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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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From the Editor-in-Chief

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The development of heavy, flexible and accurate artillery fire was one of the keystones of success for the British Empire/Commonwealth armies in both world wars. In this issue, David Zimmerman of the University of Victoria highlights the signal contribution of Dominick "Toby" Graham to scholarly analysis of British artillery technique and tactics. Toby – for that is what he insisted I call him on the one occasion I had the pleasure to join in one of his famous seminars – was the first professor of military history at the University of New Brunswick, where he taught in the 1970s and 1980s. He brought formidable practical experience to his academic work. A decorated veteran of the Royal Artillery, he had served in both the Mediterranean theatre and in Northwest Europe during the Second World War, and later commanded Britain's first nuclear artillery battery in the Cold War. As David shows, that firm grounding in technology and the interface between technology and the people who must make it work, has made Toby's scholarship a model for the still under-developed field of technology and science in war.

By chance rather than editorial planning (as is so often the case!), Daniel Pellerin of the University of Ottawa has provided a case study on the limits and possibilities of scientific methods in battle. His subject is the effectiveness of Canadian and British "predicted" counter-battery artillery fire against German gun positions in the Scheldt estuary during the fall of 1944. He shows that in that thoroughly unfavourable terrain and even worse weather, the best will and technique did not succeed in placing direct hits on the well camouflaged and well protected

enemy batteries. Near misses silenced the German guns at critical times, but Daniel's work ultimately underscores the burden that fell on the "poor bloody infantry" even with the Allies' superiority in technology and materiel at that late stage in the war.

This number of the journal features new research into two other issues in the Canadian war effort of 1939-1945. Kirk Goodlet of the University of Waterloo has examined the medical records of selected Canadian camps for German prisoners of war. His findings show that in the repatriation of sick or injured prisoners Canada did not abide by the Geneva Convention. The difficulties of transportation across the Atlantic, and challenges in negotiations with the Germans and in coordinating Allied policy took precedence over the articles of the convention during much of the war. In fact, Kirk suggests, those articles did not envision the circumstances of global conflict, and thus did not provide a realistic basis for repatriation.

Andrew Brown, a regular officer in the Canadian Army, revisits the charge made by critics of the Mackenzie King government that manpower shortages in the summer and fall of 1944 resulted in poorly trained reinforcements being dispatched to infantry units. The paper features an examination of training in the reinforcement stream, from depots in Britain through to the front line, for one battalion in Italy, the 48th Highlanders of Canada. The findings do not support the sweeping criticisms made in the press at the time, and repeated in some postwar accounts. Only a small number of troops over a brief period of time may have received compressed or incomplete training.

In the Canadian War Museum section, Hugh Halliday, formerly a historian and curator at the museum and a frequent contributor to this

journal, presents a biographical piece on Algernon Mayow Talmage, a British painter who participated in the Canadian War Memorial program of the First World War. Talmage's *A Mobile Veterinary Unit* in France is one of the eight very large paintings from the program displayed in the Senate Chamber in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. It is representative of several works he produced depicting horses at war, an intensely emotional subject because of the utter blamelessness of the animals who provided such essential service and suffered so terribly. Yet, Talmage slipped into obscurity in the early 1920s for reasons that are not clear, and is one of the least known war artists.

Dean Oliver, manager of research and exhibits at the museum and another familiar contributor, has allowed us to print his address on the meaning of Vimy Ridge given on Vimy Ridge Day in 2012 at the Embassy of France in Ottawa. Past and present, he shows, have continuously come together in this once obscure place in northern France for 95 years, and, as far as anyone can tell, will do so anew for each fresh and returning visitors. Certainly the now verdant park is a "site of memory," to borrow from the title of Jay Winter's important book, but Dean suggests that Vimy is considerably more than a "site of mourning."

Ed Storey, a member of the Army who is well known to readers of the journal, provides an update on his work to preserve artifacts of the Canadian Forces' mission in Afghanistan. Here he reports on the nose art painted on CH146 Griffon helicopter gunships that served in the theatre, highlighting both differences from and similarities with the decoration that Second World War aircrew painted on their machines.

Roger Sarty
August 2012