

# Canadian Forces in World War II



René Chartrand • Illustrated by Ron Volstad

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Series editor Martin Windrow

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## Dedication

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To my late father.

## Acknowledgments

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## Author's Note

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Canada – nicknamed by some ‘the peaceable kingdom’ – was a country with a small population and miniscule military forces in 1939. By 1945, it was making the fourth largest contribution to the Allied forces (after the USSR, USA and UK). We give here a necessarily highly compressed account of this remarkable national transformation, as well as basic information on Canadian units and military organisation.

Many items described in this book, such as Battledress, generally followed British military uniform, equipment and weapons patterns for which detailed information is already available elsewhere; the Select Bibliography lists many of these studies, and it seemed pointless to take up precious space in repeating this information in detail. As will be seen in these pages, however, there were many specifically Canadian variations, and these form the basis of the data presented here. This work is intended to offer only a general guide to the varied Canadian forces during World War II, packing a maximum of information into a relatively small but – we hope – usefully illustrated study.

## Artist's Note

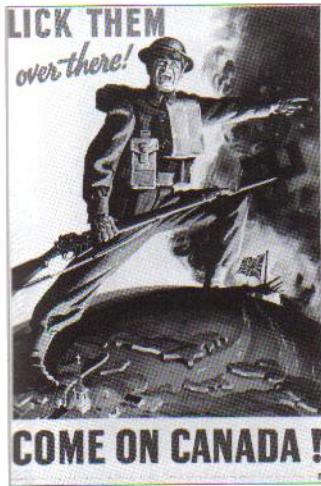
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# CANADIAN FORCES IN WORLD WAR II



Late summer 1940: the message of this Canadian poster was clear – now that France and most of western Europe had fallen, Canada was suddenly the largest country next to Britain still in the war. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers would have to be enlisted, trained, armed, uniformed, equipped and sent across the U-boats' Atlantic happy hunting ground if there was to be any chance to 'Lick Them, Over There!'. This was a tall order for a nation which had hardly any armed forces or military industries in 1939. In the event, learning from the mistakes of 1914, Canada's World War II mobilisation and gearing up for war production was achieved with remarkable speed and efficiency. (National Archives of Canada, C87131)

**W**AS THERE EVER A COUNTRY so unprepared to participate in a world conflict as Canada when it declared war on 10 September 1939? With a population of some 11 million people, the Regular forces – army, air force and navy combined – totalled only 8,000 persons. The Volunteer Militia and various reserves accounted for perhaps 60,000 men. There had been no really compulsory military training since the War of 1812, and very few Canadians apart from veterans of the Great War of 1914–18 knew anything about the military. The available equipment and weapons were mostly a collection of pre-1930s antiques. There had been armoured regiments – on paper – since 1936, but three years later they still had no tanks. The country's shipyards were not building warships; the aircraft industry – military and civilian – was miniscule; there was no heavy armament industry, and the motor vehicle industry was not geared to anything like the mass production of military vehicles.

But then, why should Canada have had a strong military establishment and a war industry? It was far from Europe and the Far East, and its relations with its only neighbour, the United States, were an example of harmony to the world. The country had no colonial ambitions, and indeed was still divesting itself – in a characteristically calm manner – of the last effective remnants of British rule. Although an independent Dominion since 1867, its own foreign diplomatic services and supreme court dated only from 1931.

Nevertheless, all Canada's official institutions were patterned after British parliamentary, judicial, public and military models, from the manuals they used to the uniforms worn by policemen and officials. The country's flag was the British Red Ensign with the coat of arms of Canada in its field. Canadians were generally at ease with their British-inspired institutions. The troubles in Europe were worrisome but far away. Much more important to them was their economy, which had been badly hit by the 'Ten Lost Years' of the Great Depression; policies patterned after those of the 'New Deal' of American President Franklin D. Roosevelt were being adopted by Canadian Prime Minister William L. Mackenzie-King and his Liberal Party.

From the later 1930s, the Mackenzie-King government watched with some concern Hitler's and Mussolini's increasingly threatening behaviour in Europe, but there was hardly anything practical that Canada could do beyond giving moral support to Britain and her Continental allies. British diplomats, for their part, hinted to Canadian politicians that new arms should be obtained and levels of enlistments raised in the Regular forces to improve Canada's state of military preparedness. There were some improvements; the Militia was reorganised in 1936, and the defence budgets doubled between then and 1939, mostly for the

purchase of a few destroyers and some Hawker Hurricane aircraft.

By the end of August 1939 the mood in the country had suddenly changed and become much more militant. On 1 September, mobilisation orders went out to part of the Volunteer Militia. Germany's invasion of Poland, followed by Britain's and France's declarations of war on 3 September, did the rest. The Canadian Parliament was convened and declared war on Germany on 10 September. Quite suddenly, Canada was at war, though almost totally unprepared and unequipped.

Volunteers came forward by the tens and eventually hundreds of thousands. Canadian industry made a truly extraordinary effort to gear up for massive war production within a few months. The aircraft, arms and shipbuilding industries were literally created out of nowhere. The accompanying **Table 1** gives some basic statistics to illustrate the scale of this remarkable national achievement. Scientific research also made huge advances, notably in aeronautics and in atomic energy.

In the summer of 1940, after the Netherlands, Belgium and France had fallen, Canada found itself the second largest country after Britain to be fighting Nazi Germany, which was joined in June by Mussolini's Fascist Italy. Canadians were gripped by the Battle of Britain, inspired by the valiant resistance of the British people and the defiance of Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. Just as in Britain, there was a sigh of Canadian relief when Germany invaded Soviet Russia in the summer of 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 changed the course of the war utterly, and made its eventual outcome certain by bringing the almost limitless resources of the United States into the conflict. (Though few Americans – or British, for that matter – realise it, the tragic losses caused by the first Japanese offensives included two Canadian regiments lost in Hong Kong, where their commander, Brig.Gen.J.K.Lawson, was among those killed in the hopeless defence of the colony.) Nevertheless, Canada's war effort was mainly directed on the Atlantic and Europe, where many Canadians were already serving by early 1940.

### The conscription issue

In Canada itself, the population was deeply divided regarding the issue of military conscription for overseas service. Canadians have never been subject to, and abhor the idea of, obligatory military service in peacetime. However, in 1940 the National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA) allowed conscription for service in North America only. The government had promised not to introduce conscription for overseas service; but, facing great pressure from the military's forecasts of

**Table 1: Canadian World War II Statistics**

<i>Men enlisted:</i>	
Canadian Army:	708,535
Casualties:	75,596, incl. 22,917 deaths
Royal Canadian Air Force:	222,501
Casualties:	21,000, incl. 13,589 deaths
Royal Canadian Navy:	98,474
Casualties:	2,343, incl. 2,024 deaths
<i>Total men enlisted:</i>	1,029,510
<i>Total casualties:</i>	98,939, incl. 38,530 deaths
Male population between 18 & 45 years old (1941):	2,474,000
Percentage of that population enlisted:	41.15%
<i>Women enlisted:</i>	
Canadian Women's Army Corps:	21,624
Royal Canadian Air Force:	17,018
Royal Canadian Navy:	6,781
Medical Corps:	4,518
<i>Total women enlisted:</i>	49,941
<i>Total men &amp; women enlisted 1939–45:</i>	1,079,451
<i>Total population (1941 census):</i>	11,506,650
Canadians in Merchant Marine:	15,000 (1,465 deaths)
Ships built in 1940: 16	
Ships built by 1945: 4,419 (108,000 shipyard workers)	
Aircraft built 1939–45: 16,400 (130,000 aircraft workers)	
Tanks built 1940–45: approx. 8,600	
Military vehicles built in 1940: 70,000	
Military vehicles built in 1944: 147,000	
Men & women working in war industries by 1945: 1,100,000	
Civil Service employees, 1939: 46,000	
Civil Service employees, 1945: 116,000	
War budgets, 1939–40: \$118,291,021	
War budgets, 1944–45: \$4,418,446,315	
National debt, 1938: \$3 billions	
National debt, 1946: \$13 billions	



At first glance this group photo seems to show British troops in India. In fact, they are Canadian Volunteer Militiamen at summer training at Camp Borden, north of Toronto, in August 1939. While most of the items are of British patterns a closer look reveals that many wear the American pressed fibre sun helmet instead of the Wolseley pattern pith helmet. (Worthington Museum, Canadian Forces Base Borden)

Troops who served in Canada often had the American pressed fibre sun helmet in summer – far cheaper and lighter, if not as handsome, as the British Wolseley. It was generally of a light khaki hue. (Worthington Museum, Canadian Forces Base Borden)



manpower shortages, it decided in 1942 to hold a referendum on the issue so as to be relieved of its earlier promise. Never a popular measure, overseas conscription was accepted as a necessary evil by most in English Canada; but the majority in French Canada were solidly against it, and the issue provoked a ferocious political crisis between the province of Quebec and the Canadian government.

Many French-Canadian leaders argued that conscription was a ploy to assimilate them with the English and use them as cannon fodder. Then as now, most French-Canadians, who made up a quarter of Canada's population, did not understand the English language and were intensely proud of their French heritage. In spite of this, Canada's military services at that time operated only in English, followed British traditions and were basically an English-Canadian preserve. Although the army made some efforts to form a few francophone regiments, and the air force did set up one francophone squadron during the war, the navy was reputed to be anti-French-Canadian. The result of such policies in the services, as historian Jean-Yves Gravel put it, was that without basic equality, the nation could not expect equal sacrifice. Yet despite the attitude prevalent in Canada's armed forces, great numbers from the francophone community nevertheless enlisted – one serviceman in five was French-Canadian. In Normandy in June 1944, Suzanne Hardy of Caen recalled her surprise when she heard the liberating soldiers speaking French.

(Nor were there only English or French Canadians in the Canadian forces. When Johannes Verner and his Wehrmacht comrades surrendered at Falaise in August 1944, they were startled to find that their captors spoke German; they were from western Canada, where many German families had settled early in the century.)

Conscription for overseas service was finally enacted in December 1944. There were then about 63,000 NRMA conscripts – nicknamed 'zombies' – now liable to be sent overseas. As it turned out, there were protests in army bases right across the country; many potential draftees vanished, and the few thousands who were sent across the Atlantic under this programme did not make promising candidates to face the Waffen-SS in battle. The country's resolve was shaken by this crisis, for little practical gain, since the units committed to operations overseas continued to be made up very largely of volunteers.

### European operations

Another irritant was the apparent non-use by the high command of the Canadian troops sent overseas. The 1st Canadian Division had been rushed to Britain as early as December 1939, and during the invasion scare of summer 1940 it represented an important defensive asset of VII Corps. More troops had followed; but while Canadians at home could follow the feats of the Australian divisions in North Africa, their own 'war effort' appeared to be sitting in England to little effect – though this armchair impatience took little account of the 'big picture'. When Canadian troops were first committed to battle in significant numbers the outcome did little to cheer the country's mood. The large-scale raid on the port of Dieppe on 19 August 1942 – a major combined operation to rehearse the realities which would be faced when the 'Second Front' eventually opened in NW Europe – was a very costly failure. Some 3,000 of the 5,000 men committed from 2nd Cdn Inf Div were killed



Canadian infantryman in England during the winter of 1942, armed with a Bren gun. The 1st Canadian Division arrived in Britain wearing the single-breasted pre-1939 greatcoat, but from 1940 received this copy of the double-breasted British 1939 pattern.

In March 1938 Canada's Liberal Party government had let a contract for 5,000 Bren guns to replace the venerable Lewis light machine gun, but without following the normal tendering process; this led to a furore in the House of Commons in Ottawa and in the Canadian press. The result was that only a handful of Bren guns were available in September 1939, because Prime Minister Mackenzie-King, although exonerated of any wrongdoing, had been reluctant to get into more political trouble over re-equipping the armed forces. Such 'politicking' was brushed aside in wartime, and Canada quickly became a major arms producer; by 1942, 60 per cent of all Bren guns came from Canada. (Canadian Dept of National Defence, ZK-1123)

or captured in one of Canada's bloodiest disasters, and inevitably this confirmed the broodings of those in Canada who opposed overseas service.

Finally, the 1st Cdn Inf Div and a tank brigade landed in force in Sicily in July 1943 as part of the British 8th Army, and subsequently crossed onto the Italian mainland. At last the army was being used, and used well; and the arrival of 5th Cdn Armd Div brought the strength of I Cdn Corps in Italy to 75,000 men. Many more Canadians remained in England; and these men would finally have their chance to avenge the dead of Dieppe on 6 June 1944 at Juno Beach in Normandy. Here the 3rd Cdn Inf Div saw hard

fighting, taking 1,000 casualties in the course of getting further inland than any other Allied formation by nightfall on D-Day.

By the end of July the 1st Canadian Army was operational; with the 2nd and 3rd Cdn Inf, 4th Cdn and 1st Polish Armd Divs under command, Gen.Crerar's army played a major role in the battle to close the Falaise Pocket in August. In the autumn the Canadians were tasked with liberating the coastal areas of France, Belgium and Holland — difficult, often flooded terrain through which they slogged steadily forward, usually in wretched weather and against bitter last-ditch resistance, with their British comrades on their right flank. Many other Allied formations were brought under Gen.Crerar's command, and at times during the Rhineland fighting of February–March 1945, 1st Canadian Army comprised up to 13 divisions. The 3rd Inf Div and 1st Cdn Parachute Bn spearheaded the crossing of the Rhine in late March. Joined by I Cdn Corps from Italy, 1st Cdn Army had liberated northern Holland by the time of the ceasefire on 4 May which preceded the unconditional surrender of German forces in the theatre. Since D-Day, Canadian troops in NW Europe had suffered some 48,000 casualties including 11,546 deaths.

Thereafter, attention focused on Japan. There had been a few Canadian warships in the Pacific. The 6th Inf Div, now to be made up entirely of volunteers, was reorganised in British Columbia during summer 1945, and a naval task force with aircraft carriers was planned. The surrender of Japan on 2 September put an end to all preparations; and massive demobilisation became the order of the day. The war was over, and Canadians wanted to get on with business. By 1946 the country was back to its traditionally small army, air and sea services made up of volunteers; but — with the Cold War looming — not as small as in 1939...

## CHRONOLOGY

### 1939

*1 September* Germany invades Poland; partial mobilisation ordered in Canada. *3 September* Britain and France declare war on Germany.

*10 September* Canadian Parliament formally declares war.

*16 December* 1st Canadian (Infantry) Division arrives in England.

*17 December* British Commonwealth Air Training Plan agreed, to be set up in Canada and managed by RCAF.



Alpine troop training in Yoho National Park, British Columbia, 1943; the Canadian Rocky Mountains offered ideal conditions for this type of training. The white parka has white fur hood trim. (Canadian Dept of National Defence, ZK-330)

Normandy, 22 June 1944: Sapper C.W.Stevens, 18th Field Coy., Royal Canadian Engineers, using a mirror to check for anti-lifting booby traps under a German Tellermine. Note the profile of the new Mk III helmet issued to the 3rd Inf Div for the Normandy landings. Unusually, Stevens wears no insignia except the small length-of-service chevrons on his right forearm - one red chevron for each year, and the bottom one in white showing that he volunteered during the first year of the war. He has the officer's valise from the WE 37 set clipped to a belt loop of his BD trousers. (Ken Bell, National Archives of Canada, PA136278)

## 1940

*10 May–22 June* German invasion of Holland, Belgium and France ends with capitulation of France on 22 June. Elements of 1st Cdn Inf Div landed in Brittany, France, on 12 June but evacuated 17 June.

*July–October* 94 Canadian aircrew take part in Battle of Britain, of whom 20 are killed.

*August* Bulk of 2nd Inf Div arrives in UK, one brigade to Iceland until December.

*December* 1st & 2nd Inf Divs in UK form Canadian Corps.

## 1941

*June–July* 1st Army Tank Bde and 3rd Inf Div shipped to UK.

*August* 645 men detached from 1st Inf Div participate in successful raid on Spitzbergen, Norway.

*November* 5th Armd Div shipped to UK.

*8–25 December* Following Japanese attacks on US, British and Dutch territories in Pacific and Asia, Royal Rifles of Canada and Winnipeg Grenadiers fight in doomed defence of Hong Kong; of 1,975 men, approx. 800 become casualties including 290 dead (another 264 will die in Japanese captivity).

## 1942

*January* Formation of 4th Armd Div and 2nd Army Tank Bde ordered.

*6–7 June* Attu and Kiska Islands (Aleutians) occupied by Japanese.

*19 August* Disastrous raid by Canadian infantry and armoured units and British Commandos on Dieppe, France. Of 4,963 men of 2nd Cdn Inf Div committed, 3,367 become casualties.

*August–October* 'Battle of St Lawrence' at its height; at least 23 ships sunk by U-boats in St Lawrence River and Gulf.

*Summer* 4th Armd Div shipped to UK.

## 1943

*June* 2nd Army Tank Bde shipped to UK (disbanded November).

*10 July* 1st Cdn Inf Div & 1st Army Tank Bde land in Sicily with British







Lance-corporal of a signals unit of 1st Canadian Division in the UK, early 1940. The straight 'CANADA' shoulder title is worn above his badge of rank on both sleeves in white on khaki; this was gradually replaced, certainly from 1942, with an arc shape. Note that his web equipment is based on the old 1908 pattern; infantry had priority for issue of the WE 37 set. (Private collection)

Men of the Regina Rifles during street fighting in Caen, 10 July 1944. This battalion was part of 7th Inf Bde of 3rd Inf Div; nevertheless, note the Mk II helmet. White marks show where the censor has obscured the sleeve insignia. The Regina Rifles wore a light red oval title with a rectangular bottom extension, with a light green inner rim and lettering 'REGINA RIFLE REGIMENT/CANADA'; below this was the 'French grey' rectangle of 3rd Division. Cf Plate E3. (H.Aikman, National Archives of Canada, PA115028)

8th Army, fighting on left flank. 28 July PPCLI take town of Agira. 3 September Canadians cross Straits of Messina to Reggio, Italy, to advance up Adriatic coast. 14 October Canadians take Campobasso. November 5th Cdn Armd Div arrives in Italy; with 1st Inf Div, forms I Cdn Corps (Lt.Gen.H.D.G. Crerar). 16 December Capture of Casa Berardi. 21-27 December Ortona taken in seven days of costly street fighting.

#### 1944

23-31 May Moved to Italian west front, I Cdn Corps breaches Hitler Line in Liri Valley as part of Operation 'Diadem', Allied break-out beyond Cassino.

6 June Normandy landings: 3rd Cdn Inf Div secures Juno Beach, penetrates 7 miles inland. Over 100 Canadian warships participate.

July Caen, Normandy, falls to 3rd Cdn Inf Div on 9 July. II Cdn Corps arrives in France; 1st Canadian Army formed on 23 July with 2nd & 3rd Cdn Inf, 4th Cdn Armd, 1st Polish Armd Divisions.

25 July-16 August Canadian drive on Falaise, Normandy, from north, to link with US forces forming southern edge of 'Falaise Pocket'. Eight German divisions destroyed; Canadians alone take 12,000 prisoners.

30 August 2nd Cdn Inf Div takes Rouen, France.

1 September Pesaro, Italy, taken by I Cdn Corps; Gothic Line neutralised.

22 September Boulogne, France, liberated by Canadian troops.

1 October Calais, France, liberated.

October-December I Cdn Corps heavily engaged in hills above Rimini, Italy, finally stabilising on Senio River line.

9 November Walcheren Island, Holland, captured by 1st Cdn Army after five weeks' fighting to clear Germans from Scheldt Estuary. 28 November Antwerp port opened to Allied shipping.

December 1944-January 1945 1st Cdn Army holds line of Maas River.

#### 1945

27 February I Cdn Corps transferred from Italy to join 1st Cdn Army in Holland.





Maj. John K. Mahoney, Westminster Regiment, receives from King George VI the Victoria Cross which he earned on the Melfa River in Italy, 24 May 1944. He wears the Canadian khaki wool beret and the KD tropical bush shirt and slacks. A shallow KD brassard looped to his shoulder strap bears the title 'THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT/ CANADA' in yellow on bright blue, above the dark red rectangle of 5th Armd Div – the Westminsters were the Motor Battalion of 5th Armd Brigade. The eleven other Canadian VC recipients were: Sgt. Maj. John Osborn, Winnipeg Grenadiers, Hong Kong, 19 December 1941; Lt. Col. Charles Merritt, South Saskatchewan Regt, Dieppe, 19 August 1942; Chaplain John Foote, Dieppe, 19 August 1942; Capt. Paul Triquet, Royal 22e Rég. Casa Berardi, Italy, 16 December 1943; PO Andrew Minarski, RCAF, over the North Sea, 25 June 1944; Capt. David Currie, South Alberta Regt, St Lambert-sur-Dives, France, 18–20 August 1944; Pte. Ernest Smith, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, Savio River, Italy, 21–22 October 1944; Sgt. Aubrey Cosens, Queen's Own Rifles, Goch-Calcar Road, Germany, 25–26 February 1945; Maj. Frederick Tilston, Essex Scottish Regt, Hochwald, Germany, 1 March 1945; Cpl. Frederick Topham, 1st Para Bn, Diersfordt Wood, Germany, 24 March 1945; and Lt. Robert Gray, RCNVR, Onawaga Bay, Japan, 9 August 1945. (Canadian Dept of National Defence, ZK-804)

2 May 5th Cdn Armd Div fights last battle near Delzijl, northern Holland. 5 May Surrender of German armies in Netherlands to 1st Canadian Army. 7 May Surrender of Germany, ceasefire effective from 11pm on 8 May.

2 September Surrender of Japan following dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 6 September In Ottawa, USSR embassy employee Igor Gouzenko reveals existence of huge Soviet spy network; prelude to Cold War begins.

## THE CANADIAN ARMY

The small Canadian Army of 1939 had a good core of young Regular officers thanks to the Royal Military College in Kingston (Ontario), and some of the older officers were Great War veterans. However, command experience of anything above a few companies was lacking, as was experience of the complex staff planning which was only possible in a large military force. This is probably the main reason why, for most of the war, there were no really remarkable Canadian generals, although some were emerging in 1944–45.

With the outbreak of war existing training camps expanded and new ones appeared all over the country. Early on, before industry could produce arms and equipment, anything available was pressed into use. (Perhaps the most celebrated example was the 1940 purchase by Maj. Gen. Frank Worthington, commander of the armoured corps, of ancient Renault tanks as scrap metal from the USA – for training recruits he needed any kind of tank he could get.) War industries were soon performing impressively, however. For example, in 1941 the Montreal Locomotive Works invented a new tank model in three weeks by using the running gear of the American M3 Lee, adding a Canadian hull and turret and arming it with a British cannon – and thus the Ram I tank was born. (Later Canadian tank production mostly concentrated on licence-building US M4 Shermans of various marks.) Considering the state of the army in 1939, the mobilisation, equipping and training of the hundreds of thousands of enlistees was accomplished with almost miraculous success.

The few Regular regiments of the pre-war Permanent Force were joined by the many Volunteer Militia units, nearly all of which were mobilised. Most Militia regiments would have one

Canadian infantrymen at Campochiaro, Italy, 23 October 1943. The foreground man wears the Mk II helmet with netting, a khaki collar-attached shirt possibly of US origin (interestingly, complete with 'CANADA' shoulder titles), KD slacks, 'ammo' boots with short puttees, and basic WE 37 battle order, and carries a No.4 rifle and No.36 grenade. (A.M.Sirton, National Archives of Canada, PA136198)



battalion on active duty serving in Canada or overseas, and a reserve component for recruiting and depot duties. The Canadian Active Service Force units were grouped into brigades and divisions. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry and 4th and 5th Armoured Divisions served in Europe; the 6th and 8th Infantry on Canada's Pacific coast, and the 7th on the Atlantic coast. In 1945 the 6th Division was being reorganised as an all-volunteer division to serve with the US forces in the planned invasion of Japan when the atomic bombs brought the Pacific campaign to an abrupt close.

There were, of course, many other units besides those Regular and Militia regiments assigned to divisions and corps in Europe. A few corps mobilised older men for the Home Army: e.g. the Veterans' Guard of Canada, and the unique Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (see below, 'Home Service units').

Some armoured and recce regiments with traditional titles were given simplified numerical titles – e.g. Lord Strathcona's Horse were the 2nd Armoured Regiment on the table of organisation of 5th Armoured Division in Italy, but still referred to themselves as the Strathconas.

In all some 368,000 Canadians served in Europe, 7,600 in the Pacific, and a few thousands in North Africa. The army overseas was divided into two distinct elements for most of the period 1943–45: I Canadian Corps in Sicily and Italy from July 1943, and II Canadian Corps in NW Europe from June 1944. These formations came under a unified Canadian command – about 165,000 strong – only in the last months of the war, with the transfer of I Corps from Italy to NW Europe to join Gen. Henry Crerar's 1st Canadian Army. This had been in existence since summer 1944, but bulked out with a number of non-Canadian divisions under command.

Overall, the Canadians proved to be very reliable troops, steady in the face of setbacks and casualties, and rather more dashing in the assault than their sometimes more stolid British comrades in arms. Like the Australians, their consciousness of being a national contingent gave them a special *esprit de corps*; it has been said of them that they represented a first rate balance between 'frontier' aggressiveness and initiative, and the professional steadiness inherited from British military tradition. (US Gen. George S. Patton paid tribute to them in his own, inimitably offensive way: 'The Canadians are the best troops Montgomery has, and they're American!'.)

Eyewitnesses in Normandy speak of their determination to get their own back for the losses suffered at Dieppe in 1942. It is also well attested that the murder of Canadian wounded by the Waffen-SS 12th Panzer Division 'Hitlerjugend' on 8 June lent a particular bitterness to their continuing encounters with that division in the *bocage* fighting – the 'Hitlerjugend' had been virtually wiped out by the time the Canadians finally took Caen four weeks later.

## HOME SERVICE UNITS

A number of regiments were assigned to 'local protective duty' such as guarding factories, power plants and POW camps, running the recruiting system or manning coastal artillery. However, there were two large corps which were distinct organisations: the Veterans' Guard of Canada, and the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, who mustered as many as 33,000 men between them.

### Veterans' Guard of Canada

This was recruited from 23 May 1940 from Great War veterans aged between 40 and 65 years, for full-time and reserve service. It grew to 29 companies of 250 men each in 1942, and eventually to 10,000 men in 1944, with another 8,000 on part-time service. The VGC was posted throughout Canada, and a few companies also went to Newfoundland, to England, to Nassau in the Bahamas, and to Georgetown, Guyana. In summer 1944/ spring 1945 some veterans went to India, and eventually even to the jungles of Burma, where they were much needed as 'mule skimmers' for the transportation system. However, the great majority served in Canada, and most of those as guards for the many POW and enemy aliens internment camps in Canada.

Most camps were built in remote areas, but some were near cities or in old forts, such as Fort Henry in Kingston or Fort Lennox south of Montreal. Throughout the war considerable

numbers of mostly German POWs were shipped to Canada – at least 12,000 in 1942 alone – since its remoteness from any country except the USA made escape futile and serious misbehaviour unlikely. However, there would always be some danger for the guards; a few prisoners were Nazi fanatics who attempted to escape (after December 1941, their only hope was to try to reach Mexico), and some made weapons, such as a homemade crossbow once found by guards. Such hard-core Nazis were usually persuaded to calm down by their fellow prisoners before the guards could spot them and weed them out. Those identified as troublemakers were sent to an isolated camp at Neys on the north-west shore of Lake Superior.

At all other camps the guards were permitted, indeed tacitly encouraged, to show kindness to the prisoners; and the mature age of most of the guards helped produce a generally calm and co-operative culture in the camps. The great majority of the German POWs, at first taken aback, were quite content with their treatment. Many POW enlisted men worked on farms or in logging camps, in return for pay and under only the lightest surveillance. There were even times when guards at Kenora, Ontario, lent their rifles to POWs for hunting deer and ducks! Though this was an extreme case, the unofficial policy of



**Pte. C. McKean, 1st Canadian Parachute Bn, poses for a photograph in 1943. He wears the third model airborne troops' helmet with chin cup in black leather, and Canadian BD. Interestingly, although the battalion jumped on D-Day as part of British 6th Abn Div, in this training shot he has an American T5 parachute harness complete with chest reserve pack. The Sten gun could be carried during the jump, thrust under the chest harness. (Canadian Dept of National Defence, ZK-226)**



**Above Juno Beach, Normandy, 6 June 1944: Maj.Gen. R.F.L.Keller, GOC 3rd Canadian Inf Div, gives instructions to men of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. At left, note the unit's red-on-dark-green arc-shaped title 'QUEEN'S OWN RIFLES' above a separate national title, above the division's French grey rectangle, above black-on-dark-green Rifles NCO's rank chevrons. At right, the rear of a British battle jerkin is just visible. (F.L.Dubberhill, National Archives of Canada, PA115544)**

general tolerance had very positive results.

As time went by, POWs wore their German uniforms less and less – especially after D-Day when, as Hans Kaiser put it, 'We knew it was over'. Siegfried Bruse, a U-boat commander, was much impressed by the Canadians who 'made my life as pleasant as possible from the day I came here as a prisoner'. The kindness shown by the soldiers of the Veterans' Guard of Canada to Bruse and many German POWs changed their minds

and their lives: thousands came back to settle in Canada after the war.

The same could not be said of most Japanese POWs. Indoctrinated with the blind fanaticism of the *bushido* spirit, and tormented by guilt at having allowed themselves to be taken alive, many Japanese prisoners remained irreconcilable. In one instance three Canadian guards were killed during a break-out in which Japanese rushed the wire. However, once outside the escaped prisoners simply sat down, apparently waiting to be killed, and admitted after recapture that they had been seeking an 'honorable death' rather than a way home.

The subject of Japanese POWs reminds us that the VGC also guarded another type of camp. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the Canadian as well as the American west coast was traumatised by fear of surprise attacks. The occasional appearance of Japanese submarines did not help to calm the population. Consequently, internment camps were established for 'Japanese' civilians – an ugly episode in Canada's, as in America's war record. Some 16,000 innocent Canadians of Japanese descent were arrested and interned, along with some 7,200 resident Japanese nationals. Their property was seized and their livelihoods ruined in an abject act of blatant racism for which the Government of Canada, long after the war, formally apologised.

Another and dreadfully ironic category of internment was that suffered by German Jews who had fled to Britain before the war, and now found themselves regarded as 'enemy aliens' because of their German citizenship. In 1940 many in Britain were interned (though briefly, and under generally decent conditions) on the Isle of Man; and some 1,800 were sent to Canada for internment as potentially dangerous aliens. These were greeted in Quebec City by troops with fixed bayonets and were at first regarded as hard-core enemies; however, a number of incidents made the Canadian authorities reconsider. Initially interned at several camps, most were sent to Fort Lennox, Quebec, a historic tourist site before the war. The guards and the local villagers from nearby Saint-Paul did what they could to help. The barbed wire around the fort was mostly removed in 1941. These innocent victims of persecution were

gradually freed, though it was only at the end of 1943 that the last 83, by then transferred to Hull, Quebec, were released. Many remained in Canada to start a new life.

The Veterans' Guard continued to serve for some time after the war, in dwindling numbers as POWs were repatriated, until March 1947 when the last 200 veterans were disbanded.

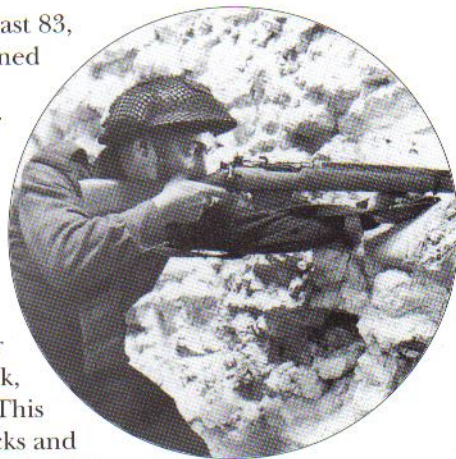
**Uniforms** See Plate A2.

### **Pacific Coast Militia Rangers**

British Columbia's extensive and rugged coastline was impossible to defend and there were few troops available for surveillance. To provide at least warning in case of Japanese attack, the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers were raised from March 1942. This was a volunteer force consisting mainly of woodsmen, lumberjacks and fishermen formed into companies scattered along the length of the BC coast. The organisation was patterned after the British Home Guard of 1940. There was no age limit, but these mostly older men had to be fit and familiar with their area. They formed their own local companies, elected their officers and NCOs, and served without pay.

The concept was immediately successful. By July 1942 some 10,000 volunteers had organised 123 companies; by 1945 there were 138 companies totalling about 15,000 men. The Rangers' permanent base was at Chiliwack, BC, where a monthly bulletin – *'The Ranger'* – was published, and where training was given to new volunteers in map reading, weapons care and guerrilla warfare. The local companies assembled at evenings and weekends to practice guerrilla tactics; there was very little drill and no 'spit and polish'. It was understood that the Rangers might be mobilised at a moment's notice. Later on, they were tasked with spotting and neutralising the many Japanese balloon bombs which landed in British Columbia. The PCMR were disbanded in October 1945.

**Uniforms** All members had a light khaki armband with 'P.C.M.R.', the company number (e.g. 'No.31 Coy.') above and the local designation (e.g. 'NANAIMO RANGERS') below, all in black. This was worn both with civilian dress and with the uniform. The primary uniform was a 'Dry-Bak' cruiser-style tunic made of water repellent duck with metal snap buttons and four pockets, and 'logger' pants (reinforced with double thickness fabric from the waist to two-thirds of the way down the legs) – a popular outdoor outfit made by Jones Tents & Awnings of Vancouver. On 22 June 1942 the firm was contracted to make 15,000 such suits of khaki duck especially for the Rangers, with shoulder straps added. Black shoulder flashes with 'P.C.M.R.' in yellow were often added. The initial khaki lightened considerably after several washings, and assumed a light tan colour. The headdress was patterned after the hunter's popular Dry-Bak khaki duck 'shooting hat' and had a rather narrow brim. The badge could be worn in front, or holding up the left side of the brim 'Aussie style'. The Army's cotton drill summer BD was later provided to some as secondary dress. The Rangers at first used their own sporting guns, but were later armed with a variety of older rifles such as the Ross .303, Enfield .30-06 1917, Marlin 1936 and Savage 99; the most popular were Winchester 64 and 94 models in .30-30 calibre. Sten sub-machine guns were later issued on a scale of about one to every 15 men.



**Pte. R.Schwabe, Regina Rifles, 7th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div, at Vaucelles, 14 July 1944. Note the field dressing under the netting of his Mk II helmet. (Ken Bell, National Archives of Canada, PA131387)**



Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa in action at Carpiquet, Normandy, 4 July 1944. This was the machine gun battalion of 3rd Inf Div, and under magnification the Vickers No.1, equipped with the WE 37 pistol set, can be seen to display above his divisional patch its dark green arc-shaped title with a squared bottom extension, and yellow lettering 'CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA/MG'.

The Normandy campaign of June–August, in the notoriously difficult terrain of the *bocage* country and against determined resistance by some of the best German divisions in the West, saw some of the war's most savage and costly fighting for all the Allied infantry committed to this front. The first 3rd Div troops had reached the edge of Carpiquet airfield on the evening of D-Day – a month before this photo was taken. (D.Grant, National Archives of Canada, PA138359)

## ARMY UNIFORMS & ACCOUTREMENTS

### Battledress

Until the summer of 1939 the Canadian Army was wearing uniforms reminiscent of World War I. As with everything else in the Canadian forces at the time, British patterns were closely followed. In 1939 the British War Office sent to Canada documentation and samples of its new Battledress, Serge. During July and August the Canadian National Defence Dress Clothing Committee considered the uniform, and recommended its approval by Canada on 24 August. The Minister of National Defence, the Hon. Norman Rogers, concurred on 2 September, and 100,000 blouses and trousers were ordered four days later, with tenders first invited on 23 September when further samples were available.

With many regiments mobilised from 1 September 1939 the country instantly found itself with an acute uniform shortage. There were no large stocks in store and suitable cloth to make new uniforms was also scarce. By October it was feared that enough Battledress suits might not be available to equip the 1st Canadian Division, which was due to leave for Britain soon. The minister set 15 November as the target date for all clothing and equipment to be 'delivered and ready for issue'; but by 6 November only 3,700 blouses and 6,700 trousers had been delivered. Among various delays, one large clothing firm, the T.Eaton Co., had failed to supply blouses which were 'up to standard'. By 21 November it

was realized that only 20,000 Battledress suits could be obtained from available cloth; but they were now being produced rapidly, and suitable cloth was also becoming available in quantity.

By 2 December it was reported that 'there should be no further difficulties' in supplying troops leaving for Britain in the future or those mobilised in Canada. The 1st Division left Canada in December wearing the new Battledress. The crisis had been overcome; on 20 December the Minister of National Defence was able to pay tribute in a radio broadcast to the remarkable speed with which the clothing industry had converted to making uniforms in large numbers, something almost unthinkable less than a year before.

The millions of khaki wool BD suits made in Canada were generally deemed to be of superior quality to the British model, and became sought-after by British officers and men. Unlike the British blouse, which went through several changes during the war, the Canadian blouse was always made to the original pattern, with concealed buttons. (The only notable change was the replacement of the collar hooks-&-eyes with a cloth tab from 1943.) Canadian BD was of a somewhat darker bronze/green hue of khaki than the British patterns.

A departure from British practice was the manufacture of a summer cotton version of BD; this was of a light greenish-khaki hue when first issued, settling to a tan shade after some use and laundering. Troops and volunteers in the warmer Pacific coast stations were often seen in the cotton BD, but it was not worn overseas.

Since the shirts were collarless, the enlisted men's BD blouse was worn fastened at the throat. In early 1945 British Army enlisted men increasingly received collared shirts worn with neckties, so the practice was also allowed by the Canadian Army. Some of the first Canadians to be issued this pattern shirt were the 'zombies' drafted following the overseas conscription crisis in Canada. In April 1945, the Canadians – then in Belgium and Holland – 'were now issued with black ties and collared shirts'. The well-known Canadian author Farley Mowatt, then with the Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment, recalled that the 'tie itself was known as the Zombie tie, and the resentment of the volunteers [in NW Europe] who were now ordered to wear this symbol of shame was most outspoken'. For the regiments arriving from Italy to join the Canadian Army in the Low Countries, 'the biggest change, and the one that really hurt, was the fact that the Eighth Army's famous Crusader Cross [shoulder patch] had disappeared, to be replaced by the meaningless geometric pattern of the First Canadian Army flash'.

**BELOW LEFT** British battle jerkin, 1942–44, front view. This rig, made of dark brown canvas, saw some limited use by Canadian troops of the 7th and 8th Inf Bdes, 3rd Inf Div on D-Day and in the following weeks. It was theoretically a good idea, but in practice the troops found it too hot for comfortable wear, and its pouches could not be separated; after a short period they discarded the jerkin in favour of conventional web equipment. (Ed Storey Collection)

**BELOW** A Canadian pattern battle jerkin was designed shortly after the British model in 1942–43. Some 1,500 were produced, of which 1,000 were sent to Canadian Army units in the UK. It was made of brown canvas material edged with lighter brown tape. Instead of wooden toggles as on the British pattern, the Canadian jerkin had black enamelled snap fasteners and belt buckles. Few appear to have been issued, and those only for training in Britain; there is no evidence they were used in battle. (Ed Storey Collection)





**Table 2: Canadian Army Units 1939-45****Regular regiments (in order of precedence):**

*Royal Canadian Dragoons (1st Armd Car Regt)* I Corps troops – Italy 1943-45; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Lord Strathcona's Horse (2nd Armd Regt)* Italy 1943-45 with 5th Armd Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*Royal Canadian Artillery* Dieppe 1942, Kiska 1943, Italy 1943-45, NW Europe 1944-45. Some units also served in Canada, notably as coast artillery.  
*Royal Canadian Regiment* Italy 1943-1945 with 1st Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe 1945.  
*Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry* Italy 1943-1945 with 2nd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe 1945.  
*Royal 22e Régiment* Italy 1943-1945 with 3rd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe 1945.

**Militia, volunteer & reserve units (listed alphabetically).****Notes:**

'Mb' = mobilisation date.

Units with initial numbers are listed phonetically – e.g. '1st' & '4th' etc. appear under 'F'.

Many units listed as shipped to the UK in 1944-45 and disbanded there were dispersed as casualty replacements to units of 1st Canadian Army in NW Europe.

*Algonquin Regiment* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 23 August 1944 with 10th Inf Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada* Mb 15 August 1940; Normandy 23 August 1944 with 10th Inf Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Argyll Light Infantry* Not mobilised; converted to artillery, remained in Canada as part of Reserve Army.  
*Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada* Mb 1 September 1939; three platoons at Dieppe 1942; Normandy 6 July 1944 with 5th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*British Columbia Dragoons (9th Armd Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Italy 1943-45 with 5th Armd Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*British Columbia Regiment (28th Armd Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 26 July 1944 with 4th Armd Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Brockville Rifles* Mb 18 March 1942; served in Bermuda, later with 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command.  
*Calgary Highlanders* Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 July 1944 with 5th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Calgary Regiment (14th Armd Regt)* Mb 11 February 1941; Dieppe 1942; Italy 1943-45 with 1st Armd Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa* Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 3rd Inf Div (MG bn); NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Canadian Fusiliers* Mb 29 January 1942; with 13th Bde, 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command; Kiska 1943; to UK May 1944, converted into 2 Cdn Training Bn, 1 November 1944.  
*Canadian Garrison Battalion* Formed late autumn 1940 from WWI veterans; served in Ontario guarding hydro-electric plants at Chippewa and Niagara Falls; disbanded 1943.  
*Canadian Grenadier Guards (22nd Armd Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 26 July 1944 with 4th Armd Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Canadian Scottish Regiment* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 7th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Canadian Parachute Corps* 1st Canadian Para Bn raised July 1942; jumped Normandy 6 June 1944, Rhine crossings; NW Europe 1944-45 with British 6th Airborne Div. 2nd Bn with First Special Service Force (qv).  
*Cape Breton Highlanders* Mb 1 January 1941; Italy 1943-45 with 11th Inf Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Carleton & York Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 3rd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Dufferin & Haldiman Rifles of Canada* Mb July 1940; served in Canada.  
*Edmonton Fusiliers* Mb 1 September 1939; served in Canada. 2nd Bn mb 12 May 1942; served with 8th Inf Div, Pacific Command.  
*Edmonton Regiment* – see Loyal Edmonton Regiment.  
*8th Princess Louise's New Brunswick Hussars (5th Armd Regt)* Mb July 1940; Italy 1943-45 with 5th Armd Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*Elgin Regiment* Mb 24 May 1940; one sqn as 1st Cdn Tank Delivery Sqn in Italy 1943-45; one sqn as 25th Armd Delivery Regt in Normandy 8 June 1944, NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Essex Regiment* Mb 24 May 1940; July 1943 to UK, where disbanded 31 March 1944.  
*Essex Scottish Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 5 July 1944 with 4th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*1st Cdn Armoured Personnel Carrier Regt* Formed in Holland 24 October 1944, served with British 79th Armd Div; disbanded Germany, 11 May 1945.  
*1st Hussars (6th Armd Regt)* Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 June 1944; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*First Special Service Force (Parachute)* Mixed elite US/Canadian unit organised from June 1942, Canadians originally called 2nd Cdn Para Bn; Kiska 1943; Italy 1943-44; southern France 1944; disbanded 5 December 1944.  
*Fort Garry Horse (10th Armd Regt)* Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 June 1944; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards (4th Recce Regt)* Mb 26 January 1941; Italy 1943-1945 with 1st Inf Div, then 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*14th Canadian Hussars (8th Recce Bn)* Mb 26 January 1941; Normandy 6 July 1944 with 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*48th Highlanders of Canada* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 1st Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Fusiliers Mont-Royal* Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 7 July 1944 with 6th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Fusiliers de Sherbrooke* Mb 18 March 1942; served in Canada; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 18 January.  
*Fusiliers du Saint-Laurent* Mb 3 January 1942; served in Gaspé Peninsula; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 18 January.  
*Governor General's Foot Guards (21st Armd Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 25 July 1944 with 4th Armd Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Governor General's Horse Guards (3rd Armd Recce Regt)* Mb 9 October 1941; Italy 1943-45 with 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*Grey & Simcoe Foresters* Mb 24 May 1940; June 1943 to UK, where disbanded 1 November.  
*Halifax Rifles* Mb 1 January 1940; June 1943 to UK, where disbanded 1 November.  
*Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 1st Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945.  
*Highland Light Infantry of Canada* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 9th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.  
*Irish Fusiliers of Canada* Mb 1 January 1941; served in Canada & Jamaica; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 19 January.  
*Irish Regiment of Canada* Mb 24 May 1940; Italy 1943-45 with 11th Inf Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.  
*Kent Regiment* Mb 24 May 1940; served in Canada with 8th Inf Div, Pacific Command.  
*King's Own Rifles of Canada* Mb 24 May 1940; served in Canada with 8th Inf Div, Pacific Command.

**Table 2: continued**

<i>Lake Superior Regiment (Motor)</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 26 July 1944 with 4th Armd Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Régiment de Châteauguay</i> Mb for local defence 1 September 1939; to Newfoundland, September 1944; disbanded at St John's, 18 January 1945.
<i>Lanark &amp; Renfrew Scottish Regt (1st Light Anti-Aircraft Regt)</i> Mb 5 March 1942; disbanded Halifax 15 October 1943. 1st Light AA Regt organised in UK, 1 February 1941; served in Italy 1943-45; designated Lanark & Renfrew Scottish, 15 March 1945.	<i>Régiment de la Chaudière</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 8th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Lincoln &amp; Welland Regiment</i> Mb 15 August 1940; Normandy 26 July 1944 with 10th Inf Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Régiment de Gaspé-Bonnaventure</i> Formed 15 August 1944; not mobilised; disbanded 31 March 1946. (Originally 3rd Reserve Bn of Les Fusiliers du Saint-Laurent, and wore its cap badge.)
<i>Lorne Scots</i> Mb 1 September 1939; served in Canada as base depot but detachments in Italy 1943-45, Normandy & NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Régiment de Hull</i> Mb 28 July 1941; with 13th Bde, 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command; Kiska 1943-44; May 1944 to UK, where redesignated 4th Cdn Inf Training Bn Type B, 1 November.
<i>(Loyal) Edmonton Regiment</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Spitzbergen August 1941; Italy 1943-45 with 2nd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945. Prefix 'Loyal' granted 7 July 1943.	<i>Régiment de Joliette</i> Mb 3 January 1942; served in Newfoundland; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 10 January.
<i>Manitoba Mounted Rifles</i> Not mobilised.	<i>Régiment de Lévis</i> Local defence duty from 1 September 1939; mb 12 May 1942; served in Valcartier, Quebec; disbanded 15 October 1943.
<i>Manitoba Volunteer Reserve</i> Local guard duties in Canada.	<i>Régiment de Maisonneuve</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 7 July 1944 with 5th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Middlesex &amp; Huron Regiment</i> Not mobilised.	<i>Régiment de Montmagny</i> Mb 15 March 1942; served in Newfoundland; disbanded 15 September 1944.
<i>Midland Regiment</i> Mb 24 May 1940; served in Canada; to UK January 1945.	<i>Régiment de Québec</i> Mb 18 March 1942; served with 15th Inf Bde, 7th Inf Div of Atlantic Command; disbanded 22 December 1945.
<i>New Brunswick Rangers</i> Mb 1 January 1941; Normandy 26 July 1944 with 10th Inf Bde, 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Régiment de St Hyacinthe</i> Mb 3 January 1942; served in Newfoundland; disbanded 14 January 1946.
<i>New Brunswick Regiment</i> Not mobilised.	<i>Régiment du Saguenay</i> Not mobilised.
<i>19th Alberta Light Horse (31st (Alberta) Recce Bn)</i> Mb 13 March 1942; served in Canada; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 15 February.	<i>Rocky Mountain Rangers</i> Mb 1 January 1941; with 13th Bde, 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command; Kiska 1943; May 1944 to UK, where redesignated 1st Cdn Inf Training Bn Type A, 1 November.
<i>North Nova Scotia Highlanders</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 9th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Regina Rifle Regiment</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 7th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 8th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Royal Hamilton Light Infantry</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 7 July 1944 with 4th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Ontario Regiment (11th Armd Regt)</i> Mobilised 1 September 1939; Spitzbergen August 1941; Italy 1943-45 with 1st Armd Bde; NW Europe from March 1945.	<i>Royal Montreal Regiment</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Normandy 28 July 1944; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Oxford Rifles</i> Mb 24 May 1940; served in Canada; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded.	<i>Royal Regiment of Canada</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 7 July 1944 with 4th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Perth Regiment (Motor)</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 11th Inf Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from March 1945.	<i>Royal Rifles of Canada</i> Mb 24 May 1940; destroyed in defence of Hong Kong, December 1941; reconstituted 1 January 1942; served in Canada; January 1945 to UK.
<i>Pictou Highlanders</i> Mb 1 September 1939; served in Newfoundland 1941-43; companies to Bahamas & Bermuda 1943-46.	<i>Royal Winnipeg Rifles</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 7th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Prince Albert &amp; Battleford Volunteers</i> Mb 1 September 1939; served in Canada; Battleford component disbanded and absorbed into 16/22 Saskatchewan Horse, 1 May 1941. Remainder redesignated The Prince Albert Volunteers; served in Pacific Command 1942-45.	<i>St John Fusiliers</i> Mb 1 September 1939; with 13th Bde, 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command from January 1941; one company on Kiska 1943-44; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 10 January.
<i>Prince Edward Island Highlanders</i> Mb 1 January 1941; served in Canada; January 1945 to UK, where disbanded 18 January.	<i>Saskatoon Light Infantry</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 1st Inf Div (MG bn); NW Europe from March 1945.
<i>Prince Edward Island Light Horse (1st Cdn Armd Bde HQ Sqn)</i> Mb 27 February 1941; redesignated II Corps Defence Co, 1 November 1943; Normandy 6 July 1944; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>Sault St Marie &amp; Sudbury Regiment</i> Mb; served with 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command 1942-45.
<i>Prince of Wales Rangers</i> Mb 1 September 1939; served with 8th Inf Div, Pacific Command, 1942-45.	<i>Scots Fusiliers of Canada</i> Mb 5 March 1942; served in Ontario; disbanded 15 October 1943.
<i>Prince Rupert Regiment</i> Raised 20 November 1942; served in Prince Rupert, BC, area coast defences; released from active duty May 1944, disbanded 31 March 1946.	<i>Seaforth Highlanders of Canada</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943-45 with 2nd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945.
<i>Princess Louise Fusiliers (Motor)</i> Mb 1 January 1941; Italy 1943-45 with 11th Inf Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from February 1945.	<i>2nd Armoured Car Regt</i> Mb in Winnipeg; sent to UK, where disbanded early 1941.
<i>Princess of Wales' Own Regiment</i> Mb 9 September 1939 for local defence in Kingston; disbanded 15 October 1943.	<i>2nd/10th Dragoons</i> Mb 26 May 1942; with 7th Inf Div, Atlantic Command; disbanded 1944.
<i>Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada</i> Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 7 July 1944 with 6th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars (7th Recce Regt)</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.
<i>Queen's Own Rifles of Canada</i> Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 July 1944 with 8th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944-45.	<i>7th/11th Hussars (2nd Cdn Armd Bde HQ Sqn)</i> Mb 27 February 1941; to UK, where disbanded 1 January 1943.
<i>Queen's York Rangers</i> Mb 5 March 1942; served in Ontario; disbanded 15 October 1943.	

*continued on next page*

**Table 2: continued**

*Sherbrooke Fusiliers (27th Armd Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 2nd Armd Bde; NW Europe 1944–45.

*Sherbrooke Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; to UK, where disbanded 16 July 1940.

*16th/22nd Saskatchewan Horse* Mb 24 May 1940; June 1943 to UK, where disbanded 1 November.

*6th Duke of Connaught's Royal Canadian Hussars (5th Cdn Armd Div HQ Sqn)* Mb 27 February 1941; to UK, where disbanded 1 January 1943.

*South Alberta Regiment (29th Armd Recce Regt)* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 24 July 1944 with 4th Armd Div; NW Europe 1944–45.

*South Saskatchewan Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 8 July 1944 with 6th Inf Bde, 2nd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944–45.

*Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders* Mb 24 May 1940; Normandy 6 June 1944 with 9th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div; NW Europe 1944–45.

*Three Rivers Regiment (12th Armd Regt)* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943–45 with 1st Armd Bde; NW Europe from March 1945.

*Toronto Scottish Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Dieppe 1942; Normandy 8 July 1944 with 2nd Inf Div (MG bn); NW Europe 1944–45.

*12th Manitoba Dragoons (18th Armd Car Regt)* Mb 10 May 1941; Normandy 9 July 1944; NW Europe 1944–45.

*Victoria Rifles of Canada* Mb 24 May 1940; with 7th Inf Div, Atlantic Command; 20 November 1944 to UK, where disbanded on arrival.

*Voltigeurs de Québec* Mb 10 May 1941; with 17th Inf Bde, Pacific Command; July 1943 to UK, where disbanded 1 November.

*West Nova Scotia Regiment* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943–45 with 3rd Inf Bde, 1st Inf Div; NW Europe from March 1945.

*Westminster Regiment (Motor)* Mb 1 September 1939; Italy 1943–45 with 5th Armd Bde, 5th Armd Div; NW Europe from March 1945.

*Winnipeg Grenadiers* Mb 1 September 1939; to Jamaica & Bermuda until recalled to Canada, October 1941; to Hong Kong in November, where destroyed December 1941. Reconstituted 10

January 1942; with 13th Bde, 6th Inf Div, Pacific Command; Kiska 1943; May 1944 to UK, where redesignated 3rd Cdn Inf Training Bn Type A, 1 November.

*Winnipeg Light Infantry* Mb 1 September 1939 for local defence; 18 March 1942 to 19th Inf Bde, Pacific Command, at Esquimalt, BC; disbanded 10 January 1945.

**Service & support units**

The corps and support units below had detachments in all areas where Canadian troops served:

- Canadian Chaplain Service
- Canadian Dental Corps
- Canadian Forestry Corps (formed 1941, NW Europe 1944–45)
- Canadian Infantry Corps (authorised 2 September 1942 – administered reinforcements for infantry units)
- Canadian Intelligence Corps (authorised 29 October 1942)
- Canadian Postal Corps
- Canadian Provost Corps
- Canadian Technical Training Corps (authorised 4 June 1943 – trained specialist tradesmen e.g. mechanics, electricians, draftsmen etc.)
- Canadian Women's Army Corps (authorised 13 August 1941)
- Corps of Military Staff Clerks
- Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers
- Royal Canadian Armoured Corps (authorised 13 August 1940 – administrative corps created to provide reinforcements to armoured units)
- Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps
- Royal Canadian Army Pay Corps
- Royal Canadian Army Service Corps
- Royal Canadian Army Veterinary Corps (disbanded 1 November 1940, as mechanised equipment had replaced horses)
- Royal Canadian Corps of Signals
- Royal Canadian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (authorised 1 February 1944)
- Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps

Officers were directed to use the same patterns of BD as their British counterparts by a long instruction of 14 September 1939 (DND, HQ 54-27-8-8), and also in the detailed 1943 War Dress Regulations. From the outbreak of war they were permitted to wear the blouse collar open to show their collared shirts with tan neckties.

**Helmets**

Various elements of the Canadian infantry used no less than four helmets during the war. The army helmet in use in September 1939 was the British Mk I of Great War vintage. Samples of the new 1938 British Mk II had been sent to Canada in 1939, but the first 25,000 were only manufactured from late May 1940, with another 115,000 ordered a month later and 135,000 more (including 20,000 for the RCAF) at the end of that year. Some 200,000 more were ordered in 1941. From July 1941 the helmet liners were edged with steel wire clips to hold the rubber buffers on the liner band, a feature not found on British-made helmets. In 1942, half a million helmets (including 200,000 for the RCAF) were ordered to meet the demand of the vastly expanded Canadian forces. Thereafter helmet orders were lower but, by the end of the war, a total of 1,131,600 (including 155,000 for Civil Defence) had been produced, with even more liners and chin straps.

OPPOSITE **Sgt. F.C. Edminston, Highland Light Infantry of Canada, 9th Inf Bde, 3rd Inf Div photographed in Normandy, 20 June 1944. Note that he has removed his rank badges, a common precaution against snipers; typically, however, he retains the large shoulder title – 'HIGHLAND/LIGHT INFANTRY/CANADA', in yellow on grass green within a yellow inner rim – above the divisional patch; see also Plate E3. Though sometimes dulled over with mud or camouflage cream, the titles were important to unit *esprit de corps* and seem normally to have been worn in action.**

**Appearing in the UK from late 1939, these titles proliferated in 1942–43; designed at unit level by 'beer bottle heraldists', in traditional unit colours, their**  
(continued opposite)



Canadian-made Mk II helmets, including those for the RCAF and Civil Defence, were sprayed with a base coat of matt khaki paint which was initially browner than the more olive shade produced after 1942. Unit or arm of service decals were often applied to the left side. There was occasional repainting in camouflage, sand-textured olive-green or tan for specific purposes. A net of khaki or olive-green, or bi-coloured brown and green from 1943, was nearly always worn. It was sometimes interwoven with bits of khaki cloth 'scrim' for added camouflage. Canadians nearly always stuck their first field dressing packet under the net so their helmets had a bulge, usually at the back or one side.

Even as Mk II helmets were being made, the Canadian forces toyed with the idea of adopting the new American M1 helmet, and a few hundreds of these were experimentally issued to troops in southern England during autumn 1942. The M1 helmet was found to give better protection and it was recommended for adoption at the end of 1942 not only by Canadian but, ultimately, by all British forces. Canada went ahead and immediately ordered a quarter of a million helmets from the USA. Meanwhile, the British changed their minds in early 1943 and decided to develop instead their own Mk III helmet. The Canadians' policy of maintaining a high degree of commonality with the British forces led them too to adopt the new Mk III; but the American order had to be

honoured to at least 200,000 helmets, so that by April 1943 over a million dollars' worth of US helmets had arrived in Ottawa.

Senior supply officials wondered what to do with them; it had been decided that the British Mk II helmets would continue to be used in Europe except for the 3rd Inf Div, which would get the new British Mk III. The obvious answer was to issue the American M1 to units posted in British Columbia, the most likely to serve with American troops in operations in the Pacific. Thus the 13th Inf Bde, which was attached to the US forces for the liberation of Kiska, wore the M1. Later, in 1945, M1 helmets were issued to the 6th Inf Div then being reorganised in British Columbia for participation in the projected invasion of Japan. The M1 saw various uses in the post-war years, but it officially replaced the British Mk II only in September 1960.

The turtle-shaped British Mk III became much associated with Canada in many Canadians' minds, as it was the 'invasion' helmet often shown in the press worn by Canadians during 1944. Some collectors later claimed that it was a Canadian design, but in fact none were made in Canada and all were issued in Britain to the Canadian troops. The 2nd Inf Div landed in France in July wearing Mk II helmets; this was also the only helmet used by the 1st Inf Div in Italy and later in NW Europe.

shape and style varied widely. In 3rd Inf Div most were arc-shaped with 'CANADA' below the unit title, usually but not always embroidered on the same backing. A few other representative 3rd Div examples are: (7th Inf Bde) arc with rectangular bottom extension, black ground, white lettering 'ROYAL WINNIPEG RIFLES/CANADA'; (8th Inf Bde) shorter over longer arc, dull red ground, light red inner rim, white lettering, 'LE/REGIMENT/DE LA/CHAUDIERE'; (9th Inf Bde) longer over shorter arc, blue ground, red lettering 'GLENARRIANS/CANADA' (Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders). Some 48 variations are recorded in all - see Sexton, D.J., *Select Bibliography*. (Ken Bell, National Archives of Canada, PA133104)

## Cloth headgear

Following British practice, the pre-1939 peaked (visored) service cap quickly disappeared in favour of the khaki Field Service cap (sidecap), which was issued with the BD uniform from autumn 1939. In 1943 the Canadian War Dress Regulations introduced, following 1937 British Army regulations, a complicated table of colours for FS caps worn optionally on ordinary duties by officers and enlisted men. While staff officers and NCOs in London or Ottawa would have indulged in this, there is not much evidence that the coloured FS caps were widely acquired. Instead, from 1943, the khaki FS cap was replaced by the khaki General Service cap. The Canadian pattern was a true beret, made of one piece of material and generally of superior quality and appearance to the British GS cap, which was made from several pieces with a broad separate head band and which the Tommies bitterly compared to a cow-pat. The relevant unit cap badge was worn over the left eye, and some units used coloured cloth badge backing – e.g. the Royal Winnipeg Rifles had green backing following the outline of their badge, while Toronto's Queen's Own Rifles had a green square. 'Scottish' units had the khaki Balmoral bonnet (see Highlanders below). The Irish Regiment of Canada had the caubeen bonnet in dark green for officers and khaki for enlisted men.

For the six regiments converted 'on paper' to the armoured role in 1936 the next few years would be frustrating, since no actual tanks were forthcoming. Even the armoured corps' black berets were first denied to the units, and they were ordered to continue to wear their 'traditional headdress'. There was a loophole in the case of the Essex Regiment, since as a newly raised regiment it had no traditions. Members of the unit bought black berets at their own expense and wore them at the regiment's inaugural parade on 20 April 1937, making it the first Canadian unit to wear berets. The Department of Defence eventually followed suit, so that all armoured units had black berets during the war. (Curiously, the 13th Inf Bde in the Aleutians was also issued black berets in 1943.) Parachute units had maroon berets like their British counterparts.

## Footwear

Footwear was the standard laced army 'ammunition' boot of black pebbled leather. The soles were of leather, hobnailed and with steel toe and heel plates. The ankles were covered with short khaki web anklets; the Canadian-made anklets had the narrow retaining straps made of webbing but, especially in Italy, the Canadians sometimes received British anklets with leather straps from 8th Army stores. In 1943 the 13th Inf Bde wore Canadian-designed black boots, made higher and with a wrap-around ankle flap buckling at the outside; these were considered both comfortable and smart. For the 1944 Normandy invasion part of the 3rd Inf Div was issued with these 'invasion boots', as they now became known. They remained, however, a limited issue outside of the 3rd Inf Div in NW Europe, and are often referred to by collectors as '3rd Division boots'.

OPPOSITE This view of a Canadian infantryman at Caen on 25 July 1944 shows the rear of the 1937 web personal equipment in battle order – cf Plates E2, E3. The small pack is worn on the back, with a British General Service shovel thrust below it – the issue entrenching tool was inadequate for getting a man under cover quickly. (The British shovel had a 'T'-handle, the US equivalent a 'D'-handle.) The dark olive-green anti-gas cape, now used more as a rain cape, is rolled and tied to the back of his belt. Below this is the bag for his light respirator, slung around the body. On the right hip can just be seen his water bottle. On the nearside he seems to carry his nested mess tins in a second water bottle carrier of the pocket type. He has a netting face veil attached to the back of his helmet; and note the buckle-flap '3rd Div' boots. Sleeve insignia are limited to the 3rd Inf Div patch and lance-corporal's badge of rank. (Ken Bell, National Archives of Canada, PA163403)

Canadian troops in Holland, early 1945, wearing the standard British white cotton two-piece snow camouflage suit. (Canadian Dept of National Defence, ZK-958)





## Canadian Highlanders

The new BD trousers were greeted with sadness and resignation by many Canadian Highland units. They may have been a more practical garment in battle but, in their hearts, the men wished they could have retained their kilts. To make matters worse, some regiments – e.g. the Seaforths and the Calgary Highlanders – were first issued the ordinary khaki FS cap instead of the khaki Balmoral or tam-o’shanter bonnet, their tartan badge backings being the only Highland distinction left to them. The khaki tam-o’shanter bonnet was eventually issued to all Canadian Highlanders and was the only cap to be worn with BD in the field; but photos taken in NW Europe in 1944–45 often show Glengarries with diced bands also being worn as off-duty headgear.

Apart from the regulation distinctions listed in **Table 3**, a number of peculiarities were noted in various Canadian Highland regiments, of which the following are merely a few random examples. The Cape Breton Highlanders were mobilised in 1939 with diced Glengarries and kilts; were issued BD with bonnets, and also tropical dress with shorts and sun helmets when in Ottawa in 1941; were shipped to England and then to Italy in 1943, where the pipe band reassumed Black

Watch tartan kilts, black sporrans with six tassels, red and black hose tops and Glengarries with a plain black border. The Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders had the standard issue khaki tam-o’shanter, but also bought Glengarries for every man in June 1943. Many men of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders had Murray of Atholl tartan kilts in England. (In NW Europe the regiment wore BD but nevertheless carried in the front lines – unofficially – the very Scottish-looking provincial flag of Nova Scotia, which may have been the first ‘Canadian’ flag planted in German soil.) The pipers of the Seaforth Highlanders of

**Table 3: Regimental distinctions of Canadian Highlanders**

<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Tartan</i>	<i>Glengarry dicing</i>
Black Watch of Canada	Black Watch	plain
Highland LI of Canada	Mackenzie	all dark green cap
Lanark & Renfrew Hs	Black Watch	plain
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Hs	Macdonell of Glengarry	scarlet, white & green
Pictou Hs	Mackenzie	scarlet, white & green
North Nova Scotia Hs	Murray of Atholl	scarlet, white & green
Cape Breton Hs	Black Watch	scarlet & white
Prince Edward Island Hs	Black Watch	plain
Cameron Hs of Ottawa	Cameron of Erracht	plain
Essex Scottish	MacGregor	scarlet, white & green
48th Hs	Davidson	scarlet, white & green
Argyll & Sutherland Hs	Black Watch	scarlet & white
Queen’s Own Cameron Hs	Cameron of Erracht	plain
Calgary Hs	Black Watch	scarlet & white
Seaforth Hs	Mackenzie	scarlet, white & green
Canadian Scottish	Hunting Stuart	scarlet, white & green
Toronto Scottish	Elcho	Elcho blue, white & tan
Scots Fusiliers	Black Watch	scarlet, white & green
Lorne Scots	Campbell of Argyll	scarlet, white & green

**Notes:** Pipers of the Black Watch and the Lanark & Renfrew had Royal Stuart tartan kilts; the Scots Fusiliers had No.11 Erskine. The Highland LI, the Scots Fusiliers and the Lorne Scots had trews, except for their pipers who wore kilts. Except for the Highland LI, all Glengarries were dark blue with a scarlet tuft.



France, 28 July 1944: Tprs. Holstrom, Lardner and Mitchell relax on 'Clanky', the Sherman command tank of Cap. David Currie VC, C Sqn, South Alberta Regt, 4th Armd Div – cf Plate E1. By the time this photo made the 16 December 1944 cover of *Liberty* magazine, 'Clanky' had been lost in action at Bergen-op-Zoom, Holland; the crewmen survived the war, however. Here they wear general issue collarless shirts and BD trousers with 'ammo' boots and the black Armoured Corps beret.

Canada are said to have worn their kilts almost constantly in the field in NW Europe, though 'Wallace', their St Bernard regimental mascot made famous by the press, remained in Britain.

The steel helmet might have some added Scottish distinction. The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada had applied, from 1941, 'a two-and-a-half inch square decal of the MacKenzie tartan with the regimental cap badge imposed on it' on the left side of the helmet. The Calgary Highlanders put a small square of red and white dicing on their helmets.

### Accoutrements

The personal equipments worn by Canadian servicemen had quite a convoluted history of their own. The title '*Tangled Web*' given to the definitive study of this topic by the late Gen. Jack L. Summers is most appropriate, and readers are referred to it for all minute details, technical, administrative or even political.

It has often been assumed that the accoutrements worn by Canadians were identical to those of their British comrades. While this was largely true in times of national mobilisation during the World Wars, Canada did in fact evolve its own versions from the late 19th century. At that time, peculiar Canadian models of the originally

British 'Oliver' equipment were adopted. These were made of dark brown leather. Although replaced with the British 1908 Web Equipment (hereafter in this text, WE 08) for nearly all troops going up to the Front in the Great War, reserve troops often kept the leather accoutrements.

Following World War I the Canadian government made plans for a much expanded volunteer force, but found it had insufficient equipment in its stores. Additional WE 08 equipment was sought from the UK in 1920, but could not be supplied. Thus, by 1923, the Quartermaster-General reported having some 43,120 WE 08 sets, 10,780 of which were only missing the entrenching tool carriers. Spare parts could make up another 22,480 sets. In all, about 50,000 sets of surplus WE 08 which had seen previous service in the trenches could be issued. There were also 13,000 sets of the Canadian 1916 leather equipment. Although there were various proposals to replace these supplies with more modern equipment, the idea of a large volunteer force was by now no longer entertained.

The Great Depression of the 1930s ensured that nothing more would be done. Consequently, until 1940 the solid if aging 50,000 or so sets of WE 08 were still the only equipments available to the Volunteer Militia.

For the Regular infantry regiments of the Permanent Force – and for the Royal Canadian Air Force – there was a limited and somewhat confusing attempt to provide new equipment in 1928. This took the form of a Canadian issue of the British WE 19 equipment, later retitled WE 25 because it had some features of that newer British model too; this

was in khaki for the infantry and blue-grey for the RCAF. When World War II broke out, the Regulars who went to Britain with the 1st Canadian Division in December 1939 had this WE 25 and the volunteers the ancient WE 08 of World War I vintage. These much-worn accoutrements were exchanged for the new British WE 37 equipment in England.

While the Canadian government had approved the British WE 37 in 1938, none of it was even made, let alone issued, until early 1940. Thereafter, however, the pace picked up quickly as Canada's industrial output soared. By the summer of 1940 many units on active service had been re-equipped, and by that autumn there were enough new equipments for the thousands being called up under the Selective Service programme. The WE 37 pattern was the standard equipment of Canadian soldiers from that time. There was one exception: the 13th Inf Bde Group in 1943. Serving with the Americans for the Kiska expedition, they received US Army accoutrements and helmets but Canadian issue weapons, uniforms and light respirators (see Plate B2).

## THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

Perhaps because of the sheer size of their country, many Canadians were especially attracted to aviation. During the Great War thousands of Canadians served in Britain's Royal Flying Corps (from April 1918, Royal Air Force) – among them many of its leading fighter aces. In the wake of such feats, and to cope with increasing demands for a national air force, the Canadian Air Force was set up in 1920, redesignated Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1924. The small RCAF of the 1920s–30s was more of a communications, survey and reconnaissance service than a combat air force. Made up of Regulars and volunteers, in September 1939 it mustered just 2,200 permanent and 966 reservist personnel; it had 53 combat aircraft out of a total of 201 machines, nearly all of them obsolete except for seven recently acquired British Hawker Hurricane fighters.

### The Commonwealth air training programme

As soon as war was declared thousands of volunteers signed up to join the RCAF; some even went directly to England to join the RAF. The small RCAF was immediately overwhelmed: it needed vast numbers of new aircraft, new airfields and, most of all, trained aircrews. The British RAF also urgently needed trained aircrews; and on 17 December 1939 the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) was created. This called for a huge training programme for aircrews to be established in the vast – and safe – air space of Canada; outright, Canada became the largest flying school in the world. By 1941 there were 30 Elementary Flying Schools, 29 Elementary Flying Training Schools, 11 Bombing & Gunnery Schools, ten Air Observer Schools, seven Operational Training Schools, six Air Navigation Schools, four Wireless Schools, three Flying Instructor Schools, one Naval Air Gunners School and one Flight Engineers School. All this was organised in Training Commands numbered 1 to 4.

Aircraft were found in Britain and the USA, but in this as in so many other cases the home industry also rose to the national need. Initially tiny, the Canadian aircraft industry grew by leaps and bounds; old Finch



Canadian Army winter cap for enlisted men issued to troops in Canada. It was fairly high-crowned, with the side flaps usually worn tied up with a thin ribbon across the top. Its front flap was permanently turned up and the unit badge was often pinned to the centre – cf Plate A2. (Ed Storey Collection)



The officer's winter cap issued for service in Canada was of khaki woollen cloth but with front and side flaps faced with brown fur. (Ed Storey Collection)





ABOVE 1936 RCAF enlisted ranks' blue-grey service jacket with white metal buttons. The blue-black shoulder title with 'CANADA' in an arc over the eagle, both in white, shows that this garment was worn overseas. This example was made in Montreal by the T.Eaton Co. in 1942. (Ed Storey Collection)



ABOVE RIGHT In 1940 a blue-grey blouse and trousers modelled on the khaki Battledress was introduced in 1940 as the 'Suit, Aircrew' - redesignated 'War Service Dress' in October 1943. It was not to be worn for parades and was of the same quality for all ranks. A feature of the trousers was that the left thigh 'map' pocket was much smaller than on Army BD trousers. (Ed Storey Collection)

and Fairey Battle aircraft were soon joined by numbers of Tiger Moth and Harvard trainers. Training was given by Canadian, British and American instructors; as many were civilians, they were often grouped in para-military organisations. Suffice it to say that, from its inception until 31 March 1945, some 131,553 aircrew graduated from the BCATP. Of these 73,000 were Canadians; 42,000 from the RAF (including

airmen from various British territories as well as Free French, Belgians, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, etc.); 10,000 from Australia, and 7,000 from New Zealand. This was an impressive total when one considers that 288,000 aircrew were trained in the USA, whose population and resources were ten times those of Canada.

### Home defence

The RCAF also had to expand quickly to meet the demands for home defence and squadrons sent overseas. The Home Air Force in Canada initially concentrated in a few squadrons, all scrambling to get some aircraft - notably flying boats and bombers. With U-boats lurking along the Canadian coastline targeting ship convoys going to Britain, the emphasis fell on the Atlantic provinces and Newfoundland in 1939 and 1940; the west coast was all but undefended, with only a handful of elderly aircraft.

The Japanese offensive of December 1941 naturally increased the urgency of organising some defence for the west coast. From June 1942 British Columbians became seriously worried about Japanese air attacks when, in the Aleutians, Dutch Harbor was bombed and the islands of Kiska and Attu were occupied by Japanese troops. Politicians bowed to public pressure, and scores of modern aircraft were quickly sent to the west coast. With hindsight this may be judged a highly successful Japanese diversion: eventually a total of 36 RCAF squadrons were based on the Pacific coast which, as Japan's naval air resources declined sharply after the battle of Midway, saw virtually no action. (There was one encounter, when an RCAF Bolingbroke - the Canadian version of the British Blenheim bomber - sank a Japanese submarine off the coast of British Columbia in July 1942.)

In spring 1943 the Allies were at last successfully turning the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic against Germany's U-boats, and RCAF squadrons - notably those now flying B-24 Liberators - made a significant contribution to 'closing the mid-Atlantic gap'. As time passed and the possibility of serious enemy attacks practically vanished, so the Home Air Force shrank, and many squadrons were transferred overseas or disbanded. By September 1945 there remained only 17 RCAF squadrons in Canada.

- 1: Private, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; UK, December 1939  
2: Private, Veterans' Guard of Canada; winter dress, 1940-45  
3: Despatch rider, Royal Canadian Dragoons (1st Armoured Car Regt); Italy, 1943



1: Private, Royal Rifles of Canada or Winnipeg Grenadiers; Hong Kong, December 1941

2: Private, Régiment de Hull, 13th Inf Bde; Kiska, Aleutians, 1943

3: Sergeant, Calgary Regiment (14th Armd Regt), 1st Army Tank Bde; Dieppe, 19 August 1942



- 1: Private, Royal 22e Régiment, 1st Inf Div; Sicily, July 1943  
2: 2nd Lt., Ontario Regiment (11th Armd Regt), 1st Armd Bde; Italy, summer 1944  
3: Sgt., Loyal Edmonton Regiment, 1st Inf Div; Italy, winter 1943-44



1: Private, First Special Service Force; Anzio, Italy, 1944

2: L/Cpl., Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1st Provost Company; Italy, 1943-45

3: Pte., 1st Canadian Parachute Bn; NW Europe, 1944-45



- 1: Capt., South Alberta Regt  
(29th Armd Recce Regt), 4th Armd Div;  
NW Europe, 1944–45
- 2: Pte., Régnt de Maisonneuve,  
2nd Inf Div; NW Europe,  
winter 1944–45
- 3: Pte., Highland LI of Canada,  
3rd Inf Div; Normandy,  
June 1944



- 1: Pilot Officer fighter pilot, RCAF; England, 1940-41  
2: Air gunner, bomber crew, RCAF; England, 1942-44  
3: Flight Lieutenant fighter pilot, RCAF; NW Europe, late 1944



1: Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Navy, 1941–45

2: Seaman, Royal Canadian Navy, Arctic convoys, 1941–45

3: Signals rating, Royal Canadian Navy, working dress, 1943–45



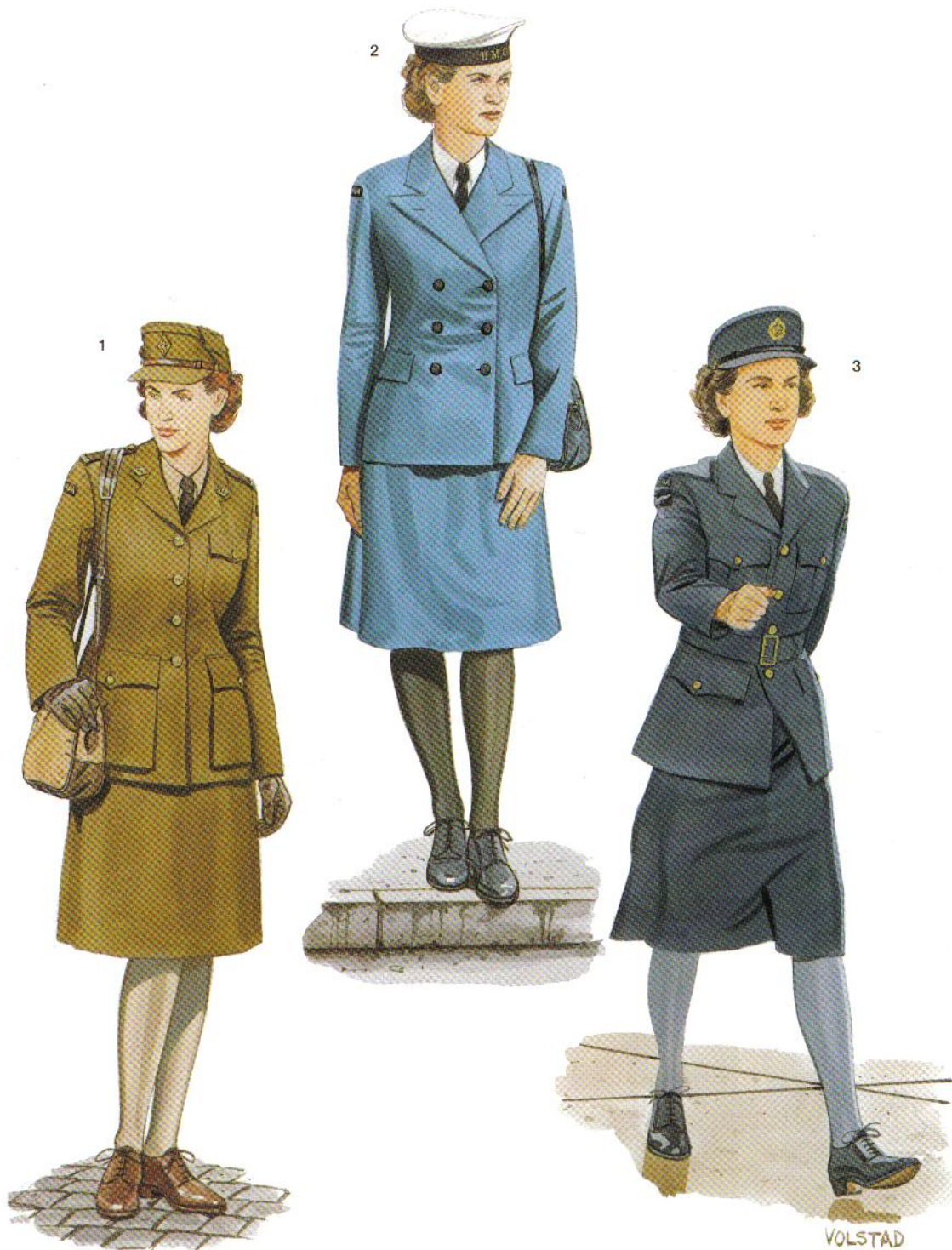
VOLSTAD



1: Volunteer, Canadian Women's Army Corps; UK, 1942-45

2: Rating, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, summer uniform, 1942-45

3: Aircraftwoman, Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division, 1942-45



## The RCAF overseas

The first RCAF unit overseas was No.110 Squadron with its Lysander scout planes, which arrived in England in late February 1940, followed by No.1 Sqn with its Hurricanes, and many others in August and September 1940. With more RCAF squadrons on the way to Britain from Canada and elsewhere, a new squadron numbering sequence was introduced by the RAF in March 1941 in order to avoid confusion. Canada got the '400' series, which expanded rapidly from its initial four squadrons. In the meantime, the RAF's No.242 'all Canadian' squadron had been formed in Britain during October 1939 from Canadians volunteering directly into the RAF. Badly mauled in the closing stage of the Battle of France, No.242's Hurricane pilots quickly recovered their edge under the leadership of the legless RAF ace Douglas Bader; based at Coltishall, they fought effectively in the Battle of Britain under command of No.12 Group.

The Canadian government eventually wished for a more distinct RCAF identity, since some 60 per cent of Canadian flyers were serving in RAF units and a quarter of Bomber Command was formed by RCAF personnel, notably 6 Group. Thus, in time, some RAF units became Canadian. However, senior operational command devolved to the RAF which effectively controlled the Canadian squadrons overseas. As time passed the RCAF squadrons became quite mixed, much like many other RAF units. The RCAF unit ground crews were mainly British, and some pilots of British or other nationalities could be found on the squadrons.

Whatever the politics, it was an effective combination. By late 1944, 43 RCAF squadrons were serving overseas including 19 day fighter and fighter-bomber, three night-fighter and 15 bomber squadrons. The RCAF were credited with downing some 1,200 enemy aircraft; and the top Canadian aces in the RAF were credited with another 119. The RCAF's 6 Group of bomber squadrons made nearly 41,000 sorties, dropping over 126,000 tons of bombs, though at a cost of 814 planes.

## RCAF uniforms

From 1924 the uniforms and equipment of the RCAF were very similar to those of the RAF. (For details, see Cormack, Select Bibliography.) The RCAF pilot's wings badge worn on the left breast was similar to that of the RAF except that the letter 'C' surrounded the 'A' in early versions and circled all letters in later versions. The other badges usually had 'RCAF' in small letters below the trade's crowned letter, except for the observer's 'O', which was plain.

The basic identification for Canadian airmen serving overseas was a white title 'Canada' on a blue-black shoulder flash, plain for officers and below the RAF's white eagle badge for enlisted men. (The title and badge were red on the tropical khaki uniform.) On 17 May 1940, personnel in Canada were 'absolutely prohibited' from wearing the national title while in the country. It was allowed for RCAF personnel serving in Newfoundland on 5 September 1941.



Royal Air Force Ferry Command aircrew in Trinidad, West Indies, in front of a Lockheed Vega bomber, October 1943. Besides the main North Atlantic route some aircraft were ferried via Nassau (Bahamas), Trinidad, and Senegal (French West Africa) to North Africa. The summer light khaki shirtsleeve uniform is worn with the distinctive dark blue Ferry Command cap. (National Archives of Canada, PA114613)

In early 1941, bizarrely, the wearing of scarves was forbidden for RCAF personnel when flying, but this order was widely ignored. On 30 May 1941, Americans in the RCAF were allowed a 'U.S.A.' shoulder title when serving in Canada, and when overseas a title with 'Canada' above 'U.S.A.'; this order was cancelled in 1943 (DND, RCAF Routine Orders 1940-1943).

Khaki drill summer uniforms were ordered discontinued from August 1941 for all RCAF commands, but this rather impractical order was cancelled in 1943. The RCAF issue consisted of the KD bush jacket and trousers to be worn with blue-grey caps. There was no RCAF issue of tropical sun helmets, shorts and stockings as there was in the RAF, but the few Canadian squadrons serving in the Middle East and Far East received RAF tropical issues. Ralph Palmer, who served with No.420 Sqn in Algeria, recalled that 'pith helmets, shirts and shorts were the usual attire' in early 1943.

Winter clothing consisted of double-breasted greatcoats, overshoes, gloves, fur caps for officers and cloth caps for enlisted men. The pattern and cut of the greatcoats and caps were the same as for the Army but made from RCAF blue-grey cloth, with RCAF titles, badges and buttons. The fur and cloth caps were only worn in North America.

The BCATP trainees wore their respective nations' air force uniforms. From 18 July 1941 the false turned-up peak visible at the front of the field service cap became white for aircrew under training; this was removed after graduation. Between July 1941 and February 1942, white armllets were issued to graduates until they could obtain officers' uniforms. The civilian personnel of BCATP instruction schools wore dark blue uniforms of approximately the same cut as the RCAF with distinctive brass buttons, cap badges and pilots' wings; these usually bore the letters 'EFS' (Elementary Flying School), 'EFTS' (Elementary Flying Training School) or 'AOS' (Air Observer School). Women instructors had dark blue jackets and skirts with white 'ETFS' titles on dark blue shoulder flashes, and pale blue or white open-collar blouses.

### **Ferry Command**

During 1940, when Britain was desperate for aircraft of all types and U-boats were sinking over half of those shipped from North America, a scheme to fly the larger planes across the North Atlantic was approved by Prime Minister Churchill and the Canadian authorities. Regular air crossings had been deemed impossible, especially in winter, and far too costly; but these were desperate times – if more than half of the aircraft sent over made it to Britain, it was worth the gamble.

The RAF would direct these operations with a few senior officers in Montreal, where Dorval airfield was built. Aircrews and support personnel would be mostly civilians. Airline pilots from Canada and Britain, Canadian 'bush' pilots and American pilots thus joined ATFFERO (Atlantic Ferry Organisation) from the autumn of 1940, becoming 'Ferry Command' on 20 July 1941. Ground security personnel were uniformed, armed, and assumed duties as varied as trying to save aircrew from burning crashed planes to providing part of Churchill's 'British' security guards at the Quebec Conferences. In March 1943, Ferry Command became No.45 Group in the new RAF Transport



RAF Ferry Command brass button, 1940-45. This RAF organisation based in Canada, which evolved from the Atlantic Ferry Organisation of civilian pilots, had distinct buttons for its dark blue RAF-style uniforms. (Private collection)

Command. Over 10,000 men served in this organisation during the war, and it flew some 10,000 aircraft to Europe.

Initially, ATFFERO's non-RAF personnel had no uniforms, and this raised concern over their fate should they be forced down in enemy territory. Anything that looked like a uniform was initially worn, with personnel from airlines such as Imperial Airways or Trans-Canada Airlines (now British Airways and Air Canada respectively) wearing their dark blue uniforms. In the early summer of 1941, Air Cdre.G.J.'Taffy' Powell 'put them all in service-style khaki with caps', and a badge was hastily designed in his Dorval airfield office; this featured a lion astride the Northern Hemisphere. Few of these badges were made up, as 'from mid-summer 1941, we were on firmer ground for insignia generally', recalled Powell. 'We fell heir to the standard RAF eagle and the astral crown. These were incorporated in cap badges, wings and half-wings, which were worn with chrome buttons on dark blue winter uniforms and khaki in summer. Standard RAF-type stripes were used for senior captains, co-pilots and other aircrew. From then on we were reasonably sure of officer status being given to those who got into strange situations or became prisoners of war.'

Ground security personnel were also dressed in the dark blue RAF-style uniforms and had RAF rank insignia for NCOs. The buttons were distinctive, having no astral crown but bearing 'F.C.'. They were used until the end of the war, as were the dark blue uniforms, long after Ferry Command had become RAF Air Transport Command.

## THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Formed in 1910, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) had a permanent component supported by a Reserve. It was patterned very closely on Britain's Royal Navy in organisation and equipment. In 1923 the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve and Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve were formed as distinct organisations, which were to prove invaluable in the coming conflict. In September 1939, Canada had only six destroyers, five minesweepers and two training vessels, manned by 1,365 officers and men, with the reserves adding another 1,800. From these the Canadian fleet grew to 363 craft of all sorts, making it, by the end of 1945, the third largest Allied navy after the USA and Britain, with a total during the war years of 118 corvettes, 60 frigates, 15 destroyers, 12 other escorts, three armed merchant cruisers, two cruisers and two escort carriers, plus numerous minor craft. By VJ-Day, 89,000 men and 6,700 women had enlisted in its service.

During World War II the RCN concentrated mostly on the difficult but vital mission of escorting convoys in the North Atlantic. Small escort vessels, notably corvettes, coped with an unpredictable climate including fog, heavy seas and winter ice, as well as German U-boats. In 1942, U-boats penetrated the Gulf of St Lawrence and sank 22 vessels, some of them within sight of coastal towns.

Tasked with vastly greater responsibilities than either the Canadian or the British naval staffs had anticipated, the RCN expanded to sixty times its pre-war strength between 1939 and 1945. At first undertrained and underequipped, Canadian warships managed to destroy 33 enemy

submarines by the end of the war: one each in 1940 and 1941, six in 1942, seven in 1943, and 18 in the last 18 months of the war against Germany. In spite of some setbacks, the small RCN ships safely escorted about 25,000 merchant ships bearing 180 million tons of cargo from North America to Britain.

On D-Day, 109 RCN ships manned by 10,000 sailors were part of the Normandy invasion fleet for Operation 'Neptune', and ferried some 45,000 soldiers to the beaches. In response to British requests for help in manning ships, the RCN acquired two light cruisers and provided crews for two auxiliary aircraft carriers in 1943-44, with plans for greater participation in the war against Japan. However, only one cruiser took part in operations in the Pacific before VJ-Day.

### **RCN uniforms**

Initially, RCN uniforms were very similar to those of the Royal Navy (see Plate G; and Sumner, *Elite 79*, Select Bibliography). The British dress regulations were followed in minute detail, and indeed, most pre-war Regular officers bought their uniforms from Gieves, the naval outfitters in London, when they took their initial training with the Royal Navy. The only difference was the small 'Canada' on the gilt button between the crown and the anchor for officers with the rank of commodore and below. Chief Petty Officers had only the crown and anchor. Leading rates and below had black horn buttons with 'Canada' between the crown and the anchor. Sailors wore the yellow-gold 'H.M.C.S.' (His Majesty's Canadian Ship) followed by the ship's name on the black cap ribbon, with a uniform otherwise identical to the Royal Navy's. After September 1939 the ribbon officially bore only 'H.M.C.S.'

The enlistment of tens of thousands of volunteers brought a new spirit and a call for more Canadian identity on the uniform, as in the other services. Yellow-on-dark blue 'Canada' shoulder titles were added in 1941, although at first somewhat resented by old-timers. Again following an unofficial RN fashion, by 1942 some ratings were seen with ribbons bearing e.g. 'H.M.C. DESTROYERS' or 'H.M.C. MINESWEEPERS', etc; this practice was immediately forbidden, and an order of 15 May 1942 confirmed the 'H.M.C.S.' tally as the only pattern allowed.

There were occasional variations in the uniform. From September 1939, the seamen's white jumpers and trousers traditionally made of British duck flax material were made of cotton, a material available in quantity in Canada. In February 1941, gold silk lace was authorised for officers' rank rings because of the scarcity of metallic gold lace.

For all, hair was cut short and moustaches not allowed, but 'permission to discontinue shaving' was occasionally granted to crew members by captains - as long as the resulting 'full set' of beard and moustache was suitably virile and neatly trimmed.

Officers belonging to the RCNVR had the same dress as the RCN but, according to regulations, 'instead of each distinctive stripe of gold lace round the sleeves of the coat there is a wavy line of three-eighths inch gold lace. (The half stripe, however, is a straight line of one-eighth inch gold lace.)'. As in the British service, this special rank lace earned the RCNVR the nickname of 'Wavy Navy'. The coloured edges of non-executive officers followed the curves of the lace. In February 1941, only the curl on the sleeve, the same size as on shoulder straps, was allowed due to the scarcity of lace at that time. RCNVR Midshipmen had maroon

Leading Seaman Brown, of the destroyer HMCS *Ottawa*, at Halifax in summer 1940. He wears the white-topped cap with No.1 Dress – blue jumper with badges in gold rather than red, bell-bottoms, blue-edged white 'front', collar, black silk neckerchief and white lanyard. The anchor and chevron on his left sleeve indicates his rate and three years of good conduct. On his right sleeve the star, crossed guns and 'Q' indicate a 2nd Class Gunnery Rating for Quarters. At this date the full ship's name was still worn on the cap tally by crews of the few pre-1939 ships to mark them out from the Hostilities Only ratings already wearing the universal 'H.M.C.S.' ribbon. This HMCS *Ottawa* was lost on 13 September 1942, but a new River Class destroyer took up the name in 1943. (National Archives of Canada, PA104373)



collar tabs and twist cord instead of white. Ratings wore identical uniforms to the RCN, initially with 'R.C.N.V.R.' cap ribbons from 1938, but later the 'H.M.C.S.' ribbon was worn. Royal Canadian Fleet Reserve officers had their rank lace narrow and intertwined. The ratings wore identical uniforms to the RCN, with 'Royal Canadian Fleet Reserve' cap ribbons from 1 April 1939 but later with the 'H.M.C.S.' ribbon.

There was also, from early 1942 until April 1943 on the Pacific Coast, a small 'Fishermen's Reserve' for service in local waters. Made up of about 191 fishermen manning 21 vessels, they were very active, largely in going into the bays and inlets of British Columbia to make sure Japanese ships were not hiding in them. It was initially assumed that the reservists would want to wear civilian clothes, but they requested uniforms so that they would be identified with the navy. A uniform of sorts evolved: officers wore a seaman's jersey and bell-bottom trousers with an officer's cap, and seamen wore uncollared jerseys with bell-bottoms. Often, however, the fishermen resorted to their more familiar civilian working rig of Cowichan sweaters, trousers and gumboots; as a result they were informally referred to as 'the gumboot navy'. Seventy-three went on to serve in the RCNVR as landing craft crews.

## CANADIAN WOMEN'S SERVICES

### Military nurses

Canadian military nursing services trace their origins back to the 1885 North-West Rebellion, and the first contingent of Canadian nurses to go



**Sub-Lt. Ross M. Wilson was a member of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve who trained to be a carrier pilot in the Fleet Air Arm; he perished in 1942. Just above the 'wavy' RCNVR rank lace can be seen the FAA aircrew badge of a crowned silver fouled anchor and wreath and gold wings. The 'CANADA' shoulder title was apparently not worn by individual Canadian pilots serving on British carriers. (Ross M.A. Wilson Collection)**

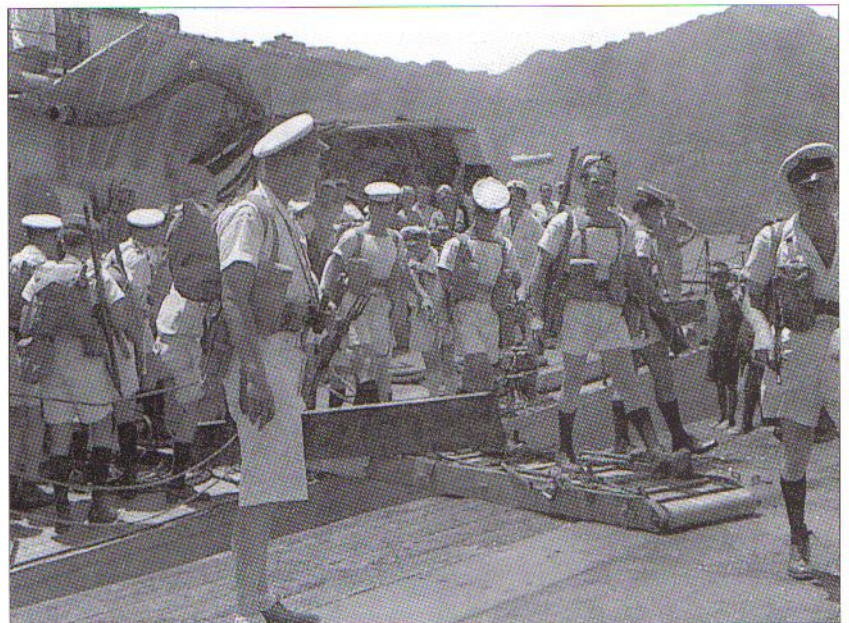
**RIGHT Sailors from HMCS *Prince Robert* disembarking in Hong Kong on 30 August 1945. They wear the RCN's warm climate dress of white 'fronts' and shorts, with British pattern 1937 khaki web equipment, and carry SMLE rifles, Brens and Stens. Their task was to liberate the survivors of the two Canadian regiments overwhelmed by the Japanese attack in December 1941. At Shamshuipo Camp they found some 1,500 dazed and skeletal prisoners, none of whom would ever entirely recover from their atrocious captivity. Of the Canadian POWs in Japan and Hong Kong, 1,418 survived the ordeal but at least 311 died, of exposure, sickness, exhaustion and ill-treatment – a very marked contrast with the kindness shown to Axis POWs in Canada. (A.M.Sirton, National Archives of Canada, PA114810)**

overseas was during the South African War. In 1904 a small permanent nursing service was set up within the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC). Around this small core, nurses from across Canada could be mobilised in times of war according to an agreement between the government and the nursing associations (notably the Canadian Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, and Victorian Order of Nurses). Thus, within months of the outbreak of World War II, thousands of nurses had volunteered into the RCAMC; about 3,656 served in all, more than 2,600 of them overseas, in nearly all theatres of war and in units ranging from field ambulances to general hospitals and convalescent centres. There were also two Canadian hospital ships, the *Lady Nelson* and the *Letitia*, which carried 28,000 Allied and 2,700 POW casualties.

At the outbreak of the war neither the RCN nor the RCAF had nurses. The RCAF Nursing Service was authorised on 28 November 1940 and grew to 481 personnel by 1945, about one in seven of them serving overseas. The RCN began its Nursing Service with three nurses on 4 December 1942, which grew to 343 by the end of the war. In all, Canadian nurses staffed over a hundred major hospitals, admitting some 60,000 Canadians as well as thousands of Allied and enemy wounded soldiers.

All Canadian military nurses had officer status and, in 1942, this was confirmed with equivalent rank designations. In the RCAMC a nursing sister was a lieutenant, a matron a captain, a principal matron a major, and a matron-in-chief a lieutenant-colonel. In the RCAF, a nursing sister was a pilot officer, a principal matron a squadron leader, and the matron-in-chief a wing commander. In the RCN, a nursing sister was a sub-lieutenant and the matron-in-chief a commander.

In hospitals, RCAMC nurses usually wore a sky blue jacket with two rows of brass buttons and white collar and cuffs, a sky blue skirt, a white veil and, when attending patients, a white apron. Rank badges were worn on the shoulder straps. Near the front lines, they wore khaki drill shirts and skirts in Algeria and Sicily in 1943. Towards the end of that year they



were issued with Battledress in Italy, and later in Normandy and NW Europe. The RCN and RCAF nurses wore the same type of uniform as Army nurses in hospitals, but the jacket and skirt were navy blue and blue-grey respectively. The naval service had the gold lace rank stripes with maroon distinguishing cloth for nurses, and green for laboratory technicians, dietitians, etc.

### Women's auxiliary military organisations

At the outset of the war Canada had no women's services other than nurses, but there had been precedents during the Great War. Spontaneously, thousands of women organised themselves in various unofficial volunteer organisations. As early as 1940, an estimated 17,000 women volunteers had enrolled in various groups, doing administrative and secretarial work, catering, signals and even some mechanical work, as well as attending weekly drill parades. They were often instructed in first aid by staff from the Canadian Red Cross, St John's Ambulance and Victorian Order of Nurses. Their aim was to fill non-combatant jobs to allow men to join the forces.

The various groups often purchased their own uniforms. A favourite of the Toronto groups was the double-breasted light tan trench coat, worn with khaki peaked caps and black mid-calf boots by some, with field service caps and shoes by others. Another Toronto group had khaki field caps, a jacket whose cut was based on BD but with small buttons, shirt and tie, a skirt and shoes. The Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps, a Quebec unit about 500 strong, wore an air force blue-grey peaked cap, tunic and skirt.

Appeals were made to the government to recognise and harness all this good will; and finally, from July 1941, a Women's Auxiliary to the Armed Forces of Canada was authorised. The RCAF was first off the mark and immediately raised its Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force on 2 July 1941 – the first women's military service to be authorised in North America. It was renamed the Royal Canadian Air Force (Women's Division) on 3 February 1942. It was patterned after the British Women's Auxiliary Air Force and adopted its rank structure, customs and uniforms, but differed in one fundamental feature: it was from the start an integral part of the RCAF and subject to the same code of discipline. Over 17,000 women joined eventually, performing some 70 trades – mostly in Canada, with some in Newfoundland and a few in the USA. From September 1942 a first contingent arrived in Britain; eventually reaching a figure of some 2,000 women, they served mostly at the RCAF Overseas HQ and with 6 Group of RAF Bomber Command. **Uniform** See Plate H.

On 13 August 1941 the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) was authorised as an auxiliary of the Army. Some 3,000 women from the volunteer organisations promptly joined and, from 1 September,



RCN sailors and a Petty Officer celebrating VE-Day with some CWACs on 8 May 1945 in Halifax, Nova Scotia; cf Plates G and H. The Petty Officer (right) is distinguished by the peaked cap with crowned anchor badge without a wreath, worn with a double-breasted 'monkey jacket' with gold crown and crossed anchors on his upper left sleeve, white shirt and black tie. Note the CWAC's well-cut khaki tunic with one breast pocket, dark red-brown shoulder straps, and the diamond-shaped collar and cap badges.

After years of restrictions young people in uniform wanted to celebrate, but in Halifax the authorities had made no provision for victory celebrations. Finding all entertainment and liquor outlets closed, thousands of servicemen and women broke into stores and Keith's Brewery, causing the worst disorders in the city's history. A government commission of enquiry blamed the rigid attitudes of senior naval authorities. (National Archives of Canada, C79574)





November 1943: Lt.Cdr. Frederick Clairmonte, RCNVR, and his bride Sister Eileen Davidson, with a bridesmaid in the background, both of them in the uniform of the RCN Nursing Service – blue, with gold buttons and gold rank lace on the shoulder boards, white veil, collar and cuffs. (National Archives of Canada, C5859)

reported for duty in various locations in Canada. Over the years the CWAC grew to over 21,000 women employed in over 50 trades. Most served in Canada, but many served in the USA and Newfoundland, as well as over 2,000 in the UK, Italy and NW Europe. Uniform See Plate H.

The Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) was organised from 23 July 1942, by three senior officers of the British Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) detached for the purpose following a request of the Canadian government. Within a year they had enlisted over 3,000 Canadian women, and the WRCNS eventually numbered over 4,300. The WRCNS was a part of the RCN; its members were subject to the same code of discipline and its training centre, HMCS *Conestoga* at Galt, Ontario, was commissioned as a training ship. Until June 1943 rank structure was as in the WRNS, but thereafter the WRCNS used naval rank, its officers holding King's Commissions. WRCNS personnel served in over 40 naval bases and establishments in Canada, Newfoundland, New York and Washington in the USA; some were also posted to England and to Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Uniform See Plate H. (See also Brayley, *MAA 357*, Select Bibliography, for further details of all women's services.)

## NEWFOUNDLAND

During World War II, Newfoundland was still 'Britain's oldest colony' and not yet part of Canada (it joined Canada as the tenth province in 1949). However, its wartime defences were closely linked with those of Canada and many Canadian servicemen were posted there. In 1939 there were no military forces or reserves in Newfoundland, which did not have the resources to raise its own. An arrangement was made with Britain whereby Newfoundlanders who joined could serve in the same British units. In 1940 the 59th (Newfoundland) Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery, and the 166th (Newfoundland) Field Regiment, RA, were raised; the 59th served in North Africa and Italy with the 8th Army, the 166th in NW Europe during 1944–45. The Coast Artillery Battery established at Bell Island, Newfoundland, was the training depot for the two regiments. Some 3,232 men joined the Newfoundland branch of the RNVR formed from late September 1939. Newfoundlanders also joined the RAF in 1940, resulting in the formation of No.125 (Newfoundland) Squadron. All these Newfoundland volunteers wore the uniforms of the British forces in which they served.

Locally, the Newfoundland Militia was raised in 1939 for active home defence service; renamed the Newfoundland Regiment in March 1943, it was disbanded in 1945. The Newfoundland Auxiliary Militia or 'Home Guard' was organised for part-time service, renamed the Newfoundland Militia in March 1943. The officers of the Newfoundland Militia, and later Regiment, had buttons with a crowned moose head and 'Newfoundland' in a scroll below. Some 2,100 Newfoundlanders went to Scotland with the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit, a civilian works group. Once over there they formed the 3rd Inverness (Newfoundland) Battalion of the British Home Guard in 1942.

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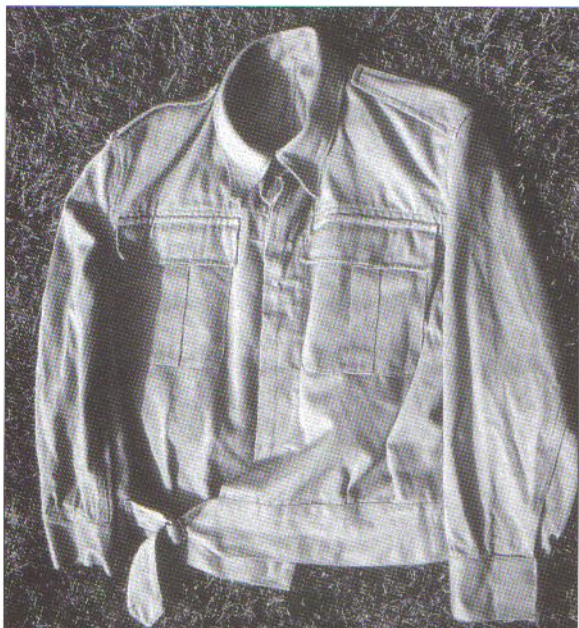
## THE PLATES

### **A1: Private, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; 1st Canadian Division, UK, December 1939**

The men of the 1st Division sent to Britain had the new British 37 pattern Battledress and Field Service caps made in Canada, but lacked the web anklets. The accoutrements were much older: the Regulars had, in theory, the WE 25 set, but some seem to have received the WE 08 set like the volunteer regiments. All had the old Mk I steel helmet. The 'Princess Pats' served in the 2nd Inf Bde with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada and the (Loyal) Edmonton Regiment. Only the cap badge identifies the unit at this date, and no 'CANADA' shoulder title is yet worn.

### **A2: Private, Veterans' Guard of Canada; winter dress, 1940-45**

The uniforms of the veterans were the same as the Regulars: khaki BD with FS caps in summer, with the addition of this khaki greatcoat and cold weather cap in winter; WE 08 or WE 37 accoutrements; and, often, the old .303in. Canadian Ross rifle in place of the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE). From February 1941 red badges with 'Veterans Guard' in yellow were issued for wear on the shoulder straps of BD and greatcoats. Early in the war some older pre-war kit was used. Photos taken in Canada during 1941 show the pre-1939 light khaki tropical service uniform with five brass buttons, the American tropical helmet and WE 08 accoutrements. The figure shown has 4 x 10-round cartridge carriers rather than the universal pouch. The supply situation soon improved – by 1945 No. 22 Company even had a pipe band, wearing light khaki summer doublet, shirt and tie, dark kilt (probably Black Watch sett), black sporran with two white tails, Glengarry with a plain band, and white gaiters with dark hose tops. (F.H. Wooding, 'The Veterans' Guard of Canada', *The Legionary*, January 1941 & February 1947; photos in private collection)



### **A3: Despatch rider, Royal Canadian Dragoons (1st Armoured Car Regiment); Italy, 1943**

Canadian Army motorcycle despatch riders wore, like their British counterparts, a rubberised coat (the short pattern is shown here), breeches and high three-buckle boots, and were armed with WE 37 revolver equipment. Motorcyclists had a rimless steel helmet similar to the British armoured troops' pattern but with its own liner and strapping; Trooper Everett Walter Paisley, on whom this figure is based, recalled getting the first model helmet in 1943. The RCDs provided the armoured car reconnaissance regiment for I Canadian Corps; despatch riders had a high casualty rate, and Paisley was badly wounded at Ortona just before Christmas 1943. He went on to serve in the South Alberta Regt, the recce unit of 4th Armd Div, in NW Europe, and later volunteered for the Pacific.

### **B1: Private, Royal Rifles of Canada or Winnipeg Grenadiers; Hong Kong, December 1941**

No visible insignia distinguished the battle order of the two regiments which took part in the doomed defence of Hong Kong; both wore Canadian khaki drill tropical uniform. The Canadian shorts had no field dressing pocket and were cut closer than the British Army pattern. Armament and accoutrements are the conventional SMLE rifle with bayonet and WE 37 equipment. Respirators were worn slung under the left arm.

### **B2: Private, Régiment de Hull, 13th Infantry Brigade; Kiska, Aleutians, 1943**

The 13th Inf Bde wore Canadian BD, the leather buckle-flap boots also later worn by the 3rd Inf Div in NW Europe, carried the light service respirator, and were armed with the Lee-Enfield No.4 rifle. Just about everything else was American, which made good logistical sense for a brigade attached to a large US force, and minimised the risk of being taken for enemy troops. The equipment set was based on the US 1923 cartridge belt; the men had American framed rucksacks, Arctic sleeping bags, and overcoat/parkas. A surviving parka-style coat made by Reed Products of Philadelphia in September 1942, worn by Pte. Ludger Saint-Laurent of the Régiment de Hull on Kiska in 1943, is of a light tan colour, reversible with a pile liner; it has a drawstring hood, a tightening tape in a waist 'tunnel', buttoned cuff tabs, a deep front fly, and two patch skirt pockets with flaps. The US M1 helmet was dressed with the Canadian camouflage net in two hues of khaki. Canadian officers of the brigade wore US rank badges on their berets, left of the regimental badge, and on the left collar of their blouse, as well as their Canadian rank badges on the shoulder straps. Note the yellow-on-blue title 'LE REGT DE HULL/CANADA' above the Bowie knife patch of the Kiska force.

### **B3: Sergeant, Calgary Regiment (14th Armoured Regiment), 1st Army Tank Brigade; Dieppe, 19 August 1942**

The men of this Churchill tank regiment taking part in the disastrous Dieppe raid wore BD and WE 37 accoutrements. A

**Light khaki denim Canadian BD blouse, this example made in April 1940. This summer version of Battledress, cut like the woollen blouse, was issued only in Canada and not overseas. (Ed Storey Collection)**

**Sgt. H.E.Cooper, 48th Highlanders of Canada, in Sicily on 11 August 1943. This excellent illustration of a 1st Inf Div soldier wearing Canadian KD tropical bush shirt and slacks was widely distributed in the press, but Cooper's superiors were annoyed that he had been photographed unshaven... Note the regimental shoulder title, the red rectangular divisional patch and the sergeant's rank badge all rather roughly sewn to the upper sleeve; and the large khaki plastic removable buttons. (National Archives of Canada, PA130215)**

number of tanks were disembarked, but their traction was hampered by the slippery shingle beach and they were all knocked out, mostly close to the waterline. Our figure is based on a tank crew sergeant seen there, desperately fighting with revolver in hand. His open blouse reveals a surprisingly modern touch – a sweatshirt with the regimental badge printed on; a German photo of a prisoner of the Fusiliers Mont-Royal shows that at least one other unit followed suit. The regimental badge is worn more conventionally pinned to his black armoured troops' beret.

The white tank right sleeve badge of the British Royal Tank Regt is visible in some photos of the Calgaries – it is not worn here, but note the regimental left shoulder lanyard. Their non-regulation UK-made shoulder title, with 'CANADA/THE CALGARY REGIMENT' in dark blue on lighter blue, seems to have been the only regimental title worn by units at Dieppe. At this date the 2nd Inf Div wore the white-on-khaki 'CANADA' title (of both straight and arc patterns), above their royal blue rectangular divisional patch with an added World War I scheme of 'battle badges'. The 4th, 5th and 6th Inf Bdes were identified by the colours green, red and dark blue respectively. The senior battalions had a coloured disc above the blue patch (Royal Regiment of Canada/ Black Watch/ Fusiliers Mont-Royal); the intermediate battalions, a half-disc butted down against it (Royal Hamilton LI/ Rég't de Maisonneuve (absent)/ Cameron Highlanders); and the junior battalions, a shallow triangle (Essex Scottish/ Calgary Highlanders/ South Saskatchewan Regt).

**C1: Private, Royal 22e Régiment, 1st Infantry Division; Sicily, July 1943**

This figure shows the typical dress – khaki drill shirt tucked into shorts, short puttees and hose tops – worn by the 1st Inf Div in Sicily and southern Italy in the summer of 1943. This famous French-Canadian Regular regiment (always known as the 'Van-doo's', after the phonetic pronunciation of the French '22', *vingt-deux*) wore a large shoulder arc in blue over yellow over red with the full regimental title in black on the yellow stripe. The white-on-khaki 'CANADA' title was sometimes worn between this and the red divisional patch. The WE 37 accoutrements and No.4 rifle were standard issue. (L.Lamontagne, *Histoire du Royal 22e Régiment*, Quebec, 1964)

**C2: 2nd Lieutenant, Ontario Regiment (11th Armoured Regiment), 1st Armoured Brigade; Italy, summer 1944**

The old 1st Army Tank Bde was redesignated 1st Armd Bde in August 1943, but its component units were unchanged –



the 11th (Ontario), 12th (Three Rivers) and 14th (Calgary) Armoured Regiments, all now equipped with Sherman tanks. The brigade fought in the bitter battle for Ortona at Christmas 1943, and the following year with XIII (British) Corps of US 5th Army in the advance on Florence. This troop commander wears his single buff-on-cavalry-yellow rank 'pip' on his shoulder strap slides, and the brigade's diamond-shaped black and red patch on the shoulders of his Canadian-made KD bush jacket, below a combined national/regimental title. The British Royal Armoured Corps steel helmet is worn with M1938 'Resistol' goggles. Equipment is limited to the WE 37 belt with M1942 (short strap) RAC holster for a .38in revolver.

**C3: Sergeant, Loyal Edmonton Regiment, 1st Infantry Division; Italy, winter 1943–44**

As the Canadians moved up into the wretchedly cold and wet Appenine Mountains in November 1943, BD and greatcoats were routinely worn but specialised winter clothing was slow



**Lt.Col. B.M.Hoffmeister, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1st Inf Div, Italy 1943. He wears the khaki wool Balmoral tam-o'shanter bonnet with the regimental cap badge on a backing of Mackenzie tartan, and the KD bush shirt with his white-on-black regimental/national title above the red divisional patch. One of the Army's brightest officers, Hoffmeister quickly rose to command 5th Armd Div in 1944, and was reorganising the 6th Inf Div when VJ-Day came in 1945. He then left the Army, went into business, and became president of MacMillan-Bloedell, one of Canada's largest companies. (T.Rowe, National Archives of Canada, PA132779)**

to arrive. (Army blankets were turned into 'short coats, fetchingly tailored by Castropignano civilian artisans', according to Farley Mowat of the Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment.) The field dressing is tucked under the netting of the Mk II helmet; like most British and Commonwealth infantry junior leaders on the Italian front this sergeant is armed with a Thompson sub-machine gun, here the M1A1 model. Later examples of the 'CANADA' title were seen in buff rather than white lettering.

**D1: Private, First Special Service Force; Anzio, Italy, 1944**

This mixed US/Canadian commando-type unit was originally intended for an operation in occupied Norway. Raised in 1942 and trained in parachute and alpine warfare, it took part in the Kiska expedition in 1943, but proved its real worth as an outstanding infantry regiment in Italy. By the Anzio landings it was completely equipped with US uniforms, accoutrements, weapons and kit. Our figure has the US M1 helmet, a reversible first-pattern parka, mountain trousers, paratrooper boots and a 'Yukon' pack. His weapon is the M1941 Johnson LMG, used in Europe only by the FSSF. (Burhans, Robert D., *The First Special Service Force*, Washington: Infantry Journal, 1947)

**D2: Lance-Corporal, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1st Provost Company; Italy, 1943-45**

Members of Canada's famous police force were organised into provost detachments serving with Army divisions in Europe. They wore Army BD with red-on-blue 'ROYAL/CANADIAN MOUNTED/POLICE' shoulder titles, and the RCMP cap badge on the FS cap and later the beret, sometimes on a red backing. On duty their WE 37 pistol equipment was whitened. Normal Army rank badges and formation signs were worn on the sleeves.

**D3: Private, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion; NW Europe, 1944-45**

The Canadian paratroopers who jumped in Normandy and later on the Rhine were dressed and equipped exactly like their British comrades of 6th Airborne Division. This soldier has the third pattern jump helmet, camouflage netting face veil, second pattern Denison smock, and parachutist's BD trousers with an extra rear pocket, knife pocket in the seam, and enlarged 'bellows' left thigh pocket lined with thin leather. The WE 37 accoutrements include a 'bandolier' of seven Sten magazine pouches; he also carries a six-foot toggle rope for obstacle climbing. Only the Canadian parachute wings identify his nationality; out of the line he would also display the unit's distinctive badge on his maroon beret. The gold-yellow band on the shoulder straps also identified the unit within 3rd Abn Bde of 6th Airborne Division.



**L/Cpl. P.Chimilar, a motorcyclist of the Canadian Provost Corps, putting up a warning road sign near Haumesnil, France, on 14 August 1944. Although near the front the MPs' distinctive white webbing, gauntlets and lanyard are still worn; and the plain blue horizontal diamond patch of 1 Canadian Corps troops is just visible on his upper sleeve. Military policemen wore a red-on-black 'MP' brassard on the right sleeve. Cf Plates A3 and D2. (Ken Bell, National Archives of Canada, PA131261)**

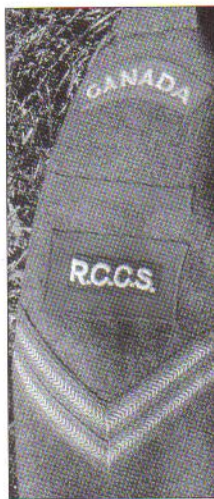
**E1: Captain, South Alberta Regiment (29th Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment), 4th Armoured Division; NW Europe, 1944–45**

Canadian armoured units were issued with the British 1943 tank oversuit or 'pixie suit'. Made of heavy cotton fabric of a light khaki colour lined with khaki wool shirting material, with two neck-to-ankle zippers, it had no less than 13 pockets. 'They had a heck of a lot of pockets...but they were too heavy', and thus too warm for tank crews in the summer of 1944, so that 'not everybody had them [on]', recalled Capt. Barford of the South Alberta Regiment. However, 'the tank commander generally had one [on] because he sat in the turret with the draft down the back of his neck'. Captain Jack Summers, of the same regiment, liked the suit in cool weather, as, it seems, did most Canadian tank crews. (Graves, Donald E., *South Albertas: A Canadian Regiment at War*, Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1998; and interview data kindly provided by Mr Graves).

**E2: Private, Régiment de Maisonneuve, 2nd Infantry Division; NW Europe, winter 1944–45**

This regiment arrived in Normandy on 6 July 1944 wearing standard BD and equipment; as the wet autumn wore on some cold weather items were added. The sleeveless leather jerkin was popular with everyone and, in winter, some soldiers modified them by adding sleeves cut from greatcoats. This Bren gun No.1 – an infantry section light machine gunner – wears the Mk II helmet, BD, jerkin, knit gloves, WE 37 accoutrements, and the parts wallet for his Bren; a GS shovel is thrust under his webbing. Above the dark blue divisional patch is the regimental title, in this case of truncated oval shape.

As in all units, a lot of changes were soon made once in the field, especially to officers' gear and armament. The Sten guns were immediately found 'more dangerous to ourselves than to the Germans', and most officers laid them aside along with the bulky ammunition pouches. Instead they picked up .303in. rifles and disposable 50-round cotton bandoliers; Maj. (later Col.) Jacques Ostiguy recalled that 50 rounds was 'usually enough'. He wore his web waistbelt and hung grenades on it; his revolver was worn at the back, but he never used it – only the .303 'firing from the hip', which he had practised in England. On several occasions Germans



Battledress blouse of a corporal, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, 1945. The buff-on-khaki 'CANADA' title appears above the red bar which sometimes indicated a division's second brigade, and the red rectangular patch of 1st Infantry Division. Corps were allowed to apply their titles to the divisional sign, in this case in white letters on dark blue. For details of the complex subject of Canadian sleeve insignia readers are recommended to consult Law, Clive, *Distinguishing Patches – see Select Bibliography*. (Ed Storey Collection)

armed with pistols shot at him, but always missed, while his rifle brought 'much better' results. He did not use the helmet much, finding it too heavy and awkward to wear. Instead he wore the beret, without the badge, or a woollen 'cap comforter'. On his shoulder straps Maj. Ostiguy wore his father's pips rather than 'the ones lined with red'. Later, when it got colder in Holland, Maj. Ostiguy preferred puttees to web anklets, for their warmth. (Recollections of Col. Ostiguy; Marchand, Gérard, *Le Régiment de Maisonneuve vers la victoire 1944–45*, Montréal: Presses Libres, 1980)

**E3: Private, Highland Light Infantry of Canada, 3rd Infantry Division; Normandy, June 1944**

The Canadian infantry who secured Juno Beach on 6 June were basically dressed and equipped as this figure from the 9th Infantry Brigade. All had the new British Mk III helmet with net, BD, the buckle-flap boots soon nicknamed 'invasion' or '3rd Div' boots, and WE 37 accoutrements. The unit/national shoulder title is in yellow on a yellow-rimmed green backing; below it is the divisional patch, officially described as 'French grey' but found in several shades of light blue and blue-grey. Our man is well armed with a Sten gun Mk III and a PIAT

British 'MRC' body armour was worn by some men of the 2nd and 3rd Inf Divs in 1944. This item originated from a Medical Research Council recommendation of 1940, but although issued in quantity for training it saw very little British use in action. However, some Royal Canadian Engineers with 3rd Inf Div wore it in Normandy; and the biggest users appear to have been infantrymen of 2nd Inf Div – soldiers of the Black Watch of Canada, South Saskatchewan Regt, Fusiliers Mont-Royal and Rég de Maisonneuve (see Plate E2) are known to have worn it. The back plate is at left, the two front plates at right, the lower one always worn low in order – recalled a Canadian Highlander – to protect 'the family jewels'; the steel plates were covered with tan fabric. The armour was only meant to give protection against low velocity projectiles and fragments; in the Maisonneuves, Maj. Ostiguy found that it did not stop rifle bullets. It was heavy and awkward and, after some of the men wearing it were killed anyway, it was abandoned as of doubtful value. (Ed Storey Collection)

(Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank). Note that the 'universal pouches' of the 37 set could not be fastened when carrying Sten magazines. (Schipper, Paul, 'The 3rd Canadian Division on D-Day', *Militaria Magazine*, July 1995)

**F1: Pilot Officer fighter pilot, RCAF; England, 1940-41**

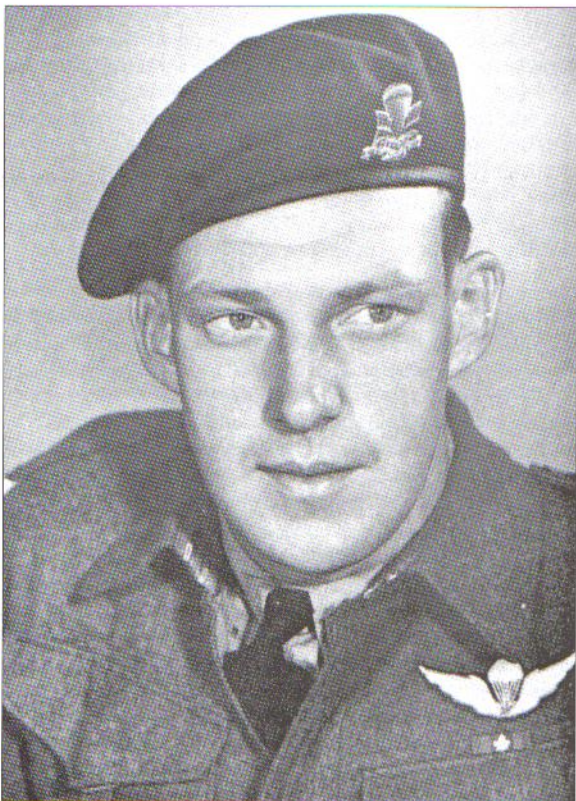
The pilot's service dress was similar to that worn by the RAF although increasingly made in Canada. The 'CANADA' shoulder title was worn only by RCAF personnel serving outside Canada. Our pilot wears the British 1939 pattern boots, 1933 gauntlet gloves, 1932 'Mae West' life jacket, and the Type B helmet with Mk III goggles. Note the single narrow cuff rank rings in light on dark blue.

**F2: Air gunner, bomber crew, RCAF; England, 1942-44**

The bomber crews of No.6 Group were issued the same heavy 'Irvin' sheepskin flying jacket and trousers as their RAF comrades. Our gunner wears 1941 pattern boots, gauntlet gloves, life jacket, helmet with Mk VII goggles and the 'Observer's' pattern parachute rig, all typical items for mid-war bomber crews.

**F3: Flight Lieutenant fighter pilot, RCAF; NW Europe, late 1944**

Following the stationing of fighter squadrons in France soon after the Normandy landings, it was feared that the blue-grey BD worn by RCAF personnel could be mistaken for German uniform, especially when dirty from use on front-line airstrips. From September, khaki BD was ordered worn instead when



servicing in NW Europe. The rank badges and other insignia were unchanged. This was not always greeted with joy, and some continued to wear the old blue-grey uniform; in November 1944, recalcitrant airmen of 83 Group were specifically ordered to get into the khaki Battledress. Our figure is a Typhoon pilot, wearing his service cap and 1943 pattern 'escape boots' with the khaki Battledress.

**G1: Lieutenant, Royal Canadian Navy, 1941-45**

From about 1941, many officers on the smaller ships such as corvettes took to wearing as working uniform the Army issue BD blouse dyed dark blue, or copies privately tailored from dark blue serge; rank was indicated on shoulder boards. Besides its advantages as a practical working dress, most officers were new to the service and often did not have the full service wardrobe of the Regular officers. Many veteran officers also liked BD, as it saved wear and tear on their more expensive service uniforms. In March 1942 the authorities acknowledged the fashion and officers were officially allowed to purchase at their own expense 'Blue Battledress serge uniforms consisting of blouse and trousers (Army Pattern)' for wear 'only while at sea'. Battledress was worn over the white turtleneck sweater when on watch in bad weather, and on more formal occasions with the white shirt and black tie. The officers' rank insignia were often painted on the front of the steel helmet worn when at 'action stations'. The rubber lifebelt was covered in white or khaki cotton, and fitted with a small inflation tube; it was worn around the waist over the uniform and secured with a neck tape, or carried in a small roll.

**G2: Seaman, Royal Canadian Navy, Arctic convoys, 1941-45**

Severe weather conditions were common in the North Atlantic, where most Canadian sailors served in small, wet warships. Foul weather gear included bulky dark blue-green oilskin raincoats with sou'wester hats and sea boots. The popular buff-coloured 'duffel' coat (named after the town of Duffel in Belgium, where this cloth was originally made) had a deep hood and fastened up the front with wooden toggles through cord loops; it was warm and comfortable in cold weather when worn with a scarf or towel at the neck, mittens and sea boots. Crews who sailed north of the Arctic Circle escorting convoys to Murmansk, Russia, faced the harshest conditions of all. They were issued this special winter clothing consisting of an outer parka and trousers of khaki waterproof Greenfell cloth, the parka hood being trimmed with wolf fur. A grey 'fearnaught' cloth parka was worn under the outer shell. Grey 'fearnaught' mittens with a trigger finger, and special winter boots, were also provided.

**G3: Signals rating, Royal Canadian Navy, working dress, 1943-45**

Besides the ratings' uniform jumpers and bell-bottom trousers, sailors spent much of their time wearing a practical

**During Operation 'Varsity', the Rhine crossings in late March 1945, Cpl. Frederick G. Topham, a medical orderly with 1st Canadian Parachute Bn, won the Victoria Cross for rescuing wounded under fire. Note the silver cap badge of the unit; Canadian parachutist's 'wings' worn above the left pocket; and the battalion's gold identifying loop around his shoulder strap. See also Plate D3. (Private collection)**



**Royal Canadian Navy officer's cap, c1940–1945; and BD blouse of an RCN officer, c1945–46 – note that all buttons are concealed. This blouse shows lieutenant-commander's gold ranking on the shoulder boards, and on the breast the Fleet Air Arm wings. The gold, arc-shaped national shoulder title appears to have been added when a distinct Canadian naval air arm was formed at the end of the war.**  
**Cf Plate G1. (Ross M.A. Wilson Collection)**



on-board working dress consisting of a blue jean jacket, shirt and trousers. Only the rank and specialty badges were worn on this working dress, not the national title nor good conduct badges. The cap, rubber boots and a life jacket were often worn with this dress when on watch. At the beginning of the war the life jackets were large cork affairs covered with canvas, which were stowed in lockers and issued only in emergency. From about 1940 the less bulky inflatable life belt appeared, and was routinely worn or carried at all times when at sea – see G1. That very basic pattern was replaced from about 1943–44 by this aircrew-style vest with a collar to hold the head of an unconscious man up in the water; it was covered in dark blue fabric, with 'RCN' in large white letters and a smaller serial number stamped below. At 'action stations' most personnel wore the life jacket over the clothing, with a white fire-retardant flash hood, long matching gloves, and the khaki-painted Mk II steel helmet.

**H1: Volunteer, Canadian Women's Army Corps; UK, 1942–45**

Initially, in September 1941, the first volunteers continued wearing their volunteer groups' uniforms but with a cherry-red brassard bearing 'CWAC' in small white letters. (The 'cherry-red' shade is sometimes also described as 'beechnut-brown' – a dark reddish brown hue.) From 9 November the first uniforms started arriving individually addressed to each woman. Sergeant Ada Wilson (later Arney) recalled that the 'uniform, softly tailored in khaki, was an immediate hit with just about everyone. The official insignia was Athene, the Greek goddess of wisdom and protectress of cities and heroes of war'. The uniform consisted of a khaki tunic and skirt, the tunic having an open collar, two patch skirt pockets but only one left breast pocket, four buttons in front and the CWAC's distinctive red-brown shoulder straps; a light tan blouse with black tie, and a khaki cap (including the cloth visor). The brass cap badge was diamond-shaped

with three maple leaves and the title of the corps; the brass collar badges and buttons had the helmeted head of Athene with 'C.W.A.C.' below; brass 'C.W.A.C.' titles were worn on the shoulder straps, and a white 'CANADA' title on a red-brown strip on the arms when serving outside Canada, later above a buff or yellow maple leaf and rim on a black disc. The summer uniform was similar but made of light-weight tan material. There were also tan raincoats, khaki double-breasted winter overcoats, brown laced shoes, work blouses, khaki trousers and laced work boots for some trades. (Arney, Ada, *Here Come the Khaki Skirts: the Women Volunteers*, Cobalt, Ontario; Highway Books, 1988)

**H2: Rating, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, summer uniform, 1942–45**

The service uniform of the WRCNS was similar to that of the British WRNS 'with the exception of the officer's skirts, which are gored rather than pleated'. However, the Canadian naval servicewomen had a distinct summer uniform, shown here. It was light blue with gilt buttons for officers and black buttons for other ranks. On this uniform officers' rank was marked by blue-black shoulder boards with gold lace stripes.

**H3: Aircraftwoman, Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division, 1942–45**

The RCAF Women's Division ('Wids') wore the same air force blue-grey jacket and skirt as the British WAAFs, with a light blue-grey shirt and black tie, the same rank badges, and initially the same cap but with a cloth-covered visor. However, the second pattern cap was of this more becoming 'kepi' shape, with a higher stiffened front to the crown. Women serving outside Canada wore the RCAF national shoulder title.



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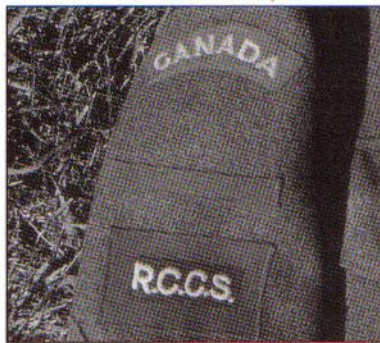
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