

P.E.I. ARTILLERY UNITS MARK HALF CENTURY OF HISTORY

28 L. A. A. Regiment Worthy Successor To Traditions Of Past

Change of command for Prince Edward Island's oldest military formation, the redesignated 28th Light Anti-Aircraft Regt., R.C.A. (RF), was announced recently by Major-General H. W. Foster, chief of the Army's Eastern Command, marking another turning point in the distinguished record of Island Artillery units and involving:

Retirement of Lt.-Col. G. K. Peake, D.S.O., E.D., to the supplementary reserve of officers after nearly twenty-six years service with active and reserve artillery forces of the Canadian Army.

Promotion of Major H. G. Williams, former second-in-command, to the rank of Lt.-Colonel and appointment as commanding officer.

General Foster said it was with "very great regret" the application of Col. Peake for retirement had been accepted. He declared Col. Peake was one of Canada's "most versatile and aggressive anti-aircraft regimental commanders" and that in the past four years he had organized and trained the present unit "to a very high standard."

Regimental change of command for the Island's remaining peacetime artillery unit marked another milestone along a fifty year trail of Canada's most famed "gunner producing" province. Since the turn of the century, artillery batteries from Prince Edward Island have gathered empire competitive laurels in peacetime competition and battle honors and commendations abroad in two world wars.

Former C.O.'s

Many of the Island's most lauded citizens in varied fields of endeavor have served with its artillery units. Three former commanding officers of the unit now relinquished by Col. Peake are still living in Charlottetown and taking an active interest in the growth of the 28th. They are:

Lt.-Col. D. A. MacKinnon, DSO, CdeG, VD, at 74 years of age still an inveterate harness racer and one of the Island's most noted soldiers, horsemen and athletes;

Lt.-Col. P. W. MacNevin, DCM, ED, for 46 years a railway master mechanic, an outstanding soldier who served with distinction as a gunner in the ranks during the First World War;

Lt.-Col. P. S. Fielding, MM ED, present deputy Minister of Health for the province and a soldier who saw active duty in two world wars.

Another former commanding officer of the regiment, the late Lt.-Col. J. P. Hooper, MC, died only recently after a long and active association with Island Artillery

units.

Other officers who have contributed much to the growth of artillery batteries across the province in peace and war include:

Major the Hon. A. W. Matheson, Provincial Minister of Health and former commander of the 8th Medium Battery.

Major G. W. Craig ED, of the Department of Transport, former commander of the 2nd Medium Battery.

Major D. L. Mathieson ED, of the firm of Bell & Mathieson, former second-in-command of the post-war artillery Regt.

Major D. F. Tierney, long active with artillery units and now serving as secretary-treasurer to the peacetime Regimental Association.

Col. MacKinnon recalls that at the turn of the century he "lined up with the two batteries then organized here as a powder monkey." His main contribution at that time, he says, was in the athletic capacity of Maritime champion mile runner for three years an addition needed by the 2nd Battery to meet keen sport competition from mainland units.

Active physically and keen mentally despite his years, Col. MacKinnon unfolded many stories supported by a thick volume of old newspaper clippings of Island Batteries winning Canadian and Empire efficiency and gunnery competitions at home and abroad before the First World War. "Competition among artillery units everywhere became so acute," he said, "that every means at one's disposal, orthodox, semi-legal or not, was employed to attain victory."

Col. MacKinnon recalls formation of four coast defence batteries and organization of a school of Artillery on the Island in 1904. Competition in the field of appearance as well as gunnery ability was so acute



RETIRING COMMANDER AND SUCCESSOR—Lt.-Col. H. G. Williams, left, is shown here with Lt.-Col. G. K. Peake, DSO, ED, whom he now succeeds as commanding officer of the 28th LAA Regt., R.C.A. (RF). A veteran of five years overseas service with RCA units throughout the Second World War, Col. Williams takes over the regiment from the position of second-in-command. He is a graduate of Prince of Wales College and served with the NPAM prior to the recent war. As the new commanding officer, Col. Williams took his regiment to camp this year at Picton, Ont., by big skyway transport of Maritime Central Airways. They returned last Saturday.—(Canadian Army Photo).

throughout the First World War. Col. MacKinnon initially organized the old 11th Brigade Ammunition Column which he took overseas in 1916. The same year he assumed command of the 38th Battery from Cape Breton and led the unit to battle across the fields of France. It was during this command that he won the Distinguished Service Order and the Croix de Guerre.

At the end of the First World War Col. MacKinnon organized and commanded the 1st P. E. I. Medium Brigade, R.C.A., as a part of the peacetime Non-Permanent Active Militia. He continued in command through the initial years of inter-war peace, relinquishing the appointment on retirement to his role Lt.-Col. J. P. Hooper, MC, Col. Hooper did much to keep alive the traditions and high record of the Island Artillery unit. He was succeeded in command by Lt.-Col. P. W. MacNevin, DCM, ED.

A Master Mechanic of 46 years service with the Canadian National Railways, Col. MacNevin traces his military association over a period of more than 44 years. He just joined an Island Battery in 1909 and entered the ranks of the 2nd Siege Battery as a gunner in the First World War. He received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry in battle.

He commanded the peacetime medium brigade for a number of years and maintained a keen interest among P. E. I. gunners when most Canadians were viewing their scattered armed forces with serious apathy and little regard.

Still active in his work and constantly in touch with the present 28th LAA Regt., Col. MacNevin has served as the first president of the post war RCA Regimental Association which was formed on the Island in 1947. He has accumulated a large amount of material marking the half-century growth of P. E. I. Artillery units and plans to write a "regimental history" within the next year or two.

In 1936 Lt.-Col. P. S. Fielding, MM ED, assumed command of the Brigade from Col. MacNevin after having served for a period as second-in-command. Early mobilization came in September, 1939, immediately after the outbreak of war. At that time Col. Fielding was appointed to command the 2nd Medium Regiment, including the famed P. E. I. 8th Battery, mobilizing at Camp Petawawa, Ont. Col. Fielding served for five years in the Active Army during the Second World War, retiring to become Deputy Minister of Health for the province in 1945.

Lt.-Col. G. G. K. Peake DSO ED,

was an Island battery captain at the outbreak of war. He soon rose to the rank of Major and was appointed to command the 8th Medium Battery on September 11, 1939. Overseas he later commanded the newly organized 8th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery and led the 3rd Canadian Light Anti-Aircraft Regt. as commanding officer throughout the campaign in Northwest Europe.

Formed New Regt.

With organization of the new Canadian Army Reserve Force, the 28th Light Anti-Aircraft Regt was formed, drawing its numerical designation from the old 2nd and 8th Batteries. Upon demobilization, Col. Peake was asked to form the new regiment and see it through its initial years of organization and training.

During the four postwar years that he commanded the unit, Col. Peake gathered about him a strong nucleus of young artillery officers and NCO's. General Foster declared that Col. Peake has "welded together" three strong battery organizations that are capable of producing an effective fighting anti-aircraft regiment within a "very short time." Batteries of the present unit are located in Charlottetown, Montague - Souris and on the mainland at Stellarton.

In addition, Col. Peake has been instrumental in forming the first Island Regimental Association, the only one of its type organized by the RCA in Canada. The association is comprised of many former unit officers with a primary function of assisting the present regiment in any way possible. Col. Peake said that such an organization would "often be able to render invaluable aid through civilian as well as military channels in maintaining the standard of the regiment."

Lt.-Col. Williams takes over the 28th with strong support throughout the Island and a notable record to uphold as the top Artillery



"NO ISLAND OFFICER EVER RETIRES"—Still very active in Island Artillery circles and still a top winner on the local racetrack, Lt.-Col. D. A. MacKinnon, DSO, C. de G., VD, curled a quizzical eyebrow when "retire" was mentioned. "No Island Artillery officer retires," he says, and promptly cites as an example Lt.-Col. P. W. MacNevin, DCM, ED, another ex-commanding officer still working as a railway master mechanic after 46 years service.—(Canadian Army Photo).

commander. A graduate of Prince of Wales College, he has been associated with P. E. I. Artillery units since 1928. He served in England and Northwest Europe for nearly five years during the Second World War and has filled the appointment of second-in-command to Col. Peake since July, 1947.

In resigning his command, Col. Peake emphasized the need of "steady promotion" for Reserve Force personnel in order to "maintain interest and worthwhile activity." He said it was his opinion

reserve commanding officers should "step aside" after three or four years service to make way for others.

Commenting on the military progress and contribution of Prince Edward Island to the defence of Canada and the democratic world over the past half century, General Foster said "no province across the dominion has surpassed the Island in patriotic zeal and genuine interest in the country's armed forces whether at war or at peace."

Pays Tribute to Retiring Commander

Commended by Major General Foster as one of Canada's "most aggressive and skilful" Artillery commanders, Lt. Col. G. K. Peake, D.S.O., E.D., brings to a close some 26 years of military service upon relinquishing command of the 28th Light Anti-Aircraft Regt., R.C.A. (RF) and being posted to the Supplementary Reserve of Officers.

Son of another noted Island soldier—the late Lt. Col. A. G. Peake—he perfected a startling innovation in the use of anti-aircraft artillery guns during the Second World War that wrought havoc among enemy troops and won for him the Distinguished Service Order.

While commanding the 3rd Canadian L.A.A. Regt. battling in Holland along the crucial Nijmegen salient, Col. Peake conceived the idea of using anti-aircraft guns for ground firing. He developed and produced a "most efficient modification" for guns of his regiment that enabled them to fire in a ground role with "devastating effect of German troops." This change was carried out by Col. Peake in the midst of battle without interrupting the operation "in any way."

The citation presented to the distinguished Island officer with the award of the D.S.O. stated that "his leadership was aggressive and skilful and he always undertook more than his orders demanded."

Military Career

Col. Peake is a graduate of King's Collegiate. He has been associated with the Army since 1924 and at the start of the recent World War was an R.C.A. Battery Captain. He had previously served with both the Signal Corps and Artillery and was soon appointed to command the 8th Medium Battery with rank of major.

Proceeding overseas early in the war with the 8th Heavy A.A. Battery Col. Peake in 1943 for a time commanded "Q" Training Wing, 3 C.A.R.U., and also was second-in-command of the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regt. and the 3rd L.A.A. Regt. He led the latter unit throughout the entire campaign in Northwest Europe and was commended on several occasions for his skill at receiving and outfitting enemy counter artillery batteries.

In accepting Col. Peake's resignation of command of the 28th L.A.A. Regt., General Foster said "we are by no means fully losing the services of so valuable an officer." The General pointed out that Col. Peake had offered to place himself at the disposal of the Canadian Army with "complete cooperation" at any time his services may be needed in the future.

Col. Peake said that he would continue to support the regiment "in every respect" either through the Regimental Association or in a purely civilian capacity. He will continue as a member of the Association and will be carried on the Army's Supplementary Reserve, making him eligible for further service should emergency require.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The articles and pictures reproduced here are done so through the courtesy of the Public Relations Officer, Capt. D. L. Burleson, Headquarters Eastern Command. He states in part "From the Army point of view, the opinion expressed at Command and Army Headquarters on the remarkable record of the P.E.I. Artillery is most commendable in all quarters."



FIFTY YEARS OF ISLAND GUNNERS—Former commanding officers of Prince Edward Island's famed RCA batteries and officers of the present 28th Light Anti-Aircraft Regt., R.C.A. (RF) gathered recently at the home of retiring commander Lt.-Col. G. K. Peake, DSO, ED, to mark another milestone along a 50 year trail. The recent change of command for the post-war 28th brought about a review of Island artillery history that started at the turn of the century. Shown above are, left to right, Major D. L. Mathieson, ED, Major W. J. Andrew, Major George C. Craig, ED, Lt.-Col. Don. MacNeill, RCAMC, Major D. J. MacCormack, Lt.-Col. G. G. K. Peake, DSO, ED, Lt.-Col. P. W. MacNevin, DCM, ED, Lt.-Col. P. S. Fielding, Lt.-Col. H. G. Williams, Major L. E. Wellner, Major D. MacGowan, MC, and Major A. W. Matheson. Absent at the meeting shown above was the most senior ex-commanding officer of all—Lt.-Col. D. A. MacKinnon, DSO, C. de G., VD, first to organize and command the P. E. I. Medium Brigade, R.C.A. At an age not under 74, he couldn't be present. He was age 74 when he retired. He drove three horses, each in two separate heats, winning two races and piling up the highest individual score of any driver on the track that day.—(Canadian Army Photo).

2nd and 8th Siege

The advent of the First World War saw formation of the 2nd and 8th Siege Batteries on the Island, both of which saw service overseas. The late Lt.-Col. A. G. Peake, father of retiring Lt.-Col. G. G. K. Peake, took the 2nd Siege Battery to England and returned to Canada to organize and take to France the 8th Heavy Battery. Both units fought with distinction



TO CAMP BY AIR TRANSPORT—Sixty gunners of the two Island Batteries of the 28th LAA Regt., R.C.A. (RF) are seen here as they prepared to take off on a return flight to Picton, Ont., for a week of summer camp training. Flying troops over thousands of miles for summer camp is a "far cry" from the days recalled by senior ex-commanding officer Lt.-Col. D. A. MacKinnon, DSO, C. de G., VD, Col.



OFFICER GROUP 28 L. A. A.—Left to right, Lt. H. Lacey, Major L. E. Wellner, Major D. J. MacPhee, Lt. H. Hughes, Capt. M. E. Campbell, Cormack, Lt. P. R. MacDonald. The above picture was taken at the Charlottetown Airport prior to departure for Picton and summer training.

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Marrying Mark

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Mark as if he had never talked of nothing else, "I should say it all depended on you. In China they use white to mourn in. You see it's just a matter of custom, of being conventional—doing things because other people do. It has nothing to do with what you feel inside. I don't happen to like it myself, I mean black, but you shall have a ton of it if you want it."

"But I don't," she cried. "I want blue, and white, and—"

"We'll find your favourite shop and buy 'em out. But maybe you'd better not tell Dorothy."

"Oh—no—"

He laughed at the horror in Valerie's eyes. Then he decided it was no laughing matter.

The train slipped away from the platform. Valerie and Mark had almost missed it. Mark apologized steadily for the two minutes left him, and said things about the traffic.

He was so charming Valerie wondered how Dorothy could look at him so crossly. She and Paul stood in the vestibule of their car behind glass, for now the door was shut in their faces. Her aunt looked out at them grimly as they stood side by side on the platform. Anyway she had no chance to speak, for suddenly the train was gone, leaving a faintly disturbing scent of smoke about their heads. It made you think of places—California, where you longed to go, and other far spots.

"A railroad station is terribly exciting, isn't it?" Valerie asked as they went back up the long stairs. "I mean it sort of goes up your spine—"

Mark stopped short to look down on her. "Can you belong, by any chance, to the Brothers of the Wandering Foot?" he asked. "Because if so, you've picked the right parent. Just give me a few moments at the factory to make 'em think they can't get on without me and I'll show you a real vacation."

"You mean—away?"

"Nothing else but. Where would you be wanting to go?"

"California, please, and the South Seas. Nowhere cold, unless you like it—"

"California and the South Seas are all right for me."

The came out of the station, round the parked roadster and headed for shops. Mark asked which one she preferred and Valerie, after trying frantically to be grown-up, collapsed and told him the truth.

"I don't know any shops, Father. You see, I never saw any clothes until they were sent to me. Mother bought them and I just wore them. She thought girls ought not to think about clothes, I mean until they were older, so what are we going to do?"

"Oh, we'll muddle along," said Mark.

He could think of nothing more intimate than marriage. Yet now he knew that Ellen, in that secret place where people live alone, had been a stranger. And all the time she had lived beside him, absorbing his life, satisfied with nothing less than all of him.

To be continued

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