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War Artists' Activities, Mediterranean Area.

1. The present report consists basically of a report made by Capt. W.A. Ogilvie, a Canadian War Artist, on his experiences during the SICILIAN and ITALIAN campaigns, 10 Jul - 20 Dec 43. The report in question is attached as Appendix "A".
2. Capt. Ogilvie's report is of special interest as providing a commentary upon the remarkable group of paintings and drawings which this officer produced during his tour of duty in the Mediterranean Area. It is considered that these will constitute a most valuable national record of the campaign for future generations.
3. Capt. Ogilvie, as described in his Report, joined 1 Cdn Inf Div during its period of training in SCOTLAND previous to embarkation for the MEDITERRANEAN, and he was with it throughout the active period of the SICILIAN operations. His pictures, accordingly, record the whole campaign in a remarkable manner: including the exercises carried out in SCOTLAND, the voyage to SICILY, scenes on the beach immediately following the assault phase, the subsequent period of heavy fighting in the inland mountains, and some scenes of the life of the troops following the withdrawal of the Division from the line early in August. Although Capt. Ogilvie was in hospital at the time of the invasion of Italy proper (3 Sep 43) he returned to the Division in time to record some phases of the autumn and winter campaign.
4. Capt. Ogilvie was a pioneer, so far as the Canadian Army is concerned, in the work of a War Artist during active operations. He was the first Canadian artist to be employed with troops under fire. The conditions under which he worked in SICILY were singularly difficult, as he had no independent transport and was obliged to depend upon the good offices of units in this connection. In spite of this disadvantage, he covered a great deal of ground, recorded the operations of many formations and units, and produced an astonishingly large number of vivid pictures, whose fidelity to the conditions of the campaign is attested by every officer returned from the theatre of war who has had an opportunity of seeing them.
5. Although Capt. Ogilvie was the only War Artist employed with Canadian forces during the SICILIAN campaign, it was subsequently decided that at least two artists should be permanently employed with the Canadian troops in the Mediterranean area. Accordingly, Capt. C.F. Comfort was despatched from the United Kingdom and, travelling by way of North Africa, arrived at H.Q., 1 Cdn Inf Div in ITALY on 13 Oct 43. Subsequently Capt. Ogilvie himself was relieved at H.Q., 1 Cdn Div by Lieut. (now Capt.) L.P. Harris, who had also been despatched from the United Kingdom (see

Capt. Ogilvie's report, para. 107). Capt. Comfort and Harris still remain in ITALY at the time of writing, and a considerable number of valuable pictures by these artists depicting the progress of the Italian Campaign have been received at C.M.H.Q. Especially important is the pictorial record created by Capt. Comfort of the ORTONA area, in which, during December 1943, 1 Cdn Inf Div engaged in the hardest fighting which had fallen to its lot since it was committed to the SICILIAN assault on Jul 43.

6. A number of Capt. Ogilvie's Sicilian watercolours were included in a small exhibition of pictures by Canadian War Artists of the three services which was opened at the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London, by H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent on 9 Feb 44. The majority of the pictures included in this exhibition were contributed by Army War Artists.

7. At the time of writing, four War Artists are employed in the United Kingdom under Historical Section, C.M.H.Q. These artists are Capt. W.A. Ogilvie, Lieut. G.D. Pepper, Lieut. G.C. Tinning and Lieut. O.W. Fisher. Capt. Ogilvie is engaged in developing the valuable material obtained in SICILY and ITALY. The other artists have been pursuing the lines hitherto laid down for artists in the United Kingdom; that is to say, they are attached to appropriate units or formations of the Canadian Army in England for periods usually of three or four weeks and are thereafter employed in London, where studio accommodation is available at Fairfax House, High Holborn, in developing the material obtained in the field. It is intended that a minimum of three War Artists shall accompany the Canadian forces likely to be employed in future operations in North West Europe. Accordingly, provision has been made in the War Establishment of No. 2 Cdn Field Historical Section, which it is intended to employ with the Canadian component of 21 Army Group, for three War Artists of the rank of Captain.

8. In ITALY during the winter the weather has seriously hampered operations of every kind and conditions have been much less favourable to the work of artists than were those in which the SICILIAN Campaign was carried out in the summer of 1943. Artistic production has inevitably been affected by these conditions. It has nevertheless been respectable in quantity as well as in quality.

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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

5 Feb 44

Historical Officer

EXPERIENCES DURING SICILIAN AND
ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS, 1943.

1. In submitting this report it is intended to sketch in part the writer's experiences during the Sicilian campaign and part of the Italian campaign, that is up to 11 Dec 43, while attached to 1 Cdn Div in the capacity of Official War Artist. The intention therefore is to discuss the campaigns in very general terms, describe conditions under which the artist must work while on active service, including the problems with which he is faced, and to offer some suggestions as to how these might be overcome.
2. The writer was most fortunate in having been attached to both 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes while these formations were undergoing combined operations training at INVERARAY during February and March 1943, and was subsequently attached to 1 Cdn Div from the outset of the divisional exercises which culminated in a rehearsal for the invasion of Sicily.
3. Though the immediate object in taking part in these combined ops programmes was to make some pictorial record of Canadian troops in training, the idea was always kept in mind that such an experience would be of great help to the artist when the time came for action. The experience gained subsequently proved to be of incalculable value while working under active service conditions.

1. In accordance with an order to leave London at some date about the middle of May 43 to join 1 Cdn Div as Official War Artist, plans were completed when the final order came to move with a convoy transporting the Film and Photographic Units to 1 Cdn Div H.Q. at Troon. This convoy, consisting of 1 H.U.P., 5 jeeps and 2 D.Rs., was under command of Captain Frank Royal, P.R.O., and left London 21 May 43 arriving at Troon 23 May, where I reported to Divisional H.Q.

2. Most of Div H.Q. staff was in London for planning conferences and up to the moment there apparently had been no instructions as to the disposal of an Official War Artist. Div H.Q. messes being filled, Capt. Royal, Lieut. Smith, Lieut. Fraser, all of P.R.O., and myself, were most hospitably received at 1 Cdn Inf Bde H.Q. near Craig about six miles from Troon.

3. Due to shortage of transport (all vehicles at this time were in the process of being waterproofed), it was difficult to move from Bde H.Q. except for such purposes as going into Poon in order to draw necessary items such as tropical kit, etc. from Q.H. Stores. Personal luggage consisting of kit bags and valises had to be marked with special serial numbers and code names, and these delivered to Camp Commandant on 3 Jun.

4. One problem which presented itself immediately was the disposal of a large sketching kit containing all surplus supplies of art material. It was finally decided by Camp that this would be loaded on one of the P.R.O. vehicles and that I could at some time following the landing recover it. Though I was not at all anxious to be separated from it this seemed to be the best plan at the time and subsequent events confirmed my idea that in order to function properly the artist should have from the outset some independent means of transport.

5. Plans had to be made as to what sketching kit could be carried on the men during the landing. Several trial packs were made and I finally decided that the most practical way of carrying such material was in an ordinary map case with board. Sketch books, watercolour paper cut to size, colour box, pencils, etc., sufficient to last for at least a week were packed and it was found that this could be carried without unduly encumbering one's movements.

6. On Friday, 10 Jun, I made a request for some form of official pass and authority to sketch other than the covering letter which I carried. This was arranged by the then C.S. Capt. Pierce. Capt. Baste, who had been appointed historical officer to the Division, arrived on 12 Jun having come direct from C.M.H.Q. I had a short meeting with him and that afternoon proceeded to H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Bde on attachment.

7. On Sunday, 14 Jun, Bde H.Q. paraded in full marching order and moved off at 0700 hours for HAMILTON STATION where we entered for GOOROCK, arriving there at 0905 hours. We were then taken by tender to H.M.F. "CIRCASSIA".

8. The CIRCASSIA (A.4) during peace time was an Anchor Line steamer on the Bombay run. She had been converted into a landing ship, so that her deck space was considerably reduced by the extra davits, winches and other machinery designed for launch landing craft; of these she had in all 15. On the port side 4 L.C.A.s. were slung from the upper boat deck, 3 from the promenade deck, plus a motor launch used as landing craft, support; on the starboard side 4 L.C.A.s. on upper boat deck, 3 on promenade deck and one other launch (L.C.S.4). A.A. defence was formidable, consisting of Oerlikons, 12-pdrs and twin Hotchkiss guns. In addition to this she had a number of secret rocket devices, and mounted on her stern a 6-inch naval gun. Eight permanent ladders, four on either side, were built into the side of the ship from the lower deck to the water line. These allowed troops to descend quickly into large types of landing craft such as L.C.T.s, which of course had to be warped alongside.

9. The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada made up the main body of troops on board. Added to the staff of H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Bde were personnel from the various services and also a number of attached officers including A.M.C.O.T. and civil administration officials.

10. On 15 Jun I requested permission from Ship's Adjutant to sketch on board, and this was granted by O.C. Troops and also naval authorities. I would suggest here that if possible the Admiralty be approached to give a covering pass to artists. It has been the experience of some to be denied this opportunity - at times in fact by O.C. Troops - and sometimes by the Master of the ship. A permanent pass such as those used by official photographers might be the answer. During this period all ranks were engaged in a strenuous training programme and these various schemes provided excellent material for sketching purposes.

VOYAGE OUT

DISCIPLINE

11. "All ranks will be confined to the ship as from 1830 hours today, Sunday 27.6.43." This Order, which appeared in ship's Daily Routine Orders on the H.M.T. "CIRCASSIA", gave rise to considerable speculation as to the actual date of our sailing.

12. During the last few days crews of L.C.As. had been busy painting their craft, renewing gear and generally getting things ship-shape. Activity about the guns had been considerable too, and all over the ship one felt that preparations were afoot to sail.

13. We were then lying off GOUROCK and the day had been very hot with an almost cloudless sky. That evening at about 2100 hours the "HILARY" (Div H.Q. ship) passed on our port side and we began to move. Ships' rails were crowded and our convey consisting of HILARY, CIRCASSIA, MARNIX, BATORY, ASCANIA and DERBYSHIRE, steaming in line ahead passed through the submarine booms, later past ARRAN ISLAND and AILSA CRAIG, familiar landmarks to so many Canadian troops on their first arrival in the United Kingdom. The following morning we had some idea as to our destination, a signal from the Admiral telling us that we were bound for the Mediterranean, although it was not until Dominion Day that all bets and speculations were settled as to our final touchdown.

14. Our screen of 6 Destroyers, gave one some idea of the size and speed of the "QUEEN MARY", which unescorted on the afternoon of 29 Jun went by us on the starboard side, carrying we thought further Canadian reinforcements to England.

15. On 30 Jun orders came for tropical dress, bush shirt, shorts, hose tops and putties shorts were to be changed at 1830 hours for longs in order to accustom all ranks to this daily habit which would afford protection against mosquito bites when operating in a malarial zone.

15. On 1 Jul, Dominion Day, all troops were briefed. The Bde Commander, Brig. Christopher Vokes, gave a brief outline of what the Bde's part would be and a general plan of Operation "HUSKY", which operation we learned was to be the invasion of SICILY.

17. From now on our daily routine included lectures and demonstrations on subjects ranging from the cause and prevention of malaria, the great importance of hygiene in tropical climates, enemy formations, weapons, etc., and also some classes in Italian were given by Lieut. Whitehead, Italian interrogator attached to Bde I staff.

18. A small book "ITALY" was issued to all ranks. This compact booklet had an excellent foreword and contained much useful information. What seemed to be particularly valuable was a very brief history of Italy and an explanation of Italian customs and character. It was stressed also that Italy was a storehouse of cultural and historic monuments which should be respected by all as being a legacy. In a practical way, the book dealt with simple phrases in Italian which the soldier might need in asking directions, giving instructions to civilians, requesting certain types of food, etc.

19. All ranks had earlier begun a "course" of mepacrine as a malaria repressive, and this treatment was continued throughout the campaigns in Sicily and Italy during the malarial season. Maps and pamphlets had been issued and a great deal of time was spent on studying the beaches and terrain. There were a number of occasions when great activity on the part of our screen of destroyers suggested submarines in the vicinity, and we subsequently heard that our escort was officially credited with the destruction of two "subs" during the trip out, one of which it was thought had been responsible for the sinking of the B.B.3 and "CITY OF VENICE", in a convoy ahead of us.

20. On July 4 a special Order of the Day, which was a personal message from the Brigadier 2 Cdn Inf Bde was read to all personnel, and also messages were received from General Montgomery, G.O.C. Eighth Army, Lt.-Gen. A.C.L. McNaughton, C.-in-C., 6th Army, and Maj.-Gen. Simonds, G.O.C., 1 Cdn Div. In the morning a Church Parade and Service of Intercession and Dedication was held. Men and officers assembled in their various mess decks and the service, which was simple and impressive, came over the P.A. system. It was timed so as to coincide with similar services held on each of the ships in our convoy.

21. We were now approaching the Straits of Gibraltar, the actual passage being made at about 0500 hours July 5th. It was a very mild night and one could see LA LINEA on the Spanish side well lit up, an airfield beacon made wide sweeps across the sky, but little of Gibraltar itself could be seen.

22. These were days of brilliant sunshine. All personnel had undergone a gradual process of tanning and were usually stripped to the waist. Plans for landings were rehearsed daily by groups from platoons under their platoon officers to sections under their section leaders. It was interesting to observe how apparently casual these groups appeared about it all. It was difficult to obtain much deck space so that groups sat and lay around on whatever available space could be found. Maps were spread out and chalk diagrams of attacks were drawn sometimes on the decks themselves, sometimes on blackboards.

23. The Model Room, containing a detailed scale model of the beaches and features beyond them was housed in a special cabin below decks and was in continuous use, periods being allotted to various groups.

24. With all this activity going on subject matter for sketching presented itself daily, and it was at this time that I met the Master of the ship, Capt. David Bone.

25. Capt. Bone had been a Commodore of the Anchor Line in peace-time, was retired, and on the outbreak of the war was once more engaged in convoying, a work with which he was very familiar, having had much experience during the last war. One of his books "Merchantmen At Arms" gives a very graphic story of the fight against U-boats during 1914-18. He was most interested and gave me a great deal of co-operation. We had a number of talks and he had much interesting comment to make about his brother, Sir Muirhead Bone, whose work as an Official Admiralty War Artist is so widely known.

26. On 8 Jul 48 hour rations were issued with Tommy Cooker, also special helmet mosquito net. That afternoon we passed CAPE BON, and of course there was much discussion about the collapse of the AFRIKA CORPS here during the last stages of the Tunisian campaign. The land itself appeared rather forbidding, pinkish granite-like rock rising from the very intense blue of the Mediterranean, while on the heights a grey green and somewhat scrubby growth ran down into deep eroded gullies. I made several sketches of part of our convoy passing within a mile or so of the Cape but these with other drawings were subsequently lost.

27. A very popular occasion on board ship was the playing of "RETRAT" by the Pipe Band of the Seaforth of Canada. This usually took place on the forward hatch of the well deck, and of course in the evening. The decks were always crowded with a mass of tanned figures, some even perching in the rigging. A fairly complete study of this was made over successive days, but it, with other sketches mentioned, was lost.

28. Battle dress had now been turned in and orders issued for disembarkation dress.

29. The problem arose as to how to get my sketching material ashore dry. "Mae Wests" had of course been issued and I managed to get an extra one which was tied securely about the sketching kit after that had been thoroughly wrapped in a gas cape. A length of cord was attached to this, so if it meant having to go off in deep water there would be a chance of towing it ashore.

30. I had made a request that the work which had been completed so far, and this included all training sketches plus those done on board up to this time, be packed where they might go ashore safely, and Capt. Thrasher, acting Camp Commandant, allowed me space in one of the boxes in which Divisional H.Q. office supplies were packed.

31. It was fortunate that this arrangement had been made as a safety measure, and also it would have been most difficult to try to carry this added weight and bulk - all sketches made subsequent to this I had of course to carry with me - the latter including those made of the actual assault were unfortunately lost while going forward shortly after the landing.

32. Assault serials had rehearsed landings by both day and night and it seemed that all was now in readiness for the actual thing.

33. July 9th had been a very full day of last minute preparations, seeing to arms and kit, and also final briefings were given. A tremendous concentration of shipping was about us on all sides. Wherever one looked to port, starboard, forward or astern, one saw craft of various kinds - and this was just part of a force of well over 2,000 ships. The Battleship H.M.S. "HOWE" passed on the fringe of this shipping moving slowly in contrast to our destroyers, some of which were now hurrying back and forth.

34. The sea, which up to now had been smooth throughout the voyage, began to rise to a swell of alarming proportions. As it drew towards evening this swell worsened and it seemed as though the situation had become so serious as to suggest the possibility of postponing the operation. Certainly if there had been no abatement it would have been impossible to launch L.C.As., L.C.Ps., and other small craft from the mother ships in such weather.

35. To those used to a period of twilight after sunset, night in the Mediterranean must seem to come with surprising suddenness. Then also the sinking sun here is rather fantastic in its colour, size and slightly distorted shape. It goes down as a great burning mass and almost immediately darkness follows. This particular evening would, I think, remain an indelible memory to those who experienced it. The sight of this mass of shipping was most stirring and though when darkness fell one could no longer distinguish their shapes, one knew that each individual ship was moving to an appointed spot closer to the shore.

36. It was interesting to observe how high was the morale of the men, and at this time it must be remembered that the casualties were expected to be very high and that the assault would be a most difficult and hazardous operation. From the mess decks one caught snatches of jokes and "wise cracks", and it was obvious that the troops were keen for zero hour and action.

37. At 2100 hours I had permission to visit the Ops Room. I had previously made a number of studies of its setting. The Bde staff, S.M.O.L., Sigs, and other personnel had assembled, all being in full Battle Order

with "Line Wents". The blackboards showed the disposition of various craft whose positions would be changed from time to time while the attack went in. With previous studies of the actual room I had been able to make a fairly complete drawing with portrait studies, also full notes of the diagrams appearing on the boards (sketch lost).

38. At 2300 hours a hot meal was served to all assault flights. Serials were loaded into landing craft and complete by 0200 hours and at 0245 hours first flights had touched down. Some difficulty was experienced with mines and wire, but generally speaking most defences were over-run rapidly and success signals came from both Bns (Seaforths and Pats).

39. The Monitor H.M.S. "ROBERTS" was sending salvos from her 15-inch guns and also supporting fire from destroyers made terrific flashes in the sky. The success of the attack by the assault troops allowed for a procession of craft coming from the beaches to the ships to take off the later serials.

40. After a quick breakfast at 0600 hours I had to wait some time for my serial which went ashore by L.C.M. It was now light and masses of shipping could be seen lying close inshore. Landing craft of all types were beaching, unloading men, material, vehicles and equipment, all of this making a scene of exciting activity. Tanks and S.P. artillery churned up on to the beaches after having been immersed in water often up to gun turrets. This was a tribute to a thorough job of waterproofing, though of course a number of vehicles did stall and had to be hauled out. Amphibious ducks, at one moment water borne, the next scuttling along the beaches, brought in supplies quickly and efficiently.

41. Our L.C.M. made a fair landing, and on shore I met one or two of the Div H.Q. staff who were making for H.Q., which was in an area about a mile from the beach itself. By now it was blazing hot, and the road, which sappers had cut through the canebrakes, and cactus fringing the beach, was crowded with vehicles and men moving forward. A fine dust billowing up made the lines of marching infantry and transport look as though these had been sprinkled with white powder.

42. We eventually located Div H.Q., which was situated in, or rather about, a small peasant stone farm house. The farmer had fled leaving his horse, some chickens, guinea pigs and rabbits and also myriads of vermin. The horse was immediately requisitioned and was used to good effect by the D.A.D.M.S., Major K. Bell.

43. Most of 2 Bde were landed and had consolidated. Prisoners were beginning to arrive fast, first in small groups, then in long lines. It was here that we prepared our first meal ashore, the 48 hour ration being supplemented with fresh ripe tomatoes which grew in profusion in the fields about the house. Troops during this period had requisitioned many mules and donkeys, also two wheeled carts, in lieu of transport which had yet to arrive.

44. We had put in an infantry attack (Royal Canadian Regiment) on the nearby PACHINO Airfield, and it was interesting to note that the Italians had concentrated a large number of dummy wooden planes in fields adjacent to the Airfield proper. This ruse had failed to deceive our Intelligence, and the Airfield and runways received the full attention of our bombing force. Near this Airfield was an Italian barracks which obviously had been vacated in a great hurry. Personal equipment and arms were scattered about in the utmost confusion, and there was no doubt that the garrison had been taken completely by surprise. Prisoners, a mixed and varied lot, seemed to be quite cheerful about it all.

45. At about noon I returned to the beach and made a number of drawings of transport coming ashore also men being landed from all types of landing craft, and was later able to make studies of our first prisoners who were being put aboard L.C.Ts. for transport to AFRICA.

46. In the afternoon we were raided by German planes but a very heavy concentration of A.A. made this attack in the nature of a hit and run affair. That night shipping and the area generally was again raided by a force of German bombers. Many parachute flares were dropped which seemed to hang motionless in the sky silhouetting the ships lying in the harbour and generally lighting up the area uncomfortably. The display of tracer sent up by our A.A. was like some tremendous pyrotechnic display, the sky criss-cross with red, orange, green and white.

47. The following morning I made more completed drawings of this air raid, and as we were still waiting for transport, I later returned to the beach and made some drawings of recovery tanks hauling out vehicles which had stalled in the sea. These tanks the SAHIB and SIMBA (Three Rivers Regt), were attached to an L.A.D. for this purpose. Their crews stripped to the waist would drive their waterproofed Shermans into the surf, the water often coming up to the turret itself. Cables were attached to the stalled vehicles and these were hauled up to the beach where the L.A.D. personnel took over.

48. When I returned to Div H.Q. in the late afternoon I found that they had managed to scrounge some transport and had moved forward. A guard had been left and he was to be picked up that night or the following morning. My large pack and portfolio containing drawings had, I learnt, been packed onto a vehicle.

49. That night I ran across Lieut. Cooper, Field Security, and his Section, also waiting for their transport. We had a further air raid and though many bombs were dropped apparently little damage had been done.

50. In the morning I had an opportunity to move forward with Capt. Pierce, G.3, and catching up with Div I found that the portfolio and other kit was not to be found. Exhaustive inquiries revealed only that it had been loaded in the first instance. This was a serious loss, and though most of the sketches were necessarily incomplete, they included all notes made of the landing operations and would have provided exciting subject matter.

31. I now began to feel that it would be very difficult to move from unit to unit as I had hoped. First because of the fact that transport was short, and that as an individual doing a non-operational job any argument or plea for the necessity of independent transport did not carry much weight. My decision was then to move by whatever means and as quickly as possible to various battalions and regiments. This, of course, meant first of all getting to that unit, and I realized that much valuable time would be wasted waiting as I should have virtually to hitch-hike my way. It also meant that while with a formation it would be necessary to remain close to it as we were making very rapid and frequent moves at this time. The units themselves offered as much co-operation as could have been desired, but naturally they were unable to help beyond giving transport within the unit. The logical way to have functioned properly was to have been able to move independently and quickly.

32. Both ISPIGA and ROSOLINI (the former^{or} which had been heavily shelled by the Navy particularly by the Monitor H.M.S. "ROBERTS"), were now in our hands and very large numbers of prisoners could be seen trudging back. Up to now we had had no contact with German troops and by the 13th of July had taken MODICA. Here is where we had expected to meet with considerable difficulty, the country being ideal from a defensive point of view. MODICA is a town perched high on an escarpment overlooking fairly flat country, but the approaches into the town were over deep ravines. We were amazed to find that none of the bridges over these ravines nor across the rivers had been blown. Just before we entered MODICA a German plane had strafed a stretch of straight road where a "Duck" had been shot up and was now burnt out, also some civilians travelling in a cart drawn by two mules had been killed nearby. Our own casualties and these civilians were the first result of road strafing we had seen, for up until now Jerry had given our convoys little trouble.

33. I was at this time (about 14 Jul) travelling on the back of a Quad with the 3 Field R.C.A. We passed through RAGUSA, which is really a twin town, and like most Sicilian towns was perched high on a mountain. The descent from RAGUSA into the valley below was a rather hair-raising experience. The road winds in a series of sharp hairpin bends along the side of the mountain. Much of this advance had been done at night and one began then to realize what a fine job the M.T. drivers had done.

34. 1 Bde at this time was moving through VIZZINI, and 2 Bde continued to advance via CHIRAMONTE. Here we came across much abandoned equipment, booby traps and mines were encountered and we began to run into stiff opposition from German troops.

35. By the 15th of July 2 Bde was in the vicinity of IACODIA where we made contact with American First Army detachments. The Germans had at this time come under some heavy fire just north of PIAZZA AMERINA, and it was here that I joined the 142 Regiment, R.A. (South Devon Yeomanry). The Regiment was at this time in

support of 2 Bde. I approached a Battery Major while the Regiment was pulling out of a concentration area and rapidly explained what I was doing and asked if I could go along with them. His reply was "alright old boy hop in my scout car and we will show you some fun". I had a most interesting, if somewhat unofficial attachment to this Regiment. During the 2 Bde attack on LEONFORTE batteries of this artillery (Self-propelled 25-pdrs mounted on Valentine Mk.III chassis) took up positions in some rolling wheat fields. It was blazing hot and the ground crews, stripped to the waist, did a grand job of support. There was some counter-battery, and shells falling in the area sent up plumes of sandy dust mixed with smoke - an unusual and different effect from most shelling.

56. While here I managed to get a trip up to a forward observation post with an artillery F.O.O. The situation was rather confused, our battalions being under shell fire from the heights of both LEONFORTE and ASSORO. I made contact with detachments of the Edmontons waiting to go into the attack which was postponed until our infantry could get artillery support. This took shape in a Divisional Shoot, which I was able to observe from gun positions of both the 2 and 3 Field Regiments, R.C.A. These Regiments were dispersed in a long valley below ASSORO and LEONFORTE, Medium Regiments (British) being dispersed further back slightly to their right. This concentration of artillery fire was very heavy, 400 rounds per gun were fired, the shoot beginning at 2100 hours and ending at first light.

57. I attempted to make a number of studies during gun flashes, which were almost continuous, and in the early morning used these notes to make a more complete sketch.

58. I now moved forward with the 142 Regiment to an area near VILLA ROSSI and found that 2 Bde H.Q. was temporarily established around a large villa. The landowner had returned, and in talking to him I found that he was one of a family of twelve boys, each of these having been established on various adjoining properties consisting mainly of olive groves. As always, they had little good to say of Facism or Mussolini - one however invariably felt this quick change of heart on the parts of the large landowners was just a little too obvious - the smaller peasant was always vitriolic in his denunciation of "Musso" and one felt a certain honesty here.

59. 21 Jul. Late that night the Edmonton Regiment had moved in on LEONFORTE and after some confused night fighting they, and the Seaforths of Canada, had consolidated. 1 Cdn Inf Bde had at this time also made an attack on ASSORO. ENNA had fallen to the Americans though our Pats' patrols claimed to have been first in the town, the boys grumbling in no uncertain terms at being withdrawn, which meant that the Americans had the honour of taking this town.

60. 25 Jul. 2 Bde was in reserve; Pats in LEONFORTE, Searforths in ASSORO, and Edmontons in an area near "HELL FIRE CORNER".

61. 26 Jul. I had gone forward with an Artillery F.O.O. into ASSORO, which had been badly knocked about both by shelling and bombing. Our infantry were moving up preparatory to the attack on AGIRA, which we could see in the valley below. We had climbed to the highest point above the town from where the whole valley lay exposed. While here Major-General Simonds, G.O.C., 1 Cdn Div, arrived with a number of staff officers. I learned that a Divisional Artillery shoot was lined up as a prelude to the infantry attack which was shortly due to go into AGIRA.

62. The setting for this Divisional H.Q. Group was most interesting. On the highest point of the hill was the ruin of an old Castle, from the tower of which there presently arose a violent cloud of pink smoke, which was an air recognition signal for our bombers. The artillery concentration was falling on the approaches to and into the town of AGIRA itself, and presently one could see our troops moving forward into the attack. I made a number of drawings here and later completed a sketch in colour from these.

63. That night I returned to R.H.Q., 3 R.C.A., in order to complete some previous studies. The Regiment moved forward to an area beyond NISSORIA, the batteries taking up positions in the vicinity of the important cross-roads, PALERMO - CATANIA. Jerry had this spot properly taped and began to bracket the area, with the result that the Regiment suffered a number of casualties and had to pull out into less exposed positions. This shelling was most persistent and very uncomfortable. Fortunately (as there had not been much time to dig slit trenches) we were able to take cover in a natural ditch which ran through an olive grove. Besides casualties the Regiment lost a number of vehicles which were thoroughly shot up.

64. The following day I had an opportunity of a lift to VAIGUARNERA, where I wanted to visit Lieut. Gordon Smith, I.O. of the Pats, who had previously been badly knocked about by mortar fire. While in the hospital the D.A.D.M.S., Major Bell, arrived and introduced me to the O.C. 1 F.D.S., Major Pace. I found that some most interesting work was being done here, Surgical and Resuscitation teams doing major and delicate operations, much further forward than had been our practise previously. I intended to make some studies in the hospital but had to return to the Unit. The following day, however, I got a lift down with a water truck and stopped off to find that unfortunately as far as my plans of drawing were concerned most of the casualties had been removed to the rear. While returning I came across three large hospital tents of unusual design - these were pitched in an arid plain - and I discovered belonged to No. 9 Fd Amb R.C.A.M.C., whose present location was near RADUSA. I stopped off here in order to make a watercolour sketch. These tents had

been captured at VALGUARNERA from the Italians, and our medical staff were very pleased with their design. The tents were double walled with a ventilating system; their main disadvantage being that bulk made the transport problem difficult. (1)

65. Our advance had been very rapid and the difficulty of moving from one unit to another made me anxious to return to 2 Bde H.Q. in order to link up for a more permanent stay with various infantry battalions.

66. 2 Bde H.Q. at this time was just outside of AGIRA, where I joined them about 29 Jul and asked to be attached to the Edmontons. Mule transport was necessary in this type of country and all mules in the Div had been placed at the disposal of 2 Bde. REGALBUTO at this stage was still in enemy hands and the Bde was to make an attack on the town.

67. On 31 Jul the Edmontons were ordered to capture Hill 736. Patrols of the Edmontons had gone down the SALSO RIVER avoiding REGALBUTO. The patrols were to find out whether this high ground (Hill 736) was held by the enemy, and also whether a suitable route forward could be found for men and animals in the bed of the SALSO RIVER. These patrols apparently had made no contact with the enemy and reported that the route along the bed of the River although unsatisfactory was passable.

68. 31 Jul. The Edmontons were preparing to move, and mules, harness, etc., were collected at Bn H.Q., which was then in the cemetery on the Southern outskirts of the town. This cemetery had just previously been the scene of an action, the Italian habit of burying their dead in family vaults having rather unpleasant results. The Germans had taken up positions in the cemetery during our attack and had to be cleared out. These positions had been mortared by us and after we got in, by Jerry, with the result that the vaults (rather flimsily constructed) were often broken exposing bodies, and this along with the fact that there were a number of German dead about, made it a far from pleasant spot until things were cleaned up. I had received permission from Major Day, 2 i/c of the Edmontons, to go forward with a mule train taking up water, rations and ammo to the forward companies of the Bn, which were then placed in a rather sticky and exposed position below Hill 736. This train, consisting of about 25 mules, 15 other ranks, one officer and myself, left Bn H.Q. at about 1600 hours on 3 Aug.

(1) As No. 9 Fd Amb had lost all of its equipment at sea, this acquisition of tents and medical supplies was extremely valuable.

69. We proceeded north to an area where final packing and adjustment was made, and then went down into the bed of the SALSO RIVER in the late evening. Two guides had been provided, one of whom had come out the night previous. It was now quite dark and our route lay along the east bank of the River. This route was simply a mule track which petered off whenever it ran into the deep gorges and ravines which cut down into the River and that necessitated crossing the bed of the River wherever it was possible in order to find a trail on the opposite side. This at times was extremely difficult owing to the nature of the River bed itself, which often consisted of tightly packed volcanic formations of rock rather fantastic in shape and difficult for the heavily laden mules.

70. The guide stopped the train frequently and he and one other scout would go forward about 100 yards in order to spy the land. The information was that Company H.Q. would be found near a railway bridge approximately 8 miles from our starting point. This we expected to reach about first light, but as the enemy were thought to be still in possession of the surrounding heights forward, our progress had necessarily to be slow.

71. A scout party was sent out at about 0400 hours in the morning and was away for a couple of hours. They had found the bridge, and hearing voices had crawled for a considerable distance trying to find out whether these were enemy or our own troops. They came back very mad but relieved, having heard an unmistakable Canadian voice saying "come on you ... get moving". This happened to be a detachment of 3 R.C.E., who were then receiving a crossing. We arrived at the Bridge at sun up and found that as usual Jerry had it well taped making it a hot spot for a while. The O.C. Mule Train therefore decided to pull back a bit, water the mules, and give the men a chance to breakfast. We then moved forward once more and eventually located Bn H.Q. which was in an olive grove on the west bank of the River.

72. After we had bathed in the very sluggish pools of the River I took a mule back to the bridge. This railway bridge, despite the fact that it had not been blown, was unsuited for M.T. though tanks and Bren-gun carriers managed to cross over the ties. The bridge and neighbouring area came in for a considerable amount of shelling and watching the sappers carrying on with their job made one realize how much of their work had necessarily to be done under these and worse conditions. I was able to make one or two drawings here, later rejoining the Edmontons' Bn H.Q.

73. That afternoon following an artillery concentration of both H.E. and smoke, "C" Coy Edmontons cleared the remaining German troops off HILL 736.

74. I had gone up with Major Donald, O.C. "C" Coy to his H.Q. which was located in an outcropping of rock ringed with castl, about half way up the hill. From here, in company with an artillery P.O.O. and the mortar platoon officer (Lieut. Snell), we climbed to the crest of the hill to find the boys tired but excited and happy at having cleared Jerry out of these positions which were actually natural rock fortifications. From the crest of the

hill it was possible to command both the valleys of the SAISO and TROINA, and we could see the last of the German transport pulling out up the TROINA VALLEY. Also this was an ideal observation post for spotting enemy gun positions and the Artillery P.O.O. was kept very busy.

75. Coming down we witnessed the burial of four of these Edmonton lads by their comrades. It was impossible to get them out and the very simple manner in which it was done, and the setting high in the hills made, it seemed, a much more impressive ceremony than others of a more formal nature.

76. I slept that night on the hill, and the following day linked up once more with Bn H.Q. travelling with the Artillery P.O.O. in his carrier. On 4 Aug 43 the Bn was preparing its attack on MT. REVISOTTO and took its objective that day. Our next objective was ADERNO and with the fall of this town the Division went into rest, 2 Cdn Inf Bde having been allotted an area near MILETELLO where I reported back.

77. On 13 Aug 43 I was able to get a lift to Div H.Q. near LINTINI, and made a request for transport to allow me, while we were in rest, to revisit some of the areas in which action had taken place. I had hoped to make more completed sketches particularly of town and in certain marked areas where I had made spot sketches. The request was granted, but I was unable to get transport until 16 Aug 43 when I left 2 C.I.B. H.Q. with a driver and sufficient rations, and petrol to last for a period of ten days when it was necessary to report back with the vehicle. A careful time-table and a mapped route took us back over a good part of the original line of advance, i.e., we worked from VIEZINI north.

78. It was a curious sensation to revisit areas which had been so full of excitement and movement and to find them now deserted and empty, except for a few local farmers and peasants. The main object however was to make landscape studies, and though the time was short, I felt encouraged by the results of the first few days being able to work steadily and undisturbed.

79. On 22 Aug 43 we were camped outside of VALGUARNERA when I went down with what I thought was Sandfly fever. Hoping within a few days to get rid of it, we proceeded north but eventually found it necessary to make for CATANIA where I reported on 23 Aug 43 for a medical inspection and found that I should have to remain in No. 5 Cdn Gen Hosp for at least two weeks with a dose of malaria.

80. On being discharged from the hospital I reported to 1 C.B.R.D. (CATANIA) and was sent to the Rest Camp for convalescence. Here I again met Major Pace, now O.C. Rest Camp, who gave me a great deal of help providing a small room in the barracks which enabled me to complete a number of sketches. I had the opportunity here to parcel some of these which were delivered to Lt.-Col. Tow by courier and eventually through him were taken back to C.M.H.Q. by returning officers.

81. The invasion of ITALY had of course taken place on 3 Sep 43, and 1 Cdn Div were en route north from REGGIO where we had landed. M. and T. in CATANIA eventually arranged a passage for me on an E.C.T. proceeding to TARANTO, from where I should have to make my way by whatever means possible to rejoin the Division.

82. We sailed from CATANIA on 27 Sep 43, the trip to TARANTO taking a little over twenty-five hours. Div H.Q. was at this time near POTENZA and as no Canadian vehicles were moving through TARANTO it was necessary by a series of hitch hikes to make the trip north. I eventually caught a Canadian truck which landed back at H.Q. near LUCERA, on 3 Oct 43. Here I heard from Capt. Sesia that Capt. Sam Hughes (H.O.) and Chas. Comfort (Official War Artist) were expected daily. Capt. Sesia had by now managed to get as transport a Humber staff car, but with additional personnel arriving it was obvious that our need for more transport would be an ever greater problem.

83. Weather at this time began to deteriorate rapidly and we experienced a great deal of rain and cold. It was impossible to get tentage but we had managed to secure a railway tarpaulin which made a sort of lean-to for our section.

84. The "A" and "Q", Col. Gilbride was anxious that some work be done with the R.C.A.S.C. and also R.C.O.C. work shops, and while 1, 2 and 3 C.I.B. workshops were near LUCERA I was attached for a period of several days making a number of drawings. I felt though that perhaps the most interesting pictorial aspect of their work was that done in the field, i.e., Tank and Vehicle Recovery, etc.

85. During this period I had managed to visit various parts of our front with either Liaison or Intelligence officers, in particular with Capt. Kenneth Cottam (German Interrogator). During our attack on CAMPOBASSO we were supported by the 1st Light Air Landing Regiment (British). Their 75 mm guns with limber were towed by a jeep with the result that they could get across rough country rapidly and usually they set up as close support to infantry. The range of this compact mountain gun is about 9000 yards, and the interesting role of the Regiment generally provided good subject matter. (Later Capt. Comfort and myself were invited by the O.C., Col. Thompson, to visit the Regiment for a period of some days).

86. On 13 Oct 43 while we were near RICCIA we were joined by Capt. Hughes and Comfort who had come up by road from TARANTO. We were hoping to get further transport and also some better cover than the "lean-to".⁽²⁾ Our cover was considerably improved by the loan of a tent which had been previously used by several of the liaison officers. This was a great help as besides the physical comfort provided one was able to arrange material and do some work under cover.

(2) Our increment which allowed for an H.U.P. for use by the Historical Officer, and two jeeps for Artists, came through later, though when I left on 10 Dec 43 we were still waiting for this transport.

87. 14 Oct 43. Capts. Comfort, Cottam, and myself were in CAMPOBASSO, the town having fallen that day. The town itself was not badly damaged though all railway lines, rolling stock, engines, etc., had been thoroughly destroyed by the Germans and as usual Hydro electric installations wrecked, the local flour mill also being completely demolished.

88. Leaving Div H.Q. on 18 Oct 43 Capt. Comfort and myself spent several days in FERRAZANO with a company of 43th Highlanders, later returning to Div H.Q. when on 24 Oct 43 I joined the 12th Tank Regt, and Capt. Comfort the 2nd Fd R.C.A.

89. 12 C.T.R. were supporting our attack on BOIANO and I spent some days with "B" Sq. Weather during this period seemed to be a succession of rainy days broken by occasional sun. Working conditions generally were very difficult and it seemed tough luck indeed that Comfort should run into this from the very beginning of his attachment.

100. Capt. Seasia had left for NAPLES on 2 Nov, Capt. Hughes taking over as Hist Offr. We were shortly to go into rest and billets in CAMPOBASSO, and Major Warren, G.S., suggested that it might be possible to arrange an exhibition of sketches. CAMPOBASSO had by now taken on a distinctly Canadian atmosphere. Principal streets had been renamed, and one found such names as Yonge St, Portage Ave - and the Royal York Hotel. A modern building which included a theatre was christened "THE BEAVER CLUB" and here a small room was set aside to house the exhibition, which was to remain open for two days. Capt. Comfort had by now completed a number of excellent and vigorous watercolours and altogether we were able to show about 78 items. The troops appeared to find the exhibition interesting, the first days attendance being 1500, the second day bringing the total number up to the 3000 mark, all of which was rather encouraging.

101. Gen. Montgomery had expressed a wish to see this show, which meant a visit to 3th Army H.Q., then at VASTO. Capts. Hughes, Comfort and myself left CAMPOBASSO on 11 Nov arriving that noon at Army H.Q. where we were received by Major Dick Malone, formerly Bde Major 2 Cdn Inf Bde.

102. Most troops had at one time or another seen Gen. Montgomery, either during his visits to the Division or passing on the roads, and this trip we felt gave a fortunate opportunity for a "close up".

103. The sketches were pinned up onto the walls of the mess which was in a small villa overlooking the sea. Outside under some trees was the famous "Electric Whiskers" caravan complete with bird-cage. A most informal and interesting time was spent discussing the work. Among the observations made by Gen. Montgomery was the encouraging one that as much as possible should be done in the collection of both historical and pictorial records of the war.

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104. On our return from VASTO we found ourselves billeted at "E" Mess in CAMPOBASSO, and on 27 Nov preparations were made to move forward once more as we were to relieve the New Zealand Div. Our new Headquarters was the Railway Station of FOSSACESIA within a stone's throw of the ADRIATIC. The crossing of the SANGRO en route gave one a pretty fair idea of the difficulties experienced in our earlier advance. The river, swollen with rains, was now running swiftly and what diversions there were were quagmires of deep greasy mud.

105. Capt. Comfort and myself now went forward to 2 Cdn Inf Bde H.Q., which was near SAN VITO. We were forcing a crossing over the MORO at this stage preparatory to the attack on ORTONA. The river crossing was extremely difficult - the enemy being well dug in on the far bank and rising ground. Prisoners brought in by the various battalions revealed the fact that they had recently been strongly reinforced. Weather if anything became worse and transport difficulties increased. This was tough country to advance in and because of the nature of the ground unsuitable to armour, so that our infantry ran into some hard going.

106. Just before our first attack on ORTONA we witnessed a very heavy concentration of artillery on this narrow sector. Seven Field Regiments, two Medium Regiments and one S.P. Regiment (105 mm) put down a most searching fire. Starting from the north bank of the river and gradually moving up to the crest of the hill one could see ORTONA. Twelve squadrons of Kittyhawks were on call to bomb objectives, and enemy lines of communication on the coastal roads in the rear were shelled by cruisers and destroyers. This artillery concentration began at 1350 hours, and as there were 400 rounds per gun up, the din was continuous until at 1800 hours our infantry went in. Despite it as soon as our troops began to move forward German machine guns opened up and it was found that they had been very well dug in. The fighting here and the actual taking of ORTONA itself was the hardest our fellows had yet experienced.

107. On 9 Dec I received a signal from Div H.Q. recalling me as Lieut. Lawren Harris had arrived as my replacement. I returned to Div the following day and made preparations to go by truck to Naples on the following morning. On arrival there I reported to A.F.H.Q., Major Simmons giving me instructions to report to the Port Commandant. It was necessary to wait for over a week before I could get a sailing, and on 20 Dec I went aboard the CAMERONIA.

108. On board were 7th Armd Div tps who had recently handed over to our own 5th Armd Div.

109. Our convoy sailed that evening arriving at ORAN on 23 Dec where we waited for further ships to assemble, until on 27 Dec in company with eleven other ships and our escort, we sailed for the United Kingdom. The voyage was without incident and we made the Firth of Clyde on the evening of 4 Jan 44.

110. On board were two other Canadians, Brig. Norton (5 Armd Div), and Col. Eaman (1 Cdn Div). On 5 Jan a Canadian F.S.O. came aboard and we disembarked at GLASGOW taking the "Ghost" train that night and arriving in LONDON

on the morning of 5 Jan 44, when I reported back to
C.M.H.Q.

W. A. Ogilvie

(W.A. Ogilvie), Capt.,
War Artist,
Canadian Military Headquarters.