

NOTE

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Directorate of History
National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

July 1986

DUPLICATE

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32
13 Jun 41

Canadian Base Depot
Activities of Personnel of this Depot
during MERSEYSIDE Air Raids.

CANCELLED



Canadian Military Headquarters,
2 Cockspur Street, S.W. 1,
London, ENGLAND.

The Director,
Historical Section,
General Staff,
National Defence Headquarters,
Ottawa, CANADA.

1. A further report is presented. This deals with the CAN-
ADIAN BASE DEPOT, and in particular with the work of men attached
to the Depot during the heavy air-raids on MERSEYSIDE during the
early part of May, 1941.
2. The O.C. Canadian Base Depot, Lt.-Col. LOUIS KEENE, E.D.
(LORNE SCOTS), has recently visited C.M.H.Q. and has given me
copies of a number of documents relating to these raids. I
think it proper to forward these to ensure their availability for
the Official Historian, and I take the opportunity of preparing
at the same time a brief summary of the development of the Depot,
based on information supplied to me by Lt.-Col. Keene, or extracted
from records on file at C.M.H.Q.

THE CANADIAN BASE DEPOT

3. The following facts are supplied from C.M.H.Q. file
6/BASE D/1 ("Organisation and Administration Canadian Base Depot").
4. A statement drawn up at H.Q. No. 1 Canadian Base Depot
(Lorne Scots) 21 Nov 40, and signed by Major R.W. LENT for the
Commanding Officer (folio 39 A) explains that this unit was orig-
inally mobilized as No. 1 Infantry Base Depot from The Lorne Scots

(Beel, Dufferin and Halton Regiment), N.P.A., on 1 Sep 40, authorized strength was Unit H.Q. and two companies. "On proceeding Overseas one Company was left in Canada, and the Unit H.Q. and one Company came to England consisting of 5 Officers and 49 Other Ranks."

5. N.D.H.Q. cable A.G. 775, 10 Jun 40 (C.M.H.Q. file 5/BASE D./1) authorized the amalgamation of No. 1 Canadian Infantry Base Depot and No. 1 Canadian General Base Depot into a single new unit which was designated No. 1 Canadian Base Depot. It was intended that this unit should proceed to France (where it was then anticipated that the Canadian forces would shortly be operating) and establish itself on the lines of communication, where it would perform the function of holding, for short periods previous to their despatch to field units, reinforcements sent forward from the Holding Units in England. The Depot would presumably have been set up near the 2nd Echelon, which (as noted in my Report No. 16) was to be at PORNICHET on the west coast. Before the German advance through the Low Countries, it had been intended that both Echelon and Depot should be at ST. VALERY EN CAUX. This information is from Major M.S. DUNN (A.G. 2, C.M.H.Q.).

6. Administrative Orders No. 8, issued by the Senior Combatant Officer, C.M.H.Q., 4 Jul 40, stated that a Routine Order would shortly be promulgated giving effect to the amalgamation authorized as above, and proceeded as follows:

2. The military situation which the new organization was designed to meet does not exist at present. The two depots concerned are therefore now required to function in a manner at variance with their normal role.

3. To meet this new situation which is to be regarded as temporary, the physical amalgamation of the two depots will be delayed in order that the Canadian Base Depot may fulfil two functions:-

- (a) To act as a depot for the disposal of non-effectives, and
- (b) To receive and administer advance parties, miscellaneous personnel and transient details, awaiting courses, arriving from Canada.

The order provided for a temporary organization in two wings: "I" Wing, comprising personnel formerly of No. 1 Inf. Base Depot, for duty as in 3(a) above, and "G" Wing (personnel of No. 1 Gen. Base

Depot) for duty as in 3(b). Instructional details of the two depots not required under this organization were to be attached to "A" or "B" Group H.Q. of Holding Units. Lt.-Col. Keene was to command "I" Wing and Lt.-Col. L.M. WATSON (THE SHERBROOKE REGIMENT) "G" Wing. The new unit was to remain under command of the H.Q., Canadian Troops, ALDERSHOT, which had been temporarily organized under Colonel E.L.M. BURNS, O.B.E., M.C., as commanding officer.

7. It should be noted that No. 1 Canadian General Base Depot had been mobilized on 1 Sep 39, the Sherbrooke Regiment providing the personnel in the same manner in which the Lorne Scots provided that of No. 1 Canadian Infantry Base Depot. (G.O. 135, 1939).

8. It appears that the two "wings" of the Depot functioned in the manner outlined in para. 6, above, through the remainder of the summer of 1940. On 4 Sep 40 Major-General ODLUM, G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div, wrote to C.M.H.Q. inquiring what was to be done with "G" Wing. The arrival of more 2 Cdn Div units had resulted in removing all personnel of the Div from this wing, which was thereby much reduced; and the accommodation occupied by the wing would soon be required by further 2 Cdn Div units arriving from Canada.

9. The consequence was the liquidation of "G" Wing. This wing, its personnel not on permanent establishment having already been disposed of, moved from ALDERSHOT to BORDON on 28 Oct 40. Thereafter Administrative Order No. 23, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 5 Nov 40, provided that the arbitrary division into "I" and "G" Wings would cease as of 5 Nov, and continued:

No. 1 Cdn Base Depot, Guillemont Barracks, Cove, under command Lieut-Colonel L. Keene, E.D., will continue to perform the functions of a Disposal Depot.

10. In the meantime the G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div had complained, as early as September, 1940, of the presence of the non-effective personnel awaiting return to Canada in this depot adjacent to his own troops, upon whom he considered them to be a bad influence. Search was made for other accommodation, but the Depot remained at COVE (on the

outskirts of FARNBOROUGH, immediately north of ALDERSHOT). On 3 Feb 41 Lt.-Gen. McNAUGHTON, G.O.C. Cdn Corps, made a strong representation on the matter to C.M.H.Q., requesting that action be taken to move this unit away from Aldershot "at the earliest practicable date". Accommodation was found at SEAFORTH BARRACKS, LIVERPOOL, a position which had the advantage of being close to the embarkation ports.

11. Administrative Order No. 41, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 6 Mar 41, authorized the change in location, providing for a movement by an advance party on 6 Mar 41 and by the main body on 12 Mar 41, H.Q. Cdn Base Depot to open at SEAFORTH BARRACKS at 0001 hrs on the latter date. The same order laid down procedure to be followed in future for forwarding personnel for return to Canada to the Depot.

12. Although SEAFORTH BARRACKS had not been considered an unduly exposed location, the heavy enemy air attacks on MERSEYSIDE early in May, 1941, damaged the barracks so badly that it became necessary to move the Depot forthwith. This information reached C.M.H.Q. on 7 May 41 at 1600 hrs. The new location (confirmed by Administrative Order No. 70, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 9 May 41) was KING'S REGIMENT I.T.C., CAIRNIE HOUSE, FORMBY, LANCs. This location was merely temporary, as on 5 Jun 41 Lt.-Col. Keene telephoned to C.M.H.Q. to the effect that the Depot had moved to OULTON PARK, near CHESTER, CHESHIRE, where it remains stationed at the moment of writing.

PROTECTIVE DUTIES OF LORNE SCOTS

13. The LORNE SCOTS are shortly to undertake an important additional role in the work of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom. One consequence of the experience of recent campaigns has been the organization of protective units for the headquarters of formations, to provide against sudden attacks by parachutists, armoured vehicles, etc. These units at present exist in the Canadian Corps on a provisional and temporary basis, but the principle that all protective units should be drawn from one regiment was accepted some months ago. Cable Canmilitary to Defensor, A. 1708, 20 Dec 40, runs as

follows:

Your G.S.D.196. Agree that all Protective units should be found from one Regt. Have no objection to Lorne Scots being used for this purpose provided this unit also continues to operate Canadian Base Depot. Not considered necessary to have separate regimental H.Q. Necessary however to create a Coy of an Infantry Holding Unit to handle reinforcements. Concur in Employment Units forming part of this unit. Only additional establishment needed is one Coy. No. 1 Infantry Holding Unit on same establishment as other Coys. Details of personnel required from Canada will be cabled at early date. McNaughton and C.G.S. concur.

Cable Canmilitary to Defensor, A. 651, 28 Mar 41, runs as follows:

Your GSD 248 W.E. Corps Protective Unit still under consideration Troopers but on basis provisional W.E. that unit and actual authorized W.Es other Protective Units and Cdn Base Depot plus H.U. Coy and reinforcements following personnel required from Lorne Scots Canada by early sailing officers Majors 4 Captains 7 Lieuts 23 O.Rs 350 with only sufficient N.C.Os to control draft.

(The above cables are on C.M.H.Q. file 5/BASE D./1 ("Establishments for Cdn. Reinforcement Base Depot, France").

14. The Lorne Scots draft required from Canada is expected to arrive in the United Kingdom on the next convoy (T.C. 11).

15. Lt.-Col. Keene has given me the following list of units which will be provided in this country by the Lorne Scots when the arrangements contemplated are complete:

- (i) Cdn Base Depot, Lt.-Col. Keene, O.C.
- (ii) 1 Cdn Corps Protective Unit.
- (iii) 1 Cdn Div Defence and Employment Pl.
- (iv) 2 Cdn Div Defence and Employment Pl.
- (v) 1 Cdn Inf Bde Def. Pl.
- (vi) 2 " " " " "
- (vii) 3 " " " " "
- (viii) 4 " " " " "
- (ix) 5 " " " " "
- (x) 6 " " " " "
- (xi) Lorne Scots Holding Coy.

In addition, he tells me that the organization of a Transit Depot to undertake the duties now dealt with by the Base Depot is under consideration. This would permit the Base Depot to return to its proper function.

16. As I understand that the Lorne Scots will also take over the personnel of the existing protective units, it appears that this regiment's overseas strength will be very large. The present strength of the Lorne Scots personnel of the Base Depot, Lt.-Col. Keene tells me, is 6 officers and 44 other ranks.

WORK OF BASE DEPOT IN MERSEYSIDE AIR RAIDS

17. Attached as Appendix "A" are a number of documents furnished me by Lt.-Col. Keene relating to the work of the men of the Depot, and the attached personnel awaiting embarkation for Canada, during the MERSEYSIDE air raids of May, 1941.

18. Air attacks were frequent from the time of the Depot's move to SEAFORTH BARRACKS, and reached a climax in the seven days' continuous raiding to which these reports refer. On this week of constant attacks, see my previous Report No. 27, which makes reference to Intelligence Summaries dealing with the MERSEYSIDE situation. This was perhaps the worst single experience undergone by any region of Britain in the present war, and the part played in it by Canadian troops seems a matter likely to have some interest for the Official Historian.

19. Lt.-Col. Keene has interested himself in the possibility of obtaining some official recognition for his unit and for individuals as a result of services performed during these raids. The documents attached appear to indicate that these services were considerable, and that they were duly appreciated by the local authorities and the people of the district.

C.B.S.

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q.

APPENDIX "A"
(Copies of Copies)

- (1) Report by Lt.-Col. L. Keene, 9 Jun 41, on work of personnel of 1 Cdn Base Depot.
- (2) Report by Lt.-Col. Keene on Capt. C.E. HEGGIE, R.C.A.M.C.
- (3) Report by Lt.-Col. Keene on Capt. G.W. BULLOCK, Lorne Sects. 7 Jun 41.
- (4) Covering Letter, Capt. A.C. GILL to Lt.-Col. Keene, 1 Jun 41.
- (5) Report of Capt. Gill.
- (6) Letter to Lt.-Col. Keene from Chairman, Civil Defence Committee, LITHERLAND, 3 Jun 41.
- (7) Letter to Lt.-Col. Keene from Chief Constable of Lancashire, 8 May 41.
- (8) Letter to Lt.-Col. Keene from Town Clerk of Borough of CROSBY, 8 May 41.
- (9) Letter from Mr. W. ORD.
- (10) Statement of Head Warden for SEAFORTH.
- (11) Statement of Nurse M.G. DAVIES, 31 May 41.
- (12) Statement of Rescue Squad Leader and Superintendent Rescue Parties, Borough of Crosby.
- (13) Personal Narrative of B - 51527, Pte. M. DONALDSON, Lorne Sects.

C.B.S.

Cdn. Base Depot,
Lorne Scots,
OULTON PARK,
CHESHIRE.

S.O.,
C.M.H.Q.,
London.

9 Jun 41

Cdn. Base Depot
Merseyside.

1. Appended hereto is a brief report, copies of a number of letters and statements bearing on the behaviour of the Cdn. Base Depot during the period when we were stationed at Seaforth Barracks, Merseyside.
2. Our barracks being within a few hundred yards of the Gladstone Docks, while outside the walls was a battery of A.A. guns and within the confines of the barracks an Admiralty Wireless Station, it was a military objective.
3. From the time we arrived, in fact within two hours, we were subjected to a great deal of aerial attack which was intensified on the consecutive nights 1/2 to 8/9 May.
4. Almost as soon as we arrived I had arranged a demonstration of the methods of dealing with incendiary bombs; three days later the unit had the opportunity of dealing with some enemy incendiaries in the barracks.
5. There was seldom a day without a raid or at least an Alert, and the permanent staff and the attached personnel of all ranks, turned out in aid of the Civil Defence on all occasions, in organized parties or in groups, but at no time was the barracks left without its proper protection.
6. This report is not complete as new facts come to light nearly every day. As recently as Saturday/Sunday, 1/2 Jun, our S/Sgt. helped in the rescue of three people in the neighbourhood of Seaforth.
7. To quote from a letter herewith:

"It was undoubtedly due to their efforts that such a low figure in the number of fatal casualties was effected."

Chairman,
Civil Defence Committee.

"I am informed that these men, often at great personal risk, helped to release trapped persons and also helped to a great extent in clearing the debris, controlling traffic, assisting homeless persons and generally giving invaluable aid to the Civil Defence Services.

Cont.---

".....The help given on this occasion was very highly appreciated by the Police."

A.F. HORDER

Chief Constable of Lancashire.

8. Capt. D.C. Heggie, attached Medical Officer, is worthy of commendation for long and continuous work. He was, on one occasion, lowered down by his feet to administer morphia to trapped people, - the attached statement will show his gallantry and courage in detail.

9. Chief Inspector ALLEN of Seaforth said that the help given was inestimable and stated that he did not know what they would have done without such help, "..... that without such help it would have been difficult to accomplish what they did."

10. One man, MacDonaldson, besides driving an ambulance backwards and forwards to the Mortuary and hospitals, helped in the releasing of thirtytwo people dead and alive. Under these circumstances, may I respectfully recommend that some awards may be made to the personnel and some commendation to this unit which has the far greater proportion of men who are sick and unfit. It has distinguished itself in the eyes of the people of the district in which we were stationed. All ranks of the permanent staff and attached Category "E", have done a good job for Canada.

(Louis Keene) Lieut-Colonel
Cdn. Base Depot
Lorne Scots

The "MacDonaldson" referred to is Olt.
M. DONALDSON, LORNE SCOTS: see
item 13 of this Appendix. C.S.

REPORT OF AIR RAID ATTACK, SEAFORTH BARRACKS,
LIVERPOOL.

The Seaforth Barracks, Liverpool are within one mile of Gladstone Barracks, 300 yards from an anti-aircraft battery and there is a wireless station in the centre of the barracks, so it could easily be considered in the target area.

Capt. C.E. Hoggie, R.C.A.M.C. Our medical arrangements were such that we had two doctors with us all the time and often one or two going back on a draft available for use in an emergency.

As soon as we came to the area we told the Civil Defence Authorities that we would be glad to help if we could do so.

The A.R.P., A.F.S., and other Civil Defence Services in the neighbourhood of the barracks were well organised in this middle-class district but there was a lack of doctors, so our senior Medical Officer of the permanent staff, with permission, voluntarily attached himself to the F.A.P. on the Rawson Road about fifty yards outside our barrack gates.

When the "Alert" sounded he would go to this post and stay there until "All Clear" went, often being there all night caring for the injured and binding up the wounded who were brought in to this First Aid Post.

On one occasion, Saturday/Sunday night May 3/4, there was a particularly heavy blitz with parachute mines dropping all around our barracks. The Doctor and S/Sgt. Moreton, both in trows, glengarries and doublets had been dining with friends at Crosby when the sirens went. Immediately they set off on foot for barracks and on the way rescued two women and a dog who were trapped in the ruins of a blitzed house. Fortunately all were uninjured but badly shocked. They set off again; meanwhile, it becoming an extremely bad blitz, the Lorne Scot personnel and the attached category "E" men were all out working amongst the debris and rubble of demolished houses, searching for and rescuing injured and bringing out dead people. The doctor immediately took charge of the civilian F.A.P., binding up wounds, administering first aid and hurrying back and forth between blitzed houses and F.A.P., directing operations and crawling down into cellars to administer hypodermics to trapped people to relieve their sufferings until they could be released. Dawn and the "Raiders Passed" siren came, the rescue parties toiled on. About 1000 hours a lull came in the rescue work and Doctor, dishevelled, tired, dirty, good uniform torn and filthy was persuaded to go back to Barracks for something to eat and clean-up, but in a short time he was back again on the job.

There were air attacks for seven successive nights and this Medical Officer was at his post on all occasions, besides the numerous other occasions in the months of March and April, during the numerous attacks on this neighbourhood.

On Wednesday/Thursday night, May 7/8, when the "Alert" sounded, Doctor Hoggie was back at the First Aid Post on Rawson Road, chatting and cheering up the nurses and A.R.P. workers and drinking a cup of tea that someone had handed to him. A number of big bombs had landed in the neighbourhood and they were all tensely waiting for the first expected casualties when there was a heavy thud and the building shook violently. The Doctor got up to place his tea cup on the mantel when the mantel disappeared and the whole roof and walls collapsed. Screams, darkness, shouts, smoke, falling timbers and collapsing walls. He was injured in the head and left side of the face and thrown some distance. In spite of his profuse bleeding and shock, he dragged himself over to the screaming, injured nurses and by strenuous efforts managed to pull them clear of the timbers, bricks, etc. and drag them outside

where he commenced to bind their wounds, but owing to loss of blood, couldn't complete the job. In a very few minutes the wounded were found and rushed away to another First Aid Post and thence to hospital.

The officer has, in my opinion, shown a very great deal of courage and bravery. There was never a time that the needs of this unit during a blitz were neglected, arrangements having been made that at least one Medical Officer stay in the barrack confines.

I have pleasure in bringing the heroism of this officer to your attention.

He is at present at #1 General Hospital in Birmingham.

(sgd.) Louis Keene

(Louis Keene Lt-Colonel
Cdn. Base Depot
Lorne Scots

C O P Y

7th June, 1941.

CAPT. BULLOCK, G.W.

This officer was appointed P.A.D. Officer when we first arrived at Conforth. He was responsible under the P.A.D. for the West Lancashire Area for the training and organising fire fighting squads, and to be sure that the fire fighting apparatus was in good order and everybody on duty at their posts. It was also his responsibility to see that the trailer pump was properly warmed up every time there was an alert, of which there were a great many all the time we were in the Area.

During this period of intensive air attacks, this officer scarcely had his clothes off for the whole week. He was out during all alerts, and by this conscientious devotion to duty was responsible that the barracks were not destroyed by fire during the successive raids when showers of incendiaries were rained down on it. He ascertained that there were always sufficient men on duty to handle any danger that might arise in the barracks, while so many of the men were away employed on rescue work outside the Barracks Area.

While his work was not so spectacular as that of others, he helped greatly the proper carrying out of P.A.D. work by his example and under his guidance.

.....

The above is a copy of a report by Lt.-Col. Keene. He tells me that this officer is a Lorne Scot.

C.B.S.

(4)

C O P Y.

1 June 1941.

Lieut.Col. Louis Keene, E.D.,
Officer Commanding,
1st Can. Base Depot.
LORNE SCOTS.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit my report, for your approval, of the help and work accomplished by the Officers and men of the 1st Can. Base Depot during the Air Raids and subsequent bombing, whilst stationed at Seaforth Barracks Liverpool. Appended are official reports given to me by the Wardens and Police Authorities.

The Police Supt. informed me that an official letter of appreciation has been forwarded to you by the Chief of Police.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours obediently,

(Sgd.) A.C.Gell, Capt.

Canadian Seaforths.

REPORT

5

Liverpool and district were bombed on the nights of 2 to 8 May inclusive and Seaforth and Bootle being in the dock area came in for some of the heaviest attacks.

These very densely populated districts, mostly working class, suffered intense damage to property with subsequent heavy loss of life.

Both officers and men of the Base Depot, though mostly Category "E", voluntarily turned out and gave every help possible to the victims and the Local Authorities in rescuing people and valuable personal belongings from wrecked homes, at all times at very great risk owing to collapsing walls, fires and falling bombs.

Chief Inspector Allen.

Chief Inspector Allen of Seaforth Police Station told me that the help given was inestimable and stated he did not know what they would have done without such help, for the calls were so heavy on all services, Rescue Parties, A.R.P., First Aid, Police and Demolition, that without such help it would have been difficult to accomplish what they did.

Subsequently the people of the districts I visited, voluntarily came forward and made so many grateful statements of the help received that I found it a problem to lay particular emphasis on individual acts of bravery, but two particular instances were brought to my notice both by civilians and police in the area concerned, and I beg permission to bring them especially to your attention.

Capt. D.C. Heggie.

This officer throughout the whole of the raids gave exceptional service and help at the different First Aid Posts and in the heaviest attack on Saturday night, had crawled through tunnels in the debris and in one instance administered morphia to a Mr. Kelly, being lowered down by his feet to do so. Mr. Mrs. and Miss Kelly were trapped in the cellar of their house in Bedford Place where a mine had dropped, Mrs. and Miss Kelly being dead when eventually reached through the tunnel made in the debris.

Capt. Heggie stayed around this district giving all assistance possible until daybreak.

On the following Wednesday, he was again giving voluntary help at the First Aid Post in Rawson Road, attending to a casualty, when a large bomb dropped right in the yard of the Post, injuring him.

Mrs. M.E. Wilkinson stated that Capt. Heggie was at her home earlier in the evening and seeing how tired he looked had begged him to go back to barracks early and get some rest in case there was another raid that night. This he agreed to do but instead called at the First Aid Post and stayed there until injured. He had been helping at this Post throughout the previous raids, the local M.O. in charge being away.

A.2228 Signaller W.G. Minnice - 1st Div. Signals
B.51515 Pte. Cuthbert, S.A. - Lorne Scots.
H.16415 Pte. Siegel, A.G. - P.P.C.L.I.

together went to Bedford Place where a mine had dropped, this place being close and opposite to the barracks, to see what help they could give. Here about ten or twelve houses were totally destroyed and the casualties were very heavy.

Hearing that it was thought some people were trapped in their cellars, these men ascertained where voices had been heard and proceeded to dig and burrow through the debris, despite falling walls, until faint sounds were heard, and located a Mr. Kelly who was imprisoned with his wife and daughter.

Sgm. Minnice.

Minnice chiselled through the brick wall and found Mr. Kelly alive but the others dead. In the meantime, Pte. Cuthbert went and found Capt. Heggie, the three lowering him by his feet to administer morphia as Mr. Kelly was badly crushed.

On being told by Mr. Kelly that he had heard voices on the other side of the wall, Minnice again proceeded to tunnel, twice having to try new locations owing to heavy obstructions being in the way. This part was extremely hazardous to all three, as a large wall was crumbling and it eventually crashed.

In this cellar they found two women, Mrs. and Miss Baker, mother and daughter, Miss Baker alone being alive and in danger of drowning as water from the broken main was up to her shoulders when they eventually reached her. Ptes. Cuthbert and Siegel rushed across to the barracks and obtained a fire pump and pumped out the water whilst Minnice tunnelled the opening large enough to get Miss Baker out. They were unable to get out the other bodies until midday, Sunday.

These men, except for short break for food early Sunday morning, worked continuously until late Sunday night. They had, previous to this mine falling, been fighting fires and putting out incendiaries in the district.

Pte. Minnice in particular, showed coolness, courage and initiative which all around commented on, and on having refused to give his name to the Warden on being asked, saying they had all only done their duty. This man is suffering from a lame leg for which he is being returned to Canada.

L.6158 Pte. Fraser, J. - 18th Anti-tank Battery, drove Lieut. L. Griffiths - R.C.A.M.C. from 2300 hours onwards, the doctor giving medical help wherever necessary and taking patients to hospitals whilst the doctor was administering.

Pte. Fraser helped to extricate many people, put out incendiaries and neither returned until Sunday morning, working and helping continuously, Lieut. Griffiths, R.C.A.M.C. giving tremendous help both at First Aid Posts and around throughout the blitz.

(Sgd) A.C. Gell

Capt.

(6)

COPY

THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LITHERLAND

Telephone 2231 Waterloo
2232

Air Raid Precautions Dept.
Town Hall,
Litherland,
Liverpool 21.

3rd June 1941

Dear Sir,

I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the Civil Defence Committee in this area of the County Palatine, of expressing to you our sincere appreciation of the very excellent services rendered to the District by your personnel on the occasion of the severe air raids on the 3rd and 4th ultimo.

It was undoubtedly due to their efforts that such a low figure in the number of fatal casualties was effected.

Thanking you for your valuable assistance and willing co-operation in this matter,

Yours sincerely,

Sgd. J.Lloyd Parry,

Chairman,
Civil Defence Committee.

Lieut.Colonel Louis Keene, E.D.
Commanding,
No.1 Canadian Base Depot,
Western Command.

HM/55/A

Telephone No.
Preston 4811

Chief Constable's Office
('55' Department)
Lancashire Constabulary
Preston.

Telegrams
Ecilop, Preston.

8th May, 1941

AIR RAIDS ON MERSEYSIDE - ASSISTANCE RENDERED
BY THE MILITARY

Dear Sir,

It has been brought to my notice that during last weekend's air raids on Merseyside extremely valuable assistance was rendered in my Seaforth Division by soldiers of the 1st Canadian Reception Centre, Seaforth. I am informed that these men, often at great personal risk, helped to release trapped persons and also helped to a great extent in clearing the debris, controlling traffic, assisting homeless persons and generally giving invaluable aid to the Civil Defence Services.

It gives me great pleasure to bring these facts to your notice, and to add that the help given on this occasion was very highly appreciated by the Police.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. A.F.Horder

Chief Constable of Lancashire.

Colonel Keene,
Officer Commanding
1st Canadian Reception Centre,
Seaforth Barracks,
Seaforth,
LIVERPOOL 22.

COPY

8

BOROUGH OF CROSBY

Town Clerk's Department,
Town Hall,
Waterloo,
Liverpool 22.

Telephone 2201 Waterloo

Frank D.Foulkes,

6th May 1941

Town Clerk

AC/AMH

The Commanding Officer,
Lorne Scots Regiment,
Seaforth Barracks
SEAFORTH

Dear Sir,

I have been directed by the Civil Defence Committee to convey to you their sincere appreciation of the excellent services rendered by detachments of your regiment during and following the recent air raids. The assistance of the troops has been invaluable, and many appreciative reports have been received regarding the way in which the work was carried out.

Yours faithfully

Sgd. Frank D.Foulkes.

Received

(9)

COPY

Mr. & Mrs. W. Ord,
59 Claremont Road,
Seaforth,
Liverpool 21.

To:-
Officer Commanding,
Canadian General Headquarters,
Canada House,
London.

Dear Sir,

I am very pleased at the act of one of your
Canadian soldiers in the time of a Blitz here.

An incendiary bomb fell and caught our back
bedroom Private Polster of the Canadian Artillery, who is
stationed at Seaforth Barracks, put it out and saved our
home and my sister in law Mrs. Parrett, and her daughter
were hurt and he also gave first aid to them, while Jerry
was heavily bombing and fixed her arm and the child's leg.

I would like all the credit necessary given
to Private Polster.

Thanking you in advance,

Yours sincerely,

P.S. The soldier did not want to give his name but I found
out from some one else.

extra (10)

William James Roberts says,

I am Head Warden A.R.P. for Seaforth, and I reside at 14 Clarendon Road, Seaforth.

On Saturday night May 3rd and 4th 1941, I was on duty amongst other air raid incidents, at the incident at Bedford Place, Seaforth, where a parachute mine exploded, demolishing property and trapping people in the wreckage. The mine dropped about 0230 hours.

Shortly after the parachute mine exploded a number of Canadian soldiers whom I did not know, but who were stationed at Seaforth Barracks at that time, and including a Captain who was a doctor, came to the scene to render assistance. The Captain did splendid work rendering assistance to the injured as they were brought out of the debris from demolished houses, and also to people who were still trapped amongst the debris, and he remained on the scene until about 1000 hours on Sunday 4th May, 1941.

Amongst the Canadian soldiers, two men in particular did exceptionally fine work, I think one of them was a lance corporal and the other a private. They worked amongst debris, tunneling under the demolished houses to people trapped in a cellar, who were rescued owing to their efforts. They kept on with this difficult and dangerous work until about 0900 hours on Sunday 4th May, 1941.

All the remainder of the Canadians did splendid work and rendered invaluable assistance. These men were completely tired out with their efforts when they left the scene and some of them were asleep on their feet.

The air raid on this occasion was a very heavy one.

Sgd. W.J.Roberts.

H.W.

MERITORIOUS SERVICES RENDERED BY TWO MEMBERS
OF H.M. FORCES ON THE NIGHT OF 3/4 MAY, 1941
AT BEDFORD PLACE, SEAFORTH, LIVERPOOL 21.

EYE WITNESS REPORT

A parachute mine had fallen on a congested area causing many deaths and casualties. It was observed that a Doctor named Capt. D.C. Heggie of the Canadian Lorne Scottish rendered conspicuous gallantry to entrapped persons.

He burrowed down into the debris and rendered medical aid on five separate occasions over a period of eight hours.

On one occasion he was held upside down during which time he injected morphia to relieve the suffering of the trapped person.

He also tunnelled his way through the debris to render medical assistance to four persons who were also trapped. Through his efforts the lives of these people were saved.

During the incidents, bombs were falling and fires were raging in the vicinity. Adding to the danger, an unexploded bomb was near the site.

Coupled to the gallantry of the aforesaid gentleman, we feel it our duty to report our observations concerning the meritorious service of Regimental No. A.228 Sgm. W.O. Minnice, 1st Div. Signals. This man for over a period of seven hours burrowed beneath the debris and released trapped persons.

The service this man rendered is made the more conspicuous owing to the tottering condition of gable ends of three storied houses above the tunnels he had burrowed out. His conduct deserves the highest praise.

(Sgd) Patrick Traynor

Rescue Squad Leader

Superintendent Rescue Parties
Borough of Crosby
(Sgd) A.L. Cochrane

31/5/41

(11)

Mary Gwendoline Davies
Trained Nurse
8, Rosedale Avenue,
Crosby..... says:

On Saturday night, 3rd and 4th May, 1941, I was on duty in my official capacity at No. 1 First Aid Depot, Rawson Road, Seaforth. An air raid commenced about midnight which proved to be one of the heaviest raids we have experienced.

Whilst the raid was in progress and during a period covering about nine hours, invaluable work was performed at the above Post by a Canadian Captain named Heggie who was a doctor.

On Sunday, May 4th, Captain Heggie again rendered most valuable assistance during another heavy raid which lasted from midnight to 4 a.m.

(Sgd) M.G. Davies

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRIVER E. DONALDSON'S EXPERIENCE.

(B - 51527, LORNE SCOTS).

On Saturday night, I first went to the Merton Hotel then back to barracks. The warning sounded at 2335 hours and at 2340 hours the first land mine came down about half a mile away. I ran towards it but half way there I heard H.E. bombs falling. I tried to get down flat but was too late and half way down was picked up by blast and rolled like a barrel into the middle of the street. Wind knocked me out but to my joy was able to get up and move. Measured distance next day and was approximately 15 ft. from crater, which is too damn close.

I stopped and spoke to two fire watchers who took me up three-story building, and out on to balcony. We just got out there when when another land mine exploded in same place as first and the suction made us cling to the balcony rail. I said "This is no place for me" so we went down.

I thought I should get back to barracks but on reaching Johnson Dyer works I heard some moaning: investigating and found 12 adults, 4 children and two dogs in a shelter which had received a direct hit, so started to remove same.

The two children had all their clothes gone so I put my jacket on small boy of 4 years and sweater on girl of 3 years, and took what I imagine was their mother to nearest Air-raid shelter. I asked men to come and help with rest, and after telling them in very strong language what I thought of them, finally got about 25 men.

When we ^{had} removed all, we heard some whining and had another look and found a small girl of about 5 years pinned by right leg under approximately 5-tons of cement and steel. We could not move it so I saw by light of fire a shelter about 30 yards away so borrowed cold chisel and hammer and Finch had three of same, so we chipped away from around leg and drew child out her dog never leaving her until she left.

Two of us looked through another hole and saw three women who were beyond our help.

On leaving I became very cold so asked first civilian if he could loan me a coat. Received same and had a small cup of cold tea. Proceeded for home passing house with all windows and doors blown in. I heard some sobbing so went in to find house almost upside down - not a thing standing, plaster all down, etc. Finally, hearing a female voice sob, soldier got down on knees on account of terrific rain of H.E. bombs and finally found young mother with two babies behind tipped Chesterfield. Mother put her arms round me and went into hysterics right away. I was in a hell of a fix, not knowing what to do, so put my arms around her and patting her back said, "Please lady, think of your kiddies." After kissing her forehead several times she turned out to be a solid brick and she cuddled her babies and I told her I would send two men to sit with her, which I did.

After seeing everyone as comfortable as possible, I headed once more for barracks. I tried to take a short cut while climbing over a pile of bricks which had been a house and saw a man's right hand. I felt it - it was warm and he groaned which gave me a start, but on uncovering him found he had one leg left, the right might as well have been off. The poor chap also received a brick right on the mouth and he looked like one of the saucer-lipped Africans, being all blood. I saw an ambulance two blocks away but they could not hear me shout, so blood and all I put my fingers in my mouth and whistled, but I could taste blood for 24 hours after.

The first-aid men told me he would live but I have my doubts.

I then started back and Major Lent's car came along so I stopped him and went straight to Officer's Mess with the great hopes of getting a damn good shot. As I entered the door the phone rang and they asked for transport. I told them all our transport was out but in any other way we would be glad to help.

With that, our friend sent us down a Molotov Breadbasket but the boys were great and had them all out almost as soon as they were alight.

Just after that, Major Burgoyne came and asked for 100 men to help outside. Within 10 minutes everyone was ready and we marched out of the gate. We were nearly all put on police work, so had little to do but guard the unfortunate people's belongings.

I finally returned to breakfast at 1030 hours. We had no gas or water but the cooks managed to get us something.

P.S. One little thing I still laugh over. A lady called me as I was passing and asked me to take her to a shelter. She was so scared she did not know what to do. She had a pair of slacks and sweater and a small coat she wanted to get on so I told her I would wait outside but she wouldn't let me leave as there was quite a lot of stuff coming down. I grabbed her, undressed her and put her other clothes on and got out while the going was good. I saw her a couple of days later and she looked like a tomato so I said "What are you blushing for." She said "I bet that's the first time you ever dressed a woman." I returned a crack but was immediately invited to the house, but as I had more important things in mind, I let her buy me a couple of "doubles" and got on my way.