

FIFTEEN MAN STRENGTH

History Of 5 Signals Regiment Is Story Of Continual Growth

The story of Signals in Prince Edward Island goes back even before the birth of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals in 1903, for it was before the turn of the century that the antecedent of the present 5th Signal Regiment took root. At that time there was an engineer unit on the Island, and a small section was singled out to look after local army communications. This section was commanded by the late Walter P. Doull, afterwards a well-known electrician in Prince Edward Island.

In 1905, authorization was received for the formation of an independent signal unit, which became known as No. 12 Signalling Section—since Prince Edward Island was then Military District No. 12. The first commanding officer, with the rank of Lieutenant, was the late W.K. Rogers, who had served previously as a trooper in the Prince Edward Island Light Horse, and had been at one time a telegrapher by profession. This unit camped regularly at Victoria Park from 1905 to 1913. In 1911, command was changed, as Lt. W.K. Rogers retired in favor of his son, Lt. K.S. Rogers. The strength of the unit was less than 15 in all ranks.

In July, 1914, No. 12 Signalling Section camped in Sussex, N.B. The senior sergeant at camp that year was, incidentally, Sgt. E.G. Weeks, now Major-General, retired.

UNIT TO OVERSEAS
On August 17, 1914, a detachment from this unit was the first group to leave Prince Edward Island for overseas service in the Great War. This detachment, consisting of Sgt. Weeks, Cpl. H.R. Stewart, Sgmn. H. Whitlock, H.R. Large, V. MacLeod, C. Scott and G. Gardiner, served with distinction from 1914 until 1919. They were the recipients of nine decorations for service in the field (four of them won by Sgt. Weeks), several were mentioned in despatches, two were wounded, and all returned home little the worse for wear.

Lt. Rogers served as Fortress Signal Officer in Halifax during the Great War, becoming a Captain in 1916. Meanwhile No. 12 Signalling Section performed valuable service in recruiting officers and men for overseas service in various communications units.

In 1920-21, the unit was re-organized as No. 8 Signal Company, and Capt. Rogers was a again commanding officer, now as a major. In 1921, and successive summers the new company camped at Victoria Park with a strength in excess of 200 officers and men. A mounted unit, its officers and men received thorough training in equitation. Cable carts were received in the mid-twenties and training in

the laying and maintaining of telephone lines followed.

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 licence, using the call letters XAR. Following the Great War wireless training was received and drew many to the unit in the days when radio was first gaining popularity.

CONRAD TO COMMAND
In 1928, Major Rogers retired and command was taken over by Major F.B. Conrad, MM, ED. Major Conrad commanded the unit from 1928 to 1938 during which period it was known successively as No. 8 Signal Company, No. 2 Company of 6th Divisional Signals, No. 6 Composite Company and No. 6 District Signals. Second-in-command was Captain W.A. Smith and Captain D.N. Bell was the adjutant during these years. Training camps were in Victoria Park, Charlottetown, and occasionally in Aldershot, N.S., and in Sussex, N.B. The winter months were devoted to training courses in which, for example, all officers were required to qualify in line and wireless telegraphy. Each summer a number of officers and WO's attended the School of Signals at Camp Borden and later at Vimy Barracks, Kingston. On two occasions the company attended Signals concentrations at Vimy Barracks, Kingston, Ontario, where training on a Divisional Signals level was carried out.

On his retirement in 1938, Major Conrad was promoted to Lt.-Col. In recognition of his untiring efforts in bringing his unit to a higher state of efficiency, year by year.

He was succeeded by his second-in-command, Major W.A. Smith. Officers of the company at that time included, in addition to Major Smith, Capt. D.N. Bell, (2 IC), Capt. C.G. Pickard (QCM), Major W.H. Worth (Paymaster), Lt. F.J. Storey (Adjutant), Capt. L.F. Macdonald, and Lieutenants K.M. Johnston, G.S. Bowness and C.S. Chandler. When mobilization orders were received, prior to Canada's declaration of War on September 10, 1939, one hundred percent of unit strength reported for active duty on September 1, 1939.

SENT TO SYDNEY
On September 15 a detachment consisting of Capt. Bell, Lt. A. Jenkins and Johnston and 40 men was sent to Sydney, N.S. to take over the fortress communications while a local Nova Scotia unit was being recruited and trained for this task. At the same time and for a similar purpose, a smaller detachment, consisting of Lt. 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, where they remained until joining the Third Divisional Signals in Barriefield, Ontario, in the summer of 1940. Twenty-eight other officers who had received their initial military training with the Prince Edward Island company enlisted in other units in 1939, and a number of others were commissioned in the RCN and RCAF.

During World II a signals reserve force unit under command of Lt. Col. K.S. Rogers, VD, was formed in Charlottetown. This unit trained and provided a number of officers and many tradesmen for active force duty.

Following the war, the Charlottetown unit was re-organized as 5th Divisional Signals Regiment with Lt. Col. D.N. Bell, ED, as commanding officer, Major F.J. Storey, ED, as second-in-command, and with Majors K.M. Johnston and P.S. Jenkins as squadron commanders. All officers and men who first joined the re-organized unit were veterans. It was not long before the number grew and in the summer of 1948, 12 officers and 60 men attended summer camp at the Royal Canadian School of Signals, representing about half

of the unit's strength at that time.

COMMAND CHANGES
Subsequently there have been six changes in command, the present Commanding Officer being Lt. Col. H.R. Hennessey, CD, second-in-command Major W.L. MacKinnon, CD, Adjutant Captain J.R. Hobbs and Squadron Commanders Major H. Pollard, CD, Major R.L. Doyle, CD, and Captain R.L. Bowell. Honorary Lieut.-Colonels of the Regiment have been Lieut.-Col. F.B. Conrad, MM, ED, Lt. Col. D.N. Bell, ED, CD, and since 1958 Lt. Col. L.F. Macdonald, ED.

During the period 1946 to the present the unit has attended summer camps in the Maritime Provinces, Quebec and Ontario in such places as Pelawawa, Ontario, Utopia, N.B., Camp Borden, Ontario, Gagetown, N.B., Farnham, Quebec, Debert and Aldershot, N.S. These camps were all well attended by the officers and men. At Borden in 1955 a concentration of Signal Units in Eastern Canada was held and 5 Signal Regiment the largest Unit in camp, won the following: Despatch Riders Competition, Drivers Competition and Line Laying. In the field of sports the Unit tug-of-war and volleyball teams succeeded in securing first place and the softball team was nosed out in the finals. During the summers of 1956 and 1957 well over a hundred all ranks of the Regiment assisted No. 1 Airborne Signal Squadron in providing line and wireless Umpire Communications in the annual regu-

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5 SIGNAL REGIMENT



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OFFICERS AND NCO'S OF 5 SIGNAL REGIMENT

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60th ANNIVERSARY

Commanding Officers from 1905 to 1965

- (Late) CAPT. W. K. ROGERS 1905 - 1911
- (Late) LT. COL. K. S. ROGERS, V.D. 1911 - 1914 1920 - 1928
- LT. COL. F. B. CONRAD, M.M., E.D. 1928 - 1938

- (Late) MAJOR W. A. SMITH, E.D. 1938 - 1940
- LT. COL. D. N. BELL, E.D., C.D. 1945 - 1947
- LT. COL. F. J. STOREY, E.D. 1947 - 1949

- BRIG. K. M. JOHNSTON, E.D., C.D. 1949 - 1958
- LT. COL. F. S. JENKINS, E.D. 1958 - 1961
- LT. COL. E. A. McCAREY, C.D. 1961 - 1965

LT. COL. H. R. HENNESSEY, C.D. 1965 - to date

Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel
LT. COL. L. F. MacDONALD, E.D. 1963 - to date

The public is cordially invited to attend a signal display and demonstration at the Brighton Compound from 2 - 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 30th.

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The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Oct. 29, 1965. 7
ar force concentrations held at Gagetown, N.B. From 1957 the Unit has competed in the Canadian Signal Association annual competitions among all militia Signal units in Canada and in addition to individual prizes obtained by officers and NCO's won on three occasions the Mallock Trophy, emblematic of the most efficient Militia Signal Unit in the country. It is interesting to note that (Continued on page 10)