

JAMES and ANNA DUNCAN

Huntsville, September 2, 1933

Courtesy of: The First Hussars

Written by: Nick Corrie

Name: James Stewart Duncan

Rank: Major

Born: 21 June 1909, London, Ontario

Served in: WWII

Service: Canadian Army

Battle Group: 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade

Regiment: 6th Canadian Armoured Regiment (First Hussars)

Service Details: Joined the ranks of the First Hussars cavalry in 1933 becoming a skilled horseman while receiving his commission. The Regiment converted from cavalry to armoured when they were activated on 2 September 1939, one of the first in Canada to transition from Militia to Active Force.

Service notes: On D-Day as "B" Squadron Commander powering to shore in a floating DD tank named *Bold*, the canvas screen was compromised causing the tank to fill with water and sink. Caught up in the collapsed canvas, Major Duncan was dragged down and almost drowned. Surprisingly, the tank didn't sink at that point. Instead, it rose unexpectantly to the surface, only to go down again permanently, almost drowning Major Duncan for a second time. One casualty was the gunner: A 68153, Trooper Tofflemire, Roswell Ernest.

HODIE NON CRAS

CANADIAN WAR MEDALS – NW EUROPE

James Stewart Duncan – Personal History: 1909 - 1992

The surname Duncan was first found in Forfarshire, part of the Tayside region of North Eastern Scotland, present-day Council Area Angus, where the Clan Duncan has a long and distinguished history dating back to before AD 1000.[1]

The name is Gaelic with many variations: Donnchad; Duncha; Donnachadh. On a list of names ascribed to people around the world today, 14,888 rejoice under the name Duncan which places it at 295th.

When compiling the biography of Major James Stewart Duncan, hailing from a so obvious Scotch Highland ancestry coupled to a military, army background, one that spanned two decades of peace and war, it becomes a distinct pleasure to display such a befitting family motto:

DISCE PATI

(BROWN WARRIOR)

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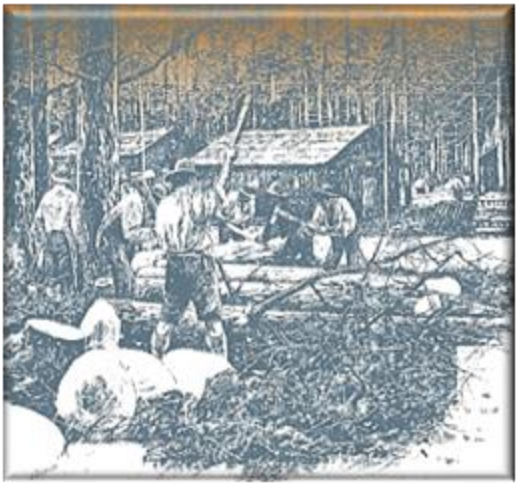
[1] Special note: Over a period of centuries, the people of Scotland have always in their vast world presence, exalted under the proud name Scotch, like the whisky they make. As time has intervened, the alternative "Scots" has gained favour. "Never say it Laddie." When the settlers came from Scotland to North America and elsewhere on the planet, they arrived as Scotch. Proud Highland Regiments have fought and died on battlefields the world over as Scotch soldiers. John Kenneth Galbraith, noted professor and economist from Dunwich Township, wrote a book about his family and others who settled in South Western Ontario (Upper Canada) entitled *The Scotch* because they never – ever - referred to themselves using any other word.

I believe the highlight of the Duncan family history finds prominence in the great Shakespearean play Macbeth. The 21st century family can lay claim as descendants from Dunchad, the 11th Abbott of Iona who died in 717. He was also the progenitor of the Robertsons. On their maternal side, the Duncans are related to King Duncan of Scotland who was killed by Macbeth. Macbeth served under King Duncan, but spurred on by his wife, killed him and assumed his throne. If you recall, it was at this point that scheming, lying witches promised Macbeth security by prophesying threats stemming from impossible eventualities which became instead, twisted hints of doom against the troubled protagonist. Suddenly one day, against all promised logic, the Great Birnam Wood advanced to the high Dunsinane Hill signalling his vanquishment. Predictably, Macbeth was killed by the brave Macduff. Recall Macbeth's famous and often repeated last words: "Lay on Macduff." And so - he did.

Beginning in the middle of the 18th century, culminating in the late 1800s, the Highlands of Scotland underwent drastic changes. A shift from small agricultural holdings to bigger farms was part of the cause, but the biggest reason, the best known and remembered in history, was the clearing of the Highland's crofters, their small farms replaced by hills of cattle and sheep - the people gone forever. Families were forced out, burned out in some cases – and challenged to find new lives in unsettled countries. North America, closest to the old, was the big beneficiary, receiving hordes of strong, dedicated settlers anxious to begin life anew. Canada became a big beneficiary of their spiritual faith, work ethic, dogged determination while not forgetting their hereditary canniness.

Crofters leaving Scotland

As Christians, in addition to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity found in the various denominations transported across the sea, these settlers had a very practical working trinity followed just as religiously: God, family and country. They placed God before family because they knew all good things come from God. As they stared into the stands of virgin forests blocking out crop growing sunshine necessary for survival, what better helpful force could be found to clear the land than in God Almighty?



Their formula for survival was first build a log shelter, clear some land for crops, then build a rough, functional log church wherein a faith community could gather to give thanks to God for His blessing. This happy chore done, more trees toppled to build schools for educating their growing families. This was the practice followed by thousands of Scotch families who came to Canada West (earlier Upper Canada, today South Western Ontario). It was against this background that the Duncan family settled and grew in the 19th century.

The first known progenitor of this Duncan family line to immigrate here was John Duncan, b. ca. 1833, in Scotland, who came to Upper Canada with his wife Christina Stewart, b. ca. 1842, in Scotland (Stewart name still with family today). They settled as farmers within the large Scotch community of East Williams Township, part of Middlesex County. The 1891 census indicates growth of a typical pioneering family: Will 19, Arch 17, James* 15, Isabella 12 and Collen 8.

James Malcolm Duncan b. ca. 1876 – d. 1928, father of our James Stewart, is shown in the census with an added birth place detail: the village of Springbank, East Williams. This typical small village, a cross roads really, comprising a post office of the same name, a store, and blacksmith, had one added benefit which fits large in this village's history. The local people built two log schools as time and circumstances dictated finally building, in 1877, a fine frame structure which still stands unused today. The history of this poor, deserted, ramshackle witness to better days of pioneering spirit, can boast an extended list of important graduates who contributed greatly to Ontario and Canadian history. Their numbers would challenge and win for notoriety only a few schools with more, but they wouldn't have rural route origins like S.S. No. 7 Springbank School.[2]

[2] For a complete history of this pioneer township, school, and graduates of note, consult *Vanished Villages of Middlesex*, 2002 by writer-historian, Jennifer Grainger.

The 20th century inherited the incredible growth in population and technology begun in the nineteenth. The rural areas could no longer absorb the large number of children so typical of pioneering families forcing many of the young to seek their fortunes in the growing towns and cities. The move introduced rural folks to amenities not even dreamed about back home on the farm. Electricity, natural gas stoves and heating, potable tap water, and indoor toilet facilities with accompanying sanitary sewers, did much to dispel any home sickness.


London Is Growing

From the Press, April 20th, 1914

MAHAFFY BROS.
LIMITED
231 DUNDAS STREET, - LONDON

The cosmopolitan, commercial economy found in the city, created a world which offered the newcomers opportunities to discover and expand on latent talents hidden away back home in the country. One man who discovered unknown talents moving him into a trained profession, was the S.S No. 7 graduate, James Malcolm Duncan. Known as Mac, James Malcolm was drawn to the druggist profession.

James Malcolm's science-based profession departed from his ancestral list of writers, artists and poets, politicians, athletes, theologians. When searching for ancestral coincidences connecting the past to the present biography in hand, no stone should be left unturned. One special ancestor, Daniel Duncan, 1649-1735, was an esteemed writer in the field of *iatrochemical* works:

> *The term derives from Ancient Greek terms which bring together the sciences of chemistry and medicine. Having its roots in alchemy, iatrochemistry seeks to provide chemical solutions to diseases and medical ailments. Iatrochemists believed that physical health was dependent on a specific balance of bodily fluids. Iatrochemical therapies and concepts are still in wide use in South Asia, East Asia and amongst their diasporic communities worldwide.*

We trust James's modern, tried and true scientific skills dedicated to the growing reputable medical profession in the early 20th century, brought forth more favourable results from those of the rather fanciful chemist/medicine, bodily fluid balancing credentials of ancestor Daniel.

The first store location selected, operated as a combination drug and general store run by his older brother by a few years, Archie, 1873 – 1945. This corner drug store at 466 Dufferin Ave, was the norm followed for years until chains began to gobble them up into the huge conglomerates we see today. Pharmacy in Canada, beginning first in New France, spans over two hundred years of constant

development demanded by the increase complexity of modern drugs. Pharmacy is the act or practice of preparing, preserving, compounding and dispensing drugs. In the late 1800s, when Mac became a druggist, he may have graduated from an approved college, one of many which were rushing to open, or he may have learned by apprenticeship, a common practice satisfying the professional demands of the times.

James and Archie in Store

James "Mac" Duncan in 1902 married Margaret Jean Rogers b. ca. 1882 North Dorchester Township, d. 1968, and buried in Mt Pleasant Cemetery with husband.

The 1921 census has the family living at 1143 Dundas Street, the new location for the drug store, with children Isabella, *Stewart, Jean and William.

*James Stewart "Stew" was born 21 June 1909 when his parents lived at 499 Maitland Street, in a small apartment block attached behind the drug store.

The early 20th century witnessed in Ontario the slow but inevitable passing of horse power. One hold out however, despite mounting evidence to the horse's vulnerability seen in World War One, was the Canadian Cavalry. While tanks, trucks and airplanes pointed to the future of modern warfare, senior military staff housed

in Ottawa saw no need to switch away. “To what”? they asked. The tank wasn’t that impressive in the mud of Passchendaele so the attitude was – change slowly or not at all until something better comes along.

To be fair, there were two other considerations besides cavalry tradition which Scotched any new approach during the interim between the two world wars. First, all nations were war weary; national leaders and citizens alike accepted any convincing arguments against fighting. The posture accepted almost universally to warn off new tyrants arising the world over, was appeasement, under which it apparently becomes a flagrant sin to spend money on new armaments. World leaders, including Canada’s, oh, definitely ours, followed this policy religiously up to the eve of a new war.

The second part of the new defensive strategy argument of doing nothing, was the great depression of the 1930s. The suffering which brought so much poverty and heartache couldn’t be ignored. How can scarce money be spent on guns when people are starving? Thus, arose another excuse for military budget restraint which dovetailed nicely with appeasement.

Sgt James Duncan (white shorts)

The military career of James Stewart Duncan apparently began sometime in the late 1920s. Duncan became a sergeant with a contingent of the Royal Canadian Engineers, presumably stationed in London’s Wolseley Barracks. The Engineers were responsible for maintaining buildings, fortifications and firing range maintenance. In 1924, their entire Canadian manpower amounted to only 243, All Ranks.

At age twenty-four, Stew Duncan’s interest turned to learning about horses, how to handle them and ride. Serving with the Engineers was a poor way to learn about horsemanship. Stationed in the local Armouries as part of the Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM), was the First Hussars, a prominent London Regiment which retained its cavalry designation begun in 1856.

Perhaps his equine interest sparked when he rubbed shoulders with someone in the First Hussars who convinced him that riding horses was more fun than fixing windows at the Barracks. Following that hunch, in *The Gallant Hussars*, author Mike

McNorgan[3] relates how Major Sandy Spencer, a WWI veteran and First Hussars officer since 1911, decided in 1933, (the same year Duncan joined the Hussars) to command the local militia squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers. Coincidence?

London was surrounded by rural acreage of exceptional growing and pasture quality. The "Old Gentry" sporting "Old Money," still loved riding to the hounds, an age-old pastime demanding that each country gentleman maintain a fine stable of mounts. A list of past regimental commanding officers and honorary colonels shines forth with many of these respected men.

W.J. "William" Stevenson

J.E. "John" Smallman

J.G. "Gordon" Thompson

Some esteemed citizens who figure prominently in Stew Duncan's First Hussars cavalry service years were: Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. W. F. Stevenson, 1929 to 1934; prominent London beer baron John Sackville Labatt, known as a good friend to the Regiment; Captain (retired) Jack Smallman, who in 1934 assumed Sevenson's role to become Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment. Colonel Smallman's Medway Farm (later the Hunt Club), located on the city's north boundary, provided fine stables which, combined with those from other local gentry, presented a fine selection of extra horses for regimental cavalry training.

[3] *The Gallant Hussars*, 2004, by Michael R. McNorgan, is the latest of three historical accounts of the Regiment. The first: *A history of the First Hussars*, *1856 – 1945,* 1951, by Lieutenant Foster M. Stark. The second volume: A *History of the First Hussars Regiment 1856 – 1980,* 1981, by A. Brandon Conron.

When one deals with the horsey set of breeders and riders such as Smallman et al, the ability to put a horse through its paces with demonstrated skill, places that individual within singular company. Duncan at 5ft 7in and 140 lbs., was an easy burden allowing horse and rider to successfully challenge the many jumps placed during both military and civilian competitions. These demonstrations of horsemanship helped build for the new cavalry recruit fresh from the Engineers and future commissioned officer, a great reputation within the right quarters of the local equine fraternity.

To understand a typical day for Stew Duncan at Medway Farms, he perhaps after enjoying a day of galloping and jumping in lush rural surroundings, he next socialised by downing a cold IPA beer in the well stocked tack room courtesy of J. Labatt. Once refreshed, Stew may have stopped to fuel his car at the neighbourhood *SUPERTEST* station, one of many owned by another fine London gentleman of renown who also liked riding to the hounds, J.G. (Gordon) Thompson, who was destined in the future to become another valued Honorary Colonel of the First Hussars.

John S. Labatt

James Stewart Duncan's fascination with horses was shared with one other pursuit which had a more lasting attachment. The year 1933 became more than just an introduction to an old Cavalry Regiment and many prominent citizens. On September 2 of that year, in Huntsville Ontario, a quiet town nestled in the beautiful Muskoka district, Stew Duncan married the charming Anna Chadwick Day, a London girl born in 1911.
Father: Rowland Paul Edgar Day, b. St Thomas 1875, d. January 26, 1961.
Mother: Sarah Annie Chadwick, b. March 1, 1871, d. November 7, 1942. Both are buried in Hamilton.
Children: Catherine (Cass), Grace, Rowland Chadwick, Richard (Dick) and *Anna Chadwick.

The Chadwicks immigrated from England and settled in the Hamilton Area. It is supposed the family prospered though manufacturing enterprises. The name becomes a given Christian name in the Day family.

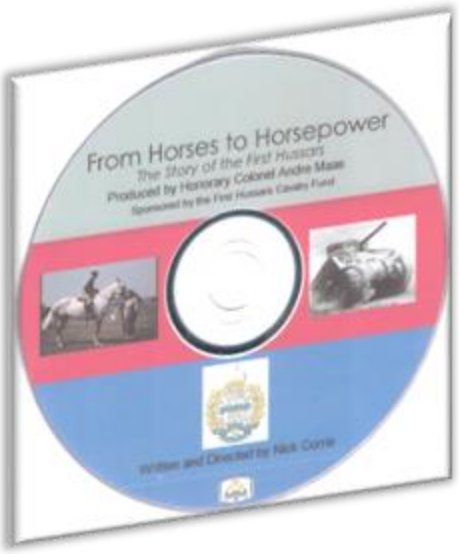
To what degree Anna shared her father's personality one can only guess. She had much to inherit. Those who knew Rowland Paul Edgar Day regarded him as a good husband and father, but also in many ways a man of special, colourful interests. In his earliest incarnations, he hunted and trapped for a living. Perhaps emerging from the woods one day with a clutch of hares, he decided to change from common hunter-trapper status to instead adopt the standards of the English country gentleman. In due course, as he strutted among the hoi polloi, puffing on a Groucho-sized cigar, when and wherever seen, he was impeccably coiffured and richly attired. He wore a smartly tailored dark jacket with resplendent striped trousers, spotless vest over white shirt with high starched collar accented by stunning silk cravat. Highly polished expensive imported shoes topped with grey spats completed the ensemble. When skeet shooting or accompanied by gamekeepers and ghillies for a morning of dropping grouse on the wing, *Sir* Rowland comfortably followed the gentleman's standards where only bespoke high-topped boots with jodhpurs would do. All of these luxuries were acquired through his profitable pursuits in the fur garment

industry as a travelling salesman or manufacturing and retail - a true entrepreneur. Bagging rabbits was in the past.

When a man meets a woman and Cupid's Arrow finds it mark, love trumps delay and all common sense. Rowland Day's daughter Anna, was a very attractive woman, quite fetching, so much so that Stew paid little or no attention to the 1933 economic depression wreaking havoc across the country and around the world. The impetuousness of youth dictated that he, a dashing soldier age 24, and Anna a charming young woman of 22, they should get married. At that point money seemed no problem with Stew employed as a store manager earning an income capable of supporting a married life together at 460 Oxford Street at Maitland.

Not long after the nuptials, their lives followed the depression down to where the newlyweds had to abandon their independence and move in with Anna's family at # 5 Thorton Ave. Stew's employment also went down market, obtaining work in some capacity with National Dry Beverages.

On the same day Stew and Anna celebrated their sixth wedding anniversary, 2 September 1939, Lieutenant Duncan's attention was suddenly divided because on the same day the First Hussars gave up its militia status to become the first regiment in Canada to go Active. One can imagine the excitement in the Dundas Street Armouries as man after man stepped forward to volunteer for war duty, but not as cavalry troops, they had become an armoured regiment. Did they completely understand what the change from horse to tank actually meant?



The cavalry training enjoyed by the Hussars in the 1920s and '30s is well documented, not just in print but on 16mm, black and white film. The actual film is safely housed in the National Archives but is now on DVD[4], a proud addition to the First Hussars Museum. A bold statement describing military training is simply – it's fun! Why else would men and women do it year after year if it wasn't? In the militia/reserve forces it becomes even more obvious when one considers how much time is gladly devoted to training outside of civilian work and home life.

When one views the film footage of the cavalry troops proudly resplendent in wide brimmed Panamas, clean uniforms and smart riding boots, mounted somewhat smugly astride beautiful horses while galloping about the countryside, the joy exchanged between mount and cavalryman is undeniable. They were having a ball. After a day's gallop at either Port Stanley or Thedford, the horses were carefully groomed and fed. That chore completed, the men in turn were generously victualed under canvas. All this and paid too. During the "Dirty Thirties," a decade of unemployment and little money, army pay could make all the difference to borderline families. This pre-war euphoria wasn't to last.

[4] The two historical films became the basis for a short film depicting the entire history of the First Hussars since 1856. Finding humour in most of the film sequences, *From Horses to Horsepower* combines the lighter moments with the more serious Regimental service years to create a documentary somewhat different from most regimental histories.

Ferrier Sgt Davies

As the war progressed and the quality and complexity of tanks increased, all pre-war Hussars came to realise that the change from cavalry to armoured involved saying goodbye to a pleasant day's trot on horseback accompanied by old friends the farrier and veterinary surgeon, in exchange for saying hello to mechanics and dirty tank chores.

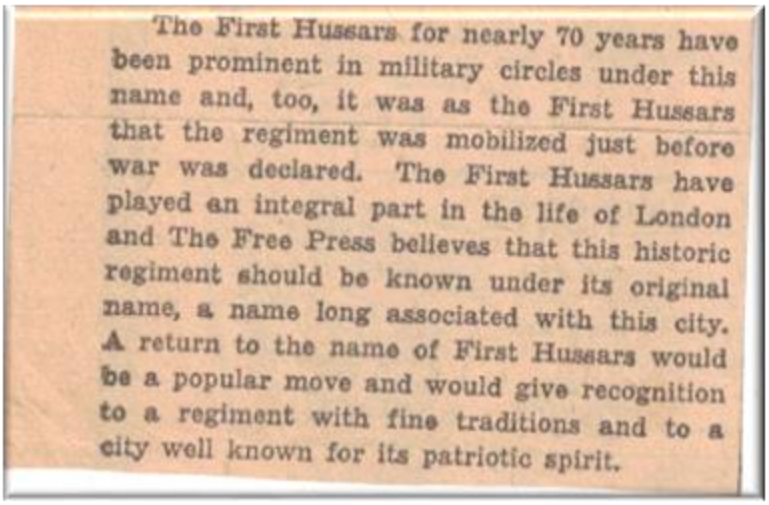
On these same DVDs is post WWII footage of the First Hussars training at Camp Meaford in newly issued Sherman tanks, the same wartime tank training range used by many armoured regiments. Comparing the condition of troopers after a day of cavalry training on horseback to a day of roaring about the tank range in a noisy steel box breathing in exhaust fumes and choking dust, followed by inspecting and replenishing fuel and oil, giving the tracks a good bash with a hammer, no shoes on a tank. When it comes to daily maintenance care, the tank is a more demanding beast than the trainable horse. The conversion helps explain the Regiment's adjustment problems.

For cavalry Commissioned Officer Stew Duncan, the tank chores were merely his to supervise, but men of all ranks had to share 57 weeks of tank training while struggling to convince themselves it was fun and worth it. Their dedication never wavered.

Mike McNorgan in *The Gallant Hussars*, offers a tongue in cheek insight into the machinations of the Ottawa bureaucracy. He points out that, after years of sluggish decision activity, with war declared and the 1st Canadian Division on its way to Britain (untrained, poorly trained and equipped) "In every Canadian conflict from

South Africa to the Gulf, someone in Ottawa determines that the best way to meet the crises is through *ad hoc* units." Therefore, it's not surprising to learn that, in January 1940, the First Hussars' name was changed to the great fighting moniker of: the First Canadian Cavalry Regiment (Mechanised) (1 CCR (M)).

This insult to London's oldest Regiment was reversed in January 1941. The anger to the afront probably came from many powerful citizens familiar with the Regiment's history plus one important ally. Rising above the work carried out behind the scenes, was the published campaign initiated by the London Free Press, a great power house of influence throughout South Western Ontario.



The First Hussars for nearly 70 years have been prominent in military circles under this name and, too, it was as the First Hussars that the regiment was mobilized just before war was declared. The First Hussars have played an integral part in the life of London and The Free Press believes that this historic regiment should be known under its original name, a name long associated with this city. A return to the name of First Hussars would be a popular move and would give recognition to a regiment with fine traditions and to a city well known for its patriotic spirit.

Another indignity happened soon after. When looking over most of the 57 weeks of training and the equipment issued to the Hussars, one can't help but feel how pathetic their treatment was. On 24 May 1940 (Queen Victoria's birthday) they proudly led a garrison parade through the streets of London after which they vacated their Queen's Park barracks and entrained for the newly opened Canadian Armoured Fighting Vehicles Training Centre at Camp Borden.[5] The cheering public gathered along the streets, believing, as did the Regiment, that this was a big step leading to the war overseas. Unfortunately, upon arrival at Borden in the rain, they were informed there were no barracks, so they were sent on leave arriving home without fanfare.

[5] This extended name serves as another illustration of the Ottawa penchant to change names. Eventually, in due course after more changes, it became: The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps School.

In the army you can be sent anywhere at any time. Hating to see the Hussars sit idle, from ever agile Ottawa minds came next a threat of conversion from armour to a home defensive motorcycle regiment. Recruited to train motorcyclists at Camp Ipperwash, was pre-war expert A 57515 Sergeant Harry A. Favell.[6] After this nonsense was scuttled, an order was issued for troop details to be unceremoniously sent to Kingston's Fort Henry and Gravenhurst to guard German prisoners of war.

Encouraged upon learning their return to Borden was imminent, the troops naturally imagined the future promised great things; the s..t house rumour was that actual tanks were available. It must have been a cruel blow when they were introduced to the newly acquired armour.

The father of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps (RCAC) was Lieutenant-Colonel F.F Worthington, known fondly as Worthy. He had been introduced to armour in Britain in 1936, and was now to apply this knowledge in the 1940 Canadian context. His first order of business was to find tanks - quickly. Searching below the still war neutral American border, were a number of French Renault designed, American built, M1917 Light Tanks. To avoid neutrality problems, the Americans sold them as scrap metal; no doubt a better description considering their 5mph top speed, light armour and machine gun weaponry.

The world watched and recoiled as the Blitzkrieg of German armour and Stuka bombers sliced through Poland and the Low Countries into France. This new mechanised war graphically illustrated the tank's importance to all but the most obtuse military cadres. And here in Canada's Camp Borden, while German troops

[6] Some irony here. The motorcycle seen in the above picture with Harry was an *Indian* motorcycle, a competitor of the *Harley-Davidson*. Camp Ipperwash was previously an Indian reservation taken over for the war effort.

marched triumphantly behind their formidable tanks, men of the First Hussars were found sitting in their ridiculous tank facsimiles. One can't imagine what thoughts were going through their minds.

As for Stew Duncan, we can assume he suffered through all this disturbing but typical military imposed confusion along with everyone else in the Regiment. Eventually he was granted, gladly one supposes, some reprieve by spending three weeks on a gunnery instructor's course. What happened to him next is somewhat obscure?

There is some ambiguity contained in the regimental diary notes. They indicate that the newly promoted Captain James Duncan received an order on 04 April 41 to "Proceeded on Command to the Canadian Forces Overseas." It would appear that the Canadian army wanted this officer to learn about modern warfare from the Brits who were on many active fronts, suffering under the German imposed armoured warfare learning curve. Canada's army eventually became the Brit's students, and Captain Duncan once in the UK, would have been placed in the vanguard to sharpen his armour skills and in turn pass them on to the Hussars. If he actually did go, then he returned in time to appear in photos and film recording the departure of the Regiment from Borden in November 1941. Point is, whether he went or not, Captain Stew Duncan was tapped above all others for the singular honour of preceding his Regiment to a war zone.

It is to the credit of those Canadian males who volunteered for war that, to a man in November 1941, they filled the ranks of the First Hussars and sailed from Halifax aboard the *Oronsay* destined for the United Kingdom. Most wouldn't see the home hearth again until 1946.

Stew and Anna had to say their good byes, regretfully and tearfully one supposes, in a train station scene reminiscent of thousands of couples wishing for better days and a speedy safe return. Oddly, as described above, this husband and wife may have kissed and hugged each other twice in 1941?

On 1 April 1943 Captain Duncan became Major James Stewart Duncan, Officer Commanding "B" Squadron.

BRITAIN PREPARED TO EQUIP TANK BRIGADE FROM CANADA

"More Divisions of Canadians Come Here the Better," Says General—Provision of Food for Troops Presents No Problem

An article in the LFP ca. 1940, referencing the departure of the Canadian army for Britain, quoted Lieutenant General Sir Wilfred Lindell of the British home forces in which he promised adequate food, accommodation and tanks: "…the war office is ready to equip the Canadian tank brigade when it comes to England…" The General went on to emphasise in his remarks that, if Canadian armoured regiments needed tanks, and of course they did, they would get them. All of these paper-promises were quickly dispelled soon after the Hussars arrived in England. In fact, his remarks were all "bull pucky."

Arriving after a rough and cold crossing, the again renamed for the duration, 6th Canadian Armoured Regiment (1st Hussars), landed on 21st November at Liverpool. Thankful to survive the violent ocean weather and lurking submarines, there followed a quick train ride through the imposed blackout covering all the UK, to finally arrive at the traditional home of the British Army – Aldershot. Recalling the prophetic words of Sir Wilfred outlining the good hospitality available in Britain to Canadians, there was widespread dismay when the troops gazed upon the dismal, dilapidated stone pile built after the Crimean War. Once inside, Willems barracks offered nothing inviting to counter the poor impression gained on the outside.

Lieutenant Stark, in his post-war history volume, points out that, despite being housed in a cold dungeon with sweating walls of running water, with food shortcomings that no Canadian stomach was prepared to tolerate, (subsequently corrected) "…this was a period in which all ranks had to adjust…" In other words, forget the bull you were told back home because from now on you "…were overseas in a country which, although unprepared…was

determined to devote all her energy to the making of tools of war and sacrifice all personal comfort to that end." As the Brits like to say when things are wrong, "Mustn't grumble." And it was with this understanding and reality check that the Regiment settled in while looking forward to the second part of Sir Wilfred's boast of advanced tank training.

While still training in Camp Borden, in addition to the 250 WWI Renaults, the Regiment did train on six Vickers Mk VIB Light Tanks, the latest light tanks produced by Britain beginning in 1936 with over 1600 produced. This was only one of the front-line, but outdated tank variants, the Canadian Armoured Corps (CAC) was offered for training. Fortunately, the Canucks only had to train on them; the Brits were forced to fight with the poorly conceived, outdated, outclassed tanks against the better equipped Germans on a multitude of fronts with predictable disastrous outcomes.

Good fortune eventually did shine on the CAC when a better tank training line-up came on offer consisting of British Churchill, Valentine and Matilda; American Lee Medium plus Stuart M3 Light tanks. Then, in late Spring 1942, from the Montreal Locomotive Works, arrived the Canadian Ram I. Designed along the lines of the still-in-the-works-Sherman, the Ram became "the" training tank until the Shermans arrived in large quantities in 1943. Given its relative simplicity and promised huge production numbers, the American Sherman tank was selected as the Western Allies main battle tank. The First Hussars would come to know them well including one model with a surprise adaption.

As the war progressed, behind-the-scenes boffins or technicians, spared no brain power to develop strange weapons of war. The Brits called them Hobart's Funnies, named after Major General Percy Hobart who apparently never scoffed at any oddity if he foresaw its merits in saving lives and winning the war. One such invention was the floating tank which

became known by the more descriptive term - Duplex Drive tank or simply DD tank; it sported both tracks for land and propellors for water power. And, oh yes, an eight-foot-high canvas screen held up by compressed air bags and a few steel rods. Enough canvas was used to displace the correct amount of water to keep some 33 tons of steel and ammunition afloat. It might sound odd to impossible, but like most of Hobart's inventions, it worked!

The one purpose behind the idea for the floating tank which greatly impressed Percy Hobart, was its ability to save lives, mainly those of the infantry who were destined to land on the well-defended beaches in the initial wave. To lessen their casualties, the plan challenged the DD tanks to land ahead of the infantry, then use their armour protected fire power to render the beach defences destroyed before the infantry landed, thereby providing them with a fighting chance for survival.

It was in one such DD tank named *Bold* that Major Stew Duncan, as Officer-Commanding "B" Squadron on D-Day, 6 June 44 attempted to power ashore. In preparation for the day, he and all DD tank crew underwent exhaustive and dangerous training.

The idea for a floating tank wasn't entirely new; boffins in WWI saw the advantage. With the war's end, work stopped, but the concept percolated in more than one country during the inter-war years. Various groups monkeyed about with a wide array of contraptions, but with the dawn of yet another world war, more serious experiments were conducted in Britain. The final design used on D-Day was largely attributable to Nicholas Strausser, a Hungarian who approached Vickers-Armstrong, maker of the Valentine tank, which became the first successful tank fitted out and used for training selected crews until the Sherman became available. Devising a floating tank was basically a simple exercise involving time and money. The next stage, the most important and complex, was

to train "volunteer" soldiers to use the odd contraption and survive all contingencies.

Everyone involved in the design and testing was aware that, once launched into the choppy Channel waters, it was a distinct possibility that the floating tank could sink. Losing the tank was one thing, but the more important five-man crew needed a sure method of escape even more! What followed in the next phase was to train the crews in a fashion similar to that of submariners escaping from a sinking submarine.

Another "B" Squadron tank on D-Day was *Bad Boy* with gunner A 525 Corporal James Fisher. Given its crudeness compared to more sophisticated training later introduced, Jim and his crew may have undergone in the Valentine one of the first escape exercises ever conducted. Equipped with submariners' Davis-type breathing apparatus and life jackets, they were taken aboard a barge equipped with a large crane and a Valentine tank. With the crew inside, the hatches were closed, the tank lifted, swung over the side and lowered into the water. In the pitch-dark steel enclosure, the tank quickly filled with water. The crew just as quickly with cold and wet fingers, deftly donned the breathing apparatus, opened the hatches, then using their life jackets, floated to the surface. They all made it, but the overall crew opinions and level of fear endured, were never recorded. The fact that Jim recounted it all with such clarity after 70 some odd years provides a very big clue. The experience became for Jim and most others, the first instalment in a lasting, unsettling, mental condition.

Man escaping with Davis equipment

Not long after, part of the survival exercise was more professionally conducted with a deep-water tank at His Majesty's Royal Naval Base Portsmouth. Once a crewman mastered this harrowing underwater ordeal of using the breathing apparatus and floating to the top of the deep tower, he was next taken to the seaside where an actual tank awaited, allowing the crew to be immersed and hopefully – survive.

Following their submersed baptism, more mundane training was carried out, such as mastering the raising and lowering of the canvas screen, manning pumps and

arranging the exterior rudder for the crew commander. (The extra rudder operated from behind the turret, helped pilot the tank ashore.) These were easy chores compared to their survival training, more like normal maintenance.

Multiple exercises were conducted to test both the equipment and crew's ability to operate everything properly and quickly. Over a period of months at different locations, a few tanks were lost, and sadly some crew drowned. War games are dangerous but necessary for men of all ranks to learn before the big day. The exercises were especially instructive to junior and senior officers whose responsibility it was to have the men highly trained and ready to properly carry out their roles for a successful campaign leading to ultimate victory. Major Duncan's "B" Squadron on D-Day, fully demonstrated the high level of professionalism achieved through many months of persistent training – they excelled!

Train, train and more of the same, this was the repetition experienced by the First Hussars since 2 Sept 39. No one knew when D-Day would happen, but in the Spring of 1944, troops and civilians alike knew it had to be getting close when huge gatherings of men and equipment began parking along lanes, in car parks, even town centres, all inching closer to the English Channel waiting for the word - GO!

For the First Hussars, their long period of training and waiting for the invasion ended on June 2. On that date, all tanks were loaded onto the landing craft and everyone for the next few days played the old army game of "hurry up and wait."

While aboard a Landing Craft in Southampton on June 4th, Stew Duncan wrote a letter to his wife Anna who at that moment was in Florida. The Major was obviously not bothered with his wife lounging on a beach in the Orange State, makes no mention of it as he contemplates soon sailing off to war across the English Channell to his own beach in Normandy. He was wearing a GOOD LUCK bracelet that Anna had sent him, a gift he assured her "…it will bring me luck."

Duncan goes on to describe both his confidence and dedication to his troops fighting ability. After months of extremely tough DD tank training, Anna learns that he found everyone "… in very high spirits and very anxious to get started with the job." And, unlike the early years "We have the very best equipment…" And plenty of it, supply was apparently no problem now that it really mattered. The RAF had supplied them with aerial photographs every few days to the point where they knew the landing ground "…just like our own back yard." On a personal level with years of training behind him and his first day of actual combat draws near, he displays a great sense of relief by informing his wife "I feel myself as if a load was off my mind as the last training has been very severe."

The Major must have appreciated Anna's strong fortitude. He writes: "I have the very great honour of being in charge of ½ the Regiment in the first phase. I hope to be the first Canadian ashore." He was proud to be part of "…the biggest amphibious operation the world is ever likely to see or read about." He continued to reassure her that everyone in the Regiment was "… very confident that we will make a good show." As for his squadron: "My old gang are with me and we know what we intend to do." The record they set that day bears out his claim.

Marking out the "old gang" comprised of men who he had known for a long time, pre-war even, trained with them, drank beer together, points to his deep-seated assurance that together they could get the job done. (Stew on left) This heart-felt attachment to them would result in severe repercussions later in June.

Two Canadian regiments, the First Hussars and The Fort Garry Horse, were equipped with DD tanks; each unit assigned to different sectors of Juno Beach. The total compliment of these secret tanks for each regiment was 38, divided into two squadrons, "A" and "B" of 19 tanks each. (The Garries had two extras not counted.)

The Canadians were not alone going ashore in floating tanks. They were joined by Americans on two beaches, Utah and Omaha, plus the Brits on Gold and Sword. After studying the history for each, the total compliment for the three allies is difficult to tally, but the estimated total could be as high as 262. The number which didn't make it to shore is even more obscure given the various conditions and problems encountered by each unit and how recorded. On bloody Omaha, the 741st Armoured Battalion with 32 DDs on board, 29 were launched with only two surviving the high waves to reach the beach. Variations of this worst example were experienced throughout the attacking forces.

The British fared better on Gold and Sword but circumstances defeated their goal to arrive ahead of their infantry.

The Fort Garrys gauging the high waves, had the good sense to carry out with their full complement, a direct landing on the beaches - but after the infantry landed. The Hussars found waves somewhat friendlier and launched at the appropriate H-Hour. The success between "A" and "B" Squadrons differed due to a variety of events mostly impacting badly upon "A" Squadron.

Major "Dud" Brooks' "A" Squadron discovered conditions improved closer to their beach *Mike Red* and after initially deciding to dry land his squadron, launched instead. Only 10 of the 19 were launched with seven reaching shore. Five more were dry landed. Unfortunately, none of the 12 which reached shore landed before the infantry. Tally: 12 of 19 reached shore - a 63% success rate.

Major "Stew" Duncan's "B" Squadron launched first, headed for *Nan Green* beach. All 19 tanks were launched with 15 powering to shore landing ahead of the infantry: a 78% *plus* success rate.

Duncan was more than a little dismayed at the rough conditions of the Channel seas. Instead of launching at the specified 7000 yards from shore, it was first decided by himself and the flotilla commander to dry land. Closer in, at the urging of the flotilla's 2nd in command, Lieutenant Commander Jones, it was decided to launch at 5000 yards. At this point, as events would show, it was still too rough, accounting for three of the four lost.

Two sunken tanks close to shore

One of the tanks which sank was Major Duncan's *Bold*.[7] His tank was merely an estimated 200 hundred yards from the beach when an enemy round splashed close enough to cause the canvas screen to collapse.[8] A frightening sequence of events soon followed. As the sea rapidly rushed inside, a rush of five men attempted to escape the sinking 33 tons. According to Duncan's account, seen in Appendix A, the tank sank so fast it took the entire crew with it. Ignoring the cold sea and the tank's confinement, everyone miraculously scrambled to exit the tank safely. All except Duncan who was snagged somehow by the tank under water, floated away independently. He was the last to surface "...after what seemed like an hour… "

To the exhausted Major's surprise, trapped air in some cavity caused the tank to surface under him, whereupon he became to *Bold* what Jonah was to the whale. The tank caught hold of his feet again dragging him down into the depths for a second time. Adhering to the Bible story of Jonah's release by the whale, Duncan finding himself suddenly disgorged from *Bold's* grasp, came up "completely out of breath" to thankfully gulp air.

His next challenge was swimming fully clothed for all he was worth towards the tank's survival dingy occupied by Corporal Challenger. No doubt exhausted, Stew

[7] Major Duncan's tank *Bold,* lay under the Channel until 1970 when it was brought ashore and sits proudly today on Normandy beach. His story is recalled in Appendix A. Sergeant Leo Gariepy was instrumental in the tank's recovery.
[8] The distance from shore varies widely with each version recounted. Major Duncan's estimation used here.

finally gained upon the dingy, and with Challenger's help, flopped inside, glad to be alive for the third time in the passage of a mere few minutes.

Before reaching the dingy, and totally preoccupied with staying afloat and alive, Stew's Second-in-Command, Captain Harry Smuck, described by Stew as his "favourite," couldn't resist a bit of macabre humour at his OC's expense. From Stew's *D-Day Incidents*, Appendix A, "He had always kidded me about replacing me and as he went by, he gave me the OK sign and pointed to the insignia on his shoulders." This humorous encounter between the two men would bring a lasting impact in a few days.

An eye witness to *Bold's* demise and the crew's struggle to survive, was Sergeant Leo Gariepy of "B" Squadron in his own DD tank *Bucephalus*[9]. In his after-battle account, he related how "…I looked about and saw Major Duncan about 30 yards to my starboard…" Gariepy was having his own problems with a collapsing canvas screen and small arms fire. Ignoring for a moment his own situation, he looked over in time to witness "…two pillars [of water from shell fire] to the right of Major Duncan's tank…" Then, after securing his own tank's screen, "…when I turned around once more the Major's tank had disappeared." He also noted that there "…were only four heads in the water."

This last observation is rather chilling when considering that the four heads were probably those of the crew; the missing head had to be Duncan's, who at that moment, was struggling under water to free himself from *Bold's* first deadly grip. Recall when he emerged the second time, only Corporal Challenger was visible nearby in the dingy. The remaining three crewmen had floated away.

[9] *Bucephalus* was the name of Alexander the Great's horse. The famous name was borrowed by the Commanding Officer of the RCD when Sergeant Gariepy joined that Regiment in 1937.

L to R Dixon Maguire Duncan Challenger Toffelmire

After *Bold* sank with the crew safely floating in the sea, there was one casualty who unexplainably drowned: A 68153 Tpr Toffelmire, Roswell Earnest, KIA 6 June 1944. Buried in La Delivrande War Cemetery, France. Toffelmire was the gunner.

Despite losing Squadron Commander Duncan before reaching the beach, each tank crew knew their individual enemy targets, demanding good driving, target sighting and sharp gunnery. They were trained to the nth degree. After touching down and dropping their screens, each DD tank crew fell to their task with a will. Quoting McNorgan "No one can fault the performance of the men on D-Day, they performed magnificently. The 21 fatal and 17 non-fatal casualties were testament to how difficult the task had actually been."

Despite the casualties, a regrettable consequence in war, the expertly conducted, successful attack on Nan Green beach by "B" Squadron deserves special recognition with accolades paid to the officer who trained and led them on the fateful day: Major James Stewart Duncan. When he stated in his letter to Anna that the squadron knew what to do, Duncan was emphasizing that the planned reason for a DD tank was to land on the beach *ahead* of the infantry, the Regina Rifles; to that end, he was confident his squadron would succeed. Let history show that "B" Squadron achieved the DD tank's designed attack function better than any similar Allied tank unit engaged on June 6. The First Hussars neglect to crow over this achievement. Maybe someday? Once the two units were joined on the beach, they fought together against a determined enemy for more than two hours before finally securing the town of Courseulles-sur-mer.

In 2014, at age 94, "B" Squadron gunner Corporal James Fisher reflected back 70 years with amazing clarity to the events of D-Day, recalling how he in *Bad Boy* and others in their DD tanks on that incredible day experienced an unexpected, unwelcomed, fundamental change in attitude. Even before they reached the beach, all their bravado and over-confidence gained after years of training, disappeared. They were unprepared to have their

senses bombarded by the roar from hundreds of guns and rockets, suffocating in choking clouds of noxious cordite, and worst of all, the sight of bodies and blood floating in the sea. Jim went on to recount how he and his buddies throughout eleven months of combat in North West Europe, witnessing daily evidence of grisly death and destruction were unable to fully relax. Beginning the first day, their audacity was replaced with a persistent level of stress; that's the word he used. That same stress plays an important part in this story.

The details of Stew Duncan's next few days in England and the trip back to France, arriving on June 12th, are shown in Appendix A. Given everything that happened in the interim, it's questionable whether his timing was, fortunate or unfortunate?

On June 11th, "B" Squadron was the main squadron ambushed at Le Mesnil Patry by the experienced and fanatical 12th SS Panzer Division *(Hitlerjugend)*. The day was so devastating it is known today in the Regiment as the Black Day, the bloodiest single day in the history of the First Hussars. In keeping, it is marked each year joining on June 6th for special commemorative ceremonies. The day's cost was 45 KIA including 7 officers, 6 NCOs and 32 men plus 6 missing and never accounted for. Not all died in combat; at least 7 were murdered by the sadistic SS. A total of 37 tanks were lost. Only 2 of "B" Squadron's survived, meaning for all intents and purposes the squadron ceased to exist.

Coming in from peaceful England and proceeding up from the beach to suddenly gaze upon rows of dead soldiers, men who he had helped train, some who harkened back to the cavalry days and joined the Active Force together with him, viewing this carnage must have been quite a shock. One missing casualty would most certainly have stood out – that of his good friend Captain Harry Smuck, who he last saw standing in his tank heading for the beach, taking time to share some humour with the twice nearly drowned, struggling for survival, Major Stew Duncan. It was subsequently learned that he was one of the unfortunate Hussars to be murdered by the SS (*Hitlerjugend*).

A member of the Toronto police force for 15 years, attached to Claremont St. station, Capt. Harry Lee Smuck, First Hussars of London, Ont., has been missing in action in France since June 11. His wife, Mrs. Hattie C. Smuck and three children, Melba, 16; Billy, 9, and Rosalie, 6, live on Cowan Ave. Born in Bayham, Ont., Smuck came to Toronto in 1919. He enlisted in November, 1939, and went overseas three years ago.

The clip above from a Toronto newspaper, recounted that Mrs. Smuck thought for a time her husband was a prisoner of war. Her hope was crushed in March 1945 when an army padre visited her with the bad news that, no, he was not a prisoner, he had been killed on 11 June 44. This article printed after the war, contained the names of all known Canadian soldiers who had been murdered including her husband, Harry. She openly expressed her bewilderment how human beings could be so ruthlessly cruel.

Adding to the sight of his dead fellow soldiers, scattered about the battle zone lay the burned out, smoking tanks that stood as grotesque grave markers to the fallen crew men.

Acting as an archetype Duncan drawing upon his family Scotch motto, *Disce Pati – Brown Warrior*, with the added distinction as Squadron Commander, Major Duncan as a professional in all respects, would realise it was his responsibility to rebuild his squadron. The challenge of rebuilding must have weighed heavily upon him when he considered who remained to help? It would not have eased his concerns if he saw the ponderous official casualty statistics suffered by "B" Squadron from June 6 to June 11 inclusive. The total casualties amounted to 54% of the 95 men who were launched ashore in the 19 DD tanks plus replacements unknown to him.[10] Compounding the loss of the very capable Captain Smuck who briefly assumed command on D-Day as predicted, were Captains Richard Wildgoose, killed, and Harry Harrison who had the misfortune of becoming a prisoner of war for the duration. No other officer survived but three experienced and valuable NCOs had returned.

[10] Casualties counted from lists in *The Gallant Hussars*.

Typical destruction of Sherman tanks inflicted by the dreaded German 88mm guns

Competing with Major Duncan's reconstruction requirements were those of the Regiment. The battle damage sustained on the 11th didn't stop with "B" Squadron; the need for rebuilding extended to all squadrons. The loss of men and equipment was a foreseen inevitability; beginning right after D-Day, new tanks and crews crossed the Channel daily. After the carnage of the 11th, it was only the volume of replacements necessary which made it all so hard to bear.

Major Duncan, as a skilled training officer, would know the replacement of men and tanks was only the beginning. Once they were assembled, the formidable task of rebuilding the squadron would begin: putting crews together, appointing new officers and NCOs, then training everyone to a high standard, ready for combat as a co-ordinated fighting unit. It amounted to basic training all over again but with a time factor: the war continued - the enemy active and dangerous - the need to hurry was paramount!

Considering the total weight of all facts bearing down on Major Duncan, June 20th becomes an important date for his role in WWII. A date when mental torments known only to himself finally became overwhelming. Looking at the GOOD LUCK bracelet from Anna and remembering how *Bold* dragged him down twice didn't help - it was a sad joke. His boast of being the first Canadian ashore a forgotten memory. It would be depressing to recall in the letter to Anna the confidence he expressed with his men who were "…in high spirits and very anxious to get started with the job." They had been ready, he made sure of it, but now they were dead, despite all his efforts to give them the very best chance of survival. His "old gang" was gone. If he felt alone, overwhelmed and depressed, it was understandable.

Unknown RCAMC doctor

We do know that he confided with a Medical Officer, admitting that his imagination dwelled on images of his men burning up helplessly in the tanks still smoking nearby. It had all become unbearable. Hushed conversations within the Regimental community tell of his disappearance for a time. Then, on that fateful day, he dutifully asked the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel R.J. Colwell, to be relieved of his command. Acting as a responsible officer, he sacrificed his reputation for the betterment of his Squadron and Regiment. On his departure he left behind for the First Hussars to savour - the best D-Day record of any Allied force.

No stigma related to shame was appropriate in 1944, nor has any evidence either from official or private sources revealed that any slanderous terms were levelled against Major Duncan's character following his command release. However, an examination of history provides a preponderance of evidence which at one time would have shined upon his behaviour in anything but a favourable, honourable light. In the minds of some thick-headed people found the world over, outdated malicious accusations such as cowardice survive into the 21st century; the movie industry thrives on the charge.

Major Duncan's request for command release took place against a backdrop of a well-publicised incident in Italy. United States General George S. Patton, while visiting casualty hospitals in 1943, twice slapped and ridiculed as cowards two soldiers who had succumbed to the stress of battle. Once the incident came to the attention of US Higher Command and the public on both sides of the Atlantic through the media, opinions of his actions and the question of cowardice found both condemnation and approval along equal lines within both higher commands and the public. With this incident discussed freely in all quarters, one can assume the same charge

swirled around Major Duncan's character, albeit more covertly compared to the Patton incident.

For a visual depiction of how nineteenth century society regarded cowardice, consider the grand sculpture *Valour and Cowardice* by Alfred George Stevens, (1817-75), on display at the V&A in South Kensington, England.
Notice how the upright, noble, fearsome and honourable figure of *Valour*, squashes the grovelling *Cowardice* like a bug.

Shell shock psychotherapists

In WWI, the medical profession went beyond the common "Shell Shock" diagnosis as a suitable mental assessment, actually eliminating it altogether by simply adopting recognised modern mental diagnostic terms.[11] Stubbornly, the British army, acting for Empire countries, Canada the largest, accepted none of this medical mumbo jumbo. Any man who could not withstand trench warfare with constant shelling, mud, blood and rats to seek medical treatment, he was a coward. Alarmed and in keeping with ancient military practise fearing widespread desertion, emerging as a deterrent from the ranks of senior officers safely entrenched far behind the front lines, they tilted at imaginary windmills to whittle down the number of thousands who had succumbed to a mere 306 who were summarily shot by a firing squad.

[11]. *The Medial Services* by Sir Andrew MacPhail, 1925. Part of the series: *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-19*

Typical execution supposedly at dawn

While Shell Shock remains a generic term used freely in everyday speech, the practise has begun to wane. The last 40 years has been an age of enlightenment in the world of mental stress assessment, bringing forward new terminology universally acceptable to both the medical profession and the public at large – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The diagnosis has expanded beyond the military confines to encompass police, fire, ambulance crews and many others where daily stress builds to a point requiring treatment.

The fundamental concept behind this change is recognising that the troubling mental health condition is triggered by a terrifying event *outside* the individual rather than an inherent individual weakness, i.e., timidity or cowardice. Looking for a cause, consider Stew's own words describing his stressful ordeal on the 6th: "After what seemed like an hour, I rose to the surface and as my head broke water, I took one deep breath." Probably feeling relieved at surviving, he was surprised when the tank rose only to roll a second time taking him down again. "The next time I came to the top, I was completely out of breath."

Coupling together Major Duncan's near twice drowning to the subsequent realisation that his squadron had been wiped out, meaning the challenge to rebuild and start over was his, the combination developed into an acceptable medical *cause* of stress disorder suitably displayed by his behaviour which when seen was also in keeping with the clinical description: *The stress disorder can manifest itself in people who have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping with life around them, even dealing with normal daily tasks.* Conclusion: reflecting back all these years later, applying to Duncan's experience both the clinical *cause* and unfortunate consequences, his war induced mental condition becomes in the field of PTSD, a text-book case.

One last point: Socially advanced western nations, Canada stands prominently, have long since expunged the term coward from most facets of life, but the outdated attitudes have lingered into the 21st century as a cause for concern and

correction. Counting off 88 years since the end of WWI, in the year of our Lord 2006, the Canadian government finally examined for correctness the charges leading to execution carried out against 25 Canadian service men in the Great War. Two were convicted for murder with the punishment deemed appropriate. The remaining 23 were charged mainly with desertion. Some of these men were totally unsuited to soldiering; all round bad behaviour filled their charge sheets. Nevertheless, with no medical assessment offered in their defence, the possibility of some or all of their behaviour as a battle induced, stress related act, was never considered.

Shot at Dawn Memorial in UK. Dedicated to the 306 executed

During the war, the charge of cowardice swirled freely about British society witnessed by hordes of women pining white feathers on men out of uniform, signifying them as cowards. Given the publicity and popularity of the charge, it's not a stretch to assume the presiding British court martial judges looked upon a deserter as a coward first and foremost. Despite how the charge was worded, 23 Canadian soldiers found guilty of a crime punishable by firing squad, were posthumously pardoned by the Canadian Parliament on 16 August 2006.

This sudden wave of enlightenment washed over the mother of parliaments in the UK but here the long overdue initiative found opposition. Remember, it was British officers who made the charge of desertion or its cowardice derivative, and ordered executions of all British service men, including Canadians. In 1993, John Major's government rejected any pardoning based on the belief that by so doing it would constitute "an insult to those who died honourably on the battlefield." In other words, to that government, battle-induced mental injuries were "dishonourable" and cowardly, a valid charge punishable by death. By 2006, with obstruction diminished somewhat, the *Armed Forces Act 2006* was enacted, permitting soldiers to be pardoned posthumously with the proviso it "does not affect any conviction or sentence." A clever CYA manoeuvre.

Post War Life and Events:

In 1946, the Regiment's tank *Holy Roller* was shipped from France to Canada. It was the only tank of 350 issued to the Hussars that survived the war. In truth, the tank was completely rebuilt before shipping to London. It arrived looking, despite displaying a few battle scars, a pristine – running machine. Sharing the tanks post-war public persona for perfection, was the Regiment's main compliment of service men who returned six months before in January. Many of these men had been patched up after sustaining a wound, but mostly they like the tank, arrived in good physical condition rejoicing at their good fortune to be home and away from all the horror they had endured. They left behind nearly 200 others buried in cemetery plots across Europe. Together, the killed and wounded made up the official casualty list for the First Hussars in WWII. *Not recorded as casualties,* were those with psychological scars embedded, either unseen and untreated or known and treated, in countless others whose mental imbalance in the future would unexpectantly appear at various moments with varying degrees of seriousness.

At some point in 1944 –'45, Major Duncan, retaining his rank, went full circle with his return to the same Reserve Regiment he left by going Active in September 1939. When seeking treatment for a stress condition, the consensus among PTSD caregivers is that, with time and self-care, sufferers usually get better. This assessment fits nicely with Major Duncan's apparent easy recovery, perhaps taking advantage of the professional care administered from Westminster Veterans Hospital located in South London.

Sometime after the war, 1947 or '48, there was a casual gathering of officers from various units in the London home of Major Duncan's in-laws, Anna's parents. What took place that day fully demonstrated that Major Duncan's actions on June 20th stemming from an unbearable level of stress, his condition lingered on capable of demonstrating an unexpected reaction.

In attendance that day in the late '40's, was the Major's namesake, four-year-old Duncan Stewart Day. aka Stew jr. In 2023, he can still recall how serving in WWII impacted everyone gathered around the kitchen table. Each time a man raised a bottle of Labatt's India Pale Ale to his lips, the boy's young eyes noticed his hands shook. Lighting a cigarette – ditto – more shaking. What happened next graphically illustrates how war induced mental injuries had created between war veterans, a brotherhood of unseen stress related uneasiness, the consequences easily sparked at rare moments. Suddenly breaking the chummy camaraderie, a passing car backfired. Stew recalls watching as each man dived under the table for cover. The war wasn't completely over for them, not yet. The guests included a doctor and dentist who had both served in Italy and North West Europe while the third veteran officer became the Commanding Officer of the First Hussars. Stew Sr. was in good company.

Years later, the close, cordial relationship enjoyed between young Stew Day with his uncle Stew Duncan, inspired the maturing nephew to join the First Hussars. In Day's own words: "As I began to understand what my uncle had done and to understand his personal involvement, I became interested to get a taste of it for myself and that is why I joined the First Hussars if only for a couple of years. We did not discuss the details of his experiences; it was more for me [by enlisting] to try and understand where he got the courage and determination to take on the responsibilities that he did running up to D-Day and on D-Day itself. I have always been proud to tell people of his experiences in those tumultuous times. To me they were all heroes."

Stew Sr. with Stew Jr.


O.M. "Oswald" Fuller

If the consummate horseman, Duncan, had any designs to resume his friendly affiliations with the local equestrians he was forced to leave at the war's outbreak, he needn't look far. His old friend, and perhaps mentor, Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Jack Smallman still maintained his prominent post, not retiring until 1949. One other Smallman connection came through the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel O.M. Fuller who had the previous good sense to marry Colonel Smallman's daughter.

Major Duncan had trained armoured recruits for four years in Canada and the UK; his skillset as an officer commanding and training men would become a valuable asset as the Regiment faced new challenges in post-war peace time. The immediate post-war period witnessed the same apathy to the military experienced after WWI, resulting in sluggish recruiting drives. The Regimental complement with reduced numbers on parade faced with training on old war-weary vehicles, did nothing to help boost the numbers or morale. All that was to change in 1947 with the introduction of new Sherman tanks.


Sherman M4A2(76)W HVSS

As stated earlier - training is fun. Recruits, some as returning veterans, were excited to see the new tank which carried more armour, a bigger more powerful gun, improved suspension and tracks, and twin diesel engines. Everything about the new version excited recruits and improved morale. The First Hussars were on the move again.

Unfortunately, with the rise of North Korea invading the South, the world didn't embrace peace for long. The Hussars' sabres rattled again with the expectation that the Reserve Regiments would be called up. In Canada this didn't happen, but inwardly a new appreciation of future military needs in the atomic age pushed some older veterans to assess how they would fit into a new conflict. Major James Stewart Duncan, who was serving as Second-in-Command, decided his military service, just two years shy of 20 years with the First Hussars, was enough. He retired in 1951.

For a short period of time, a few years perhaps, Stew Duncan worked as a manager with Hay Stationary, an old prominent London Firm. Anna's middle name, Chadwick (from her mother's maiden name), may signify some family money on her mother's side. As mentioned, they were a manufacturing family centred in Hamilton. In 1944 as Stew struck out for Normandy, Anna was 33 years old and either living or visiting people, perhaps family, in Florida. One must grasp that, in the 1930s '40s, to have residences in both Canada and the United States, Florida no less, some wealth was needed. Money aside, Anna's love of the Orange State prevailed upon the childless couple to pull up stakes and move south.

They both petitioned the US government for naturalisation 15 February 1957 and took up residence in Miami. According to Stew's niece Penny, daughter of his sister Jean, they enjoyed a quiet non-athletic life together centred around the pool enjoying a few refreshing dips followed by cocktails in the shade. Stew found employment with a bank, functioning at some level in a managerial position. And so, life went on until as it happens to all, old age creeps in. Luckily for Stew and Anna, there came from the wild Canadian north a familiar call reminding them that a return to their birthplace as seniors, they would be eligible for many attractive free benefits. In due time they were drawn home to await at leisure - the last call.

Before leaving in the fifties, the Duncans resided in Lambeth, "Lovely Lambeth" they call the area just south but now part of London.

Upon their return, they took up residence there again leaving only when their ability to cope in a house became a burden. Eventually, they both resided in a retirement home together.

Completing 59 years of marriage in times of peace and war, Major James Stewart Duncan died in 1992 and is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, London. Anna followed 2 years later on 25 July 1994 and is buried beside Stew.

1971 and the raising of *Bold*: *Introduction to Appendix A*

On D-Day, while the floating tanks were powering to shore, the one recorded witness to the demise of Major Duncan's tank and crew was P 1109, Troop Sergeant Leo Gariepy, noted above. His tank *Bucephalus* safely landed on Nan Green beach, located on the eastern side of the coastal town Courseulles sur-Mer. This landing placed "B" Squadron some 1000 meters from "A" Squadron's Mike Red beach to the west.

With credit due to Leo Gariepy, these details became of great importance in 1971. Some years after the war, Leo, who apparently made friends easily, bowed to the town's request for him to immigrate to France, settle in Courseulles and become a municipal employee. Outside of work responsibilities, his connection with the liberating Hussars and the war in general singled him out as a go-to-guy for WW II historical information and tourist guidance.

Juno Beach

The local fishermen also sought him out. For years their nets were snagging on an underwater object not far out from the beach which they supposed was a tank. Leo recalled seeing on D-Day his "B" Squadron Commander, Major Stew Duncan, disappearing below the waves in about the same location. For Leo, an eye witness, no doubt about it, the tank was *Bold.*

A flurry of letters pleading for a solution to the fishermen's problem were written to Canadian and French officials. The town officials all warmed to the suggestion for retrieving the tank and installing it as a memorial to D-Day and the men who died. With all officials on side, some luck came Leo's way. His old pre-war Regiment, the Royal Canadian Dragoons, had recently arrived in Germany as part of Canada's NATO force. Would they help? Can birds fly? In short order, recovery vehicles arrived, located the tank, took hold and dragged it to the beach.

Bold on land, 1970. In front, Leo Gariepy and MWO Frank Price, RCD

In 1971, a large contingent of First Hussars went to France as witnesses to the installation of *Bold* as a celebrated monument to all the Canadians who on 6 June 1944, stormed ashore on Juno Beach. Also returning to the scene of his D-Day ordeal, was the retired from the Regiment for some 20 years, the Officer-Commanding "B" Squadron on D-Day and crew commander of *Bold*, Major James Stewart Duncan. Stew exhibits great composer as he stands calmly beside his tank, 33 tons of steel which 26 years before instead of landing him ashore as he planned, it unexpectedly dragged him down into the briny depths threatening to become his burial crypt.

Despite some unseemly flutter over the tank's proper identification, cool heads sided with Courseulles' unofficial mayor, Leo Gariepy, late of Canada, the First Hussars and an eye witness to the sinking, to accept that the tank retrieved from the Channel was indeed *Bold*. Stepping forth with a welcomed sprinkling of humour easing the controversy surrounding the tank's true identity, was another Hussars veteran, Sam Pawley. Sam noted that while its arrival was welcomed news, it was 26 years, 6 months, 10 days and 3 hours late.

In keeping with the significance associated with the tank and sacrifice made by Canadians on D-Day, Courseulles officials named *Bold's* prominent location - La *Place du 6 Juin*.

One year later, Leo Gariepy unfortunately died. In his memory, the town renamed a street in his name.

HUSSARS
HODIE NON CRAS
CANADA

Hodie Non Cras

Appendix A

D-DAY INCIDENTS

by

MAJOR J. STEWART DUNCAN
FIRST HUSSARS (RETIRED)

HODIE NON CRAS

D-DAY INCIDENTS by MAJOR J. STEWART DUNCAN

FIRST HUSSARS (RETIRED)

After nine months of top secret, intensive training in DD tanks, a weapon never before tried in combat, on the 2nd of June, 1944, A and B Squadrons of the First Hussars boarded at Gossport to proceed to France. When all were loaded, we moved out into Southampton water and tied up at anchor, four abreast.

Now began the final briefing of all the things we couldn't tell the men while they were still on shore. Major Brooks of A Squadron and myself had spent many, many hours at briefing over on the Isle of Wight, where we had seen pictures of the beach and blown up pictures of everything that was necessary for us to know. A Lieutenant from the Royal Navy had walked up and down the beach several times a week, having proceeded there in a submarine, and ashore in a rubber boat. There he had taken pictures of everything with an infra-red camera.

Now we could show the men all these pictures and tell them where the place was, and when we were going to arrive, and what they had to do. For instance, on our last interview with this Naval Lieutenant, he had told us that one of the hotel fronts on the beach at Courselles sur Mer had recently been painted stark white. As I had to steer the Squadron onto that beach, this was a great help to me.

On June 4th, while I was briefing the troops, the inventor and designer of the DD tank, a former Austrian, came aboard to wish me luck and assure himself that I was confident that the DD tank would perform as he had intended it to do. I so assured him and he left, a happy but still apprehensive man.

As everyone knows, D-Day was supposed to have been on June 5th, 1944, which was the lowest tide of the year on the French Coast. But, due to the violent storm, General Eisenhower had decreed that we would proceed on June 6th instead of June 5th. So, at 11:00 o'clock in the morning of June 5th, we weighed anchor from Southampton water and proceeded on our way to the coast of France. The sea was still very rough and we had heavy going all that afternoon and evening.

During the afternoon, we overtook and passed a row of large structures that had been built on the south coast of England, and which, when sunk in place on the coast of France, formed a large artificial harbour which was so useful in weeks to come for the Allies to land supplies and equipment for the army.

We also passed several of the craft bearing large rolls of flexible pipe which was uncoiled and followed the contour of the bottom of the channel. This pipe was laid all the way from England to France in one day, and was used to supply high test gasoline, motor oil, diesel fuel, and fresh water, our only source of water for any purpose for many weeks.

During the night we followed the flares set out by the mine sweepers. Everyone was sick, including the sailors. I was in the leading LCT of the group and we were towing two 30-foot launches with Royal Navy personnel aboard. They were all sick. My driver, Mat Dixon, who was the sickest of all during training, spent the entire night passing out anti-seasick tablets to the rest of the troops on our LCT.

As Snoopy would say, "It was a dark and stormy night".

In the middle of the night, I went onto the Bridge of the LCT with the skipper, and watched the flares go by, one by one. I was very curious to know how we would tell when we reached the correct position to form up. He kept saying we will know when we reached the "spot". To all my questions as to what the "spot" was, he kept saying, "You will know when you see it." When the first streaks of dawn appeared, he said to me, "There, look ahead, there is the "spot". How the hell he could tell one spot in that rough sea, from another spot, I couldn't figure out. What I saw when I looked ahead low on the water, was what appeared to be two men standing on the surface of the rough sea. They seemed to be standing nonchalantly leaning against something and smoking cigarettes. What in fact happened was that they had proceeded to that point in a two man submarine and by navigation had arrived at the "spot" and anchored there.

At this point, the skipper reported to the group Commander that we were in sight of the "spot", and he ordered us to fan out into line abreast instead of the line ahead we had proceeded in all night. As the DDs were to launch at 7,000 yards, we moved in line abreast toward this point. Sometime before we reached there, the Naval Group Commander signalled me, as senior military officer of the group, and said, "Tanks will not launch today, do you concur?" I signalled back, "I concur at this range". The seas at this time were at least force 6 to force 7, and DD tanks were not supposed to be able to launch at more than a force 3 sea. As the LCTs were moving at a speed of somewhere around 6 knots, and the tanks could only do 4 knots, Commander Jonas ordered the group to do a large circle and come back to this position at a time that would bring the LCTs onto the beach at H hour.

During this circling manoeuvre, Lieutenant Commander Jones, his 2nd in command, roared along side my LCT in his MTB and shouted up through a loud hailer to me, "What's the matter Duncan, are you afraid?" I replied, "The First Hussars were never afraid, and we will launch when and where I decide that it is possible." He said, "It is simply a matter of you losing three of four tanks and me losing 8 ships." So I said, "Run into 5000 yards and if the sea is calmer, we will launch there." He roared off and came back a few minutes later and said the seas were quite calm at 5,000 yards. I signalled Commander Jonas that we would launch at 5,000 yards.

We moved on, and as I later told Commander Jones in England, he was a damned liar because the seas, if anything at 5,000 yards, were higher than they were at 7,000. BUT WE LAUNCHED.

During this time, when the news had spread around through the eight LCTs that we were not going to launch, but would go dry ashore, most of the crews had dumped onto the decks of the LCTs, the 5 man rubber rafts, and binnacle compasses and other things we wouldn't need if we were going to go dry ashore. So there was a mad scramble during this time to replace this equipment, inflate the screens on the DDs, and get ready to launch. Major Brooks of A Squadron was just as confused as anyone.

I now quote from the First Hussar's history: "Sick crews climbed into their tanks and started off in first gear, moving from the rolling, pitching LCT's into the choppy, foamy, white capped sea". Initial impetus carried them away from the LCTs and gave the necessary time to lower propellers and change gears. Then the DD tanks headed for the beach with each crew Commander standing on the platform steering towards memorized landmarks. All the tanks in B Squadron launched as in practice. In a few minutes I had them in line abreast behind me. We proceeded towards shore and seemed to be doing very well. I stood on the deck and steered my tank towards the white fronted hotel, until we came under heavy machine gun fire from the shore. I then told Mat Dixon over the intercom to take over the steering with his periscope. I sat on the edge of the turret with my feet dangling inside, where I could watch over the screen and see if he was on the right line. I kept giving him directions, a little left, a little right, and he kept answering me. Suddenly, his words were garbled, and I looked down to see water in the turret coming over my gunner's shoulders. This was the first indication I had that we were sinking or had been hit. A second later, the tank disappeared below the surface of the water, carrying us all with it.

After what seemed an hour, I rose to the surface and as my head broke water, I took one great big deep breath. Then I realized that the tank was following me up to the surface. Apparently the air in the engine compartment had re-floated the tank, and before I knew it, the tank rolled over, caught my feet and took me back to the bottom. The next time I came to the top, I was completely out of breath. After a few seconds, I looked around and saw that Corporal Challenger had inflated the 5-man raft and was sitting in it, and motioning me to come to him. The raft was drifting swiftly on the tide, and I started swimming toward it for dear life. As I had on a suede jacket which was soaked it was difficult to manoeuvre to say the least. However, after some minutes, I finally made it, got hold of one of the ropes around the raft, and Challenger finally hauled me aboard where I took off the suede jacket. There we sat, watching the tanks going away from us towards shore and the invasion of Hitler's France. WE FELT VERY LONELY!

While I was in the water swimming towards the raft, several tanks passed me on the way in to shore, including the one manned by my second in command, my old favorite, Captain John Smuck. He had always kidded me about replacing me, and as he went by, he gave me the OK sign and pointed to

the insignia on his shoulders. That was the last time I ever saw him as he was killed in action on June 11th.

Very soon, as we sat there, the landing craft of all kinds began to form a solid line on their way towards shore. One Navy barge which was about to pass us quite close veered toward us and I waved to it. As it approached, I realized it was probably one of the ones we had towed from England. It came in quite close and the Sublieutenant in command said, "Hop aboard Major". I knew now, that as I had no marks of rank of my jump suit that he knew me. I threw my sodden suede jacket aboard and scrambled after it keeping a hold on the painter from the raft. As I got aboard, the launch leaped ahead and I screamed to the Lieutenant to wait for the Corporal. His reply was that he was under strict orders not to pick up survivors. In any case, I held onto the painter and wrapped it around my arm. The corporal was riding the raft like a surf board and almost pulling me in too. Soon the Lieutenant eased the speed a little and I was able to help Corporal Challenger on board.

The launch headed straight for Commander Jonas" command ship and coming alongside put us on a ladder to the deck, and then went about its business.

As I stepped onto the deck, I saluted the bridge and the Commander motioned for me to come up. As I stepped onto the bridge, I saluted again and he came forward and said, "Good job, Major". He said to a sailor, "Take Major Duncan below and see that he gets some rest", and to me, "We will have a talk later."

I went below with the sailor and on the say met Lieutenant Bill Little and two of his men who had been picked up earlier. Below I was taken into a tiny cabin and stripped of the jumpsuit, underwear and socks (which was all I had except my watch and wallet), and put on a bunk with blankets below and above and handed a pint enamel mug which was three-quarters full of hot rum. I SLEPT! I woke up at four that afternoon.

When I came too, a sailor proudly presented me with a sweat shirt several times too large, with holes in the elbows, a pair of faded blue jeans, with holes in the knees, and a pair of tennis shoes that fit me but had no toes in them. He promised me they were all nice and clean. While I was getting into these, he said the Commander would like to see me whenever I was ready. So, not having a razor, a comb or a toothbrush, I soon followed the sailor up to the Commander's small room adjacent to the bridge where he was sitting down for probably the first time in thirty-six hours.

He smiled a little when he saw my new uniform but got down to the point. He said, "I suppose you feel you should go ashore, but that would be very foolish, with no sign of rank, no boots, no side arm, no helmet, etc., so I won't order you but advise you to let me put you and the others on an LST carrying wounded back to England tomorrow morning." I had to agree and he said, "Make yourself as comfortable as possible and if you want to watch some of the action, stay here on the bridge for a while." I did, and with a pair of good glasses watched some of the fifty-four landing craft he commanded go about their

business. I never failed to wonder how with all that, he knew my name even, when I came aboard.

Bill Little and I had some supper in the ward room where the ships officers kept coming in for a bite to eat and then back to their posts. We sat there most of the night as German planes came over constantly and several times bombs lit close enough to rock our ship.

Sometime during the morning, we were taken by the Lieutenant with his launch and he ferried us to an LST that, having discharged its cargo and taken on a load of wounded men, was moving toward England. As we came alongside in a still violent sea, a rope ladder was lowered and we climbed what amounted to a five story building up a swaying, swinging, bumping rope ladder.

I, of course, had to go first and the idea was that as the launch came close to the ship, you grabbed the ladder and started up. Several seconds later (the ship being empty), it rolled and the ladder swung out several feet from the side. As it came back with a crash, the next man jumped on. We proceeded upward until we were hauled on deck by crew members. When we were all safely up, we were interviewed, and our names, etc. noted and any wounds we had. Being all in fair shape, the Medical Officer asked me to go below with him and took me to a small cabin in the Officer's quarters. He then asked me if there was anything he could do for me at the moment and I said, "Yes, I would like a good strong drink." It took me a couple of seconds to figure out why he laughed at that, and then I suddenly realized that this was an American ship and they didn't carry any alcoholic drinks on board. He seemed like a nice guy so I said, "You mean to tell me you have all these wounded on here and no stimulant in case of need?" He smiled and said, "Well, I have some South African Brandy in case of emergency." So, I said, "This is one now." Anyway, he went away and came back with a bottle which we finished before food was served. I found out that we were going back the long way around the bottom of England and down the Thames to avoid all the traffic from the south side to France.

As it turned out, we didn't get in to Tillbury, the "Port of London" until early on the second day. By that time the Medical Officer and I had finished his stock of 6 bottles of brandy.

When the ship had run up on a hard and with doors open, started to remove the wounded men, we walked ashore and up towards a row of waiting trucks. On the way, I saw a small booth on the sand with a sign "Cable Office". There was a line of soldiers going up to it and an oldish lady was asking them questions and turning most of them away. When my turn came, I said, "I am Major Duncan and would like to send a cable to my wife in the U.S.A." She said, "Yes, Sir, what is your priority?" On my reply of A1 she passed me a form on which I wrote my wife's name and address and "Safe back in England". She took it from me and said, "Next please". I moved off.

Up at the road, my group was waiting for me and an English Corporal told us to climb in. I told him he could climb in the back and I would ride up where he had been. When we entered the adjacent camp, I asked the driver to let me and my people off at the camp Commander's office. Once there,

I went in and asked to see the Commander. Having been told my name and rank, he agreed to see me and took me in to his office. I asked about what happened from hereon and he said we would be kept there for up to a week and processed back to the Canadian Army through a reinforcement unit.

After hearing my arguments about the absolute necessity of me rejoining my unit as soon as possible, he agreed to give my group a ride to the nearest railroad station if we would just get out of his hair. Five minutes later a truck pulled up in front and slowed down long enough for us to scramble aboard then took of to a railroad station several miles away.

It was a small little station on a single track line and one stationmaster was standing on the platform. After hearing my story, he said he would put us on a train for the next big station which would be through in a few minutes. When it arrived, he put us in a first class compartment and wished us luck.

As the train started off, we noticed there was one other passenger present, an older, very well-dressed man with the usual umbrella, brief case and derby hat on the rack above him. He was reading a newspaper as usual and I suspected taking a look at us once in a while. After a few minutes, he lowered the paper and said to me, "You people look like you have been in the big ditch." When I said, "Yes", he said, "I don't suppose you would turn down a cigarette would you?" at the same time passing me a full package of Players and a box of matches and went back to reading his paper.

On arrival at the next stop, which was a larger station, I went straight to the stationmasters' office and told him my story and that I had to get to Waterloo Station and a train for Gossport or Portsmouth as soon as possible. He explained to me that there was no direct train from here to Waterloo and the next train out of there for anywhere was several hours away. That got me down, but as I came out of his office, I saw one of those little British mail trucks loading some bags at the curb. I approached the driver and he said he was going direct to Waterloo. But upon the question of a ride, he was adamant. No riders allowed, Royal Mail. I looked very sad and asked him if, when he was ready to go, he would wait two minutes to give us a chance to crawl up onto the bags. He said emphatically, "NO", but he did anyway. It was sure uncomfortable squeezing between mail bags and the canvas roof of the truck, but we stuck it out and after about one and a half hours through London traffic, he stopped and let us out just outside Waterloo Station.

Now it should be simple if we had some money to buy tickets to Gossport or Portsmouth and have a nice ride down. By now we were getting a little hungry, but we didn't waste time trying to scrounge food. I walked up to the line of tracks to the South and found that the only train down there for an hour or two was to Portsmouth. I approached the guard at that gate and told him our story. I thought he was going to brush us off but he took a good look at us and decided to help. When the train was ready to depart, he took us along to a third class compartment and put us in and locked the door, which meant we could not be disturbed until we reached Portsmouth.

The day was getting on by now and it was beginning to get dusk when we arrived at the South coast. We left the train and walked down to where I knew there was a hard on the edge of the harbour and as we stood there looking across towards Gossport, a line of submarines came from a river on the side of the harbour and proceeded soundlessly towards the open sea. The crews were all lined up at the rails and made a very impressive sight.

Just then, I noted a Navy launch coming along close to the bank and I saw that there were two girls operating it. It was very much like the one that the Colonel and Major Brooks and I had been ferried to the Isle of Wight and back twice a week for a month or more before D-Day to attend the top secret briefings. I took a chance and called, "Is that you, Mary?" The launch stopped and reversed a little and the one girl said, "Is that you, Major Duncan?" On my reply of, "Yes.", she said, "Where are you going?", and I replied, "We have to get over to Gossport". She told us to hop in which we did and they whisked us the mile and a half across the harbour in no time and landed upon the old familiar hard we had used for weeks before. Having filled Mary in on some of what had happened since I last saw her, we both said "good luck" and my group and I started up the slope towards our old camp where the "B" Echelon of the Regiment still held forth.

Soon we were challenged by a guard and almost at once, Captain Stan Brydges arrived and escorted me to the Officer's Quarters. Corporal Cliff Challenger went off with some of his friends and Lieutenant Little and his men with his A Squad people.

There were quite a few officers there, including Captain MacKenzie who said he would get my trunk out of storage first thing in the morning so I could get some clothes. They got me some food and several good drinks and got me a cot and I went to sleep. It had been a long day!

Now, after twenty-seven years, the French people led by my old friend, Sergeant Leo Garipey, a Troop Sergeant of B Squadron on D-Day (now an important official in the town of Coursuelles), have with great effort and expense recovered my tank from the sea and mounted it in the main section of town as a memorial to all the Canadian troops who landed on D-Day in 1944.

My wife and I, along with 100 other First Hussars, will be there on June 6th, 1971, to witness the Dedication Ceremonies.

2s Susan + Stewart Day

J. Duncan Maj