

*Newfoundland*

battles of history. It took part in one of the most desperate and tragic attacks of the whole war. Seven hundred and forty officers and men went over the top that morning to attack that key position in the enemy defences, and they suffered 684 casualties. Of this action, Sir Douglas Haig said in his dispatches:

The heroism and devotion to duty they displayed on the first of July has never been surpassed.

Their own corps commander said in his dispatches:

The assault only failed because dead men could advance no further.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is with people such as those who wrote that imperishable page of history that we now join hands in the great enterprises of peace.

The Royal Newfoundland regiment had one of the finest records in the whole war. When it was demobilized in St. John's on November 25, 1918, 5,046 officers and men had passed through the ranks of that one unit, whose establishment in the ordinary course of events would be only approximately one thousand men.

Thousands of Newfoundlanders also served with great courage and distinction in the army, the navy and the air force units of Canada, Britain and the United States. All who saw them in action or learned of their achievements knew the stout hearts and great spirit of these splendid people who are about to unite with us in confederation.

In the second world war the association between Newfoundland and Canada was very much closer. The changing character of global warfare placed Newfoundland in a central position in that great struggle. Its strategic importance was highlighted in the early days of the war when Churchill and Roosevelt, with their military and official staffs, met in one of its many bays to draft and sign the Atlantic charter which pledged the people of the commonwealth and the United States to join forces in restoring freedom to the people of Europe who had been engulfed in the flood of nazi power.

With the increasing role of long-range bombers and aircraft of all kinds, Newfoundland became a focal point in the efforts of Canada, Great Britain and the United States through the years which followed.

During the whole of the war, Newfoundlanders served side by side with Canadians in different parts of the world and also in their own country. Because of the threat to the Atlantic coast by German submarines and aircraft, it was necessary to provide for the actual defence of Newfoundland as a very real contingency which might be faced. For that reason many Canadians served in Newfoundland throughout the war.

In the spring of 1940, the Black Watch of

Montreal were dispatched to Newfoundland to protect the great airport at Gander, which was then being expanded as an operational base for the Royal Canadian Air Force and the air-ferrying services of Canada, Britain and the United States—the United States, of course, indirectly at that time. Because our common interests had become so closely linked, the defence forces in Newfoundland were brought under the Canadian Atlantic command in 1940.

Canadian coast defence batteries and anti-aircraft units were stationed at the airports at Gander, Goose Bay, Torbay and also at the loading piers at Conception bay, the mines on Bell island, as well as the fuel tanks and docks at Lewisporte and Botwood. A Newfoundland coast defence battery manned the defences at Bell island while Canadian batteries were stationed at St. John's.

I mention this to indicate the close military association which existed between the people of Newfoundland and Canada under the Canadian Atlantic command. In due course the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto relieved the Black Watch at Gander and, as the war progressed and increased in intensity, units from every part of Canada were moved to different points in the island. These included the Chaudiere regiment, the Royal rifles, the Edmonton fusiliers, the New Brunswick rangers, and other well known regiments.

The Royal Canadian Air Force operated bases at Botwood, Torbay, Gander and Goose Bay. Thousands of our young men and women served in these units at these various bases. Extensive communication systems were also set up under Atlantic command signals. Other Canadian services included the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, the ordnance corps, medical depots and other special units.

In addition to those who served in their own units, many Newfoundlanders served in the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Navy. They also served in all branches of the Royal Canadian Air Force, including the women's division. Those with Canadian units wore the Newfoundland badge on their shoulders and won friendship and respect from all with whom they served in every part of the world.

Because of these many contacts, thousands of Newfoundlanders trained and served in Canada while thousands of our own young men and women saw service and made warm friendships in Newfoundland.

I have mentioned these details at some length because that history of the participation of Newfoundlanders in two wars, and particularly that association between the young men and women of Canada and Newfoundland in the second world war,