

### Convoys, and So on.

The Regt was in Sussex NB, at the time, and were short of everything except cold winter weather. The only fighting going on at that time, was in North Africa, where the Brits and the Germans were chasing each other all over the place. By this time, the Infantry did not march too far, they were lifted in trucks, (pronounced TCVs), and the Brits laid it down in stone that convoy speeds would be from 12 to 15 MPH, and the distance between vehicles would be 75 yards. And these rules were to be rigidly enforced.

So 8 Cdn Bde laid on an exercise to do this training. There only enough vehicles to lift one Company at a time, so it was on that one company would be picked up at our barracks and taken several miles down the road, dump us off to continue the march on foot and the empty trucks would backtrack and pick up one of the marching companies, and so repeat the process.

Charlie Co was to be in the trucks to start, and I had them all in those open, cold trucks several minutes before start time. Went up to the front of the column and stood waiting. Lots of time. Transport Cpl Wells came along, saluted the Major and said hello to me. Asked him how things were going, and he replied his only worry was this 75 yard business. He looked directly at me and asked Sir, just how far is 75 yards.

A direct question, I had to answer, so I looked down the street to where I figured 75 yards would be, and said keep 3 telephone poles apart. He stared at me and ask what I meant, so told him. We are at a pole now, count three poles down the street, and that is where the truck you are following should be.

He asked if that was 75 yards, said I did not know, but it did not matter, as long as they stayed that distance apart, it would look good and so no one would get a yard stick to measure if it was 69 yards, or 75, or 82. It was the spacing that had to be good.

So he went down the line and told all the drivers what to do, meanwhile I looked at my Coy Commander, and he was furious, and he snarled at me, Get back to your truck. I suppose that remark about it being good enough, upset him, as we all know that looking good is not good enough for the Army, it has to be good, as well.

The next part of this story was told to me, by Bde Major Crowe. I knew him slightly, as I had fired in rifle competitions against his father, and we filled me in some weeks later, when we were doing another bit of training together.

The North Shore NB. Regt had tried this exercise, and it was awful. The Brigadier had screamed and raised Merv Hell.

Next came the Regt de la Chaudiere, and that was even worse, every one at Bde was out for blood. A lot of threats were thrown around as to what would happen if the next exercise was not a great deal better.

All of the Officers from BdeHQ were standing on the steps of the YMCA hut, at the camp entrance, as that is where the thing would actually start. There was an officer who had come up from DivHQ to watch the event, and make his report.

As they watched a motorcycle rider popped out from behind a barrack hut about a quarter of a mile away. Just as he was turning into the Main Road, a truck popped out from behind the same block, and as that truck turned into the Main Road, another truck popped out. Things had started well.

Transport Sgt Angus Scully, gave a smart Eyes Right as he passed the hut, and went on to the main gate to stop traffic, and an officer walked to the side of the road, keeping his eye on his watch, raising his right hand above his head. As second minute and hour hand touched 0900hrs, he chopped his hand down, right opposite the front wheel of the Majors truck. Right on time. He stood there and checked the time between trucks, and they were all within a second of each other.

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A spot had been chosen in the country, where observers could watch a stretch of road for about a mile and a half, the route then went up a hill, down the other side and turned right again for more than a mile. All this time the vehicles stuck to the 3 pole spacing, and looked very good indeed. <sup>MILE</sup>

So the exercise turned out to be a huge success, and the QOR were officially declared to be the masters of convoy work, and any questions were at be sent to us.

Now the men of the QOR had already proved that they could drink men of all other Units under the table. Four months of lapping up Newfy Screech had heelped.

And so we were a rather cocky crew. We had proved ourselves to all comers.

Some weeks later, all Units were being supplied with transport, and the training area in the Camp was getting crowded. Infantry would be crawling around trying to hide behind blades of grass, all sortsof vehicles were messing around, and the Field Artillery Tractors, (pronounced EfHayTees) were the worst. At that time, they called jeeps, the Americans not yet being in the war, and so had not invented the famous vehicle that later got thatname.

Some bright soul asked why the Carrir Platoon could not go to the nearest beach, practice convoy control on the way down and back, and practice tactical exercise on the beach with no one else around. The Brss were pleased with the idea, here were men so interested in training, that they were thinking up ideas to make it more intetesting and ~~xxx~~ practical.

So away they went, and not being a member of Mad Four Platoon, I do not know just what training they carried out, but would think it was on the lines of cops and robbers on tracks. Real up to date.

One of the carriers threw a track and they jumped to it getting it fixed, when one man looked up, and Hey look at the water. Now this was the shore of the Bay of Fondy and the water comes 50 or 60 feet deep, and comes in quick.

So they got out of there Toot Sweet, or is it Vite Vite, maybe even Achell. ~~XXXXXX~~ Schnell.

Would have liked to have seen that platoon commanders face as he told the CO LCol Harry McKendrick that one of his brand new Bren carriers was gathering rust at the bottom of the Bay, The air must have been blue.

A vehicle casualty report was sent in, and Bde screamed their heads off. This was according to them, the worst thing that had happened to the Canadian Army since the War of 1812.

And when it was reported to DivHQ, they were furious, and sent us a nasty letter saying the 3 Cdn Div was NOT REPEAT NOT considering beach assaulting or any other type of water front training, and said firmly, "This practice will cease forthwith".

So was forthwithed, but the damage had been done, and as far as transport work went, our name was MUD.

Ah well, you know how it goes, up like a rocket, down like the stick.

WE

The Regt arrived in England, as was fully equipped with vehicles, and the order came round, all vehicles must have 2 Gas Alert signs painted on, in conspicuous place. These were an ugly yellow, and were supposed to turn pink, or even red if gas came. As long as they were a certain size, units could use their own design, circles squares, so on.

Once again an idea was raised in Mad Four Platoon, why could we not have a sign that showed a submarine. The idea was approved with the rider that it had to be sent to higher HQs for their approval. *WAG*

So a sketch was made up, and sent to Bde, HQ, the DivHQ, then CorpsHQ. might even got as far as CMHQ. Do not think it had time to go to NDHQ in Ottawa, but it might have.

*RESULT* Now the whole trouble was, each HQ decided it needed a modification, and as a result, it ~~it~~ came back a heck of a mess, nothing like the sketch that had been submitted. Matter of fact it looked horrible, and there not a thing we could do about. We had asked for it, now we had to grin and bear it.

When men from other units saw them, they did not grin, they guffawed, and when wondered how come we had such a lousy sign, we had to explain, and they roared with laughter again. A unit from a country as large as Canada, did not have enough *M*oxie to tell dry land from sea water.



The Regt was in Inverary, Scotland, doing advanced training. Part of this training was waterproofing vehicles, so the Transport Platoon started on a jeep, being the smallest.

So they slaved away, and when it was done, only one thing remained, would it float? So Harry Baxter got in, drove the jeep down the beach and into the water,

And it floated. They were happy, they had done a good job, only one thing they had not thought of, the tide was going out, and Harry Baxter and the jeep were out of reach.

For a couple of minutes it looked as if Harry was going to earn the brass ring, for being the first man to drive a jeep across the Atlantic Ocean from Scotland to Newfoundland. Holy Crow, more trouble on the beach, first a carrier, now a jeep.

But here were a couple of Navy types close by, and they noticed what was going on and sailed over, and gave Harry a tow back in.

Naturally, we were pleased about that, and most pleased of all was Harry Baxter.

The Regiment was in billets on the South Coast at the time. They were empty houses, the inhabitants had been moved out by the authorities, as being too dangerous to live. So we, guarding the coast, moved in.

One day, during CO's Orders, a man had been remanded for a Summary of Evidence. This was part of the paper work leading to a Court Martial, so when I marched him out, said to the Provost Sergeant, put him under Close Arrest.

The man objected, saying he had not broken any Military Laws, therefore he should not be put into a Military lockup.

Well he had a point, he had NOT broken Military Law, all he had done was to beat up some local civilians, and relieved them of their L S D.

That is pronounced Pounds, Shillings and Pence.

But I had to keep him handy, to answer questions, and it would have been easy for him to hide in the local houses. Besides, I had given an order, and could not back down.

So I repeated the order, and added that if he gave any trouble, put him in irons. He was a big tough man, and it took 3 husky Provosts to clamp the cuffs on him, and escort him (pronounced drag him), to the local digger.

In a couple of days, the paper work was done, and he was turned over to the civilian Police. So I forgot all about him.

However, two or three years after the War, was walking down Yonge Street near the Masonic Temple at Davenport Road, when I saw a big man coming toward me. Knew him at once, the man from Eastbourne, and said to myself, OyOy here is where I get my clock cleaned, real good.

But no, he came up, all smiles, wrong my hand, slapped me on the shoulder, and said how pleased he was to see that I had come through without a scratch. After a few minutes of chinwag, we each went our way, and as I ankled down to Bloor Street I reflected on how nice it was to have been born lucky, instead of rich.