

The Torch

May 2018

Volume 29, Number 2

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Operation HUSKY, Seventy-Five Years Later

Dr. Robert Engen, Royal Military College of Canada

For six weeks in the summer of 1943, the outcome of the Second World War balanced on a Mediterranean island one-third the size of New Brunswick. That island, the Italian province of Sicily, was to be seized in a colossal Allied joint operation codenamed HUSKY. July 10th 2018 marks the 75th anniversary of

the start of the Sicilian campaign. It is a mighty story that needs to be continually retold.

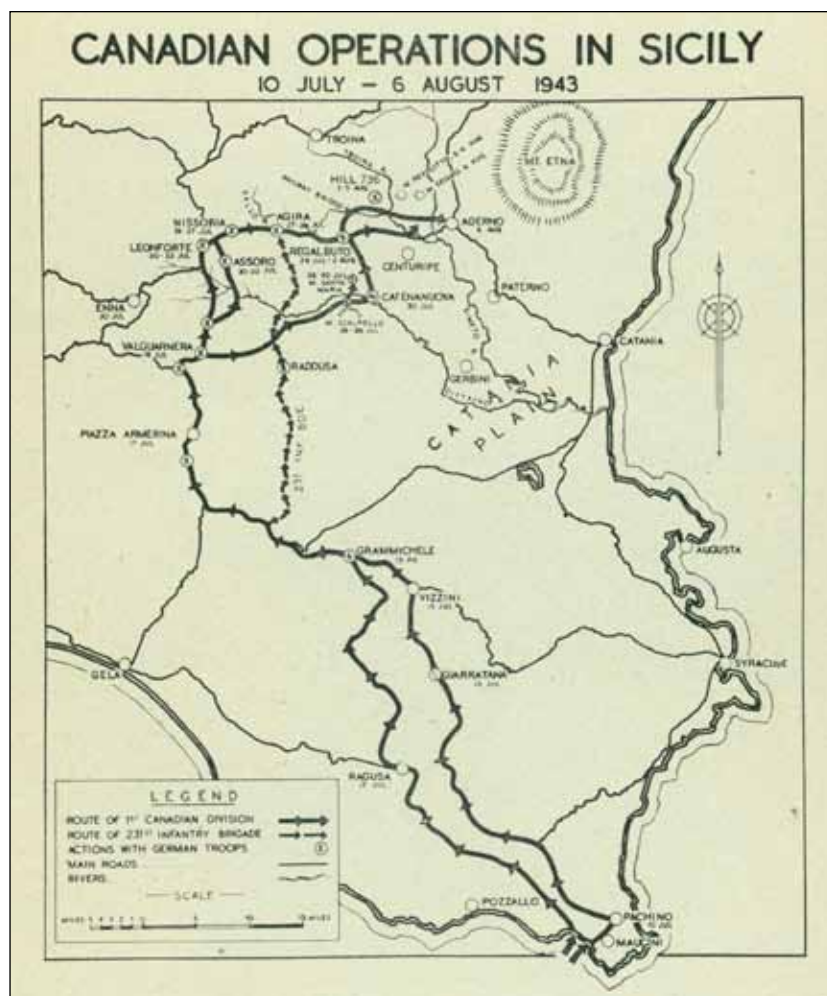
Why? Because in 1943, the Allied nations faced a terrible dilemma. In 1918 they had defeated Germany at great cost, with the ability to use their major ally, France, as a base of operations on the European contin-

ent. But since June 1940, France had fallen under Nazi control, so no matter where the western Allies wanted to bring the fight to the Germans, they would have to cross major bodies of water to do it. This increased the complexity and risks involved exponentially. Landing a large army on a

continued on page 3



B/64587 Private F.R. Webb, a PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank) gunner from the 48th Highlanders of Canada rests at side of road during a march to Regalbuto, Sicily. This 27 year-old Highlander from Toronto was killed two months later in Italy on 30 September, 1943 and lies buried in the Bari War Cemetery (Grave III. D. 6.). CWM 19910238-821



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President's Message

Dear readers, welcome to the spring 2018 edition of *The Torch*. Please join me in congratulating Ed Storey our new editor. Ed brings a wealth of experience and creativity which can only broaden the range and depth of the publication and enrich its quality. Under his stewardship, we have introduced a themed approach to editions (this edition being Operation Husky) as well as a new format which has already attracted positive comment and which I hope you will enjoy.

In previous messages, I reported on the initiative to examine our governance, our strategic framework and our business approach so as to ensure that we are lean and focussed for successful support of the CWM. There have been many cooks in the broth and we have subjected our work to a rigorous SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and we are nearing completion. Earlier I shared our vision statement identifying the FCWM as a pan-Canadian corporation supporting the Museum through fundraising, volunteering and program participation. In support, we have now adopted four strategic objectives: to raise funds; to build constituency across Canada; to optimize support directed to the Museum; and, to govern and administer the Friends organization effectively and efficiently.

To strengthen internal governance we have introduced training for our board of directors to ensure awareness of our responsibilities as a registered charity and a not-for-profit corporation. Recognizing that *The Torch* and the FCWM website are fundamental communications vehicles supporting outreach we have strengthened oversight by establishing an editorial policy and assigning an assurance reporting role to a particular BOD member.

Looking forward, we are moving ahead in support of our signature event "The Eleventh Hour" a gala program for Saturday, 03 November 2018. The management team comprising of representatives of the FCWM, the CWM and the Ottawa Cantata Singers team meet on a regular basis and we are soon to embark on the formal campaign to solicit sponsor support. Of course, we are looking for the support of our readers to help fill the seats!

Finally, may I remind all readers of the importance of supporting *The Torch* through furnishing articles or suggesting possible contributors. *The Torch* product is closely aligned with strategic objectives and reflects who we are, what we are and where we want to go. We all need to contribute!

**Yours aye
Robert Hamilton**



coastline held by enemy forces is one of the most difficult tasks a military can take on; Canada had learned this to its sorrow at Dieppe.

Historian Lee Windsor has argued that Sicily needs to be viewed as a necessary part of the D-Day plan that culminated in the invasion of Normandy in 1944. For the Allies, the more German forces that could be drawn away from the forthcoming landings in France, the better the chances were that those landings would succeed. Most of the Nazi war machine was deployed eastwards against the Soviet Union, but a new Allied campaign would draw German forces away from the eastern front, and reduce the number of troops they would have on-hand to oppose a landing in Normandy.

Sicily was the optimal target. The Italian island-province lies at the pivot of the Mediterranean Sea and commands the approaches through its centre. In 1943 Sicily was very close to friendly airbases in Malta and North Africa, and battle-hardened Allied armies were nearby after the defeat of the Afrika Korps in Tunisia. Attacking Sicily would also put pressure on the crumbling Italian Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, and might conceivably drive Italy out of the war, leaving Germany's southern frontier vulnerable. The Germans gained nothing from fighting in Italy, but HUSKY would force them to deploy hundreds of thousands of soldiers to guard their empire's southern flank.

The 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the independent 1st Canadian Tank Brigade took part in the invasion of Sicily as part of the British Eighth Army. Although initially landing at Pachino Beach, a remote corner of the island intended to shelter the inexperienced Canadians from immediate counter-attack, they quickly found themselves at the critical place at the critical time. Marching inland through the centre of the island, the

Canadians struck at the fulcrum of the German defensive line before it was fully prepared, beginning an end-run around the enemy's main battle line. The Canadians chased, fought, and defeated elements of every German division on the island of Sicily, and many Italian ones; they inflicted far more casualties than they sustained.

Sicily was Canada's first sustained campaign of the Second World War, and one of the swiftest and most decisive victories that involved Canadian troops. More than 26,000 Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen were part of HUSKY. 490 of those Canadians remain on that island today, buried at the Agira war cemetery.



Fully laden troops gingerly disembark Landing Craft Infantry (Large) (LCI(L)) 166 onto the Op Husky Pacino Beachhead. During the Second World War, LCI(L) 166 served in various theatres in both Europe and Asia. LCI(L) 166 was laid down by Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. (Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A.) on 26 August, 1942, and launched on 17 October. Following her launch in the United States she was transferred to the Royal Navy under terms of the Lend-Lease Act and commissioned HM LCI(L) 166 on 9 November, 1942 and in July 1943 participated in Op Husky. On 4 December, 1943 she was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy and placed under command of LT. George M. Oliver RCNVR (Temp). LCI(L) 166 participated in Operation Neptune, the invasion of Normandy, as part of Force "J", with the RCN's 1st (Ex RN 260th) Flotilla. On 31 August, 1944, she was decommissioned by the RCN and returned to the RN. In April 1945 LCI(L) 166 participated in Operation Dracula landing men of the RAF Regiment and RAF crew at a beachhead near Rangoon, Burma. LCI(L) 166 was returned to US Naval custody 14 March, 1946; struck from the Naval Register on 17 April, 1946 and transferred to the State Department for disposal where she was sold on 13 February, 1948. Her fate following disposal is unknown. LAC Image 23923

Personal Message from the Army Commander

Ed Storey

The 1st Canadian Infantry Division had been in England since late 1939 and other than when the 1st Brigade landed in Brest in June 1940 for a brief stay before the fall of France; and when the 2nd Brigade participated in the Operation Gauntlet raid at Spitsbergen in September 1941, the Division had spent years training for their chance to fight the Germans. The 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade had arrived in England in 1941 and only The Calgary Regiment had been blooded having taken part in the ill-fated August 1942 Dieppe Raid. The time for action finally came in June 1943 when these two formations were selected to become part of the famous British Eighth Army commanded by General Sir Bernard Montgomery. Under command of the British XXX Corps, and serving alongside the veteran 51st (Highland) Division, the Canadians took part in Operation Husky, codename for the Allied assault landing on Sicily on 10 July 1943. The Sicilian campaign lasted 38 days and cost over 2,100 casualties. It also brought the Canadian Army directly into the fight against the Germans demonstrating that the warrior reputation earned by Canada during the First World War was still just as strong.

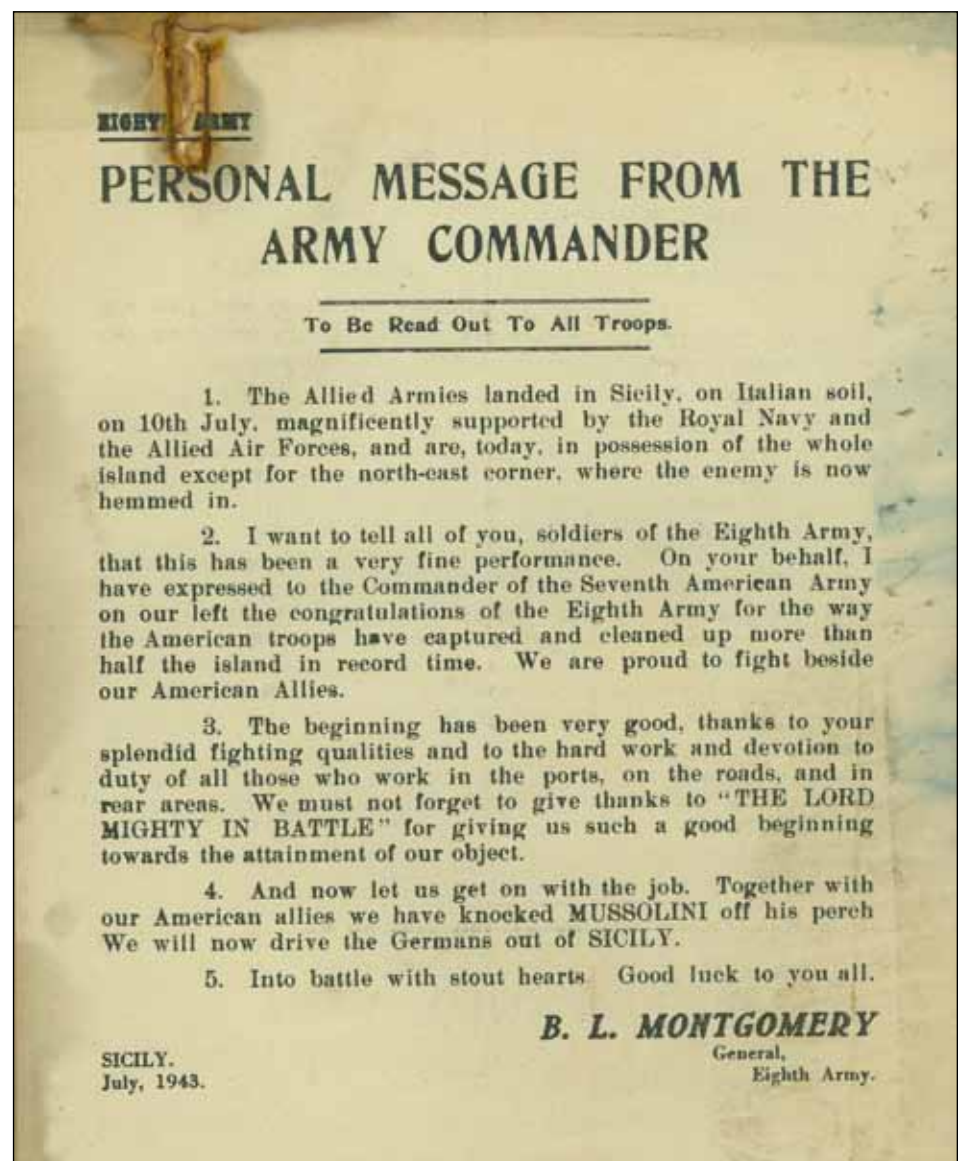
Personal messages have been used for centuries by commanders to inspire their men before a battle or to congratulate them at the end of a campaign. This tradition continued throughout the Second World War with these messages being printed in the field and distributed down to battalion level.

This particular message from General B.L. Montgomery was distributed just before the final completion of the Sicilian campaign and

praises the Eighth Army for their very fine performance and he congratulates the American Seventh Army for their part in capturing and clearing more than half the island. The splendid fighting qualities of the Army are also recognized as was the hard work of the supporting troops. Illustrating the religious devotion of the times, thanks was also given to "The Lord Mighty in Battle." The message concludes with some rousing words of inspiration and good luck towards the successful completion of the

campaign to drive the Germans out of Sicily.

These messages were never meant to be saved and the vast majority was lost during the war. Paper ephemera is some of the most delicate of artifacts to preserve and personal messages from commanders are exciting to collect due in part to their content and the fact that so very few were printed. This message is an excellent example from the Sicilian campaign 75 years ago.



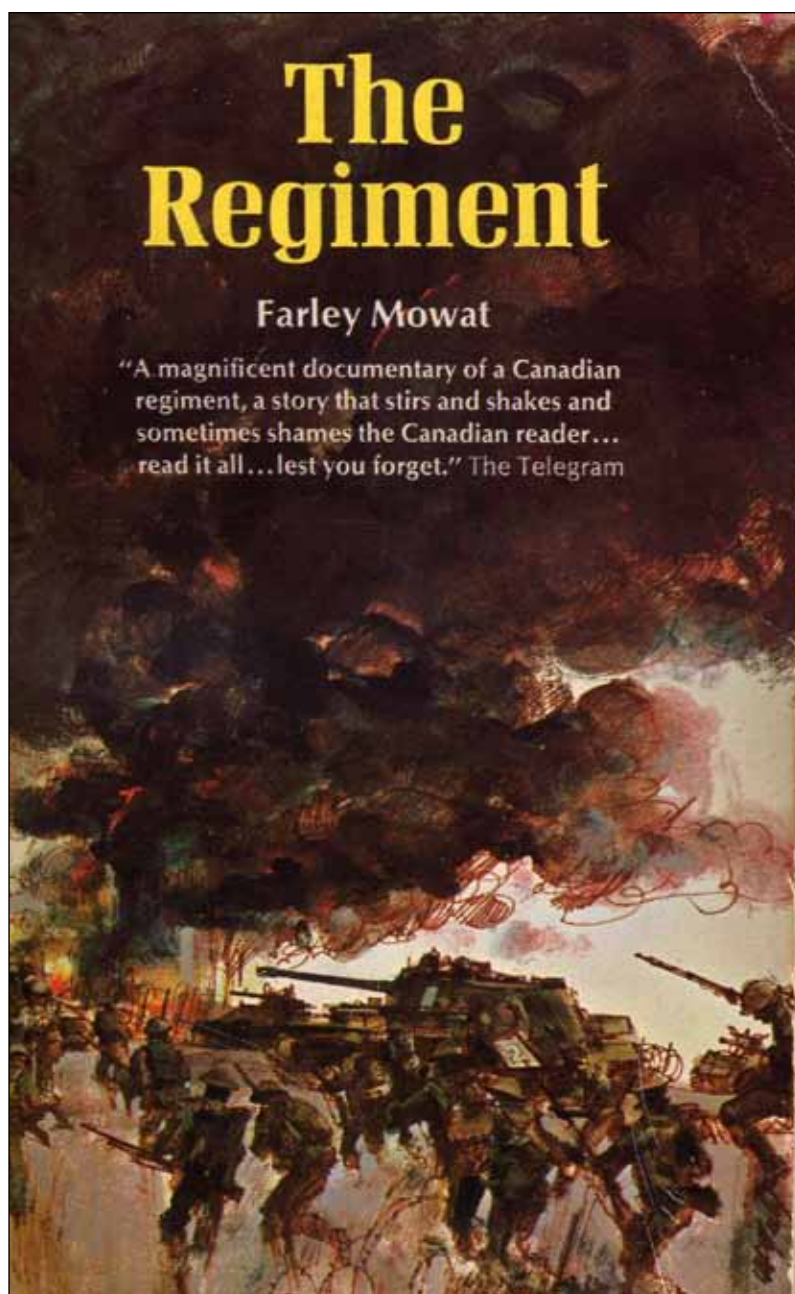
Chronicling the 1943 Sicilian Campaign

Bob Fowler

What happened in Sicily in the summer of 1943? Like all the campaigns of the Second World War, many books have been published about it, although the choices are more limited than other more well-known battles. So what publications best tell the story of this first invasion of an Axis power in this war? Most units which participated in it will of course include something in their regimental histories. However, the book that gives broadest picture about it must be *Bitter Victory* by Carlo D'Este (1988, ISBN 978-0060576509), as it covers the story from both the Allied and Axis viewpoints, and largely focuses on the lack of coordination at the Allied command level. At 579 pages, it is the most thorough book on the subject and is a classic. On an operational level, only one book deals both with the Sicilian campaign and the Canadian contribution. That is *Operation Husky* by Mark Zuehlke, published in 2008 (ISBN 978-1553653240), and it is another hefty study at 480 pages. From the aspect of writing style, on the other hand, the book that is perhaps both the easiest to read and well researched would be the most recent 816 page *The Day of Battle* by Rick Atkinson (2007, ISBN 978-0805088618), a Pulitzer Prize winning author. Unfortunately, it focuses mainly on the American role and Sicily is only dealt with in the first of four parts of the book.

Historians are certainly the best writers to explain the grand happenings and the reasons for success or failure in war. However, a writer who participated in a battle and has skill with words must be the best source for conveying to a reader what it was like to be a participant. With this in mind, the best books in my opinion to understand the battle for Sicily are probably those by Farley Mowat. As a 2nd lieutenant, he led an infantry platoon of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment through Sicily and so was well-qualified to write about the campaign. Ten years after the war ended, he published *The Regiment* (ISBN 978-1459733893), the account of what his regiment did in the war. This was followed in 1979 by his own memoir, titled *And No Birds Sang* (ISBN 978-0864922823), telling about both the humorous and ugly things that he experienced in Sicily and Italy. What is most appealing about these books is that he holds nothing back, writing, as he states, "with the emotions which belonged to those men." His best account

is about the battle of Assoro, during which the battalion scaled a great cliff to seize the heights above the town and outflank the German defences. While he carried out his role of platoon leader well, he is very honest about how he lost his eagerness for war after experiencing a Nebelwerfer bombardment on the mountain, and how this would later result in him becoming a combat stress casualty. These two books therefore provide an unusual viewpoint for anyone who wishes to understand the Canadian role in the Campaign for Sicily.



A New Editor Signs In - Ed Storey

Ed has been a member of the Friends of the Canadian War Museum since its inception and has served on several committees as well as the Board of Directors. Ed is also retired from the military having served 34 years in the Canadian Military Engineers.

Trained as a cartographer, printer and terrain analyst, Ed has served overseas in the Former Yugoslavia, Central Africa, Central America and Afghanistan. Ed brings a wealth of experience to *The Torch* as for over a

decade he was on the editorial committee of *The Military Mapper* managing content and helping it evolve into the digital era. Ed is also a published author having written extensively for several European enthusiast magazines as well as *Canadian Military History Magazine*, *Legion Magazine* and *Esprit du Corps*.

He looks forward to taking the helm of *The Torch* and plans to build on the fine work conducted by Mike Braham and the rest of the team.

Editor's Comments

Welcome to the May 2018 edition of *The Torch* and my first as the new editor. Let me first take the time to thank Mike Braham for all of his hard work over the years. Mike shaped *The Torch* into the publication that we now all enjoy and he has been instrumental in ensuring that the transition in editors was as smooth as possible. Mike, thank you and enjoy your new-found spare time.

2018 marks the 75th Anniversary of Operations Husky and Cottage, both Allied amphibious landings, but at opposite sides of the world. Operation Husky, in July 1943, was the Anglo-American assault on Sicily which was often described as the 'soft underbelly of Fortress Europe' by Winston Churchill. Operation Cottage in August 1943 was the combined American-Canadian attack to retake Kiska Island in the Aleutians from the Japanese. Sadly both operations have been overshadowed by latter events in mainland Europe.

The Friends have decided to mark Op Husky with a Member's forum in June as a lead-in to the Annual General Meeting. *The Torch* is supporting this forum and by now you will probably have noticed that the theme of this edition is also Op Husky. My work as Editor has been made much easier by the assistance provided by the CWM's Military History Research Centre who graciously supplied the images and artwork. As well, both Bob Fowler from the Friends and Rob Engen from RMC tied this edition together by graciously submitted themed articles. And finally no newsletter is complete without the all too important 'housekeeping pieces', so it is to everyone who helped me assemble this addition that I wish to thank. I could not have done it without you and don't be surprised if I call upon your help again.



The theme for the August edition will be the Last 100 Days and in keeping with the centennial of the end of the First World War the theme for the November Torch will be 1918 Armistice and Remembrance. I hope that you enjoy this edition of *The Torch* and if you have any comments or wish to contribute please contact me at edstorey@hotmail.com.

Canada Goes to the Mediterranean

'A fast assault convoy for Sicily at sea, July, 1943.' A drawing by Captain W.A. Ogilvie depicting Officers and men on board their Landing Ship Infantry (LSI) taking in the sites and sea air as sailors diligently prepare their Landing Craft Assault (LCA) for the impending invasion.

William Abernethy Ogilvie CM MBE (1901-1989) was born in March 1901 in Stutterheim, South Africa and moved to Canada in the 1920s where he established himself as a promising artist in the early 1930s. Ogilvie was a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters in 1933. He enlisted in the Army in 1940 and following basic Officer

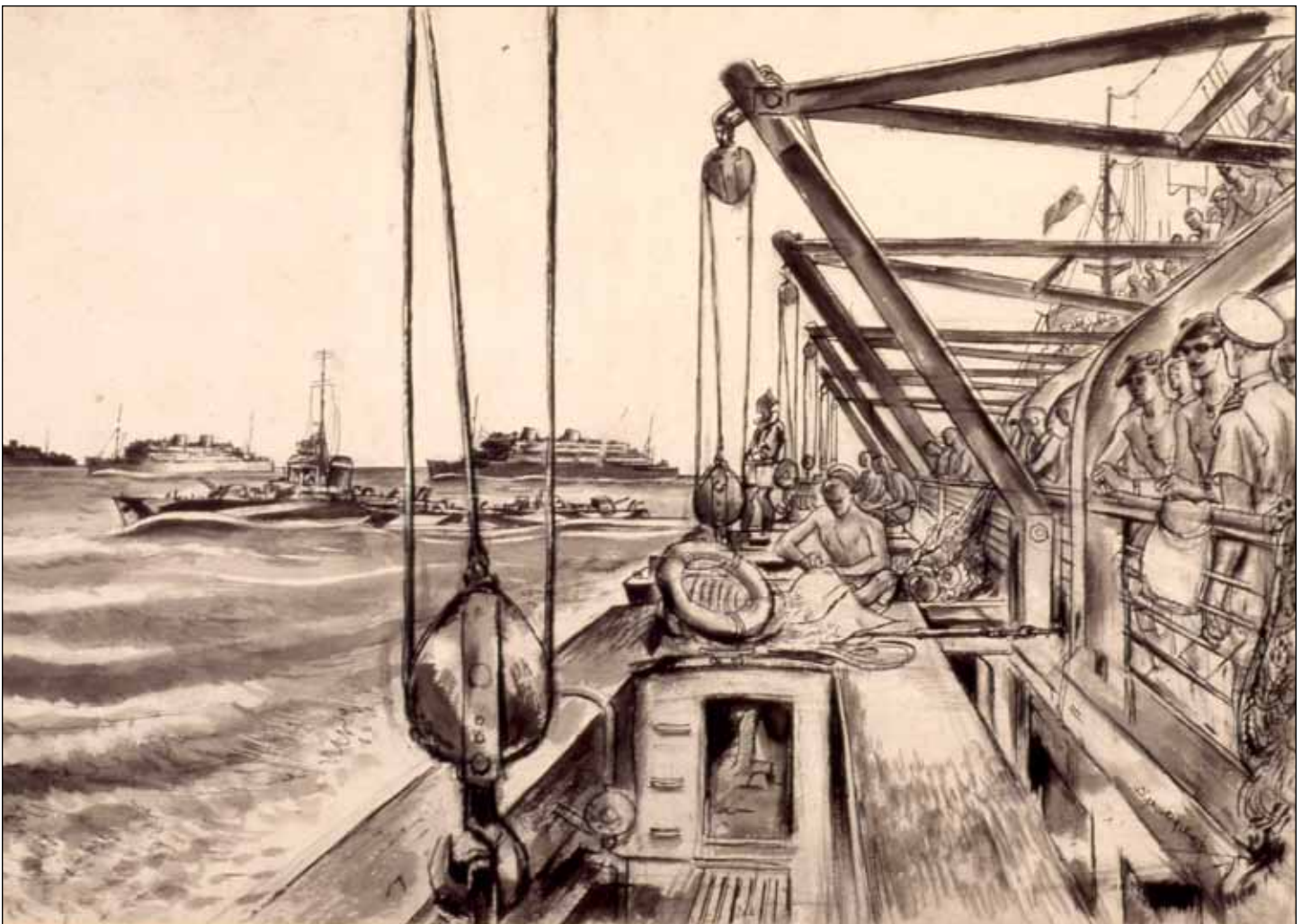
training was attached to Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London where he joined the fledgling Canadian War Art Program. In 1943 Will Ogilvie was dispatched as part of the two-man historical team to join the Canadians for Operation Husky.

In his Canadian Military History Magazine article "The Historical Triumph in Sicily" The Artistic Legacy of William Ogilvie, Matt Symes wrote, "Ogilvie's work, in both its rawness and completeness, is perhaps the most impressive Canadian collection. The art that came out of Normandy, and elsewhere in Europe, depict the action but not the setting,

at least not completely. In Sicily, the sum of the conditions figure in every canvas."¹ He summed up by quoting historian C.P. Stacey from *A Date with History*, "Reflecting nearly 40 years later, the famed historian said that he knew "of no other pictorial record of a campaign anywhere to match the one Ogilvie made in Sicily." The "historical triumph" of the Sicilian Campaign does indeed belong to Will Ogilvie."

William Ogilvie was a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and in 1979; he was made a member of the Order of Canada.

¹ *Canadian Military History*, Volume 22, Number 3, Summer 2013, pp.88-98



From P-Hill to P-Dubs Journey of a Canadian Flag

Robert Hamilton

As readers may know, national flags which have been flown from the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill (P-Hill) are available to the public upon application (recognizing that the current waiting period is in the order of 70 years!) Among the fortunate Canadians to have obtained such a flag (albeit when the waiting time was considerably shorter) was Ms. Phyllis Kiss, a volunteer in the administration office of the Friends.

Having cherished the flag in her safe-keeping since its receipt in 1995, Phyllis sought a permanent home for her treasure. In discussion with Robert Hamilton, president of the Friends and a Kingston resident, a plan began to unfold. Taking advantage of a scheduled event at the Kingston Military Family Resource Centre, Robert

would present the flag to the Kingston Base Commander with the understanding that it would be donated to the Princess of Wales Own Regiment (PWOR) affectionately known as the P-Dubs. The P-Dubs have served Canada with distinction from the Fenian raids through Vimy Ridge and Hill-70 to Afghanistan.

From P-Hill by way of Phyllis, the Friends and CFB Kingston to the P-Dubs, the journey of the flag was completed in late 2017. It will now be laid up in the historic regimental museum of the PWOR in the Kingston armoury which features an original Vimy cross.

So... from Canada's capital to the first capital of the United Province of Canada, a suitable resting place has been found. Thank you Phyllis for your generosity!



Ms. Phyllis Kiss with Robert Hamilton



Robert Hamilton FCWM president presents the flag to Col Jaynes (now BGen)



Col Jaynes (now BGen) presents the flag to LCol Taylor CO PWOR in the presence of (left to right) LCol Parkinson (past CO), Hon Col Jordan, Hon LCol Milliken, Hon Col (ret'd) Hutchings

The “Friends Only” 2018 Adopt-A-Book Campaign

After a successful 2017 campaign, Friends are again sponsoring the Adopt-a-Book campaign for 2018.

The titles the MHRC Library wishes to acquire are listed below. Interested Friends are invited to indicate on the form below the title

they wish to sponsor, together with a second and third choice. The form should then be forwarded to the Friends office with a cheque.

Alternatively, sponsors may leave the title selection to the Library if their first, second and third choices have already been

adopted. They may also simply leave the selection of the title to the Library in the first instance.

The Library will then acquire the books and inscribe the name of the sponsor on a bookplate in each volume.

It is requested that Friends be cognizant of the desire of other Friends to adopt titles, and thus to restrict their initial adoption to no more than one or two titles. If all titles are not taken up, then the remaining titles to be adopted will be published in the next edition of *The Torch*.

| # | Title | Author | Price |
|-----|---|----------------------|----------|
| 1) | Dambusters Raid: the most audacious bombing raid in history | John Sweetman | \$ 20.00 |
| 2) | Bad teeth no bar: a history of Military Bicycles in the Great War | Colin Kirsch | \$ 57.00 |
| 3) | Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires | David Isby | \$ 21.00 |
| 4) | The Fog of Peace: A Memoir of International Peacekeeping in the 21 st Century | Jena-Marie Guéhenno | \$ 21.00 |
| 5) | Fire and Desolation: the Revolutionary War's 1778 Campaign as Waged from Quebec and Niagara against the American Frontier | Gavin K. Watt | \$ 26.00 |
| 6) | Stalin's Ocean-going Fleet: Soviet Naval Strategy and Shipbuilding Programs, 1935-1953 | Jurgen Rohwer | \$ 37.00 |
| 7) | Gender, War and Conflict | Laura Sjoberg | \$ 25.00 |
| 8) | A Weary Road: Shell Shock in the CEF, 1914-1918 | Mark O. Humphries | \$ 45.00 |
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| 10) | Imperial Vancouver Island: Who was Who 1850-1950 (British Military Personnel) | J.F. Bosher | \$ 50.00 |
| 11) | Armoured Warfare in the First World War: Rare Photographs | Anthony Tucker Jones | \$ 9.00 |
| 12) | Les Canadiens face à la Hitlerjugend, Normandie 7 au 9 Juin 1944 | Georges Bernage | \$ 50.00 |

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| 14) | Churchill and the Dardanelles: Myth, Memory and Reputation | Christopher M. Bell | \$ 35.00 |
| 15) | Army Wives: the Women Behind the Men Who Went to War | Midge Gillies | \$ 28.00 |
| 16) | A Soldier's Sketchbook: the Illustrated First World War Diary of R.H. Rabjohn | John Wilson | \$ 21.00 |
| 17) | Adolfo Kaminsky: A Forger's Life (French Resistance) | Sarah Kaminsky | \$ 25.00 |
| 18) | Great War Medal Collectors Companion: volume II | Howard Williamson | \$ 90.00 |
| 19) | Airmen in Exile: the Allied Air Forces in the Second World War | Alan Brown | \$ 25.00 |
| 20) | Life Behind Barbed Wire: the Secret World War II Photographs of Angelo M. Spinelli | Angelo Spinelli | \$ 66.00 |
| 21) | Exile Air: World War II's Little Norway in Toronto and Muskoka | Andrea Baston | \$ 44.00 |
| 22) | A Child in Prison Camp | Shizuye Takashima | \$ 12.00 |
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| 24) | Your Country, My Country: a Unified History of the United States and Canada | Robert Bothwell | \$ 34.00 |
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| 26) | Double Blind: Lebanon Conflict 2006 | Paolo Pellegrin | \$ 30.00 |
| 27) | Geographies of the Holocaust | Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole | \$ 30.00 |
| 28) | War Memories: Commemoration, Recollections and Writings on War | Stephanie Belanger, Renée Dickason | \$ 125.00 |
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| 39) | Canada's Dream Shall be of Them: Canadian Epitaphs of the Great War | Eric McGeer | \$ 40.00 |
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| 41) | Medal Yearbook 2018 | Token Publishing | \$ 39.00 |
| 42) | Varsity's Soldiers: A History of the University of Toronto Contingent, Canadian OTC, 1914-1918 | Eric McGeer | \$ 57.00 |
| 43) | The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era | John Karlsrud | \$ 24.00 |
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| 46) | Strategy: Context and Adaptation from Archidamus to Airpower | Richard Bailey | \$ 70.00 |
| 47) | The Dependant: a Memoir of Marriage and the Military | Danielle Daniel | \$ 20.00 |
| 48) | Air Power: A Global History | Jeremy Black | \$ 45.00 |
| 49) | Canada's Admirals and Commodores 3 rd edition | Norman H. Jolin and John M. MacFarlane | \$ 35.00 |
| 50) | Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees 1975-80 | M. Molloy et al | \$ 39.00 |
| 51) | Our Germans: Operation Paperclip and the National Security State | Brian E. Crim | \$ 50.00 |



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A tax receipt will be sent.

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Donations

We regret that donations made through CanadaHelps.ca after February 18, 2018 are not included in the following. We will include the missing donations in the August issue of *The Torch*.

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In Memoriam

We regret that details of In Memoriam donations received between January 1 and March 31 were unavailable in time for inclusion in this edition of *The Torch*. These will be acknowledge in full in the August edition.

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 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 037 (AB), High Prairie, Alberta
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 047 (NL), Labrador City, Newfoundland and Labrador
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 153 (MB), Carberry, Manitoba
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 185 (QC), Deux Montagnes, Quebec
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 229 (ON), Elora, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 238 (ON), Fenelon Falls, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 290 (SK), Nokomis, Saskatchewan
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 314 (ON), Manotick, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 341 (SK), Pense, Saskatchewan
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 442 (ON), Erin, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 542 (ON), Westport, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 636 (ON), Minden, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 638 (ON), Kanata, Ontario
 The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 641 (ON), Ottawa, Ontario
 Walker Wood Foundation, Toronto, Ontario

Maj Donovan Redknap
 Col Winston Rogers
 Ms. Beverlee Rombouts
 Mr. Douglas Rowland
 Ms. Dorothy Smale
 Dr. William Stewart
 Mr. Okill Stuart
 Mr. George Tarasuk
 Col. Tony Tremblay OMM, KStJ, CD, ADC
 Mme. Rolande Vezina
 Mr. Douglas Zbetnoff
 The Royal Canadian Legion
 Branch 638 (ON)

Mr. Peter Sekenda
 Mr. Okill Stuart
 Mr. Robert White
 Mr. Scott Widdowson

Deceased Friends

BGen Bruce T. Burgess
 Lt P. Sidney Irwin
 Col Ian D. Isbester
 Capt Robert F. Kingston
 Mr. Nelson Langevin
 Mr. Lee F. Murray