

## CHAPTER 1

### A SHORT HISTORY OF THE RCA, 1534-2014

#### 101. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the story of Canada's Gunners, with emphasis on The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. It is in no way intended as a replacement for reading the volumes of the official Regimental history, "*The Gunners of Canada*" by Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson.

2. The study of military history and of the story of The Royal Regiment is a professional development activity expected of all professional Gunners. Learning lessons from history is much less costly than re-learning them on the battlefield.

#### 102. FRENCH COLONIAL ARTILLERY 1534-1763

1. The first recorded use of artillery in Canada occurred in 1534, when Jacques Cartier had two guns on his ship fired in order to scare off First Nations warriors approaching in canoes. On his third visit in 1541, Cartier brought three guns ashore from his ships to protect the log fort at Charlesbourg-Royal, a pattern copied by colonists for the next two hundred years.

2. In spite of significant fighting between French colonists and the First Nations people, particularly the Iroquois confederacy, the French Crown provided no regular soldiers in Canada until 1665. The settlers had to see to their own defences. As early as 1636 there is a record of "The Company of One Hundred Associates" being organized for defence against the First Nations. This company procured some artillery pieces from ships that arrived in the colony.

3. The arrival of French regular troops in 1665 turned the tide of the war with the Iroquois and secured New France from destruction at their hands, however, the threat posed by the English did not abate. Even with regular troops, gunnery remained largely the business of the French settlers under the guidance of infantry soldiers. Guns were not prominent in warfare against the First Nations because of their lack of mobility in a country possessing few and poor roads. Instead guns were mainly found in a garrison role defending population centres.

4. A notable example of such a defence took place at Québec in 1690. There, the colonists manned gun batteries under the direction of Jacques Le Moynes, a Canadian-born officer. They did good service in repulsing the English attack on the city under Sir William Phipps. The French commander, "le comte de Frontenac", famously replied to the initial English demand to surrender with the words: "I will answer your General only by the mouths of my cannon...."

5. In order to provide for a permanent garrison of regular troops, the French Crown established the "troupes de la marine" in New France in 1692. Service in these "colony regulars" must have attracted many Canadians because in 1743 the King wanted to discourage recruiting in Canada since it withdrew too many men from agriculture. The first company of regular French Gunners was created in Canada in

1750, when Louis XV ordered a company formed within the “troupes de la marine”. A second company was added in 1756. The Gunners were considered to be the elite of the force, and were the first recorded artillery units accorded the honour of the right of the line on parade, a tradition copied by the British Royal Artillery some six years later. Canadian-born men had served in the military forces and colonial defences of New France for some two centuries by the time of the formal capitulation of the colony to the English in 1763.

### **103. ENGLISH COLONIAL ARTILLERY 1745-1854**

1. The Royal Artillery presence in Canada dates from at least 1745 when a train of the Royal Artillery was stationed in Louisbourg after its capture in that year. The Royal Artillery played a prominent part in the battles with the French for control of the country. From 1760 until 1855, the defence of Canada rested mainly with the British regulars garrisoned here, and like the French, the British also had to rely on Canadian assistance. All Canadian men between 16 and 60 were liable to be called up for military service in an emergency. As a result Canadian-born men of both English and French descent saw service with the British forces in the American Revolution 1775-1783, the War of 1812 and the rebellions of 1837-38.

2. Like the French, the English principally used garrison artillery to bolster the defences of settlements rather than field artillery with mobile forces. In addition to Royal Artillery units serving tours in Canada, the British also formed volunteer militia artillery companies in settlements to augment their defences, particularly along the Atlantic coast in the 1790's.

3. As the direct threats to the colonies in North America diminished from the mid-1800's, the British government sought to reduce the expense of defending the empire. To this end, the Dominions (colonies with home rule but no power for foreign affairs) were encouraged to provide for their own defence.

### **104. CANADIANIZATION 1855-1871**

1. The Militia Act of 1855, passed by the Parliament of the United Provinces of Canada, was a milestone in Canadian military history, creating the first truly Canadian army units. The Act provided for the creation of a five thousand man force which included seven batteries of field artillery and five batteries of foot artillery (batteries organized and trained as infantry with the role of defending the gun positions). Four of these units are still in existence today and are the oldest batteries in The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Battery in Ottawa, the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Battery in Montréal, the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Battery (Hamilton-Wentworth) in Hamilton and the 57<sup>th</sup> Batterie de campagne in Levis. The first Canadian Artillery unit was formed in 1856 as the Battalion of Montreal Artillery. The unit still exists today as 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, RCA.

2. The period between 1855 and Confederation was one in which interest in military matters remained high because of the Crimean War, the American Civil War, and the threats, real and imagined, which these posed for Canada. Immediately following the U.S. Civil War, Irish-Americans who had served in the conflict began raiding British North America in an effort to divert British resources from Ireland and, thus, further the cause of Irish independence. These raiders were members of the Fenian Brotherhood.

3. The Fenians launched several raids into Canada 1866-71. These saw the militia being called out

for widespread service but the role of the artillery was limited in the actual battles that occurred. The most notable engagement fought by the artillery was one in which the Welland Canal Field Battery, acting as infantry, defended Fort Erie against the Fenian force returning from their success in the battle at Ridgeway in 1866. Their gallant stand was doomed from the start, the Gunners being greatly outnumbered, and they were eventually forced to surrender. The last Fenian raid into the new Province of Manitoba in October 1871 resulted in the formation of the oldest militia battery in Western Canada, which still exists today as 13<sup>th</sup> Field Battery in Portage La Prairie.

4. After Confederation in 1867, the Dominion Parliament moved quickly to improve Canada's organization for defence. A Militia Bill, passed in 1868, authorized an Active Militia strength of 40,000 men. Essentially, the terms of the bill extended the militia system then in effect in Ontario and Québec to the two new provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. By 1870 there were 10 field batteries and 30 garrison batteries.

5. In 1870, the last British military action in North America saw Colonel Garnet Wolsley lead a mixed force of British regulars and Canadian militia across Northern Ontario to quell a challenge to the sovereignty of the Canadian Government by a provisional government in the Red River Colony. The expedition did not have to fight, and the result was the Province of Manitoba joining Confederation in May 1870. The British troops were withdrawn back to England in August, but a Canadian garrison stayed in the two forts along the Red River until 1877. From 1872, this force included the Manitoba Demi-Battery, composed of Regular Gunners drawn from A and B Battery.

#### **105. FORMATION OF THE PERMANENT FORCE 1871**

In Britain, the pressure to make self-governing colonies responsible for their own defence was particularly high, and, in 1871, all the British troops in Canada, with the exception of the Halifax and Esquimalt garrisons, were withdrawn. The permanent element of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery originated on 20 October 1871 with the formation of A and B Batteries of Garrison Artillery in Kingston and Quebec City respectively. These two batteries represent the creation of Canada's Permanent (Regular) Army and are the oldest continuously serving regular component in the Canadian Forces. The Batteries also functioned as Schools of Gunnery and schools of instruction for all militia officers until the Cavalry and Infantry Schools formed in 1882.

#### **106. FORMATION OF THE NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE 1873**

1. To control the North West Territory and prevent American encroachment, Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald had a constabulary formed in 1873. Originally to be named the North West Mounted Rifles, MacDonald insisted that while equipped for war, the unit should be called the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) to avoid provoking the United States. The first 150 men of the NWMP were enlisted at Lower Fort Garry in 1873 under the Military District Commander of Manitoba.

2. In 1874 the NWMP were reinforced and concentrated at Fort Dufferin (now Emerson, Manitoba). From there, they began their great march west in July, leaving the Province of Manitoba to bring law and order to the Territories and to secure Canadian sovereignty. The Mounties eventually extended their policing duties across the entire country.

3. The First Commissioner of the NWMP was Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) Sir George A. French, a Royal Artillery officer who had been seconded as the first Commandant of A Battery

Garrison Artillery. The first Chief Constable (RSM) was Staff Sergeant Arthur Griesbach, also of A Battery. Together with 31 other men from A and B Battery, they formed the nucleus of the new police force. The Gunner contribution included 15 Non-Commissioned Officers, among them Sgt Sam Steele (later Major-General Sir Sam Steele) from A Battery. Steel was one of three Gunner NCOs appointed to the five Troop Sergeant Major positions within the force.

## **107. THE FATHER OF CANADIAN ARTILLERY**

1. French's colleague from the Royal Artillery, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Bland Strange (who later rose to the rank of Major-General), was the first Commandant of B Battery Garrison Artillery and the Dominion Inspector of Artillery. Strange, also known as "Gunner Jingo", is remembered as the "Father of Canadian Artillery". He was instrumental in forming the Royal Canadian Artillery Association which provided a uniform system of inspection. Participation in nation-wide gunnery competitions, inaugurated by the Association, was shortly extended to meets held in Shoeburyness, England, where Canadian artillery teams became strong competitors for the coveted British awards. These tournaments increased not only the efficiency but also established a magnificent esprit-de-corps in the several independent units, an esprit-de-corps that continues in The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery to this day.

2. His autobiography, *Gunner Jingo's Jubilee*, offers a fascinating series of glimpses into the early years of the Regiment's permanent force component - "*When the last British Legionary departed, mine was the task to form its first guard of Canadian Artillery. The evacuation had been so rapid, only a few days elapsed between my arrival and the embarkation of the British garrison, scant time to enlist, arm, uniform and drill the first new guard of the Citadel.*" Equipment for the Québec garrison would have been a problem had it not been for Strange's rather direct manner. The Government of Canada had expected to inherit all the garrison stores but the British Government sold everything down to, and including the bedsteads to local merchants. Strange solved this by not allowing them into the Citadel to get their purchases. The arms, ammunition and uniforms were taken over from the Québec Volunteer Artillery. With drills and practises, Strange quickly brought his garrison into shape. He held his Canadian Gunners in very high regard and the sentiment was eagerly returned.

3. As Dominion Inspector, Strange visited all artillery units and his inspections were of the most searching nature, as his numerous reports disclose. Strange did not limit his observations to the artillery, but made broad recommendations, including that the Government should found a military college. This recommendation was adopted resulting in the formation of The Royal Military College of Canada (RMC). Upon retirement, he moved to what is now Alberta and became an innovator in large-scale cattle ranching. He came back into Canadian service during the 1885 Rebellion. In recognition of his tremendous contribution to the formative years of our Regiment, MGen Strange was named first Colonel Commandant shortly before his death in 1925.

## **108. THE NORTH WEST REBELLION 1885**

1. The first major test for Canada's Gunners came in the North West Rebellion of 1885. In addition to A and B Batteries, many Militia artillery units participated in this action. The Winnipeg Field Battery (later designated the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Battery) supplied two 9 Pounder (Pdr) Rifled Muzzle-Loading (RML) guns and 49 all ranks. The Montreal Brigade of Garrison Artillery served as infantry on the lines of communication, along with members of the Ottawa Field and the Québec and Maritime Garrison units.

2. On 27 March 1885, A and B Batteries received orders to proceed west on active service. Under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel C.E. Montizambert, the two batteries left Renfrew, Ontario by rail for Qu'Appelle (now in Saskatchewan). On reaching Qu'Appelle, the two batteries split. A Battery and the Winnipeg Field Battery joined Sir Frederick Middleton's column. B Battery went west to Swift Current to join Lieutenant-Colonel William D. Otter's force. In addition to their guns, A and B Battery eventually each manned a Gatling gun and both provided their Garrison Divisions as infantry companies to the force. LCol Montizambert commanded all artillery in the force and moved with Middleton's Column.

3. A Battery was the first to see action at Fish Creek on 24<sup>th</sup> April, firing over the heads of the infantry, while elements of the battery fought with distinction in an infantry role. The Battery suffered casualties of 3 killed and 12 wounded in its first action, including Gunner William Cook, who became the first Canadian Gunner killed in action. A Battery and the Winnipeg Field Battery would go on to fight in the battle at Batoche 9-12 May, where the Gatling gun played a crucial role, particularly in helping to save the guns on the first day.

4. B Battery fought its first battle at Cut Knife on 2 May. Successfully fending off several determined attacks against its guns, Major Short led the Garrison Gunners and NWMP in four counter-attacks against the First Nations warriors. Miraculously, the Battery suffered only 4 wounded during the battle. The Battery experienced extreme difficulties with the 7 Pdr RML guns which they had borrowed from the NWMP (being told that the 9 Pdrs were too heavy to move across the prairie in that area). One of the 7 Pdrs went out of action with a collapsed trail after its first shot. Brevet-Captain (later Major-General) Rutherford rigged the second carriage with rope in an effort to prevent this, but the cannon came loose and had to be lifted back onto its frail carriage after each firing. The Gatling gun was instrumental in holding the enemy warriors away from the gun line. The Battle of Cut Knife marked the first use of the machine gun by Canadian soldiers and the last time in Canadian history that bows and arrows were employed in battle.

5. LCol Strange came out of retirement in Alberta in order to lead the Alberta Field Force as a brevet-Brigadier. Strange's force was the left column of the three involved in the campaign. His artillery support was a 9 Pdr RML manned by Mounties, all of whom were former members of A or B Battery. Sam Steele took a leave of absence from the NWMP to lead a unit of mounted scouts for General Strange.

6. In total, the campaign cost The Royal Regiment 6 killed and 18 wounded. The Regular Gunners stayed out west until the summer of 1886 as part of the garrison force. On departing for home, they left their guns with the Mounties in order to strengthen the NWMP presence in the west.

## **109. THE YUKON FIELD FORCE 1898 - 1899**

The discovery of gold in the Yukon in 1896 had generated a rush of miners and speculators. In 1898, in order to support the NWMP in maintaining law and order, an Order-in-Council authorized the formation of the Yukon Field Force. The 203 man force was mainly constituted of 133 soldiers from The Royal Regiment of Canadian Infantry and 46 Gunners of The Royal Canadian Artillery (14 from Kingston and 32 from Québec) with two 7 Pdr RML guns. After tremendous difficulties, the Force finally reached their two main destinations, Fort Selkirk and Dawson City, in September and October respectively. The Force carried out garrison duties and other tasks normally done by police and customs officers. Once the troops returned to their home stations they were replaced by a small militia unit, the Dawson City Rifle Company. The Force reported to Inspector Sam Steele of the Mounties.

## 110. THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR 1899-1902

1. During the interval between the rebellion and the South African War The Regiment, under the tutelage of Major (later Major-General) C.W. Drury, became considerably more modernized. Drury, on a posting to Britain, had paid particular attention to new developments in fire discipline and technical improvements. As Commandant of the Deseronto Camp, he injected considerably more realism into training, and by stressing competitions, spurred the militia gunners on to greater efficiency. His contributions were to earn him the name of "Father of Modern Artillery in Canada." The Regiment owes him a great deal. He brought it into the modern era and, in a real sense, gave it the groundwork of skills that it would require at the beginning of World War I. The period was one in which great strides were being made in the development of artillery. It was at this time that Canada acquired 12 Pdr breech-loading guns, which were available for range practice in 1897. These were the guns with which the Royal Canadian Field Artillery would serve in South Africa.

2. Shortly after the outbreak of the war between Great Britain and the Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, public pressure led to the dispatch of two Canadian Contingents to South Africa. Many Gunners volunteered to serve in the infantry of the First Contingent and fought at Paardeburg. Three batteries of field artillery formed part of the Second Contingent. The three artillery batteries were designated C, D and E. They were concentrated at Kingston, Ottawa and Québec respectively. Each battery was formed from members of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery (permanent force) with the remaining personnel coming from militia units in the general area of each place of concentration. C Battery was enrolled at Kingston, Gananoque, Winnipeg, Hamilton, St Catherines and Toronto; D Battery at Guelph, Ottawa, London and Port Hope; and E Battery at Québec, Montréal, Granby, Woodstock N.B., Newcastle N.B. and Sydney N.S. In command of the Brigade was LCol C.W. Drury.

3. The South African War was frustrating in some respects for Canadian Gunners. The Canadian Brigade consisted of three batteries, each armed with six 12 Pdrs, but the nature of the war did not permit the grouping of the Brigade or even of the batteries for operations. Most operations were conducted by two-gun Sections supporting mobile columns.

4. The war did, however, teach some valuable lessons. The adoption of indirect fire techniques was spurred on by the battles in this war. Boer marksmanship has been cited as the motivating factor but, in fact, the widespread use of the rifle in any hands would have been enough to end the older tactic of galloping up and engaging the enemy over open sights. Indirect fire training was implemented in Canada following the war.

5. C Battery formed part of the Rhodesian Field Force and took part in the relief of Mafeking and then in operations in the western Transvaal. D and E Batteries originally formed part of Carnarvon Field Force and then assumed line of communications duties on the main railway line to Kimberly. Later E Battery formed part of the Griqualand column and suffered one killed and eight wounded in action at Faber's Putt. E Battery had the heaviest battle casualties of all three batteries. Total Gunner casualties in the conflict were 13 men killed and 11 wounded in action.

6. D Battery joined Lord Roberts' main army in operations in the east Transvaal. It was at Leliefontein that a historic and successful rear-guard action was fought by a handful of Royal Canadian Dragoons and the left section of D Battery (the Gunners under the command of Lieutenant (later Major-

General) E.W.B. "Dinky" Morrison of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ottawa Field Battery). They defended against an attack by some 200 mounted Boers who had charged to within 70 yards of their position. Three of the Dragoons were awarded the Victoria Cross for this action. Lieutenant Morrison was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). One of the guns involved is now displayed in the Canadian War Museum. The following is an excerpt from the "Supplementary Report, Organization, Equipment, Dispatch and Services of the Canadian Contingents during the War in South Africa 1899-1900" from OC D Battery, RCFA to CC Brigade Division RCFA, dated 9 March 1901:

*"It was soon evident that the Boers had heavily reinforced since yesterday. Col Lessard with The Royal Regiment Canadian Dragoons and two Royal Canadian Guns, the latter under Lt Morrison, covered the rear, and I have no praise too high for the devoted gallantry they all showed in keeping the enemy off the convoy and infantry."*

*"In a telegram congratulating Gen Smith-Dorrien on the success of his operations, Lord Roberts said: 'Col Lessard with his Canadians had a difficult task in guarding the rear of your return march and deserves great credit as do all who were with him.'"*

*"Gen Smith-Dorrien subsequently recommended Lt Morrison for 'some special mark of Her Majesty's favour for the skill and coolness with which he worked and finally saved his guns'. He was duly awarded the Distinguished Service Order."*

*"During the two day's fighting the section expended 240 rounds ammunition."*

7. The service and traditions of C, D, and E Batteries are perpetuated by the RCHA batteries with the same designation. After the war, King Edward gave two banners to The Regiment in recognition of the distinguished service by Canadian Gunners.

8. The most significant aspect of The Royal Regiment's first overseas service was the increased recognition which now came from the Canadian and Imperial governments, not only in the form of increased appropriations, but also in an awareness of the excellence achieved by The Regiment.

## **111. TURN OF THE CENTURY - THE PRE-WAR YEARS**

1. 1906 ended a long chapter in Canadian military history with the final departure of the Halifax and Esquimalt British garrisons. In addition to A and B Batteries, there were now five companies of Garrison Artillery in the Canadian Permanent Force. These were formed in 1905 and 1906 to take the place of the departing British in the garrisons at Halifax and Esquimalt – the last British troops to leave Canada. Many of the Gunners of the withdrawing British batteries took their leave from the Imperial Army to serve with the new Canadian units. In 1905 there was also a re-organization of the militia artillery grouping the batteries into ten brigades.

2. Among the most significant developments prior to the First World War from The Royal Regiment's point of view was the acquisition of the large new training area at Petawawa. The familiar peacetime routine of summer practice camps for the militia artillery, presided over by the regular Gunners, once again became a feature of Canadian artillery training. Petawawa gave these practices a scope never before possible. The new 13 and 18 Pdrs came into service with modern recoil and sighting systems and, as noted above, indirect fire became a regular feature of practice.

3. While their numbers were small, the training of Canadian Gunners in the years preceding the war was essentially good. The equipment was up-to-date; indeed, the 18 Pdr would remain in service until early in the Second World War. Tactically, the size of the Petawawa ranges allowed scope for realistic manoeuvres. Technically, indirect fire procedures, with its requirements for meteorology and other technical considerations such as communications and range-finding, also became familiar to Canadians.

4. Changes in techniques and equipment, which followed the turn of the century, stemmed largely from experiences gained in South Africa. Previous to this campaign, guns had not normally been specifically allotted in support of a particular arm. With the redesignation of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery Brigade to the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA) Brigade in 1905, British practice was adopted. It was decided that in future, horse artillery batteries would gallop with the cavalry while field batteries would support the more slowly moving infantry. Orders were placed in the United Kingdom for 13 Pdr Quick-Firing (Q.F.) guns for the RCHA, and 18 Pdr Q.F. guns for the Militia field artillery.

5. The term “quick-firing”, as employed at the beginning of the twentieth century, was applied to a gun that fired fixed ammunition and in addition was equipped with some effective form of recoil control. Fixed ammunition for guns had come into use in the early 1890's, after the silk cloth bag that contained the charge (propellant) had been replaced in certain breech-loading guns by a brass cartridge case that expanded when fired and thus acted as a seal for the gases at the breech. The innovation made it possible for guns of small calibre to have the cartridge case joined to the projectile, and the resulting “fixed ammunition” materially speeded up the process of loading. The 13 and 18 Pdrs themselves were a composite of an Armstrong wire-wound gun (barrel and breech) mated to a Vickers recoil system, and sighting and elevation gear made in the Royal Ordnance factories. Before the war, both guns fired only shrapnel, which was soon to prove a serious shortcoming.

## **112. THE FIRST WORLD WAR 1914-1918**

1. Of approximately 44,000 Gunners who enlisted during the First World War, some 38,000 served overseas. The remainder served in depots, coast batteries and as instructors at the Gunnery Schools. By the end of the war in 1918, Canada had produced for service five divisional artilleries, an army field brigade, an anti-aircraft battery and three brigades of garrison artillery (including two heavy batteries). The RCHA Brigade, first under Lieutenant-Colonel H. Panet and later under Lieutenant-Colonel W.H.P. Elkins, was part of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. This brigade served in the Canadian Corps and also in the Indian and British Cavalry Corps. Two Canadian field batteries served in North Russia and one in Siberia, fighting the Bolsheviks into 1919, and a coast defence company garrisoned the Island of St Lucia in the British West Indies.

2. The main armaments used by Canadian Gunners during the war were the 13 Pdr with the RCHA; the 18 Pdr and 4.5-inch howitzer in the field artillery; the “turned up” 13 Pdr mounted on a truck in the anti-aircraft artillery; and 60 Pdr, 6-inch, 8-inch and 9.2-inch heavy guns in garrison, heavy and siege artillery companies. By the end of the war, each Divisional Artillery also had heavy trench mortar batteries using 9.45-inch mortars and medium trench mortar batteries with 6-inch Newton mortars.

3. The Ypres Salient, the Somme, Passchendaele, Amiens, Arras, Cambrai and Mons mark the road of the Canadian Gunners 1915-18, but none of their battles is more famous than Vimy Ridge in April, 1917. It is safe to say that no British offensive up to that time was as carefully planned as the attack by the Canadian Corps. The offensive is described here as an example of the artillery battle during the Great War 1917-18.

4. Experience at the Somme had shown the necessity of thorough artillery preparation against strong defences, though this time there was no intention of trying to demolish all of the enemy's trenches. Except in the foremost areas, instead of totally destroying the German wire entanglements, the fire of medium guns with the use of the newly introduced No.106 instantaneous fuze on high explosive shells would cut lanes through the wire for the assaulting infantry. The preliminary bombardment would be directed against trench junctions, concrete machine-gun emplacements, strongpoints, tunnel entrances and dugouts. In the rear, road junctions, ammunition dumps and light railways would receive particular attention. Harassing fire had proved its value at the Somme and it would now be employed each night to ensure that the enemy's relieving troops or carrying parties could use no avenue of approach to their trenches with impunity.

5. Counter battery work, the organization and development of which was due largely to the efforts of Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) A.G.L. McNaughton, would seek out and neutralize hostile guns to an extent far greater than in any previous operation. This was possible as result of improved techniques in locating the enemy's batteries, better liaison between the artillery and the assaulting infantry and an increased efficiency and accuracy of fire in the batteries detailed to silence the German guns.

6. Overall command of the artillery in the operation was vested in the General Officer Commanding Royal Artillery (GOC RA), Canadian Corps, Brigadier E.W.B. "Dinky" Morrison, who had won his DSO at Leliefontein.

7. The Canadian Corps Heavy Artillery at Vimy consisted of eighteen heavy batteries, twenty-six medium batteries, nine 60 Pdr batteries, and two batteries of 6-inch Mark VII guns which formed into eight Siege Groups and three Counter Battery Groups. All heavy artillery was under the command of Brigadier R.H. Massie, who exercised that command through the four Double Group Commanders with respect to the Siege Groups and through Lieutenant-Colonel A.G.L. McNaughton in control of the three Counter Battery Groups. Total heavy artillery at the Corps level numbered one hundred and four 6-inch howitzers, thirty-six 8-inch howitzers, thirty-six 9.2-inch howitzers, four 12-inch howitzers, three 15-inch howitzers, fifty-four 60 Pdr guns and eight 6-inch guns.

8. The Commanders Royal Artillery (CRAs) of the four Canadian divisions, in addition to their own respective artilleries, had under their command a number of British artillery formations for the operation. These included four more divisional artilleries, seven army field artillery brigades (i.e. regiments) and a brigade of the RHA. The total amount of field artillery available to the four divisions numbered four hundred and eighty 18 Pdrs, twenty 13 Pdrs (A & B Batteries RCHA with C and K Batteries RHA), and one hundred and thirty-eight 4.5-inch howitzers together with twenty-four 9.45-inch trench mortars.

9. Canadian Corps Artillery Instruction No. 1 for the capture of Vimy Ridge, a 35-page document issued by Brigadier Morrison's headquarters, divided the artillery battle into four distinct phases. The first two of these would consist of preparatory bombardments. In the initial phase (March 20 - April 2), there would be a general increase in activity where only 50% of the heavy batteries and a portion of the divisional artilleries would reveal themselves. To aid in this concealment, the registration and calibration of heavy batteries, not intended to be disclosed until later, would take place under cover of pre-arranged bombardments.

10. The second phase (up to the day of the assault) would see the total available artillery come into action. During this period, in addition to the destruction of wire, trenches, strongpoints and hostile batteries, eight villages within or immediately beyond the area to be assaulted would be subjected to the

most intense bombardments. The village of Thélus, lying between the Red and Blue Lines (objective lines on the right side of the ridge) would receive special treatment from four heavy howitzer batteries, and the British 12- and 15-inch super howitzers. 180 12-inch and 270 15-inch rounds were allotted for this task, almost completely obliterating the village. Included in the second phase were two feint barrages to throw the enemy off guard as well as to practice the barrage lines and detect any errors in calculations.

11. The third phase was the bombardment in support of the assault, comprising of rolling and standing barrages and counter battery fire. The rolling barrages would be fired in lifts of 100 yards to allow the advancing infantry to move forward under cover of fire. The standing barrages would concentrate on certain specified trenches and defensive systems. Silent batteries would be positioned forward on the right to support the attack against distant targets on the wider part of the ridge.

12. The fourth phase of the artillery fire plan provided for the movement of field batteries behind the infantry once the latter had captured their objectives, in order to provide defensive fires. Heavy artillery would also have to move forward to provide counter battery fire, with their observers taking advantage of the direct observation that would now be available from the summit of the ridge overlooking the Douai Plain.

13. During the first phase, over 85,000 rounds of heavy and 190,600 rounds of field ammunition were fired. During the second phase (2-8 April), a period called by the enemy "*the week of suffering*", an unceasing flow of shells of all calibres poured over the heads of the Canadians in the forward trenches. By the morning of the assault (9 April), more than a million rounds, with a total weight of 50,000 tons had battered the German positions into a cratered wilderness. The counter battery fire - 125,900 rounds in the week before 9 April – silenced 83% of the German guns.

14. During the assault itself, in addition to their own guns, Canadian Gunners put into action nine captured enemy artillery pieces. The Vimy operation remains a classic example of the deliberate break-in against strongly prepared positions, and of the ability of the assaulting forces to consolidate and hold what they had gained. Vimy set a new standard in the artillery's readiness to deal effectively with strong enemy counter-attacks after the infantry's successful capture of their objectives.

15. A stunt that Canadian Gunners would use with effect during the Second World War may have originated at Vimy as a defence against German counter battery measures. It was known that the German artillery was using a prominent church spire behind the Canadian lines as a registration point. The tower was carefully dismantled one dark night and then rebuilt exactly as it had been before, but on a new site far enough away to throw all guns registering on it several degrees off their targets.

16. The price of victory during the First World War was high. Of the 59,544 Canadian battle fatalities, 2,031 were Gunners. The addition of 534 artillerymen who died of disease, injury or accident brought the total Canadian artillery fatalities to 2,565. Another 8,066 Gunners were wounded or injured, bringing total casualties for The Regiment to 10,631: almost 28% of the total men who went overseas. Only the infantry suffered higher casualties in the War.

17. The war of 1914-1918 would contribute significantly to the growth and efficiency of The RCA. The intimate cooperation between artillery and infantry, which is the first requisite of modern war, found no better example than in the productive relationship which existed between the Gunners and their supported arms within the Canadian Corps. The Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie, himself a Gunner, sought at all times to exploit gun power to the limit for the purpose of saving infantrymen's lives. In the final two years of the war, when the serious shortage of artillery ammunition

no longer existed, Canadian Gunners were unsparing in their expenditure of ammunition to give the assaulting infantry adequate support, with their motto being to always fire the “ultimate round”.

### **113. THE INTER-WAR PERIOD 1919 - 1938**

1. The First World War demonstrated that modern warfare placed very definite limitations on the role of horse artillery and horses in general. At its conclusion, the Canadian Government would reverse the decision in favour of two different types of artillery. The returning Canadian Contingent would not bring back its 13 Pdrs. The Defence Department made the 18 Pdr the uniform post-war gun for both horse and field artillery in Canada.

2. The “war to end all wars” philosophy which pervaded public thinking after the war resulted in political indifference for matters military, creating a climate in which there was little support for defence spending. It was decided to maintain a nucleus of young officers, Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and specialists around which expansion could be quickly completed in the event of an emergency. Thus, between the two World Wars, the Permanent Force artillery was small and consisted of the RCHA Brigade, a medium battery, coast batteries and two Schools of Artillery. The RCHA Brigade with A and B Batteries was located at Kingston together with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medium Battery. C Battery, RCHA Brigade was located at Winnipeg.

3. During the 1920's the Non-Permanent Active Militia artillery batteries trained at local headquarters every winter and spent a week at practice camp in the summer. Units were small but keen, judging by the enthusiasm shown by most at the annual competitions fostered by the Royal Canadian Artillery Association (RCAA). Camps were conducted by the RCHA and the Schools of Artillery, and were held at Petawawa, Ontario; Shilo, Manitoba and Sarcee, Alberta. All of the wartime units and batteries soon began to hold annual reunions, where it became a tradition to sing “Auld Lang Syne” at the end of the formal dinner in honour of their fallen Gunner comrades.

4. In 1924 the Royal Canadian Garrison Artillery (RCGA) dropped the word “Garrison” from its name. At the same time, RCGA companies were renamed batteries. Various Militia units underwent nomenclature changes, and the terms CFA and CGA disappeared from Militia lists. All artillery units, aside from the RCHA Brigade, were designated RCA on 3 June 1935.

5. In 1929, the inevitable but sad day arrived, when The Regiment was informed that it was to become mechanized. Everyone had become deeply attached to their horses. Each horse was assigned a number and a name, the name starting with the battery letter in the RCHA. There are few military spectacles more stirring or picturesque than that of horse-drawn artillery, and crowds always turned out when the batteries appeared on the streets or highways. It is even recorded that when B Battery was proceeding to Camp Petawawa in the summer of 1909, the inhabitants of Smiths Falls, hearing that a stop-over was intended on the outskirts of their town, bought and laid 300 feet of piping for watering the horses.

6. The first unit to become mechanized was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medium Battery, RCA. It was issued four 6-wheeled Leyland tractors in 1929 to tow its 60 Pdrs. A and B Batteries were mechanized in 1930, but it wasn't until 1937 that C Battery parted with its horses. In 1931, seven militia field artillery brigades, one medium brigade and one medium battery were placed on the mechanized establishment. No mechanized transport was issued to these units for some years, however.

7. Between 1922 and the early thirties, when horses were replaced, all three batteries of the RCHA performed the Musical Drive at numerous events for the public. The popular mounted displays were based on the famous drive performed annually by the RHA. The Musical Drives had three main objects. As exhibitions of considerable colour, dash and skilful precision, they were designed to stimulate and maintain public interest in the Canadian Army, and the artillery in particular. They served to encourage recruiting among young men, for whom the varied skills in the artillery held a special appeal. Above all, for the Gunners themselves, the drives developed excellence in the technique of driving six-horse gun teams, they raised to a very high standard the care of horses and the maintenance of equipment, and they furnished soldiers with a special interest outside the day-to-day routine of service in peacetime. Wherever the Musical Drives were performed, spectators in their thousands, filling every seat, thrilled to the sight of four six-horse teams swinging their heavy guns and carriages at full gallop around the arena. The last drive was performed in Winnipeg in 1933, when Captain "Ham" Roberts (who 9 years later, as Major-General J.H. Roberts, would command the forces taking part in the Dieppe Raid) staged C Battery's final display.

8. In keeping with advancements made in air warfare, the first Permanent Force anti-aircraft component of The RCA was raised in 1937 at Kingston. Designated the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battery, it was equipped with four 3-inch 20-cwt. guns and first conducted firing practice at Point Petre on Lake Ontario in the fall of 1938. In the following year it proceeded overseas as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) Regiment.

9. The lack of defence spending during the inter-war years had taken its toll on the Canadian military. Despite the build-up of international tension from 1932 onward, the Defence Department went into World War Two ill-equipped to fight. A report by the Defence Minister in 1935 revealed a dismal shortage of modern equipment in all three services. The Minister described the situation with respect to the artillery as follows:

*"...there was not a single modern anti-aircraft gun in Canada. The stock of field gun ammunition on hand represented a total of ninety minutes firing at normal rates for the field guns inherited from the Great War... and there were no reserves. Existing field artillery was unsuitable for mechanical traction and outranged by modern guns to the extent of 3,000 to 6,000 yards. Coast defence armaments were obsolescent and in many cases defective. Firing practice had been restricted in order to prolong life of the guns. Beyond a few tractors for guns of the Permanent Force batteries, no provision had been made for mechanical transport for defence purposes. Canada possessed no tanks or service armoured cars and no tractors for heavy and field artillery equipment..."*

10. It would take three more years before plans were set in place to re-arm. Unfortunately, by that time the rising crisis in Europe caused the delay or cancellation of armament orders from overseas. With no defence industry of her own, Canada would have to wait her turn for up-to-date equipment to be made available.

## **114. THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945**

1. The outbreak of war found Canadian Gunners still training on the weapons that their fathers had used in 1918. The forces that were mobilized with commendable speed and efficiency when hostilities commenced would have to wait many months before they could be fully re-armed with modern equipment.

2. On 25 August 1939, in view of the growing tension in Europe, volunteers from the Militia were called out to man the coastal defences, and the 4<sup>th</sup> AA Battery was ordered from Kingston to Halifax. On 10 September, Canada declared war. Within two days, each of the Permanent Force batteries had dispatched 25 of its personnel to cities and towns across the country to act as assistant Gunnery instructors for the Militia artillery units. Where they were available, First World War-era 18 Pdrs and 4.5-inch howitzers were used for gun drill. Other units had to improvise with barrack room furniture and chalked outlines of guns on the floor.

3. By 3 December, the 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Artillery began to assemble in Halifax, and by 10 December, the first convoy left for England. Training in England was initially hampered by the lack of equipment, although some soon started to appear.

4. The field regiments (the term "*Brigade of Field Artillery*" was dropped at the beginning of the war) progressed from the 18 Pdr to the 18/25 Pdr and finally to the new 25 Pdr gun-howitzer and the self-propelled 25 Pdr Sexton. The medium regiments received the 5.5-inch and 4.5-inch guns. Anti-tank regiments (an innovation in this war) were equipped first with the 2 Pdr, then the more effective 6 Pdr, followed by the 17 Pdr and the American self-propelled M10 (3-inch). Light anti-aircraft (LAA) batteries were equipped with the Polsten 20mm and the dependable 40mm Bofors gun for engagement of low-level aircraft. The heavy anti-aircraft (HAA) units guarded against higher altitude aircraft with the 3.7-inch gun. Later in the war, once the Allies had established air superiority, anti-aircraft guns were often employed with devastating effect in the ground role in support of infantry units. The 3rd Divisional Artillery were specially equipped with American 105mm SP howitzers for the initial landings at Normandy, and returned to their 25 Pdrs afterwards. In late 1944 the 1<sup>st</sup> Rocket Battery was formed and was equipped with 12 rocket projectors, each projector firing 32 high explosive rockets. Artillery officers also took to the air with the formation of three Air Observation Post (OP) Squadrons. These Air OP pilots directed artillery fire from their Auster aircraft while flying over the front lines.

5. The 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RCHA (re-named from "the RCHA Brigade" at the beginning of the war) was the first of the gun regiments to "visit" the continent in the abortive attempt to stem the German invasion of France in June of 1940. Their stay lasted a mere four days, and they nearly had to leave their guns behind when the British headquarters ordered all guns and transport destroyed in order to ensure enough room for the evacuation of personnel. The determination and stubbornness of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Roberts prevailed, and the Regiment was the only one to return its field guns to England.

6. The First Canadian Army, which was commanded initially by General A.G.L. McNaughton then by General H.D.G. Crerar (both Gunner officers), would have two army artillery groups (AGRAs), two corps artilleries and five divisional artilleries as its primary fire support. The RCA would eventually go on to play a major part in the campaigns in Sicily, Italy and northwest Europe.

7. Elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisional Artillery – mainly men from 3 LAA Regt with Bren guns to provide the raiders with air defence - landed at Dieppe in 1942. In 1943, the guns of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division supported Canadian tanks and infantry through Sicily. Next, on the Italian mainland, the 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Artillery, augmented later by 5<sup>th</sup> Divisional and 1<sup>st</sup> Corps Artillery, assisted in smashing a way through the German defenders up the long Italian peninsula until all Canadian troops were concentrated in northwest Europe in 1945.

8. On 6 June 1944, the Gunners accompanied the assaulting infantry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, firing their

self-propelled 105mm howitzers from the decks of their landing craft on the “run in” to the Normandy beaches. This would be followed by the break-out, the Falaise Gap, the drive up the Channel Coast, the push through Belgium to the Scheldt, the liberation of the Netherlands, the southeast punch through the Hochwald and the Battle of the Rhine. Numerous barrages, concentrations and ceaseless harassing bombardments were fired in support of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army in its bitter engagements with the Germans.

9. Developments in artillery played a large role in the Allied victory during the Second World War. While there were no revolutionary changes to artillery weapons from the First World War, there were significant evolutionary improvements in range, ammunition efficiency, maintenance and mobility of guns. These included the successful combining of the characteristics of a gun (high velocity) and howitzer (high trajectory) in the 25 Pdr and the development of self-propelled artillery. Another early innovation during the Second World War was that the Observers were no longer expected to calculate gun data for indirect fire as had been the practice throughout the First World War, but left that function to the Command Posts, providing only target locations, descriptions and orders for weight of fire as per the modern practice.

10. Canadians took part in the most important artillery development of the War, that is the ability of an allied commander to quickly bring down the fire of a massive concentration of guns (from division, corps or even army artillery) onto a single target in a short space of time. This required the development of reliable wireless (radio) and other communications equipment, more effective, speedy and accurate methods of gun survey and improved methods of fire control, voice procedure and fire planning. Putting this system into practice required a high level of proficiency in every troop and battery. Most concentrations fired during the war were carried out at the divisional level, where the Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) always had at his disposal the fire of two to three field regiments (48 – 72 guns). Major battles, normally controlled at the corps or army level, routinely involved the concentrated fire of 500 to 1000 guns and mortars.

11. A good example of how the Canadian and British Gunners were able to achieve massed, accurate fire occurred in early February 1945 during *Op Veritable* - the First Canadian Army's attack from Nijmegen southeast to the Rhineland. The Army Commander, General Harry Crerar, had to make a frontal attack against three successive fortified zones, each firmly anchored on the Rhine River. These included a strong system of outposts on the western face of the Reichswald; then three miles beyond these, the northern end of the Siegfried Line; followed by the Hochwald Layback 12 miles further east. The defences included multiple lines of trench works linking strongpoints and reinforced by anti-tank ditches. Small towns and villages between the second and third zones had been extensively fortified. General Crerar's final objective lay 40 miles from his front lines. Due to this depth, *Op Veritable* was planned in three stages, with enough time between each to regroup infantry and armour and to bring supporting artillery to within range of their new targets. General Crerar had 30<sup>th</sup> British Corps under command, while 1<sup>st</sup> British Corps would provide a secure anchor and deception to the South. Due to the narrow distance between the Rhine (to the north) and the Maas River (to the south), the initial assault would be made by the five divisions of 30<sup>th</sup> Corps (including 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division), and as the distance between the rivers widened, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Corps would join in on the left flank.

12. The artillery support for the operation was a major battle-winning factor. The 30<sup>th</sup> Corps Fire Plan was designed to take advantage of the 14:1 superiority in Allied artillery to blast a way for the infantry into the enemy's defences. The Fire Plan called for:

- a. preliminary bombardment to prevent the enemy from interfering with the initial assault;

- b. complete saturation of enemy defences;
- c. destruction of known concrete positions;
- d. immediate supporting fire for the attack; and
- e. maximum fire of the medium regiments on the Materborn feature 12,000 yards from the start line, without their having to move forward.

13. The fire of seven divisional artilleries would be augmented by five AGRA's and two anti-aircraft brigades together with units of Corps and Army level artillery, for a total of 1034 guns (not including the 17 Pdrs and 40mm Bofors which would be used with tanks, mortars and machine-guns to "Pepperpot" selected targets with harassing fire). All known enemy localities, headquarters and communications sites were targeted. An estimated six tons of shells would fall on each target. The concrete defences of the Materborn would be subjected to the fire of the 8-inch and 240mm guns of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Super Heavy Regiment RA located in the 1<sup>st</sup> British Corps area to the South. The Fire Plan would open with the preparatory fire from 5:00 to 9:45 A.M. on D Day (8 February 1945). It would be followed by a Block Barrage planned to support the three central divisions in their advance. This barrage would commence at 9:20 for seventy minutes on the initial positions and was 500 yards deep. At H Hour (10:30 A.M.) the barrage would lift 300 yards, repeating this every twelve minutes to allow for the advancing speed of the infantry and armour over the difficult terrain.

14. A novel feature was introduced into the schedule for the preliminary bombardment. Between 7:30 and 7:40 a smoke screen would be fired across the front, followed by 10 minutes of complete silence. It was hoped that the enemy, assuming that the screen heralded the main assault, would engage with his artillery, thereby exposing his gun positions. At the same time, flash spotters, sound rangers and pen recorders of the locating batteries would attempt to pinpoint the enemy battery positions, allowing counter battery fire to neutralize the exposed enemy guns before H Hour.

15. A massive ammunition-dumping program was carried out by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Corps prior to the assault. More than half a million rounds, weighing more than 10,000 tons were dumped - 700 rounds per gun on field gun positions and 400 rounds per gun on medium positions. In addition 120 truckloads per division of 40mm, 17 Pdr, 75mm and 12.7mm ammunition were dumped for the "Pepperpot" requirement. More than 10,000 three-inch rockets for the Land Mattress Battery were brought in. Every foot of countryside from Nijmegen to Mook and beyond on the far side of the Maas seemed to be filed with tanks, guns, vehicles and waiting troops.

16. Stunned by the ferocity of the preliminary bombardment of over 500,000 rounds of various natures of ammunition, and pinned down by the tremendous barrage which had expended more than 160,000 shells, the badly disorganized enemy troops offered little resistance to the assaulting infantry and armour. The effectiveness of the counter battery and counter mortar programs was seen in the almost complete lack of German shelling and mortaring. Most of the Allied casualties, which were relatively light, came from mines rather than artillery or small arms fire. Prisoners coming back through the gun positions spoke of what the artillery preparation and the barrage had done. There were reports of half the guns of a 12-gun battery having been destroyed and 32 of 36 guns having been knocked out in another locality. Interrogators were told that the bombardment had a devastating effect upon morale, producing a feeling of complete helplessness and isolation, with no prospect of any possible reinforcement. The defenders claimed, however, that because of the well-constructed shelters, they had escaped serious

casualties from the artillery fire and the “Pepperpot” in the initial assault. Those caught in the open were less fortunate. The artillery fire had also succeeded in seriously disrupting the German lines of communication and resupply.

17. The day’s success owed much to well-prepared gun programs, carefully sorted ammunition, much improved meteorological data and recently calibrated guns. The massive preparations had been successful in providing effective artillery support to the operation. It didn’t end there, however. The artillery would provide continuous support with barrages, screens, direct support and counter battery fire until the enemy was finally beaten three months later.

18. A total of 89,050 officers and men served in the Royal Canadian Artillery during the Second World War. Of these, 57,170 served in Europe, Newfoundland, the Aleutians and the Caribbean. The remainder served in Canada in home defence in field, anti-aircraft and coast units as well as in numerous schools and depots. There were also three divisional artilleries in Canada formed as part of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions for home defence. In 1945 another 6<sup>th</sup> Division was formed for service in the Far East Theatre, complete with its divisional artillery. It was still training in Canada and the USA when the war with Japan ended. During the War, the Regiment suffered 2,073 killed and 4,373 injured or wounded.

19. Total artillery available to the First Canadian Army in Europe by the end of the war included:

- a. 15 field artillery regiments (264 towed 25 Pdr, 48 SP 25 Pdr Sextons, 48 SP 105mm Priests);
- b. six medium regiments (48 5.5-in. guns, 48 4.5-in. guns);
- c. seven anti-tank regiments (150 towed 17 Pdr, 150 SP 17 Pdr);
- d. one heavy anti-aircraft (HAA) regiment (24 3.7-in. AA guns);
- e. seven LAA regiments (60 towed 40mm, 108 SP 40mm, 84 quad-mounted 20mm);
- f. 32 75mm AFV OP vehicles (in SP Field Regiments with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Cdn Armd Divs); and
- g. One rocket battery (36 Land Mattress rocket projectors).

20. During the war, though not part of Canada at the time, the province of Newfoundland raised two artillery regiments for service with the British Army. The 59th (Newfoundland) Heavy Regiment, RA fought in North-West Europe, while the 166th (Newfoundland) Field Regiment, RA fought in North Africa and in the Italian campaign.

## **115. POST-WAR VIGILANCE 1945-48**

1. In May 1945, The RCA contributed three field regiments, an anti-tank regiment and a LAA regiment to the Canadian Division serving as occupation forces in the British Zone of Occupation. They would remain there until the summer of 1946. Most of the remaining units of the Army, which had been activated during the war, were now deactivated or transferred to the Militia. In 1947, the Canadian Army Active Force was established with an authorized strength of 25,000, supplemented by a Reserve Force of 50,000. In 1946, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RCHA, which had returned to Petawawa after the war, was renamed

the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA, and was moved to Shilo, Manitoba, when the latter was chosen as the permanent site for the Royal Canadian School of Artillery (RCSA) (Field, Medium and Anti-Tank).

2. The Army was again not intended to be large during peacetime. The Active Force artillery consisted of the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA, the 68<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery, RCA, and the 127<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Battery, RCA at Shilo, the 128<sup>th</sup> HAA Battery, RCA and the 129<sup>th</sup> LAA Battery, RCA at Picton, Ontario, and E Section Signals (71<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA), Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. In addition to the school in Shilo, two others were formed: RCSA (AA) at Picton, and RCSA (Coast and Anti-Aircraft) at Halifax. In 1948, the 129<sup>th</sup> LAA Battery was re-designated HAA and moved to Esquimalt, British Columbia, together with a Coast Artillery Training Section - RCSA West Coast. The School at Halifax was re-designated RCSA East Coast that same year.

## **116. THE COLD WAR 1948-1992**

1. By 1948 it had become apparent to Western nations that the Soviet Union was a direct threat to their security and was intending to attempt to dominate Europe either by direct military action or subversion. Canada reacted by maintaining a large armed forces in peacetime for the first time in our history. In 1951, the Government also decided to station forces overseas with NATO as a deterrent, another peacetime first. These forces included an artillery regiment. The Cold War would see hundreds of thousands of Canadians serve in the Armed Forces. It is Canada's third most costly conflict to date, resulting in the service related deaths of over 1,200 military personnel, including 14 Gunners.

2. By the end of 1951, the post-war organization of the Active Force artillery had undergone several changes. In 1949, 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA reverted back to its wartime designation of 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RCHA. In 1950, it had under command the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Battery (Paratroop) RCA, which later became Z Battery, which was armed with 75mm pack howitzers and 4.2-inch mortars. A growing emphasis on air defence due to the emerging Cold War and the threat of Soviet bombers resulted in the formation of four composite anti-aircraft batteries through the conversion of the 127<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Battery and the 128<sup>th</sup> HAA and 129<sup>th</sup> LAA Batteries together with the authorization of the 119<sup>th</sup> Composite AA Battery. In addition, the RCSA East Coast was re-designated the 49<sup>th</sup> Coast Battery RCA. This left the three schools of artillery in Shilo, Picton and Esquimalt.

## **117. THE KOREAN WAR 1950-1953**

1. War erupted in Korea amid fears that this was only the first battle of the war against communism. In response to the United Nations appeal for the provision of troops to resist communist aggression in Korea, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment RCHA was raised at Shilo in 1950 as part of the Canadian Army Special Force (the term "Field" was dropped from the titles of the two RCHA regiments in 1951). Volunteers came from the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA, the Schools and selected Militia artillery units. On the train move to Fort Lewis, Washington on 21 November 1951, tragedy struck. The third troop train collided head on with an eastbound passenger train just east of Canoe River, British Columbia. The passengers on the eastbound train escaped injury, but 17 Gunners on the first two cars of the troop train were killed and 42 injured when the cars fell down an embankment and were demolished. 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment RCHA arrived with its twenty-four 25 Pdrs in Korea on 4 May 1951, and saw its first action two weeks later. By May 1952, fighting in support of the 25<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade Group, and later with the 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Division, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment RCHA had expended over 300,000 rounds of ammunition. It was considered to be one of the most efficient units in the Commonwealth Divisional Artillery. The 1st Regiment RCHA upheld this reputation after it replaced the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment that May.

2. In the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade in 1952, many raids were carried out by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), supported by A Battery, 1 RCHA. A bond of mutual admiration grew between the Battery and the RCR to the point where the guns of A Battery had the RCR crest painted on them. A letter from the Commanding Officer of 1 RCHA, Lieutenant-Colonel E.M.D. (Teddy) McNaughton (who in March 1953 changed his surname to Leslie), to the infantry Commanding Officer confirmed this. A phrase in the letter would soon haunt A Battery: *"It is also my intention that should ever the day come, from which the Lord preserve us, that a gun of A Battery shoots short onto the Royal Canadian Regiment, that gun and the subsection thereafter for twenty-five years will forgo the high honour and distinction of wearing the Colour and the Cypher of the Royal Canadian Regiment."* It was with commendable frankness, but undoubtedly with no little chagrin, that a little more than a month later the Regimental diarist recorded the forfeiture of this privilege by a gun of A Battery. To the embarrassed members of that gun detachment, 1977 must have seemed far distant indeed! Two years later, however, in view of the consistently fine support given by 1 RCHA to the RCR, the infantry Commanding Officer asked that the penalty be cancelled, and from that time A Battery has proudly worn the RCR crest on all its guns.

3. The 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RCHA handed over to the 81<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment RCA in April 1953. The 79<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Field Regiments RCA had been formed in 1951 and 1952 respectively, by bringing a number of Militia batteries onto operational status for service in Europe as part of the Canadian Brigade with NATO. The 81<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment served in Korea until nine months after the armistice in July 1953. In November 1953 its designation was changed to the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment RCHA as part of a reorganization of the Canadian Army, which saw the formation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Infantry Division as part of Canada's commitment to NATO. In conjunction with this, the 79<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RCA was redesignated as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment RCHA. After serving in Germany for two years, 3 RCHA replaced 4 RCHA in Korea in the spring of 1954. 4 RCHA returned to its new home at Camp Utopia, New Brunswick. 3 RCHA would remain in Korea for 29 weeks to help ensure a stabilized peace. Canadian Gunners played an important role in the success of Commonwealth Division operations in Korea. Mercifully, the static nature of the war resulted in relatively few Gunner casualties. Of the 1,543 battle casualties suffered by the Canadian Army in Korea, The Regiment suffered 13 killed and 27 wounded or injured in theatre. To these casualties must be added the dead and injured from Canoe River.

## **118. SERVICE WITH THE NATO BRIGADE 1951-1992**

1. In 1951, 79<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RCA joined the newly formed 27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade Group (CIBG) in Northern Germany under command of the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). Instead of the 25 Pdr, which was still the standard field artillery weapon in Canada, the Regiment was initially issued the American 105mm towed howitzer - the standard NATO gun at that time. Shortly thereafter, however, the regiment reverted to the 25 Pdr in order to solve problems with supply and a lack of uniformity with its sister British units. The Regiment was first quartered at Hohne, and then later at Fort Prince of Wales, near Soest in the Upper Ruhr Valley. Re-named the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment RCHA in 1953, the Regiment was replaced in November 1953 by 2 RCHA during the changeover of 27 CIBG with 1 CIBG.

2. Over the next thirteen years, 1, 2, 3 and 4 RCHA would rotate to Germany. In 1967 1 RCHA became the permanent artillery regiment in Germany as part of 4 CIBG (later - 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (CMBG)). The Regiment moved south to the Schwarzwald (Black Forest) with the rest of the brigade group in 1970, to become Central Army Group's reserve force, and was based in Lahr, Germany. It would remain there until 1992, when the brigade group began pulling out of Europe.

3. The Gunner contribution to NATO also included 1<sup>st</sup> Surface-to-Surface Missile Battery (1 SSM Bty) equipped with Honest John tactical nuclear rockets from 1960-70. The warheads were held by the United States to be released to Canada in the event of a Soviet attack. 2 SSM Bty was stationed at CFB Shilo to train Canada's nuclear Gunners.

4. In 1975, 128 and 129 AD batteries were re-formed to protect Canadian airfields in Germany. From 1987 to 1992, the Batteries were under command of the 4<sup>th</sup> AD Regiment, which also included 127 AD Battery to provide air defence to 4 CMBG. 4 AD Regt was reduced to nil strength in 1992 as part of the closure of 4 CMBG at the end of the Cold War.

## **119. ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT - 1945-68**

1. The Reserve Force (renamed from Non-Permanent Active Militia) was also re-organized immediately after the Second World War into six divisional artilleries and corps troops. This provided for six divisional headquarters, RCA, eight medium regiments, 20 field regiments, eight anti-tank regiments, nine HAA Regiments, 18 LAA Regiments, five coast regiments, two survey regiments and nine AA gun operations rooms.

2. This structure would last until 1954 when a reorganization of the Reserve Force resulted in the substantial reduction of the establishment of the artillery. In the aftermath anti-tank artillery ceased to exist, and the Militia artillery now consisted of 21 field regiments, six medium regiments, three independent medium batteries, nine HAA regiments, two harbour defence batteries, a locating regiment and an anti-aircraft fire control battery. It would be over 10 years before any other major changes were made to Militia artillery establishments.

3. In the Regular Force by the end of 1954, besides the four RCHA Regiments, the move to a divisional artillery organization resulted in the formation of a Divisional HQ RCA, the 1<sup>st</sup> LAA Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Locating Battery and the No.1 Air OP Flight. In the anti-aircraft field, the missile systems then under development and the increasing speed of aircraft meant that the usefulness of the gun as an anti-aircraft weapon was going to diminish.

4. In the early fifties, each of the four Regular Force regiments was provided with a fourth battery armed with 4.2-inch mortars. In 1 RCHA this battery was designated Light Battery (Para), and later Z Battery. In the mid-fifties the RCHA regiments turned in their 25 Pdrs for the C1 105mm towed howitzer, and in 1958 replaced the 4.2-inch mortar in the light batteries with M1A1 155mm medium towed howitzers. The Militia regiments would eventually replace their 25 Pdrs with the new 105mm howitzers as they became available. In 1968, 1 RCHA in Germany, replaced its towed guns with self-propelled M109A1 155mm howitzers.

5. The 1<sup>st</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RCA had been formed in October 1953. It consisted of a HQ and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> LAA Batteries located with the RCSA (Anti-Aircraft) at Picton, Ontario. The remaining battery, the 4<sup>th</sup> LAA Battery was at Esquimalt. The Regiment was originally equipped with 40mm Bofors, but converted to 90mm guns and M33C fire-control equipment in 1955. The 4<sup>th</sup> LAA Battery in Esquimalt was reduced to nil strength in 1957. The remainder of the regiment continued to function for three more years during which it helped to train anti-aircraft Gunners of the Militia.

6. Changes in defence policy resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> LAA Regiment being disbanded in September 1960. The majority of its personnel went on to form two new units - the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Surface-to-Surface Missile

(SSM) Batteries RCA - at Hemer, Germany (with 4 CIBG) and Shilo respectively. Each battery was equipped with four 762mm Honest John Rocket launchers. The Honest John was a nuclear tactical weapon capable of carrying a 1-Kiloton nuclear warhead to a range of 40 km. Thus was born the nuclear role of The RCA. The role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SSM Battery was to train replacements and reinforcements for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battery. The SSM Batteries would remain in service until 1970, when the Canadian NATO Brigade Group's role in Europe was reduced in scope.

7. Formation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Locating Battery in 1954 at Shilo marked the reappearance of a locating unit in the Order of Battle of the Regular Force after an absence of nine years. After a short, but fruitful existence, during which it played an active role in numerous exercises, the Battery fell victim to a general reorganization of close support artillery. Among other changes, locating units were decentralized to the Brigade Group level, and each RCHA regiment in Canada was given a Regimental Locating Battery as part of a new "5-battery organization." The 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Locating Battery was reduced to nil strength on 30 April 1958. It was revived briefly in 1965, and its Radar Troop equipped with the new AN/MPQ/501 Counter Mortar Radar. At the same time the RCHA and Militia locating batteries disappeared. The revived battery was located at Winnipeg, where it conducted drone and sound ranging trials with the National Research Council. Once the trials ended in 1968, the battery was once again reduced to nil strength.

8. Completing the order of battle of the 1<sup>st</sup> Divisional Artillery at the time of its formation in 1953 was Canada's first peacetime Air OP Flight. No. 1 Air OP Flight was formed at Petawawa in 1953, followed by No. 2 Air OP Flight in Shilo in 1954. The flights were initially equipped with the British wartime Auster Mark VI aircraft, and in late 1954 were re-equipped with the US-built Cessna L-19. A number of field artillery officers underwent basic pilot training at the Brandon Flying Club. They then progressed to the Light Aircraft School at Rivers, Manitoba for advanced training. Their role was to provide aerial artillery observation, air photography, liaison and reconnaissance. In 1960, Air Observation Troops were added to the four RCHA regiments (Gagetown, Petawawa, Shilo and Fort Prince of Wales, Germany), and the two original Flights were reduced to nil strength. The new Air OP Troops operated under regimental control until 1970-71, when they converted to Kiowa helicopters and were subsequently absorbed into the Air Command helicopter squadrons.

9. On 1 February 1968, Canada's three services ceased to exist as separate entities. Integration brought about the amalgamation of these services to form what is now called the Canadian Armed Forces. With that change came a severe reduction in the establishments of the Militia. Many Reserve Force artillery units were either converted to field Regiments, independent batteries, struck off the order of battle or converted to other arms.

## **120. THE POST-WAR SCHOOLS**

1. Shilo had been home to A3 Canadian Artillery Training Centre (CATC) during World War 2 and provided ranges for A4 CATC located in Brandon. A3 was re-named as The Royal Canadian School of Artillery (RCAS) following the War and remained in Shilo as the sole school for field, medium and anti-tank artillery. The Coast Defence School soon closed, and with the closure of the 1<sup>st</sup> LAA Regiment and The RCAS (AA) in Picton in 1960, the only remaining school of artillery was at Shilo. All existing disciplines within the artillery were taught there.

2. The School would remain in Shilo until 1970, when it was moved to Gagetown together with the Infantry and Armour schools (the title "Royal" was dropped from the various Army schools when the

services integrated in 1968). They formed the Combat Arms School, part of the Combat Training Centre in CFB Gagetown. On 11 July 2007, the School was re-designated as The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery School (RCA School).

3. A Soldier Apprentice Training Battery was formed in Shilo in September 1954. This program allowed 16 year old boys to enrol for a two-year combined academic and military training program. The Battery produced highly trained graduates, many of whom rose to the highest NCO and officer ranks, until its closure in June 1967.

4. 1956 saw the birth of The RCA Depot at Shilo. The Depot undertook Gunner recruit training for both field and anti-aircraft artillery. It was the sole source of basic Gunner recruits until 15 May 1968 when the last squad (#164) completed their "Passing-Out Parade". The Regiment was without a central depot for the training of Gunners until 19 September 1981, with the formation of The RCA Battle School in Shilo. This much-needed School again gave The Royal Regiment a steady supply of consistently trained soldiers. It trained all Regular Force recruits, and numerous serials of Reservists, in gunnery until June 1997, when it was disbanded. The RCA School in Gagetown eventually assumed responsibility for again conducting centralized basic gunnery training.

5. A new AD School was established at CFB Chatham in 1985 as part of the "re-birth" of AD within The Regiment. The School had 119 AD Bty under command. In 1995, the Air Defence Artillery School and 119 AD Battery were moved to CFB Gagetown, and in 1996 the Field and Air Defence Artillery Schools were again amalgamated.

## **121. ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT – 1968-92**

1. The latter part of the 1960s and the early 1970s saw many changes that would affect The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery. As noted above, by an Act of Parliament on 1 February 1968, the Army, Navy and Air Force were integrated into the Canadian Armed Forces. During unification, it was decided that regiments would not be affected, but that the Corps of the Army would be disbanded and replaced by CF Branches. So while all other Army Corps were disbanded, The Royal Regiment survived and also assumed the function of a CF Branch. Although all regimental uniform distinctions were initially abolished in the CF, Gunners were soon wearing their grenades and shoulder titles proudly once again.

2. As part of the formation of the Canadian Airborne Regiment on 8 April 1968, the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Battery RCA was created. It remained in Edmonton as an independent battery until 1977 when the Airborne Regiment was re-organized and moved to CFB Petawawa. At that time the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Battery was disbanded and E Battery, 2 RCHA was re-designated E Bty (Para).

3. On 6 May 1968 a Regular Force artillery unit returned to Québec City after an absence of nearly half a century. Le 5<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Artillerie légère du Canada (5 RALC), the first Regular Force French-language Artillery regiment, was formed around a nucleus of Gunners from X Battery, 3 RCHA. As part of the personnel plan to create 5 RALC, it was decided that 4 RCHA would be reduced to nil strength. 5 RALC was initially equipped with towed 105mm howitzers, but took on its new colours, the 105mm L5 pack howitzers, in 1969. The L5 would also serve in the airborne and ACE Mobile Force Batteries in 2, 3 and 4 RCHA for duty on NATO's Northern and Southern flanks.

4. 3 RCHA moved to Shilo from Winnipeg in 1970 to fill the void left by the move of the School to Gagetown. On 15 July 1970, 4 RCHA in Petawawa was reduced to nil strength. The majority of its

remaining equipment and personnel were transferred directly to 2 RCHA, which was moved from Gagetown to Petawawa.

5. In 1968, the M109 SP 155mm howitzer was introduced into service with 1 RCHA in Germany. A second buy of M109s in 1977 went to equip 3 RCHA. Eventually, both 3 RCHA and 5 RALC were equipped with M109s and were tasked to fly-over to Germany to reinforce Canada's commitment to NATO as part of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Divisional Artillery (which was re-formed in the early 1980's). 2 RCHA retained the ACE Mobile Force gun battery and the airborne battery roles for the remainder of the Cold War.

6. In 1975, in response to a new government commitment to protect airfields and army formations from air attack, two airfield air defence batteries were re-activated in Germany. These were 128 Airfield Air Defence Battery RCA at Baden-Soellingen, and 129 Airfield Air Defence Battery RCA at Lahr, both equipped with 40mm Boffin guns and Blowpipe missiles. The Boffin was a hydraulically driven naval version of the standard World War Two 40mm Bofors. In 1976, 1 RCHA and 2 RCHA each received a troop of Blowpipe air defence missiles. 3 RCHA and 5 RALC each added a Blowpipe missile equipped battery to their establishments, U and V Battery respectively. These are the only air defence batteries in RCHA history.

7. In the mid-1980's, the army launched the Low Level Air Defence (LLAD) Project to re-equip the Army with modern LLAD weapon systems. The \$1 Billion project was the most expensive single project to date for the Army, and resulted in the procurement of what was considered to be one of the most effective Short Range Air Defence (SHORAD) systems in the world. On 27 November 1987, 4<sup>th</sup> Air Defence Regiment RCA (incorporating 127, 128 and 129 Air Defence (AD) Batteries) was formed and headquartered in Lahr, Germany. The two air defence batteries protecting the airfields were each equipped with 4 Skyguard sections (each section comprising a Skyguard fire control radar and two twin 35mm Oerlikon GDF-005 air defence gun systems), and a troop of 4 of the Air Defence Anti-Tank System (ADATS) missile systems. 127 AD Battery, tasked with AD of 4 CMBG, was equipped with 12 ADATS. 119 AD Battery in Canada was also re-equipped with ADATS at this time. All other Regular AD batteries and troops were reduced to nil strength on the formation of 4 AD Regt.

8. In operations, 4 AD Regt was to be augmented with a troop of Javelin S15 missiles (which replaced Blowpipe in 1991) from each of three Militia units that had been re-equipped as air defence artillery - 1<sup>st</sup> AD Regiment in Pembroke, 18<sup>th</sup> AD Regiment in Lethbridge and 58<sup>th</sup> BAA (part of 6 RAC) in Levis, Quebec.

9. In 1992 as part of the reduction of forces and the return of units from Germany, 4<sup>th</sup> AD Regiment RCA was reduced to nil strength. It was raised again, but with a smaller establishment on 21 July 1996 as a Total Force unit, with a high ratio of reservists. The HQ and 128 AD Battery were located in Moncton, with 119 AD Battery and 210 AD Workshop located in Gagetown. A third battery worth of equipment was positioned at Cold Lake, Alberta with a small support staff.

10. Also a result of the downsizing of the Canadian Forces in 1992, 3 RCHA was reduced to nil strength. 1 RCHA moved from Germany, on the disbandment of 4 CMBG, to replace 3 RCHA in Shilo. 1993 saw the last parachute deployment of the L-5 howitzer with the deletion of a parachute capable battery from the Army. The guns of the three remaining Regular Force Field Regiments (1 RCHA, 2 RCHA and 5 RALC) were re-distributed, giving each unit a mix of two batteries of M109s and one battery of 105mm C1 Howitzers. In 1997, a new, longer range, light 105mm gun, the French LG1, replaced the C1 howitzers in the Regular Force units.

11. By 1992, the Reserve Force artillery was composed of 15 field artillery regiments, two air defence artillery regiments, two independent field artillery batteries and one air defence battery. The field regiments operated the C1 and C3 105mm towed howitzer. The air defence units operated the shoulder-launched Javelin S-15 SAM.

12. The end of the Cold War in 1992 created a period of uncertainty in Canadian defence, which had been focused for so many decades on the Soviet threat. The Royal Regiment struggled to define a secure role in an Army increasingly focused on peacekeeping as the most likely way ahead. Many senior leaders in the Army even began to think that maintaining an artillery capability was not affordable or even necessary.

## **122. THE 1<sup>ST</sup> GULF WAR – 1990-91**

1. On 9 August 1990, 119 Air Defence Battery RCA received orders to deploy a 36-member Javelin Troop to provide extra air defence protection for the three Canadian Naval ships which were part of Canada's commitment to the UN forces in the Arabian Gulf. The war had erupted in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Javelin was procured in a very short span of time for this operation in order to replace the obsolete Blowpipe missile. Detachments were trained in a matter of two weeks while they were in transit to the Gulf. This was accomplished through the provision of an Instructor-in-Gunnery (IG) team from the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill, UK. The IG team arrived in Halifax just prior to the ships' departure, and conducted weapon training while crossing the Atlantic. A successful live fire practice was held when the ships reached the Azores in early September, and the IG team left the Canadians when the ships reached Gibraltar.

2. Each ship was provided a section of Javelin, with HMCS Athabaskan and HMCS Protecteur each receiving four detachments while HMCS Terra Nova received three. The troop headquarters was located on HMCS Athabaskan as part of the Canadian Task Group Command staff. The Troop Commander (a lieutenant) also acted as the senior air defence advisor to the Task Group Commander.

3. The ships arrived in the Central Persian Gulf on 23 September 1990, and commenced UN Patrol duties, including the halting and boarding of ships in day and night as part of the embargo placed on Iraq. The Javelin Troop did not have to fire on any enemy aircraft, as the allies quickly grounded the Iraqi Air Force. They returned to Canada with the ships on 13 March 1991.

4. Plans were made to deploy 1 RCHA as part of 4 CMBG from Germany to the war, but in the end the Government did not approve the plans, principally over fears of excessive casualties. Three Canadian Gunners did serve in the ground war in exchange postings with allied forces (including one as a Battery Commander with the Royal Artillery), but no Canadian artillery units were deployed with the coalition ground units. No Canadian Gunner casualties resulted from the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War.

## **123. OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR**

1. Since World War 2, members of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery have served on some 33 deployments and missions for operations other than war. Gunners have served in places such as the Congo, Egypt, the Golan Heights, Hanoi, Saigon, Laos, Iran, Iraq, Namibia, South Africa, Central America, Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda and Mozambique to name a few. The Regiment has deployed units and batteries on operations other than war, both in an infantry role and with their guns, many times. Some of

the more significant commitments are discussed in the following paragraphs. As of 2011, three members of The Regiment had been killed on these deployments.

2. Canada deployed a battalion-sized peacekeeping force in an infantry role as part of the UN mission on Cyprus continuously from 1964 until 1993. Some 33,000 Canadians served on this mission. Over the decades, U, X and W Bty deployed to Cyprus as companies in other units. In 1974, 1 Canadian Airborne Battery, RCA was deployed from Canada with 81mm mortars to reinforce the Canadian Airborne Regiment during a major Turkish Army offensive on the island. The Battery did not have to fight, but this was the closest that Canadian Gunners had come to war since Korea. 3 RCHA completed a tour as a unit 1982-83, as did 2 RCHA 1985-86. 5 RALC completed a unit tour 1987-88. 1 RCHA served 1991-92 and 2 RCHA was the last Canadian contingent on its second tour in 1993.

3. More aggressive efforts to contain fighting became known as “peacemaking” in the early 1990’s to distinguish them from the more passive “peacekeeping”. At the end of the Cold War, with no other significant threat perceived, the Army began to focus on peacekeeping / peacemaking as the likely way ahead. Cold War tensions had “kept a lid on” many regional conflicts due to the moderation of the superpowers who were concerned that regional wars could spark a global confrontation. With the demise of the Soviet Union and most communist dictatorships, there was a sharp increase in small wars around the globe. In particular, the eruption of civil wars in the former Yugoslavia would have a significant impact on The Royal Regiment.

4. Gunners from X Bie, 5 RALC deployed to the former Yugoslavia in 1993, providing a Mortar Troop, FSCC and observers for the Canadian Battlegroup. They were followed in this role by Gunners from 1 RCHA, who fired an 81mm illumination round over the heads of factions involved in a firefight as a deterrent on 3 July 1994. This was the first operational round fired by Canadian Gunners since the Korean War. The mortar task continued with further rotations from 1 RCHA, 2 RCHA and 5 RALC Gunners into 1999.

5. In 1999, 1 RCHA deployed C Bty as an infantry company and A Bty deployed as a gun battery equipped with the LG1 105mm howitzer towed by modified Grizzly APCs. This set the pattern for subsequent deployments by all three Regiments until 2002, when 5 RALC deployed Q and R Bie in those roles for the last time. Thereafter, only BC and FOO parties were deployed until the rotations stopped in 2004. The drawdown of the Gunner commitment to the former Yugoslavia was necessary in order to meet the new demands of the War in Afghanistan.

6. Canadian Gunners have been also called upon on numerous occasions since the earliest days of The Regiment to assist Canadians in disasters and to aid the government in maintaining order and security (Aid to the Civil Power). In recent years, 5 RALC and W Battery were deployed with guns near Montreal during the First Nations uprising known as the Oka Crisis. Elements of the 4<sup>th</sup> AD Regiment also participated in the deployment. In the spring of 1997, all Regular artillery regiments and 26<sup>th</sup> Fd Regt were involved in the flood fighting in Manitoba. In January 1998 The Regiment provided aid in the aftermath of the Century’s worst ice storm in Ontario and Quebec. In 2002, The Regiment deployed numerous soldiers to provide security for the G8 Summit. Gunners deployed in 2010 as part of the security force for the Vancouver Olympics.

7. Since 1962, Gunners have been involved in avalanche control duties at Roger’s Pass, British Columbia. Under an agreement between the Department of National Defence and Parks Canada, The Regiment (normally by drawing on the unit stationed at Shilo, but also employing Reserve Gunners and other units when the Shilo Gunners are not available) furnishes a detachment commanded by a junior

officer with one or two 105mm howitzers to carry out counter-avalanche firing from 1 December to 1 April each year. Because of the isolated nature of their task, detachments are normally rotated at six-week intervals. Firing takes place from a number of permanent surveyed-in positions, and shoots are programmed based on snow build-up analysis by Avalanche Control officials. High explosive rounds are fired at critical trigger points along 27 miles of highway in Glacier National Park in order to bring down snow build-up before it can cause a major avalanche.

## **124. THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN 2002-14**

1. On September 11, 2001 a series of coordinated and devastating terrorist attacks were launched in the United States by the terrorist organization al-Qaeda which killed almost 3,000 people, mainly civilians. Canadians were among the dead. These attacks marked the beginning of a concerted effort by the U.S. and its allies to destroy international terrorism as a threat to world peace and security – an effort christened the “War on Terror”. It was quickly determined that the extreme fundamentalist Taliban government of Afghanistan was harbouring al-Qaeda terrorists and facilitating their training. The result was an invasion by the U.S. and allied nations which overthrew the Taliban and ushered in a long and difficult counter-insurgency campaign.
2. Canada committed a battle group (BG) to fight with the allies in 2002. C Bty deployed from 1 RCHA as part of the initial Canadian BG based upon 1 PPCLI. The Battery deployed with the BC, FOO parties and a Mortar Troop equipped with four 81mm mortars. The Battery took part in airmobile operations designed to destroy the Taliban and helped to defend the Kandahar airfield. No major engagements occurred, but the Battery did fire one mission with HE against a suspected Taliban mortar position.
3. From 2003 to 2004, F Bty, 2 RCHA and X Bie, 5 RALC deployed LG1 105mm howitzers, Light Counter Mortar Radars (LCMR) and UAVs in Kabul. These batteries were very large, with some 225 personnel and were deployed in two firebases: Camp WAREHOUSE and Camp JULIEN. The deployment ultimately saw some 75 Gunners at WAREHOUSE with two LG1 howitzers, Battery HQ and the LCMR Troop (less one detachment) and 150 personnel at JULIEN with 2 LG1 howitzers, an LCMR detachment and the UAV troop equipped with the Sperwer UAV. No enemy targets were engaged during this phase of the war, but the presence of the battery materially increased the security of coalition forces in the area. From August 2004 until February 2006, the Canadian deployments in Kabul relied upon allied artillery support but included Canadian FSCC and FOO parties. Overall, Canadian casualties were very light during the operations in Kabul.
4. Beginning in 2003, 4 AD Regt deployed an Airspace Coordination Centre (ASCC) to support the Canadian efforts. The Regiment has maintained an ASCC in theatre continuously since that time. 4 AD Regt also deployed significant numbers of soldiers as UAV Tp personnel.
5. In Feb 2006, the Canadian BG moved south to Khandahar, where combat operations were much more intense. The Canadians needed artillery support for this new area of operations and the M-777 light 155mm howitzer was rushed into service with 1 RCHA in order to fill this gap. A Bty deployed with four guns in Feb 2006 with the 1 PPCLI BG. From 2006 until the summer of 2011, a Canadian gun battery with 4-6 M-777, Locating Tp and UAV Tp was deployed in theatre. Each rotation was composed of a battery from one of the Regular Force field regiments with significant reinforcement by the Reserve Force. On average, several thousand operational rounds were fired by each battery during a tour of 6-8 months. The guns were normally deployed in two-gun Troop firebases to provide support for Canadian

and allied operations which occurred principally in Khandahar and Helmand Provinces.

6. Harkening back to the Korean War, and showing that Canadian Gunners still meet the high standards set for them by their predecessors, both the PPCLI and the RCR asked that the guns of the Batteries that supported them be emblazoned with their Regimental badges in recognition of the outstanding support given to them by “their” Gunners.

7. Hundreds of Canadian Gunners also served in theatre in other roles such as the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) which conducted “heart and minds” tasks; the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT) tasked with training the Afghan National Army and the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) which provided a long-term planning capability for the Afghan government.

8. By May 2011, eight Gunners had been killed in action since the move south in 2006 and dozens of others had been wounded or injured. The war is the longest continuous deployment of Canadian Gunners in combat operations since 1855. In the summer of 2011, the Canadian mission is scheduled to transition from a combat role to a mission of training the Afghan military. The exact contribution to the training mission out to 2014 had not been determined at the time of writing this brief history.

9. The war resulted in a re-organization of the field regiments in Canada in order to better meet the demands of mounting a very large and complex gun battery for long-term operations. In 2010, each of the Regular regiments was organized into two field batteries equipped with the M-777, an OP battery and a locating battery. This re-organization saw the return of V, Y and Z Batteries from the Supplementary Order of Battle to 5 RALC, 2 RCHA and 1 RCHA respectively. As of 2011, A, B, C, D, E, F, Q, R and X Batteries had all served one or more tours in theatre as gun batteries since 2002 and The Royal Regiment was better equipped for war than at any time since the early 1950s.

## **125. THE REGIMENTAL BANDS**

1. While there have been, and continue to be, numerous excellent quality bands associated with The RCA, most have been raised by individual regiments and will not be discussed here. The Royal Regiment has had two Regimental Bands, which are the subject of this section: The RCA Band and the RCHA Band. Today, The RCA Band is a reflection of the pride that Gunners have in themselves and in their Regiment. It plays a very valuable role in connecting with Canadians on behalf of all Gunners, past and present.

2. The Royal Canadian Artillery Band traces its roots to Québec City. In 1879, the B Battery Band of the Royal Canadian Artillery became the first permanent military band in Canada. This band was composed of professionally trained musicians from France and England and it was a concert favourite in Quebec. In 1899 this band became The Royal Canadian Artillery Band. The RCA Band served overseas in the UK during World War 2. It was reformed and re-organized in 1947, 1968, and 1994 as a result of various force structure plans.

3. In 1994-95, The RCA Band joined the “Canada Remembers” program, which sought to underscore Canada’s contribution in the Second World War. This participation took the Band to Asia, England, Belgium, and Holland, as well as France, where it represented Canada at the D-Day celebrations. In 1996 The RCA Band played a central role in the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of A and B Battery, traveling across the country playing at unit ceremonies and giving public concerts. That same year, the band moved from CFB Montréal to CFB Valcartier. On 1 September 1997 the RCA Band was

split in two, with one half forming the new Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Band in Valcartier. On 4 December 1997 (St. Barbara's Day), in a ceremony presided over by the Commander of Edmonton Garrison, Colonel J.J. Selbie, The RCA Band marked its move to its present location at the Edmonton Garrison. The RCA Band is one of six military bands in the Regular Force and is under command of Land Force Western Area.

4. The RCHA Band was authorized at Kingston in October 1905 with an initial establishment of 25 members as a vehicle to attract recruits for the RCHA. For the next twenty years, the band flourished under the accomplished baton of Bandmaster A.L. Light, late of the British Imperial Army. During the First World War, the Band's contribution to recruiting was considered so valuable that its members were denied the opportunity to serve overseas. The Band was present at the unveiling of the Vimy Memorial in 1936, and in the course of that European tour, it played at Buckingham Palace before King Edward VIII. After the Second World War it was moved to Winnipeg, and in the last dozen years of its existence, the RCHA Band traveled extensively in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Lakehead area, performing at military and civic functions and giving numerous public concerts. The Band played its last public performance at the Centennial Tattoo in 1967, and was disbanded on the unification of the Canadian Forces in 1968.

## 126. CONCLUSION

As we approach 2034 and the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first use of artillery in Canadian history, we find that Canadian Gunners can still be relied upon to answer the enemies of our nation with the mouths of our cannons. So may it be for the next 500 years. All members of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery share in a very proud history. By learning it in detail, they will also find themselves well equipped to look to the future with confidence. *UBIQUE*

## 127. RECOMMENDED READING LIST

1. The following books and articles used in the preparation of this chapter are highly recommended for commencing the study of the Gunner story by the members of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery:
  - a. Canadian Army Publication, 1953 Titled *The Royal Canadian Artillery* by Edmond Cloutier, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P., Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery;
  - b. Canadian Army Journal, April and July issues, 1955, *A Gunner Centennial - A Short History of the Royal Canadian Artillery, 1855-1955*;
  - c. *The Gunners of Canada, Volumes I & II* by Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson, CD, published 1967 by the Royal Canadian Artillery Association;
  - d. *RCHA - Right of the Line* by Major G.D. Mitchell, MC, CD, published by the RCHA History Committee, 1987; and
  - e. *More Fighting Newfoundlanders; A History of Newfoundland's Fighting Forces in World War Two*, by Col (Ret'd) G.W.L. Nicholson, CD, published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1969.

(128 to 199 inclusive - not allocated)