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is to provide

The Cape Breton Highlanders.  
Allied with the Cheshire Regiment.  
1871-1948

Prelude

This is only a very short story of this Battalion. Its purpose is an immediate story of where the C. B. H. originated from and what they did. It is hoped that some time in the very near future some one ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> describe with feeling the many actions of this famous unit. ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> do them the justice so richly deserved.

Pre War 1914-18.

The C. B. H. <sup>then</sup> formerly the 94th Victoria Regiment (~~Argyll Highlanders~~) was formed in October 1871 with Hq. at Baddeck, Victoria Co. Cape Breton.

The personnel of this unit were mostly Scots <sup>who originally come from</sup> the Duke of ~~Argyll's~~ <sup>Argyll's</sup> Estates in the Highlands of Scotland. So the unit ~~became~~ <sup>became</sup> a complete highland regiment in 1879 and adopted the sub-title (Argyll Highlanders). (Motto & march past.)

The Regiment then consisted of four companies and later four more were recruited. These companies existed until the out break of war in 1914.

1914-18 War.

On the out break of hostilities in August 1914 the 94th. was immediately called on active service, and as German cruisers were reported off the Nova Scotia coast protective measures were taken against surprise raids and the 94th was allotted the following

Stations, Sydney Mines A + F Company  
Glace Bay B + D. Company  
Louisburg C + E. Company  
Canso G + H " "

These duties were guarding wireless stations + towers, power houses and submarine cables.

In addition to these duties they sent 2400 men to the 85th Bn and 185 Bn. Cape Breton Highers but did not see action as a unit.

Following the 1914/18 war the N.P.A.M. was reorganized and the 94th was reconstituted in 1920 as the Cape Breton Highlanders, consisting of two battalions. 1st Battalion perpetuating the 85 Bn. Nova Scotia Highlanders and the second the 185 Bn. both of which had been raised by the regiment.

The badges then worn by the regiment were ~~the~~ designed from those worn by the 85th. With the motto (Siol No Fear Fearaid) a breed of manly men, inscribed on the inner circle of the badge and the regimental march post was changed to Highland Laddie.

Battle honours inherited through the services of the 85th Bn. approved by his majesty the King and awarded the Bn. in 1929 are. Arras 1917 + 18, Vimy 1917 Ypres 1917, Passchendaele, Amiens, Scarpe 1918 Bracont. Queant, Hindenburg line, Canal Du nord, Valenciennes, Sambre, France, & Flanders 1917 + 18.

In April 1932 permission was granted the C.B.H. to wear the kilt and uniform of Argyll + Sutherland Highers (Princess Louise's)

1939-~~Canada~~

At the outbreak of hostilities the C. B. H. was again called on active service and given ~~the~~ coast defence role in Cape Breton. Moving in Jan 1941 to St. John to guard that coast. Many by this time had transferred to the N. N. S. H. & W. N. S. R. so as to get overseas as it looked as if the C. B. H. was to suffer the fate of the 94th. Moving in May to Ottawa to fire small arms on the famous Connaught Ranges. It was here that it was announced we were to be infantry support for the new Armoured Division forming at Borden. This was a wonderful piece of news for all members as they were very few in this unit that looked forward to fighting the waiting war in Canada.

An inspection was held in the unit lines for Col. Ralston C.M.G., D.S.O., K.C., K.L.D., D.C.I. then Minister of Nat. Defence (Army) honouary Col. of the unit. and a march past for the Governor General of the Dominion then of to Borden to join Sanson's rough riders as the 5th Can. Armoured Div. was after called.

A period of strenuous hardening training was done here and the unit entrained for Quebec and then on board ship for England.

England. Nov. 4/43

The passage to England was uneventful and unit disembarked at Liverpool then entrained for Aldershot and quartered at Maida Barracks. Here the unit went through a period of reorganizing and many new faces appeared amongst the officers, many of the older officers going home because of age and new and younger ones to take their places. Two years was spent on hard training and preparing for the great task that lay ahead. The unit then was ordered to Eastbourne to await transportation to Italy to join the first Canadian Corps.

Italy

The unit sailed in Nov. and had a very exciting journey down as they were dive bombed in the Mediterranean and stayed behind the convoy to pick up survivors. They had to run into Philipville North Africa to escape sub. packs which lay outside for four days. Then proceeding on they landed in Naples late in November to join the rest of the Div. From there up to the Prisoner of War Camp at Altamura. The unit here was reequipped with new transport and moved into the line in Jan. North of Ortona and relieved the West Nova's. Here history repeated itself as the first fatal casualty suffered by the unit was a piper in the 1914-18 war was a piper and here on the Ortona front the unit's first trip in the line its first casualty was again a piper.

Here they took part in the attack on this front and suffered heavy casualties. They then moved into winter positions on the static front in front of Orsogna and relieved the Gurkas. A hard winter was put in here in the mud and as the enemy held all the high ground in this area all supplies and ammo. had to be carried up to the front at night by mule train from jeep head and many <sup>interesting</sup> stories could be told about handling those mules on narrow mountain trails in the mud.

#### The bogging of the mules

The next move remainder of the winter was spent on this static front in various sectors.

The next major operation was the breaking of Sustar line then on to the Hitler line in May 1944

The enemy was badly mauled on the Rapido and Saur rivers the next natural defences were the Melfa & Liri rivers so it was felt he would make a determined stand at these points.

The unit moved up to our own gun positions and concentration areas and were constantly shelled by counter battery fire from German 17 cm guns causing casualties to the Batt. of 10 men killed and 17 wounded. On the night of the 24 of May the 11 Inf. Brigade was concentrated on this side of the Melfa with the Irish Reg. leading and holding the rear bank, on the morning of the 25th the Irish crossed the river and formed a small bridge head. The C. B. H. then passed through and enlarged the bridge head to the depth of two thousand yds.

1/ Both banks of the Melfa were very steep and there was only one track on the far bank where we hauled and tracked. Vehicles could travel and this was on the right of the battalion <sup>consequently</sup> the ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Armour had to detach itself and proceed up the track then rejoin the infantry on their axis of advance. ~~From there the line moved to Capriano.~~

From here orders were received that the unit would cross the Liri river south of Capriano. Start time to be on orders of ~~move~~ probably 0700 hrs. The unit was on immediately orders to move but not to cross start point. Brigade orders were then changed and the actual move to the river did not take place until 1645 hrs.

At 1830 hrs. the Brigade commander decided ~~to~~ shorten the bridge head and gave the unit orders to cross the river on rafts operated by the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti tank Regiment. These rafts were able to take a full platoon at a time, the battalion plan was to cross one up, with three companies forward along the line of the lateral roads along the river. As the engineers at the bridge site were definite that the bridge would not be completed until 2400 hrs. it was decided to use four Anti tank guns that the 4<sup>th</sup> A.T. reg. put across. The Bn. support weapons could not cross until the bridge was completed. Apart from ~~very~~ heavy shelling and mortar fire at the crossing and later on the objective no enemy were encountered and all companies were on their objectives at 2350 hrs. During the shelling 3 men were killed and eight wounded.



8  
at 0600 hrs. 28 May. orders were received to take Cupira. The plan was Perth right and C. B. H. left. and the Irish to occupy the town itself. The Bn. moved one up and all company were on their objective at 1140 hrs. Owing to heavy shelling of the bridge site the units supporting weapons did not reach the unit <sup>at</sup> 1900 hrs. By 2100 hrs. all support weapons were in position on the far side of the river. During the night the Armoured Brigade passed through the unit lines and a recon. group from the Loyal Edmonton Regiment arrived at Bn. Hq. With <sup>information</sup> instructions from the 2nd Can. Infantry Brigade were passing through us.

At 1400 hrs. 29th May. instructions were received that the Brigade would move to Pofia and form a firm base. The C. B. H. part in this show was to take and the high ground south of Pofia with one company in the town. By 0130 hrs. all companies were on the objective, the delay being caused by mopping up operations ~~by the~~ <sup>perth</sup> in the town proper.

at 0500 hrs. the unit had orders to again advance across country and by pass Amara and on to an area outside of the town marked on the operation map as "Tom". Consolidation of this objective was completed at 1330 hrs. Here the unit came under heavy shelling and sniping which increased when the tanks arrived. At the request of the Armoured Brigade Comm. the scout platoon had a busy time here rooting out snipers and two prisoners from the 26th Panzer Div. were taken <sup>on</sup> the afternoon of the 30th of May.

The unit then came out for a period of rest and while out orders came for them to move across the country to the 5th Army front this move was done under camouflage and all markings were stripped from Vechs. and clothing. The move was completed with success and the unit then spent a quiet summer from June until August training and preparing for their new job.

On the 28 of August the first Can. Corps with the 1st Div. leading <sup>crossed</sup> across the River ~~Metauro~~ <sup>METAURO</sup> with the Poles right 1st Can Corps & 5 British Corps, <sup>to</sup> breach the Gothic line. With the 5th Div in reserve <sup>which</sup> would then pass through the 1st Div. and take feature Tomba di Pisano with the 11 inf Brigade leading then continue its advance North East to Rimini.

At 1030 hrs the Brigade Commander ordered the C.B. 11. to push forward to South Angelo feature and patrol down to the river Foglia this was completed at 1330 hrs. with 3 companies on high ground overlooking the river. A patrol was then sent out and returned at 1900 hrs. with information that the river Foglia on our front was no obstacle to tanks or infantry and the valley floor did not appear to be occupied by the enemy and one prisoner was also brought in by this patrol. "A" Company was then detached to search the <sup>river</sup> valley floor for mines. B. Company was ordered to stand to and ready to proceed to Montecchio, as mines were discovered in great numbers south of Montecchio the plan to cross that night was postponed. At 1000 hrs. 30th Aug. the Brigade was ordered to cross the Foglia and capture Montecchio.

The Bn. then pushed one company across the river and ~~onto~~ <sup>on to</sup> the objective followed by the balance of the unit. The leading company did not encounter any opposition until they reached the objective. There the enemy were playing a waiting game, well dug in. ~~They~~ <sup>we</sup> came under very heavy ~~explosive~~ fire and the enemy then counter attacked and pushed the leading platoon off the ridge and pinned the whole company to ground. A second company was then sent to pull a left flanking movement and try to relieve the pressure on the leading company. This company was run into heavy cross fire and could make no progress. So permission was granted by Brigade to withdraw the two companies and tee up with Artillery for a second attack. This was done and the objective was plastered with Artillery fire for twenty minutes then the companies attacked and advanced to less than fifty yds <sup>from the</sup> objective and further progress <sup>was impossible</sup> so they were ordered to dig in and hold as <sup>markers</sup> enemy counter attack was expected. The leading company was again ordered to attack supported by tanks and the objective was reached by 0150 hrs and some prisoners were taken from the 26th Panzer Div. Total casualties for this night's operations were one officer and 62 other ranks.

At 1655 the unit was ordered to advance and take M. <sup>point</sup> Marone the Bn was on the move again and ~~obeying~~ <sup>obeying</sup> to the traffic situation the advance was postponed until first light. at 0500 hrs. <sup>when we were</sup> the brigade ordered the to move up to M. Marone. at 0600 hrs. the unit was on its objective but lost one officer

11  
and one other rank as P.O. At 0700 hrs. very heavy 88mm. fire and heavy shelling knocked out three of our tanks this fire continued all morning. The Irish reg. then passed through and mopped up the buildings in the Bn. area and took many prisoners <sup>all</sup> from the 26th Panzer Div.

The unit then was ordered to load in T.C.V.'s and follow up advance of 12 Brigade who were <sup>had</sup> passing <sup>ed</sup> through <sup>us</sup>.

The Bn. arrived at Concentration area at 1315 hrs. 2nd Sept. 1944. Owing to heavy resistance being run into by the Armour the unit was ordered to take and occupy St. Andrea feature. This was done and patrols sent to the river Marano and found enemy infantry on western slope of Cariano feature so could not reach river.

As the town of Cariano was not taken as was reported by the 4th British Div. our positions were under observation and we were subjected to heavy artillery and mortar fire through the <sup>early days of</sup> <sup>September</sup> 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th + 9th of Sept. 44. Heavy patrolling at night was done while holding this feature and many prisoners were taken. On the night of the ~~night~~ 9th the unit was relieved by the Irish. Our casualties from this operation were 14 killed and 77 wounded.

The unit moved then to a rest area at S. Giovanni and remained there until the 12th of Sept. When they formed up again to take objectives outside town of Cariano these were taken and the Irish passed through to mop up town of Cariano. The unit was again ordered back to S. Giovanni to rest.

to hrs.

1<sup>2</sup> From the middle of September the unit moved around to various sectors of the front but did not take part in any large scale operations until 1st of Jan. 45. When the brigade was ordered to take the area surrounding Conventello. The 5th Brigade passed through them and captured S. Alberto. The Inf. attack was successful and the Perth and Irish were on three objectives by noon 2nd Jan. The C. B. 16. were concentrated in Mezzano. The plan was for the Armour to push as far as possible with out infantry support. The Div. would then join them and join up for the night.

5<sup>th</sup> Can. Armoured Bde. less 2nd Can. Arm. Regt. started to pass through 11 Inf Bde in area of Conventello about 1400 hrs. 2nd Jan. At 1600 hrs <sup>the</sup> Bn. then moved off, "A" Coy. riding in carriers the remainder on foot. ~~The unit~~ used the main tank route ~~along to Lamone~~ through Conventello and on up the Lamone ~~Abbandato~~ towards S. Alberto. The move was uneventful except for clearing a few M. I. nests from along the sides of the road.

at this time the tanks were across the Lamone and "A" company was exposed by itself on the right of the canal. The Coy Commander found a crossing place and <sup>taking</sup> took a loop of tanks with him crossed the river. All <sup>of the</sup> company were in position by 2200 hrs. at 2230 a fighting patrol was sent out to contact the enemy. This was done and 3 P. W. were taken.

at 0500 hrs. heavy shelling came all along the abandoned canal from Conventello to S. Marta this continued until 0630 hrs. when counter attacks came

in on "a" Comp. <sup>AM</sup> front about 50 strong armed with Bazookas. The attack came from the N.E. along the dry canal bed. C. Coy. also reported a strong counter attack on their position and D. Coy. still another. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and the attacks were repulsed and two prisoners were taken. The C. B. H. suffered a small number of casualties.

at first light, the tanks went through and pushed on towards Bonifacio. The unit remained in its old positions and the remainder of the morning was uneventful. P.W. began to <sup>arrive</sup> ~~pour~~ in and by noon picked up 58.

The orders now were that as soon as the tanks reached their objective the C. B. H. were to move up and consolidate. At 1600 hrs. tanks reported they had reached Bonifacio and the bridge was blown. C. B. H. was ordered up to hold the near bank. Very little resistance was met moving up.

These positions were held over night while patrols probed for possible crossings. These reported Bonifacio an insurmountable obstacle and that there was ice on both sides of the river to make rafting difficult and that the Boche were holding the opposite bank in considerable strength.

~~On the morning of Jan 7~~ It was known the enemy would make a stand here and a large scale river crossing was necessary. Some deserters came through the lines and

and reported these troops to be very much demoralized so A & B Coy started to infiltrate across. The bridge was under heavy M. G. fire but the tanks managed to get across and reinforce this small bridge head and by 2115 hrs. all coys were across and consolidated. During the night the A.T. guns came over the right hand bridge and a reconnaissance patrol was sent out ~~to~~ 3 Alberto. They saw a reconnaissance patrol enter then withdrew from the town. The civilians reported all ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~troops~~ <sup>the</sup> pulled out but some forty or fifty prisoners were picked up ~~without~~ <sup>without</sup> the fight ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~out of them~~ and the town was consolidated by A & B Coys.

The next day a band of Partisans under the leadership of an officer crossed the Reno up as far as Strada La. Menate and found an American fighter pilot. ~~The latter~~ <sup>who</sup> had been shot down over a month before behind the enemy lines. He was very glad to see friends again.

These positions were held until the 13 Jan. During this time patrolling was carried out to Reno and the Fossa Vecchio. On one occasion P.W.s were picked up and they reported the arrival of the 26 Pz. Recon Bn in this sector. This operation was the most successful ever undertaken by the unit and accounted for a great number of the enemy killed, wounded and P.W.

Prisoners taken were 156 other ranks 2 Officers.

The Italian Army then took over on this front and the first Cav. Corps then started their move for to the western front. The unit sailed from Leyburn late in January and had an uneventful trip up, landing at Marseilles in Southern France. Travelling by unit transport through France into Belgium.

Here the unit was on rest near Poperinghe for a month and were honored. Then the unit had <sup>with</sup> a visit from Gen Field Marshall Montgomery and the unit was highly praised for their work in Italy. Here a very enjoyable time was had by all ranks, whose time was spent in visiting the battle areas of the 8<sup>th</sup> Bn. N.S. Highlanders.

The unit's next move was up to Valberg and into the line on a new and strange front. Moral was very high as the unit was thoroughly rested and ready for what may come.



Holland 27 March 45 to May 8th.

On the 28 March the Bn relieved the 4th Bn. Essex Regt. on the island north of Nijmegen with Bn. HQ. at Valburg. Held here until the 3 April when orders came to ~~move~~ up to the Neder Rhine this move forward was made with out any opposition. Enemy action was very light on this sector of the front and considered quiet after what the unit had been used to in Italy. These positions were held until the 12 of April when the Bn. was relieved by the 7 A.T. Regt. Casualties here were three killed and five wounded. 13 April unit occupied line of Dessel River in a holding role. The enemy were being badly mauled by the 1st Can. Div. to the north so they remained very quiet on the C. B. 16. front but several P.W. were taken.

15 April found the unit in Arnhem waiting to pass through the Westminister Regt. with objective Tiel. This was taken on the sixteenth and orders came then to capture Barneveld this was done as the opposition was very light. Mopping up in this area, the unit bagged 24 P.W.'s

21 April <sup>the intention was</sup> ordered to Friedland area <sup>where</sup> and <sup>we</sup> relieve the N. N. S. H. of 3rd Div. This relief was completed before dark. The task here was to keep the Germans on the Island from reaching the mainland. Some 12 P.W.'s were taken. The only thing of interest that occurred here was when five Germans manning a Dutch barge went aground in the unit area.

17 On the Night of the 27th April 45  
the unit was ordered to capture the  
Port of Delfzijl from the North before  
the enemy had a chance to blow up  
the Port. The plan <sup>was to be carried out</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>in four</sup>  
~~phases~~ <sup>phases</sup>, 1, two companies to capture dyke  
2. 1 Coy. to capture strong gun positions  
3. 1 " " " Main gun position on harbour  
4. seize the station and mop up the town.  
~~Phase~~ <sup>Phase</sup> 1 was completed by 0300 hrs with  
1 Coy on dyke. 2, 3 & 4 <sup>were</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to be done</sup>  
the following night. ~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> day <sup>the regiment</sup> was  
~~spent~~ under heavy small arms  
fire and shelling. Phase 2 started  
at 0200 hrs. by C. Coy who ran  
into heavy opposition after breaching  
a mine field and needed arty. support  
badly. Phase 3 started at 0330  
hrs. at 0500 hrs the Coy Commander in  
phase 3 exhausted his supply of  
S. A. Ammo. and were seriously  
threatened by stubborn resistance.  
B Coy was sent through to help them  
also flame throwers and C Coy sent  
them Ammo and a heavy arty.  
stunk was brought down on the  
enemy positions and they <sup>which</sup> were <sup>then</sup>  
over run thus completing phase  
2 and 3. Phase 4 was ordered to  
start at once at 0945 hrs. the  
attack moved of the infantry going  
in behind the tanks all objectives  
were taken and 300 P.Ws by  
1020 hrs. By early afternoon  
all opposition ceased with the  
Bn. facing south and west. The  
following contact was again made by  
the Irish on the south and opposition  
ceased. Cease fire came 1030 hrs.  
5th ~~April~~ May.

This action though short in duration proved highly successful and though the Unit's casualties were 19 killed + 54 wounded about 1700 P.W.'s were taken and the harbour though prepared for demolition was not blown up.

Here the unit was quartered in the town for three months enjoying the hospitality of the Dutch people. While here the unit took part in various <sup>division</sup> celebrations.

The unit then moved to Friesland remained here until orders came to move to England in December. Landing at Dover from Calis early in December then back to Canada and home in January. Landing at Halifax ~~in~~ 9 in Jan. 1946. There the unit was met by the Pipe band of the 2nd Bn C. B. H. and entrained for Sydney.

The unit was disbanded in March the 2nd Bn. then became the C. B. 16. under command of Lt. Col. Brooks M.M. with Hq. ~~in Sydney~~ at Victoria Pk. Sydney.

Casualties suffered by the Unit in these Campaigns ~~from~~ from 1939 to 46

Killed ——— 200

Wounded. ——— 702

P. W. ——— 10

Died on Active Service ~~in Canada~~ - 13