham battle. The evening's entertainment consisted of a tattoo and a fireworks display. The men found their own pleasurable after-hours pursuits which ranged from pulling sleeping men by their feet from their tents, to battles with potatoes. The Lorne Scots regimental history recorded these activities as "a gentle exercise in which the men amused themselves 'till the rhythmic clang, clang of the scabbard of the Orderly Officer sent all to cover and threw a blanket of silence over the camp through which the hoarse voice of the Orderly Sergeant

penetrated like the roars of the bull of Bashan. The same Orderly Sergeant might be participating in the same nocturnal activities the next night, but tonight he was dressed in a little brief authority. 'till the Orderly Officer dismissed him, and left the camp in the care of Sleep and the sentries of the Quarter Guard."

The 20th Lorne Rifles introduced the marquee tent as a mess tent for the men. This improved the dining arrangements. Their cooking was done using a mobile steamer unit which greatly improved the quality of food served.

The food at Camp Niagara was not always acceptable to the men. In the summer of 1914, two companies of the Halton Rifles refused to parade until they had been served with coffee.

The troops refused to go on parade because they had been served coffee that in their opinion bore no relationship or resemblance to true coffee and they refused to go on parade until they'd been given proper coffee.

Col Ted Conover  
Lorne Scots, Brampton, Ontario

According to the regimental history, they claimed" that the stuff provided in the mess was not fit for a hog to drink. Here was a fine state of affairs, a British Regiment were

in revolt, and the voice of authority. Usually trumpet tongued, sunk to an inaudible whisper amid the clamour of grievances from the mutineers which assured the Orderly Officer and Adjutant that they knew all that sort of coffee, cafe au lait, cafe noir, demi tasse and all that sort of thing, and they would see the Regt. to a certain well known address before they would respond to the notes of the bugle."

Such a situation was, of course, not beyond the capabilities of a Regimental Sergeant Major to resolve. The RSM is known as a model for the younger men . He is ramrod straight in his posture, absolutely commanding in his language, and equal to any task in the leading of his men. To have arrested the recalcitrants would have more that filled the guard house and resulted in an enormous amount of paper work and investigation. The RSM in this instance chose a simpler, more direct route. He simply ordered that the regimental cook stoves and coffeemakers be shut down. Lunch passed. Dinner time passed. The combination of hunger and the odours of cooking emanating from nearby regimental messes worked. By ones and twos, in groups of three or four or more the men gradually reformed the parade. Whereupon the RSM gave the order, "Parade Dismiss" and the men went to bed hungry, chastened, and wiser.

That same year, 1914, was to be a signal year, for the Canadian soldier was about to put on his uniform to go to war.

Oh yes. I remember well 1914, July 1914. They must have smelled the war coming on because a big general come over from England and he inspected us. Saw us on parade, watched what we were doing, how the Colonel drilled them, the whole regiment. They must have known the war was coming on then.

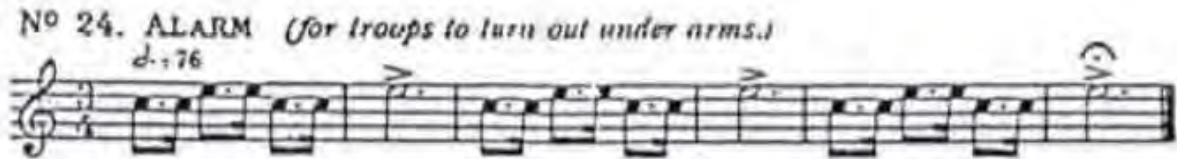
RSM John W. Finnemore

In 1871, the year of the first brigade camp at Niagara, The Haldimand Regiment arrived, in company with three other regiments, wearing uniforms of rifle green. Seven of the infantry battalions wore scarlet and blue. By 1914, the Lorne Scots and other regiments were wearing the new khaki field uniforms that would very shortly be used in the Great War. The proud colours of those earlier years, it was thought, would be seen only in the Mess and on formal occasions.



## CHAPTER II - The Great War

### ALARM



When Britain declared war on August 4, 1914, Canada, as part of the Empire under the rule of King George V, was at war automatically. In this war, Canada would give up from its small population of less than eight million, the lives of 60,000 serving men and women. In 1909, at the Imperial Defence Conference in London, England [and] the various countries of the Empire had agreed that their military forces be harmonized. In an emergency all could be combined into a single fighting force. Initially colonial armies lost much of their independence.

So Canada went to war, using British methods and standards. Among the trappings they took were remnants of the British class system, including a very clear social distinction between officers and other ranks. While the officers wore comfortable open necked-tunics with ties, other ranks wore tunics that buttoned to the neck. Not only did these chafe, but in some instances, they also galled. Greg Clarke, the noted Canadian humourist, in one of his popular essays on military life wrote about this distinction in dress and how the simple statement "Ties must be worn" at the entrance to a restaurant kept the other ranks at the "correct" social distance and out of the officers' favourite haunts.

Both tunic and trousers were made of khaki, wool serge, a material that was serviceable but sometimes rough on the skin. The legs from the ankles to the knees were wrapped in puttees, a bandage-like strip of material. These puttees, in overlapping layers, were sometimes a mixed blessing. Until a man learned the proper way to wrap them, they were often a sagging nuisance. But when properly wrapped, they stayed up, looked neat and trim, and served a useful purpose in the trenches later on.

Lance Corporal Herbert Mills of the 5Bth Infantry Battalion, C.E.F. recalled the puttees in his personal memoirs. "Puttees? Oh yes, we had puttees. I'd forgotten about them. Oh yes, the puttees saved you wet feet in the trenches quite a lot. Because you'd step over the corner where you'd turn; it's all dark and slippery. Every once in a while you step over and go into about two feet of water. Your foot, your leg, up to your knee, eh!"

Whether or not the puttees saved the men from having wet feet, perhaps with the puttees wrapped tightly around the leg so that the body heat could dry them out more quickly.

Regiments temporarily lost much of their individual identities when they were amalgamated as numbered battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The identity of these new battalions was recorded when each posed at camp before embarking overseas for one of the wide panoramic photographs of the day. Formed

up, complete with the band on one side and field officers astride their horses, the photograph shows the battalion, as many as a thousand strong, ready to embark.

Each of the men in these early photographs was a volunteer. To volunteer was more than just patriotism. For many young men, it was what they felt they had to do. The first contingent of 30,000 men had volunteered very quickly and it was common to see men in uniform. Private Neil D. Milne of the 147th Grey. Owen Sound Battalion. C.E.F. in a letter from Camp Niagara, dated May 21, 1916 wrote that "Last winter in Elmwood we used to run to the window to see a soldier on the street and now down here it is just as odd to see a civilian."

Sometimes it was the untimely death of a friend or acquaintance that compelled a man to volunteer. L/Cpl Herbert Mills in his personal recollections of 1915 recalled that-  
About that time. I received a letter from a friend of mine who worked as I did for the G.W. Rly [Great Western Railway] in London, England. She told me her brother Charlie had been killed in action at Lille. I decided I ought to enlist not stay here and do nothing."

Often, enlisting was done with friends. To enlist meant a young man had to move away from home and family, many for the first time. To enlist with friends meant that one would not be alone. Herbert Mills recalled his enlistment. "I spoke to some of my friends about it and three of us; Fred Bearman, Bill Croft and I went to the armouries and enlisted. We joined with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. They were sending a platoon to Niagara Camp in charge of Lieut. Leckie. At Niagara, two platoons from Hamilton, the other from the 13th Reg. now called the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, were taken into the 58th Infantry Battalion."

But, in spite of your best efforts, you didn't always get to stay with your friends, as Army life quickly took over. Private Neil D. Milne told in his letter what happened to him. "Rufus Pearce and I were going to bunk together and had a good bunch picked out to sleep in one tent but just as we were getting nicely settled Mr. Morrison our platoon commander called two of us out to take charge of other tents & the one he gave me has a bunch of rubes in it. There are nine of us in one and we can scarcely turn around."

Oh, it was crowded. And guns, you had guns in there as well as yourself. All your equipment, everything that belonged to you was in that tent. In the morning you

took your blankets out. You had three blankets for each man. You had to fold blankets on the grass in the sun, if the sun was out.

Lance Corporal Herbert A. Mills  
58th Infantry Battalion, C.E.F.

During the day each man's kit was piled neatly, in geometrically precise lines, in front of his own tent. The tent's side walls were rolled up to provide ventilation. When the men were on duty, the tent lines were empty except for the picquet detailed to patrol the lines. The men's personal belongings were kept safe by this simple expedient of keeping them always in full view.

There was one line where belongings might be thought to have been extra safe. The 76th Battalion had a special mascot.

We had a bear down there. He was a, what was it they called that thing you keep with a battalion, or football field, something like that? Sort of a goat, or something like that. A mascot. The 76th Battalion had a bear as a mascot, and they kept it in the loose lines. We were very new back then. We wouldn't pet that bear, or go past it because we didn't trust that bear.

There was no privacy with six to nine men in a tent, sleeping on wooden floor boards, feet to the tent pole, and head to the outside. They slept "toe to pole", with personal belongings, equipment and rifles stored wherever there was room. All aspects of camp life were shared. But when it rained sharing became very difficult.

It was always damp, and everything else. We never bothered about that ... Well, you know, we didn't get much rain that year really . We had to stay in the tents because of the rain, and you don't like that at all because packed in, when you're not sleeping... (once you get to sleep you don't give a darn, you know) .. . you get to fighting when you're a big bunch in the tent out of the rain

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

Units at Camp Niagara in 1915, included three Artillery Batteries, a Company of Field Engineers, a Divisional Cycle Depot, a Machine Gun Battalion, twelve Infantry Battalions and a Provisional School of Infantry. The Canadian Permanent Army Service Corps was there , as was an Army Service Corps Overseas Training Depot, a

Troops Supply Column and a Mechanical Transport Training Depot. Lance Corporal Mills' Battalion was camped in bell tents just west of River Road, north of Paradise Grove. Other battalions were camped over the whole of the Common, and on what is now the golf course at Fort Mississauga. Officers from the Mississauga or Lake Common were billeted at the Oban Inn, just down the road.



Google Map of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

There were sections of the Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) at Camp Niagara. Overseas sections of these units left at the conclusion of the summer camp to complete their training in England.

The passing of the day at camp can be summed up quickly. Reveille was at 5:30 during the war years. Roll call was at 6:00 a.m. They washed and shaved outdoors in cold water. Private Neil D. Milne wrote "Then we can wash & shave or clean our shoes & be ready for breakfast at seven. We get bacon and beans & bread & butter for breakfast ... We fall in for duties at eight and have dinner at twelve...meat & potatoes for dinner. We parade again at two & drill till four thirty. Supper at six... bread & butter & jam... roll call at 9:30 at night & everybody has to be in at ten and lights out at 10:15, so you see we don't lose much time."

After the day's work was done and provided he had no extra duties, a soldier was quite often free to go into town. But the rules had to be followed no matter where one was based, or there were consequences. Herbert Mills wrote about this aspect of military life. "We could go up town after supper if we had any money but had to be in bed by ten p.m. lights out always at 10:15 p.m. The boys had learned by now that they had to keep these hours or be confined to barracks. A few might be out late and did 10 days C.B. [Confined to Barracks] for it."

And the bugles gave you all the orders. You didn't get any worded order but you knew what the bugle meant and you did what it meant. You had every light out by 10:15 o'clock, cause if you didn't,



those tents showed up a light as easy ... It was just  
candles... We didn't use them much because,  
mostly, when we were in our tents it was time to go  
flop...

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

And even in May, it could be cold in bed. "We get three blankets & a rubber sheet &  
it has been so cold that one guy and I doubled up & put two blankets under us & four  
over us. He is on guard to-night and I will get all his blankets to-night" wrote Milne.

The rifles the men had were the Canadian-made Ross Rifle which was  
manufactured through three marks and eighty variations.

It was a good marksman rifle but it was way  
too long, got caught in everything, barbed wire,  
when you 're trying to get along in a trench in the  
dark and the top of your rifle would catch the barbed  
wire all the time...Every corner you turned you'd  
catch them. It was a nuisance. It was a good  
enough rifle but it took more handling... You know  
the Lee Enfield was way better.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

It was an accurate rifle, but not reliable under trench warfare conditions. The Infantry Training manual for the Canadian Militia, 1915 described the Ross Rifle and its care. "The Ross Rifle is the soldier's best friend on service. Treat it as such in peace. Avoid all rough treatment." In the trenches, the chief complaint was that the rifles became jammed with the mud, and the men had to use their feet to move the bolt. The Lee Enfield was considered to be more rugged under combat conditions. It is little wonder that under combat conditions at the Front men "traded" their Ross rifles for something better.

Oh yes, I picked up a Lee Enfield as soon as I could. There were several rifles lying around you know, in the bathroom. You run across the rifles. I picked up the first Lee Enfield that was available.

L/Cpl Herben A. Mills

Camp Niagara had some training trenches patterned after the trenches used in France. The most elaborate were on the Common and featured barbed wire, look outs and connecting passages. There were trenches on the Lake Common too; where the golf course is now, and the outlines of these trenches can still be seen today.

Well our trenches were by the Niagara River...

They were very good trenches ... They didn't get knocked down... No, because we threw a bomb at certain places only. We couldn't throw a bomb anywhere we wanted to. Pretty dangerous game anyway.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

Bayonets were part of the armament of the day, and the men practised bayoneting straw dummies to learn the proper technique: "On Guard, Right Parry, Left Parry, The Point and Shorten Arms".

Physical training was held in the still-damp grass before breakfast. They fell in for duties at eight a.m. There were lectures on military deportment and when and how to salute their superiors. Other ranks had to be able to salute with both the right and left hands, using the arm furthest away from the approaching officer. The officer returned the courtesy with a right handed salute.

There was basic foot drill to learn how to march in step, to turn or halt as one, or to Form-Two Deep or Form-Fours. And you had to know when to Mark Time to paces so that others might gain their proper positions.

Well, you'd number off first. Call the right number, "Form Fours Right", "Advance in Fours from the Right", "Form Fours-Right", "Quick March" . Then you're going in fours, you see, and when you formed a platoon, at the end you say "At Halt on the left. Form Platoon It. or whoever is in charge says that. And you have to "Mark Time" . "If the odd number don't mark time two paces, how the Hell can the rest form a platoon?" That was a song we used to sing. The song helped you remember. And you had to "Mark Time- two paces if you were an odd number, because otherwise the other fellow couldn't get in place.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

The soldiers were taught how to throw the Mills Bomb (a grenade) and even how to make a hand grenade from a tin can. Signallers practiced communicating with flags and heliograph, in semaphore and morse, using methods no longer safe in trench warfare. Later photographs show the signallers at Camp Niagara laying wire and working with field telephones as it was done overseas. In one instance, the men established communication very quickly. Instead of laying wire in the prescribed fashion, they had attached the telephones to the wire fence at the edge of the field. While officially reprimanded for such an unorthodox method, they were later privately commended for their ingenuity.

The Medical Officer was responsible for the men's health and inspected the lines each day, reporting to the camp commandant. Garbage and horse droppings were removed daily. Drainage ditches were maintained to prevent pooling of stagnant water. Springs wells and streams in the area were tested for potability and sometimes found to be polluted. Camp orders forbade drinking any water except camp water supplied from the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Camp Laboratory Unit monitored the water quality and effected the chlorination of the town water and the purification of the river water by means of an ultra-violet purification system. The water was first filtered and then, as one wag put it, "ultra violated" it to render it safe for washing and drinking.

The camp Stationary Hospital was located in one of the early buildings on the site of Fort George. The restored Navy Hall served the laboratory Unit and the Dental Corps with its six-chair clinic. Prior to embarkation, men were given their vaccinations and inoculations there on assembly line basis with men walking in the door at one end and walking out the door at the other end. A whole battalion could be treated in a few hours.

Bathing Parade was normally held once a week and even in the colder weather when the breeze blowing past the officers ' quarters suggested that the other ranks were becoming a little rank, a special parade was held.

Every week we went for a bathing parade in the lake. There was always about a thousand [men] at least. We never had anything on. It was beautiful. It's way better than having a wet [bathing] suit on.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

The men were marched to the lake for bathing even as late as the end of October. On one occasion, when the men had completed a bath parade and while still undressed the officer in charge laughed, albeit good naturedly at the shivering men. The men took umbrage and just as good naturedly threw the fully clothed officer into the lake. While the men dressed in dry clothing for the march back to camp, the officer had to march back in his wet uniform.

The men were lectured on the proper care of the feet. Foot Parades were held and each man's feet were examined for blisters, athlete's foot, or ingrown toenails. Once overseas and in the wet trenches, there was the risk of trench foot. According to the 1915 Infantry Training Manual of the Canadian Militia "The real cause of sore feet are ill fitting boots and socks, combined with uncleanness." The feet were to be washed at least once a day, or if this was impossible, to be wiped over, especially around the toes, with a damp cloth. Socks when taken off were to be stretched, well shaken and placed on opposite feet when next worn. A handful of salt in the footbath water was the recommended treatment for tender feet.

The men also received lectures on the sexual aspects of personal hygiene and disease prevention. This was particularly important as there was at that time still no effective treatment of venereal disease. And periodically there was a special parade known colloquially as the short arm inspection.

I think it was every month they had a doctor's examination, and you'd line up. You'd line up about 100 men, with nothing on. None of them got a stitch on, and they go by the doctor and he'd examine them very closely.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

A very graphic film showing the results of unwise activity was shown.

But that *Damaged Goods* picture was a pip.

It just showed you so plainly everything that happened.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

Homosexuality was not tolerated by the army or by the men.

We got a homosexual and he was discharged. They really put him through it ... Well, he was discharged, dishonourably. And they threw him in the tank, the horse trough. When he got all his clothes on, they gave him a civilian suit to go home with, a bunch of guys got a hold of him, slit his suit and threw him in the horse trough and he was all soaking wet.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

The men's spiritual needs were not neglected. Church Parade was held at Camp Niagara on Sundays. On occasion the men would march to a local church for a service, but with as many as , 10,000 men on parade, this was impractical. It was



more convenient to have more than one service with fewer men attending each. In the open air, the men formed a Hollow Square (U-shaped fashion) with the regimental drums stacked at the open end forming the altar.

Pocket-sized song books including a hymnal were part of every soldier's kit. Hymns were sung to the accompaniment of the Regimental Band. Onward Christian Soldiers was a favourite.

Because most of the battalions at Camp Niagara were infantry the weekly route marches were of paramount importance. The end of the week was the time for route marches which increased in length as the men were toughened up. Eventually, the march would take the men the ten miles to Queenston Heights, where they would rest for a couple of hours before marching back. A wagon followed the parade to pick up those who became ill or incapacitated.

Soft drinks were available, and a coffee tent was set up at Queenston. Meals were brought from the camp to feed as many as, 10,000 men.

Eight months earlier, in October, 1915, there had been a special route march from Camp Niagara, known as The Great Trek. This was the last route march from Camp Niagara for these men. It was the first stage of the long trip overseas. Beginning on October 25th, 1915, one battalion left for Toronto each day for eleven days. (Divisional Cyclists, Engineers, Army Service Corps and Medical Personnel left by special train from Camp Niagara on October 25<sup>th</sup>.) The route from Camp Niagara at Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto covered eighty-seven miles, lengthened by detours around those parts of Lakeshore Road under construction. The march to Toronto was accomplished in six easy stages of twelve to nineteen miles each day. The march took six days to complete, or seven days if a battalion were on the road on a Sunday, for "hostilities" ceased from 10 p .m. on Saturdays to 8 a.m. on Mondays. The first battalion to leave was the 37th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, which left on Monday, October 25, 1915. Herbert Mills' battalion, the 58th Infantry Battalion, left the next day, Tuesday, October 26.

The highway was a dirt road. We took more than half of it marching in fours. There were no cars. We passed very little here and there a farmer's wagon, but I think they got off the highway for us as we frightened the horses.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

The men carried full equipment, rifles (but no ammunition) bayonets, overcoat, two blankets and a rubber sheet, sixty to seventy pounds in all. It was quite a march on the dirt roads. There were no paved highways at all.

Dirt roads, every one of them and the dust. We kicked up such a dust with thousands of men marching. You couldn't tell your own pal's face because of the sweat and the dust caked on his face ... But we had a wonderful time on that march.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

The weather was good that autumn. There was no rain to turn the roads to mud. And the good weather meant that the men were able to rest comfortably during their short breaks. At the village of Fruitland, the men received a rare treat.

We will never forget Fruitland. We lay at the side of the road and had our meal and as we were resting afterwards, all kinds of girls came along with pies and everybody got a slice. They were lovely girls and the boys all treated them like ladies which they were. Almost angels to us. Our faces were caked with dust and we must have appeared strange to them.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

Much of the route paralleled the tracks of the Hamilton, Grimsby and Beamsville Electric Railway and the Hamilton Radial Electric Railway. The Dominion Power and Transmission Company Limited issued special train orders to assist officers on the march by transporting injured soldiers to the camps and hospitals along the route. Bulletin No 123, dated October 20th, 1915 stated that "Trainmen are herewith instructed to stop on the signal of any Officer and pick up any soldiers who may desire transportation, accepting a note from the Officer on the spot for their fare. Should any Officer give a 'Stop' signal between our regulation stops, motormen will stop and pick up between regular stops.

Train conductors were also instructed in making ambulance arrangements for incapacitated soldiers. Provisions were made even for the charter of a whole train if necessary.

The first night of the march was spent in the armouries at St. Catharines, Ontario. Other camps were at Grimsby, where the men slept in the open, Hamilton armouries where the march hospital was located, Merton (Bronte), Port Credit, and then the Exhibition Grounds at Toronto, Ontario.

We slept in fields beside the road near Bronte and  
Port Credit. A lot of us had to go on duty after

supper till morning; 2 hours on and 4 hours off.  
Guard mostly but some fatigue details. At Toronto,  
our battalion was billeted in the Poultry Building. It  
was all clean but smelt pretty bad. We got used to it  
and didn't notice it after a few days.

L/Cpl Herbert A. Mills

But others must have noticed it, for as L/Cpl Mills said, "We smelled lovely." From there, after a few weeks, the battalions embarked for Canada's east coast, then to England.

There was a tragedy at Queenston Heights in the summer of 1916, when 10,000 men were on a routine route march from Camp Niagara. It was a full-scale exercise, with individual battalions marching with the proper spacing between, with scouts out to the side and in the vanguard ahead, climbing over fences and underbrush to ferret out any enemy that could threaten the mass of troops. Signallers were in communication with one another, with Queenston Heights, and with the camp at Niagara.

The men had been resting at Queenston Heights enjoying their coffee and as some of the battalions began to form up, a severe electrical storm hit. Lightning struck the coffee tent, injuring a number of men. One man was killed, two were thought to have

lost their eyesight, and forty-eight others were injured. One man was finishing his coffee when he was struck unconscious for a while. Upon waking, he found he could not move. Fortunately, he regained control of his limbs. Some of the injured were badly burned when the summer straw hats they were wearing burst into flame. Ambulances, including horse drawn and motorized vehicles, with medical corps personnel and nursing sisters, responded from Camp Niagara. The men were treated on site, and the more seriously injured transported to hospital at Camp Niagara. The following day, a Saturday, was declared a holiday, and the men who had participated in that route march were excused from all non-essential duty.

## **The Polish Army**

There was to be quite a different group embark later from Camp Niagara for the European front, for in 1917, the scarlet and blue uniforms of the nineteenth century were again worn at Camp Niagara the men of what was --- to be known as the Polish Army. Khaki was unavailable; they were issued with dress uniforms.

The recruits wore a strange mixture of uniforms.

Perhaps the most distinctive part of it, in fact, was the hat. The trainees would tend to wear, when they weren't wearing the Polish forage cap, a Canadian militia straw hat which was so fragile in militia days

that it would last the life of a summer camp. But the officers, of course, would wear a uniform that was distinctly Polish, though with French influence.

Hugh Halliday  
Senior Curator of Collections/Research  
Canadian War Museum  
Ottawa, Ontario

Poland did not exist as an independent country at that time, and had not existed for one hundred and twenty-five years, having been partitioned among Prussia, Russia and Austria. But the Western allied determined that Poland should participate in the Great War as an entity in its own right.

During the First World War, there were several Polish leaders who were organizing the fight for independence of the Polish State ... Because of the large number of Polish immigrants in the States; they thought that the main source of the recruits would be coming from the North American continent, and there was quite a bit of propaganda made here among the Polish immigrants in the United States to

join the ranks of the Polish Army, and to fight on the  
Allied part for the independence of their beloved  
land.

Dr. Andrzej M. Garlicki  
Captain, Polish Combatant's Association  
Ottawa. Ontario

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1917, twenty-three Polish men were sent to the School of Infantry in Toronto, Ontario to qualify as officers. The classes continued to grow, and by the summer of 1917, approximately one-hundred and fifty Polish Probationers were stationed at Camp Borden, Ontario. On June 4, 1917, France's President Poincare authorized the formation, within the French Army, of an autonomous Polish Army.

In the multinational scheme that evolved. Polish recruits from Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland. New York and other centres in the United States of America were to be trained in Canada by Canadian and Polish officers.<sup>2</sup> Elementary instruction was given in British drill with commands in English and Polish. After a short period at Camp Niagara, the recruits would embark for France for their advanced training. The costs were paid by France.

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<sup>2</sup> Only 221 members of the Polish force came from Canadian cities.



Lieutenant Colonel Arthur D'Orr LePan, then thirty-two, was detailed to command the Polish Army Camp served as Camp Commandant until the camp was closed in March 1919.

As Officer Commanding, School of Infantry, M.D. '2, I was rather startled as you may well imagine to receive, early in 1917 in Toronto, instructions from headquarters to receive a class of Polish boys from the United States to be trained as officers. This strange order was filled by the arrival of 23 recruits. That class was qualified and disappeared into the unknown from whence it had come. Classes in increasing numbers then came to the school till in the summer of 1917 at Camp Borden we had about 1 50 Polish Probationers in training for officers. Then on September 24th, 1917 came an equally illuminating communication instructing the School of Infantry staff to move to Niagara to take charge of a Polish Army Camp to be established there. Of this camp no information could be obtained as to numbers or duration.

Remarks of lieutenant Colonel LePan  
Commandant. Polish Army, Camp Niagara  
at Banquet given by National Polish Department  
Buffalo, N.Y., March 4, 1919

The impending arrival of these men apparently caused some concern among the townsfolk of Niagara-on-the-Lake, for they did not know how these young men would behave.

And one old lady expressed very generally the sentiments of the population when she said "Oh My God, these fellows will murder us in our beds & but fortunately before a protest could be made, the foreign invasion had taken place and the people at Niagara-on-the-Lake, while at first sceptical, now speak most openly and enthusiastically of the conduct of these men. Never before, they say, has there been such a quiet and such an orderly camp in that historic place.

L/Col. A. D. LePan

Over the next two years 22,395 men arrived at Camp Niagara, or as they called it. honouring a Polish hero, Camp Kosciuzsko. The first draught of recruits failed to arrive as scheduled, and Lieutenant-Colonel LePan's personal diary describes many non-arrivals and non-embarkations and the consequent frustrations in scheduling the Michigan Central Railroad troop trains.

The volunteers from all over the United States came to Buffalo, Polish Dubporski, they called it.

They stayed there overnight and they sent them on the next. One day they came in, the next day they came into camp. Niagara-on-the-Lake. And it was going like this for months and months.

Josef Ziolkowsky  
The Polish Army  
North Tonawanda, New York

When LePan arrived at Camp Niagara, there had not been any winter occupants since 1867, and much work had to be done. Four two-storey huts were built to accommodate twelve hundred men. By November, 3,779 men were in camp and accommodation for these men had to be found. Hotels, warehouses, and canning factories were used, rent free, that first winter so that they would not have to live in tents. Sewer and water lines throughout the camp had to be lowered to keep them from freezing. This work was done by the recruits. Water and electricity were supplied without cost by the town.

The men trained there for approximately four weeks and then embarked for New York for further training, and thence to France. One of the first drafts sailed on a ship appropriately named Niagara.

Josef Ziolkowski was underage when he arrived at camp. Rather than being allowed to proceed overseas, he was held back and became the camp barber. But when he was eighteen years of age, a year after he had arrived at Camp Kosciuszko, his pride and determination were fulfilled.

I met a guy from Poland. He was a volunteer from Warsaw. He was a good guy, a smart guy, you know. You know how the people from the big city are. He was my best friend. And he said, "What are you going to do in the army here and what are you going to be? You have your barber trade, (but) that's no soldier. Why don't you tell your captain that you want to go to Poland." He convinced me and I quit the barber (trade) and I went to Poland...

Josef Ziolkowsky

The health of the recruits was of major concern. Upon arrival, each recruit was examined by officers of the Canadian Medical staff in accordance with French medical

requirements. Generally, the recruits were physically robust and their health in camp was very good.

The Polish Army at Camp Niagara did not escape the ravages of the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918 which took so many Canadian lives. Twenty-four of the Polish Army's deaths at Camp Niagara were attributed to this epidemic. Many of those who died are buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery at Niagara-on-the-lake, and these deaths are commemorated on Polish Sunday each spring. Arising from this epidemic, a Court of Inquiry was convened to examine the hospital's dietary costs as these were deemed to be too high. The Court found that the costs were high because the camp's medical staff had been unstinting in their care of the ill.

The American Red Cross sisters from branches in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, New York travelled regularly to Camp Niagara with their motor ambulances to distribute comfort kits, soap, socks and tobacco. A "Service Station" was established in camp for use by relatives visiting the recruits. Lieutenant-Colonel LePan was able to assist many relatives to be admitted to Canada by Customs and Immigration officials to visit at Camp Niagara.

The camp hosted a number of distinguished visitors, including the Duke of Devonshire, General Sir James Willcocks , and Countess Laura Turozynowicz. On Tuesday, August 13, 1918, the Governor General of Canada was the distinguished visitor. Lieutenant Colonel LePan noted in his diary on Tuesday, August 13, 1918, "In morning at 10:30 hold review of about 1050 Polish troops for H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught. He was accompanied by Lieut. General Sir William Pulteney; Major, the Earl of Pembroke & Montgomery; Captain, the Master of Sinclair; Capt. Kenyon Stanley and Capt. Batt. We had the Royal Salute, a March Past and then H.R.H. spoke to the officers. I call for three cheers for H.R.H. and then the men sing the Polish National Hymn. Prior to the March Past, H.R.H. inspected the front rank. The men were very steady and he seemed impressed, and said they were a fine body of men."

Perhaps the visitor most important to the men was Ignace Jan Paderewski, the world-celebrated musician who gave so much to the cause of Poland and who became that country's leader. Paderewski was accorded the honour of a March Past.

For their work with the Polish Army. Lieutenant-Colonel LePan and his Camp Adjutant, Major C.R. Young were invested with the Order of Polonia Restituta. Camp

Niagara-on-the-Lake was remembered fondly, by the men of the Polish Army, and wherever in Europe they were billeted, they named a street for Niagara. And the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake are still remembered fondly by the last Polish Army veteran in the New York state area.

But in Canada, it was just like having good parents, you know. The Canadian people were wonderful and they are wonderful now. The Canadians welcomed us like brothers ..

Josef Ziolkowsky

Much of the activity of this singular experience of a foreign army training for an extended period at Camp Niagara was portrayed by C.W. Jefferys, a noted Canadian artist and illustrator of Canadian history books. Mr. Jeffreys was appointed as a War Artist and part of those duties was to illustrate the daily activities of the Polish Army.

It goes back to the Canadian War Memorials Fund which was, among other things, an art program run by Lord Beaverbrook. Lord Beaverbrook, knowing nothing about art, had delegated this responsibility of this art program to others who knew something about art, including in Canada, Sir Edmund Walker who was a Director of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Walker, in turn, consulted with C.W. Jefferys in 1917 as to the possible choice of Canadian artists to paint the war effort in Canada. And finally

Jeffreys himself was brought personally into the program in the spring of 1918. Precisely how it was done, or on what terms, I'm not certain. But he did have a mandate to visit and sketch and paint three different locations; Camp Pettawawa, Camp Niagara, and the RAF training facilities at the University of Toronto.

He seems to have picked out whatever seemed to be the main activity that was going on there at any particular time ... He did many studies of the officers in their uniforms and of recruits marching back and forth. or bathing . There seems to be no particular theme in the sense that one could invent a story. If it was going on, he would sketch it.

Hugh Halliday

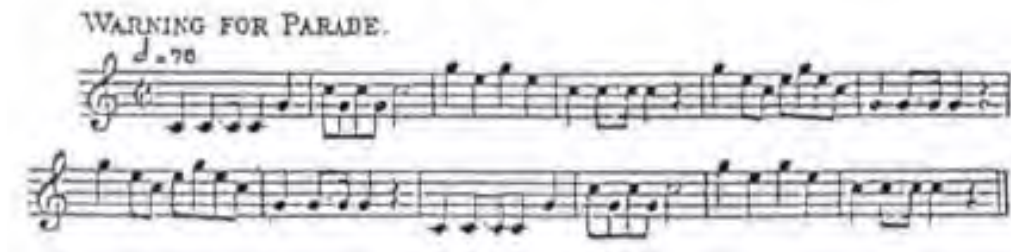
He sketched and painted the life of the officers and recruits as he saw it; whether it was marching, musketry, bayonet drill, relaxing, swimming, or writing letters home in the Y.M.C.A. tent. In all of these, he showed the pride and determination of these men in their unique mixture of cast off uniforms.

Although the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, men of the Polish Army continued to be trained at Camp Kosciuszko until the early months of 1919. By that time, Canada's army was coming home.



## CHAPTER III - The Post-War Years

### WARNING FOR PARADE



With the War to End All Wars now over, there began a period of reduced militia activity, and the summer camps at Niagara-on-the-Lake did not resume until 1921. Camp Niagara, with little more than four hundred acres was still considered to be too small to permit adequate training and it could not compare with Camp Sir Sam Hughes in Manitoba, with its more than twenty thousand acres and miles of trenches modelled after those at the Front in Europe.

The few trenches near Paradise Grove at Camp Niagara were gradually filling in, leaving only surface scars. These would disappear over the years as the land was graded and the topography redefined.

During the years between the two wars the militia suffered from lack of financial support much as did the regular army. Support was given to the fledgling air force and

to the navy. The cost of supporting these two services was, by comparison with the army, high. Also during the great depression, the dedicated men of the militia donated much of their time, often turning over to their regiments what little pay they did receive. These funds paid for additional food for the men at camp, or for boots, or for the regimental dances and social activities.

The war had created a great deal of interest in cadet programs whereby young people still in school could be given the rudiments of basic drill and an appreciation of the military command structure. After the war army cadets continued as an active program in these High Schools and private schools, often under the tutelage of teachers who had served in the war. Some of the cadet corps from central Ontario were able to attend summer camp at Camp Niagara. For these young cadets being exposed to army life in the field, some aspects of camp life were quite good, others more memorable for their inadequacies.

I first went as a High School Cadet, at the Georgetown High School in 1921. And they had a very large encampment there of cadets from all over Central Ontario and I particularly remember that they were from Toronto and Hamilton district and it was

quite a camp. Two week affair and we had beautiful hot August weather. You didn't have to have hot water to wash in because the pipes were all up above the ground and the water came out hot and you couldn't get a drink of cold water for love nor money. It was all under canvas, of course, just the way it had been left after World War I and, oh, there's a beautiful swimming beach behind the rifle ranges on the Lake Ontario side of the camp on the other side of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We went there for range practice and there was a swim parade. That was the big event. Four o'clock every afternoon, they took us swimming. We needed it all right after the August sun. We just did battalion drill and things like that, physical training and so on. It would have been a very successful camp except that the catering was about as bad as anything I could ever think of and the last memory I have is the caterer was going over a brick wall on the other side of the camp where the bigger boys chased him. And as far as I know, he hasn't been seen since.

Colonel John R. Barber  
Lorne Scots  
Brampton, Ontario

I think it was the summer of 1929. And I went from the High School at Georgetown and it was a tremendous experience for me. I'd never been away anywhere from home before. The cadet instructor whose name was Kirton was a high school teacher. We had a very sharp Cadet Corps there. And so I was given some spending money. My parents drove me down [to Georgetown] to spend the night with a friend there before taking off. But I spent all that money that night together with my friends, eating banana splits probably. And so we got on the ship in Toronto flat broke.

And it was a side wheeler. Now the name of it I don't recall, but it was a side wheeler with the heavy overhead beams going up and down. And according to the *Times*, it was the heaviest storm in many years. And we arrived at Niagara a very, very sick bunch of boys. Boy, it was really something.

Lieutenant Colonel Horst M. Gandier  
38th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery  
Second Infantry Division

Among the ideas taught to the cadets was the structure of the military chain of command, the manner in which it worked and the privileges of senior rank.

I do remember several things that, of course, I've never forgotten because they got a really good imprint. And I do recall that I never got to be conscious of a rank higher than Sergeant Major. And it was this one person that we saw quite often, who was from the regular army. And he was, I believe, a Regimental Sergeant Major. I noticed every detail about him and his clothing. His uniform was of a much finer texture than any of ours. And he had a very impressive demeanor in every way. And we really felt he must be God Almighty.

L/Col Horst M. Gandier

If the young cadet learned little else, he learned that those who held the exalted rank of Sergeant were equal to any challenge. But he was too young and still too untutored in military management techniques to understand that the Sergeant's success came not from his rank, but from the wisdom and experience he gained acquiring that rank.

We visited the American Fort [Niagara]. I can't remember what it was that started it but for some reason, we got the feeling that we were not wanted. We wanted to get into the fort, into the inside of the place. And I am sure it was open to the

public. But there must have been something wrong with the timing. No matter what we did we couldn't persuade the person at the front to let us go inside. And somebody decided it was because we didn't have enough rank. Not enough influence. And I was rather big for my age. So I was appointed to be the one who was going to be the authority. And there was a visitor's book on the stand and so I was to sign my name. And the highest rank that we could come up with was Sergeant. I was fifteen and a half years old. And I signed my name, H.M. Gandler. I think it was that way, but very definitely Sergeant. I didn't have any stripes up you see. So the lady who was in charge, I think saw through it very plainly. And she got so serious and addressed me as sergeant, and in a very humble way pointed out that I didn't have any stripes on. And it was pointed out that they were at the laundry being laundered. So I haven't forgotten that. But we never did get in.

L/Col Horst M. Gandler

Sometimes the problems arose not from trying to be "grown up", but from appearing to be just that.

At fifteen and a half, a boy can have a lot of adventures at a cadet camp. And I certainly did have some. But this one was unforgettable. Everybody was going to the dance and I was being ridiculed because I wasn't going. I did go and I couldn't dance, so I was scared half stiff. So anyway, I sat on the seats down along the outside. It must have been an (open] pavilion, and a lot of people there. And quite a lot of RCD (Royal Canadian Dragoons) people. And so in the course of events this woman sat down beside me, asked me why I wasn't dancing. And I said, "Well, I don't know how to dance." "Oh", she said, "there's nothing to it." So you know the rest of the conversation. But I didn't try it and she did try several times to get me to do it. And this went on for quite some time. And then there was this very impressive looking (I remember thinking how tall he was) person came up and said something very nasty to her, and turned and walked off. So, I said, "Who's that?" And she said, "Well, that's my husband." Oh boy! Well, anyway, I hadn't done anything wrong, but the next day, I forget how many of us were walking right alongside the Polo Ground ... this man who had come up the night before, came

walking along. And he looked at me and he said "I've been watching you." Oh well, he walked up and I don't remember anything about what the other fellows did. But I just stood there. And he came up and put his fist under my nose and he said something or other about his wife. And I said I didn't know or something like that. I got about that far, and boy, he planted me. Knocked me flat. And I decided to get away out of that place and I went so fast, he couldn't catch me. And he never did. I think he must have been very distraught with other things that had been happening, because I didn't do anything.

L/Col Horst M. Gandier

It is difficult being in a man's uniform in a man's world, learning a man's duties, but being not quite yet a man. Perhaps nothing could make a young fellow appear more a man than a tattoo. If he wanted one, that is, and Mom would tolerate it.



The other thing that I remember well was getting a tattoo. Now, I don't know where those boys came from. I'm not sure where they came from, but they had a tattoo outfit. One of the kind that you punch with your hand. Well, anyway, after lunch people were getting these tattoos. And I knew very well that if I got one of those marks, I'd never get back to another cadet camp. And so, I didn't want one and that was that. But, after lunch, we used to just lie there on the ground in the tent or outside to have a little siesta. Well. I guess that I was asleep, except that I did hear something. I do remember seeing these guys come in the flap of the tent. And before I got to my feet, I was pinned down on my back. And so, I don't even remember how many there were. But they spread eagled me on my back, and one holding my hand down. I got a tattoo on the inside of my right forearm. And if you look at it closely enough, you can make it out that it is a heart with frills and a banner across the front. But they didn't get a name in there because I did manage to get away.

L/Col Horst M. Gandier

It is perhaps just as well that the tattoo job wasn't finished with the name of some alleged sweetheart. For, while Cadet Gandier was at camp that summer, his father had accepted a new ministerial charge in a new town. While trying to find his new family residence, Cadet Gandier sought directions from a young woman who, as it turned out, was the girl next door. This young woman he later married.

Even ordinary everyday problems gave the cadets trouble. Although it had been suggested in the early days that the site had been chosen for its easy availability of drinking water, good tasting and safe water was a problem at Camp Niagara. A testing program was still in effect to determine the potability of the various water sources in and around the camp; and bulletins were issued periodically placing contaminated sources off limits.

We couldn't get drinking water with this hot stuff coming out of the taps so we went over to the old fort, Fort George. And down there is a lovely spring. We took pop bottles and filled up our bottles with this and brought them home. For about a week that went on, and then Saturday came a bulletin saying they found the spring at Fort George was full of contamination and we shouldn't drink the water, that we might get diphtheria or something, whatever you get from water. And that was the end of that. We drank warm water from then on, or tea, whatever you could get.

Col John R. Barber

Over the years, many Canadian universities had contingents of the Canadian Officer Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) in which a student enrolled as a Gentleman Cadet. He received training throughout the academic year and spent a week or two at summer camp where he lived and trained under much the same conditions as the militia. Contingents from the University of Toronto, The University of Western Ontario in London, McGill University in Montreal and Osgoode Hall in Toronto attended at Camp Niagara.

I think there were three hundred at the University of Toronto.

There was a very famous architect by the name of Colonel Madill who commanded the C.O.T.C. contingent. And he had all sorts of volunteer officers, many of them from the First World War. And he had N.C.O.s. I remember one Sergeant who had been in the Indian Army. These were case hardened people who were weapons instructors and this sort of thing. Very knowledgeable about the sort of rifles we had. But you know, the instruction was very good because the idea was to get you to think like a soldier rather than like a student or a civilian. And you wrote War Office examinations in England. You wrote Certificate "A" and Certificate "B". And in the three years, there were two or three hundred people like me passed those examinations and the practical training which was

simple drill and rifle work and map reading and that kind of thing. So it was all very interesting and it was pure volunteer activity.

Major General Bruce Legge  
Toronto. Ontario

Among the many Commandants of Camp Niagara, there were at least three who might be said to hold a particular place in the memory of the residents of Niagara-on-the-lake and of the troops who served under them.

Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur D. LePan served as Camp Commandant of the Polish Army during the Great War and into the early months of 1919. By his concern for his men, and for their families, he earned the respect of the Polish people.

Upon completion of this military service, Brigadier-General Willis J. Moogk, chose to live in Niagara-on-the-Lake upon his retirement.<sup>3</sup> He became part of social fabric of the town, following his interest in the history of the area, writing articles and serving on historical boards in Hamilton and Niagara.

Brigadier-General Oliver Milton Martin is especially well remembered by the men who served under him, both in the 1930s when he was the Officer Commanding the Dufferin Haldimand Rifles, and during the early part of the Second World War as Camp Commandant, 13th Infantry Brigade. Brigadier Martin was remembered by some for the fine figure he presented on his white horse as well as for his superb equitation.

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<sup>3</sup> Brigadier-General Oliver Milton Martin served at Camp Niagara, in the 1930s and into the early months of World War II.

Well, as I recall it, he was quite an early riser. And he would go off on his horse before breakfast. And quite often when I was just barely out of bed, I would see him riding his horse around the countryside. It always impressed me what a beautiful rider he was, and such a lovely horse. He was such a handsome fellow himself, I was extremely impressed.

Hon. James T. Harvey  
Staff Officer, 10th Infantry Brigade  
Nanaimo. British Columbia

Brigadier Martin had a naturally courteous manner about him that earned him the admiration of his colleagues and particularly of his troops. He sincerely appreciated the efforts of others, and took the time to express his appreciation. His niece remembers him well.

Well, to my recollection, he was a man of great stature. He was a leader in the community. From what my mother told us, he joined up when he was seventeen years old as a bugler and from there on, made the army a career. He served in the First World War, but when he came home, he became a teacher in Toronto and, of course, he kept up the military service as well. I would say that I would be about ten or twelve years old when I recall him coming to visit my mother, and

having a chauffeur. As children we were advised that you could be seen but not heard. So when my uncle visited my parents, we were always told to leave the house, to go out and play. Of course, we were always amazed because when he got out of the car, he was dressed in uniform and always came over and spoke to us children ... I can recall on the numerous visits whenever he was in the territory, whether it be for a parade in Brantford, or visit the armouries or come to Hamilton to inspect a group, he always made a point to visit my parents and his mother.

Ms Nina Burnham  
Six Nations Reserve  
Oshwegon. Ontario

His men remembered him well too. Though not all can remember his name, they remember his manner, and they are proud to have known him and to have served under him.

First of all, he was a real impressive person to watch, the way he dressed with his breeches, held his pith helmet and riding his horse. The brigade staff quite often would go out in the camp on their horses, the Major and his Staff Captain. And they were quite a picture. But he seemed to have a way; I guess he'd been a school teacher. He had a way with all the

young fellows, that, I think he was trying to impress this on you. He just said "You're in the army; you don't go and do a lot of stupid things." But he just had a gentle manner about him that, well, certainly left his mark on my life ... He would always come over to speak to you. He always had something nice to say. And he would always wave when he was riding through. And he was just, you know, we'd say, one of the boys. But yet, more than one of the boys. We sort of felt we belonged to him and he belonged to us and we weren't just a bunch of guys out there and that he was the Big Shot. He was a very humble man in my estimation, but a good leader.

Corporal Roy Adams  
Lincoln and Welland Regiment  
St. Catharines, Ontario

Brigadier Martin was a Mohawk of the Turtle Clan from the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. After the war, he served as a magistrate in the Borough of North York, Ontario, where the Royal Canadian Legion named a legion branch in his honour.



Through the years, there were many other men of the First Nations who served at Camp Niagara as officers, NCOs and Other Ranks. There does not appear to have been racial discrimination issues at the camp. Having put on the uniform, a soldier was a soldier and in times of need, had the support of his uniformed comrades. Over the years, soldiers from the First Nations were actively sought for scout duties in the early days and during World War I, they were assigned to this duty in many battalions.

The one act of discrimination that did bother the native soldier was not of the army's making, but was, rather, of civil origin. Having served his country in uniform, whether in active service during wartime, or in the militia, he found it particularly galling upon his return home, that he could not enter a tavern and be served a beer. Because he was an Indian this was still illegal.

A favourite story of mine, of course, was Dr. Gilbert Montour who was in the military [and] was at some military function with royalty. It would have been George VI [in] 1939 when they visited here. But it was on a very special occasion and I mean he did the ultimate faux pas. But you see, he had to do it because of dealing with inequities. "Do you realize, you're giving an Indian a drink. You could be put in prison. I'm going

to have difficulty raising my glass to toast you, because, in a sense, you are committing the ultimate crime. You could be arrested for giving me this drink...”

Tom Hill

There were, however, no restrictions on the progress of native people through the ranks of the army, promotion being based upon performance and ability. Many achieved Non-Commissioned Officer status or commissioned officer rank.

You see, the education on the Six Nations Reserve was much better than, say, [for] Indians living in the most northern areas. So that they did have the education that would permit them to become officers. Because you usually had to have a certain sort of education just to learn the basic skills to fly a plane ... (They] had to have certain sort of background to allow them to advance within the forces. And as I said the men from the Six Nations were able to because of the educational opportunities on the Reserve.

Fred Gaffen  
Canadian War Museum  
Ottawa. Ontario

Perhaps as part of this educational heritage at Six Nations music played a large part in the lives of the people and this was reflected in the relatively large number of bands and musicians from that area. Some of the bands were military bands and served at Camp Niagara.

A summer activity [in which] military soldiers who were musicians got together and went en-masse to Niagara-on-the-Lake and stayed there until September and did whatever they had to do in terms of a military band . . . I don't have the actual date, but it was interesting to find one picture that says 1910, but I understand they may even have gone off to camp earlier . . . My grandfather who taught cornet players on the Reserve said he remembers having to teach someone who wanted to go off to camp and this was at the turn of the century". This was the Tuscarora Indian Band, but I understand there were a number of bands from the Reserve in the 1900s. You probably had about five bands.

Tom Hill

Year after year the same men (for bandsmen seemed never to retire) climbed into the back of a truck for the trip to camp.

My father always played the bass drum. He was a member of the Six Nations Brass Band... Now whether the band from Six Nations went to Camp Niagara is something that I do not recall. He could have because there were a number of times that the band travelled to various areas and they always went in the back end of a truck with their instruments so they could have gone to Camp Niagara ... My dad played with the Brass Band for a number of years, in fact, right up until he was unable to walk, so I'd say he was in the Brass Band for fifty years.

Ms Nina Burnham

The Six Nations people closely identified with Camp Niagara over the years, considering themselves to be separate nations with a strong historic allegiance to the crown, and even in the days of conscription (from which they were exempt), they chose to volunteer and serve in many of the regiments and battalions training at Camp Niagara. Men such as John Doublehill who, like many in the militia and active service forces, enlisted while still underage.

One in particular that always stood out because, that was the tale, he joined the military when he was only sixteen and lied about his age... Of course when they found out that he was, indeed, younger, they didn't kick him out of the military, but they gave him the duties of stable boy or looking after the horses, but not going to the front. But he did eventually go up to the front, much later when he got older.

Tom Hill

There were many models for the young native men in the 1920s and 1930s, men like Captain Alexander Smith who had served as an Adjutant with the Polish Army.

He was from the Six Nations and had been a member of the 20th Battalion. He was able to become an officer. He (was decorated] for conspicuous gallantry in action on the Somme. There he had proceeded with a party of bombers and captured an enemy trench and fifty prisoners. And although twice buried by the mud from exploding shells, he stuck to his post. He'd been wounded three times and he was a highly decorated

individual, and as I said, awarded the Military Cross. And when he returned to Canada, he was made Adjutant of the Polish Training Battalion there at Niagara-an-the-Lake.

After the war, he continued on this leadership role as a Chief of the Six Nations... But his claim to fame is not really himself. It's really his son Harry Smith. Of course, no one ever heard of Harry Smith, but they had heard of someone called Jay Silverheels, and if you hadn't heard of Jay Silverheels, people had heard of the Lone Ranger's faithful Indian Scout and companion, Tonto.

Fred Gaffen

It wasn't just the radio heroes who had to be able to ride horses, for horses continued to play a big part at Camp Niagara until just before the Second World War. Throughout the army, Field Officers in each regiment had to qualify in equitation, and the early photographs of various regiments show the troops formed up in their ranks with the field officers on their mounts.

I was supposed to take equitation. You had to be able to ride a horse in order to qualify for a Major. You couldn't be a Field Officer until you could ride a horse. So each year at camp, and

I got up close to the Major business, they, the RCDs, put on a ride for these officers and they did for two camps in a row and both times I was made Officer of the Day. I had to go out and inspect the rations, inspect the food and inspect everything. I should have been out riding the horse. What they used to do, they'd take them at three o'clock when the RCDs were finished their training. They'd say, "All you candidates come over here" and put them on a horse and they'd walk them down the road toward Fort George and along the side road. And when they got to about the trees at Paradise Grove, time for the horses to be fed, they'd blow "Stables". The bugle call was "Stables". Those horses just went like that, and if you could stay on 'til you got to the stable, you qualified. That was the test. The horses knew exactly when it was time for food and they went home, if you were lucky enough to stay with them. I never got that chance so my promotion to Major was held back a couple of years.

Col John R. Barber

Even Medical Officers had to pass the equitation test.

Now the last time I was there was just before the war. As a matter of fact I think it was the June before war was declared... and that was the year that they decided all Medical Officers had to be

passed, have their equitation. Well Jeez, I was a qualified Cavalry Officer, but no, I had to... So I paraded over to the headquarters compound, and they gave me a nice big horse, good size horse, too. And I went to mount on it and I put one foot in the stirrup and I landed back about ten feet. And I got up and I said, "Hold that beast's head down", and they held it down, and I virtually jumped into the saddle and they let it go and off we went. We went through Paradise Grove. I'm ducking under trees and things like that and he was going full tilt and he began to get a bit tired. And so I gave him some leather and I pulled him up and turned him around, oh the other side of where, just about the foot of Brock's Monument, that far. He was a good horse... We got back and as I pulled up in front, there was Colonel Greer, "Speedy" Greer, and Major Cameron sitting on the compound 's verandah, laughing. And I got off and Sergeant Major Stagg came up and took the horse. And I said, "How many times has this horse been ridden?" And he says, "Twice, Sir. However that was last year."... Yeah, they gave me my qualification all right.

Dr, Magnus Spence  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Toronto, Ontario



Dr. Spence was the Supernumerary Medical Officer of the Governor General's Body Guard which amalgamated with the Mississauga Horse to become the Governor General's Horse Guard.

When I first went over to Niagara Camp, I was a Trooper. We were in tents and we had horses which we were trained on, and the horses were not the best horses in the world. Most of them came from the Indian Reserve up around Brantford. And there were a lot of "Shoeless Joes" in the horses that came, but we got along fine and dandy.

Dr. Magnus Spence

Horses for the cavalry were rented from the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. This was an annual event which added to the family income, a particularly desirable happening in the years of the depression.

I guess from oral tradition, that certain people were designated within the community to collect these horses. I guess for a fee or for rental, these were taken down to the Camp Niagara to participate in the exercises ... I would suspect that they would be mostly work horses, because you have to remember Six Nations

would indeed be a farming community, but you would have drivers as well. .. A particular family who had wonderful democrats and buggies and quite elegant horses who pulled these democrats and buggies, and these people were quite spiffy dressers And the comment was how would you get this particular family to always send their horses to Niagara because they would object to the care, or what they thought was going to be the care of these horses at the particular camp. So this family was almost *persona non grata* because they refused to participate and became not very good loyal citizens of the community.

Tom Hill

Each cavalry squadron had a farrier sergeant to oversee the wellbeing of the horses. If, when grooming his horse a Trooper found something amiss, he reported it to the farrier sergeant for treatment. The farrier sergeant also had significant responsibility in the transportation of the horses to and from Camp at Niagara.

As a Farrier Sergeant, the first job I had to do was to go to the Six Nations reservation. We had to bring them over in cable cars and that was really a nerve wracking deal because you had to put them head to tail. Fill the car up and the last two you put in there, you had a heck of a time getting out. You had to go over the backs of the last two to get [out] of the car.

Ferrier Sergeant Harris  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Sudbury, Ontario

The horses were supposed to have been halter broken, but not all of them were. It was, therefore, up to the advance Roughrider Party to determine which horses had been broken and were immediately suitable for the training of new recruits.

Well I first went to Camp Niagara in 1933, which was the year in which I got my commission on my eighteenth birthday. The old Governor General's Body Guard, and I had 2nd Troop, C Squadron at the time, and J.W. Eaton, Jack Eaton, had 1<sup>st</sup> Troop. And we were sent over because we both had slightly more riding ability than the average cavalry officer in the regiment at that time. We were sent over with our sergeants to Camp Niagara in advance of the regiment, to attempt to mount and grade and separate the two hundred odd Indian ponies that were sent to us ... So the four of us considered to be roughriders, tried to mount and ride each of the horses. Some of them threw themselves right down on the ground and refused to get up again. Some of them were ride able.

Colonel Allan Burton  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Milton, Ontario

Some horses were hardly broken at all and the troopers had about all they could handle in getting the horse's cooperation. It is one thing for a horse to be used to pulling a buggy or wagon and quite another to suffer the indignity of being suddenly saddled with an unaccustomed weight on the back. With its own weight and strength, the horse was quite capable of making its displeasure known.

I was saying the horses were supposedly halter broken. We had one horse there and we had trouble getting near him so Sergeant Major Bill Huggett and I were holding the head of the horse, one on each side, and one of the Corporals put the saddle blanket on, put the saddle on and he went to girth him up. The horse was still acting up. Got him girthed up all right, surcingle nice and tight, puts his foot in the stirrup and the horse goes straight in the air. There were Bill and me swinging like pendulums, 'til that horse decided he was going to come down. So as soon as he came down, we let his head go and Charlie was off in the "back forty" in nothing flat. We had many a laugh over that.

Sergeant Jim Valance  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Toronto, Ontario

Some troopers had better luck with their mounts.

This big horse that I'd happened to draw was one of these newcomers and I proceeded to take him into a local field that had grown very high with white clover. There I had him blindfolded with a scarf. Then I saddled him and proceeded to mount him. Then the boys stuck the side of the horse to see what he would do. Well, surprisingly, he wasn't too bad. He was as dumbfounded as I was and he didn't act up very much and so in short order, I had the blindfold off him and he performed quite sensibly under my command in riding and he joined the regular ranks in the horse lines without any trouble.

Trooper Carl Lewis  
Governor General's Horse Guard  
Toronto, Ontario

Working with a horse took some understanding of the physics of the horse's legs and his ability to kick when offended. Certain techniques had to be employed to immobilize the horse when examining the hooves or when removing a stone from the frog.

You had to be very careful how you lifted the hind legs of the horse. You had to run your hand down the horse's back, along the belly and just get inside the thigh there and extend the leg out with your knee bent, so that you're taking most of the strain of his weight, and at the same time, if you've got him extended like that, he can 't kick.

With this horse Shasta, the young lad was afraid to pick up her hooves because she was a Son of a Gun for kicking and I played around with her front legs and started on her back, gradually came down the belly, under the thigh and as I reached straighten her leg out, she pulled it forward so quickly that I ended up in the centre of the aisle. And the Sergeant Major who was in headquarters saw me coming out of there. He says, "Who told you to run out of there. Valance?" He says, "You know better than that." I say, "I didn't run out, was kicked out." We got a lot of calls like that wasn't hurt, just had the imprint on my backside for a couple of days.

Sgt. Jim Valance

Horses had to be looked after and their special fears attended to. But all the while, one had to be conscious of their strength and their bulk.

You had your guard duty at night. Well this one night in particular, there was a storm coming up and the horses started getting jittery. And I went over to one in particular, and I got hold of his halter and pulled his head down. He lunged forward and the first thing I know is he's standing on my foot with his leg stiff.

Well you have the damndest time imaginable to try and get a horse to move his foot once he's got his leg stiffened. I hit him an awful wallop. I skinned all my knuckles when I walloped him. Came underneath you know to get him to break that tension in there. However, I didn't get any broken bones in the foot or anything. I guess I wasn't the only one that ever got stepped on, but these are the little things that went along with the game, as it were.

Sgt Jim Valance



The trooper had first to learn to ride his horse. It was of paramount importance that he keep his mount under all conditions and various exercises were undertaken to acquire this skill.

We learned to stay in the saddle very readily. I remember particularly the training. We had to remove our feet from the stirrups and glue ourselves to the side, to the top of the horse by squeezing our knees together against the horse's sides. And then we would proceed at a canter and you can imagine the result. We were bobbing up and down on the hinges of our knees and bumping up and down until we got into the rhythm of the thing. It is a pressure on the knees that keeps a horseman on the horse's back. We became quite proficient at this, and as your body is moving in all directions during activity, the necessity of anchoring yourself securely by knee pressure becomes paramount.

Tpr Carl Lewis

To become one with the horse was the trooper's goal. To keep the horse under control and to be able to recover one's mount upon misadventure were skills that came only with practice.

And we were vaulting off and on, and you vault off, back on, and then you go right over the horse run up two or three steps and vault back on again. We used to love that kind of thing you know. But one fellow, his spur caught in the tail of a horse and it pulled the horse around. And the horse went down and roiled on him. I think it was actually the sword that saved him from serious injury.

Sgt Jim Valance

In spite of this training, the unthinkable sometimes happened. Sometimes a cavalryman would fall off his horse. Fortunately, Field Ambulance personnel were there to help. But they had to be able to determine why he had fallen in order to provide the correct treatment.

There was a guy that has fallen off his horse. And Cavalrymen don't fall off horses. So to start with, what's the matter with him? This is the one I remember more than anything wise. The guy is just really as red as a beat. 50 what's wrong with him? One eye was extended, that is dilated, and you know he looks like he's had a stroke. So we treated that, but in the process of falling off the horse, he'd broken an arm, so you had to treat the whole of him and get him on a stretcher and get him out of there. And this was the pattern of the work at these camps. All they were doing was proving that you learned what you were getting at the lectures.

Corporal J.O. Lawley  
5th Field Ambulance  
Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps  
Burlington, Ontario

The cavalrymen engaged in exercises ranging from tent peg spearing to field manoeuvres involving a wide range of skills.

Well, this one time we were out. We were supposed to be defending a road. You had to know your high points from your map references and you took all the ground cover you could get, and in one particular spot there was a stand of trees. We headed for those trees at a gallop because we were told there was an aircraft in the area and the son of a gun, he was up high behind us and when I heard him, I got the men spread out under the trees, and my horse backed up just enough that when this fellow flew over, he dropped a little bag. Oh, I guess, about a quarter of a pound of flour in it, and it hit my horse right on the rump. I never forgot that.

Sgt Jim Valance

The cavalry was to be able to Charge with drawn swords or sabres upon the enemy.

The last cavalry charge at Camp Niagara was recorded on film, but to date the film appears to have been lost.

We had a Colonel Locke, "Rusty" Locke. Russell P. Locke was our Lieutenant Colonel, and he decided that he was going to have a Cavalry Charge. So we had a a Cavalry Charge.

They got up and they started off down in a walk, trot, canter, charge. You know. Jeez, and all of us all of a sudden went like

Hell and we came over and there was this little downhill and back up the other side. And the fellows came down and, whoosh, up. Half of them came off this way. Oh, jeez, it was bedlam.

Dr. Magnus Spence

And one of the outstanding pieces of film work I've seen that's been lost. I hope not forever, was a charge that we made in line down this big field and there was a post in the middle of the field where the fellow was standing with his camera. And I don't know if you've ever seen a couple of hundred horses in line with lances coming at you, but the guy's movie camera just disappears into the sky as he faints dead away. It's [the film] been lost for thirty years as far as I know.

Col Allan Burton

On the other side of the camp, away from the cavalry, the infantrymen were following their own syllabus of training. If they were from the Toronto area, they too arrived on the *S.S. Cayuga* or on one of the other steamships on the Toronto to Niagara run. The regiment would march to the Dock at the foot of Yonge Street in Toronto, and from

there, embark for Niagara-on-the-Lake. To while away the time on the two hour trip, the band, or an individual piper would entertain the troops and civilian passengers.

Occasionally, other boats and other ports were used. In August of 1933, two hundred members of the Lorne Scots were transported from Oakville harbour on the *S.S. Brockville*. This Hamilton based boat was chartered for the trip, which proved to be an eventful one. First, because Oakville harbour had not been used by large boats for some time, the harbour had first to be dredged to accommodate the *Brockville*.

As the *Brockville* left Oakville harbour to the skirl of the Lorne Scots pipes. the crowd cheered. And the pipe band of the Toronto Scottish, brought to Oakville for this special event, played for those watching the departure. Despite this auspicious send-off, not all was well for the *Brockville* had to stop awhile to blow her boiler. When she approached Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Signalling Officer on board tried to contact the Advance Party ashore. He failed in his efforts, but his lamp signals attracted the attention of the United States Patrol Station, which sent out a fast cutter to investigate, believing the *Brockville* to be in distress. Satisfying themselves that all was, in fact, well, they circled the troopship twice at high speed, then left in a fantail of spray.

Upon arrival at Camp Niagara, the men were assigned to their tents. There were no comfortable straw-filled paillasses to make sleeping easier in days after the war. The ground sheet and blankets were laid on the ground if there was a big lump of earth under you, you merely moved over if there was room, or pounded the little hillock flat using the tent peg mallet.

The uniforms were of World War One pattern and are remembered in quaint but colourful terminology.

Khaki uniform. Same as in the First War. Buttons down the front, buttons on your pockets, Stand-Up-For-Jesus collar, flat cap, Cheese-Cutter cap, puttees ... a web belt which you cleaned and polished in blanco.

Regimental Sergeant Major Harry Fox  
Queen's Own Rifles  
Toronto. Ontario

The web belt seemed to have a double use, for it could quickly be removed and used as a "weapon" in an altercation.

A lot of this involved blanco. There wasn't any good blanco at this time. If you ever hit anybody hard, there'd be a cloud come off you. But we spent an awful lot of time blancoing our equipment and shining the brass.

Len Stephen  
Toronto Scottish  
Wilmot Creek, Newcastle. Ontario

The camp facilities were rudimentary but adequate. Latrines were cleaned daily but on occasion, dysentery would strike some of the men in the camp placing a severe strain on the facilities. Brownie Rolls, as the toilet tissue was sometimes known, fell into short supply and on those occasions when the latrines were all occupied, the men were instructed by the Medical Officer to accommodate themselves as best they could in the horse lines.

The ablutions were also relatively simple affairs, with taps splashing water onto long metal covered tables. Only cold water was available.

They had great big long, Oh, I think going down like this covered in tin. And there was water, running water there. No warm water. it was all cold water. And they had great big, what we used to call Sergeant Major Soap. Eat the hair off a monkey, really. I don't remember any showers way back



then. We had to wash ourselves with our towel, soap and so on . There were no swimming facilities that I know of, but if I remember correctly, we had to have a sponge bath once or twice a week, something like that.

Sergeant James Powless  
Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers  
Calaedonia, Ontario

For the infantry route marches were an essential part of the training. But not the twenty mile marches of World War I, for boots were once again a problem. The men supplied their own boots.

You went what, five or six miles or something like that. Just up around Paradise Grove and back. No twenty mile marches or because anything like that provided our own boots and most of the men, well I won't say most, but a lot of them didn't have jobs they didn't have very good boots . They just couldn't stand it.

RSM Harry Fox

The Governor General's Horse Guard provided boots for their recruits from a regimental supply. There was no general army issue.

In those days the men used to actually join to get the [street) car tickets and to get the boots. The men got a free issue pair of boots and no pay. They got two tickets to come down on parade and if they didn't come down on parade, you had a hell of a time getting the boots back. They joined to get the boots... There was just a shortage of money to buy any boots if you weren't working.

Col. Allan Burton

Officers were required to provide their own uniforms at their own cost. And the cost for a complete set of uniforms was a considerable amount.

I think I had four hundred dollars saved and I was able to outfit myself, riding boots, and Service Dress and Blues and Mess Kit. I think for the four hundred dollars. But it cleaned me, took everything I had. Four hundred dollars in 1933 was a lot of money.

Col Allan Burton

Perhaps the most memorable of the events at Camp Niagara was the music with each regimental bugler or piper sounding Reveille in the morning. There was no complement on a regiment's official organization chart for a band. It was necessary

therefore, for the band members to be carried on strength as stretcher bearers. The bandsmen spent part of their time learning the skills of the stretcher bearer so that they might transport a wounded soldier in some degree of comfort. The rest of their time was spent in band duties, practicing on the instruments which had been purchased out of regimental funds.

We would practice every morning and every afternoon, and then we would parade with the regiment for morning roll call and afternoon roll call, and we would have evening sunset service. So those were our duties as a band. And we had bugles originally, the very old fashioned bugle, short and stubby kind of thing. And you got five notes out of a bugle. If you put a crook on it, you got another five notes and so the way you got your music... was the no-crook bugles would play a certain part of the tune and then the bugles with the crook would carry on intermittently back and forth and so on. And that's the kind of instruments we had the first year. Well, the second year, Timothy Eaton was our adjutant and he had a buck or two to throw around. So the second year he bought us new bugles and these were more trumpet style rather than bugle and they had one valve. And the valve gave you the crook so that instead of half the band playing part of the tune and the other half playing part of the tune, everybody now played a tune. You had to have better wind than you used to.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bohdan Yarmowich  
Queen's York Range  
Ottawa, Ontario

The camp was staffed by a permanent cadre of full time soldiers for the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the Royal Canadian Regiment. Many of the wives accompanied their husbands to Niagara-on-the-Lake for the summer, living in rented rooms in town. Officers and N.C.O.s of these regiments became a part of the town life each summer, attending parties and socials in the town, and in turn hosting their own garden parties and socials on the camp grounds.

My sister and I, when we were older / went to the dances at the Sergeant's Mess and at the Officer's Mess. It was great fun and one year they had a Christmas party in the middle of July and they decorated the whole Mess with Christmas trees and greenery. And it was a lot of fun. That's the only Christmas party I ever went to in July. I've never forgotten it.

Mrs. Kaye Toye  
Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario

One of the big annual events at Niagara-on-the-Lake was the July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebration held at the Rand estate on John Street just across the road from Camp Niagara. Officers attended on Mr. Rand's kind invitation. It was a testament to the times and to the goodwill between the two countries that the Canadians did not seem particularly concerned that this fireworks celebration should take place in such close proximity to a Canadian army camp.

With so many young men at camp, one might have thought that the town's fathers would lock their daughters up. For one militia man that seemed surely to be the case. When his unit arrived on the S.S. *Cayuga*, the route to camp was lined with pretty young women. Except for the properly chaperoned dance in the Simcoe Park pavilion on Wednesday nights, they were not seen again until they once more lined the parade route on the regiment's departure. The young women of Niagara-on-the-lake and surrounding area were, of course, as competent as any in dealing with either bashful or forward advances made by the young men in uniform. One soldier of more forward tendencies jumped onto the running board of a young woman's car.

Then as I got older, of course, I didn't ride a bicycle through the camp, but I did have one experience. I must have been over sixteen because I was driving a car. And cars had running boards on them. And a soldier jumped on my side of the running board and I can't remember what he said, but it was such an unusual thing, it scared me. And I wound the window up so his fingers were stuck. I don't know if I thought he was going to get into the car, or what. But I drove the car out to the camp with this soldier hanging on the side and dumped him off there.

Mrs. Marianne Buyers  
Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario

The neighbouring children remember the camp well for they played quite freely on the grounds. They became quite friendly with the permanent cadre, being treated to ice cream, chocolate bars, and thick slices of bread with jam. These were real treats for some of the children in those depression years. The youngsters would bring their pets to the camp veterinarian, sometimes expecting him to perform miracles. Such was their faith in his healing powers. And such was the concern for these young people that the "soldierly" language was curtailed.

Our friends over at the Supply Depot used to always be thinking that everybody should behave nicely because my mother and the girls lived across the street, you know, and they didn't want any bad language. And I remember Mr. Tunstead, he was the Sergeant in charge of the depot at the time, and I remember him saying to one of the men, "You just shouldn't use words, you just shouldn't talk like that", and the other man said "I guess I shouldn't. It must sound like Hell." I can remember them. We got the biggest kick out of it. "It must just sound like Hell."

Mrs. Kaye Toye

Of course, getting the right words across was the task of the signaller. The heliograph which reflected the rays of the sun was still one of the preferred methods of sending signals over distances as great as fifty miles. On the route marches to Queenston, the order to start the return march was sometimes to be given by heliograph, but the disappearance of the sun before the order could be given made the use of alternate methods necessary. Morse, using one flag to display the dots and

dashes, didn't work because the distance was too great. Semaphore didn't work for the very same reason. The field telephone with its wires being strung for only a few hundred yards was not of much use in this case. In one such instance, the order to pack up and march back was relayed by having the adjutant drive to Queenston in his car to give the order verbally. Understandably, the militia signallers, being part time soldiers did not have the finesse of the regular soldier. And it was up to the permanent force to demonstrate how it should be done.

It was normal routine for the signallers of each unit to practice their skills while everyone else was off somewhere "doing their own thing".

Thus we were engaged one afternoon and had set up signalling stations on the Common between the tent lines and old Fort George. We were merrily waving flags at one another, practising with the lamp as well as the helio, and rather enjoying the sunshine and fresh air. There were some cavalrymen riding about the area (Royal Canadian Dragoons I believe), but they were a haughty bunch. And being Permanent Force as well as Cavalry, they rather looked down on us as poor relations. However we were enjoying a short rest period when a party of R.C.D. decided to show us how to operate as signallers. There was a row of unused wooden buildings at the north end of the Common, which I think had been stables or storage sheds of some sort, but were now rather the worse for wear. One of the R.C.D. rode



smartly up to these buildings, climbed onto his saddle and managed to get on to the flat roof. He then proceeded to send messages to another Dragoon, using flag, who had in the meantime trotted to the far end of the Common, and he was standing on his saddle receiving and answering these signals. All went well for a time and we were visibly impressed by all this until the chap on the shed decided to move along the front of the shed, away from the corner where he had been standing. This proved to be too much for the shed which could not stand the weight at that particular point, and the building collapsed in a cloud of dust and broken boards, carrying the poor fellow with it.

His horse, frightened by all the commotion, ran off across the Common. One Dragoon chased after the horse, while others began to dig their friend out of the wreckage. All this confusion seemed to be too much for the horse upon which the Dragoon signaller had been standing and he decided to move off at a smart clip, catching his rider (or standee?) unaware and tossing him to the ground. By this time, we were so impressed we were rolling on the grass laughing!

Richard C. Fuller  
Lincoln & Welland Regiment  
Niagara Falls, Ontario

The militia training at Camp Niagara was primarily an instilling of the basics at the Brigade level, those basics essential to the functioning of an army. Much more than the "spit and polish" or "square bashing" as they are referred to, they imbued the men with a confidence and a pride in their own skills and those of their regiment. But it permitted even more than this. It provided for a concentrated course of studies to allow one to advance through the ranks as an N.C.O. or a commissioned officer. And it allowed the individual to acquire very relevant skills not possible on parade night at the local armouries.

Regimental Sergeant Major Harry Fox, then of the Queen's Own Rifles, attended Dominion Day camps of three days duration and weeklong camps at Niagara-on-the-Lake from 1932 to the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. He remembers some very specific skills learned at Camp Niagara. Some of these as he described in *The Regiment* by Farley Mowat, he was to use just a few years later when with the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment under the very real conditions of Italy.

I found [the training] very useful because that's where I was taught how to put up a barbed wire fence at Niagara and test a gas mask properly and actually to lie down on the ground and see if you could actually see what you were supposed to, the target they gave you. I learned all that at Niagara. A little bit about camouflage, so I found it very interesting.

RSM Harry Fox

Harry Fox's barbed wire was to be the hallmark of Camp Niagara's changeover to a wartime footing . As war was declared on September 4, 1939, one Company of the Royal Canadian Regiment of the camp's permanent cadre was instructed to remain behind . Brigadier Willis J. Moogk received orders, in what was perhaps Camp Niagara's last act of peacetime and the first act of war, to prepare the camp as an internment centre for enemy aliens by ringing the camp with barbed wire . After putting some nine miles of barbed wire and security lights in place, Brigadier Moogk received word that the plans had all been changed and the barbed wire and lights were removed. When the official word that war had been declared arrived at Camp Niagara,

the men of the Royal Canadian Regiment were enjoying sports outing. The duty messenger rode up to them to give them the message. Upon hearing the news, the sports ended and the men prepared to assume their wartime duties. The following day they began Vulnerable Points Duty. On this note Camp Niagara once again paraded for war.

## CHAPTER IV - The Second World War

### CHARGE



The militia summer camp of 1939 had barely ended when war was declared in September 1939 and Camp Niagara was again called upon for wartime service. But this time, there was a special role beyond that of training to be played by the camp. Camp Niagara served as the home base for the regiments guarding the Niagara Peninsula's Vulnerable Points.

As war approached, word went out to a number of regiments to begin mobilizing as Active Service Forces. Among the first such regiments to be mobilized in Canada was the Perth Regiment (M.G.) of the City of Stratford and Perth County in Ontario. This heavy machine gun regiment was mobilized for active duty on August 31, 1939, just a few days before war was declared. Recruiting started immediately in the Ontario counties of Perth, Huron, Bruce and Waterloo. The Perth's spent the first eight months of the war stationed at the Perth Barracks in Stratford, Ontario. Word arrived in May 1940 that the Battalion was to move to Camp Borden and an Advance Party was

dispatched there to prepare for the Battalion's arrival. The situation was recorded in the Battalion War Diary of May 23, 1940. "Stratford, Ontario 23/5/40. Preparations for the move to Camp continued each man has been ordered to take 2 kit bags to carry his effects in place of equipment we are short of. The Advance Party left by train at 0400 hrs. this morning, there being a number of people on hand to bid them farewell even at this early hour."

The equipment shortages referred to were to plague the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of The Perth Regiment for some time. There were severe shortages of uniforms, boots, equipment and vehicles.

The next day, word was received unexpectedly that the move to Camp Borden was cancelled and that the Battalion was to proceed to an unnamed destination. This coupled with the "critical European situation" resulted in credence being given to wild rumours of being sent directly overseas. The Battalion was placed on notice to be ready to move at an even earlier date.

The War Diary continued "Stratford, Ontario 25/5/40. The movement order to Niagara Camp, Ontario was received, The day was spent preparing the unit for

movement and getting the Barracks in condition, The troops were given a leave of absence in the afternoon, At 1900hrs, all ranks were confined to Barracks and paraded at 2300hrs. prior to the move. The embarkation was difficult due to the immense crowd of upwards of 10,000 people, which came to say farewell to the unit. The train left Stratford at 2359hrs.

The Battalion, consisting of 22 officers and 619 Other Ranks arrived the next morning at a fog-shrouded Niagara-on-the-Lake. After a few minutes march from the 11-coach train, the Perth's entered Camp Niagara before dawn at 0530 hrs. The Perth's War Diary recorded that the weather that day was cloudy with rain in the afternoon. The troops were housed in the bell tents, so familiar to those who had attended summer camps. The men slept, six to a tent, on straw paillasses laid on floor boards. Some of the men had acquired cots for even more comfort, but after an inspection by Col. S.A. Lee, the new Camp Commandant, the cots were ordered removed and many were offered for sale at bargain prices.

NCOs fared somewhat better as befitted their senior rank. They slept two to a tent and the Regimental Sergeant Major had a tent to himself. Their furnishings were somewhat more complete. Some officers' tents were well furnished.

Gone were the days of only candlelight in the tents, for in the days ahead, electricity was to be available throughout the camp. Officers' tents, Messes, Canteens and Quartermaster Stores were equipped with electrical wiring and lamps. But there were very strict rules concerning the electrical wiring in the various buildings and in the tents, for the tents were flammable. Light bulbs smaller than 100 watts had to be used in the tents. The Staff Captain of the 13th Infantry Brigade issued Standing Orders on this subject. "28/11 /40. All ranks are warned that on no account will they interfere with electric wiring or appliances, either inside or outside of buildings in camps or barracks. In the event of any failure of current, requisition for repairs must be submitted to Brigade Headquarters.

Of course, we had all the fire drills and instruction as to what to do if there was a fire in the camp. And I can recall one year having had to do a Court of Inquiry into why we had a fire, and having gathered the necessary witnesses that saw where it started in this particular part of the camp. While everyone was running, striking tents and getting all the other canvas down flat, I went and examined the remains after they got things put out of the tent where it started and found that they had Romex [electrical wire] in this tent which was one of the Mess Tents, and the Romex, which the camp engineers had put in up one



of the poles and across the ridge pole, had been held in place with metal clips. One of the clips was not tight. The result was the wind sawing the tent back and forth had worn the insulation off and that's where the short occurred that started the fire.

Colonel Sam Charters  
Lorne Scots  
London, Ontario

Training was commenced in such subjects as section drill, squad drill, platoon drill, rifle and machine gun training, machine guns in defence, and tactical work. As recorded in the Perth's War Diary, a new detail was added. "Niagara Camp, Ontario 30/5/40. In the afternoon, D. Coy. and 45 members of C. Coy. were sent on detached duty to Niagara Falls, where a camp was established in Victoria Park. This detachment was part of the first guards of the Hydro Electric Power developments in and around Niagara Falls, Ont.

"Niagara Camp, Ontario 31/5/40. B. Company and the remainder of C. Company were sent on detached duty to Niagara Falls, travelling by bus."

There are interesting memories of training at the Camp, of going on leave and returning, schemes and guard duty, have also some interesting memories of Niagara Falls where we tented about 500 ft. from the falls with the spray freezing on tents and wash basins.

Derek A. Barnett  
Lincoln and Welland Regiment  
Orono, Ontario

This move was reported back home by the Stratford Beacon Herald which followed the fortunes of the officers and men of Stratford's regiment throughout the course of the war. The Beacon Herald reported on May 30, 1940 "The troops moved in five big coaches and three trucks, taking full equipment with them from the military camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Within two hours, mess and kitchen equipment was up, the busy officers and men enjoying a picnic lunch of roast beef sandwiches and tea."

Back at camp Niagara, other units were arriving. Company 28 of the Veterans' Home Guard which was mobilizing throughout the Niagara Peninsula was quartered at Camp Niagara. Thirty-nine officers and 225 cadets of the Osgoode Hall Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C) were in camp from June 17 to 29. One officer and 35 cadets from C.O.T.C., University of Toronto were there until June 22, 1940.

Meanwhile, in the Perth Regiment, driver trainees continued with their driver training courses, passed their driving tests and were awarded their Army Drivers Licences. But there still were no trucks at camp for them to drive. The trucks did not arrive until July 18, 1940 when a detail of drivers picked up their allotment of twenty-one trucks at the factory in Windsor, Ontario.

The Provost Sergeant was promoted to Staff Sergeant in the newly formed Provost Corps and was quoted by the Stratford Beacon Herald, perhaps in a tongue in cheek encouragement for the other ranks that his promotion was earned "through hard work and clean living - my boy".

The Royal Canadian Army Postal Corps arrived to handle the Perth's mail. With the increased volume of mail, postage stamps were said to be scarcer than hens' teeth. Bugler Bohdan "Gerry" Yarmowich remembers the special bugle call to announce the distributing of letters and other mail from home.

Through the course of the day you had meal calls and mail calls and so on, and we [the buglers] knew all of these calls, and I still remember some of them. Like I remember Mail Call. There were words to them, you know, so you'd remember the. "A letter for me, a letter for you, a letter from Lousy Lizzie".

They were these kinds of funny things, you know.

Lieutenant Colonel Bohdan Yarmowich  
Queens Own Rifles  
Ottawa, Ontario

The Y.M.C.A. set up a special area for the writing of letters and supplied writing paper and envelopes to the men. The Salvation Army was always there and was always very supportive.

There was always the motherly type that would, you know, get you to write home. "Come on Son, sit down and write home". And then there were the young ladies who would talk to you, you know, about home and so on. They were wonderful people.

L/Col Bohdan Yarmowich

The Perth signallers, within hours of arriving at camp had set up and operating their own field telephone switchboard for communication with all units. They were also able

to communicate with the Vulnerable Point installations which they were soon to man throughout the peninsula.

One enterprising member of the Perth regiment set up his barber shop under any shady tree giving as many as seventy haircuts in one day. The health of the men was of primary concern. Inoculation series against anticipated diseases were completed. Special attention was paid to the men's feet, with instructions being issued, as in the earlier war that feet were to be bathed daily and clean socks worn. The footbaths were emptied and cleaned daily by each company hut fatigue party, and the sanitary section daily changed the footbath solution.

You would go and have a shower and then you would have a great big trough like this, full of stuff, and you would have to walk through it so you wouldn't get any infection in your feet. The worst case of Athlete's Foot I ever had, and the only one I ever had was from that.

Corporal Tim Kenvon  
5th Field Ambulance  
Hamilton, Ontario

Boots submitted for repair or reissue, were treated with a sanitizing solution of Izal. When being reissued, special attention was paid to the insole of the boot to remove the depressions of the former wearer.

Sanitation throughout the whole of the camp was of extreme importance, and to underline this importance, the responsibility for it was placed directly with the Commanding Officer. This was a standard order applicable to all regiments. Colonel O.M. Martin issued the usual Standing Orders for the 13th Infantry Brigade. "In order that there may be no question of divided responsibility or misunderstanding upon the subject of camp sanitation, the Officer Commanding each unit is entirely responsible for the sanitary condition of the area occupied by his command . It is the duty of the Regimental Medical Officer to see that the condition of the camp area is promptly brought to the attention of the Commanding Officer and to advise him as to the steps necessary to be taken to correct any unsanitary condition in his lines."

The method of washing the eating utensils may appear now to be somewhat primitive but it is still used today. It was effective and was very closely controlled to prevent sickness. Each man first scraped any remaining food from his mess tin and cutlery, then swished them in each of three baths.

They had three buckets and there was one to wash your knife, fork, spoon and cup, and one was to rinse, and I guess maybe the other was to disinfect. But there were three, and everybody used them.

Corporal Hazel Walker  
Canadian Women's Army Corps  
Ottawa. Ontario

Standing Orders prescribed the method of using these three buckets. The use of soap, disinfectants and even the water temperatures were specified in Standing Orders. The first contained hot water (120-140 degrees F.) with soap sufficient to produce suds. The second wash contained a chlorine solution in water not hotter than body temperature. The third was a clean water rinse of 180 degrees F. Each was monitored for cleanliness, and replaced as needed. Utensils were air dried by the simple method of waving them in the air as one went back to the barracks or the lines.

Discipline in camp and outside was maintained by assigning men on a rotating basis to serve as Camp and Regimental Military Police. Each wore a special armband to identify him as such. Others served as fire picquet or on other special duties such as loosening the tent ropes when it rained. This was done to prevent the tents from collapsing and possibly breaking the centre poles.

Standards of military dress were strictly adhered to. If a man presenting himself for a pass out of camp appeared to the NCO in charge to be deficient in his appearance, he was sent back to repair the deficiency. Whether it be his buttons or boots that needed to be polished, or a shave or even a haircut that was needed, the deficiency had to be remedied before he again presented himself to the NCO for further consideration as he requested permission to leave camp.

The placing of stripes, chevrons or other badges was strictly defined. And only those badges or insignia that had been specifically authorized were permitted. No unauthorized coloured shoulder patches were allowed. And even for a senior officer who was to be Camp Niagara's Commandant. Special permission to wear a particular badge had to be secured. The permission was noted in the Battalion Orders, Part I, No. 34 of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on October 2. 1941. "Confirmation of qualification under the terms of C.A.S.F. Routine Order #751, dated 26-10-40, having been received, the under mentioned officer is granted permission to wear the Regulation Flying Badge: - Col. a .M. Martin, V.D. 13th Infantry Bde., A.F. (-4-25-M-2)

Recycling was a necessary thing during wartime. Very little was wasted. Restrictions were placed on the use of military vehicles to conserve gas. And high speeds were



forbidden because tires were found to wear prematurely. Cartons, burlap bags, boxes and baskets were returned for reuse or for scrap. Cans were saved for their scrap value. Even cooking fats were saved for reuse or sold for use in the manufacture of soaps or glycerine based products including explosives. The outer leaves of cabbages and lettuce which were not by themselves palatable were incorporated into soup. Wherever possible, the skins of vegetables were retained for their nutritive value. Bread was sliced a wholesome one half to three quarters of an inch thick. Each man could have as much to eat as he wanted. But to prevent waste, he had to eat all he took. The food waste, exclusive of bones, was thus reduced to as little as a barrel per day for five hundred men. Periodically, the men were asked about the quality of the food.

But some of the meals, for instance, brought one of the humorous things that I remember. You'd have your breakfast, you see, and then there would be an Officer of the Day come around and say "Any complaints?" This day it was Dr. Carr. Anyway, that morning we had hard beans. You couldn't even eat the darn things. So I thought, Geeze, I'll try something. I didn't have much nerve, you know, but I said, "Sir, I'd like to complain... We come down here and, you know, we're not used to this kind of breakfast. These are hard, unpalatable beans, you know. Could you get us something better?" And he

looked around, and there was a farm guy there, and he's chomping them up like this. Dr. Carr spied him and asked "How about you, sir?" "Oh, these are great, these are fine, fine." And Dr. Carr says, "Any other complaints?" That was it.

Corporal Tim Kenyon

The troops and the camp were inspected by visiting generals from time to time. Spit and polish and March Past were the order of the day. Battalion Orders, Part I, Order No 33 of the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada warned on August 4, 1942 that "The Inspector General (Central Canada) Major General R.O. Alexander D.S.O. will make an inspection of this Bn [Battalion] tomorrow, Thursday, 6 Aug 42. All Ranks will be at their best."

Church Parades were held, with separate services for Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish personnel. The Battalion Orders usually directed the men to reassemble after divine service at the old Fair Grounds Race Track at Camp Niagara. From here the troops would march through downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake before dismissing. With 10,000 men, the parade would take three hours to pass the reviewing stand.

There was usually a March Past after Church Parade and the one that I can recall that was the biggest disaster was when the duty band that was assigned this weekend was from the RCNVR [Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve], and if you can imagine the consternation of troops trying to keep step and march past to Rule Britannia. You know you can't do that. It was awful.

Col Sam Charters

By early 1941, the Canadian Active Service Force was known as the Canadian Army and the support of the Canadian Army was sought to assist in the War Savings Certificate programs in nearby cities. Four or five battalions, including in those early years, the Perth's, Lincoln & Welland, Argyll and Sutherland, and the Dufferin Haldimand Rifles, would march through a city such as St. Catharines or Niagara Falls in support of the savings bond drive. The men would be followed in the parade by a number of army trucks and an ambulance. At the Vulnerable Points camps such as Allensburg, the parade might consist of only fifty Other Ranks. A small parade perhaps, but a significant percentage of the men on duty at that forward camp.

A letter to the Commanding Officer of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders expressed the appreciation of the campaign committee. "17 Feb, 1941. The parade on

Sunday was a great success, due in very large measure to the co-operation I received from yourself and your Officers and men. It was an excellent turn-out and I am sure from the remarks I hear that the public were greatly pleased and I believe it will have a real effort on the War Savings Certificate Campaign.”

“Will you kindly express for me to your Officers and men my sincere thanks for your splendid cooperation. Charles Daley, Mayor, St. Catharines' Citizens were encouraged to buy War Savings Bonds and Certificates to help the war effort. Billboards advertised each new campaign, and citizens were given a lapel pin to show that they were participating. Children bought War Savings Stamps for twenty-five cents each and stuck them in a special folder. Four dollars' worth of stamps kept to maturity would be worth five dollars. The officers and men of the Canadian Army, although participating Directly in the war effort, were encouraged to participate further and to set an example to the civilian population by buying war saving certificates. Even those in detention barracks were encouraged to invest their money in war bonds.

We had victory loans, and I don't know why but they picked me and I had to go with the Staff Sergeant and we had to go to all the armouries in the area and try to sell them coupons. And we had to go to the detention barracks

at Chippawa. And all I remember about that is we were in this room and they had all the prisoners, well not all the prisoners, but a pile of prisoners in front of us and Provosts all around the walls and they gave them a big talk about buying Victory Bonds from their pay. So then they were supposed to come up one by one and you signed them up.

Cpl Hazel Walker

The officers and men were encouraged also to contribute to the United Appeal of Voluntary Organizations the group of organizations that did so much in making the soldier's life away from home a little more comfortable. Battalion Daily Orders, 31 -3-41, Part I, Number 76, of the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders stationed at Chippawa read: "The Canadian Legion, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and the I.O.D.E. have been contributing to the comfort and welfare of the troops since the outbreak of war.

"These organizations are at present united in a drive for funds under the name 'Canadian War Services Fund' and it is requested that all possible aid be extended to these organizations in their drive for funds."

“As all ranks are aware of the high standard of service which has been and continues to be rendered, it is hoped that the campaign will receive the enthusiastic support it deserves.”

Many civic groups recognized that the soldiers were away from home and missed the usual social activities and interactions of civilian life. These groups invited the men in groups of 25 to 50 to euchre parties, dances, and theatrical productions. In the warm months, there were summer activities such as strawberry socials and garden parties. Invitations were posted and the men signed up for the events they wished to attend. Transportation to and from the event was supplied by the army.

While these organizations helped fill the Off-duty hours, there was also considerable other activity to keep the men occupied. There were amateur theatricals and professional concerts given by the likes of Mart Kenney or Fats Waller. Movies were shown each week in the Recreation Centre. *The Fighting Deputy* and *The Unwanted Woman* were shown during January, 1941. *Hitler - The Beast of Berlin* must have made a sharp contrast with *Rolling Plains* starring Tex Ritter and his horse White Flash.

The Royal Canadian Legion at Niagara-on-the-Lake opened its branch facilities to the men of Camp Niagara. Social activities expanded from those designed primarily for members to embrace the whole Niagara civic and military community. In *Sixty Years of Remembrance: A History of General Nelles Royal Canadian Legion*, it was recorded on page 16 that "In 1940 the General Nelles Branch added another popular event to an impressive slate of community activities when it commenced sponsorship of the Sunday Evening Song Service (SESS). Held at Simcoe Park during the summer months, it featured sacred and patriotic music with the words shown on a screen by projection lantern, performed by local and military bands as well as local musicians. Attendance rose from six hundred citizens and soldiers in June to over two thousand at the season finale in September."

On a least one occasion at the Sunday Evening Song Service, a couple of soldiers found themselves without money to buy a beer. A quick whip around with an upturned hat solicited enough silver in the collection to remedy the problem at one of the local hotels or wet canteens at Camp Niagara. These camp canteens and Messes were strictly controlled by the Ontario Liquor Control Act regulations in their hours of operations and what intoxicating beverages they could sell. With the potential for

trouble that might have resulted from drinking spirituous liquids, it is interesting to note that one of the establishments placed "Out of Bounds" at Chippawa was a tea room.

No reason for placing it out of bounds was given in the Battalion Orders.

I found that they [Camp Niagara] had quite a long list of places that were out of bounds. And I was surprised at that and I thought there must be a lot of disreputable places, to be placed out of bounds. But that wasn't the case at all. A lot of restaurants and beer parlours, and places like that, had asked to be placed out of bounds. They didn't want soldiers to be visiting their places.

Hon. James T. Harvey  
Staff Captain, 10th Infantry Brigade  
Nanaimo, British Columbia

Sports played a big part in the off duty life of the men. From the arrival of the Perths, there was organized sport available. League softball games were played with other regiments and with civic teams. Track and field, soccer boxing, and judo were among the many other sports enjoyed at the camp.

But training on a daily basis was the main part of camp life. And with the training, came promotions. Each of these was noted in the Battalion Daily Orders and was a



well-deserved recognition of skill and dedication to duty. Some "promotions", however came more easily as reported in the July 19, 1940 issue of the Stratford Beacon Herald. "Promotions come fast in the army and if you don't believe it just ask Private Mullis of Headquarters Company. He knows. Recently the young soldier was working in the Sergeants' Canteen when he was addressed as 'Sergeant' and then on another occasion while he was drilling a squad in P.T. an officer leaned out of a tent and called 'Sergeant-Major, dismiss that squad.' Private Mullis expects to become a Colonel any day."

The serious business at Camp Niagara was, of course, the provision of men for Vulnerable Points duty. The Royal Canadian Regiment, the Perths, and 124 later the Lincoln & Welland Regiment, the Dufferin & Haldimand Rifles and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise) served in this capacity. Camps were set up and manned on a rotating basis, alternating Vulnerable Points duty with training at Camp Niagara.

Well, we were in Niagara Camp for the official training days. And then we were part of what you called the 13th Infantry Brigade under Brigadier O.M. Martin. And there was the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles from the Brantford area and the

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from the Hamilton area. And after training was completed, we [Lincoln and Welland Regiment] moved out and relieved the Perth Regiment, as I recall at Niagara Falls. They were camped then at Victoria Park. Some of the platoons and companies were doing guard duty on the Falls area, particularly on the Hydro installations area. And we ended up with three barracks, sort of, in the area. The three units would move from one to the other. The one in Niagara Camp was for training. They built new huts there for fall and winter. The second one was up on what we called Allenburg Barracks where the Hayes Dana plant is now. The old glassworks was prior to that. The last company was called Chippawa Barracks and that was up somewhere around where Marineland is now.

Corporal Roy Adams  
Lincoln and Welland Regiment  
St. Catharines, Ontario

The guard was mounted around the clock and the risk of damage to these vulnerable points by saboteurs was taken seriously. Even at such a great distance from Europe, damage by bomber aircraft was considered and various plans were proposed to combat the perceived risk. There were guard posts and sentry boxes placed throughout the area to provide some shelter for the men and to provide a place for the field telephones by which the men reported suspicious circumstances. In

winter, the work was cold, dangerous by virtue of the icy steps and walkways so close to the canals, and apparently somewhat boring. Special orders were issued to control the idle pastimes of the men on guard duty. It appears that rifles and bayonets had been used as crow bars and hammers, and it was ordered that bayonets not be used to stick into the wood of the guard houses. Battalion Orders, Part I, Number 20, Station Niagara of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders stated that "Each post and sentry box will in future, be examined by the N.C.O. in charge of the post, when changing sentries, for possible breakage of deficiencies. The following points will be checked - windows, phone, bayonet damage, condition of the hot plate, instructions for Vulnerable Point guards and cleanliness. The sentry going off duty will be held responsible for any damages or deficiencies incurred during his time of duty. A report will be submitted to the guard commander whenever such damage or deficiency occurs."

Each hut was inspected daily by an officer as well. In one instance, the officer charged with this responsibility conducted his inspections at night after completing his day's work as Adjutant. The only time he had to sleep with this double duty was in the truck while his driver took him from one guard post to the next.

The men on guard duty found some particularly pleasant uses for the field telephone system to help while away the solitary hours. But Battalion Orders, Part I, Number 58, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Station Allanburg curtailed these small pleasures. "The attention of all ranks is directed to the fact that the telephones at V.P. Posts are to be used for business purposes only. Lengthy conversations must be curtailed and personal conversations will not be tolerated."

The next day, March 11, 1941, in Part I Number 59 of the Battalion Orders, the rules were set. "1. All Vulnerable Point telephones are for official use only. The receiver must not be lifted from the hook except in answer to a call or in making a call of an official nature.

"2. The further practice of transmitting radio and hockey broadcasts over the telephone system will result in an order prohibiting the use of radio receiving sets in V.P. Huts."

The guards were instructed in the proper manner of challenging anyone approaching using the well-known query, "Halt. Who goes there?" Upon the answer "Friend" or such other acceptable response, the approaching individuals were to be asked to

come forward, one at a time, to be identified. If it became necessary to do so, the guard was authorized to fire his weapon, aiming, not to kill, but to disable by shooting at the legs. On occasion shots were fired, some quite accidentally. And shots were fired when suspicious movement was detected.

Well, it was sentry duty. Basically keeping an eye (on things], making sure nobody came in that wasn't supposed to be there. So that we could protect the power plants from any subversion. And nothing, of course, happened. A couple of fellows thought they saw some strange movement and fired. One fellow shot a cow, but I wasn't there. That was further up on the Chippawa Canal part.

Corporal Roy Adams

Some of the sentry posts were in public view and the civilian visitors to the Niagara Falls area saw the armed sentries in their battle dress and web. James A. Harris of London, Ontario remembered. "When I was about eight, my parents took me to Niagara Falls. I saw the soldiers with their rifles and bayonets and the barbed wire which was as high as their shoulders remember I felt a little sad and frightened."

There were many tourists from the United States which was not yet at war, and the sight of the armed sentries provoked considerable interest. From the questions they were asked, one wonders if perhaps the guards were sometimes seen as tourist guides. One wag, when asked how much water came over the falls each day, replied that he knew it was ten billion gallons, because they had to carry it back up each night. Another tourist, when told that one was the American Falls and the other the Horseshoe Falls, wanted to know where to find the Niagara Falls. Yet another tourist, upon viewing the falls illuminated at night by the coloured light, wondered aloud "I've heard a lot about Niagara Falls, but who would have thought that the water is red."

At Camp Niagara, new buildings were being erected. There would be H-Hut Barracks and a Hospital near Paradise Grove, a Drill Hall, with a small indoor firing range attached, on Queen's Parade. There were Ordnance buildings, workshops and a building to house the camp's fire truck. Nurses quarters, and administration buildings were built near John Street. And the flower gardens started by the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the Royal Canadian Regiment were maintained. Trees were planted and ornamental shrubs were included to beautify the entrances to some of the buildings.

Soon, the regiments on Vulnerable Point duty were transferred. The Perth's went to Camp Borden in July, 1940.

When they broke up the 13th Brigade, the Duffs sort of became reinforcement people eventually. But the Argyll's went to Jamaica, the Lincoln and Welland went to Newfoundland.

Cpl Roy Adams

The 10th Infantry Brigade had been forming at Nanaimo, British Columbia; and was to trade places with the Brigade at Camp Niagara. The Advance Party arrived at Camp Niagara to make arrangements for the arrival of the western troops.

I came down with the Advance Party for the 10th Infantry Brigade which had been forming at Nanaimo. And it was decided to send us down to the Niagara area, and send the Niagara area brigade to take our place. We were expected to go overseas much sooner than the brigade that Brigadier Martin commanded. I suppose the idea was to get us closer to the embarkation point, though it seemed to be the policy of the government of the day to move units around and so then get more familiar with the other parts of the country. You get more of a vision of Canada as a whole.

Hon. James T. Harvey

When the train left Niagara, taking the brigade to Nanaimo, it took more than troops.

It took fathers, sons, husbands and fiancés too.

And on the railroad line here, they went to Niagara Falls. I remember my fiancé loading down there on the way out to British Columbia. The Lincoln and Welland entrained and well the train extended all the way down King Street. The line went all the way down King Street, at that time the coaches were there just like that. I remember the day they loaded to go away, and all those tracks are gone now. Sometimes, I look at it. I try to picture it all in my mind again. So different I don't think I really realized then. I think none of us thought that the war was going to last that long. I think we all thought it was maybe just for a short period. It was very exhilarating and exciting. You sensed the excitement in the air that they were going off to do great deeds, and, you know, it was going to be over soon. These were our loyal boys going off to make their contribution ... I don't think I realized at the time how long he would be gone or any of them would be gone. He was overseas about four and a half years. We got married in 1946.

Mrs. Kaye Toye  
Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario



The 10th Infantry Brigade, when it arrived from the west, appeared to cause some consternation among the residents of the town. The men were physically big and their arrival was received with apprehension.

The first unit to arrive was the British Columbia Regiment, which was a rifle regiment. And they marched at a quicker pace than non-rifle regiments. They had a bugle band. They were very well trained and very well disciplined. Generally taller men than the Niagara-on-the-Lake people. So when they got off the train and started marching smartly down away from the trains to wherever they were going, I think a lot of people, when they saw them, thought they were another invasion. It didn't take very long for that situation to clear up ... And then there was the South Alberta Regiment. They were even bigger men. And then there was the 16/22nd Saskatchewan Horse. They were huge men, farmers. So things, to the citizenry of Niagara-on-the-Lake, seemed to be getting worse when they saw the arrivals.

Hon. James T. Harvey

Camp Niagara continued to be used by the militia for the various regiments' summer camps. Toronto area regiments continued to arrive on the S.S. Cayuga while other regiments came by bus. And the militia continued to live in the bell tents as in former

years. The militia now consisted in some cases of the 2nd Battalion of regiments whose 1st Battalion was on active service. The 2nd Battalion, in some cases, prepared recruits for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and employed the skills of N.C.O.s who no longer met the stringent physical condition and age requirements of the active forces.

The Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps with Ambulance Corps and Casualty Clearing Stations trained at Camp Niagara. Men were trained in preliminary diagnosis and in the evacuation of the wounded, carrying them off the field by stretcher. Whereas in earlier years, the ambulance had been a wagon with a rented team of horses, it was now a small truck or jeep, sometimes with the Red Cross painted on the canvas cover. During the mock battles, treatment was given in the field for an epileptic seizure or the removal of thorns acquired during contact with the many thorn trees at Camp Niagara.

I remember we were crawling through; we crawled on our bellies with these gas masks and full packs. Then all of a sudden you get a real rough run, and I got a big thorn in my knee. So they called up the First Aid, and the guy that came and took it out was a top surgeon in Hamilton. How do you like that? Couldn't get better service than that!

Cpl Tim Kenyon

Others in the R.C.A.M.C. were concerned with the quality of water supplied the men. This was of supreme importance in battle zones, and the men learned how to test water by taking daily readings of the water from the Niagara River. They attended lectures on the theory and operation of the large mobile water pumps.

Each unit continued with its own syllabus of training including training with the Bren Gun with Bren Gun Carriers, tanks, machine guns, mortars, hand grenades, rifles and pistols. Gas mask training was taken seriously. The soldiers were exposed to tear gas given in the gas hut located in Paradise Grove at the northern end of the camp.

What they'd do is, they'd put a capful of tear gas or some other type of gas in there, and depending on the wind there put the respirator on and then take the respirator off and I tell you it was sickening. I puked a good bit over that and then they'd make you puke in your masks, which wasn't just bad enough.

Keith Dewar interview with Camp Niagara Veterans  
Niagara-on-the-lake

Mock battles were fought on the grounds to the west of the Rifle Ranges. Exercises were conducted with the tracked vehicles. The allotted time was spent firing rifles on the lakeshore Rifle Range. For some, there were exercises in map reading.

Summer camp for the militia was much the same as before, with the units keeping to themselves. There was little opportunity to mix and what one heard of other units was perhaps just rumour.

I think it was a mixture in my time, a mixture of people like ourselves, reserves, and people who were preparing to actually go overseas. I recall, I am sure; it was the Highlanders at that time, that they said that these guys are leaving today.

Cpl Tim Kenyon

This time it wasn't rumour, for the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada had returned from Jamaica to regroup at Camp Niagara. In August of 1943, they embarked for England . Some of the members were not allowed to go overseas with the regiment because of their age or physical condition. These men were disappointed to be left behind, despite the fact that they were needed to perform vital tasks at home.

Women served at Camp Niagara, handling many duties once performed by men. As in the Great War, there were during the Second World War, Nursing Sisters of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps to assist in the hospital at Camp Niagara. A new hospital building had been erected near Paradise Grove. It had a thirty-six bed ward and a twenty-eight bed isolation ward for those with communicable diseases. The Nursing Sisters resided in the N/S Quarters building, out of bounds to all others, located across from the Administration Building on Brock Road near Sheaffe Road.

Sick Parade was an involved procedure, for the soldier did not simply declare himself or herself ill. The soldier had to attend the special Sick Parade. This was particularly onerous for the Canadian Women's Army Corps because they lived outside the main camp. Reporting for Sick Parade involved a lot of marching and was considered by all but the most desperately ill as something to be avoided.

The people who worked in the offices would parade over [to Camp Niagara) every morning, and whoever the Orderly Corporal was had to call the Parade and call everybody's name. Even if you were sick, you had to be there because you couldn't go on Sick Parade 'til after breakfast. And then she'd march you to camp which was about a block and a half. And then you went into breakfast and then if you were sick, you went back to the house and told them you were sick. And they had to find

somebody who was off duty, usually the signal girl, and she'd have to walk you down to the hospital which was at the far, far end of the camp, and you had to walk it. And then the doctor down there, he'd usually tell you to go home and take an aspirin. So hardly anybody ever went on Sick Parade.

Cpl Hazel Walker

Many of the C.W.A.C.s performed secretarial or stenographic duties in camp offices and in "remote" locations. Corporal Walker took her typewriter from the office over to the Drill Hall located midway to Paradise Grove to complete the required forms as men who had not volunteered for overseas duty were to be invited, or perhaps to be persuaded to volunteer, for active duty overseas.

Four C.W.A.C.s were assigned to operate the camp switchboard around the clock. A bed was provided at the switchboard for the woman on duty throughout the night. Every second weekend was an "on-call" weekend. C.W.A.C.s also delivered the official mail which arrived each morning at 7:00 a.m. by boat during the navigation season and by truck at other times of the year.

Although they received their basic training before being assigned to camps such as Niagara. There were occasions when they went on route marches or parades.

Marching with the men created some difficulty, particularly for the shorter women because their stride was shorter than a man's and their pace therefore, a little faster.

This made it difficult to march in step with the men, particularly when the men's rate of pacing was mirrored by the even slower pace of a pipe band.

The women received trades pay in the same manner as the men, according to their qualifications and duties. Not all work assignments were clerical or office based, for some women were taking trades with the Ordnance Corps.

We were supposed to be training them to be motor mechanics or motor mechanics helpers. One lady there was a pretty good welder, and it was my job to look after motorcycles among other things. I remember one incident where we were all allotted one girl to train. My girl worked on motorcycles. The Sergeant Major came in with one of his [motorcycle] wheels wobbling. So I took it out and trued it up and put it back on and told her to tighten the nuts. I guess she didn't tighten them up. The Sergeant Major went out and the wheel came off. I got hell for that I'll tell you. It was my fault. I should have checked it.

Sergeant James Powless  
Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps  
Caledonia, Ontario

The Canadian Women's Army Corps (C .W.A.C.' at Camp Niagara were housed in a large white house that had been the summer home for one of the American families who spent their summers at Niagara-on-the-Lake. This house, which is today a Funeral Home, had well-appointed family quarters and had living quarters for the family's domestic servants. At the rear of the house was a large matching garage/coach house and tennis court, and on the street to the side of the house, was an additional residence which the family used as a guest house.



The large rooms served well as a barracks. Their sleeping accommodations consisted of bunk beds with two or more women sharing a room. Kitchen facilities permitted the women to make a snack in the evening. Kit inspections were not terribly important at the C.W.A.C. Barracks, but the morning inspection was. Everything had to be just so.

But you had this inspection in the morning and you were supposed to have everything right. And your hair had to be an inch above your collar. This friend of mine from Montreal would put her hair up in curlers at night. She'd come outside at Niagara [in the morning] and it was damp and it would just go plunk and it would be down on her collar and she was forever being charged because her hair was on her collar. Then she'd have to wash floors or do something at night because she'd been confined to barracks. If I was on duty, Orderly Corporal, I never said anything if her hair was hanging down. But every once in a while, Sergeant Mason would appear in the morning, and when she did and caught you, she'd put you on charge.

Cpl Hazel Walker

Men, of course, were not allowed in the C.W.A.C. barracks. A man courting a C.W.A.C. had to present himself at the front desk, whereupon the lady of his affection would be summoned. The women, with so many men at camp, could be choosy, and could set up their own special conditions for would-be suitors to meet.

And we had one come up and worked for a while in the Orderly Room, and his father was supposed to have gold mines in South America. Always telling us stuff. And he was always telling me he was going to take me out. Finally I said to him "The only place I would go with you is church." So one Sunday night, somebody yells out "Hey, Walker, there's a guy downstairs." So I went down and here he is. It's half past six. "O.K., you going to church?" I nearly died. So we went to church. But he got posted soon after that and I never went out with him again.

Cpl Hazel Walker

A common complaint of the enlisted man was that the C.W.A.C.s sometimes preferred the company of the more highly paid officer. Inasmuch as it was forbidden for officers to date Other Ranks, care had to be taken when stepping out together in

this manner. One way was for the C.W.A.C. to wear her rain coat because it bore no rank insignia. It was not fool proof though, for the enlisted woman's badge was slightly different from that of the officers. The sergeants were always sufficiently sharp eyed to spot the difference but did not always take disciplinary action.

The uniform of the Canadian Women's Army Corps was well designed and was voted the most attractive of all North American women's military uniforms.

We had brown oxfords and we had nylon stockings for work but silk for dress. We had a khaki skirt and a khaki jacket, with brass buttons that said CWAC and we had two Athenia badges, she was the Goddess of War, up on our lapels. And we had a khaki purse with a brown strap that went under your epaulette. And we had a cap. The officers had a cut-out badge; the girls had a built-in badge, with a Maple Leaf. You had two uniforms like that. Then you got two beige uniforms for the summer which wrinkled and were terrible. You got five shirts, and a couple of ties. You could have all the nylon stockings you wanted but your silk ones, you had to show the runs to get new ones. You got two pairs of oxfords and you got a pair of fatigue shoes, a pair of fatigue overalls, a pair of shorts, a sweater, a pullover sweater, a rain coat, a winter coat and overshoes with buckles.

Cpl Hazel Walker

C.W.A.C. posters of the time gave tips on grooming and carriage, pointing out that even though in uniform, a woman could be neatly and attractively attired. This, however, did not prevent the women, when out of sight of the camp, from rolling up the waistband of the skirt a tuck or two to shorten it to a more flattering length.

Monday night was the night the women drew their supplies from the Quartermaster Stores. They had, of course, the need for personal hygiene supplies such as sanitary napkins. This was a subject that, unlike today, was not talked about publicly. And far from being advertised as these products are today, the products were then supplied to retail stores, factory wrapped in unmarked brown paper. On Monday nights, the Quartermaster Stores was open, and the women could help themselves to the supply of sanitary napkins.

What puzzled the Adjutant was why with only a relatively small number of C.W.A.C.s on base, why the consumption of this product should be so high. Being both chivalrous and wise, he never enquired.

On those Monday nights when we had to stay in, our Quartermaster Store was open and we could go in and help ourselves to Kotex, or ask for stockings or prove that we needed something and they'd give it to you. And anyway, we all found out that Kotex was great for shining shoes. So of course we'd get a box every week, or even two boxes and we would just use them once maybe and throw them away. The quartermaster was in the Orderly Room when he was telling the Adjutant that he couldn't understand it. He had only so many girls in camp and they were going through boxes and boxes. The Adjutant didn't know why. He couldn't understand either, and he said "Well, if they need it, they need it. You'll have to order it". And Joyce and I are looking all over and we didn't say a word.

Cpl Hazel Walker

The Canadian Women's Army Corps performed many vital war services in Canada and overseas. They performed their assigned duties with vigour, despatch and pride. And by performing these tasks, they released men for the vital fighting role overseas. They served with distinction, but were never able to escape their nickname, for wherever they went, there, from the back of the bus or from around the corner, came the call "Quack, Quack". It was a nickname that was as proudly held as the name of any Canadian regiment.

## CHAPTER V - Post-War Years Again

### FIRST POST



There were celebrations the world over on VE Day. And Niagara-on-the-lake was no exception. Corporal Hazel Walker of the Canadian Women's Army Corps was at Camp Niagara on VE Day.

I was on duty the day the war was over, the night the war was over and somebody came in and told me, and then a colonel came tearing over and he was phoning for the Provosts (Military Police) to go and board up downtown, the liquor store and all that. Apparently it was wild downtown. The men were all down the main street. This friend of mine, a girl sergeant and she had a bottle of champagne in the house and she decided she and I had better go

downtown when I was off duty. So on our way over, I waited outside the Sergeants' Mess while she went in. We had a fish pond in front, and all of a sudden about four sergeants came out and they grabbed me and they're taking everybody through the fish pond. It wasn't very deep but it did wet my skirt. My other one was at the cleaners, so I didn't know what the heck I was going to do because my skirt was soaking wet, but anyway they took me through and I was trying not to let the books and the mail fall in. Then we went home and there were men all over the barracks.

I went upstairs and I met a man in the hall and they had beer bottles, and I don't know where the officer was. I guess she was out in the Officers' Mess. But anyway Molly got her bottle of champagne and we went downtown and that's how I knew it was so packed. We met a couple of paratroopers; one was a Frenchman, an Acadian. That's the first time I ever really heard the poem Evangeline. So anyhow, she opened her Champagne. I don't drink so I stood there and looking stupid I guess, and then we came back into the camp and we met one of the officers and he said "Sit there, what would you like to drink?" So he'd go in the Officers' Mess and bring it out to these guys and to her and he'd come out every so often and say "Do you want another one...?"

These two guys thought it was great.

Cpl Hazel Walker



Back in Europe, some regiments were detailed as occupation forces to keep the peace and to begin the overwhelming task of housing, clothing and feeding the destitute people who survived the war, but who could not alone survive the oncoming winter. Others were coming home.

The First Canadian Parachute Battalion under the command of then Lieutenant Colonel Fraser Eadie returned to Canada after VE Day, the first fighting battalion to do so as a unit, and was granted a thirty-day leave to visit home. The men then came to Camp Niagara to prepare for the assault on the Japan. Volunteers were called for duty in the Pacific.

We had come home from England, arriving in Canada on the 22nd of June. We sent the troops home to their respective military districts, where they were given a thirty-day leave, and their orders were to report back to Camp Niagara at the conclusion of their leave. So that would bring us into camp Niagara with our advance party somewhere about the 20th of July. 1945. with the balance of the troops arriving in dribs and drabs in trains by way of St. Catharines, and then trained down to Niagara, troop trains through 'til the end of July.

Lieutenant Colonel Fraser Eadie  
Officer Commanding  
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion

The Battalion was the first organized land unit to be returned from Europe, that is. a fighting organization. We came back as a full battalion, plus all our reinforcements and I think we were about 1200 strong. We landed in Halifax, marched through the streets of Halifax. came to Niagara-on-the- Lake and then broke up for leave. (People with Three wounds were released) and then reconcentrated in Niagara-on-the-Lake... around the end of July or early August. It was just before VJ Day.

Lieutenant General Stanley C. Waters  
Second In Command  
1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion

The commanding officer, then Lieutenant-Colonel Fraser Eadie, let the battalion get itself into position and on the ground under his second in command, then Major Stanley C. Waters (who was to retire some years later as Lieutenant-General, Commander, Mobile Command).

Stan had everything in order for when I arrived, and I came down with my wife as a matter of fact. We had stopped off in Toronto for a couple of days to attend a ceremony on the Old City Hall steps for our Victoria Cross Winner, Fred Totten, and so that took a couple of days and then off we went to Niagara. When I got into the camp, it was a tented camp, the marquees for the dining halls and the marquees for the offices and bell tents for the soldiers and the officers.

Col. Fraser Eadie

It was difficult to keep the men busy. Young, active and accustomed to action, the men found much of the time at Camp Niagara unproductive. They had no weapons, no aircraft available for jumping, and no parachute equipment of any kind. The Battalion had no new task to perform.

We would report for roll call in bathing suits or whatever, then  
be dismissed for the day.

Private R.J. Daigle  
Mortar Platoon  
1 S1 Canadian Parachute Battalion

A high priced organization because we were getting what was  
the equivalent of flying pay. Two dollars a day for officers and  
fifty cents I think it was for the troopers.

Col Fraser Eadie

But there was a problem with the flying pay, and the accounting finally caught up  
with the battalion.

How many remember the day Colonel Fraser Eadie called a Battalion Parade to announce that he had been in Ottawa for a few days, trying to change the decision of our politicians on cutting off our jump pay from May 2nd, 1945 when we met the Russians in Weismar until the end of our 30 day leave after arriving home? All privates like myself owed the government around \$90.00. N.C.O.s and officers owed more. They started taking the money back in the Aug. pay leaving a private about \$2.50 per pay for 2 weeks. What a slap in the face from the country we had been risking our lives for. It's a good thing the war ended when it did, they would have had a hard time getting enough volunteers to form a battalion. This thing still bothers me 45 years later.

Pvt R.J. Daigle

Efforts were made to sign men up for service in the Pacific theatre of war. Initially, they were to form a parachute battalion, but it is not clear how dedicated the efforts were in this regard.

I had been told in May '45 when we were at Weismar in the Baltic by General Dempsey who knew that the Canadian government wanted us all to volunteer to go to the Pacific, "There's no need to volunteer to go to the Pacific. I think you'll

find that things will be well in hand by the time you've gone home and had your leave . We actually wanted to stay with 6th Airborne Division who we understood were going to Burma.

Col Fraser Eadie

There was more celebrating on VJ Day. Some of the men went to Buffalo to celebrate. And celebrate they did, to the extent that they were arrested by the Buffalo police. Their commanding officer had to go to rescue them.

It was kind of funny because both of these fellows were excellent sergeants, top rate fellows and so on. So I went over to bail them out, and I never saw two more bedraggled men in my whole life. But they said yes, that they had done exactly what the police had said they had done and they were guilty as all get out. So the Police Sergeant said to me "Well, we're going to have to charge these fellows", and I said "Oh no, you can't do that. They're under my jurisdiction. They're in a foreign country, you know. As far as the Canadian Forces are concerned, we're obliged to look after our own people and charge them under our own military law, so you'll have to turn them over to me." Well, he wasn't too sure whether I was right or wrong, but he was decent enough to do it.

Col Fraser Eadie

On the way back to Camp Niagara, shepherding his charges past an enquiring customs officer, the colonel questioned his men.

I said to one fellow, "You know, you fathead, why did you have to go and take on the whole Buffalo Police Force?" "I didn't know there was that many of them," he said. "But there's quite a few."

Col Fraser Eadie

The civilians had their celebrations too. Upon hearing the news of the end of the war, the local laundryman is said to have closed his shop for three days while he celebrated. This caused some small problem for many of the paratroopers had their shirts in to be laundered, and it was reported that there wasn't a clean shirt in the regiment.

There has always been considerable cooperation between the military and the civilian population at Niagara-on-the-Lake, each helping the other whenever possible. The civilians were very kind and they invited a good number of the soldiers into their homes for dinner. The commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion received a seemingly strange request from the mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

When we first arrived there, I was kind of surprised to get a message from the mayor to say would I please carry on with the normal procedure of sending a soldier to the fire hall each day. And I couldn't quite understand what that was all about. And, you know, I couldn't imagine anyone wanting to guard the fire hall in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

So I phoned the mayor and I said, "I'm a little surprised about this.

Does this man come fully armed?"

"Oh no" he said. "We have a volunteer fire department but we have to have one man on duty all the time and he gets pretty lonely. And we just thought if you could send a man down the way the other regiments had, why, it would make life easier for our fellow.

"Why", I said, "We can do that. I'll do better than that. I'll send six or seven down and they can have a whole bunch of fun." So we set up a duty roster. Six guys to the fire hall every morning and so the fellows would go down there and take a volleyball with them, play a little volleyball in the backyard of the fire hall, and sit out in chairs and ogle the women and so on.

Col Fraser Eadie

However, some who came to Camp Niagara with the, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion, who did not feel quite so at home.

Coming from Montreal, and having travelled out in the prairies and spending some time in the U.K., visiting most of the U.K. and some time on the continent, I must say for the record that I did not find the people in Niagara-on-the-lake too cordial. It was in my view. a clannish society who had failed to emancipate, a son of Orangeman stronghold, probably for worthwhile reasons that have always escaped me. They viewed the military as a threat to their virginity in many ways and appeared puzzled by the presence of some of us of French R.C. culture ... "The Maple Leaf For Ever" was more popular than "Oh Canada" . I saw more British flags than when I was in England.

Lieutenant Marcel Chagnon  
1st Canadian Parachute Battalion  
St. Sauveur des Monts, Quebec



Fortunately the feelings have softened over the years, and Camp Niagara is almost universally remembered fondly by the men and by the many new brides and wives who came to Niagara-on-the-lake with them at the war's end.

Only once did I return to Niagara-on-the-Lake, ten years ago, and I should return for although I spent only two months on the shore of lake Ontario I learned to love the place, the camp, the people, the music and the flag [under] which I fought ... Really,

I must take [my wife] back and show her how the people emancipate. What do you think?

Lt. Marcel Chagnon

There was, never the less, good feeling and good cooperation between the military and the area's civilian population. As was the case throughout the country during the war years there was a severe labour shortage. The shortage of agricultural workers needed to bring in the harvest was particularly acute.

I found out through, I guess it was the mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, that the general practice had been for the local farmers to come into the camp area and see if they could obtain some volunteers to help them with the ... apple and peach harvest that they were facing. Would we be in any position to help? So we passed it out to the Company Commanders and they chatted it over with the fellows and they said they'd give it a go and see what it was like. How did it work out? Well, there'd be a truck at the gate to pick up anybody that wanted to volunteer. .. "Be at the gate at 7:30", or whatever it was, "and you can go and pick fruit." You climbed up in a tree and you picked a fruit. What you eat. I guess, is on your own. Would give the farmer a fair shake.

Well the first day there was a couple of trucks there and I suppose' 5 or 20 fellows went. Came back that night with glowing stories of what a wonderful day they had, stripped to the waist, having a heck of a time picking and eating fruit and just having a grand time in the sun. And it was not only that but you'd get paid for it.

Well the following day there must have been a hundred fellows waiting at the gate for the trucks to come, and so over a period of three or four days, there would probably be as many as a dozen trucks at the gate ... Many of the farmers told me personally that they had never experienced help such as they were getting from our battalion, for the amount they would pick in a day and the fun they had doing it ... They were delighted with what our fellows were doing, and our fellows were delighted with the opportunity to get away from the Company Sergeant-Major, and miss parades, and have a whale of a time in an orchard.

Col Fraser Eadie

Having helped with the harvesting of fresh produce, and being in an agricultural belt, it did not seem proper that the cooks should serve dehydrated potatoes.

You know we lived down in the fruit belt and I mean we were dead against these, and it wouldn't go over. It just didn't go over.

We just couldn't eat the darn things. That's all there was to it.

Sergeant Ruth Martin (nee Mason)  
Canadian Women's Army Corps

The fruit was all right though. But sometimes the CWACs who were helping with the harvest thought they were being made the butt of an agricultural joke.

I remember we went out after hours and helped pick peaches. And we met one particular fruit farmer. He said "You know, if you eat the ones off the ground, they're much better." So you know at that age, at that stage where you're "Oh yeah, if you think we're going to eat them off the ground, poohie on him."

But anyhow, one time one of the girls picked one up off the ground. It was big. Big and juicy and just right. You know they were just wonderful, and we ate them..., Ooh, he was doing us a favour but we didn't appreciate it.

Sgt Ruth Martin

And once again there was an administrative mix-up with the pay for there was some considerable confusion concerning the wages paid the soldiers for picking fruit.

Well, I was 2IC [2nd in Command), I guess, at the time. And I had not read all the damn regulations, the standing orders. And when we got these offers for people to go out on pay, they were really quite generous. And I thought, well, that's very good. So we put soldiers out everywhere working for anywhere from, I guess, eight to twelve bucks a day. Which was a lot of money then.

And I hadn't read anywhere that when they do that, you had to strike them off their normal pay of the military. They were not supposed to get two rates of pay. When they were being paid as a soldier, they were supposed to be paid as a soldier. Or paid as, they have some special phrase for it, as an emergency worker. And I paid them both ways. So they were fat, dumb and happy and so was I. We had officers out working and we were trying to keep ourselves busy. And when the story unfolded, MD2 (Military District 2), and I've forgotten who the General was there, was very

upset. I went smartly off to Toronto to try to explain the whole thing. And they weren't satisfied. but there wasn't a hell of a lot they could do at the time, I guess, because the soldiers were going. We had drafts leaving. I would guess, every week for release. So there was a sort of double pay period there and that certainly didn't do morale any harm.

L/Gen Stanley C. Waters

There were other accounting mix-ups as well. Each regiment had its own mess funds and emergency funds to be used for the regiment's benefit. And there are many stories throughout regimental histories of the efforts of the accounting personnel to reconcile these various accounts. Funds quite simply had to be accounted for, and when a battalion or regiment was disbanded, the unused funds had to be turned over to a central fund administered by the government. The trick was to turn over as little as possible.

I did read the regulations on that. We had a couple of bright young lawyers and one of them had a buddy who was a lawyer in Toronto. And we sat down and went through all these regulations and the gist of the regulations was that all the profits we had accumulated in all of our Regimental funds had to be turned back into a central fund unless they had been expended on regimental activities. And we built up quite a sizeable Regimental Fund. Don't ask me how much it was, but it was quite a large one. We had an Officers Mess Fund, a Sergeants Mess Fund and A Corporals Mess Fund and a Regimental Fund. And I think we had some kind of Emergency Fund. And I got advice from the lawyers and they said, well, consolidate them all. And do something with it. And then when you finally disband the unit and you have to obey these regulations you turn one dollar back, which will be the balance and that will satisfy the regulations."

And what we did, we founded the Jeff Nickolen Memorial Trophy Fund [in memory of Jeff Nickolen who had played for

Winnipeg in the Western Conference of the Canadian Football League]. We bought a great silver trophy for Jeff Nickolen [who had been killed in action and who] had been the Commanding Officer of the Battalion. I've forgotten how many dollars went into that. And then we funded it for a whole ten years, or it might have been fifteen years of replica trophies. This absorbed the complete Regimental Fund.

And then the stuff that was coming in on a day to day basis we, you know, we operated practically on a non-profit level. We gave away a lot of things. Had prizes for every possible kind of competition so that we met our objective of having about a dollar to turn back when they finally disbanded the regiment.

Which caused another damned inquiry.

L/Gen Stanley C. Waters



Not all the accounting connected with the disbanding of a regiment concerned money. A good portion of it concerned equipment and supplies. As men were sent out on draft for demobilisation or reassignment to new units, every piece of equipment previously issued by the Quartermaster had to be accounted for. And every shortage was questioned, and in some cases, a demand was made for payment for the shortage. There is the story of the missing tent pegs charged to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion as it turned in its equipment.

So we sent a draft out there [the joint air school at Rivers, Manitoba), packaged up the rest of the fellows to ship them back to their respective military districts for final discharge to civilian life. Of course this meant as you shipped out a draft, then tents had to come down and be returned to the ordnance people who happened to have a fellow there by the name of Wilt Hampson who was, I think, a Captain of Ordnance, and he was handling the return of all the equipment that we had drawn. So that we'd send a batch out and down would come tents and the floors and the tent pegs and the canvas would all get trundled down to his place and he'd mark them off that so many more had come in against the total. And I think it was a saviour that we did it this way rather than taking it all down at once and saying "There it is, count it up", because we were able to fudge

it a little bit. We were minus a couple of marquee walls ... and 50,000 tent pegs believe it or not. Well by the time we got everything in, our Quartermaster, a fellow by the name of Eddie Freel who lives in Kingston now, wound up as a Colonel with the RCRs I guess. Between us we got to turning this stuff in to the ordnance people and there was always a tremendous argument as to whether or not sufficient of each had been turned in. But Eddie Freel was perhaps one of the army's better quartermasters. He had most of the answers and several of the questions too. so that made it a little easier for us to fog the ordnance people and get away with some of the shortages. However when all the shortages were listed and sent in to Military District 2, I had been sent for by [the General] again and what was I going to do about it. It was all going to be charged to my personal account and I said "That's fine; you go right ahead and do that. I'll give you the bank book and you figure out what you're going to get out of me. Because there's no way that this is going to happen, you can't prove that we didn't turn them in." And that went on for a while. But he zeroed in, rather stupidly, I thought, on something like 50,000 tent pegs. Now that had to be tent pegs for everybody that had ever served in that camp. Now certainly we got rid of some tent pegs because fellows had a little fire going at night outside the tent, sat around, and somebody with a guitar sang a few ribald songs, and drank a

few beers and so on... However, we had a ball on that one and I'm afraid that I didn't sort of do anything for my own popularity with the senior officers at MD2. But then I wasn't trying to.

Col Fraser Eadie

The problem of the tent peg shortage did not go away. In true army fashion, the tent pegs had to be accounted for properly and the search for their actual disposition continued for some time.

I, as the 2IC, had to accept responsibility for all those things, You know, you can't be short 50,000 tent pegs to start with, So I found there were a lot of bookkeeping and accounting problems that we hadn't been very diligent about observing. As a combat battalion, we were not concerned about tent pegs, tent floors and things of that nature. And I believe they, in fact, instituted a Court of Inquiry from, again MD2, which was kind of my nemesis there. They were young staff officers who kept phoning ·what about this· and ·what about that, And I must confess I didn't know anything about the Canadian Regulations, I hadn't taken the trouble to look at them and I was not interested, I had other things to occupy my time, like keeping those soldiers out of jail. Which was another thing, because you get energetic young male animals like that, they can, if you don't keep them tired and active and challenged, they can cause you some interesting problems. We had a constant series of queries and investigations and that followed me for several years when I stayed in the army. They kept coming back to me for further statements and so on, but eventually nothing came of it. So I dismissed all that from my mind; staff officers who were trying to be quite officious about shortages. And you'd only been there, you know, we hadn't been there very long. And they had shortages which indicated they were trying to pick up the shortages of many of the battalions that had served, that had

gone through there. They were going to do a final audit I guess,  
and we were going to be the fall guys and I took umbrage to  
that and guess I wasn't too cooperative in some ways.

L/Gen Stanley C. Waters

There were other shortages that could likely have been charged to the battalion.

We were minus a couple of marquee walls which were, I  
suppose, six feet of good width of canvas about thirty feet long  
that I'm sure got trundled off and sold to somebody. I'm sure  
[someone] got away with two meat slicing machines and some  
other stuff we had in the kitchen. There were about six  
typewriters that went adrift and two trucks, believe it or not.

Col. Fraser Eadie

The Kent Regiment, which had served on Canada's west coast before occupying in the barracks at Camp Niagara, left camp, and by early autumn of 1945, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, had gone too, leaving the camp empty. And a year or two after the end of the war, the Department of National Defence began to demolish some buildings and to sell and remove others at Camp Niagara and at camps across Canada. Camp Niagara gradually resumed its pastoral appearance as a Brigade Camp as buildings along the edge of the Common and in Paradise Grove were removed. Some of the buildings were moved to take on a new function and are still in use today. One wing of an H hut was moved to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and bricked over to become part of the Kirk Hall. This is the part of the building parallel to Gage Street. Another building, a gymnasium, with its arched roof was moved to Picton Street to become the Parish Hall for St. Vincent de Paul Church at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Other small buildings were moved to various farms throughout the Niagara peninsula. The large Drill Hall was dismantled and moved to Welland, Ontario where it continues to serve as a curling club. Once dismantled, even a large building could be moved a considerable distance.

I was working for a contractor after the war, 1947-48. And the buildings were sold off to various people. I know one came to Port Hope, Ontario for an annex for one of the schools here. And we went up and took it apart in pieces and stripped it down and transported it... It's Dr. Powers School on Ward Street, and that H-Hut is along the west side of the school.

Sergeant Major Herbert Elliston  
Midland Regiment  
Port Hope, Ontario

Today, there is virtually no evidence of any war-time buildings having been at Camp Niagara. But the trees, grown much larger now, that once lined the camp's roads and walkways can still be seen.

Camp Niagara became once again a summer militia camp, and the regiments that had attended camp there before the war began to attend summer camp again. Into the 1950s, the militia in Canada was very active and very visible. It was relatively rich in supplies and equipment and had substantial numbers of highly qualified men to lead the ranks.

This was the time of the Korean Conflict, Canada's forgotten war. While Canada made a substantial contribution in Korea, the police action placed limited demands on Canada and Camp Niagara was not directly affected by it. But wherever in Canada there was a regiment the town folk saw uniformed men at their weekly parade at the armoury. And on every suitable occasion there was a parade through town. Marching in column of threes, with the regimental band and such vehicles or guns or other mobile equipment as the regiment might possess, and sometimes accompanied by such other uniformed groups as the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps, the Royal Canadian Army Cadets, the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, the militia was a highly visible part of community life.



And very prominent in that militia were the decorated battle-experienced veterans. Men who knew what tactics and methods worked and who were willing to share their knowledge with the younger recruits. Particularly respected was the veteran NCO.

Probably the person I respected most was a sergeant and I can't remember his name, but he was a Korean War veteran. He was very down to earth, not a pompous individual... There was another fellow who also commanded a lot of respect. He was the Regimental Sergeant Major and [had] the loudest voice I've ever heard and he's the one that sort of softened us up and worked us into shape before the CO came in. Put us through a few marching drills and so on and certainly you didn't misbehave when that fellow was in amongst you.

Brian Blois  
Royal Hamilton light Infantry

Discipline in its broadest sense of being taught to act quickly and properly in concert with others continued to be of paramount importance as was uniformity in appearance. Great attention was paid to the soldier's standard of dress. Everything was to be complete, clean and in good condition. Boots, buttons and badges were to be highly shined as a matter of personal pride in one's regiment. Given the pebbled finish of the army boot as it was issued, achieving a high shine took a lot of elbow grease and some special techniques. And the same was true for the buttons and cap badge.

Yeah, we worked a lot on the uniforms really. Polishing the boots, and not just polishing them, but, oh, all kinds of semi-mystical routines. And some people rubbed their boots with the end of a chicken leg bone to get all the little pebbly grain out of it so it would take a higher shine. I think the one I finally arrived at was the back of a spoon and you would heat the shoe polish to make it run into the pores and fill the pores. It was really, polished shoes were the epitome of military life. Same with the cap badge. I seem to recall taking a, this was cheating of course, I took a file or wire brush on an electric grinder and ground down some of my cap badge so that the little veins and the maple leaf were almost nonexistent so it took a much higher polish and then I had to solder the little there was some kind of

silver crest that was soldered on to it, put that back on, and it certainly paid dividends. I had the shiniest cap badge around and no one could figure out how I did it.

Brian Blois

Often times going to camp was a military exercise. Units based well north of Toronto still came by train to Camp Niagara, or in some cases, to Toronto to board the S.S. Cayuga, then across the lake to Niagara. Toronto area units continued to use the Cayuga until it was retired in the late 1950s. But for the most part, in the 1950s, different modes prevailed. From Port Hope, Ontario, the Midland Regiment used a chartered bus, towing their six pounder gun behind the regiment's truck. The Lorne Scots from Brampton towed their two six-pounders and two borrowed from other regiments. Others close to Niagara-on-the-Lake went by truck in a full scale transport exercise. And for the recruits who were too young to have been in the war, arriving at the embarkation point was a new and exciting experience as Colour Sergeant Colwyn Beynon of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry recalls.

The duffel bag loaded with all the items required for my first stay at Niagara, I arrived at the Armouries, quickening my noisy pace down Jane Street North as I approached the fortress-like old building. The noisy pace I referred to was caused by a once familiar sound of steel cleats on pavement, long gone now with the introduction of combat boots with rubber soles in 1968. Entering the Armoury through the huge wooden main gate, I made my way to B Company room where already a crowd of my young companions had arrived, obviously as excited as I was. Now out of our baggy coveralls from recruit days, we really looked and felt the part as defenders of Canada.

Colour Sergeant Colwyn Beynon  
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. Wentwonh Regiment  
Hamilton, Ontario.

The movement to camp could have been accomplished very easily in a straight-forward manner, but no lessons would have been learned. Colour Sergeant Beynon continues.

The sergeants were quick to form us up in 3 ranks, roll call was done and we were brought to the "Open Order" for pre-camp kit inspection. Duffle bags were emptied and articles therein placed in specific order on the parade square where the corporals could view it all. It is important to note that for the most part the sergeants and corporals were all World War II veterans with vast experience in such matters and a tremendous influence on all of us in everything we thought and did. Water bottles were filled and corks pressed firmly in place and attached to our skeleton web equipment which consisted of a web belt, cross straps, basic pouches, small pack, water bottle, bayonet, ground sheet. A small pack stored cleaning equipment, Nugget boot polish, two brushes, a polishing cloth, mess tins, knife, fork and spoon, housewife (small sewing kit, face cloth, towel and soap, not to mention a polished steel mirror and comb. The ground sheet of rubber lined canvas was neatly rolled and held down under the cross straps of the small pack. Our duffle bags contained steel helmet, shirts, socks, sports clothing, running shoes, shaving tackle and personal belongings such as cameras, radios, flashlights, etc.

Col/Sgt Colwyn Beynon

The uniform for militia camp from just after the war until about 1950 was the prewar KDs or khaki drill with heavy cotton tunic with patch pockets, epaulettes, regimental brass buttons, short knee length trousers with the long three-inch-wide khaki puttees. The uniform was completed with a pith or cork helmet (replacing the Cow's Breakfast straw hat of the early years). The helmet had a chin strap but no cap badge. Black ankle boots with steel horseshoe heel and toe cleats rounded out the kit which was tied together in the middle with a cotton belt with a brass buckle. A tan shirt with black tie did little to ease the effects of the Niagara heat when on parade.

In the early 1950s the militia went to camp with a cotton shirt with the sleeves rolled up and held in place by a tab and button sewn to the inside of each sleeve above the elbow. The open collar was buttoned down. There was also a white T shirt with short sleeves. The trousers were the World War II battle dress trousers with the very useful pockets on the leg. Web anklets known as gaiters or perhaps puttees were worn and lead weights could be placed at the bottom of each pant leg to help it drape properly over the gaiters. The World War II wedge cap was replaced with a beret. By 1955 the new wrinkly T-dubs and bush clothing had been issued.

And so, after the kit inspection, it was off to camp. On the order to "Mount Up", the World War II snub-nosed universal design trucks arrived and lined up. The drivers jumped down from the right side of the truck, these being the right hand drive vehicles which before the introduction of the automotive turn signal, carried a little sign on the rear which stated to following drivers "Right Hand Drive - No Turn Signals". Tail gates were dropped, duffle bags loaded into some of the trucks and men into others, The DRs, the Despatch Riders who were to guide and protect the convoy on the open road revved the engines of their single seat Harley Davidson motorcycles. Often they sat somewhat forward of the seat, actually sitting on the gas tank to effect a better balance on the road, or over rough terrain.

The DRs all sergeants were resplendent in their calf length driving boots. White helmets, white belts and gauntlets, pistols with khaki lanyards whitened were worn, and I envied them their warlike appearance. On a whistle blast, the boys clambered up the tail gates, found their places on the fold-down side benches and waited while the driver counted them and slammed the tail gate home with a bang, locking it in place with stay pins. Then he reported to the Transport Officer "Everyone aboard and accounted for". Ready at last, The RSM and the Adjutant passed each truck conferring with the drivers and the Corporals

in charge. Another whistle blast and the big hulking trucks ground into gear and headed out of the building, finally on their way, the DRs leapfrogging ahead to prevent cross traffic from interfering with the convoy.

Col/Sgt Colwyn Beynon

About twenty miles into the trip, the trucks stopped and the recruits were introduced into the necessities of life in the open.

Why did we stop? Well, we soon found out why. We were lined up on a side road off the highway obviously with a purpose in mind. The sergeants marched up and down the convoy shouting out the orders "Fall out lads, Piss Parade". A howl erupted immediately at this vulgar but funny statement and the order was very timely indeed. Filing off the tail gate, we made our way off the beaten track to "ease springs" to put it in a more delicate form ... We did a few PT drills to loosen up and had a swig of water which tasted tinny, then mounted up for the second leg of our journey to camp.

Col/Sgt Colwyn Beynon



Arriving outside the Main Gate at Camp Niagara, they dismounted, were "told off" into platoons, and given the proud order by their commanding officer, "Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, Wentworth Regiment, Quick March". The Regimental Bugle Band played the Regimental March, telling everyone the Rileys were back. And in turn , each regiment arriving at Camp Niagara, the Perth's, the Algonquins, the Oxford Rifles, the Elgin Regiment, the Argylls and all the others announced their presence with their regimental bugles, trumpets or pipes.

Marching, as the light infantry does, at 140 paces to the minute, the Rileys entered the camp with the Camp Commandant taking the "Eyes Right" salute. Down the main road , they marched until halted at the 3rd Infantry Brigade tent lines. "Right Turn", "Right Dress", "Eyes Front". "Order Arms", "Stand at Ease", "Stand Easy". They were at Niagara Summer Camp. They were not at home now with Mom who called her son "Dear", but in a tented camp with a Regimental Sergeant Major who ordered them about and called them in the manner of the Imperial army, "horrid little people". And mothers were grateful because their sons learned to make their beds.

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment from St. Catharines, Ontario, attended Camp Niagara too. Private Bill Smy was there in 1957 (Private Smy was to become Lieutenant-Colonel, Officer Commanding, Lincoln and Welland Regiment from 1979 to 1983 and then to take a Class C Call Out as a Major in Mobile Command Headquarters). He remembers what the camp looked like.

And so it would have been June, July of that summer (1957) that I was first there. In camps of those days, with Queen's Parade running almost north and south of you, envisage on the east side normally the units we were part of what was called 17 Militia Group... On the east side of the road would be the main Orderly Room which was a large marquee and on the west side of the road you'd start with the officers' tents, then there were some QM tents if I recall correctly, then the bell tents for the enlisted men, and down at the other end were the Sergeants' tents and the various messes in each unit, so there was a whole series of unit lines running at right angles to the Queen's Parade. And there were common showers, I just forget exactly where they were but I can recall them being set up in big large marquee tents. And the latrines were old wooden types which were dragged there, brought there by truck and

then dragged into position ... The other thing I recall is the main camp is where I said, running along Queens Parade, but the female camp in those days was up against Butler's Barracks, just to the rear of the barracks. The Canadian Women's Army Corps usually occupied that, and that was their tented area.

Maj. Bill Smy

The training area was located along the shore of Lake Ontario. The rifle ranges were there.

To the west of the Rifle Ranges, the area by the sewage lagoon was a rocket launcher range at that time. It stretched along through what we now refer to as the old ruins, which in my day was the Burnt Out House. And running up to the west edge there was a mental health complex right on the lake. Across where the cemetery is, was a part of the military training area, where that little park is, was also the military training area.

Coming back east along the other side of the road, there are some houses in there now, but that was all military. Just across from the old ruins of the Burnt Out House there are some new houses, 25, 30 years old. There was a strip of military property

in there. So that was the extent of the military property in there... A very small training area.

Maj. Bill Smy

Camp Niagara was a small camp, but despite its size, there still was room enough to give at least some small degree of experience with the modern weaponry of World War II. Infantry units like the Midland Regiment and the Lorne Scots, having towed their six-pounders behind their trucks, took them to the lakeshore where they fired blanks over the lake.

It seems to me that from the "Go", we could unhook the six-pounder, swing it around, get it into firing position and fire off six rounds and be on our way out of there in two minutes which was pretty fast.

Colonel Ted Conover  
Lorne Scots  
Brampton, Ontario

There was a strong spirit of competition in these drills, not just against others, but against the regiment's own standards. There was a very great unwillingness to let the other members of the crew down, even when hurt or injured.

I remember we had one very dedicated Number 1 on the 6 Pounder in those days. And after that demonstration, Duke Tate was his name, but I remember talking to him after the demonstration and seeing him after, and all his knuckles were bleeding. He was ramming them in so fast and he was still ramming them in and his knuckles were all bleeding from ramming in the rounds to make sure we won the competition.

Col. Ted Conover

Safety was of paramount importance on the ranges even when firing blanks or practice ammunition, for these are dangerous, even lethal, when improperly handled.

I guess right from the earliest days that I was there; the rules have been the same. When a unit arrived on the range and they were going to fire on the range, the first thing they did was put up the range flags. There is one right at the entrance to Lakeshore Road, a very large red flag you put up, and then you put up a very large red flag that's mounted on a pole that's on top of the butts. And, that can be seen from anywhere on the lake. When you are actually firing, there's a red flag and a green flag at both firing point and parapet so that if the red flags are up, you're actually firing. And when you're not firing you put the green flag up at the firing point and you can't move forward until the parapet gets up its green flag. On the lake side you would

put out two sentries. The one on the east would be right on the property boundary right at the foot of the civilian road that runs up to the cottages there. And just as it turns to the right, and goes into town, we used to have a sentry post there. I think it's still there and there was a telephone hookup that you hooked the field telephone to. And there was also a sentry on the west side of the sewage lagoon. Those were beach sentries to prevent somebody walking down the beach behind the butts.

Maj. Bill Smy

And sometimes the junior officers were given experience in the sounds of incoming fire and were taught to determine its direction and range.

The TDM, the Temporary Storage for ammunition is still there. It's a little steel Quonset hut there. There's an overlap at both ends between the edges of the Quonset roof (which is sodded over) and the doorway, like an indentation there. I can recall Colonel Dandy was the Commanding Officer at the time, having all the young officers standing there and having the mortar platoon fire practice mortars at the TOM so that you could get

the experience of hearing the whistle of the mortar coming down. Of course, there was no explosive in the practice round. but it would be thudding around down and that was, for a young officer who had never heard anybody shoot at him, an interesting experience. Colonel Dandy also believed that everybody should hear what it sounds like when a bullet passes over your head, and in front of the 100 yard firing point, there's an indentation, sort of a small gully that runs between the firing point and the parapet. And he would have people lie there and then they would fire over their heads from the two or three hundred yard firing point, and the aim was to identify the type of weapon that was being fired and the range from which it was being fired. The old "Crack and Thump". You hear the crack of the bullet going over your head and you'd hear the thump which would be the sound of the rifle or machine gun going off, and the time difference would give you an idea of how far away they were.

Maj. Bill Smy

Drivers qualified for their Army Drivers Licence and practiced driving over different types of terrain. There were Bren Gun Carriers and tracked personnel carriers for the troops to practice assaults.

Well, I probably went to my first camp at Camp Niagara in about 1951. I was a Captain, the Acting Company Commander of the Support Company. We had about the strongest company in the regiment in those days because we had some things a little fancier to train with such as carriers, mortars and that type of thing which made it a little more interesting. I do remember we had several very wild carrier driving courses out there and I guess we used to use an area opposite the ranges. There was an area in there, a little bit of a rough area out in that road opposite the ranges that we used ... I guess the first camp I went to I spent my whole week at camp conducting these carrier driver courses in that area.

Col Ted Conover



In the mid-1950s the infantry regiments conducted familiarization training exercises with four Sherman tanks.

Basically it was, you get in the tank, and they take you around a predetermined course and it was just like driving around in a great big circle just as familiarization. There was no firing of weapons from the tank or anything like that.

Maj. Bill Smy

The men were trained in the firing of mortars, flame throwers and rocket launchers. Demonstrations were given with the Iroquois flame thrower being used against simulated positions built with sand bags. Beside the rifle range was another very high set of butts that served as the backstop for the rocket launcher. The 3.5 inch rocket with a non-explosive practice warhead was fired from very near the road . It was necessary to have sentries posted on the road to stop traffic because the back blast area extended into the roadway. There was a grenade range where both non-explosive and explosive grenades were thrown. And on the rifle range they fired the .303 Lee Enfield rifle, pistols, the Bren gun and the Sten Gun. The Sten gun was the weapon that encouraged a young man to enlist.

It was a dangerous weapon. I recall reading once that the British produced them for about 98 cents each in the production line. The very first Sten Guns that I saw all had Chinese markings on them. They had originally been destined for China... The ones in the latter part of their use were very, very worn. I saw an individual drop one on the range once. The safety was so worn it just lay there and chattered away until it emptied itself. I've seen people standing not even with their finger on the trigger, but thinking that the safety was on, they would fire the weapon.

Maj. Bill Smv

Other things went wrong too, even after the camp had ended, leaving only the camp staff to tidy up.

My second summer there was 1954. Again I went back as camp staff. I was a little wiser by this time and I was a driver instead of Camp Mess Steward. But anyway, we stayed there all summer and the various Mil Groups came in and out and probably we were there for six or eight weeks. On the very last week when the last of the militia groups had left, we had to clean up the camp, so we were down at the firing ranges which were down along the lakeshore. And not having had any weapons or anything to fire all summer I it was quite a thrill. And I remember we were on the rocket range and the instructor, a huge great big burly sergeant was ranting and raving about how he had worked all day to put this target up because we had so many rounds of ammunition we had to get rid of because they weren't packing it up. And he wanted us to be careful with the target. It was a picture of a tank on a, probably a twenty foot frame. The first fellow up fired a rocket and blew the legs right off the target, and the target fell down and the rest of us just had to shoot the scantlings all down into the lake. But in the afternoon we got the privilege of joining the Royal Canadian Dragoons who had been down there at the ranges and they had Sherman tanks. And so after having been camp staff all summer, it was really a privilege to get these tank rides and we were running around as tank commanders and stuff, standing, leaning out of the turrets while the drivers were doing whatever

we told them to do. And then we had a kind of party to clean the place up. Well, I guess, I didn't see this, but I understand the party got pretty wild and that one of the RCDs drove one of the Shermans off the escarpment into the lake. It was about a twenty-five foot drop and it bent the [gun) barrel up like a pretzel on the tank.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. Masson  
Officer Commanding  
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders  
Cornwall, Ontario

Coincident with the activity in Militia training was a similar activity in Army Cadets in the nation's High Schools. Teachers, many of whom were World War II veterans, held commissions in the Cadet Services Branch of the Army, and served as officers and instructors. Cadets were trained in basic foot drill, ceremonial inspections and in some technical areas. Some high schools such as the one at Campbellford, Ontario had a rifle range in the school. Others, such as the one in Peterborough, Ontario used the rifle range in the armouries next door. Rifle training was part of the Health and Citizenship training given to the young men in these schools. Khaki uniforms were worn, with the red Maple Leaf shoulder patch, and the young men learned, as in the

militia the discipline involved in the polishing of boots and badges and in the habits of ready and timely execution of orders in concert with others.

The teacher - instructors attended summer camp to learn of the specific training goals of the Army Cadet program. At Camp Niagara sixty to seventy instructors would attend not only to learn of the current techniques of army training, but also to meet with one another in informal after hour's sessions. It was at these latter sessions that they were able to learn of each other's problems and to discover solutions. Training young men of junior high school age required techniques different from training the militia, and it was these needs that were addressed at camp.

I think the main consideration was that it was a matter of encouraging discipline of themselves, through their own people.

In other words, everybody who took responsibility for helping with the Cadet Corps was really (displaying) a type of discipline that they were exerting. Plus, the regular cadet was getting himself into the position where he could accept that kind of authority. So, I think, basically, my thinking was that this is a fair amount of good training in the fact that they can exert authority, but also accept authority. The Cadet Corps to me was simply an opportunity for students at that time to get another kind of education. And I think the business of the drill and the uniform and all that sort of thing were simply part of that.

Lieutenant-Colonel James McNab  
Cadet Services Branch  
Peterborough, Ontario

Training at Camp Niagara was serious business. But there was also some fun some after hours, some while on duty. There are stories of even senior NCOs climbing up one tent pole, across the tent top and down the other tent pole. It was done in the dark, of course and probably after enjoying a little libation. Each July 12, someone was sure to borrow a white horse from a local bakery or dairy and ride through camp as King William. The story that one such horse being somewhat used to backing up, backed into the Colonel's tent and sat down on the sleeping gentleman may not be totally true, but there is hardly an "Other Ranks" who would not readily wish it so.

On occasion, when the Pennant for Best Lines was awarded, the CO might order a "free issue" for everyone and put it on his unit expense account.

As the parties got louder and the hour later, strange apparitions could be seen flitting from tent to tent. One could almost anticipate that all hell was going to break loose, and it did. The bugle band formed up on the Common in a wide variety of kit. Some had underwear, shorts and ankle boots. Others managed to borrow Argyll kilts. A dozen different hats were seen to be worn and the whole thing took on the appearance of the Mardi

Gras.

With no colours to march on Parade, two small 13th (Battalion) pennants on a broom handle took their place and from nowhere came a canvas stretcher with a case of empty beer bottles on it.

The empties were symbolic of the end of a perfect party and were given a place of honour to the rear of our improvised colours ... It was at this moment that the bugle major, or his designate as the case may be, gave the order "RHU Bugle Band, Quick March". With that the drums and bugles thundered out their message to the world by playing the "Mountain Rose", our Regimental March Past. Heading on to the main road, we passed the lines of the other units attending camp, hoping to rouse them a little. When we got little response, it became apparent that we would have to attack on a flank. Doing so, we turned off the main camp road and wound our way to their tent lines, upsetting fire pails, tripping over tent lines and generally raising hell. This wee-hours confrontation ended by the unhappy losers of the Camp Pennant chasing us with pails of water and hurling traditional army insults at us as we made our way out.



Colonels talked to Colonels by field phone but to no avail. No one could reach the "Old Man" of the RHLI for he was quite busy with a very serious bout with the dice in the officer's lines.

After having the meatheads [Provost] and the Regimental Police called out to assist, the [participants] decided discretion was the better part of valour and melted into the landscape, scurrying into their tents, where squeals of laughter and some singing of old army songs could be heard 'til the crack of dawn.

Col/Sgt Colwyn Beynon

The consumption of alcoholic beverages was a part of the military life and was deemed, within the limits imposed by society, acceptable behaviour for men. But it was discovered that some soldiers who were under the legal age of twenty-one were being served these beverages. And an "enquiring" magazine of the day reported this to its readers.

There was a great to-do in, I think, 1953, about the age of the soldiers who were being served alcoholic beverages and it was written up, I remember, in Flash Magazine ... There was a great story about underage soldiers being served alcoholic beverages and it went on and on and on. Little did they know that the camp staff who were serving underage soldiers of course were all underage. Nobody checked our ages.

L/Col Bill Masson

Sometimes the drinking had a sadly comic result, but the need was recognized and tolerated and the man, having performed so assiduously for his country, was in no way diminished.

Somehow there's a memory that, I'm sure it was from the 1953 or 1954 period when I attended as camp staff, when the Stormont Dundas & Glengarry trained for that one week period at Niagara-on-the-Lake and just to show it wasn't all serious, or all rules and regulations . The Commanding Officer of the SD&G, in the middle ' 50s, notorious [for his] habit of bending

the elbow, shall we say, was also an extremely stubborn individual. He told the Adjutant that he wanted this Sunday afternoon parade. Of course, Sunday afternoon was sort of relaxed and everyone had been to the ball games and sports day, and people were relaxing. The bars were full but the CO called a full parade and the Adjutant advised the Regimental Sergeant Major. The RSM got the troops on parade. Of course it took about three-quarters of an hour to get the parade assembled, but the Commanding Officer continued to bend his elbow, and by the time the parade was actually formed, he couldn't stand up. So the Adjutant actually wheeled the Commanding Officer around the Sunday parade in a wheelbarrow. I could just remember seeing it happening. He was quite a fellow.

L/Col Bill Masson

Sometimes there were pranks planned with some forethought and executed with the cooperation of a number of people.

I recall that they were defogging the lines with those trucks that would go up and down through the tent lines. They'd bellow out a big puff of this DDT or whatever it was they were doing to kill the mosquitoes. And they did this when the troops were out of the lines, but I happened to be standing at the end of the lines advancing toward the latrines when suddenly the door of the latrine burst open and a soldier came running out clutching his trousers and shaking his fists, and it took me a second to recognize that it was Warrant Officer, one RSM Burns from the Brockville Rifles. And he was going to vent his anger at the truck driver, but he wasn't able to catch up with it.

Lieutenant-Colonel D. Cooper  
Officer Commanding  
Brockville Rifles  
Brockville, Ontario

Is the story too good to be true an apocryphal story perhaps?

I saw that happen. We were sitting over at one side. It was just on lunch time and we'd broken for lunch and we were having a drink before lunch and the sides of the marquee of the dining tent were rolled up and we were sitting or standing around... I think the main fun per day was to watch the fogger go round because there were lots of mosquitoes around the place and they had this fogging machine that every now and again would go all the way and sweep round the camp, blowing, fogging in front of it and killing all the mosquitoes around the place. [There was an RSM] still in the latrine. They made sure the nozzle sort of hit the bottom of the door and the door suddenly exploded and out he came.

Lieutenant-Colonel Art Wiggins  
Officer Commanding, 28 Tech Squadron  
Royal Canadian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers  
Peterborough, Ontario.

Actually you would go up and down in a systematic style, between wherever the tents were set and. and be fogging. Generally it was always spraying away from myself so it would be like spraying out the passenger side of the back of a 4 x

4. And as you'd go systematically up and down the rows of tents, you know, somebody would give you a particularly hard time, you could always "stall" or "Run out of gas" or something in front of their tent, so it had its equalizers", Actually the men used to appreciate the opportunity when you would stall the truck outside the officers mess. Then of course, the machine would still be on.

Mike Dietsch  
Former Parliamentary Assistant to  
The Minister of Labour, Ontario  
St. Catharines, Ontario

Camp Niagara was the scene of many activities not directly affiliated with the military or the militia. There was a Boy's Club and Teen Club there. The Wolf Cubs and Boy Scouts met on the grounds and conducted their nature hikes there. And in 1955, Scouting's Eighth World Jamboree was held at Camp Niagara. At this jamboree there was a very strong army participation at camp Niagara.

The Canadian Army at that time provided all the administrative support. There was a large field hospital there. They ran the communications. They ran the transportation system. I suspect they did most of the scheduling of people arriving and departing. I think they organized, basically, the whole program... I can remember going down once with another fellow to the hospital there and the hospital was virtually staffed with all army personnel.

Maj. Bill Smy

There were also celebrations of a private nature at Camp Niagara. Sometimes by people or groups who had no particular connection with the camp, and happily, by others for whom the camp had been a part of their lives. Mike Dietsch, who was to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly in Ontario, and who had worked as a civilian groundskeeper at Camp Niagara, married the daughter of a Warrant Officer, the camp's Master Foreman of Works. The wedding dinner, the last such public function at Camp Niagara, was held at Butler's Barracks.

Mike Dietsch

The militia training changed its focus as the technological factors inherent in the risk of war changed from conventional to nuclear weapons. No longer, it was thought, was

there a need for conventional forces on the ground. The fighting would be of ballistic nature and would be short lived. The militia was to assume a Civil Defence role under the Emergency Measures Act.

We had lost the Bren Gun Carriers by then, and the six-pounders which made every infantry unit self-protecting and basically mechanized and mobile so that we could move where the tanks moved as a part. And we became totally wheel driven, carried rather than (on] tracks, Bren Gun Carriers and so on.

And in the ' 60s we were in the period of National Survival, more so than infantry tactics.

L/Col Bin Masson

In the period going back just a few years prior to (1964), they'd reorganized the militia and changed its role away from what would be considered sort of standard war practices and put them onto what they called National Survival. That was what they were doing at the time. It was their role then in case of a disaster, a bomb or something in any city. And their role was what they called "re-entry", which was simply to go back into a damaged area as soon as it was possible to do so. So, as there were such things as radioactive material around, you have to wait 'til that came back down to a proper level. You were given



your training in all these little gadgets that measured the amount of roentgens and such like, to tell you when it was safe to go in on it. So we spent a lot of our time then as Militia people in the years 1960 up to 1964 on this National Survival doing rescues. So you had all the routes picked out, all the assembly areas and everything pretty well organized so that if anything did happen, why, you'd be in some position to go back and do this re-entry role as Quickly as possible. At the summer camps the four or five years prior to '964, they put you on this National Survival training which was climbing ladders and going in through windows in buildings and putting people onto stretchers and dropping them back down with ropes. A lot of time was spent on teaching them how to tie a knot so they could do various things. So it was a period completely different from the normal army training if you like to put it that way... You could always run re-entry exercises, even on the roads around Camp Niagara, by just assuming that this area had just been devastated by a bomb.

Brigadier-General Maxwell Clarke  
Camp Commandant, 1964 Niagara Summer Camp  
Peterborough, Ontario

The year 1963 was the survival year. All the militia was concentrating on National Survival. That involved exercises in going into "bombed out" cities, towns and so on.

L/Col D. Cooper

In the area of the barn on the (rifle) range, they had built what they called a Survival Village. As you drive in the front gate, it was on the left and ran over toward where the dump was located. It was a series of buildings in half demolished condition with floors collapsed and cellars in various demolished stages.

And the idea was you practiced your skills as going into a community that was damaged by a nuclear explosion. And you would search for and rescue people. It was demoralizing I recall in that period. We got no ammunition to fire on the range because it was felt there was no requirement for you to fire weapons.

Maj. Bill Smy

In March of 1964, Paul Hellyer, the Minister of National Defence, announced in his White paper, a reorientation of the role of the militia. The militia was to act as a "back-up" for the "forces in being- of the Regular Army. A committee was set up under Brigadier E.R. Suttie to consider means of achieving the ends required.

The 1964 summer camp was, therefore, to be quite different. The Suttie Commission had handed down its recommendations concerning the future of the militia. It was to be commanded by the Militia, and the thrust of militia training was to change from emphasis on the brigade to an aligning of its units with the regular force for training. As a result, the Brigade Camp with its concentration of troops was not held. Instead, up to twenty senior personnel, officers and NCOs from forty-six regiments were invited that year to attend what was essentially a protracted "TEWT", a Tactical Exercise Without Troops. People liked it for its novelty, but those who were closely tied to their units lamented the fact that they weren't with their units.

In study syndicates of four or five, with members of infantry, artillery, signals and other specialties mixed, the officers considered problems presented for their solution. Using sand table models, the syndicates "moved" troops and equipment in exercises that could last as long as three days as they tried to effect solutions.

In the next few years, many of the country's regiments which had served so proudly and with distinction were being amalgamated with nearby regiments. Others were being dissolved and the men of those regiments remember with great sadness today, the loss of their own regiments. In total, seventy two militia units were disbanded. The militia establishment was brought down to 42,000 men and its actual strength was reduced to 30,000 men.

The large summer camps of the militia were suddenly a thing of the past. Camp Niagara was no longer needed, and in 1966, it was closed. No longer would there be the scenes such as the Great Trek of 1915, a fiancé standing by the rail side, watching her intended groom leaving with his regiment for duty on the West Coast, or of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders leaving for Europe in the summer of 1943.

Militia regiments such as the Governor General's Horse Guard and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment would continue to come to Niagara-on-the-Lake but not to the Camp Niagara common. Rather, they went to the Rifle Ranges where they lived in the new modular tentage, ate in the barn on the property and conducted their training exercises in the much reduced space abutting the rifle range. There were no longer special units for the women. They now trained alongside the men in integrated units.

In many ways [Camp Niagara was] a very restrictive camp, in terms of the training facilities. Very limited from a Battalion Commander's point of view. You couldn't do much over, I would say, physical training, maybe section level tactics ... It certainly wasn't a great training area like Wainwright, or Gagetown, or Suffield. It was just too small, too tight, too congested and lacked facilities and variations in terrain ... Even for the militia, it was a tight camp.

Senator (L/Gen) Stanley C. Waters

I think it was indispensable to the militia. And I think after the war it was indispensable until it was abolished because it was always regarded as a militia camp that went back to Rogers Rangers, I think, in the 1812 war. You could go down there for a week and do your training and you'd come back feeling that you belonged to something important. And that's the essence of a militia camp.

M/Gen Bruce Legge

Today on the Common, one finds the new hospital at Niagara-on-the-Lake, housing erected for war veterans and seniors' homes. The Shaw Theatre is there and many of the camp veterans have returned to attend. They all remember Camp Niagara with fondness. It was their favourite camp, the one to which they most liked to return.

## CHAPTER VI - Today

### THE LAST POST



They will never know the beauty of this place; see the season's change, enjoy Nature's Chorus. All we enjoy we owe to them. Men and women who lie buried in the earth of foreign lands and in the seven seas. Dedicated to that memory of Canadians who died overseas in the service of their country and so preserved our heritage

## **Photograph and Figure Captions**

### **Chapter 1**

Alternate Selections

*These photos numbered with an “A” proceeding are  
alternate selections*



## Photograph and Figure Captions

### Chapter 1

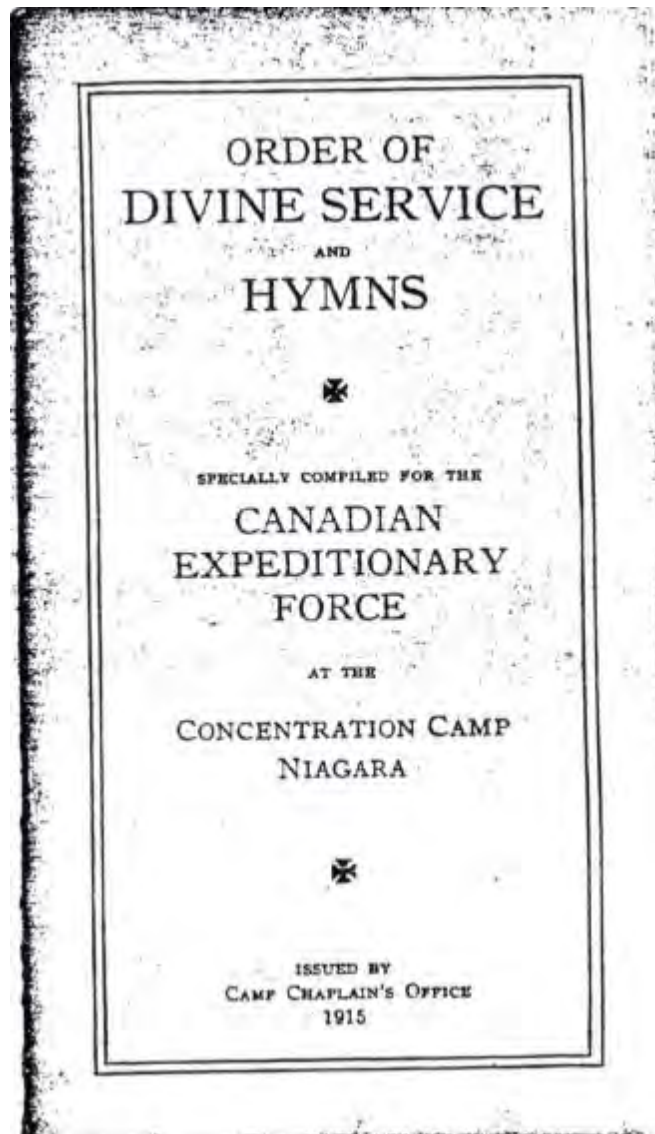


1-01  
Infantry Training Manual for Use of Canadian Militia,  
1915. Shown actual size.



1-02

Camp Niagara, 1904. No. 1 Company, Peel Regiment, Brampton, Ontario. Vaux Chadwick, Captain; Thomas Baldock, Sergeant Major; Walter Barret. Quartermaster Sergeant; A.J. Barsley, Regimental Instructor. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives.



1-03

Order of Divine Service and Hymns. Note the early use of the term Concentration Camp. Shown actual size. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives.

The 120th Canadian Overseas Battalion



### The Farewell of the Hamiltons Own Leaving Niagara Camp, July 1916

The war still on, it's summer time,  
We are on our way to strengthen our line,  
Doing our duty as our boys can do,  
For King and Country, and for you.

We pack up our troubles in our kit bags  
And always try and smile ;  
So long as we have tobacco and fags,  
To worry is not worth while.

So we are leaving for the Motherland,  
Where they have wet canteens, I understand,  
And the Canadian boys command respect  
For the way they fought and are fighting yet.

So Cheer up is our motto ; Dowhearted, No !  
And we're ready to go on our way ;  
We live in hopes to lick them soon  
And be home again next May.

A.M. Reg. No. 57,231

1-04

Postcard. The Farewell of Hamiltons Own. Royal  
Hamilton Light Infantry Archives.

1-05  
Plan of the Niagara area.

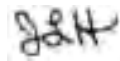
Bob Ueyer  
of Meyer, Polton & Associates  
1265 Commissioner's Road West  
London, Ontario  
N4K 1C9

Dear Mr. Meyer:

Enclosed is a negative of a photograph showing members of the 31st Rgt. at Camp Niagara, June 24, 1887. The negative is of the photograph in full, including the light streak at the right. The image in Scarlet to Green £5 not the full one .

If this photo is published, please use the credit line "County of Grey-Owen Sound Museum".

Sincerely,



J.L. Hyslop

Registrar/Archivist



Members of the 31st Regiment at Camp Niagara,  
June 24, '887. County of Grey-Owen Sound  
Museum.

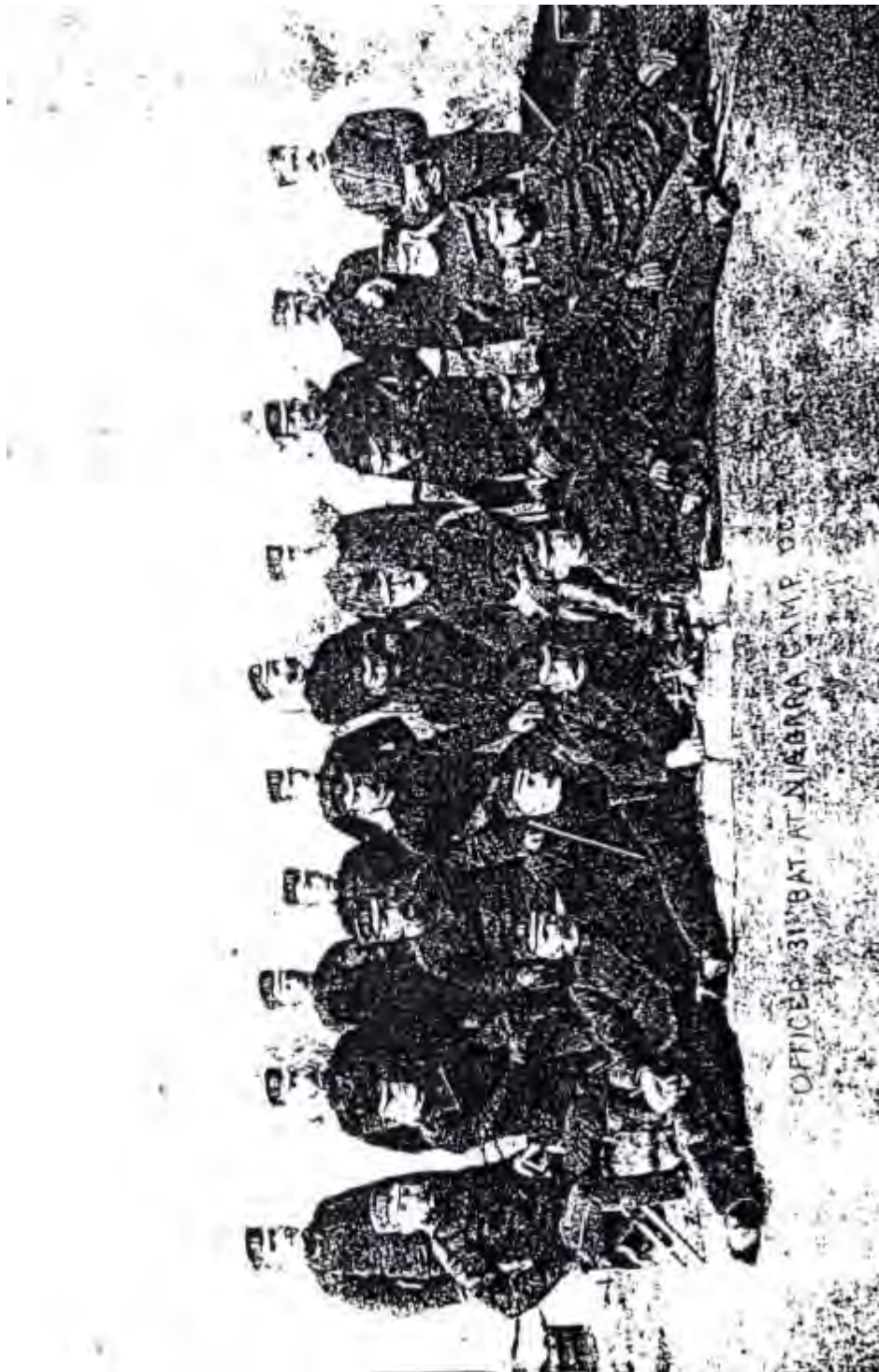


1-07

Members of the XIII<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Camp Niagara about the turn of the century. They are wearing the camp issue of straw hats known as Cow's Breakfast. They had Ross rifles, Oliver Pattern belts, and round canteens. The two seated in front are cadets.

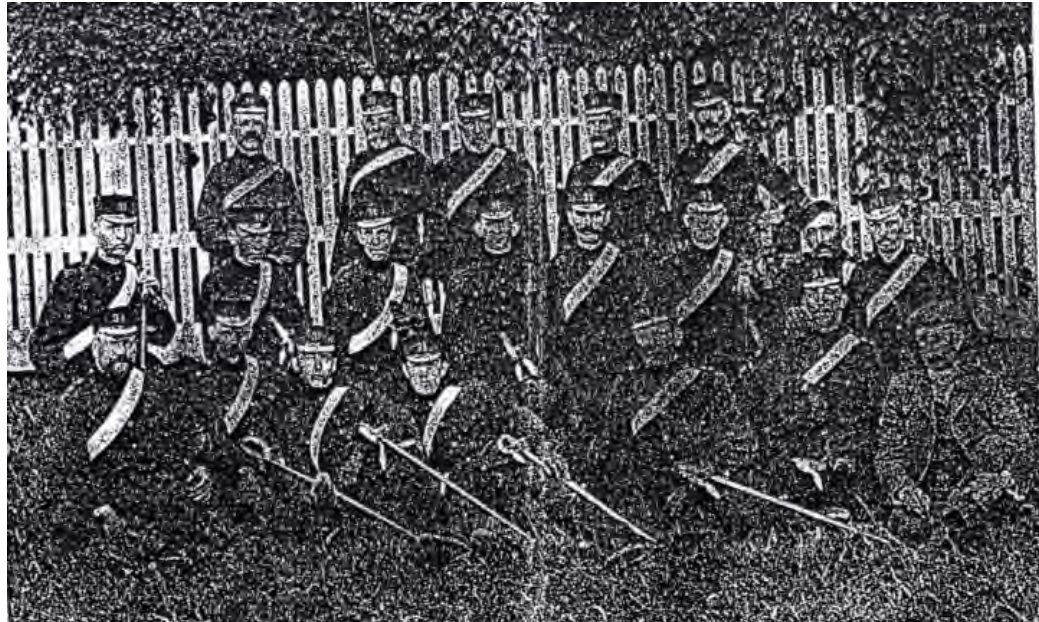
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives.





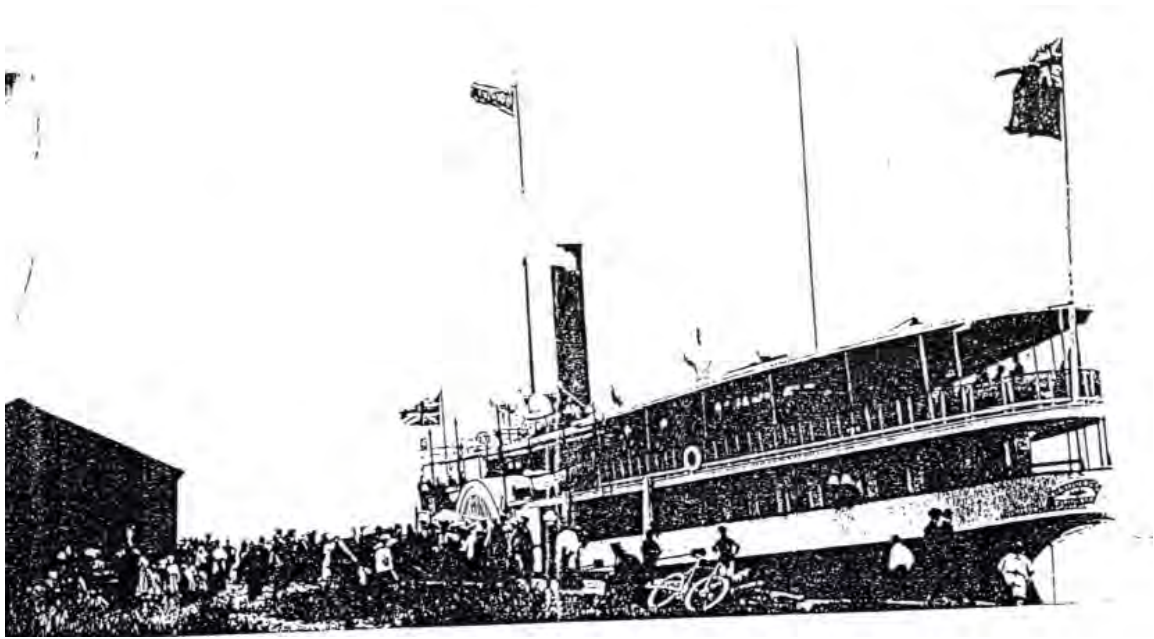
1-08

Officers of the Grey & Simcoe Foresters, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion at  
Camp Niagara, October 1891. Beaver Valley Museum,  
Clarksburg, Ontario.



1-09

Grey and Simcoe Foresters at Camp Niagara, about 1891.  
Beaver Valley Military Museum, Clarksburg, Ontario.



1-10

34<sup>th</sup> Regiment embarking from Whitby Harbour to Niagara  
Camp, 1909, on the steamboat, Garden City. National  
Archives of Canada, PA 29558.





1-11

34<sup>th</sup> Regiment Band at Niagara Camp, June 13, 1906.

Whitby Archives, Whitby, Ontario.



1-12 Leeman John and Peter John, circa 1910. These men collected the horses from the Six Nations for use as cavalry horses at Camp Niagara. Woodland Cultural Centre. Brantford. Ontario.



1-13 Camp Niagara, June 15, 1911. One of the Six Nations horses used by the cavalry. Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario. A present from Mr. J.B. Lundy, Brantford. Shirley Burnham Collection.





The Store



The Park



Niagara Falls



1-14-15 Swimming Parade, Camp Niagara, 1913.  
Collection of Captain W.A. Stevens.



1-16-18 The Artillery at Camp Niagara, 1913.  
Collection of Captain W.A. Stevens.





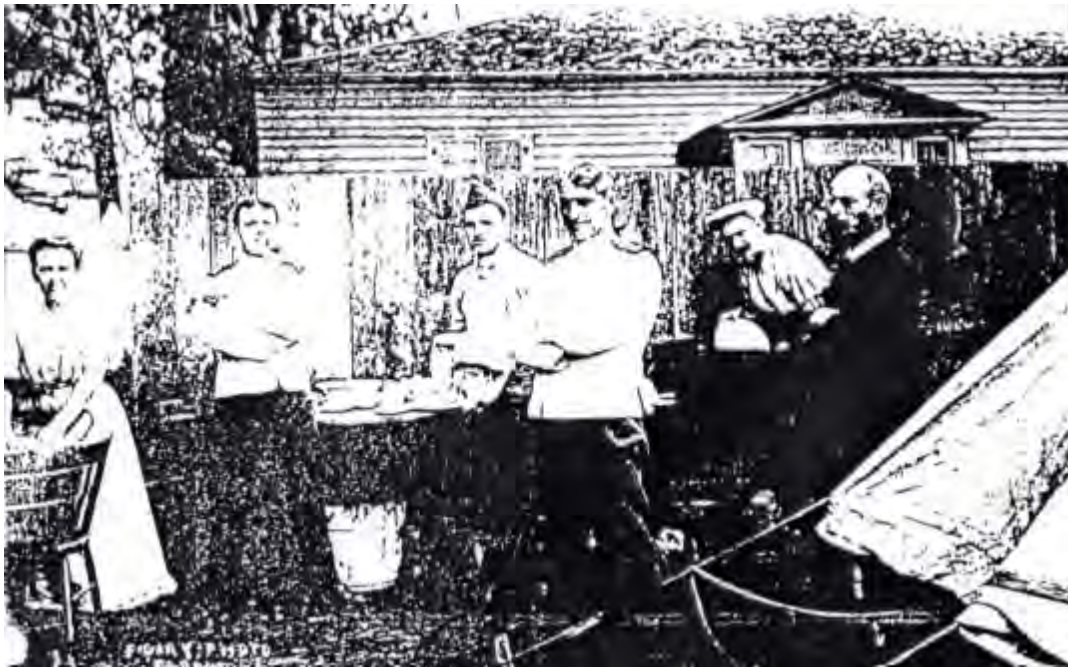
Megaphone Mike  
1-18-20 At the Rifle Ranges, Camp Niagara,  
1913. Collection of Captain W.A. Stevens.



1-21 The XIII<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Infantry from Hamilton, Ontario. This battalion became the Royal Hamilton light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment). Royal Hamilton light Infantry Archives



1-22 77th Wentworth Regiment, Camp Niagara 1904,  
showing the Lee Metford Rifle and bayonet, circa 1899.  
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives.

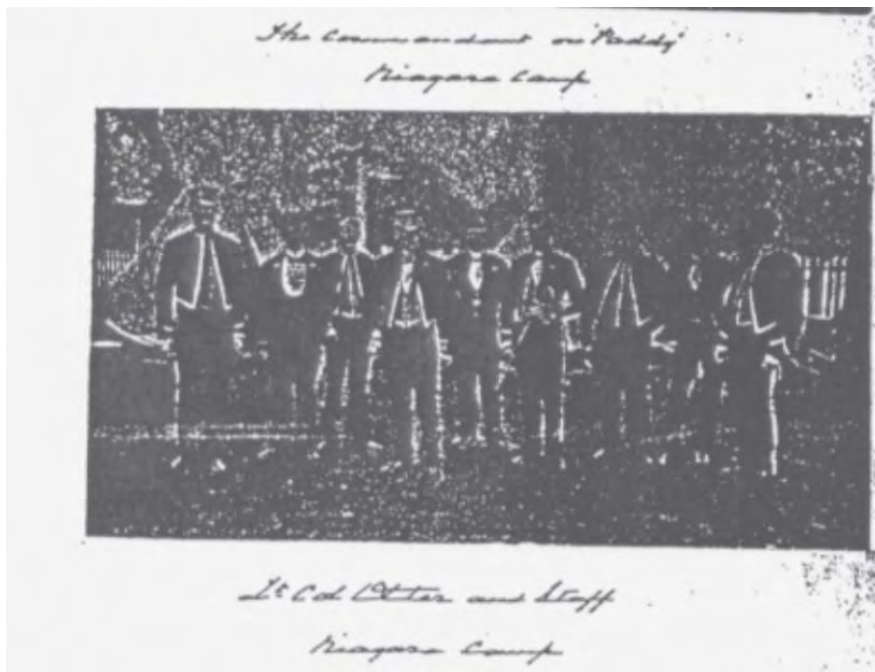


1-23 Members of the Royal Canadian Regiment at Camp Niagara, 1900. Royal Canadian Military Institute.





1-24 Governor General's Body Guard, Camp Niagara,  
1886. Royal Canadian Military Institute 1972.41.1

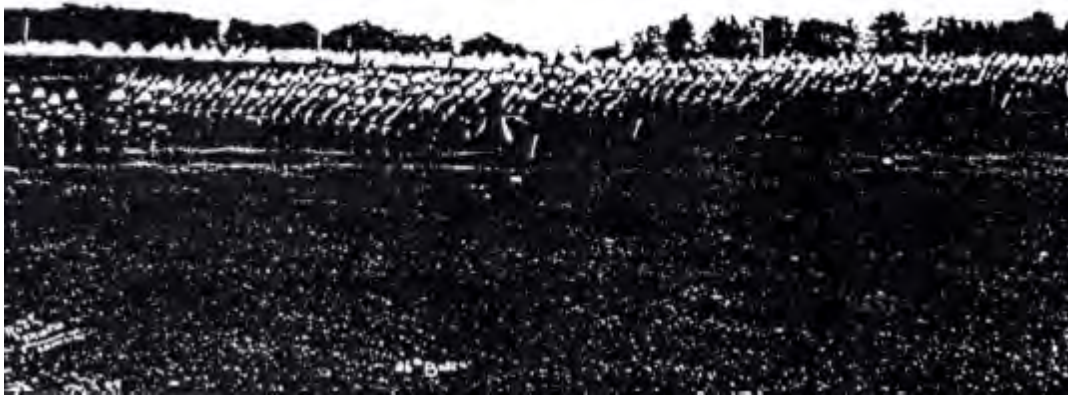


1-25 Lieutenant Colonel Otter and Staff, Niagara Camp.  
National Archives of Canada C-0031399.



*1-26 Sir J.W. Borden leaving the Supply Stores  
Niagara Camp  
National Archives of Canada*

1-26 Sir J.W. Borden leaving the Supply Stores. Niagara  
Camp. National Archives of Canada. C-0031347



1-27 36th Battalion, Camp Niagara.





*From the Cavalry Lines  
Niagara Camp, Ontario.*

1 -28 From the Cavalry Lines, Niagara Camp. 1904.  
National Archives of Canada C0031394.



A1-29

31<sup>st</sup> Regiment packing up, Camp Niagara, June 23,  
1906. National Archives of Canada PA016657.



1-30

Niagara Camp, looking from the Michigan Central Railway,  
June 23, 1906. National Archives of Canada PA016654.



1-31

Field Divine Service, Niagara Camp, 1904.  
National Archives of Canada C0031395.



1-32

31st Regiment Lines, Niagara Camp, June 22, 1906.

National Archives of Canada PA 16656.



NIAGARA CAMP 1907

1-33

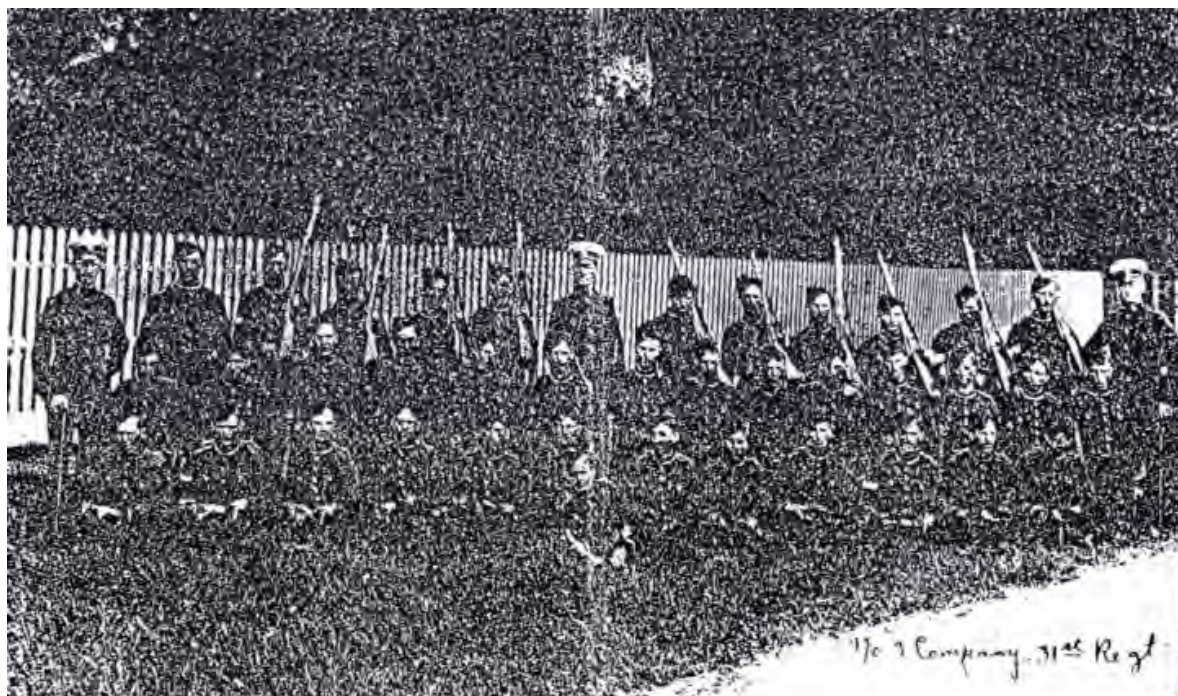
March Past, Camp Niagara, 1907.  
National Archives of Canada C0031397.



1-34

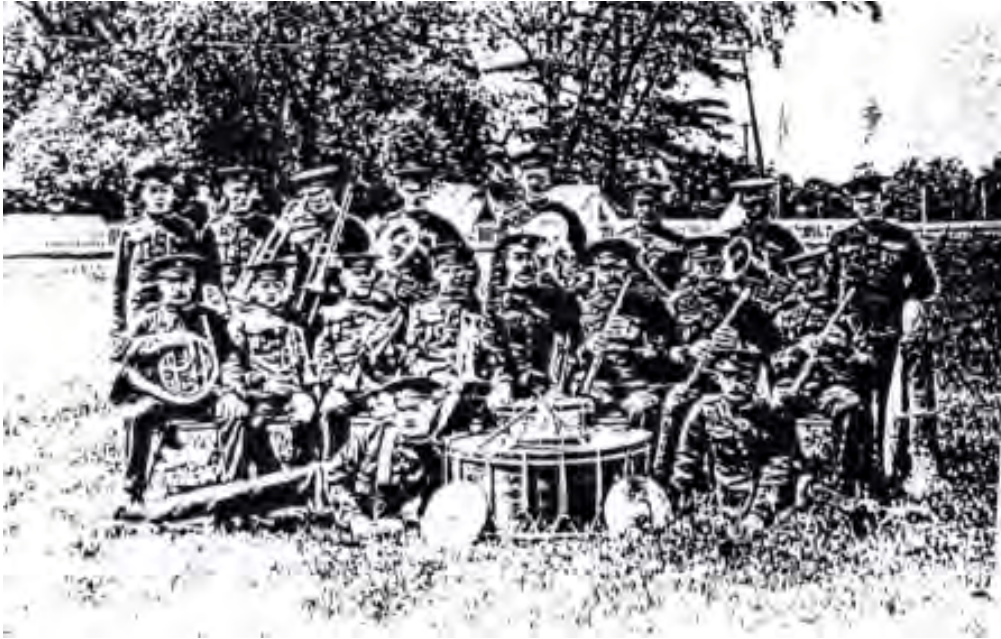
The Minister of Militia inspecting the Niagara Camp,  
1904. National Archives of Canada C0031382.





1-36  
88th Regiment Band at Camp Niagara, circa 1890.  
Royal Hamilton light Infantry Archives.

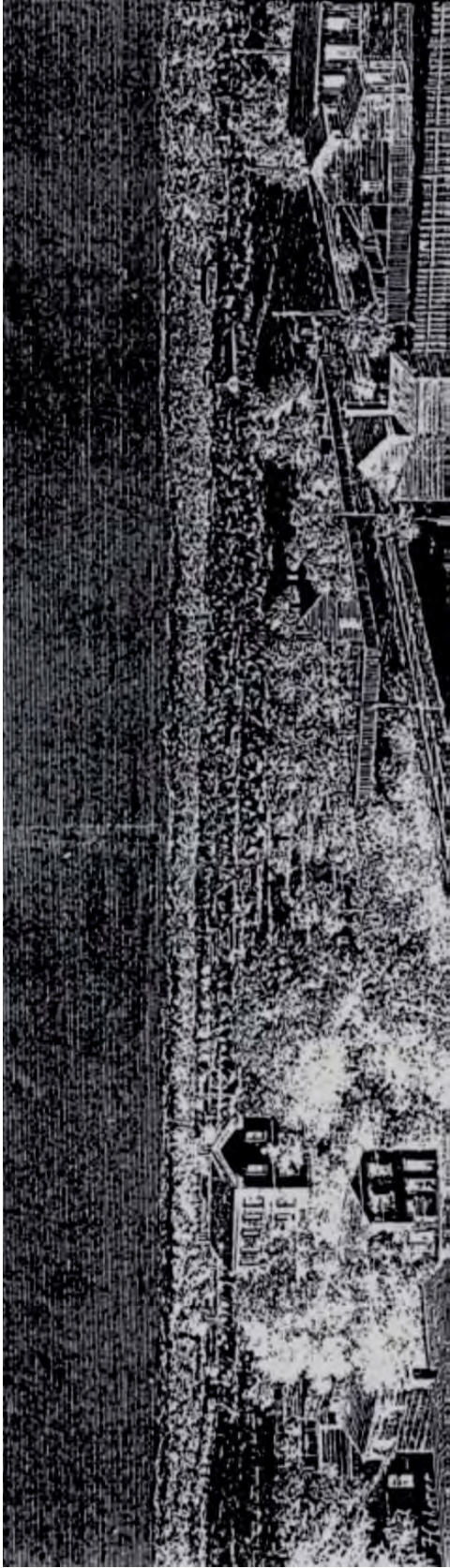




1-37

The Camp at Niagara from a photograph by Wright.  
Published in the Canadian Illustrated News, July 13, 1872.

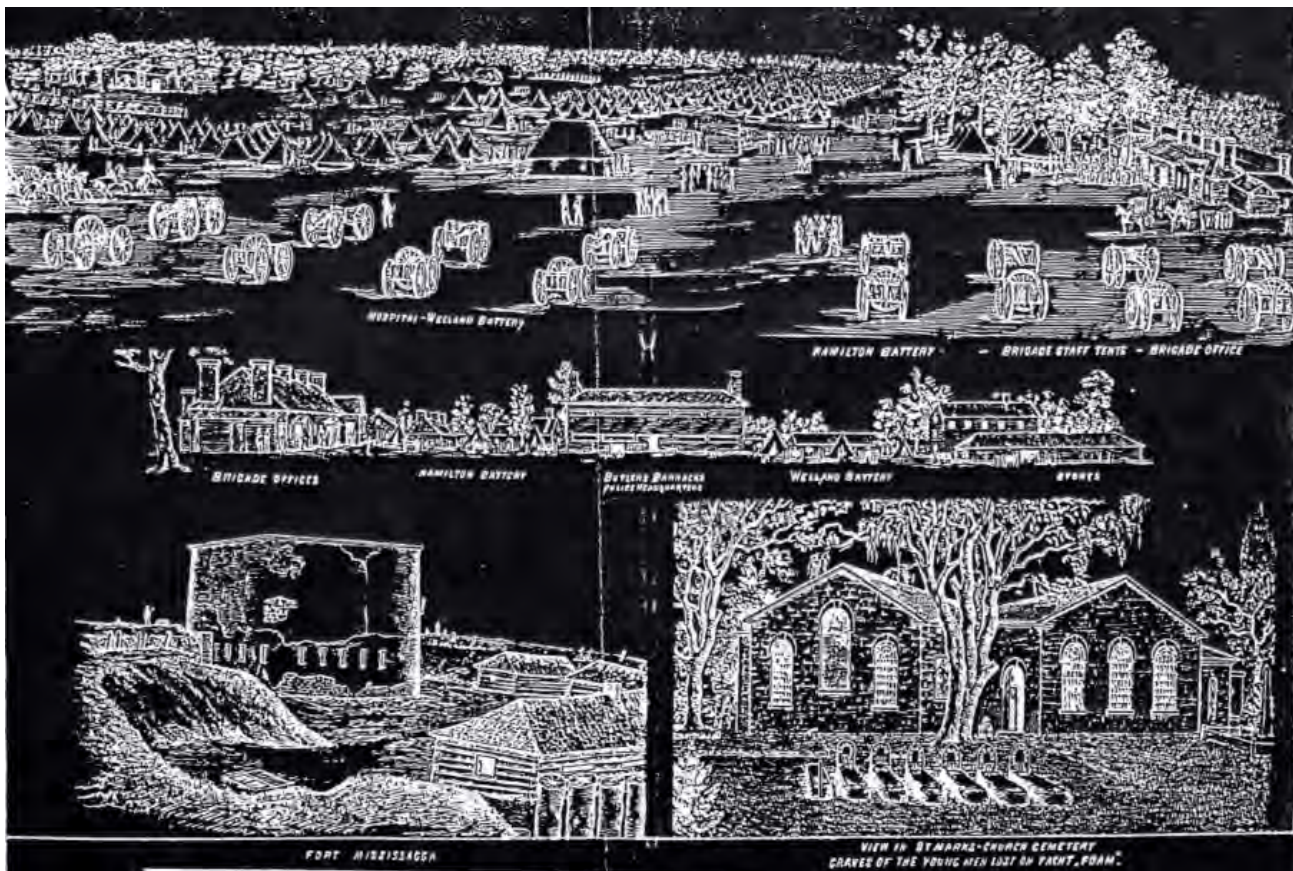




1-38

Sketches of the camp at Niagara. Published in the  
Canadian Illustrated News July 10, 1875.



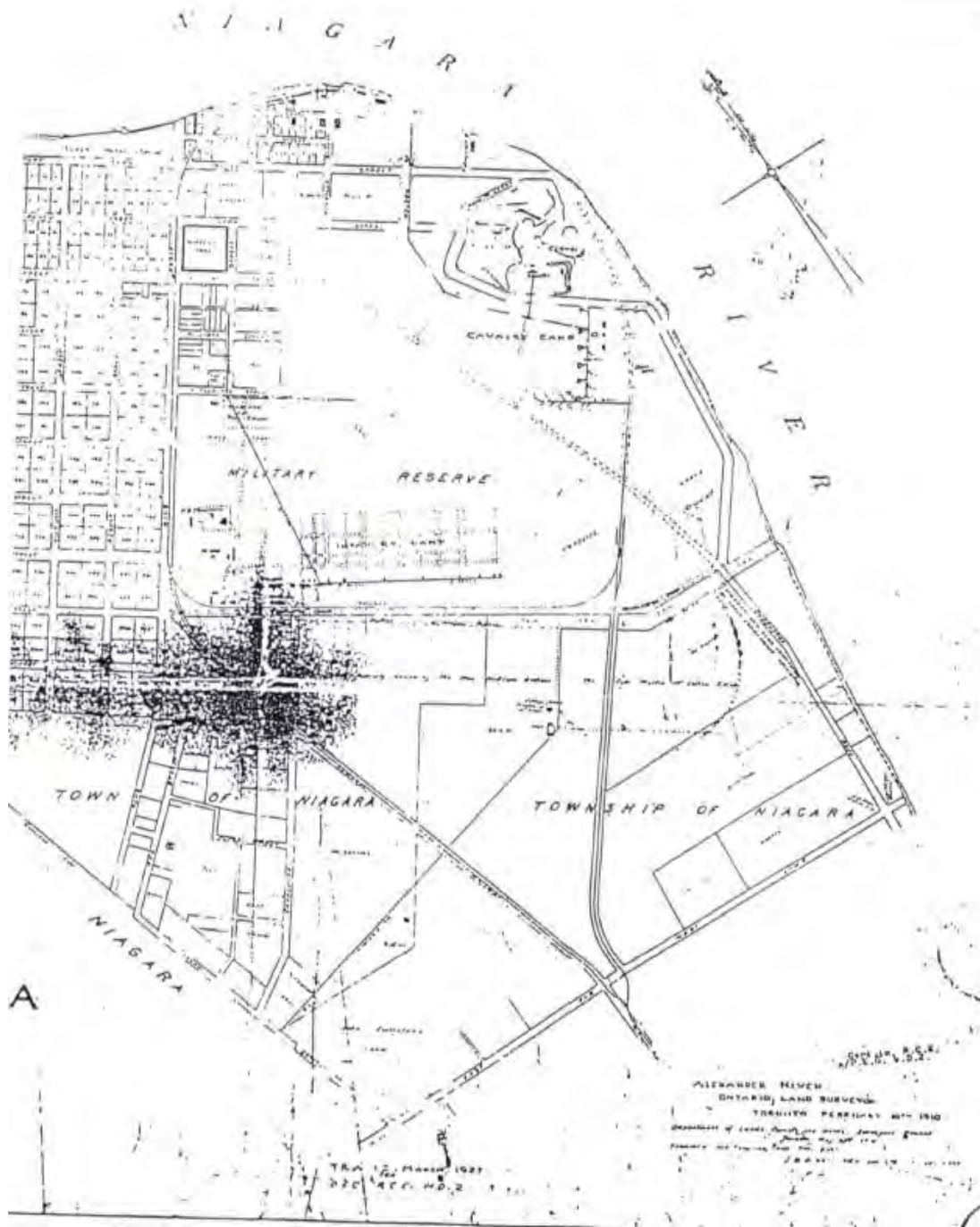


1-38

Sketches of the camp at Niagara. Published in the  
Canadian Illustrated News July 10, 1875.







1-40

Detail from 1910 Plan of Camp Niagara showing the Infantry and the Cavalry Lines. National Archives of Canada, RG 24, Vol. 6351, HQ 71-7-12.

## Photograph and Figure Captions

### Chapter 2





2-01

31st Regiment, Niagara Camp, 1919. Lorne Scots  
Officers' Mess. Donated by A.G.B. Campbell, Orangeville,  
Ontario, February 4, 1976.



2.-02

Band playing "Oh Canada", Camp Niagara, June 28,  
1916. National Archives of Canada, PA69BS1.



2-04

Machine Gun Section. using Lewis Gun . Camp Niagara,  
June 28, 1916. National Archives of Canada, PA069844.



A2-05

Cooks quarters at Camp Niagara, June 28. 1916.

National Archives of Canada. PA69848.

|



2-06

Cooks' view of Camp Niagara when the Canadian Officers Training Corps from McGill University and the University of Toronto were there. National Archives of Canada, PA61 446.



2-07

169th Battalion going to have battalion photograph taken at Camp  
Niagara. June 2B. 1916. National Archives of Canada. PA69817.



2-08

Captain Hawkins on a motorcycle at Camp Niagara. June 28.  
1916. National Archives of Canada. PA69849.





2-09

Physical Drill at Camp Niagara, June 28, 1916.

National Archives of Canada, PA069843





2-10

Signal Section tapping wires at Camp Niagara, June 28, 1919. National Archives of Canada, PA069846.



A2-11  
Signal Section telegraphing at Camp Niagara, June 28,  
1919. National Archives of Canada, PA069847.



2-12

At Camp Niagara, 1915, showing the Cow's Breakfast straw hats. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives, 588.014.01.181.



2-13

Steamer Chippawa of Canada Steamship Lines Ltd.  
with troops bound for Camp Niagara, October 1914.  
National Archives of Canada. PA 1423534.



2-14

One of three Armoured Cars provided by the Eaton family, with members of the Eaton Machine Gun Battery, Camp Niagara, 1915. Collection of W.A. Stevens.





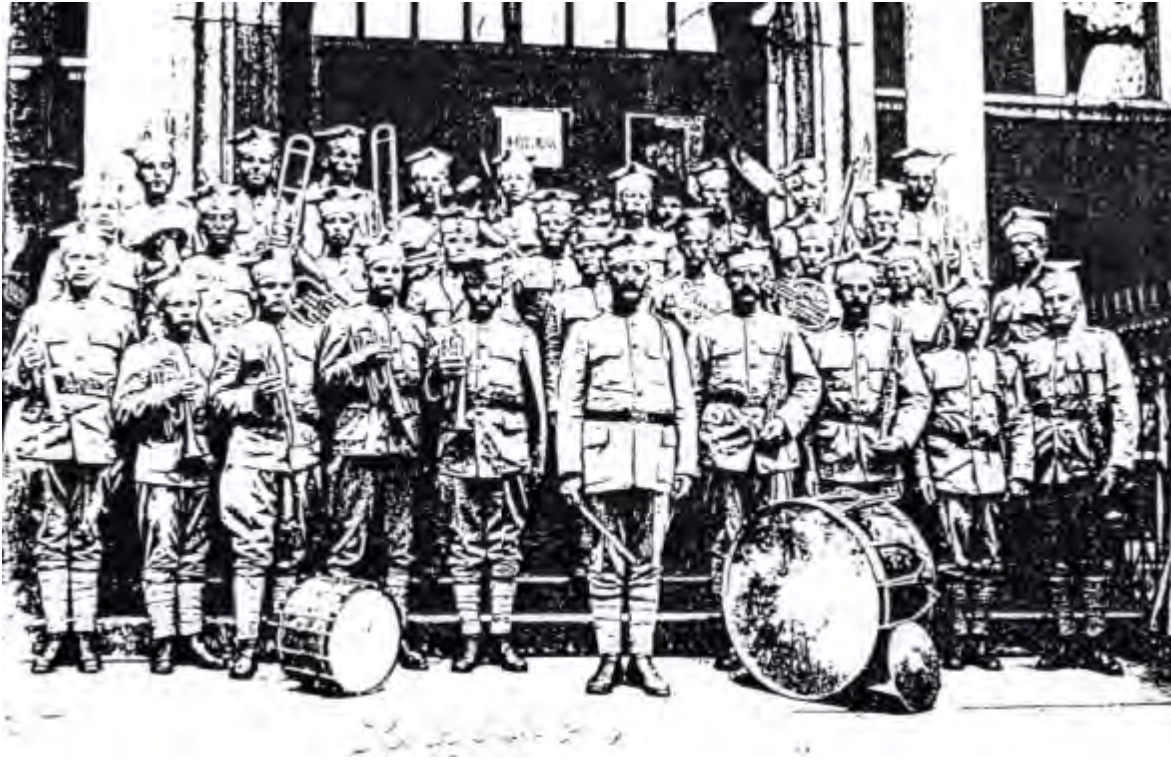






2-16

Camp Niagara main Gate,  
1915. Royal Hamilton Light  
Infantry Archives.



2-17

Polish Army Band. 19860385-018





2-18

Administration Building, Polish Army Camp.





2-19

Field Cooker, Polish Army Camp. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization, 87-396.



2-20  
Shoemaking Shop, Camp Niagara. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization. 87-367.



2-21

Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur O'Or LePan, Commandant  
of the Polish Army Camp. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization, 87-416.

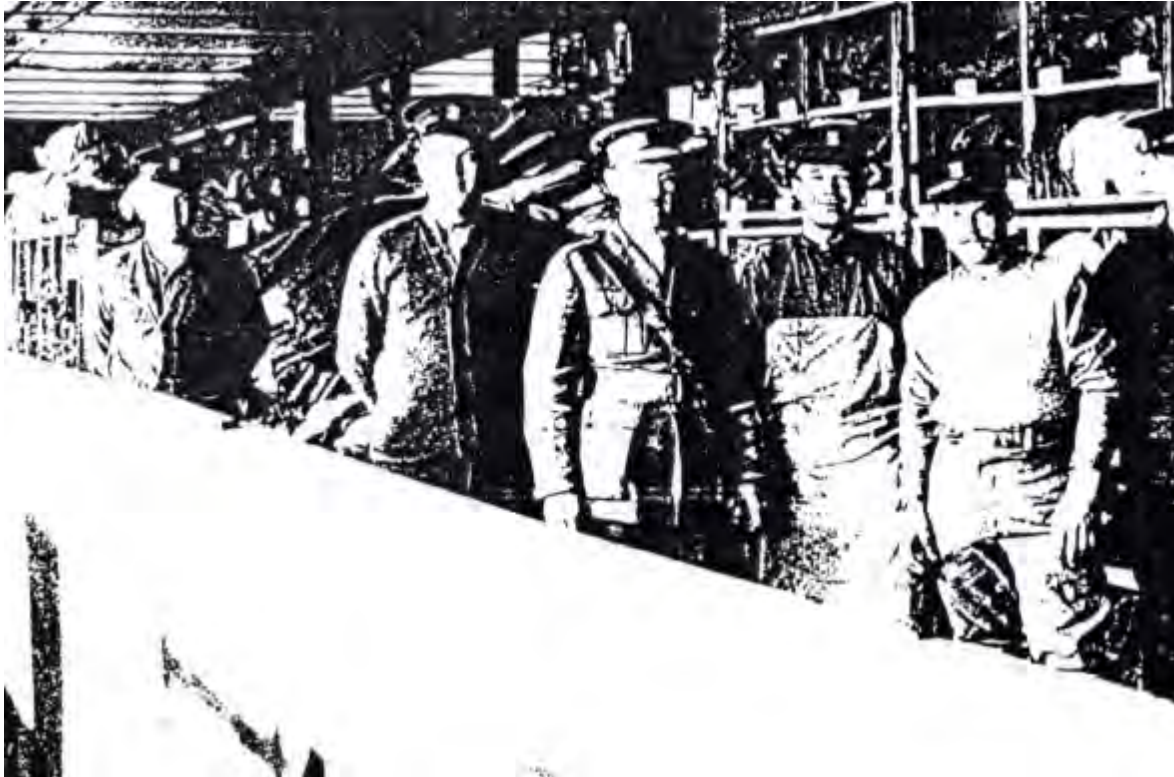




2-22

Administration Building, Polish Army Camp. Camp  
Niagara. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-298.

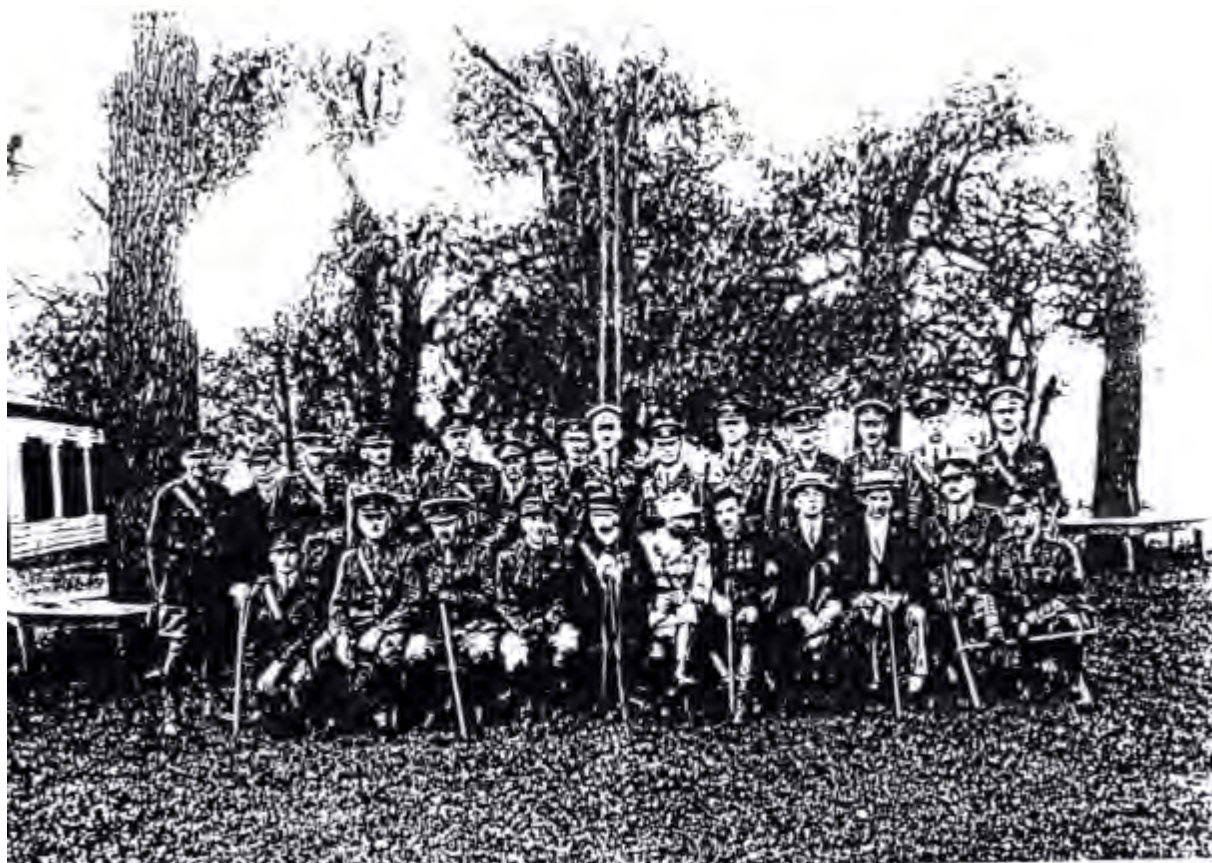




2·23  
Quartermaster's Stores, Camp Niagara. Canadian  
Museum of Civilization, 87-408.



2-24  
Field Kitchen, Camp Niagara. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization, 87-410.



2-25  
Polish Army Officers and Visitors, 1918. Niagara  
Historical Society, No. 022.





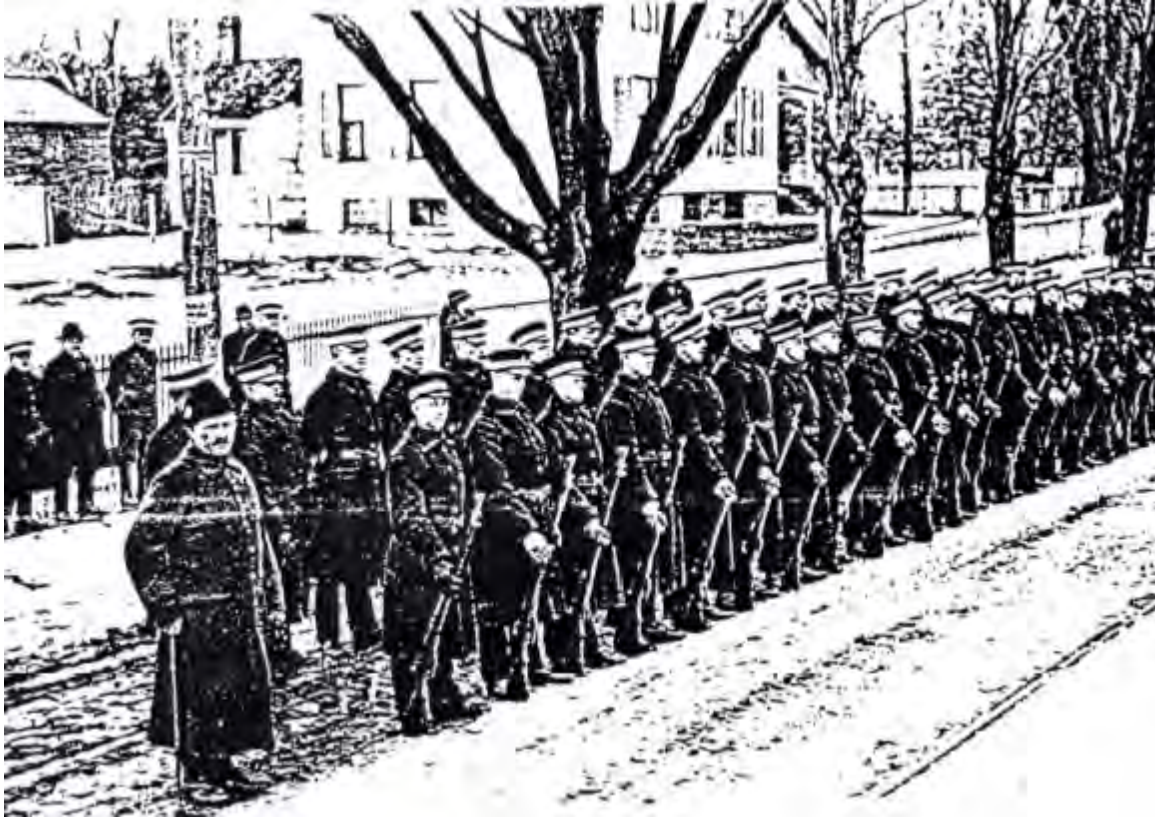
2-26

Polish Army Baseball Team, Camp Niagara. Canadian  
Museum of Civilization, 87-363.



2-27

Polish Army band, Camp Niagara. Canadian Museum  
of Civilization, 87-361.



2-28

Instructor and trainees of the Polish Army drilling with U.S. rifles,  
Camp Niagara. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-349.





2-29

Trainees of the Polish Army. Camp Niagara. Canadian  
Museum of Civilization, 87-347.



2-30

Polish Army Camp, Camp Niagara, showing the four  
barracks in the background. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization, 87-336.





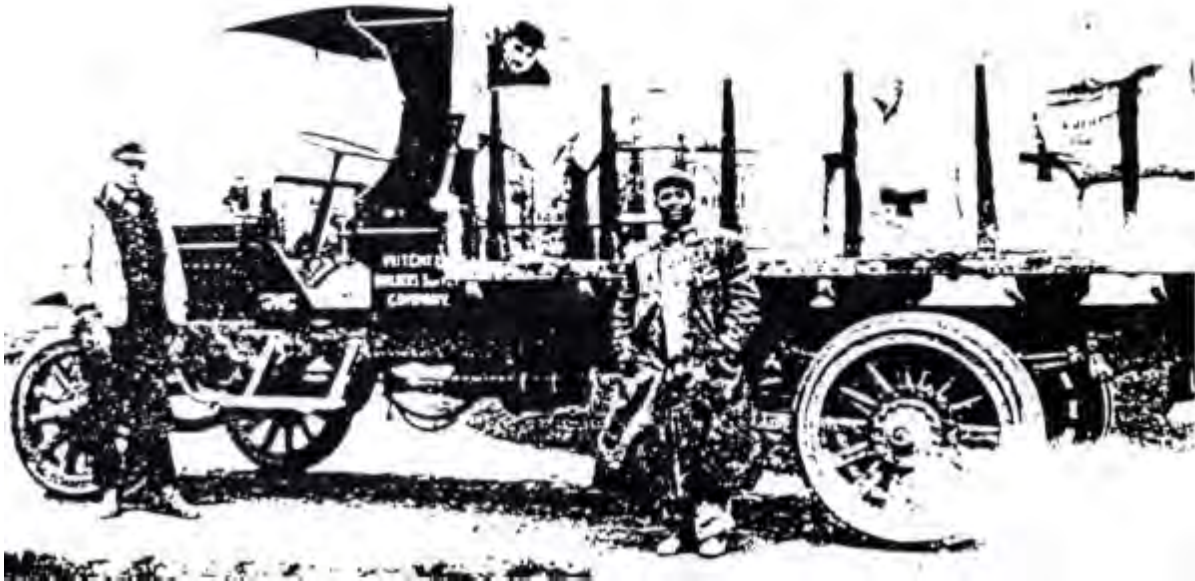
2-31

White Cross Nurses visiting the Polish Army Camp. Camp  
Niagara. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-345.



2-32

Ignaz Paderewski visiting Camp Niagara. June 3, 1918.  
Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-302.



2-33

Truck used to distribute American Red Cross parcels to the Polish Army at Camp Niagara, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-332.



A2-34

Distribution of American Red Cross parcels to the Polish Army,  
Camp Niagara. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-304.





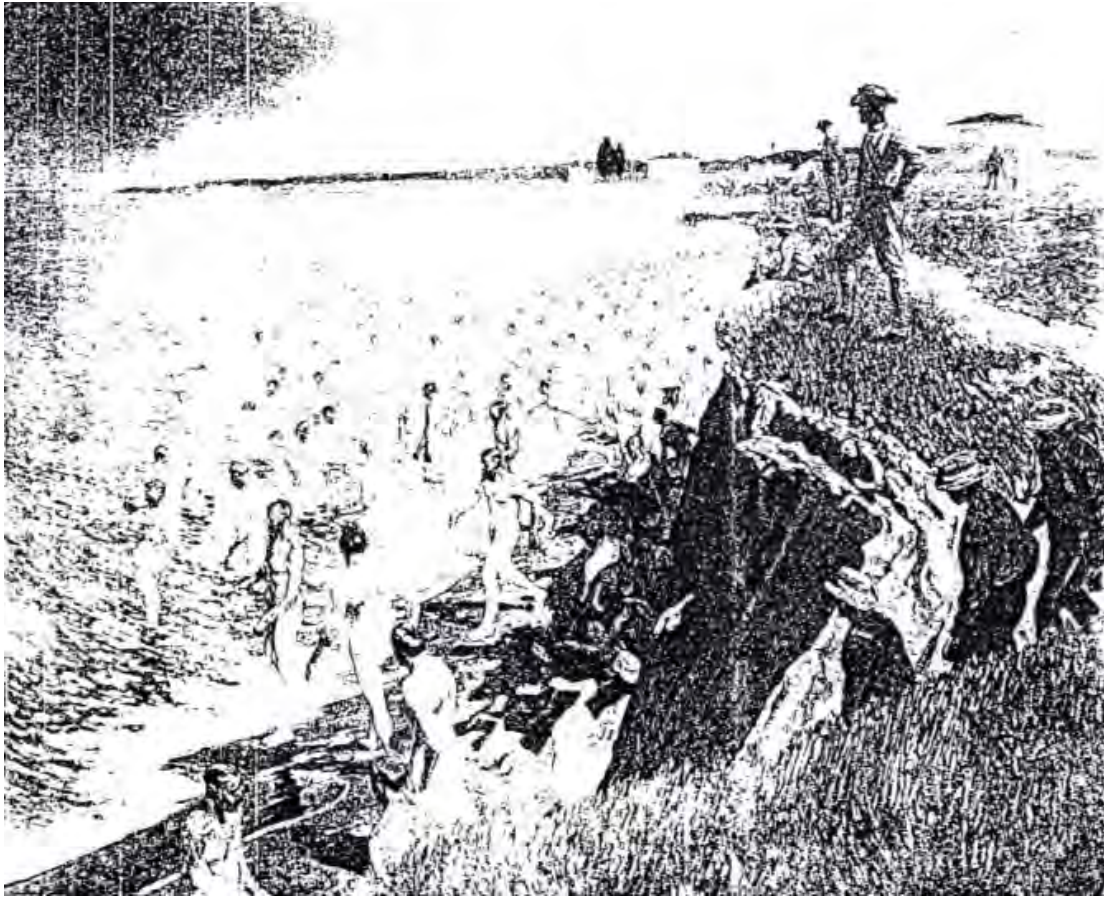
2-35

Leon Tygzuin, Postmaster, 3rd Battalion and Tomas Urbanek, Postmaster, 2nd Battalion, Polish Army. Camp Niagara, September 1918. Canadian Museum of Civilization. 87-300.



2-36

Polish Trainees inspected on Pay Friday. August 13.  
1918. Canadian Museum of Civilization. 87-315.



2-37

Polish Army Bathing at Camp Niagara by C.W. Jeffery. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 8223.

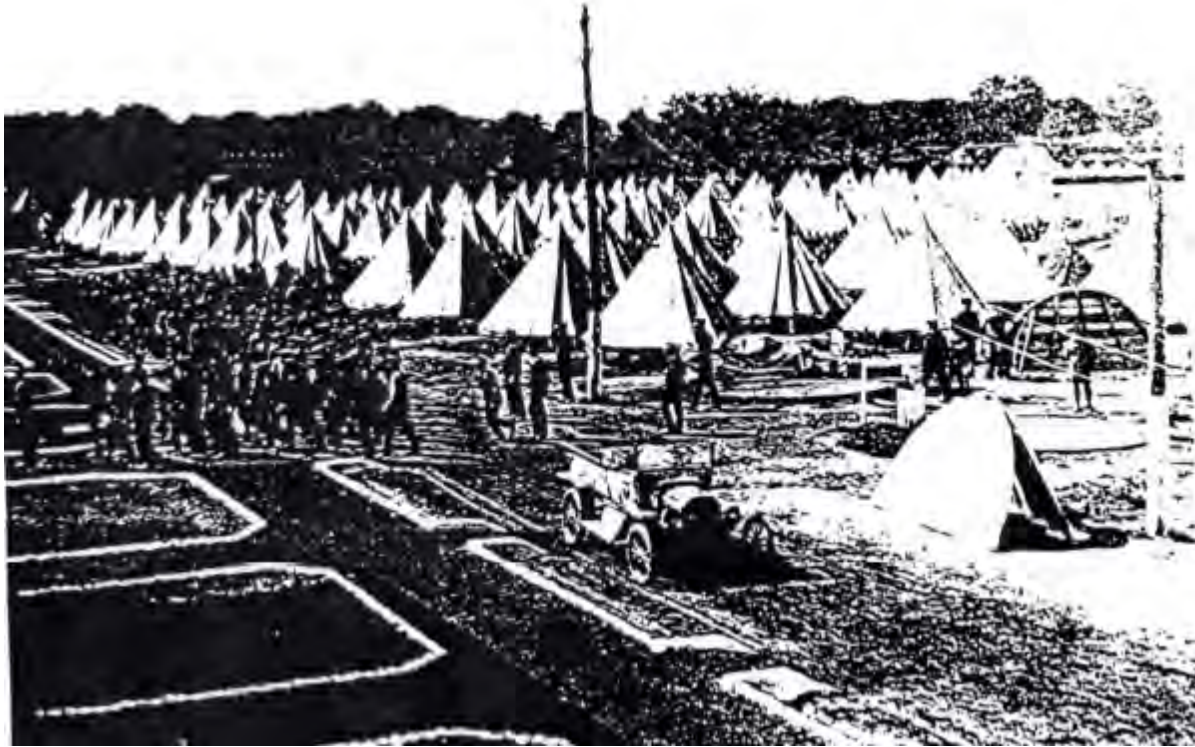




2-38

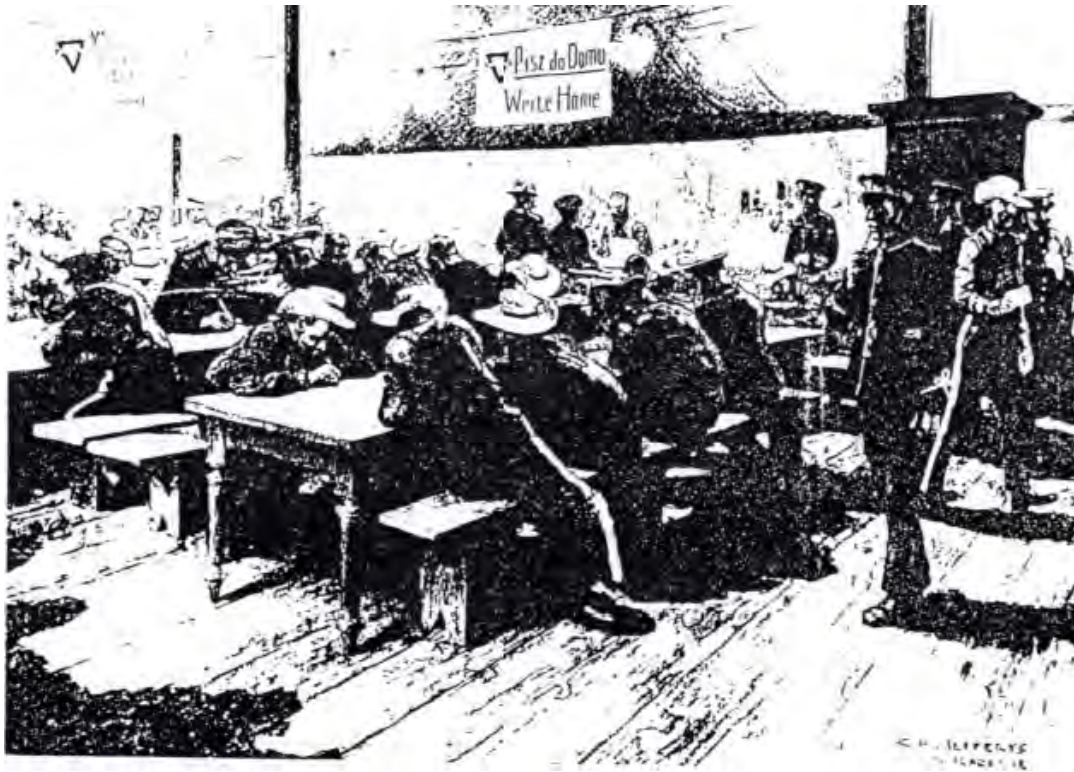
Paderewski Visits Camp Niagara, 1918. Canadian  
Museum of Civilization, 87-306.





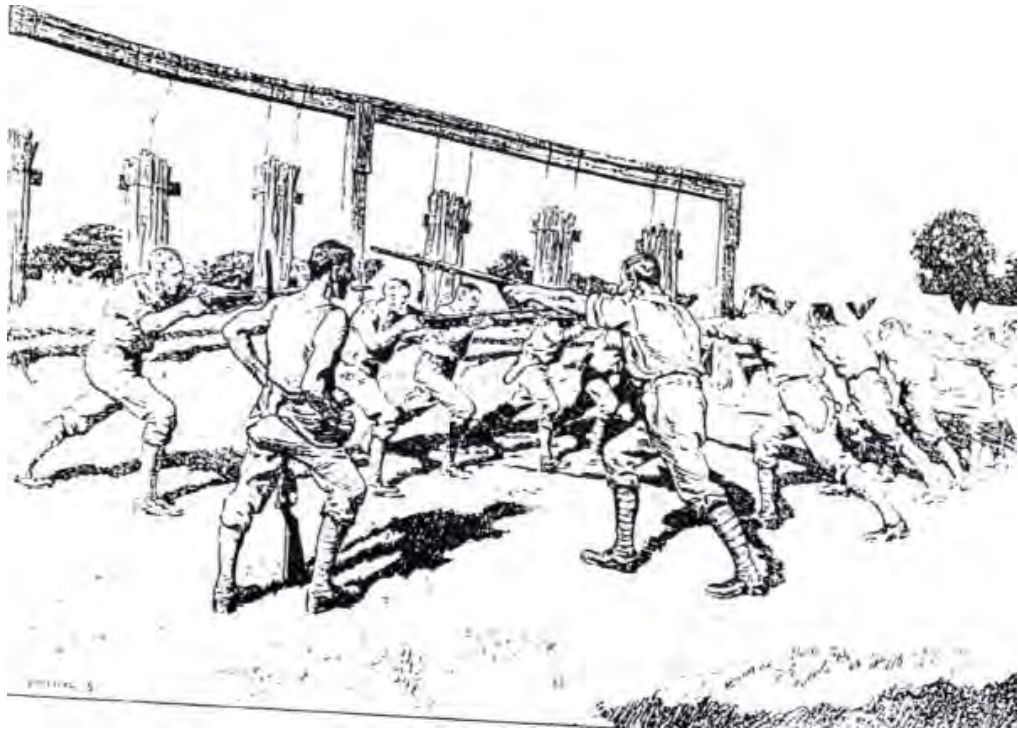
2-39

Parade through the tented camp, Polish Army Camp. Camp  
Niagara, 1918. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 87-341.



2-40

Soldiers of the Polish Army in the Y.M.C.A. Tent, Camp Niagara. Painting by C.W. Jeffery. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 8225.



2-41

Bayonet Exercises at the Polish Army Camp, Camp  
Niagara. Sketch by C.W. Jeffery. Canadian Museum of  
Civilization, 8230.





A2-42

Polish Officer, Polish Army at Camp Niagara. Lithograph  
by C.W. Jeffery. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 8232.

## Photograph and Figure Captions

### **Chapter 3**



3-01

Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver Milton Martin. Nina Burnham Collection.



3-02

Royal Canadian Regiment, part of the permanent cadre at  
Camp Niagara. Royal Canadian Regiment Museum.



3-03

Grey & Simcoe Foresters, Camp Niagara, 1937. Beaver Valley Military Museum, Clarksburg, Ontario.





3-04

Trimming and soaking at Camp Niagara, 1939. CSM Young, S9t. J. Irvine and CSM J. Algi. Lorne Scots Regimental Museum. Brampton, Ontario.



3-05

Sergeant Major Dodds, Royal Canadian Regiment at the  
Rifle Ranges at Camp Niagara, 1939. Lorne Scots  
Regimental Museum, Brampton, Ontario.



3-06

Kit lined up before the tents for inspection, 1939. Lorne Scots Regimental Museum, Brampton, Ontario.



3-07

The Lorne Scots at Camp Niagara, 1939. The truck carrying the Royal Canadian Regiment name is an experimental design of the 1930s predating the universal-design truck of the 1940s.





3-08

Lorne Scots at the Rifle Range at Camp Niagara 1939.  
Lorne Scots Regimental Museum. Brampton, Ontario.



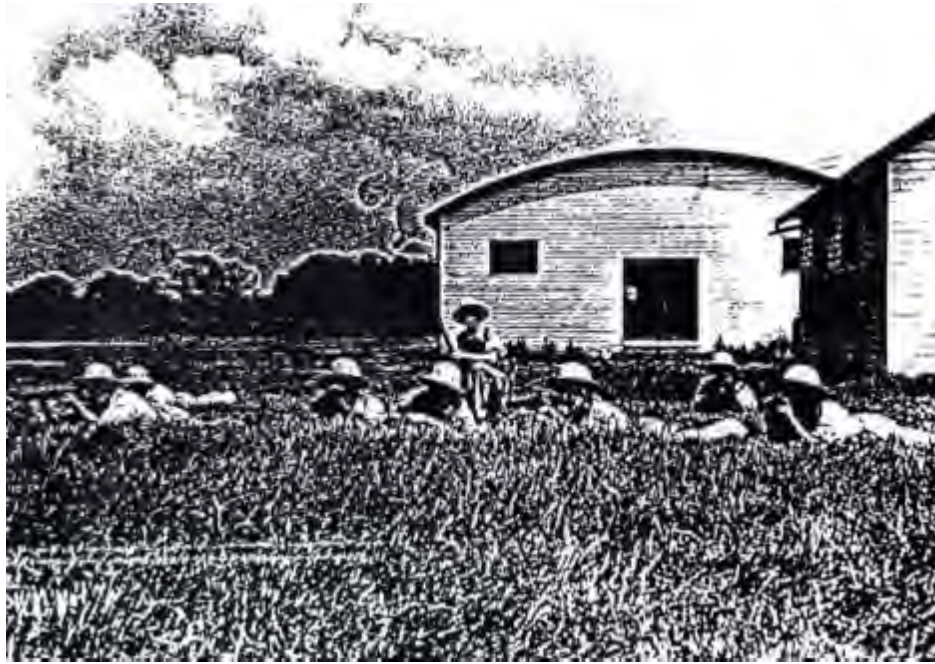
3-09

Officers of the Lorne Scots at Camp Niagara, 1939.  
Lorne Scots Regimental Museum, Brampton, Ontario.



A3-10

Officers of the Lorne Scots at Camp Niagara. 1939. Len to right, Major Sharpe. Major Barber, Major Wansbrough, Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Keene, Major Anderson. Major Lent. Captain D. Chisholm, Lieutenant C. Heggie, Captain Don Stewart. Captain McMaster, Major H.G. Peacock. Lorne Scots Regimental Museum, Brampton, Ontario.



3-11

The Lorne Scots at Camp Niagara. 1939. Lorne Scots  
Regimental Museum. Brampton, Ontario.

...



## Photograph and Figure Captions

### **Chapter 4**



4-01  
The tent lines at Camp Niagara, 1940.



4-02  
Camp Niagara telephone exchange, 1940.



4-03  
Administration Building. Camp Niagara. 1940.



4-04

World War II Battle Dress, Camp Niagara, 1940.



4-05

World War II Battle Dress with the wedge cap.





4-06  
Camp Niagara telephone exchange, 1940.



4-07

Sighting the Ross Rifle at Camp Niagara. 1940.



**NON-PERMANENT ACTIVE MILITIA OF CANADA**

UNIT 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. A.C. J.H. (L.) REGTL. N. 2

1. Surname? (Block letters).....
2. Christian names?.....
3. Present address?.....  
Phone No. ✓
4. Date of Birth? 23 Aug. 1925
5. British subject? YES
6. Occupation? CARPENTER, WEAVER  
SAVIER'S FURNITURE CO.
7. Religion? UNITED
8. Next of Kin.....
9. Relationship? MOTHER  
Address.....
10. Previous Naval, Military or Air Force Service.....  
(Give particulars, qualifications, etc.)  
✓

---

**CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION**

Height 5' 1" Weight 114 Chest max. 34 1/2 min. 32 1/2

Descriptive marks.....

I have examined the above named man in accordance with instructions laid down in Instructions the R.C.A.M.C. and C.D.C. 1937 Appendix V and find him fit Category A

Date 18-5-42 Signature [Signature]

---

**DECLARATION TO BE MADE ON ATTESTATION**

I, the undersigned.....do sincerely and solemnly declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the above answers (made by me) to the foregoing questions are true; that I am willing to be attested for the term of three years or until legally discharged, and understand the nature and terms of this engagement, that I will safeguard all clothing, arms and equipment issued to me and will return same when required, and that I will report any change in address of myself or my next of kin to my Commanding Officer.

**OATH TO BE TAKEN**

I,.....do sincerely promise and swear (or solemnly declare) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty.

Signature of Witness..... Signature of Man.....

Dated this.....day of.....19.....at.....

---

**CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTING OFFICER**

The recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answers to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished by law. The above questions were then read to the recruit in my presence. I have taken care that he understands each question and that his answer to each question has been duly entered and replied to, and the said recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath.

4-08

Attestation Card for a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise). The handwritten words at the top of the card.

"Too small to equip. Sent home".



4-09

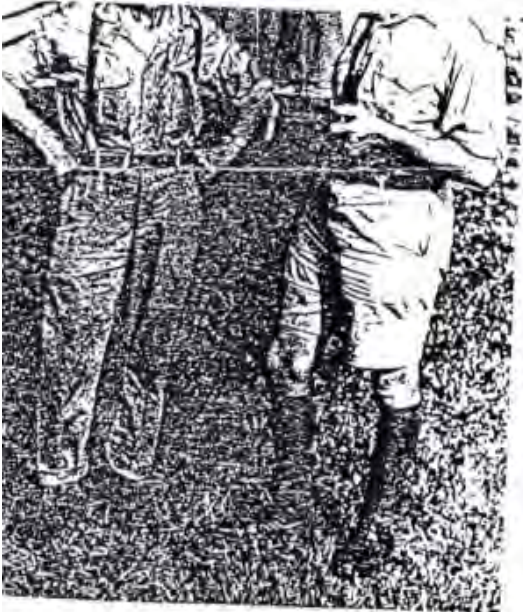
Ordnance Corps in front of Ordnance Building at Camp  
Niagara. 1942. The C.W.A.C.s were receiving trades  
training in motor mechanics. James Powless photograph.



4-10

A tracked carrier of the Perth Regiment at Camp Niagara,  
1940. Stratford Perth Archives, Stratford, Ontario.





4-11  
Three men to a single pair of pants. "Too big enough?" Perth Museum and Historical Society. Paris, Ontario .

4-12  
A British Bulldog mascot at Camp Niagara. Paris Museum and Historical Society, Paris, Ontario.





4-13

Route march at Camp Niagara. Paris Museum and  
Historical Society, Paris, Ontario.



4-14

Members of the University of Toronto Canadian Officers  
Training Corps at Camp Niagara, May 1943. Stephen  
Kozak Collection.



4-15

No.2 Engineer Stores and Works Company, Camp  
Niagara, 1940. The Canadian Military Engineers Museum,  
c/o Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering,  
Chilliwack, British Columbia.





4-16

Mock battle, Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon Collection,  
Hamilton, Ontario.



4-17

Mock Battle, Camp Niagara, 1943. Kenyon Collection.  
Hamilton. Ontario.





4-18

Cleaning the rifle, Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton. Ontario.



4-19

Firing Practice at the range, Camp Niagara, 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-20

5th Field Ambulance Corpsman removing a thorn at Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-21

Route March at Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.





4-22

Bugler, Camp Niagara, 1943. Kenyon collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-23

Demonstration of a mobile water pump. 5th Field Ambulance Corps, 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-24

5th Field Ambulance Corps members visiting the newly reconstructed Fort George, 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



A4-25

5th Field Ambulance Corps members Visiting the newly reconstructed Fort George. 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.





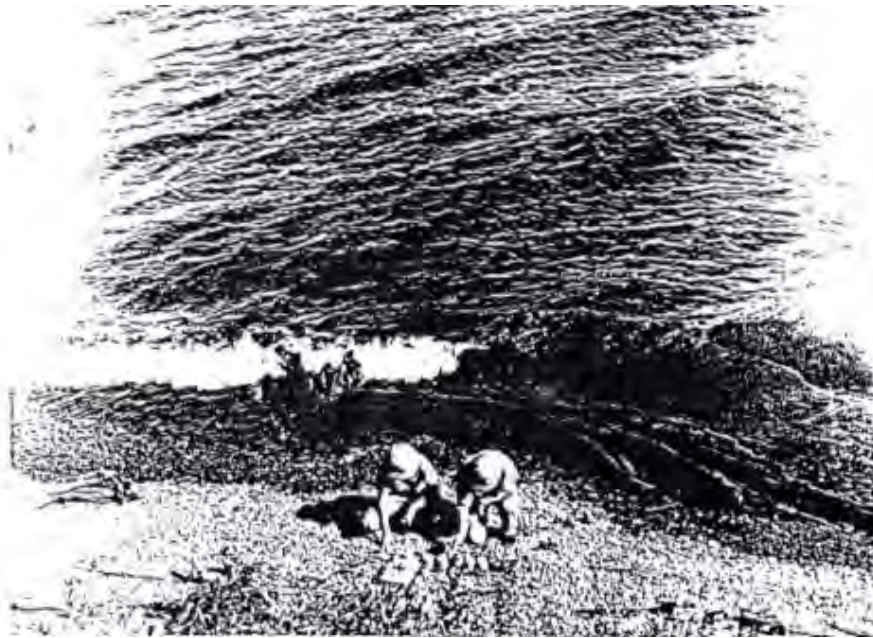
4-26

Outdoor Mess, 5th Field Ambulance Corps, Camp  
Niagara, 1943. Kenyon Collection. Hamilton.



A4-27

Outdoor Mess, 5th Field Ambulance Corps, Camp  
Niagara, 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-28

5th Field Ambulance Corps making the daily test of the water of the Niagara River, Camp Niagara, 1943.  
Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-29

Bath Parade at Lake Ontario, Camp Niagara, 1943.  
Kenyon Collection, Hamilton. Ontario.





4-30

Laying barbed wire at Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-31

Laying barbed wire at Camp Niagara, 1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.





4-32

With respirator and rifle at Camp Niagara. 1943.  
Kenyon Collection. Hamilton, Ontario.



A4-33

Laying barbed wire at Camp Niagara, 1943.  
Kenyon Collection, Hamilton. Ontario.



4-34

Tracked carrier at Camp Niagara, 1943.  
Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-35

Tracked carrier at Camp Niagara. 1943. Kenyon  
Collection. Hamilton. Ontario.



4-38

On the train to Camp Niagara with the 5th Field Ambulance Corps, Hamilton, Ontario. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



4-39

"Stand Easy, Smoke em if you got em." Camp Niagara, 1943.  
Kenyon Collection. Hamilton, Ontario.





4-40

5th Field Ambulance Corps exercise, Camp Niagara,  
1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



A4-41

5th Field Ambulance Corps exercise. Camp Niagara,  
1943. Kenyon Collection, Hamilton, Ontario.



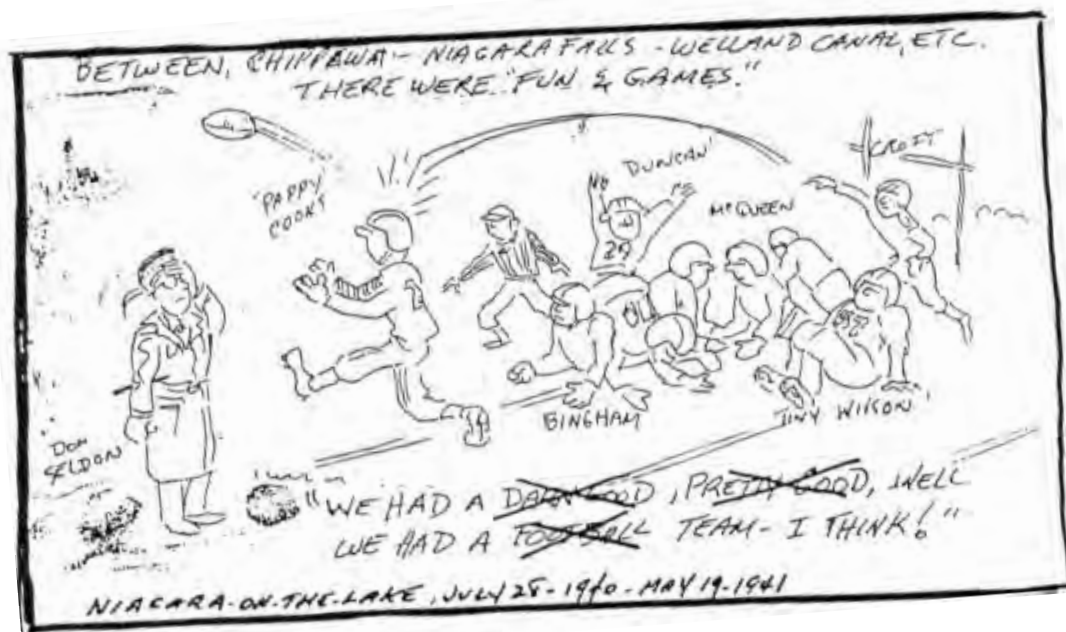
4-42

Tiny Wilson Cartoon. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of  
Canada Regimental Archives, RG6- Series 1..3 J .O,  
Pictorial Record of Service, Set 2.



4-44

Tiny Wilson Cartoon. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regimental Archives. RG6- Series 1..3 J.O, Pictorial Record 01 Service. Set 2.



4-43

Tiny Wilson Cartoon\_ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regimental Archives. RG6- Series 1..3 J.O, Pictorial Record of Service, Set 2.





A4-45

Tiny Wilson Cartoon. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of  
Canada Regimental Archives, RG6- Series 1..3 J.O,  
Pictorial Record of Service, Set 2.



A4-46

Tiny Wilson Cartoon. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regimental Archives. RG6- Series 1..3 J.O, Pictorial Record of Service, Set 2.

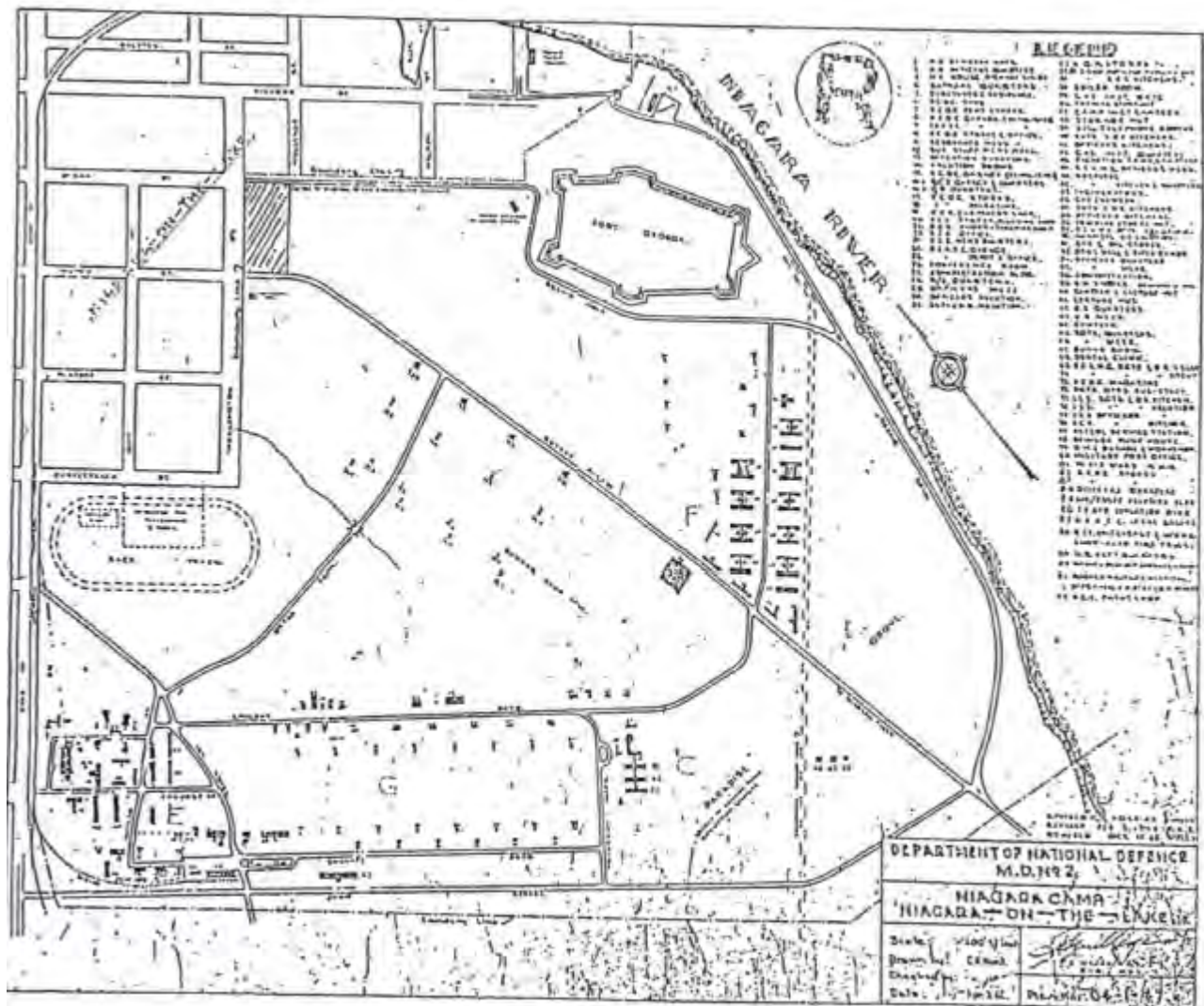


A4-47

Tiny Wilson Cartoon. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regimental Archives. RG6- Series 1..3 J.O, Pictorial Record of Service, Set 2.



4-48  
Not Assigned



4-49  
1942 Plan of Camp Niagara, National archives of Canada,  
RG24, Vol, 6573, file 1182-6-42.



4-50

Brigadier-General O.M. Martin. Nina Burnham Collection.

## Photograph and Figure Captions

### Chapter 5



# Camp Services



Of course there were many services which you might never have seen but you knew they were there and all functioning with one thought uppermost in the minds of those in charge—to make sure everyone had a good time.

If you were one of the group Scouters from Canada or anywhere else you probably found it inspiring to work and play with so many other adults who were there to make sure the Scouts had the best possible Jamboree. Paying your own way to such a gathering where you worked as hard or harder than ever before was worth every minute of it for the adventure. Perhaps you met our Camp Chief who said "Thank You" for everyone and that was enough coming from this great SCOUT and man so dedicated to his responsibilities as Camp Chief.

The boys enjoyed visits to surrounding peach and other farms where they enjoyed the fresh fruit in season like the two boys at the left who almost ate too many ripe peaches. Every day found a Service Club or some other Group asking for permission to entertain the boys and their leaders.



... was food to be unloaded from the big trailer trucks carrying supplies to feed the thousands of boys and of ... sooner or later it was your time to peel the potatoes and prepare dinner perhaps for boys from 5 countries. ... may have come upon these American Scouts popping corn in aluminum foil.

5-01

At the 1954 Boy Scout World Jamboree held at Camp Niagara in 1954, a Tri-Service hospital was set up to provide medical and dental care. The Scout Leader, December 1955.



5-02

The catering staff at Camp Niagara, 1955. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988.014.01.1457.



5-03

Three bandsmen relaxing at the end of the day, Note the steel-shod boots. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988.014.01.1459.





5-04

Best Lines Pennant, circa 1955. Royal Hamilton light  
Infantry Archives 988.014.01.1445.





5-05

N.C.O.s of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, circa 1955.  
Center WOII Dussand, left WOI Potter, center rear Sergeant  
White, right Sergeant Bottrick and Sergeant Davis. Royal  
Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988.014.01.1395.



5-06

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry formed up before the ubiquitous bell tents at Camp Niagara. 1954. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988.0 14.01.546.



5-07

Company Sergeant Major Ed Kernick preparing the mimeographed orders. Camp Niagara, 1955. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988.014.01.1112.



5-08

Mess Call, 1959. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives  
988.0 14.01.1200.



5-09

Tattoo at the Fort George Trading Post, 1957 Royal  
Hamilton Light Infantry Archives .





5-10

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry cooks at Camp Niagara.  
1959. One of the new insulated food coolers is on the  
table. Royal Hamilton light Infantry Archives  
P.987.034.023.



5-11

Piping the Booze at Camp Niagara, 1955. Royal  
Hamilton Light Infantry Archives 988 .014.01.1504.

5-12  
Not Assigned





5-13

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry veterans of World War II  
at Camp Niagara in 1951. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry  
Archives 988.014.01.545.



5-14

Best lines Pennant "three years in a row". Camp Niagara, 1961. Note the floor boards in the bell tent. Royal Hamilton light Infantry Archives 987.034.022.



5-15

Wet Bar at Camp Niagara, 1956. Royal Hamilton Light  
Infantry Archive 988.014.0 1.1399A.



5-16

Dutch Landie of the RHU on carrier exercise at Camp  
Niagara. 1955. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Archives  
988.014.0 1.1115.



5-17

Royal Hamilton light Infantry march past at Camp Niagara,  
1959. Royal Hamilton light Infantry Archives 987.034.019.





5-18

Best lines Pennant. Camp Niagara 1961. Royal Hamilton  
light Infantry Archives 987.034.021.



5-19

Lorne Scots march past at Camp Niagara, 1952. Lorne Scots Regimental Museum, Brampton, Ontario.



5-20

Aerial Photograph of Camp Niagara, 1954. Ontario  
Ministry of Natural Resources, No. 54-4311.



CANADIAN ARMED SERVICES  
 LEAVE FORM

Beynon, C. (Name) Sgt (Rank or Rating) B517546 (Official Number)

Has been granted the following leave, subject to recall:  
 Leave commences at 1700 hrs. on July 20 1957  
 Leave expires at 0700 hrs. on July 21 1957

R.H. 1 (W.R.) (Ship, Unit, or Establishment)

Type of Leave	Days	Trav. Time	Total
Annual			
Isolation			
Compassionate			
Sick			
Rehabilitation			
Special			
Number of days taken from Apr. 1/			

Remarks and Instructions:  
 (L or IS NOT) Authorized to wear civilian clothing  
 (IS or IS NOT) Authorized to visit the United States

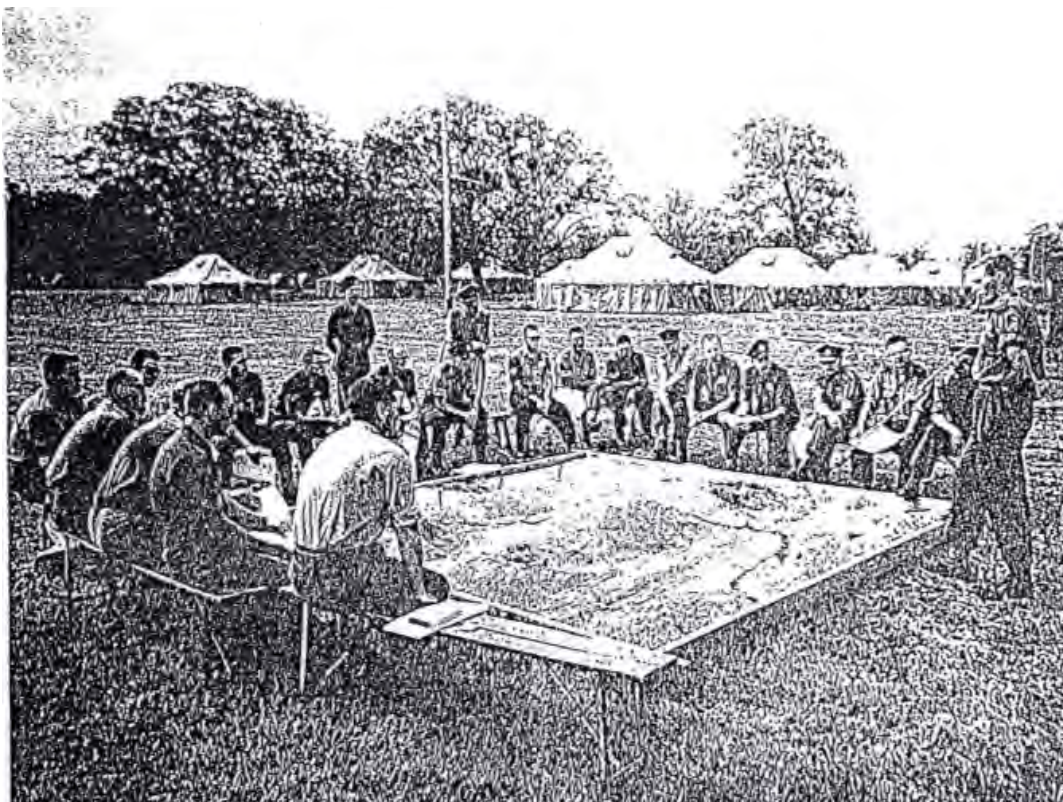
Address on leave Niagara Falls, U.S.A.

Transportation Warrant Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

None	Number
Fully Recoverable:	Number
Half Chargeable:	Number
Free:	Number

RECOMMENDED: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED: [Signature] RANK \_\_\_\_\_

5-21  
 Pass issued to Sergeant  
 Colwyn Beynon of the Royal  
 Hamilton Light Infantry.  
 Colwyn Beynon Collection.



5-22

TEWT. (Tactical Exercise Without Troops) at the special camp in 1964. Brockville Rifles Regimental Archives.