

# SIGNALS CELEBRATE THEIR 50th ANNIVERSARY

## Island Unit Has Notable Record Of Achievement

As they join today in celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals it is interesting to note that local Signals units have had a long and glorious history of their own.

The story of Signals in Prince Edward Island goes back even further than the birth of the Canadian Signalling Corps in 1903. A few years prior to that, just before the Boer War, the roots of Signals were planted here. At that time there was an Engineer unit on the Island and from it a small section was chosen to look after local Army Communications. This section was then commanded by the late Mr. Walter P. Doull, who afterwards became a widely known electrician of the Province.

It was just two years after the formation of the Signalling Corps that word was received for the authorization of an independent signal unit. Formed in 1905, it became known as Number 12 Signalling Section because Prince Edward Island was then Military District Number 12. The first commanding officer, with the rank of lieutenant, was the late W. K. Rogers. He had previously served as a trooper with the Prince Edward Island Light Horse and at one time had been a telegrapher by profession.

This first regular unit camped each summer at Victoria Park from 1905 until 1913. Meanwhile command of the unit changed as in 1911 Lieutenant Rogers retired to be succeeded by his son, Lieut. K. S. Rogers. At that time the strength of the unit was less than 15 all ranks.

In July, 1914 Number 12 Signalling Section camped in Sussex N.B., and it is interesting to note that the senior sergeant at that camp was Sgt. E. G. Weeks who made the Army a career and is now a retired major general.

**First Great War**  
It was on August 17 of that year that a detachment from this unit was the first group to leave Prince Edward Island for overseas service in the First Great War. Among them were Sgt. Weeks, Cpl. H. R. Stewart and Signallmen H. Whitlock, H. R. Large, V. MacLeod, C. Scott and G. Gardiner.

They served with outstanding distinction from 1914 until 1919 and were the recipients of 9 decorations for service in the field with four of these being won by the then Sgt. Weeks. Several of them were Mentioned in Despatches, two were wounded, and all returned to their homes none the worse for wear but richer in experience.

Signal Officer in Halifax during the war and became a captain in 1916. Meanwhile No. 12 Signalling Section performed a valuable service in recruiting officers, and men for overseas service in various communications units.

A reorganization took place in 1920-1921 and the unit became known as Number 8 Signal Company with Captain K. S. Rogers again the commanding officer but now with the rank of major. The growth of the unit is shown in the fact on successive summers from 1921 the annual camp at Victoria Park had a strength of over 225 officers and men. A mounted unit, its officers and men received a thorough training in equitation. During that same period cable carts were received and training in the laying and maintaining of telephone lines followed.

**Wireless Training Revived**  
As early as 1911 in the old No. 12 Signalling Section the Prince Edward Island unit had its own wireless station with a special experimental license, using the call letters XAR. Following the First Great War wireless training was revived and it drew many into the unit in the days when radio was first gaining popularity.

Major Rogers retired in 1928 and command was taken over by Major F. B. Conrad, M.M., E.D. He retained his post for 10 years during which there were many changes in the designation of the unit. It became successively No. 8 Signal Company, No. 2 Company of 6th Divisional Signals, No. 6 Composite Company and No. 6 District Signals.

Capt. W. A. Smith was second-in-command and Capt. D. N. Bell was the adjutant during those years. Training camps were held in Victoria Park, and occasionally in Aldershot, N.S., and Sussex N. B.

The winter months were devoted



Front row, left to right: SQMS J. P. Bolger, WO 2 E. W. Martin, WO 2 A. E. Richard, WO 1 J. F. Smith, WO 2 E. A. Stanley, M.M., WO 2 J. B. Gallant, SQMS A. W. Wellner. Second row: Sgt. W. Johnson, Sgt. P. J. Smith, SQMS P. J. A. MacDonald, Sgt. R. W. MacNeill, Staff Sgt. George W. Schleyer, Staff Sgt. W. D. Jorgenson, Sgt. A. Woolridge, Sgt. J. H. Gallant, Sgt. F. Welsh. Back row: Corporals G. J. F. Ross, E. I. Lund, B. L. Miller, J. Meredith, J. L. DesRoches, D. A. MacKay, J. I. L. Lafferty, J. H. E. MacDonald and J. J. Bolger.

to training courses in which, for example, all officers were required to qualify in line and wireless telegraphy. Each summer a smaller detachment of Lieut. Bowness and 19 men went to Mulgrave, N. S.

Later in the fall the remaining officers and men were sent to augment the Fortress Signals at Sydney and Halifax. They remained there until they joined the Third Divisional Signals in Barriefield, Ont., in the summer of 1940. In the meantime 28 other officers who had received their initial military training with the company enlisted in other units in 1939, and a number of others were commissioned in the R.C.N. and R.C.A.F.

**Second World War**  
Another proud mark was established when mobilization orders were received, prior to the September 10 declaration of war by Canada, on September 1, 1939, there was one hundred per cent unit strength reported for active duty.

Two weeks later on September 15 a detachment headed by Capt. Bell and Lieutenants Jenkins and Johnston went with 40 men to Sydney, N.S., where they took over Fortress communications

while a local Nova Scotia unit was being recruited and trained for the task. At the same time, and for a similar purpose, a smaller detachment of Lieut. Bowness and 19 men went to Mulgrave, N. S.

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During the Second World War a signals reserve unit under command of Lieut. Col. K. S. Rogers, V.D., was formed in Charlottetown. This unit trained and provided a number of officers and many tradesmen for active force duty.

Another re-organization took place following the war and it became the 5th Divisional Signals with Lieut. Col. D. N. Bell, E.D., as commanding officer. Major F. J. Storey, E.D., was second-in-command, and Majors K. M. Johnston and F. S. Jenkins were squadron commanders. All officers and men who first joined the reorganized unit were veterans.

The number in the unit grew and in the summer of 1948 there were 13 officers and 60 men attending summer camp at the Royal Canadian School of Signals, representing about half of the

unit strength at this time.

Since then there have been two changes in command. Lieut. Col. Bell retired in June, 1947 and was succeeded by Lieut. Col. F. J. Storey, E.D., who commanded the unit until June, 1949 when he retired in favor of Lieut. Col. K. M. Johnston, E.D. It was another achievement to note that Lieut. Col. Storey, who served on the staff of the Chief Signal Officer, First Canadian Army, during the war, is a past president of the Canadian Signals Association.

**5th Signal Regiment**

In March of 1950 the designation of the unit was again changed to 5th Signal Regiment, Royal Canadian Signals. This past summer the regiment had a strength of 19 officers, 35 N.C.O.'s, 121 men and five officer cadets.

The regiment took an active part during the Royal visit in 1951 when the Guard of Honour from the Charlottetown Garrison included a good representation of 5 Signal Regiment. In addition nearly the entire balance of the men turned out to lend invaluable aid in controlling crowds and traffic during the visit.

During November of that same year the regiment held a particularly successful celebration of Signals Day with over 100 in attendance. It was interesting to note the gathering of four former commanding officers of the unit and five commanding officers of other units each of whom had started their military career as a signalman.

The officers were Lieut. Col. Storey, Lieut. Col. Bell, Lieut.

Col. Conrad and Lieut. Col. K. S. Rogers, all of whom were former commanding officers of the unit. The other commanding officers who started with Sigs were Brig. G. G. K. Peake, P.S.O., E.D., Capt. J. J. Connolly, V.D., R.C.N.; Col. J. H. Shaw, E.D.; Lieut. Col. A. W. Rogers, E.D.; and Major L. E. Wellner, C.D.

Last fall Col. Conrad was ap-

pointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment.

Regarding the material things with which the unit has had to work it is interesting to note the changes which have taken place down through the years. There was considerable communication progress in the First World War, but as far as the Reserve Army was concerned it ended there. With one or two exceptions the equipment used for over 20 years were relics of that war. Flag and lamp signalling was taught to all, starting with young cadets. That was usually followed by a somewhat complicated effort to explain the mysteries of the 1917 vintage trench telephones.

To lay the telephone lines horse drawn carts were used at first, but as progress was inevitable the well known transfer operator, mobile wireless stations, frequently were no more than a wheelbarrow with three or four men shoving or heaving it across the field where the set would be unloaded and put into operation.

These early schemes, as all such exercises are called were always enjoyed, however, by everyone and were considered the highlight of the summer camps. The trainees liked them even if communications were not quite as reliable as they are today.

**Equipment Changes**

The change is noticeable now that since 1939 the Canadian Signals Research and Development Centre has produced, and is pro-

ducing, a continuous supply of new equipment much of which is available for Reserve Force training shortly after its invention.

In comparison to the one classroom, one storeroom and one combined orderly room and wireless station, which all that was available for 35 years, this regiment now occupies three large and three small classrooms, four storerooms, four offices of various sizes and has a complete radio station, containing transmitter capable of working to points 1,000 miles distant.

**Present Equipment**

Compared to the wheelbarrow and borrowed truck of pre-war days the unit now has several 15 cwt. vehicles, a large command wireless vehicle, a cable laying vehicle and a smaller panel truck. These vehicles and the classrooms are equipped with modern two-way radios, telephones and telephone switchboards, cable layers and much other associated equipment. All of it ensures that time spent in training will be utilized to the best advantage.

The story of Signals is a story of a steady fight to forge ahead by hard work and good equipment. Down through the years since its formation the local regiment has played an interesting and interested part in the life of the community. The celebration of the anniversary is a fitting tribute to R. C. Signals and through it to all the regiments which make up its great strength.



Front row, left to right: Capt. J. L. F. Burge, Capt. H. B. Chandler, Major F. S. Jenkins, E.D., Lieut. Col. K. M. Johnston, E.D., Major E. A. McCarey, Major R. G. Dumont, Capt. K. A. MacEachern. Back row: Capt. R. L. B. Champion, Capt. E. W. Carmody, C. D., Capt. H. L. Hennessey, Capt. W. L. MacKinnon, Officer Cadet A. E. Breedon, Lieut. Stanley Lancaster, Officer Cadet J. E. Green.



## 5 SIGNAL REGIMENT

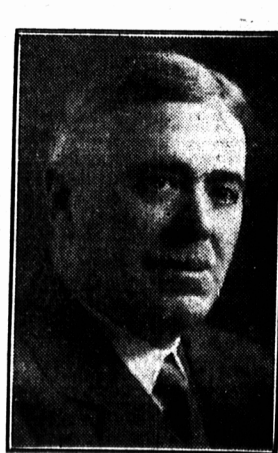
### R. C. SIGNALS

## TAKES PRIDE IN CELEBRATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY

OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE

## ROYAL CANADIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS

ONE OF THE OLDEST SIGNAL UNITS IN CANADA, SIGNALS IN CHARLOTTETOWN COMMENCED IN 1905.



Late Lieut. W. K. ROGERS, C.O. 1905-1911



Lt.-Col. K. M. JOHNSTON, E.D., 1949— Present Commanding Officer



Lt.-Col. K. S. ROGERS, V.D., C.O. 1911-1914, 1920-1928



Lt.-Col. F. B. CONRAD, M.M., E.D., C.O. 1928-1938 Honorary Lieut.-Colonel



Major W. A. SMITH, E.D., O.C. 1938-1940



Lt.-Col. D. N. BELL, E.D., O.C. 1945-1947



Lt.-Col. F. J. STOREY, E.D., O.C. 1947-49