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ABOUT THIS CD.

The 66th Canadian Field Artillery was recruited in Montreal but, judging by the included Nominal Role, it was manned as much by men from outside Montreal as by those from within it. This, in its own right, is somewhat remarkable since the recruitment took place in March of 1916 and it might have been thought that enthusiasm for joining up would have waned with the duration of the fighting and with the reports of the deaths reaching home. Not So! The recruitment office was inundated with applications and could easily have filled every position twice over.

The format of the story is familiar: Basic training here in Canada followed by more advanced training in England before joining the fighting at the front. Movements in response to the changing fortunes of the conflict and finally the 'push" towards the Rhine followed by a period of "occupation." This qualifies it as a book of interest to those who have connections with the fighting unit but does not make it anything exceptional as a history of events. And yet this book stands out in its genre for a very specific reason:

Anyone familiar with military unit histories will recognize that they are mostly the work of one or two dedicated individuals, who have had, at least, a little time to reflect on events, and who have taken time to consult the official records as well as with others who had lived through the experience. This gives their history a certain detachment and, supposedly, the advantage of distance from the events being reported. But this is exactly where the specialty of this book starts:

This is a work "ground out" to use the words of the Preface, in the course of a day, by many individuals who were right there. It was written as they waited to return to their interrupted civilian lives, with all the drama and reality of their experience still fresh in their minds. This may not have produced the maturity of hindsight which is frequently the aim of such a work but it does bear the freshness and honesty that comes of immediacy. Nor were its joint authors great literacy spirits, they were just recruits who felt the need to write down their experiences. This is not "great literature" in the classical sense. What it is, is an honest, spontaneous, first hand, close up, recounting of a life changing experience, written as much for the authors own use in their own latter years as for the benefit of us newcomers.

An exceptional opportunity to live the experience through the eyes, ears and minds of a handful of those who survived.

The Story of the Sixty-Sixth C.F.A.



Edinburgb

Done in Print by Turnbull & Spears for the Sixty-Sixth Battery, C.F.A.

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Trench Warfare

night in the fighting zone, they slept with minds sobered by the realization that now they were themselves part of the great struggle and, taking their places with Canadians who had fought so valiantly, must as gloriously prove true soldiers of Canada.

In the early hours of the following morning strange sounds disturbed the slumberers. The hum of those planes overhead carried a menacing growl and three rending crashes not far distant signified distinct hostility. The Hun with his bombs was invading the precincts of Wagon Lines. But the planes flew away and sleep was regained with puzzled anxiety.

The first day was made busy with the erection of shelters in anticipation of wet weather. Here the men learned the art, and art it is, of salvaging. Boxes, boards, corrugated iron, posts, anything which might help build up a hovel were dragged laboriously by horse and man from dismantled gun pits and old dug-outs to the camp. Possession is more than nine points of a soldier's law, and any material he lays hands on which is not too closely guarded is his property. His code of ethics does not admit of claims by mere marked ownership. The dwellings thrown up with this salved material were original of architecture and by no means grand, but they sufficed to withstand the inclemency of the weather. And this work taught the men how much could be done to make themselves comfortable from scraps and makeshift tools. These labours continued till evening.

CHAPTER II

In Action

ORDERS came that evening of September 5th—vital orders for the 66th Battery. Two guns were to be put into action as soon after dark as possible. Mr Peck's command, C and D Subsections, was detailed for this duty. Amid the envious watching of those not privileged to go, the teams were hitched in. Gas masks were adjusted to the alert position, steel helmets worn. With the coming of dusk

The Drive

cavalry wait in thousands, with numberless tanks and armoured cars. Stand To. The zero hour has arrived. The whole earth and sky quiver and throb with a thundering volcanic roar. The big push has started.

A. G. M. D.

The above is an extract from the final issue of the Strafer.

The Battery had moved from the Arras Front, and after a day's journey had detrained at Saleux, close to Amiens. A long march was at once commenced, and the journey finally came to an end shortly before dawn, in a field close to the village of Boutillerie, by the River Luce. Every man was in such a state of exhaustion that as soon as the horses were tied up he rolled himself in a horse blanket and slept in the field where he had halted. Even the thought of oncoming rain could not call up enough energy to make a search for a billet, in the surrounding empty houses, worth while. Canadian troops kept pouring into this district every night. The wooded valleys and rolling nature of the country made concealment of troops and materials a comparatively easy matter.

By day there was little movement in the back area and none whatever passed a certain point about eight miles from the line. By night the preparations for the offensive were made and the traffic on the roads was greater than the Front had ever seen before. Soon it became known that the Australian, the Canadian, and a French Corps were to launch

a surprise offensive on a large scale.

A force of Canadian infantry was sent north to the Ypres Salient to throw Fritz off the scent. This force did everything that it was possible to do to make the enemy believe that the Canadian Corps was in this sector of the line. A big raid was put over each night and it was managed so that identification marks of the raiding parties always fell into the hands of the Hun. Different patches and badges were worn on each occasion and thus Fritz came to believe that the whole Canadian Corps was concentrated here. The organization and actual preparations for the offensive appeared to be very complete and everything ran smoothly. The one obsessing fear was that Fritz would get the wind of what was coming off and retire a short distance, throwing

several R.A.F. Observers. The Boche airmen had flown over our lines in order to locate battery positions and obtain information regarding the movement of troops in the neighborhood. These two planes, outnumbered and outmanceuvred, were being slowly driven down in the direction of the Battery. One of the enemy, while still at an altitude of 500 feet, directed his machine gun on the lines of men and horses beneath him. At the sound of the whistling bullets there was a scramble for cover beneath the wagons on the part of the men below. Some, ostrichwise, were trying to find protection beneath the foliage of a nearby apple tree. Our airmen, in regard for the safety of those on the ground, held their fire and opened a loop-hole of escape. The Hun planes, seizing their opportunity, made good their escape and flew back over their own lines at top speed.

The reconaissance party returned, but minus one of its number in the person of Major Ringwood, O.C. of the 60th Battery. His death was a great loss to the brigade, for in addition to being an efficient battery commander, he was known throughout the length and breadth of the land for the service he had rendered in training the Officers and N.C.O.'s

of the Canadian Artillery.

The Battery commenced to move forward to occupy the chosen position at 3.30 p.m. The road led through Beaufort Village and then out on to the flat country beyond. cavalry had had a hot time crossing these plains a short time before, for the whole field was under direct observation by the enemy on the ridge in front. The Major, the R.O., and their signallers, trotted ahead in different parties, with 50 vards between each party. The Battery, led by Capt. Riley. came on behind. The orders to form line and trot were given. Now for a little taste of open warfare such as had been dreamed of. The guns went rattling on as if on review parade, and quite according to Hoyle and Field Artillery Training, F.A.T. is a most valuable book for training purposes, but during active operations the god of war is apt to upset its theories at the most inopportune moment. It did. The manœuvre was being executed quite correctly, when the inevitable joker appeared in the shape of a deep trench directly in front. The Captain gave the signal and the guns came into column of route again. The first gun

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Steve Brodie and took a chance. No one was hit, for the plane slid out of the rays and escaped.

The great offensive called the Battle of Amiens, or the Battle of Picardy, had now come to an end, and the troops said good-bye-e forever to the southern country. Picardy is a very fine place, particularly in the much famed song, but the roses were blooming no longer and everyone was glad to be on the move northward again.

The Battle of Arras and Drocourt Queant Line

The Battery detrained at Aubigny during the morning of August 25th, which was a bright summer day. Back to the old haunts again and everyone hoped that a few days' rest was in store. The column set out along the road, and it soon became known that the well remembered country near Arras was the destination. Nothing could look more peaceful than the long shaded Arras-St Pol Road, with its inevitable row of idle motor trucks lining the edges at odd intervals. Back on a peace time front once more!

It was a weary crew that pulled into St Catherines that night after a fifteen kilo march. The old hard tack and bully tasted pretty good, and as soon as the mokes were fixed up, everyone put up the tarps over a shallow trench and snoozed off. Precious little sleep they got! A thunderstorm came on and, after blowing down most of the tarps, drenched the whole crew. The morale which was nearly at rock bottom, went down further when the S.M. routed everyone out about midnight. "Get the guns ready and hook in." "The Battery is going over in close support of the infantry for an attack on Monchy," The troops were cold but the air was warm with curses. Did anyone say this was a peace-time front?

It was a weird sight going into action that night. The road led through the battered city of Arras and the moon, which appeared at intervals through the fleeting clouds, produced a queer fantastic effect, as it shone between the shattered buildings of this silent dead city. The way now led

had to look after his horses during the daytime and also keep his harness as clean as possible. The wagon lines were frequently moved forward, and often he would just crawl into his blankets when a hurry call would come from up the line and he would have to hitch up his team and start on the dirty trip to the guns.

The attack which had been prepared for opened at 5.30 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd of September. The objective was the piercing of the Drocourt Queant Line, a spur of the main Hindenburg Line and equalling this system in natural and artificial strength. An immense concentration of artillery was on hand to obtain this

objective.

The barrage of the 5th Division was covering the Fourth Imperial Division on the left of the Canadian Corps. It was an uneventful one as far as the Battery was concerned, for by some strange coincidence the position was free from shelling. The Nos. I had a hard time, however, for they had but two minutes to digest their orders before the shoot began. One particular thing was interesting, for it was the first opportunity that the gunners had had a chance of observing their own fire. The white puffs of the bursting shells could be plainly seen against the green background of the hill in front, though it was impossible to distinguish the figures of the attacking infantry. The attack, which was one of the most daring ever attempted on the Western Front, was entirely successful and early in the morning the Canadians were through the much-famed line.

Before nine the barrage was over and the 14th Brigade which was the first of the artillery to move forward, was on the road. The road led through the village of Vis-En-Artois, across a dirt track, and then up the Arras-Cambrai Road. The Battery position was to have been close to the village of Dury but the Boche was making a desperate attempt to attain this place and severe fighting was still going on in the vicinity. The troops of the 4th Canadian Division, whom the 5th Division had come forward to support, were having a hard fight, as was plainly shown by the continual stream of walking wounded filing down past the guns. They could be seen going forward in fighting trim and a few

minutes later come stumbling out as casualties.

out fanwise, and when Bourlon Wood was taken, they were to work over towards the left of Cambrai. The Battery was to assist in forming a protective barrage along another part of the canal and then to protect the flank of the 11th Imperial Division, which was attached to the Corps for the battle.

The crews were routed out shortly before zero hour and put the final touches on the preparations. At a time like this the ominous silence that precedes the storm causes a queer sensation to run down the spine of those nervously awaiting the crash. It is like the feelings, a hundred times intensified, of a swimmer about to take a dive through the ice.

At 5.20 on the morning of the 27th of September, there broke out the roar of a concentration of artillery which dwarfed in intensity even that of the battle of Amiens or the Drocourt Line. Every shell hole in the neighbourhood of Inchy appeared to contain a gun. Daylight was just breaking and the continuous flashes of the guns created a weird effect. The Hun did not take long to retaliate and shells began to drop in the neighborhood quite frequently. The barrage had been going on for about an hour when the 66th sustained the greatest loss that it had ever suffered. A shell landed in C Subs. pit, and with the exception of "Gordie" Rowell, the crew was instantly killed. Rowell was severely wounded. The death of Sergt, Hodgson, John Robson and "Vir" Beckitt caused a loss to the battery in every way that it is impossible to over-estimate. Hodgson was acting Sergt,-Major, and having no particular work to do once the barrage had started, he left the control dug-out to give his gun crew a hand. He told Bomb. Robson to go in and get some breakfast, saying that he would look after the firing of the gun in the meantime. Just after he had spoken, the shell landed and both were instantly killed.

To speak here of Sergt. Hodgson and of his work would be showing no lack of respect or appreciation of the character of those others who were killed during the existence of the Battery. Had they been spared, they would have been the first to voice their opinion among the chorus of assent. His was an outstanding personality. His cool head and good judgment had served the Battery in many a difficult

The Drive

too soon, for in a few minutes they would have been badly cut up, and as it was, one horse was killed and another wounded. The shelling finally stopped and the ammunition was dropped at the guns. Firing started up again later on but it ceased before the usual morning shoot came off.

The wagon lines were moved up during the afternoon to the courtyard of a large convent on the eastern outskirts of Valenciennes. The city was already celebrating its deliverance, for the streets were decorated with numerous French, Belgian and British flags, and the shops selling lace, the famous product of this city, were busy supplying the demands of the soldiers for souvenirs. The Prince of Wales was held up at the canal by the convoy of wagons crossing the narrow bridge. Royalty does not get precedence during active operations. The Prince had the inevitable pipe in his mouth and appeared to be an interested spectator of what was going on in the neighborhood.

A shoot was put over on the morning of the 5th at a very long range, and the guns looked more like Archies than 18-pounders. Another move was made to Onnaing shortly after breakfast and a barrage was fired from this place during the following morning.

The last two rounds of this shoot were fired by a French civilian. This is rather an interesting fact, for it turned out that these were the last rounds fired by the 66th during the war. The last round: a Frenchman fired a Canadian shell from an English gun on the soil of France at a party of Germans in Belgium making their way for Prussia as fast as their legs would carry them. A fitting end to this international mix-up.

That night, the 6th, the guns were again moved forward to Quaroubles. It was a bad night for those bringing up the ammunition, for they had to make two trips and it was a black rainy night and impossible to see a yard in front. All the artillery in the Canadian Corps appeared to be trying to move forward by the one road at the same time. The roads were a mass of mine craters and teams were continually getting stuck in mud up to the hubs. No sooner would one tangle of traffic be straightened out than some more guns and wagons would become involved in another mix-up and it appeared as if the job would never be accomplished. By

Part V

The March to the Rhine

"Hostilities will cease at eleven hours on the 11th inst. Precautionary and defensive measures will be maintained, present positions held and reported to Corps Headquarters. No interchange of communication with the enemy. Further orders follow later." Thus ran the official intimation that the last fight had been fought and the last battle won. The news was received quietly and without demonstration; although early reports had inspired a feeling that the war was at an end, the actual reality of it appeared incredible at the moment, and the routine of the day was carried on as usual though perhaps more time was spent in debate than work.

The next day, as if awakening to the true realization of the situation, the Battery was granted a half-holiday which was spent for the most part in discussions of Peace, the underlying thought in every mind being that of home, and the thankfulness that it was at last within sight.

With the new dawn came rumors that the 5th Division of Artillery would follow the withdrawing German Army to the Rhine. The following morning Gen. Dodds, C.R.A., 5th Division Artillery, conducted an informal inspection, and expressed himself as being highly satisfied with the general condition of the Battery, taking into consideration what it had been through. This was his last inspection prior to his departure for Canada. The same day the 14th Brigade was attached to the 1st Canadian Division and orders were received that the march to the Rhine would probably commence on November 17th.

Before outlining the march, it might be well to state (as a glance at the map facing page 128 will show) that the route

The March to the Rhine

Cologne bridgehead and is one of the most advanced artillery posts east of the Rhine. The village is situated in a valley in the vicinity of the Konigsforst, the ex-Kaiser's one-time hunting grounds. The wild country about afforded many picturesque landscapes but had little else to commend itself. Houses were few and far between, and the stillness and dormancy of the place imbued one with a feeling of isolation. Comfortable billets were found and the people showed great hospitality. The men began to get a real rest, the cleaning of vehicles and care of the horses being their only duties. After the first few days the rations greatly improved, as the railways were then in commission, the supply base being Cologne. On the 19th of December the following letter was received from General Dodds, C.R.A., 5th Division:—

58th Battery, C.F.A.
60th ,, ,,
61st ,, ,,
66th ,, ,,
2nd Section, D.A.C.

14th Brigade, C.F.A.
19th December, 1918

"The following is a copy of a letter received from C.R.A., 5th Canadian Division. Will you please have the contents communicated to all ranks in your unit:—

'I have heard from General Macdonnell, G.O.C. 1st Canadian Division, and from General Morrison, G.O.C.R.A., of the excellent showing made by the 14th Brigade, C.F.A., on its march to the Rhine.

'I can assure you that it was most gratifying to me to have such a splendid report on the appearance of the batteries under your command, and the greatest credit is due to all ranks for their untiring efforts to keep the horses and harness, guns and vehicles, in the best possible shape under most trying conditions.

'I wish to congratulate you and your officers, and especially the men to whom great credit is due.

I feel very proud of your record.
Yours sincerely,

W. O. H. Dodds, Brig.-General, C.R.A., 5th Canadian Division.

(Signed) W. H. Abbott, Capt., Adjutant, 14th Brigade, C.F.A."

The March to the Rhine

March 22nd, a special train being provided to convey those desirous of attending them. The contestants from the Battery acquitted themselves creditably and the Battery indoor baseball team, which represented the Division, won the Corps championship for the second consecutive year.

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The story of the Battery has been presented, beginning with its infancy and carrying the reader through the many stages of its life, and the various vicissitudes of its existence. This humble tale has been offered as the simple observations of men engaged in the great adventure of war, taking orders and obeying them—

Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die.

The excitement and adventure were at first fascinating, but the years have waxed long and weary. Through anxious months the discomforts which accompany life in the field had to be endured, but these were considerably lightened by the thoughtfulness and busy hands of those behind the man behind the gun.

Our hearty thanks and appreciation are extended to those who so liberally contributed to the comfort and welfare of the men of the Battery, especially those who generously sent donations to the Battery Fund; to the Montreal Artillery Circle, whose many and generous gifts proved a great source of comfort; to our Canadian girls who, through all the long years, never forgot us; and to our friends who always remembered us so kindly and wished us well.

Our course is run and every sunrise brings us closer to the day when we shall once again see the shores of fair Canada and with impatient eagerness we await that important document headed "Honorable Discharge."

OTHER RANKS-continued.

142	Dvr.	.s	Johnson, J., . Jones, A. W. Jones, W. O. Knubley, P Kempffer, R. H.	:			Joined 31.12.18. Joined 30.8.18. Joined 15.11.18.
	Sig.		Kinsella, J. A. C. Knott, G. A. R. S. S. King, F. J. Karn, W. H.		751 Bloomfield Ave., Outremont, Que. 107 Wood St., Treforest, S. Wales. 140 Winnett St., Woodstock, Ont.	•	Transf. Res. Bde. F.C.A. 15.8.17.
	Dvr. Gnr. Sig. ABd Dvr.	r.	Kirkham, T. Kirkhamd, L. Knowles, G Le Baron, A. M. Levi, M. M. Levy, I. Lowry, I. K. Leadley, F. R.	 	Mummico, Ont. St Mary's Rd., Tickhill, Yorks. 8 University St., Belfast, Ireland Hatley, Que. 204 Wood Ave., Westmount, Que. 76 North St., Halifax, N.S. Lennoxville, Que. 87 Erie Ave., Hamilton, Ont.	•	Transf. Res. Bde. C.F.A. 15.8.17. Joined 15.11.18. Joined 7.9.18. Transf. Res. Bde. C.F.A. 14.11.17. Invd. sick 20.1.19. Wounded 28.8.18.
	Onr. Dvr. Gnr. " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "		Laver, M. R. Lee, G. B. London, A. L. Lachance, J. Legere, F. J. Legere, T. J. Logel, F. C. Lumsden, F. S. Lynch, H. N. Lyons, J. P. Marson, T. W. Moy, S. A.	 •	31 Henry St., Detroit, Mich. Riviere du Loup, Que. Louisville, Moncton, N.B. Louisville, Moncton, N.B. Winnipeg, Man. Park Lane, Barnstaple, England 150 St John's Road, Toronto	•	Transf. to 5th T.M. Bde. Joined 7.9.18; invd. sick 20.11.18. Joined 28.9.18; invd. sick 3.11.18. Jnd. 28.9.18; invd. sick 14.12.18. Jnd. 17.11.18; invd. sick 15.12.18. Joined 16.10.18. Joined 25.9.18.