

4-26-2012

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### Recommended Citation

(2007) "Table of Contents," *Canadian Military History*: Vol. 16: Iss. 3, Article 1.  
Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol16/iss3/1>

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# CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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Summer 2007

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# CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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Agreement No.40025158; Publication mail registration No.08978

*Canadian Military History* is published four times a year in the winter, spring, summer and autumn by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University.

Editor-in-Chief	Roger Sarty
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Layout & Design	Mike Bechthold

Printed in Canada by EGRAPHICSGROUP, Kitchener, Ontario

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

ISSN 1195-8472

## Subscription Information

### Canada:

One year (4 issues)	\$40.00
Two years (8 issues)	\$64.00

### International:

One year (4 issues)	US\$38.00
Two years (8 issues)	US\$60.00

### Visa & Mastercard accepted.

Please make cheques and money orders payable to "Wilfrid Laurier University."

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### Canadian War Museum

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Ottawa, ON, K1R 1C2

The Canadian War Museum, the national military history museum, is a living memorial to those men and women who served in Canada's armed forces. It is also a centre for research and dissemination of information and expertise on all aspects of the country's military past from pre-contact era to the present. It preserves the artifacts of Canadian military experience, interprets them for present and future generations, and advances the professional study of Canadian military history, including the effects of war and conflict on the nation and all its citizens.

### The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies

The purpose of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) is to foster research, teaching, and public discussion of military and strategic issues of national and international significance. The Centre is intentionally multi-disciplinary; it has strong commitments in military history, with emphasis on the Canadian experience, and in strategic and operational studies, with emphasis on disarmament. LCMSDS supports both basic and applied research as well as teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, the extensive program of LCMSDS workshops, conferences, public lectures, and publications encourages informed discussion of international security and of Canada's national interests in military and strategic issues - past, present and future.

The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies was founded in 1991 as a Research Centre affiliated with Wilfrid Laurier University. Its primary support has come from the Department of National Defence and from Wilfrid Laurier University. The Director of the Centre is Professor Terry Copp, Professor of History.

## ***From the Editor-in-Chief***

**W**.A.B. (Alec) Douglas responded generously to *CMH's* appeal for an article about the late S.F. (Syd) Wise. Alec is uniquely qualified. He did his Ph.D. under Syd's supervision, served as Syd's Senior Historian at the Directorate of History, and then succeeded Syd as Director of History in 1973. Alec has combined his memories with new research to produce a piece that nicely captures Syd's style and achievements.

Richard Mayne presents the results of detective work he did at the US National Archives and Records Administration to shed important light on the long-rumoured, but unconfirmed, stories of a battle with a German submarine off Prince Edward Island. Richard's work strongly suggests that what eyewitnesses actually saw in 1943 was a training exercise by corvettes that had been built in Canada for the US Navy, and were on their maiden voyage with their American crews. That explains the absence of sources in Canadian navy archives concerning the reported action that has foiled efforts to put the story to rest.

Mark Humphries and John Maker are engaged in a large project to edit and publish English translations of the German official history of the First World War with a focus on engagements with Canadian forces. In this issue we have an excerpt dealing with the Second Battle of Ypres in April-May 1915, the first major action of the 1st Canadian Division. Readers will find the introductory essay on the writing of the German official history, and assessments of it by English-language historians from the time the first volumes were originally published in the early 1930s, particularly useful.

The battles for the Moro River and Ortona, the hard slog by the Canadian Army on Italy's Adriatic coast in December 1943, have been the subject of a good deal of critical reassessment in recent years. Chris Case has provided a comprehensive analysis of the archival materials and the full body of literature in which he highlights the problems, including incomplete or faulty information, faced by the Canadian commander, Major-General Chris Vokes.

One of the developments in Cold War studies in several countries has been work in newly opened materials on civil defence measures. Mark Davidson, on the basis of work he did in Ontario and Federal government archives, has produced a piece that highlights the main phases of civil defence policy and organization in Canada in 1948-63, the first phase of the Cold War and one that saw officials scrambling to respond to rapidly changing weapons technology.

From the Canadian War Museum there is a report on a sign with lighthearted doggerel captured in a German trench by Canadian troops during the First World War. Bruno Friesen, a volunteer researcher at the museum, and a veteran of the German army of the Second World War, has provided a translation of the verse, and an analysis of what it shows about trench culture on the other side of no-man's-land. Andrew Burtch, the historian for the museum's new temporary exhibit on Canadian operations in Afghanistan since the first deployments in 2002, has assembled a commentary on the exhibit that delves deeply into the problems of presenting contemporary events for which most of the salient information is still classified and likely to remain so for years to come.

Roger Sarty  
Editor-in-Chief  
August 2007

The editors of *Canadian Military History* wish to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions to this issue:

Maggie Arbour-Doucette, Brandey Barton, Michelle Fowler, Mark Humphries, Lianne Leddy, Christine Leppard, Vanessa McMackin, Susan Ross, Matt Symes, Jim Wood.

Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Centre; Canadian War Museum; Directorate of History & Heritage, Department of National Defence; Security and Defence Forum, Department of National Defence; Library and Archives Canada; Wilfrid Laurier University.