



THESES NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENSE

Family Name: <u>Whitehead</u>	Given Name, Middle Name (if applicable): <u>Parson Isaac</u>
Full Name of University: <u>Royal Military College</u>	
Faculty, Department, School: <u>Department of History</u>	
Degree for which thesis was presented: <u>Bachelor of Arts Honours History</u>	Date Degree Awarded: <u>May 15, 2025</u>
Thesis Title: <u>The Argylls: From Gentlemen to Liberators</u>	
Date of Birth. It is optional to supply your date of birth. If you choose to do so please note that the information will be included in the bibliographic record for your thesis. <u>July 1, 2003</u>	

In consideration of Library and Archives Canada making my thesis available to interested persons, I,

Parson Isaac Whitehead

hereby grant a non-exclusive license, for the full term of copyright protection, to Library and Archives Canada:

to preserve, perform, produce, reproduce, translate theses and dissertations in any format, and to make available in print or online by telecommunication to the public for non-commercial purposes.

I undertake to submit my thesis, through my university, to Library and Archives Canada. Any abstract submitted with the thesis will be considered to form part of the thesis.

I represent and promise that my thesis is my original work, does not infringe any rights of others, and that I have the right to make the grant conferred by this non-exclusive license.

If third party copyrighted material was included in my thesis for which, under the terms of the Copyright Act, written permission from the copyright owners is required I have obtained such permission from the copyright owners to do the acts mentioned in paragraph (a) above for the full term of copyright protection

I retain copyright ownership and moral rights in my thesis, and may deal with the copyright in my thesis, in any way consistent with rights granted by me to Library and Archives Canada in this non-exclusive licence.

I further promise to inform any person to whom I may hereafter assign or license my copyright in my thesis of the rights granted by me to Library and Archives Canada in this non-exclusive licence.

Signature <u>x Parson Isaac Whitehead</u>	Date <u>May 1, 2025</u>
--	----------------------------

The Argylls: From Gentlemen to Liberators

By: OCdt Parson Isaac Whitehead

30044

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Honours History

Royal Military College of Canada

Supervised by: Capt. Arthur Gullachsen

Submitted to: Dr. Jim Kenny

Pages: 80

HIE 424

21 April 2025

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1: Argylls in the interwar years.....	14
Chapter 2: The start of the Second World War and the spark of change.....	28
Chapter 3: The Training Years and Transformation.....	40
Chapter 4: Overseas Performance and Combat Dividends.....	55
Conclusion.....	75
Appendix.....	77
Bibliography.....	78

Abstract

This study analyzes the development of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's) infantry regiment during the Second World War (1939-1945) and demonstrates how they were able to transform from a militia unit with no modern equipment to a fully equipped combat battalion that was able to distinguish itself in the Allied campaign to liberate Northwest Europe. The existing literature on this subject is limited and comes mostly from memoirs and interviews with members of the regiment in the postwar period. To supplement the historiography of this subject, this study will examine the overall Canadian Army process of activating militia regiments in preparation for overseas service.

The research effort for this thesis relied on primary sources such as the battalion orders and war dairies supplemented by secondary sources written on the Argylls from 1928 - 1953. Other sources include works that provide background details on Canadian and British Army training, and the memoirs of members of the regiment during the war. By consulting and critiquing these sources to obtain an objective account of how the Argylls prepared for combat, this thesis demonstrates that the cause for the regiment's overall operational success in the Second World War was due to the amount of training that it received, allowing the regiment to increase its level of cohesion and effectiveness. Furthermore, the fates of the Canadian infantry battalion lost in the defeats at Hong Kong and Dieppe in 1941 and 1942, respectively, proved to have a great impact on the Argylls, who took it as a lesson to attain a high level of professionalism and well-trained for the combat ahead.

Introduction

Military history offers a valuable lens through which societies can be understood, particularly in how they prepare for and respond to the challenges posed by war. This thesis examines the evolution of the 1st Battalion, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's), referred to hereafter as the Argylls, focusing on their transformation from an interwar militia regiment to a full-fledged battalion that served with distinction in the liberation of Europe from 1944 to 1945. By exploring this transformation, the study aims to answer the central research question: *How did the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada adapt to the demands of the Second World War, and what lessons can their experience offer for contemporary military organizations?*

The significance of this examination extends beyond the experience of a single regiment. It touches upon broader themes such as adaptation, resilience, and innovation, which are critical to military success. Understanding how the Argylls prepared for and executed their wartime roles can shed light on the mechanisms by which Canadian military units adapted to the evolving nature of warfare. Furthermore, the insights gained from this historical analysis have contemporary relevance, providing potential lessons for modern defence organizations in terms of structural adaptation, leadership development, and operational readiness.

The Argylls trace their origins back to the early 20th century, specifically to the Scottish community in Hamilton, Ontario. Officially commissioned on September 16, 1903, as the 91st Canadian Highlanders, the regiment benefited from strong community support, political backing, and financial sponsorship. Over time, it underwent several name changes before assuming the name that it bears to this day. During the Great War, 1914–1918, the regiment formed a

significant part of the 19th Battalion, which was commanded by a Hamilton native and member of the 91st Highlanders. The battalion served with distinction as part of the Canadian Corps, earning numerous battle honours.¹ However, in the aftermath of the war, the Argylls, like many other Canadian militia regiments, transitioned into a peacetime role. During this period, the regiment functioned primarily as a social and community organization, reflecting broader national trends of military downsizing and disarmament. The city of Hamilton was a growing and thriving industrial hub with a population of 156,547 in 1931.² The city had a strong Scottish presence, with many residents of Scottish descent, which likely contributed to the popularity of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders among local men. In the 1930s, Hamilton's economy was dominated by manufacturing, with steel production and textile manufacturing leading the way. Companies like Stelco and the Hamilton Blast Furnace Company were central to the city's industrial landscape, providing numerous job opportunities in the steel and manufacturing sectors.³ This industrial base not only supported the local economy with skilled labour but also fostered a strong sense of community and pride among Hamiltonians, further strengthening the bond between the regiment and the city.

The interwar period presented unique challenges and opportunities for Canadian militia regiments. Government policies during this time emphasized reducing military expenditures and maintaining only a minimal peacetime force. Consequently, the Permanent Active Militia (PAM) assumed a dual role: maintaining a standing force ready for deployment, while also training the

¹ David Campbell, *It Can't Last Forever: The 19th Battalion and the Canadian Corps in the First World War* (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 7.

² Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1931: Population by Sex, General and Detailed Origin, Age Groups, Conjugal Condition and Other Characteristics, for Canada, Provinces, Counties or Census Divisions and Subdivisions* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1931), 161,

³ Craig Heron, *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883–1935* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008), 32.

Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM) units, which were part-time soldiers who could be called up in times of war. The NPAM allowed for a rapid expansion of the military during conflicts, supplementing the regular PAM forces when needed.⁴ This structure helped ensure Canada's military readiness, supplementing the regular units with a reservist force. For the Argylls, this era was marked by active community engagement and concerted efforts to preserve their Scottish regimental identity despite limited resources. The regiment continued to conduct training exercises and maintain organizational cohesion, and the prospect of another large-scale conflict seemed distant.

The outbreak of the Second World War for Canada on September 10, 1939, marked a turning point for the unit. Like other NPAM regiments, the Argylls were called upon to transition from their peacetime roles to prepare for active service. This transformation involved a significant expansion of personnel, intensified training, and the assumption of new responsibilities as an Active Service Force unit bound for overseas deployment. The regiment's early wartime activities focused on building operational capacity and preparing its members for eventual combat. Despite initial challenges, including shortages of equipment and experienced personnel, the Argylls demonstrated remarkable adaptability during this phase.

Historiography

The historiography of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's) and their role in the Second World War has received varying degrees of scholarly attention. While some works focus specifically on the wartime experiences of the individual

⁴ Andrew L. Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone: Canadian Non-Commissioned Officers in the Second World War* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2022), 46.

members and the regiment, others provide broader discussions on the Canadian Army's mobilization, training, and combat performance. Examining these sources allows for a clearer understanding of how the Argylls transitioned from a peacetime militia unit to a highly capable infantry battalion that distinguished itself in combat.

One of the earliest published accounts of the regiment is *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's) 1928-1953* (1953). Written and compiled by officers of the regiment and edited by Lieutenant-Colonel Harold McGill Jackson. The novel was dedicated to the members of the regiment who gave their lives in Canada's wars to keep their history alive.⁵ This work provides a narrative history of the regiment from its role during the interwar period, the Second World War, and in the postwar era. While valuable in its role as a regimental chronicle, Jackson's account reflects the tendency of early military histories to focus on commemorative storytelling rather than critical analysis. Nonetheless, the book remains a foundational source for understanding the Argylls' wartime experience.

C.P. Stacey's *Arms, Men and Governments, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War Volume 1: Six Years at War* and *Official History of the Canadian Army Volume 3: The Victory Campaign* are essential to understanding the broader context of Canadian military operations during the war. Stacey provides an in-depth examination of Canada's war effort, including the mobilization of the PAM. He states that the PAM had only 4,261 all ranks and the NPAM, of which the Argylls was part, possessed a total of 51,418 all ranks at the outbreak of war.⁶ *Victory Campaign* offers critical insights into the final phase of the war in

⁵ Harold McGill Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada* (Montreal: Industrial School of the Deaf, 1953).

⁶ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, Vol. 1* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), 34-35.

Northwest Europe, detailing the operations of Canadian formations, including the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, and the 10th Infantry Brigade to which the Argylls were attached.⁷ John Swettenham's *McNaughton. Vol. 1: 1887-1939* provides an in-depth examination of General A.G.L. McNaughton's career prior to the Second World War, focusing on his role in the Canadian military during the interwar years and the herculean efforts to keep the different branches of the Canadian military at a realistic level of preparedness. This source offered valuable insight into the formation of Canada's military leadership and the threats Canada faced during the interwar years, these being the danger of a communist uprising, an invasion by the United States, and Japanese expansionism.⁸ While this work does not focus on the Argylls directly, it provides crucial background on the strategic and organizational decisions that shaped Canada's army, including the structure of divisions and the role of militia units. Swettenham's analysis of McNaughton's leadership helps contextualize the environment in which the Argylls were trained and deployed

John English's *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign* gives insight into the intensive training Canadian units underwent in Britain before D-Day, particularly the adoption of "Battle Drill" to improve small-unit tactics and battlefield adaptability. He highlights how live-fire exercises, field maneuvers, and combined-arms coordination helped prepare battalions like the Argylls for combat. While effective, English argues this training could not fully overcome broader structural issues in leadership and doctrine.

⁷ C. P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe, 1944-1945*, vol. III of *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1960).

⁸ John Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), 180.

More recent scholarship has expanded on Stacey's foundational work, offering new perspectives on the Canadian Army's wartime development. Andrew L. Brown's *Building the Army's Backbone: Canadian Non-Commissioned Officers in the Second World War* examines the role of NCOs in shaping the effectiveness of Canadian infantry battalions as its core nucleus of professionalism. His work is particularly relevant to this study, as it reinforces the argument that the Argylls' success stemmed from strong leadership at the junior officer and NCO levels, which was cultivated through rigorous training.

Angelo Caravaggio's *21 Days in Normandy* provides further insight into the operational context in which the Argylls fought. Focusing on the leadership of Maj. Gen. George Kitching, Caravaggio evaluates the challenges faced by Canadian armoured-infantry formations in the Normandy campaign. He explains how the years of preparation leading up to the campaign allowed the officers to become familiar with the division and competent with their duties.⁹ His analysis of battlefield command decisions offers a valuable perspective on the factors that influenced the performance of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and its infantry elements, including the Argylls.

Arthur Gullachsen's *An Army of Never-Ending Strength* examines the reinforcement and sustainment of the Canadian Army throughout the war.¹⁰ His work highlights the logistical and manpower challenges that shaped the operational effectiveness of Canadian formations. For the

⁹ Angelo Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy: Maj. Gen. George Kitching and the 4th Canadian Armoured Division* (Havertown: Pen and Sword, 2016), 27.

¹⁰ Arthur W. Gullachsen, *An Army of Never-Ending Strength: Reinforcing the Canadians in Northwest Europe, 1944-45* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021).

Argylls, these factors were crucial in maintaining combat effectiveness, as they had to adapt to personnel losses and integrate replacements while remaining a cohesive fighting force.

In addition to these broader studies, primary sources such as the war diaries of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, preserved at Library and Archives Canada, provide firsthand accounts of the regiment's wartime activities. These documents detail training programs, combat experiences, and the day-to-day challenges faced by the unit. Regimental orders housed at the Argyll Regimental Museum further contribute to an understanding of how the regiment maintained its operational readiness throughout the war. Memoirs and oral histories also offer valuable insights into the lived experiences of the regiment's members. Interviews conducted with former Argyll soldiers, including those recorded by Robert Fraser in the 1980s, provide personal perspectives that complement official records. Some of these interviews, letters, war diaries, and other primary documents were compiled into a book titled *Black Yesterdays: The Argyll War*, which contextualized the different narratives and experiences of the Argylls. These accounts shed light on key themes such as unit cohesion, battlefield adaptation, and the importance of regimental identity in sustaining morale under combat conditions.¹¹ If further research were to be conducted on the Argylls, analysis of training documents and the contents of training courses would elaborate on the inner workings of Canadian infantry training during the war. Furthermore, not all the war diaries were available, so with more time and opportunity, a deeper look at the Argylls through could bring forth more information.

¹¹ Robert Fraser, *Black Yesterdays: The Argylls in War and Peace* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996).

This study builds on existing historiography by integrating regimental histories, official war records, leadership analyses, and firsthand testimonies to provide a comprehensive account of the Argylls' transformation during the Second World War. By examining how the regiment evolved from a militia unit into a disciplined and effective combat battalion, this research contributes to broader discussions on Canadian military preparedness, the role of training and professionalism, leadership development, and tactical adaptation during the war. While the works of Stacey, Brown, Caravaggio, and Gullachsen provide critical insights into Canadian military operations and leadership, they do not fully explore the specific evolution of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from a militia regiment into a highly disciplined combat unit. This study seeks to bridge that gap by closely analyzing the regiment's training, leadership development, and battlefield performance through a detailed examination of war diaries, battalion orders, and firsthand accounts. By engaging with these primary sources, this research offers a fresh perspective on how the Argylls adapted to the challenges of modern warfare and contributed to the success of the Canadian military during the Second World War.

The central argument of this thesis posits that the transformation of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was driven by three primary factors: adaptive leadership, rigorous training programs, and a cohesive regimental culture. Adaptive leadership played a pivotal role in guiding the regiment through periods of uncertainty and change. During the interwar and early wartime years, regimental leaders were determined to have the best unit possible by implementing innovative strategies to enhance training and maintain morale. Rigorous training programs, often conducted under challenging conditions in British Columbia and Jamaica, ensured that the regiment's members were well-prepared for the realities of modern combat.

Finally, the strong regimental culture, rooted in a shared Scottish heritage and bolstered by community support, fostered a sense of unity and resilience among the Argylls.

Methodology

This thesis employs a mixed-method historical analysis, integrating both primary and secondary sources to examine the transformation of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada during the Second World War. The research process was structured around a comprehensive review of archival materials, regimental histories, and scholarly analyses, combined with a critical assessment of the training, leadership, and operational effectiveness of the regiment.

The primary sources used in this study can be divided into two main categories: military documentation and personal testimony. Governmental and military records, such as battalion war diaries, military citations, and operational reports, provide crucial insight into the regiment's structure, strategic objectives, and combat readiness. These documents were accessed through national and military archives, ensuring a reliable foundation for the study to understand how the Argylls integrated into the broader Allied war effort. Personal testimonies, including letters, interviews, and regimental memoirs, offer a more intimate perspective on the daily experiences of the Argylls. These sources provide firsthand accounts of training, leadership, morale, and battlefield conditions. However, recognizing the potential for bias in personal recollections and loyalty to the regiment, these testimonies were cross-referenced with official military records and secondary sources to verify their accuracy.

Secondary sources, including regimental histories, published memoirs, and scholarly works helped contextualize the primary data within the broader historiography of the Canadian

Army in the Second World War. Works by military historians, such as those analyzing the evolution of Canadian infantry tactics, training methodologies, and the larger strategic picture of the war, were essential in framing the Argylls' experience within the operational doctrine of the time.

The writing process followed a thematic and chronological approach. The thesis begins by outlining the regiment's interwar period to establish its pre-war identity and organizational structure. From there, the study systematically analyzed how the regiment adapted to war, incorporating evidence from both primary documents and secondary literature. Special attention was given to training evolutions, leadership decisions, and battlefield performance, with each chapter building upon the previous one to illustrate the regiment's transformation from a militia unit into a battle-hardened force. Furthermore, attention was given to potential biases within sources—whether governmental, institutional, or personal—and cross-referencing techniques were employed to mitigate inaccuracies.

Ultimately, this methodology ensures that the study remains grounded in accuracy while capturing the personal and institutional dynamics that shaped the Argylls' wartime evolution. By synthesizing archival materials with scholarly interpretations, this thesis provides a comprehensive examination of the regiment's journey from a peacetime militia to a distinguished combat unit in the Allied campaign to liberate Northwest Europe.

The thesis is organized into four chapters, each addressing a distinct phase in the regiment's evolution. The first chapter focuses on the interwar years, specifically from 1928 to 1938. It examines the organizational structure of the Argylls during this period, as well as the training activities they conducted in preparation for potential future conflicts. The second chapter

explores the early years of the Second World War, from 1939 to 1942. This chapter delves into the regiment's expansion, its roles as a reserve unit, and the types of training undertaken during this critical period. The third chapter covers the transformative years from 1942 to 1944, when the Argylls were stationed in Jamaica and were redeployed to England, where intensive training took place prior to the invasion of Europe, Operation Overlord. During this time, the regiment acquired modern weapons, reorganized its structure according to British Commonwealth standards, and developed into a cohesive and capable battalion. The final chapter examines the regiment's performance during the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe and subsequent operations as part of the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division. This chapter assesses how the Argylls applied their training and organizational reforms in combat, highlighting the key factors that contributed to their success at engagements such as Hill 195.

In conclusion, this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's), emphasizing their successful transformation from a peacetime militia to a distinguished wartime battalion. By focusing on the critical roles of leadership, training, and regimental culture, it highlights the mechanisms by which military units can adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Canadian military history and offers valuable insights for contemporary defence organizations facing similar challenges in an era of rapid technological and strategic change.

Chapter 1: The Argylls in the Interwar Years

Following the defeat of the Central Powers in November 1918, the Argylls, then named the 19th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), among other Canadian units, began their journey back to Canada. These soldiers who had served valiantly in The Great War returned to a country eager to transition back to civilian life. Upon their return to the armouries on James Street in downtown Hamilton, the Argylls faced a new reality of postwar adjustment. This period in the unit's history was focused on demobilization and restructuring, as most members of the regiment sought to return to civilian life as soon as they could. While many former soldiers resumed their pre-war roles in society, the officers and NCOs who remained played a crucial role in maintaining the regimental traditions and standards. They formed a core group that ensured the regiment remained intact and ready for whatever the future held, despite the overall war-weariness shared by the Argylls and Canada at large.

This postwar demobilization laid the groundwork for the challenges and adaptations the Argylls would face during the interwar years. The conclusion of The Great War not only reshaped Canada but also drastically influenced the direction of its military. The effects of this transformation were compounded by the economic turmoil brought on by the Great Depression, which impacted every aspect of the Canadian Military. The Permanent Active Militia and Non-Permanent Active Militia both underwent significant changes, with reductions in size, budgetary constraints, and a shift in their structure and purpose. The Argylls, like many other units, had to navigate these changes while preserving their identity and readiness for an uncertain future.

This chapter will illustrate how the Argylls adapted to this period of transition through their training and organizational efforts. To understand this, an exploration of the PAM and

NPAM will situate the regiment's experiences within the broader state of the PAM during the interwar years and how the Canadian military changed. Moreover, the chapter will delve into their infrastructure and the methods they used to retain personnel, while also examining their evolving role within the Hamilton community. This will showcase the resilience and adaptability of the Argylls as they prepared for the challenges ahead, all while upholding the traditions and values that defined their storied history.

The state of the PAM and Canadian military doctrine

The PAM underwent many changes during this time period to reflect the security demands of the nation. General Andrew McNaughton, Chief of the Defence Staff, along with the Department of Militia and Defence in Ottawa, believed that the PAM and the NPAM should either retain the key lessons learned during the Great War or revert to their pre-war structure. However, the military had to adapt to the reality of operating under a government that, weary of war, was quick to reduce funding for both the PAM and NPAM. Consequently, the military, and particularly the land forces, had to adapt in order to not only survive but also to be prepared for emergencies. During this time, the PAM sought to assume two main functions: maintaining its standing forces that remained available for general service and training the Non-Permanent Force.

The Department of Militia and Defence believed that there were three main potential threats to Canadian democracy. The first was the threat of a communist uprising, with internal threats such as the Great Depression straining the Canadian economy and raising the possibility of labour unrest. It was decided that harmful strike action by unions would have to be put down by the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) with assistance from the Militia if necessary. In June 1919, the Minister of Militia put forward an amendment to the Militia Act that would bring

up the Permanent Force from five thousand to ten thousand. The reason that was given to the government for the increase was to increase the personnel needed to aid the civil power. The PAM and NPAM's previous commitments when strikes broke out in places like Quebec City (1921), Sydney Nova Scotia (twice in 1922) and Cape Breton (1923) were cited as the reasons for increased resources.¹² This expansion reflected the government's concern over maintaining order during times of social unrest and economic instability.

The second threat was the possibility of an invasion from the United States. This was unlikely but with the rise of extremist ideologies across the world, the possibility existed that the United States could suddenly be at odds with Canada or Great Britain. The main fear was communist influences from the states destabilizing the country or influencing attacks similar to the late 19th century Fenian Raids.¹³ To address this concern, Canadian defence planning included measures to fortify key border regions and maintain readiness for any potential cross-border conflicts.

Finally, the last and most realistic possibility was war with Japan, as its expansionist rhetoric and large Japanese military-political-industrialist conglomerate *Zaibatsu* advocated for Imperial expansion. This fear was confirmed when Japan left the League of Nations in 1933 and the Second Sino-Japanese War that began in 1937. The large Japanese-Canadian population living in British Columbia caused the Canadian government to be concerned about the loyalty of these people.

For this reason, the PAM's focus during the interwar years was to be prepared to expand the armed forces when needed. In 1929, Major-General Andrew McNaughton was appointed as Chief of the General Staff, and his goal was to ensure that Canada had the military infrastructure

¹² Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 180.

¹³ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 182.

in place to rapidly expand its forces in case of the outbreak of war. The Great Depression and the Canadian government's attitude to military spending meant that its land forces had to do a lot with little. In the fiscal year of 1930-31, the expenditure for national defence was \$23 million, but this number fell to \$14 million in 1932-33, as national revenue dropped by over 100 million and the government restructured its spending.¹⁴ As Canada emerged from the Great Depression, it was forced to be cognizant of the aggressive attitude of nations such as Japan in China, Italy in Ethiopia, and Germany in Czechoslovakia, along with the failures of the League of Nations. Responding to this new situation, the Canadian Government attempted to augment the Canadian forces over a five-year plan that would divide \$200 million among the different branches of the Canadian military.¹⁵ This program, however, was not fully enacted by the Canadian government and even met strong opposition from both sides in Parliament and within Prime Minister Mackenzie King's Cabinet. Throughout the interwar years, there was barely enough money for minimal training and none for the purchase of new equipment.¹⁶ Adjustments had to be made to ensure that there was enough for the Permanent Force to be available for operational needs, so training for its units was prioritized over the non-permanent units.

The Department of Militia and Defence decided that there was to be a small group of highly trained Permanent Force personnel to act as a nucleus for a non-permanent "mass" that trained in peacetime on a part-time basis. This Militia force would be able to mobilize in an emergency to provide the majority of the force required.¹⁷ In 1935, the NPAM reported that 5,120 officers and 34,055 other ranks had been "trained." However, the number of men who

¹⁴ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments* (Ottawa, Ontario: National Defence and the Canadian Forces, 1970), 1.

¹⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 3.

¹⁶ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 189.

¹⁷ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 184.

were permitted to train annually had increased. In 1934-35, 2,062 officers and 10,721 other ranks attended Militia summer training camps. For 1938-39 these figures rose to 3,479 officers and 25,624 other ranks.¹⁸ To ensure that the PAM and the NPAM could be mobilized without delay, the transition from peace to war footing was carefully planned with regard to their organizational structures.¹⁹ To do this during wartime would have taken a lot of time and effort, so any planning beforehand would ease the strain on the bureaucracy and logistics.

Despite a lack of funding, in times of emergency the Permanent Force could in theory be used to provide the NPAM with technical military training and fill higher staff appointments. The officers and the NCOs were to be specialists, and train the new army so that it could be effective in a time of war or national crisis.²⁰ How the Permanent Force was prepared to do this was by maintaining a cadre of carefully selected, qualified instructors and running training for the NPAM wherever it was required.²¹ These instructors were also responsible for adapting training programs to meet the specific needs of various operational scenarios, working to ensure the readiness of the NPAM. It was these personnel who qualified the Argyll officers and NCOs to ensure that they had met the standard.

Both the PAM and NPAM faced challenges in training specialists due to insufficient funding from the government but remained determined to find alternative solutions. To address the issue, they devised a plan to incorporate civilian engineers into the military's operational structure. This approach aimed to leverage the expertise of civilians while bridging the gap in specialized military training.²² By integrating civilian professionals, the army could maintain a

¹⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), 34.

¹⁹ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 184.

²⁰ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 189.

²¹ Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone*, 46.

²² Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 183.

high level of technical capability without overburdening its limited resources. This strategy also fostered collaboration between military and civilian sectors, ensuring a seamless exchange of knowledge and skills critical to national defence.

Another crucial trade that required substantial training was the Signal Corps, given its operation of the new wireless radios crucial to military communications in the field. This corps had its members undertake training and employment in the service of departments such as Forestry, Fire Prevention, Dominion Police, provincial government facilities and many others that required wireless operators.²³ This allowed for signallers to gain experience and have other departments to pay for the training rather than the Department of Militia and Defence.

The focus of training in the militia was to promote peace and order to create better and more productive citizens. These units' purpose at this time was not to be combat-ready but to have an organization on paper and a nucleus to ensure that the traditions and lessons learned from The Great War were not lost.²⁴ This was in line with the Argyll's focus to keep traditions alive and maintain a nucleus of officers and NCOs. McNaughton and the Department of Militia and Defence were able to keep the core nucleus of trained professionals despite insufficient funding.²⁵ It was planned that these trained professionals and instructors would be the ones to train the non-permanent units of the Militia during wartime.

The PAM was vital during the interwar years in aiding reserve units like the Argylls maintain a professional officer and NCO corps. The Department of Militia and Defence knew that it could not waste the skills that had been accumulated during the Great War and planned to

²³ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 184.

²⁴ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 180.

²⁵ Swettenham, *McNaughton. Vol. 1 1887-1939*, 189.

mobilize its military around a nucleus of experienced soldiers, despite budget constraints imposed by the Canadian Government.

The Argyll's training infrastructure and resources in the interwar period

During the 1930s, the Argylls had settled into their role as a militia unit with the resources available to them. The Great Depression greatly affected the city of Hamilton and by extension, the Argylls. The budget of the PAM and the NPAM suffered as the government looked for any way to save money during those uncertain times, and for this reason, the amount of training the Argylls partook in, and the standard of that training, reflected the budget and opportunities given to the unit. The regiment trained in its distinctly Scottish tradition of drill and dress, meaning it followed traditional Scottish military customs, including specific parade ground drills and wearing uniforms with kilts and tartans. This helped maintain a unique cultural identity while ensuring the regiment kept an efficient core of skilled officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers.²⁶ This core maintained a steady level of readiness, allowing the unit to expand and mobilize if necessary, during times of emergency or war. During this period, members of the regiment described it as more of a club or social group than as a military unit. Military ceremony served to maintain high morale and loyalty to the Crown, allowing a healthy turnover of personnel that the regiment would impart military training and experience on a part-time basis.²⁷ The Argylls remained a steadfast and resilient unit, focusing on keeping a level of professionalism and being ready to answer the call of duty despite the challenges of the era.

During the interwar years, the Argylls followed a specified annual program of training. January to May was designated as the spring period, followed by two weeks of training in the

²⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 1.

²⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 2.

summer, and then ending with a period of fall training. For the spring and fall training, the regiment paraded twice a week on Monday and Wednesday nights. The focus on Monday nights were lectures, military films, musketry, and sports. On Wednesdays, the regiment often paraded through the streets of Hamilton, followed by periods of drill and weapons training.²⁸ These structured routines ensured the regiment maintained discipline, cohesion, and readiness despite the tedium of peacetime military life.

During the spring training spring season in 1930, as an example, tactical training exercises for all ranks of the regiment were conducted over the last weekend of the month. For the Argylls, this training was held in the Westdale area over the weekend of the 24th-25th of May 1930. After an advance party under the Quartermaster (an officer responsible for supplies, equipment, and logistics) had prepared the camp, the rest of the regiment left the armouries at 0915 hours, conducting tactical situations and “problems” to simulate enemy rearguard actions until the regiment arrived at the campsite at 1500 hours.²⁹ The regiment typically returned to the armouries by Sunday afternoon by marching through the streets. Members of the regiment reported that these yearly training exercises were not taken very seriously and that it was easy to be excused from them for various reasons.

Outside of the armouries, the members of the regiment were qualified in courses offered to members of the NPAM led by instructors of the Permanent Force. Officers and non-commissioned officers attended District, Royal, or Camp Schools of Instruction under the supervision of Permanent Force personnel for qualification of rank and staff appointments.³⁰ This was essential to ensure that the regiment's leaders maintained their qualifications while also

²⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 2.

²⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 3.

³⁰ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 3.

receiving training for staff duties. Members could apply for available courses, which were conducted for various qualifications.³¹ The remaining members of the regiment could be qualified in a course applicable to their role in the unit. The types of courses that members were certified in reflected the state of the Permanent Force in the 1930s. Members within the unit could become certified in courses such as signalling, small arms, machine guns, and various army trades.³² These courses ensured the regiment had a foundation of readiness, fostering a well-rounded and capable force that could adapt to the demands of modern military operations. This was made apparent when the Argylls won the *General Efficiency Competition* for Military District No. 2 in the training year of 1933-34.³³

A major structural change occurred to the Argylls during the interwar years due to a reorganization of the NPAM in 1936. The Argylls merged with the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, Canadian Machine Gun Corps, becoming the *Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's) (Machine Gun)*, as the Argylls were the more senior regiment.³⁴ As a result of the amalgamation the new unit had to become familiar with the customs and doctrine of the merging unit. For the Argylls, this meant that all personnel had to become familiar with the Vickers medium machine gun. This enhanced the training for the unit as the influx of soldiers trained on the Vickers allowed the Argylls to become qualified and proficient with this weapon.³⁵ This training not only expanded the regiment's capabilities but also strengthened its identity, blending traditional Scottish heritage with modern military specialization to meet the evolving needs of the NPAM.

³¹ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (P.L.) (M.G.). "Battalion Order, Jan 25th, 1939." Received from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada War Museum.

³² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 3.

³³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 5.

³⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 15.

³⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 16.

The weaponry and equipment available to the regiment for training was left over from The Great War. The members of the regiment were trained to become proficient with Lewis light machine guns, old Enfield rifles, and Ross rifles.³⁶ The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada benefited from the existence of an arms manufacturing plant in Lindsay, which produced small arms, ammunition, and repair equipment, including replacement parts for the Lewis gun. Although these weapons and other equipment were outdated and few in number, having an inventory of them allowed the Argylls to maintain their proficiency in weapons handling and maintenance, and maintaining unit range standards.

The interwar years were a period of adaptation and resilience for the Argylls. Despite the financial challenges of the Great Depression and limited resources, the regiment did its best to maintain traditions and professionalism, ensuring it was prepared in some capacity to serve when called upon. The structured training programs, with their emphasis on leadership development and specialized military training, underlined the Argylls' commitment to operational readiness. The 1936 regimental amalgamation with the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion marked a significant evolution expanding its capabilities and integrating modern military weaponry within the period after the unit. Through these efforts, the Argylls preserved their identity while embracing change, laying a strong foundation for future operational service.

Recruitment, retention and community support

Personnel retention and maintaining a good relationship with the local community were a major priority of all NPAM units, and the Argylls were no exception. In comparison to other NPAM units, the Argylls were very large, averaging 400 members and at times exceeding 600,

³⁶ Spence Allan, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

with 40 officers.³⁷ This success was deeply tied to the unit's strong emphasis on fostering community ties and ensuring that their activities had a positive impact with the local population and Hamilton elite. Retention efforts were bolstered by cultivating a sense of pride and belonging among members, which in turn strengthened the regiment's connection to the community. These efforts were critical, as maintaining robust membership not only ensured operational readiness but also reinforced the regiment's role as a respected and integral part of the local social fabric.

The Argylls' focus during the interwar years was to maintain order in times of civic unrest, primarily through a positive relationship with the community. This followed the NPAM's main focus during the interwar years, which was being ready to act as an aid to the civil power. For the Argylls, this was an opportunity to maintain their Scottish military traditions while promoting support for the Crown.³⁸ The Argylls ensured the continuation of their traditions through various events and customs. One way in particular that the unit sought to accomplish this was by maintaining its regimental pipes and drums band and by holding a father and son night to attempt to pass on traditions and instil a strong sense of loyalty and esprit de corps.³⁹

There were many reasons for civilians to join the regiment during this time. Many reported having a Scottish or a British background and were drawn to the unit and its Highland traditions. Some men reported afterwards that they joined for the sense of community with a “good bunch of chaps” and to wear the uniform.⁴⁰ The efforts of the Argylls to maintain a positive public image attracted many volunteers to join the regiment.

³⁷ Spence Allan, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

³⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 2.

³⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 8.

⁴⁰ Spence Allan, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

The regiment participated in various parades through downtown Hamilton, keeping a visible civic profile within the city. One of the most notable ones was on May 6th, 1935, when all the military and naval units of the Hamilton Garrison celebrated the Jubilee Anniversary of King George V.⁴¹ The parade took place in the civic stadium (modern-day Tim Hortons Field) and included a 21-gun salute. Another important parade occurred when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Hamilton on June 7, 1939, as part of their Canadian tour. The regiment was featured heavily in the events of the visit due to the location of the armouries near City Hall.⁴² Parades were vital to the Argylls and other militia regiments in Hamilton in order to maintain a military presence in the city and foster interest in the militia, and promote good order and respect for the crown.

Another very effective method for the regiment to connect to the community was through its military bands, performing and competing at various events and competitions. It was the Argyll bands that allowed the regiment to have a large presence not only in the community but across Canada and internationally. The Argyll bands were the pride of the regiment as they performed at all regimental functions, in civic ceremonies, and at Highland Games across the continent.⁴³ The pipers and drummers were known to be more active than other parts of the regiment. The Pipe band won many awards, such as the Colonel Fraser and the Statler Trophies, coveted prizes among Pipe Bands in Canada throughout the interwar years.⁴⁴ The Brass band also won much fame for the regiment as it participated in many state, regal, vice-regal, military and civic functions.⁴⁵ The success of both the Pipes and Drums and the Brass band was due to

⁴¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 5.

⁴² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 18.

⁴³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 7.

⁴⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 8.

⁴⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 10.

the efforts of its leadership, who were devoted to ensuring these organizations performed well in all parades and other functions.

The members of the bands, and in particular the regimental pipes and drums, also participated in the field exercises by fulfilling the role of stretcher-bearers and first aiders on top of their duties as pipers.⁴⁶ This was a practice that started during the First World War in Canada and would continue when the Argylls transitioned into an Active Service Force unit.

The Argyll's ability to maintain a large number of dedicated members allowed for a continued strong presence in Hamilton which in turn helped it to expand rapidly when war broke out. This was in part due to the efforts of its military bands that showcased the regiment's Scottish heritage across Canada. During the interwar years, the Argylls focused on maintaining a core of members and retaining their numbers, which was especially difficult during the Great Depression. The efforts by the officers to maintain good morale and foster a sense of community among members of the regiment kept parade numbers high. All of the above factors added together allowed the Argylls to maintain a strong community presence in Hamilton, and as a result, when war came, many people were eager to join the regiment.

Conclusion

In summary, the Argylls maintained their regimental culture and esprit de corps within the unit and trained regularly during the interwar years, and this effort provided an excellent starting point for the regiment when the Second World War erupted. Despite maintaining a core of qualified officers and NCOs, the Argylls lacked sufficient numbers, logistics, equipment, and experience to allow them to function on the modern battlefield in 1939. Their training consisted

⁴⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 8.

of drill and ruck marches with very little training dedicated to battalion-level field training. At the same time, the Permanent Active Militia (PAM) focused on maintaining a core group of instructors and the necessary infrastructure to defend Canada and quickly expand the military if needed.

Chapter 2: The start of the Second World War and the spark of change

Canada officially joined the Second World War on September 10, 1939, nine days after Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1st. This marked a significant turning point not only for the country but also for regiments like the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. The declaration of war would initiate profound changes for the Argylls, transforming them from a peacetime militia unit into a battle-hardened force, deeply impacted by the realities of modern warfare. As stated before, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada were a small militia unit rooted in their community and steeped in tradition at the outset of the war. Their role had largely been ceremonial and focused on local defence, but the outbreak of the Second World War demanded an entirely new level of commitment and capability. Like many other regiments across the nation, the Argylls faced the daunting challenge of rapid mobilization and expansion. Recruitment drives swept across the region, and men from all walks of life joined their ranks, united by a shared sense of duty and patriotism. For the Argylls, this influx of recruits brought new energy but also required a significant overhaul of their training and organizational structure to prepare for the challenges ahead.

Training became the cornerstone of the Argylls' transformation. Training Camps were established across Canada to provide the regiment with the skills and discipline required for modern combat. What had once been weekend drills and parade-ground manoeuvres evolved into rigorous exercises in marksmanship, modern tactics, and physical endurance. The Argylls trained alongside other Canadian regiments, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose in various parts of the country. This period of intense preparation also served to strengthen the bonds within the regiment, as recruits and veterans alike worked tirelessly to meet the standards demanded by the war effort.

For the Argylls, the declaration of war in September 1939 was more than a call to arms; it was a turning point that would redefine their place in Canadian military history. The early days of the war set the stage for the regiment's evolution, as they transitioned from a small, community-based unit to a formidable fighting force. The challenges they faced during this period, ranging from recruitment and training to the modernization of their equipment, tactics, and overall military readiness, shaped their identity and prepared them for the trials that lay ahead. As Canada embarked on its journey through the Second World War, the Argylls stood ready, their transformation emblematic of the nation's broader commitment to the Allied effort.

Argyll Mobilization and Early Training

On August 26, 1939, the Argylls shifted to a war footing, changing their designation from a militia regiment to a battalion officially termed a "Mechanized Machine-Gun Regiment."⁴⁷ Their new status brought an increased demand for manpower. During this period, many Canadians—both men and women—enlisted in the Canadian military. This surge was especially evident in the Argylls and other regiments in the Greater Toronto Area. Some regiments filled quickly, forcing volunteers to travel miles to find available units that began recruiting later.⁴⁸ Members of the Argylls later reported having to travel across Ontario to find a unit that could take them. As recruitment surged, the Argylls were integrated into the 13th Infantry Brigade, which was composed of local reserve units.⁴⁹ This brigade included the Lincoln and Welland Regiment (The Lincs), and the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles of Brantford, with the brigade commanded by Great War veteran Brigadier General O. M. Martin (refer to Figure 1).

⁴⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 23.

⁴⁸ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 11.

⁴⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 24.

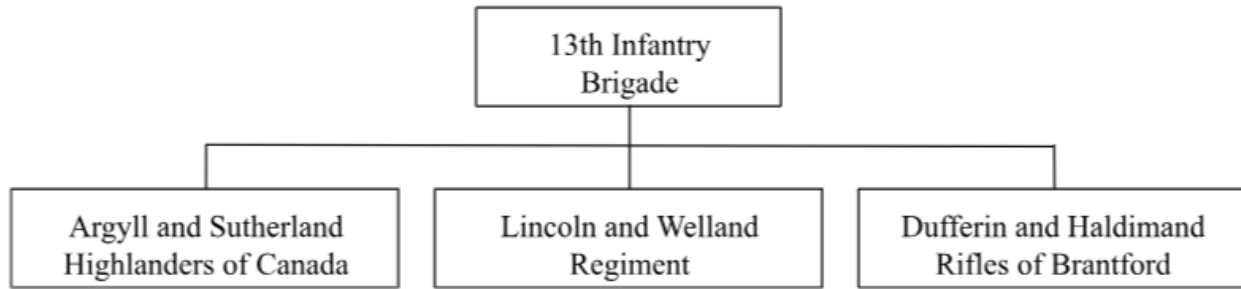


Figure 1: Diagram of the formation of the 13th Infantry Brigade in 1940⁵⁰

Strict height, weight, and medical standards disqualified a considerable number of volunteers.⁵¹ The Great Depression's lasting effects on nutrition and living conditions left many volunteers physically unfit for service. The Argylls' military bands, well-known in the community, proved valuable in recruiting efforts. The majority of the men were from Hamilton, but recruitment efforts across the province also brought in volunteers from nearby towns, along with a few from the United States.⁵² During the final weeks of July and August, the regiment's strength ranged from 25 officers and over 800 other ranks to 32 officers and 784 other ranks.⁵³ The regiment's numbers eventually stabilized to conform with regulations, as men departed due to medical and physical reasons.

During the early months of the war, the Argylls took on guard duty at Hamilton Harbour. Companies in the regiment rotated through guard duty at key sites vulnerable to enemy sabotage, including the Welland Power Canal, Decew Falls, and Victoria Park in the Niagara Peninsula. These sites housed installations that supplied power to the region. Although uneventful, these

⁵⁰ Created by myself, Parson Isaac Whitehead with information from Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 24.

⁵¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 23.

⁵² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 23.

⁵³ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 23.

duties disrupted the regiment's ability to maintain a consistent training schedule.⁵⁴ Severe supply shortages, driven by sudden demand for military clothing and equipment nationwide, became one of the Argylls' most pressing challenges in the early days of mobilization. Among the many supply issues, the shoe shortage stood out most. New recruits often wore worn-out boots or civilian footwear paired with outdated Great War uniforms and mismatched headdresses.⁵⁵ These difficulties underscored the logistical hurdles Canada's expanding military faced, as units like the Argylls struggled to properly equip and train recruits.

Early Training in Ontario

The Argylls' training in the early years of the Second World War differed significantly from their interwar training. With the onset of war, the focus shifted to enhancing the regiment's capabilities, integrating recruits, and preparing for modern warfare. This transformation required rigorous training, emphasizing weapons proficiency, physical endurance, and the conversion of civilians into soldiers. Officers mastered weapons training and drill pamphlets, allowing them to effectively instruct their platoons. The enthusiasm of all ranks, who recognized the importance of adapting to military expectations, drove this process.⁵⁶

On October 15, 1940, the regiment's companies reunited and began training at Niagara-on-the-Lake (NotL).⁵⁷ The 13th Brigade implemented a rotation system, with one battalion training at NotL for a few months, while the others performed guard duty, ensuring consistent training schedules. The facility hosted introductory military exercises designed to instil discipline

⁵⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 25.

⁵⁵ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 19.

⁵⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 23.

⁵⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 25.

and combat readiness in recruits. Here, recruits practised rifle marksmanship and learned to maintain their equipment. The Argylls received Ross and old Enfield model rifles, which were accurate for target practice but unsuitable for modern combat.⁵⁸ However, while this introductory training was necessary, it was not without flaws. The recruits identified several problems with the training, including a lack of standardization, insufficient preparation for combat, and a shortage of equipment.

The regiment's ongoing shortages of modern weaponry and uniforms were significant challenges, further compounded by the difficulties of conducting training. It was not until the end of October 1940 that the battalion finally received adequate boots, web equipment (durable cotton gear for carrying essentials), and battle dress to replace the old dress uniforms and kilts the soldiers had been wearing. Despite being listed as a Machine Gun unit, the Argylls had no machine guns and only 700 Ross rifles.⁵⁹ In the meantime, the Argylls had to make do with outdated rifles mentioned earlier, while weapons like Bren Guns, anti-tank rifles, and mortars remained something they only read about in training manuals.⁶⁰ Military equipment and clothing arrived from the ordnance department unpredictably, gradually giving the Argylls a more uniform appearance.⁶¹

One major issue in the early days was discipline, desertion and converting civilians to soldiers. The terrible weather, combined with long hours of physically demanding drills and problems in pay, caused many soldiers to try to leave the military and go back to their old

⁵⁸ Dempsey, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

⁵⁹ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 23.

⁶⁰ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 25.

⁶¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 28.

civilian jobs.⁶² Men had to learn that the military was not like their previous job or the peacetime army, and this was their duty now as members of the active service. There were some instances of misconduct, notably a Militia paymaster who was caught stealing \$15,000 and removed from service.⁶³ These obstacles highlighted the growing pains of transforming a peacetime regiment into an effective wartime force. Officers and NCOs had to instil discipline into the recruits, balancing fairness with firmness. In particular, the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM), Peter Caithness McGinlay, served as the top disciplinarian, mentoring both junior officers and the men.⁶⁴ Later on, soldiers reported the efforts their officers and NCOs were trying to make while improving their own capabilities as officers.

Training at Niagara-on-the-Lake underscored the state of the Canadian militia regiments before the war and highlighted how unprepared the nation was for another large-scale conflict. The Argylls, like many other units, faced significant challenges, including shortages of essential equipment, inadequate training programs, low morale, and disciplinary issues. These shortcomings were not unique to the regiment but reflected broader systemic issues within Canada's military at the time. It became clear that substantial reforms, increased resources, and a more structured training regimen were necessary to transform the Argylls into an effective fighting force capable of meeting the demands of modern warfare.

Training in British Columbia

After training in Ontario, the Argylls were ordered to continue their preparation in Nanaimo, British Columbia. They departed Hamilton by train on May 20, 1941 (refer to Figure

⁶² Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 34.

⁶³ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 34.

⁶⁴ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 22.

4.1).⁶⁵ In Nanaimo, the regiment utilized the province's rugged terrain for long-distance marches in full kit. These marches tested soldiers' endurance and resilience, simulating the physically demanding conditions of combat. One of the most memorable exercises conducted here involved simulated enemy air attacks, where aircraft flew overhead and dropped bags of flour to represent bombs or strafing fire.⁶⁶ This exercise trained soldiers to react quickly to aerial threats and reinforced the importance of situational awareness on the battlefield.

On July 21, 1941, the regiment undertook one of its most gruelling exercises—a 70-mile march completed over five days.⁶⁷ This physically demanding exercise pushed the soldiers to their limits, testing their stamina, teamwork, and mental toughness. Some soldiers, including officers, were unaccustomed to such intense exertion and found themselves marching up to 30 miles a day. They often scaled Vancouver Island's tallest peaks, such as Malahat, leaving them with blistered feet and "walking as if on eggshells".⁶⁸ Despite the hardships, soldiers appreciated the training for fostering camaraderie and strengthening their regimental identity.

However, aside from marching, the regiment received minimal practical military training. The primary focus was on preparing for and conducting inspections, as well as practising parade drills, leaving practical military training as a secondary concern.⁶⁹ Although training schedules were drafted for the companies, inspections consistently took precedence. It was here the Argylls received more modern equipment, trading their old Ross rifles for the Lee Enfield that would be used for the rest of the war.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 28.

⁶⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 31.

⁶⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 30.

⁶⁸ Dempsey, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

⁶⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 30.

⁷⁰ Dempsey, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

Although the training in both Ontario and British Columbia played little role in shaping the Argylls into a cohesive and battle-ready regiment, the combination of drills, parades and endurance marches helped instil a sense of identity among the troops.⁷¹ More importantly, these experiences fostered a strong regimental identity, uniting soldiers to excel above the other battalions in every respect. This pride was further reinforced by the emphasis on tradition and the continuation of the regiment's legacy. After their time in British Columbia, the 13th Infantry Brigade was disbanded, with its battalions reassigned to different posts. The Argylls, at this point received orders to deploy to the British West Indies.⁷²

Formation of the 1st and 2nd Battalions

In February 1941, the Argylls underwent a significant reorganization, splitting into two battalions to accommodate the growing needs of the war effort.⁷³ The 1st Battalion was designated for overseas deployment and was composed of fighting men who had been deemed fit for active service. These soldiers would go on to see action in various theatres of war, and see significant combat. In contrast, the 2nd Battalion was made up of medically unfit soldiers and those who were too old for combat service. A notable portion of these men were veterans of the First World War, whose experience was invaluable in training raw recruits.⁷⁴ While they would not serve in direct combat, their role in maintaining the regiment's traditions and passing on their knowledge was crucial. They reformed the Argyll band with veterans and their sons who were too young to fight.⁷⁵ The 2nd Battalion was stationed in Hamilton, where they focused on

⁷¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 30.

⁷² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 32.

⁷³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 241.

⁷⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 241.

⁷⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 241.

training recruits and ensuring that the regiment maintained a steady flow of prepared soldiers for the war effort. In October 1941, the unit graduated 24 sergeants from a sergeants' course of instruction.⁷⁶ These men would quickly be transferred to active units to augment the number of men in the active service.

The training courses available to the 2nd Battalion included:

- Platoon training (small-unit tactics and leadership development)
- Battalion weapons training (proficiency with firearms, machine guns, and grenades)
- 3" Mortar training (indirect fire weaponry and its battlefield applications)
- Chemical warfare training (preparedness for gas attacks and other chemical threats)
- Physical training (endurance building and overall fitness conditioning)⁷⁷

These courses were offered year-round, in addition to the soldiers' regular duties. Over a twelve-month period, the training schedule was expanded to include 135 evening parades, 10 full days of diverse training exercises, 15 days stationed at Camp Niagara, and an additional 30 evenings dedicated to Officers, NCOs, and specialists for advanced instruction and skill development.⁷⁸

The improvement in training and the incorporation of modern equipment demonstrated the regiment's commitment to ensuring that every soldier was well-prepared to fulfil their role in the war effort.

PAM and NPAM Mobilization

⁷⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 242.

⁷⁷ 2nd Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF), Battalion Orders. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, May - June 1941. June 2nd, 1941.

⁷⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 242.

As the Argylls transformed from a peacetime militia into a combat-ready battalion, Canada mobilized both the Permanent Active Militia (PAM) and the Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM). At the outbreak of the war, the Canadian government announced General Order No. 135 authorizing the organization of the Canadian Active Service Force.⁷⁹ This expansion created new divisions for both overseas deployment and domestic defence. The 6th Canadian Infantry Division was formed first, followed by the 7th and 8th Divisions.⁸⁰ Recognizing the need for increased military funding, the government allocated additional resources to all branches. By the end of the fiscal year ending March 1941, Canada's wartime expenditure was an estimated \$560 million.⁸¹ This would allow for all branches to build up their capabilities, but it would take time until Canada's military could fully equip all its forces.

At the start of the war, Canada faced critical equipment shortages. The military relied on surplus First World War equipment, which was both outdated and also insufficient in quantity.⁸² The situation was further exacerbated by the British retreat from Dunkirk, during which large quantities of British military equipment were abandoned. Britain prioritized rearming its own forces for the defence of the home islands.⁸³ Canada was forced to explore alternative avenues to equip its expanding army. One of the primary solutions to Canada's equipment shortages was the expansion of domestic military production. The Canadian government rapidly increased industrial output through Crown companies, and it also signed new contracts with private companies to produce war materials under the supervision of the Department of Munitions and Supply. The John Inglis Company in Toronto began producing Bren guns, Boys anti-tank rifles,

⁷⁹ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 43.

⁸⁰ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 47.

⁸¹ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 74.

⁸² C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 6.

⁸³ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 286.

and Browning 9-mm pistols in May 1940.⁸⁴ Canadian industries received orders from Allied nations as well: the Marin Industries Ltd. in Sorel, Quebec, for instance, received an order for 100 25-pounder field guns from the British War Office.⁸⁵

Simultaneously, training was revised with an emphasis on ruck marches and physical fitness. Fitness standards were standardized across all Canadian units serving both overseas and domestically. These focused on a soldier's agility, strength, and endurance and had physical tests to grade a soldier based on the fitness tests implemented by the British Army. These were done in full battle dress with all the equipment that a soldier carried into combat.⁸⁶ As training was revitalized, cooperation between the different branches of the army improved, enhancing the capability of Canadian units in combined arms warfare.⁸⁷ Around the time this policy was approved, two Officer Training Centres were established to train selected men, initiating large-scale production of reinforcement officers.⁸⁸ To ensure effective selection, British experience influenced Canadian policy, leading to the creation of a screening process for potential officers. In Britain, a selection committee of senior Canadian officers was formed in late 1940 to interview candidates and choose those who would attend.

Conclusion

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada's transformation from a peacetime militia to a mobilized battalion reflected the challenges faced by Canada's land forces in the early years of the Second World War. The regiment's journey was marked by recruitment surges,

⁸⁴ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments*, 502.

⁸⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 25.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone*, 63.

⁸⁷ Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone*, 60.

⁸⁸ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 129.

equipment shortages, and demanding training conditions. The Argylls began by performing garrison duties at Hamilton Harbour, where they developed foundational skills and discipline. Later, their training at Niagara-on-the-Lake further strengthened these abilities. Their gruelling endurance marches and exercises in British Columbia tested their physical limits and mental resilience.

Despite facing outdated equipment and inconsistent training schedules, the Argylls adapted by fostering a strong regimental identity and sense of pride. The division into two battalions ensured that experienced soldiers could pass on their knowledge while recruits received vital training to support the war effort. Meanwhile, broader efforts to expand and modernize the Canadian military brought improved resources and structure to their preparation.

The Argylls' journey during this period was one of perseverance, growth, and adaptation. These formative experiences prepared them for the challenges that awaited as they moved closer to active combat service, ensuring they would stand as capable and determined fighting forces in the conflict ahead.

Chapter 3: The Training Years and Transformation

Following their training in British Columbia, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada received their mission to relieve the Winnipeg Grenadiers and garrison Jamaica in the British West Indies. The main mission of the Argylls here was to guard the port of Kingston and the local prisoner of war camp for Axis naval personnel. During the war, the regiment underwent significant transformation due to the changing global environment, evolving leadership, and the shifting demands of warfare. These factors played a crucial role in reshaping its structure, tactics, and operations, reflecting the challenges of the time. The Argylls could have used this posting to relax and waste away; this is what was expected by the rank and file in a posting in the Caribbean Sun with cheap rum. Instead, the battalion used this opportunity to conduct useful training to make sure the companies were as ready as they could before going into combat in Europe. The training in Ontario and British Columbia was a good introduction to military life for the members of the Argylls, but they were unfamiliar with battalion-level operations. The men welcomed the new training as it made them feel like real soldiers and was a vast improvement over previous training.⁸⁹

During their time in Jamaica, the Argylls embraced a regimented schedule of physical conditioning, tactical drills, and theoretical training. Leadership emphasized small-unit tactics, and the coordination required for larger operations. This focus on preparation helped instill discipline and cohesion among the ranks. Furthermore, officers took advantage of the relatively stable environment to identify and develop promising NCOs and officers, creating a foundation of strong leadership that would prove vital in future deployments in Europe.

⁸⁹ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 92.

This chapter will focus on the Argylls' training experience, first in Jamaica and then in Great Britain, highlighting how the regiment adapted to their environment through rigorous preparation. It will explore the specific training programs undertaken, the mindset of their leadership, and how these efforts transformed the battalion into a key unit within the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade. Ultimately, this transformation helped prepare the Argylls for combat operations in mainland Europe, marking their shift from a militia to a combat-ready force.

Training in Jamaica

The training for the Argylls in Jamaica was vastly different from any training previously completed by members of the regiment. Many in the unit had never left Canada before and even fewer had been to a tropical island like Jamaica or even knew where it was. The regiment's strength at this time was reported to be 799 men in total including 100 officers.⁹⁰ The battalion at this time was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sinclair, who was a well-respected leader by those under him. It was here that the battalion was reformed and saw the creation of the Support Company with its specialized Carrier, Anti-tank, Mortar, and Pioneer platoons.⁹¹ This aligned with the reforms implemented by the British Army and, by extension, the Canadian Active Service Force. These changes were based on lessons learned in North Africa by the British Commonwealth forces and resulted in a more adaptable formation capable of addressing a range of adversities.

⁹⁰ 2nd Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF), Battalion Orders. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, Jan - May 1942.

⁹¹ James Douglas Foulds, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, June 13, 1985.

The regiment took advantage of their environment, splitting up the companies to have one training for a month in Newcastle, while the remaining three carried out their routine duties.⁹² Newcastle was originally a British barracks built in 1842. At the elevation of 3,100 feet within the Blue Mountains, it served as a training facility for British and Commonwealth troops during the war. This facility provided soldiers with the opportunity to train in new environments, particularly within the nearby dense forests, while acclimatizing them to the tropical climate and high altitude. The challenging terrain, combined with the specialized infantry training, allowed the Company commanders to teach practical skills such as small unit tactics, camouflage and concealment, and navigation, all while preparing the troops to operate in rugged conditions.

During this time, the regiment received instruction on how to operate modern equipment that they would be expected to be proficient at. While this was happening, the infantry companies were qualified on the use of new equipment: in particular, the 2" Mortar, Thompson Submachine Gun and the Boys anti-tank rifle.⁹³ One of the important weapons that the Argylls were introduced to was the Bren gun, and each soldier became very familiar with it. The companies trained often with it and received supplementary training if their range shooting scores were too low.⁹⁴ Members of the regiment reported that they got such extensive training on the Bren gun that they could take it apart and put it back together in their sleep.⁹⁵ These weapons, as well as the later introduced Sten gun, would become paramount for the Argylls in their campaign across North-Western Europe. The platoons also underwent training in fieldcraft,

⁹² *War Diary*, 29 September 1941, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14626, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁹³ *War Diary*, 6 November 1941, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14628, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁹⁴ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 95.

⁹⁵ Dempsey, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

unarmed combat, and gas warfare.⁹⁶ The Support Company also used this time to refine their skills. Each day the Carrier platoon devoted time to practice wireless communication and made good progress each day studying their codes.⁹⁷ Through specialized instruction and exposure to new equipment, they refined their combat skills and strengthened unit cohesion. These lessons would prove invaluable as they prepared for the Allied campaign in North-Western Europe.

Leadership Mindset and Mentality

One of the greatest drivers of change in any organization and in military units is the mindset and culture of the leadership. The attitude of a unit's leadership has a great impact on the rest of the unit and can have far and long-reaching effects. The Argylls were fortunate to possess many officers and senior NCOs who were well-liked and respected, but also ones who were effective leaders. Battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Sinclair vowed that he would leave the island with a regiment of soldiers.⁹⁸ His efforts were largely responsible for the transformation of the battalion in Jamaica, helping to establish the unit's eventual wartime reputation as a capable and professional fighting force.

Lieutenant Colonel Sinclair specifically petitioned Ottawa for two officers to reinvigorate the battalion's training program: Captain C. A. Dadds, known in the unit as "Blondy", and Lieutenant K. J. MacFarland. These former members of the PAM used their recent experience as instructors to make sure the regiment received the most up to date training with regard to infantry tactics.⁹⁹ Members of the regiment later reported how much they appreciated the instruction

⁹⁶ *War Diary*, 7 November 1941, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14628, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁹⁷ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 114.

⁹⁸ *War Diary*, 14 November 1941, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14628, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

⁹⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 42.

given by Dadds and MacFarland, that they were the best thing to happen to them and they believed that they “were the best-trained Canadian regiment in the whole Canadian Army”.¹⁰⁰ The regiment offered classes to NCOs and ambitious privates three nights a week, and here the fundamentals of being a leader, and instructor, were taught.¹⁰¹ The first class was attended by one hundred candidates, illustrating the willingness of the members of the regiment to learn about leadership. Some NCOs were even sent back to Canada to complete instructor courses.¹⁰² Sinclair’s goal was to ensure the unit had capable instructors so that the training in the regiment could continue.

The British Army also had a significant impact on the Argylls during their time in Jamaica. The British commanding officer of the island since 1942, Brigadier T. Denis, was a young, decisive officer, who instituted changes that were intended to modernize Commonwealth forces.¹⁰³ He formulated plans for the island's defence, staged mock battles, and sounded alarms at unexpected moments. This kept the Jamaican garrison alert and industrious, allowing the battalion to rise to the occasion and receive praise for its “smartness on more than one occasion”.¹⁰⁴ This also instilled in the regiment the discipline and drive demanded of modern soldiers, which helped the regiment later in Europe.

A major catalyst of the change in the mindset of not only the Argyll leadership but also of the rank and file was the fates of two Canadian infantry regiments, the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. The Winnipeg Grenadiers were stationed in Jamaica prior to

¹⁰⁰ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 80.

¹⁰¹ *War Diary*, 18 November 1941, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14628, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁰² *War Diary*, 4 March 1942, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, RG24-C-3, Volume 14630, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁰³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 44.

¹⁰⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 44.

the Argylls, then transferred to the British garrison in Hong Kong. When the Argylls arrived in Jamaica, they realised that the Grenadiers did not have the latest weapons and equipment, and mostly focused on rifle marksmanship.¹⁰⁵ The Grenadiers also did not complete a lot of training on the island, seeing it as secondary to their garrison duty. They also enjoyed life in Jamaica, living up to the stereotype of an island garrison unit becoming ‘soft’.¹⁰⁶ In December 1941, the British garrison in Hong Kong was overrun by the Japanese, with the Winnipeg Grenadiers suffering heavy losses, both in battle and later in captivity. Members of the Argylls later testified that they felt that what happened to the Grenadiers was a disgrace given its unpreparedness for war; in contrast, they emphasized that their battalion used its time wisely.¹⁰⁷

The result of the lack of training at the battalion level had been catastrophic for the Winnipeg Grenadiers. There were tales of heroism, such as the actions of Company Sergeant Major John Robert Osborn, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery during the battle.¹⁰⁸ Despite this, the Allied garrison was outmatched, and the Grenadiers could have been better prepared at the unit level. This regiment also lacked sufficient resources and only arrived in November just weeks before the Japanese attack. Ironically, this battalion was chosen to go to Hong Kong due to its experience in garrison duties and was not seen as well-trained enough to go to Great Britain to join the then 4th Canadian Infantry Division.¹⁰⁹

The second unit, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI), was decimated in the Dieppe Raid on August 19, 1942, as part of Operation Jubilee. Along with the other Canadian units

¹⁰⁵ Edward Dickinson, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, June 26, 1984.

¹⁰⁶ David Bercuson, *The Fighting Canadians: Our Regimental History from New France to Afghanistan* (HarperCollins, 2014), 195.

¹⁰⁷ Philip Whitehead, Billy Wiley, Hamilton, Jan 3, 1985.

¹⁰⁸ Army Historical Section, *The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), 222.

¹⁰⁹ Bercuson, *The Fighting Canadians*, 197.

involved in the raid, the ‘Rileys’, as they were known, endured heavy casualties. Here too, members of the regiment demonstrated heroism, notably Padre Capt. John W. Foote, who voluntarily remained behind to care for the wounded and was taken as a prisoner of war, enduring captivity for nearly three years. For his selfless actions, he became the first Canadian chaplain to be awarded the Victoria Cross.¹¹⁰ Operation Jubilee was criticised due to the lack of preparatory training given to the units that were involved in it. The RHLI was not adequately prepared for amphibious operations, and the raid was flawed at the operational level in terms of timings, coordination, and support.¹¹¹

These two battles and the fate of each unit had a profound impact on the Argylls. These terrible defeats and the aftermath of these units motivated the leadership of the Argylls to ensure their training was of the highest standard.

Training in Great Britain

The Argylls left Jamaica in May 1943, when they were relieved by the Irish Fusiliers of Canada. The battalion would briefly return to Canada before heading to Great Britain to partake in the Allied invasion of Europe (refer to Figure 4.1). While in Canada, the regiment had seven officers and 120 other ranks removed from the battalion due to their age.¹¹² This included all Warrant Officers, Class II, and others in senior NCO positions. This was in line with the wider stance of the Canadian Army that sought to remove older NCOs from overseas units and put them in support and training roles.¹¹³ The unit had to restructure its command structure, and the remaining NCOs that were promoted took on the responsibility of rebuilding the battalion in

¹¹⁰ Army Historical Section, *The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army*, 142.

¹¹¹ Bercuson, *The Fighting Canadians*, 206.

¹¹² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 48.

¹¹³ Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone*, 175.

England.¹¹⁴ Prior to its departure, the battalion was reinforced by a group of Canadians from the Prairies, restoring its numbers and further strengthening the unit.

The Argylls' time in England was divided into three parts that lasted a year. The first was a period of working hard to be accepted as a unit of the Canadian Army. The second period consisted of weeks of intensive infantry training in realistic live fire environments. Finally, the last period consisted of larger exercises with other combat arms, and waiting for the invasion of North-West Europe. The regiment underwent various infantry training programs, including handling Bren guns, gas warfare drills, first aid, and other basic skills. At the platoon level, they also received specialized training in advanced tactics. *Squad-sloping arms* involved holding rifles at an angle while in formation, fostering discipline and unity among the soldiers.¹¹⁵

In 1943, the unit was under the command of "B" Group, Canadian Reinforcement Units, a formation responsible for holding newly arrived units in England until their fate was decided.¹¹⁶ After months of training, word came that the Argylls had to pass an inspection on August 17, 1943, for it to be selected to be part of a Canadian infantry brigade. If this inspection was not passed, the regiment would have been divided up among other Canadian units. The inspection lasted all day and was conducted by a team led by Lt.-Gen E. W. Sansom that omitted nothing. The battalion was inspected individually and collectively, with special attention paid to vehicle maintenance, weapons drill, battalion stores, and administrative performance.¹¹⁷ It was not until August 22, 1943, that the Argylls received word that they had passed and were to join the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade, a formation that was part of the 4th Canadian (Armoured) Division. At this time the divisional commander was Maj. Gen F.F "Fearless Frank"

¹¹⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 48.

¹¹⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 53.

¹¹⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 53.

¹¹⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 54.

Worthington. As a division commander, he had four tenets that he focused on: vehicle and weapons maintenance, war-craft and loyalty.¹¹⁸ Worthington made a strong impression on the Argylls and was well-liked by the men of the division.

By 1943, the Argylls battalion was organized into its final establishment of 38 officers and over 800 other ranks. The headquarters company had a strength of 100 all ranks, and the support company that gave the battalion its specialist weaponry had a strength of 7 officers and 184 other ranks. Finally, the rifle companies had a full strength of 5 officers and 120 other ranks divided between the company headquarters and three rifle platoons (refer to Figure 2). The battalion was supported by 150 vehicles. This gave the battalion modern capabilities to deal with a variety of challenges that it would face in the field.¹¹⁹

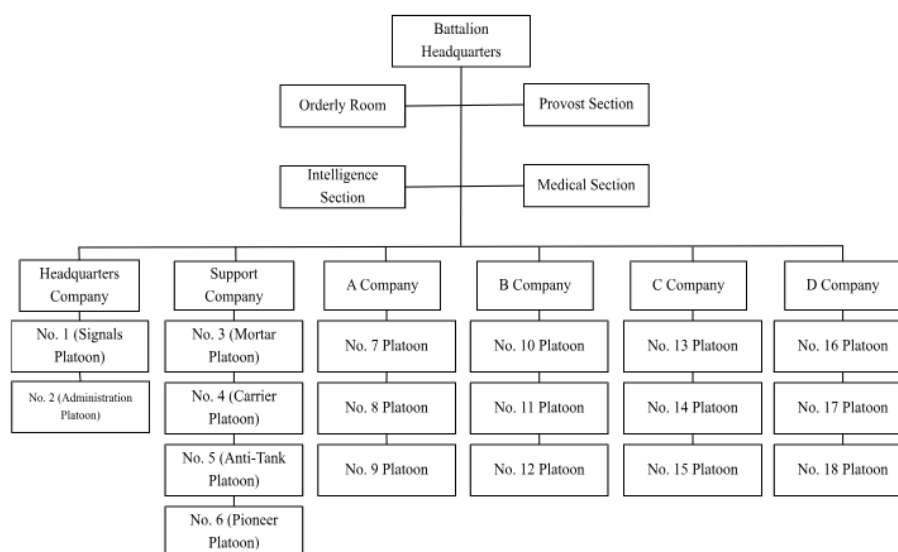


Figure 2: Infantry Battalion Formation 1943 (A scout platoon was added in February 1944)¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 55.

¹¹⁹ Geoffrey Hayes, *The Lincs: A History of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment at War* (Alma: Maple Leaf Route, 1986), 14.

¹²⁰ Created by myself, Parson Isaac Whitehead with info from Hayes, *The Lincs: A History of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment at War*, 15-16.

This was not the end of training for the battalion, as it now had to become accustomed to brigade and division-level exercises, particularly to working alongside armoured units. The division conducted combined arms exercises in Norfolk, England, before moving to New Hunstanton.¹²¹ Training at both locations was rigorous, requiring all members, including clerks and cooks, to complete two ten-mile route marches per week for three weeks. Simultaneously, additional lectures covered mine care and handling, the operation of the No. 38 radio set, and field exercises with the armoured regiments of the 4th Canadian Armoured Brigade. As the Normandy invasion neared, the Argyll Support Company received all necessary weapons and vehicles to meet British Army War Establishments in 1944. This included Bren Gun Universal Carriers, 6-Pounder Anti-Tank Guns, 3-Inch Mortars, and any trucks and jeeps that the battalion needed. As with other Canadian equipment, these supplies entered the British pipeline, ensuring both Canadian readiness and broader operational flexibility within the 21st Army Group.¹²² Meanwhile, battalion specialists received instruction in military intelligence, driver-operator courses for signallers, and specialised training for snipers, pioneers, and intelligence personnel who had previously not received formal instruction.¹²³

All this training culminated in the division-level exercises “Grizzly II” from October 18-24 and “Bridoon” on November 1-3, 1943, both in Norfolk.¹²⁴ The exercises were designed to prepare headquarters with orders and intelligence reports while simulating different scenarios such as holding bridgeheads, division attacks, and defending against an experienced opponent.¹²⁵ These operations were challenging for all members of the battalion due to the atrocious weather

¹²¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 55.

¹²² C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 623-624.

¹²³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 56.

¹²⁴ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 43.

¹²⁵ Hayes, *The Lincs: A History of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment at War*, 15-16.

and the difficulty levels of the exercises imposed on them from above.¹²⁶ In addition to the weather, the Canadians faced strong opposition, particularly in “Bridoon”, where the 4th Division faced off against the 9th British Armoured Division, veterans of Africa. Here the Argylls thrived, pushing ahead of everyone else and holding a minefield, despite heavy casualties, disorienting the British armour and leading it away from the battalion objective. The scheme was declared finished two days before it was scheduled to end due to the majority of the British armour being ruled “knocked out” as a result of well-prepared Canadian anti-tank defence and Canadian field artillery.¹²⁷ The training schemes were exhausting and yet they allowed the Argylls and the rest of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division to prove itself capable of working together to achieve their operational goals against proven formations.

When in Great Britain, the battalion took part in platoon-level training programmes that tried to simulate real battlefield conditions.¹²⁸ This was part of a growing trend referred to as “Battle Drill” used by the British military and by extension Commonwealth nations. Canadians came into contact with “Battle Drill” in 1941, and it began to be practiced in the Canadian Army in England, resulting in the opening of “The Canadian Battle Drill School” in 1942.¹²⁹ The purpose of this training was to prepare small units by putting them through realistic combat scenarios that included live-fire exercises, tactical manoeuvres, and decision-making under pressure. The training emphasized small-unit tactics, teamwork, and the importance of speed, adaptability, and discipline. It also aimed to build psychological resilience, helping soldiers to react quickly and effectively in high-stress situations, as well as training squads and platoons to

¹²⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 58-60.

¹²⁷ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 44.

¹²⁸ Dempsey, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, 1984.

¹²⁹ English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign*, 74-76.

react instinctively instead of being paralyzed with uncertainty.¹³⁰ This type of training was deemed essential for preparing soldiers for the demanding and varied combat conditions they would face during combat. The Argylls later commented that Battle Drill was an overall net positive and truly prepared them for what was to come. When interviewed later if it was a good idea to use live ammunition and grenades, one replied “I think so. Gets you used to the wham of them going by anyways. Long as you can hear them, you’ll never be hit.”¹³¹ The Argylls were transported all over Britain to carry out training “schemes”, such as being dropped off in the countryside 20-30 miles away from camp, so that once the day’s training was completed, they could march back to camp. Members of the regiment conducted advanced infantry training in multiple environments, including street battles in bombed-out places in London, to prepare them for urban combat.¹³² To further enhance their skills, many NCOs attended specialized training programs. From 1943 to 1944, the British-run School of Tactics offered an NCO course titled “Street Fighting,” which focused on battlefield-tested methods to equip soldiers for the brutal realities of urban warfare.¹³³

Battle Drill was not without its dangers, however; the regiment lost Sgt. “Jock” Rennie when he was killed in a training incident on a grenade-throwing range where he saved his comrade’s life and was awarded the George Cross posthumously.¹³⁴ Despite its risks, Battle Drill proved invaluable in forging a well-trained, disciplined, and adaptable fighting force, ensuring the Argylls were further prepared for the harsh realities of combat.

¹³⁰ English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign*, 72.

¹³¹ William Mackay, Robert Fraser, Hamilton, June 19, 1984.

¹³² Philip Whitehead, Billy Wiley, Hamilton, Jan 3, 1985.

¹³³ Brown, *Building the Army’s Backbone*, 72.

¹³⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 59.

Before the invasion into Europe, the Argylls continued to refine their skills by conducting exercises with battle-hardened British Army units. One of these exercises involved two weeks of rigorous training in Scotland alongside the British Commandos. This training was even more demanding than their time in the Caribbean, and many members of the regiment noted the intensity of the exercises, which were designed to prepare them for combat and sharpen their killing skills.¹³⁵

The extensive training the Argylls underwent in Great Britain, including their participation in Battle Drills and exercises with the British Commandos, ensured they were well-prepared for the challenges they would face in the future. This intense preparation not only enhanced their combat skills but also solidified their cohesion as a unit, ready to face the hardships of the impending invasion of Europe. By the time they were called to action, the Argylls had transformed into a highly disciplined, well equipped and battle-ready force.

2nd Battalion training and the rest of the Canadian Army

While the 1st Battalion conducted training in the Caribbean and later in Great Britain, the 2nd Battalion was busy conducting its training, maintaining its capabilities to support the Argylls' war effort as part of the Canadian Army home defence forces also known as the Reserve Army. The 2nd Battalion focused on ensuring readiness for deployment at a moment's notice in Canada, keeping their skills sharp and adapting to new tactics and equipment. They played a crucial role in supporting the Active Service Force, serving as a reserve to reinforce front-line units when needed. The focus of the 2nd Battalion was to maintain a presence in Hamilton, supporting both the 1st Battalion and the wider Canadian war effort. They did this by conducting

¹³⁵ Philip Whitehead, Billy Wiley, Hamilton, Jan 3, 1985.

church parades in full dress uniforms as part of the “Army Recruiting Campaign” and having designated recruiting staff ready every night the battalion paraded.¹³⁶

The members of the 2nd Battalion participated in various training, with all four companies completing a variety of courses in 1942. This included courses such as Platoon Weapons, Medium Machine Gun, 3” Mortar, Physical Training and Chemical Warfare.¹³⁷ These courses ranged from three to six weeks and were available for all lieutenants, sergeants and corporals with the right qualifications. Although not all these members served overseas or joined with the 1st Battalion, this system was still crucial for training replacements for the Canadian infantry battalions in Europe that were taking casualties and needed new troops to keep up the momentum.

Ultimately, the efforts of the 2nd Battalion were instrumental in strengthening the overall Canadian war effort. Their rigorous training program not only ensured the readiness of their own troops but also contributed significantly to the reinforcement of front-line units. While they may not have received the same recognition as the 1st Battalion fighting overseas, their role in sustaining and supplying trained soldiers was crucial in maintaining the operational effectiveness of Canadian forces throughout the war.

Conclusion

The time and training spent in Jamaica and Great Britain were instrumental in transforming the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada from a militia unit into a battle-ready regiment. The rigorous training in Jamaica, despite the tropical climate and potential for

¹³⁶ 2nd (Res) Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF), Battalion Orders. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, April 28, 1942.

¹³⁷ 2nd (Res) Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF), Battalion Orders. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, February 16, 1942.

complacency, set the foundation for the regiment's discipline, adaptability, and technical proficiency. The leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Sinclair and his officers ensured that the Argylls did not fall into the trap of idleness that could have come with a Caribbean posting. Instead, their time was spent sharpening their skills, learning new tactics, and instilling a mindset of professionalism and preparedness.

Their time in Great Britain further refined these skills, exposing the Argylls to large-scale exercises, joint training with armoured units, and the rigorous demands of 'Battle Drill'. These exercises helped solidify their cohesion as a unit, ensuring they could effectively operate in high-pressure combat environments. The regiment's ability to learn from previous Canadian operations, such as the fates of the Winnipeg Grenadiers in Hong Kong and the RHLI at Dieppe, reinforced the need for constant improvement and vigilance.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion played a vital role in maintaining the regiment's strength, morale, and readiness back in Canada. Through its recruiting efforts and ongoing training in Hamilton, this battalion ensured that replacements were available and well-trained, reinforcing the 1st Battalion when necessary. By the time the 1st Battalion was called into action for the Allied invasion of Europe, it had developed into a disciplined and highly skilled fighting force. Its extensive training, strong leadership, and commitment to professionalism made it a formidable fighting force, prepared to face the hardships of combat. The transformation from a militia unit into a combat-ready regiment was a testament to their adaptability and resilience—qualities that would define them in the battles to come.

Chapter 4: Overseas Performance and Combat Dividends

After years of rigorous training, strategic postings across the Americas, and extensive preparation, the Argylls were finally ready for combat. By the time they departed for France in July 1944, they had developed into a disciplined, cohesive, and well-equipped fighting force. Their officers were battle-ready, their soldiers highly trained, and their unit cohesion after years of training together was high. While the Allies launched the largest amphibious invasion in history on D-Day, the Argylls did not take part in the initial landings but arrived in France on July 26, 1944, as part of the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the 4th Canadian (Armoured) Division.¹³⁸ Their baptism of fire came swiftly as they engaged in the brutal battles that followed the Normandy landings, pushing deeper into Nazi-occupied territory. The Argylls demonstrated exceptional adaptability, leveraging their training, leadership, and operational coordination to secure key objectives. However, as with all frontline units, they faced significant challenges, including high casualty rates, particularly among their junior officers and NCOs.

This chapter examines the combat effectiveness of the Argylls', the dividends of their training, and the leadership that shaped their successes, in the wider context of their operations in Normandy, the Low Countries, and finally into Germany. Through key battles and larger strategic operations, the role of the Argylls in the liberation of Europe will be analyzed, highlighting the sacrifices and achievements that defined their wartime legacy.

¹³⁸ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, July–August 1944, RG 24-C-3, Vols. 15026–15027, Department of National Defence Fonds, Laurier Military History Archive, <http://www.lmharchive.ca/>.

The 4th Canadian Armoured Division and the 10th Infantry Brigade

The Argyll's experience across Europe fits into the greater story of the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade and the 4th Canadian Armoured Division. The 4th Canadian (Armoured) Division was one of Canada's key formations in the campaign to liberate Western Europe. It was structured to provide a balance between mobility and firepower, with its armoured regiments providing the necessary support for the infantry units. The division was commanded by Major General George Kitching, who had rose through the ranks in the British Army before retiring and later enlisting in the Canadian Army. This career army officer brought valuable combat experience from the recent campaigns in Sicily and Italy. He was seen as a top candidate to replace Major General Worthington by Lieutenant General Guy Simonds, commander of II Canadian Corps, and General H.D.G. Crerar, commander of First Canadian Army, both of whom played key roles in shaping Canada's operational strategy in Northwest Europe.¹³⁹ Worthington was replaced as Guy Simonds believed in having younger men in command positions who could react quickly, both mentally and physically.¹⁴⁰ He was considered an excellent training officer but Kitching had proven himself in previous campaigns.

Kitching was later replaced following the end of the Normandy Campaign and the battle of the Falaise Pocket, his replacement being Major General Harry W. Foster, who earned recognition for his leadership during the division's operations in France and Belgium. He later exchanged commands with Major General C. Vokes, who commanded the 1st Infantry Division in Italy; Vokes took over the 4th Division on 1 December 1944.¹⁴¹ Major General Chris Vokes

¹³⁹ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 25-26.

¹⁴⁰ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 9.

¹⁴¹ C. P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 426.

served as the division commander until the end of the war, earning a reputation for decisive leadership.¹⁴² The division had many leaders, and although not without controversy, they were respected by their staff and the men under them. Each inherited experienced division staff that had been with the unit since 1943.¹⁴³

Within this division, the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade served as the primary infantry component, made up of the Argylls, the Lincoln and Welland Regiment (the Lincs), the Algonquin Regiment, and the 10th Independent Machine Gun Company (refer to Figure 3).¹⁴⁴ The brigade was vital in securing territory that tanks alone could not effectively control, as well as launching its own attack, working in close cooperation with armoured units.¹⁴⁵ Its commander, Brigadier General Jim Jefferson, earned the Distinguished Service Order for his leadership in Italy while commanding the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. His actions in Italy led to his promotion to Brigadier, after which he was given command of the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 426.

¹⁴³ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 27.

¹⁴⁴ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 29.

¹⁴⁵ Gullachsen, *An Army of Never-Ending Strength*, 96.

¹⁴⁶ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 29.

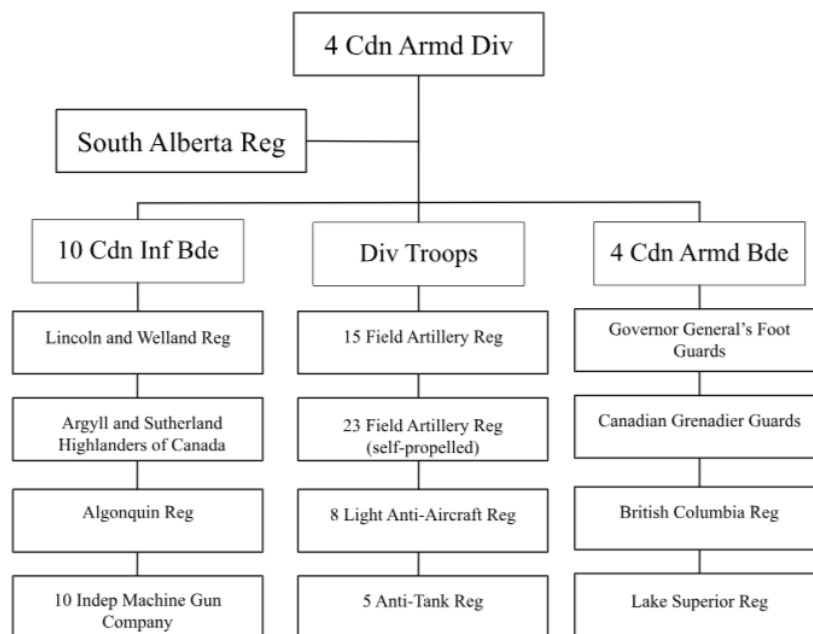


Figure 3: 4th Cdn Armoured Division Order of Battle, January 1943¹⁴⁷

The performance of the Argylls was deeply intertwined with the efforts of the 4th Division and the 10th Brigade. The division's operational doctrine emphasized rapid movement and combined arms coordination, which played to the Argylls' strengths in adaptability and tactical innovation. The brigade's successes were often defined by the Argylls' ability to conduct bold night attacks, execute precise manoeuvres, and integrate effectively with supporting armoured units. The South Alberta Regiment, which fought alongside the Argylls throughout the entire campaign in Europe as an armoured reconnaissance regiment, was considered dependable and the best tank regiment that ever fought, according to the Argylls.¹⁴⁸

The Argylls' success in Europe was closely tied to the leadership of experienced and respected officers like Major General Kitching, Major General Foster, and Brigadier General Jefferson, all of whom had proven combat records. Operating within the highly mobile and

¹⁴⁷Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 39.

¹⁴⁸Fraser, *Blacks Yesterdays*, 440.

powerful 4th Canadian Armoured Division, the Argylls adapted to rapid movement and combined arms tactics. Their strong coordination with supporting units, especially the South Alberta Regiment, ensured cohesive infantry-armour operations, reinforcing their reputation as a skilled and reliable infantry regiment in the Canadian Army.

The Argylls in Combat: Normandy and the Falaise Gap

Battalion command positions July 1944

Battalion Headquarters

Lt. Col. J. D. Stewart.....	Commanding Officer
Major W. T. Cromb.....	Second-in-Command
Capt. D. G. Seldon.....	Adjutant
Lieut. M. H. Boyd.....	Intelligence Officer
Lieut. J. L. Johnson.....	Scouts
Capt. W. Bie.....	Medical Officer
H/Capt. C. H. Mclean	Chaplain

Headquarters Company

Capt. G. H. L. Mills.....	Officer Commanding
Capt. C. P. Malone.....	Quartermaster
Capt. F. W. Woods.....	Paymaster
Capt. T. E. D. Abbott.....	Transport Officer

Support Company

Capt. R. D. Machenzie.....	Officer Commanding
Capt. A. Rathbone.....	Mortars

Capt. H. N. Maclean	Carriers
Lieut. E. J. Dillon.....	Carriers
Capt. W. G. Whiteside.....	Anti-tank
Lieut. O. J. Zavitz.....	Anti-tank
Lieut. R. E. Pogue.....	Pioneers

õ C ö " E q o r c p {

Major J. A. Farmer
 Capt. J. M. Harper
 Lieut. N. A. Donaldson
 Lieut. S. M. MacDougall
 Lieut. C. T. Bissell

õ D ö " E q o r c p {

Major D. F. Coons
 Capt. D. J. McCordic
 Lieut. J. R. Girard
 Lieut. A. J. Dalpe

õ E ö " E q o r c p {

Major G. M. Winfield
 Capt. R. A. Paterson
 Lieut. J. G. Sloane
 Lieut. A. J. Henderson
 Lieut. H. Watson

õ F ö " E q o r c p {

Major W. K. Stockloser

Capt. A. C. Logie

Lieut. D. K. Frid

Lieut. J. Dell

The slate of officers as of July 26, 1944.¹⁴⁹

When the Argylls arrived in France, they quickly grasped the reality of their situation as they advanced through the bombed-out ruins of Caen toward Bras (refer to Figure 4.2). It was here that the regiment suffered its first combat fatalities when Privates Hindle and McCaan of “C” Company were killed by a direct hit on their trench from an 88mm shell.¹⁵⁰ Under relentless enemy fire, including mortar barrages, sniper attacks from the 12th SS Panzer Division ‘Hitler Youth’, and sustained artillery barrages, the Argylls quickly adapted to the harsh realities of combat. These experiences taught them valuable lessons, such as spacing out their vehicles to avoid drawing the attention of the “uncomfortably accurate” mortar crews.¹⁵¹ The Argylls' first actions in early August 1944 were small successes fought along the road to Falaise, securing villages such as Cintheaux. Here, the Argylls performed admirably, with Lieutenant Donaldson of “A” Company standing out for taking down six Germans with six shots from his .38 service pistol. Despite heavy mortar fire, the regiment sustained only light casualties.¹⁵²

However, their first major action came at Hill 195 on August 10, 1944. The previous day, the British Columbia Regiment and the Algonquin Regiment were assigned the task of capturing the hill, but they became disoriented and suffered significant losses. The British Columbia Regiment lost 47 out of 55 tanks and its commanding officer, while the Algonquin Regiment lost

¹⁴⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 71.

¹⁴⁷ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 75.

¹⁵¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 76-77.

¹⁵² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 85.

128 men, including 45 killed in action, along with their commanding officer.¹⁵³ Orders came down for the Argylls to take the hill. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart took the lead, personally guiding his scout platoon and battalion in an unconventional night assault.¹⁵⁴ Advancing in a single file under the cover of darkness, the Argylls infiltrated deep behind enemy lines and captured the previously unassailable strong point. The regiment quickly dug in, setting up anti-tank defences in anticipation of a German counter-attack. Holding the line against desperate German assaults, the battalion held firm, never wavering or giving an inch.¹⁵⁵ This daring manoeuvre exemplified the abilities, confidence, and professionalism of the Argylls.

Less than ten days later, during the battle of the Falaise Gap, a battlegroup consisting of “B” and “C” companies of the Argylls, alongside a squadron of South Alberta Regiment (SAR) tanks, captured St. Lambert-sur-Dives, one of the last escape routes for the Germans.¹⁵⁶ They held the town for three days against relentless German counterattacks, demonstrating remarkable resilience and coordination with the SAR. These engagements established the hallmarks of Argylls’ success with many stories of heroism against a determined foe with artillery and armoured support.

In particular, Major I.H. Martin, while in command of “B” company, led by example, clearing out German forces that were stationed in St. Lambert and defended his company’s positions against fanatical counterattacks, repelling the numerically superior force and inflicting heavy casualties multiple times. He later went forward alone to observe enemy self-propelled

¹⁵³ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 98-99.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 89.

¹⁵⁵ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 11 August 1944, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁵⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 97.

guns and directed artillery to neutralize them. Maj. Martin was mortally wounded when returning from one of his observation patrols on 21 Aug 1944. For his actions, he was posthumously awarded the American Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military award that can be given to a member of another nation's forces by the United States Army.¹⁵⁷

Another Argyll, Pte. Earl McAllister, received praise from "Life" Magazine, as "the modern-day Sgt York" (Sergeant Alvin York was a U.S. soldier in World War I who, during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918, earned the Medal of Honour for his bravery) for capturing 150 German prisoners.¹⁵⁸ These are but a few stories of individual members of the regiment serving with distinction in this final battle of the Normandy Campaign.

By the end of the engagement, Companies B and C, with only 70 men total, took over 3,000 prisoners, and despite being outnumbered 50:1, the Argylls and the SAR performed admirably.¹⁵⁹ Had it not been for the abilities and determination of the Argylls working alongside the South Alberta Regiment, the 4th Canadian Armoured Division's positions would have been completely overrun by the desperate forces.¹⁶⁰ Although the performance of the II Canadian Corps is criticised for failing to close the cap in time and allowing thousands of Germans to escape, the Argylls performed admirably, with Stewart being recognized as one of the best subordinate commanders. Extremely capable, he would take command of the brigade when Brigadier Jefferson became ill during the pursuit across France.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Lt. Col. Albert Frank Coffin to Mrs Annette Joyce Martin (Holland, November 8, 1945).

¹⁵⁸ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 21 August 1944, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁵⁹ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 21 August 1944, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁶⁰ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 190.

¹⁶¹ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 190-191.

Stewart was recognized as the most competent of the infantry battalion commanders in the division, and for this reason, the Argylls gained a reputation among the infantry regiments, especially in their abilities to complete infantry armoured cooperation.¹⁶² Despite the high losses suffered by all infantry battalions across the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, the Argylls were undefeated in any major battle.

The battles across Normandy and the Falaise Gap were a crucible of fire for the Argylls as they faced battle-hardened German veterans. Despite challenges and growing pains, they emerged from Normandy relatively successful, though not without cost. Between July 27 and August 30, the Argylls suffered 218 battle casualties, while other regiments in the brigade, such as the Algonquin Regiment, suffered 244 and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment sustained 258.¹⁶³ The regiment's participation in August 1944's Operation Totalized illustrated that the training carried out in England had been effective in preparing forces for conducting combined arms operations under challenging conditions.¹⁶⁴ In multiple battles, the regiment had performed superbly. In the aftermath of the Falaise pocket, the Argylls pursued the Germans across the Maas and into the Low Countries.

The Scheldt Campaign and the Drive into the Netherlands

Following their success in Normandy, the Argylls were reinforced through September 1944, bringing the strength of the battalion to 37 officers and 834 other ranks.¹⁶⁵ With their ranks replenished, the Argylls turned northward, advancing through Belgium and into the Netherlands

¹⁶² Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 31.

¹⁶³ Gullachsen, *An Army of Never-Ending Strength*, 115.

¹⁶⁴ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 116.

¹⁶⁵ Gullachsen, *An Army of Never-Ending Strength*, 131.

to participate in one of the most arduous battles of the war, the Battle of the Scheldt, fought from October to November 1944. This campaign was crucial in securing the vital port of Antwerp for Allied supply lines. The Argylls played a crucial role in clearing the flooded and treacherous terrain, where entrenched German forces were positioned during battles at Moerbrugge on September 8-10, Bergen-op-Zoom on October 29, and Kapelsche Veer from January 27-30, 1945.¹⁶⁶ The Battle of the Scheldt proved to be one of the most gruelling challenges the regiment faced. The landscape had been deliberately flooded by retreating German forces, transforming the countryside into an expanse of knee-deep mud and broken dykes.

At Moerbrugge, the Argylls, along with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, and in coordination with supporting artillery and engineers, executed a daring boat crossing at night across Ghent Canal under relentless fire.¹⁶⁷ Fighting house to house, they overcame stiff resistance, demonstrating remarkable tactical flexibility. While the engineers built a bridge across the canal, the Argylls fought to hold their bridgehead. Brigadier Jefferson placed all forces within the bridgehead under Stewart's command, as troops, ammunition, food, and reinforcements had to be transported across the canal under the cover of darkness.¹⁶⁸ The Argylls were finally relieved when tanks of the South Alberta Regiment rolled across the bridge. In the end, the Argylls took 150 prisoners in exchange for 63 casualties.¹⁶⁹ Here Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart received the Distinguished Service Order, C.S.M. Mitchell the Distinguished Conduct

¹⁶⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 69.

¹⁶⁷ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 8 September 1944, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁶⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 117.

¹⁶⁹ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 10 September 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Medal, and Cpl. Paterson the Military Medal.¹⁷⁰ The defeat of the Germans here forced them to abandon the whole line at the Ghent canal.

The Argylls followed this action by participating in the seizing of Bergen op Zoom, a strategic Dutch town. On October 28, 1944, the Argylls entered the town along with the Lincolns and the South Alberta tanks. Here, the Argylls were greeted by cheering civilians and stopped for lunch.¹⁷¹ The next day, the Argylls crossed Scheldt-Rhine canal, passed through minefields, and had to clear houses on the far side. In these conditions, the Argylls had to rely on their discipline, small-unit tactics, and unyielding resolve to dislodge well-prepared enemy positions. The regiment distinguished itself in brutal close combat to drive German forces from the region. By the time the battalion returned to the town, the total strength of all four companies was 125.¹⁷²

Later, the battalion participated in Operation Elephant, an offensive launched to seize Kapelsche Veer, a German stronghold in the Netherlands on the Maas River. The German forces, including elite SS units, had established a well-fortified bridgehead at this location, threatening the security of Allied positions in the Netherlands.¹⁷³ The operation became necessary as German forces were using Kapelsche Veer as a launching point for raids and counterattacks, disrupting supply lines and preventing the Allies from fully securing the region. In the bitter cold, the Argylls along with the Lincoln and Welland, engaged in fierce close-quarters combat, pushing back German counterattacks and suffering many casualties from frostbite as well as by enemy

¹⁷⁰ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 117.

¹⁷¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 142.

¹⁷² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 146.

¹⁷³ C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 450-452.

action over multiple days. The Argylls lost 15 dead and 35 wounded in return for heavy casualties on the Germans that included 24 prisoners, and three times as many dead.¹⁷⁴

By the end of the Battle of the Scheldt, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada had demonstrated exceptional courage and resilience in the face of overwhelming challenges. From the brutal house-to-house fighting in Bergen op Zoom to the freezing conditions and fierce combat at Kapelsche Veer, the battalion endured heavy casualties, with many soldiers falling to both enemy fire and the harsh weather. Despite these losses, the Argylls played a vital role in securing key objectives. The campaign was seen as a pyrrhic victory by the Argylls and the Lincs. The battalion had suffered 300 casualties in dead, wounded, and frostbite, and it would require time to restore their numbers.¹⁷⁵ Their sacrifices in these critical engagements solidified their reputation as one of Canada's elite fighting regiments, with their actions ultimately contributing to the liberation of the majority of the Netherlands. The regiment's losses were severe, but their unwavering determination ensured that their mission was accomplished. The Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of the Argylls, Peter C. McGinlay, received the Military Medal for his actions at Bergen op Zoom and Kapelsche Veer. He was one example of heroism that cemented the Argyll's reputation among the division.¹⁷⁶

The Rhineland Offensive and Final Push into Germany

In January 1945, the regiment underwent a leadership change when Lieutenant Colonel Stewart was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Wigle, a staff officer from the division. This shift

¹⁷⁴ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 31 January 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁷⁵ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 31 January 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁷⁶ Peter Caithness McGinlay, *Military Medal Citation*, Canadian Army, July 30, 1945.

raised concerns within the regiment, but Wigle quickly proved himself effective, delivering orders with clear precision, down to the last comma.¹⁷⁷ He had a challenge in replacing Lt. Col Stewart, but through hard work he won over the men. As winter set in, the Argylls prepared for Operation Veritable, the Allied assault on the Rhineland, scheduled for February 1945. Through scheduled training with the SAR on infantry-tank tactical cooperation, the Argylls prepared for their next operations. This period provided Wigle to learn more about his unit, while also allowing the battalion's RSM, McGinlay to enforce discipline, particularly among the 'green' troops.¹⁷⁸ They would need this preparation before brutal fighting through the Hochwald Gap from February 8-26, the Kusten Canal from April 17-19, and Varel on May 6.¹⁷⁹ In the final months of the war, the regiment faced some of its fiercest battles and had to rely on their training and their experienced leadership. These engagements were characterized by brutal house-to-house combat, heavy shelling, and relentless German counterattacks.

One of the most significant actions undertaken by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada in 1945 was Operation *Blockbuster* in the Hochwald Gap in late February. The difficulties of this operation placed a severe strain on all members of the regiment. The plan was for the 2nd Canadian Corps (of which the 4th Canadian Division was included) to break enemy lines, seize ground west of the Hochwald and serve as a launching pad for the next phase of the operation, breaking through to the Hochwald forest.¹⁸⁰ Good coordination between Canadian armoured and infantry units allowed them to overcome enemy defences, as squadrons of tanks

¹⁷⁷ Caravaggio, *21 Days in Normandy*, 28.

¹⁷⁸ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 31 January 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁷⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 69.

¹⁸⁰ Donald E. Graves, *South Albertas: A Canadian Regiment at War* (Toronto: Published for the South Alberta Regiment Veterans Association by Robin Brass Studio, 2004), 266.

with companies of infantry on armoured carriers with flail tanks to clear minefields in support broke through German lines.¹⁸¹ This showcased the ability of the Argylls and other Canadian units to execute effective combined arms operations in challenging terrain.

Lieutenant Colonel Wigle used the days prior to the attack to meticulously organize the attack, giving specific objectives to each part of his battlegroup, named “Jock Force”.¹⁸² He ensured that every officer, NCO, and other rank was well briefed and understood their role and the capabilities of the armoured unit attached to them in preparation for casualties.¹⁸³ Despite bad weather that caused the tanks of the battlegroup to get bogged down, “Jock Force” moved methodically in accordance with its original plan with Lieutenant Colonel Wigle personally directing much of the advance.¹⁸⁴ By the morning of the 26th, the Argylls’ HQ was visited by the commander of the division, Major General C. Vokes, who informed them that the division had taken 1,500 prisoners the previous day, 400 of whom were credited to the Argylls.¹⁸⁵ The battalion accomplished this while sustaining only six killed and 25 wounded.¹⁸⁶

On February 28, “B” Company of the Argylls was cut off from the rest of the battalion and faced relentless German counterattacks. The one remaining officer, Captain Perry, was determined to hold his companies’ positions. Fighting hard, the men rallied together against overwhelming odds, knocking out at least one, perhaps two, German self-propelled guns with a

¹⁸¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 173.

¹⁸² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 173.

¹⁸³ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 24 February 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁸⁴ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 177.

¹⁸⁵ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 27 February 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁸⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 177.

¹⁸⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 177.

PIAT, with Captain Perry shooting the German tank commander who had demanded they surrender.¹⁸⁷ He later managed to break through to battalion headquarters to inform them of what was happening to his company, leaving a Sgt. Huffman, who had been blinded by enemy action in command. By the time the company was relieved, there were only 15 soldiers left who had not been wounded or killed, along with five badly wounded men.¹⁸⁸ The Argylls Support Company made itself known, working through dangerous conditions and exhaustion, carrying supplies, ammunition, and wounded men day and night under fire. For their bravery, five decorations were issued to the battalion, most being awarded to members of “B” Company.¹⁸⁹ In just a few days of action in Germany, the battalion suffered heavy casualties, but due to the battalion's discipline, leadership, and training, the Argylls took their objectives, killed and captured hundreds of Germans and helped the overall operation achieve success.

During the advance into Germany, the battalion suffered a significant loss when Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Ernest Wigle was killed in a firefight in Friesoythe on April 14, 1945.¹⁹⁰ Despite not being with the regiment long, Wigle, a native of Hamilton, had left a strong impression on his troops. In the chaos following his death, Canadian forces mistakenly believed the attack had been carried out by a civilian sniper. In retaliation, the Argylls systematically burned down much of the town, with members later reporting that they didn't know where the original order came from, either from the division or brigade level.¹⁹¹ Some report that Major

¹⁸⁷ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 28 February 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁸⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 181-182.

¹⁸⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 181-183.

¹⁹⁰ Warren, Trumbell. *Letter to Group-Captain Douglas Wigle. April 17, 1945. Tac HQ 21 Army Group.*

¹⁹¹ Fraser, *Black Yesterdays*, 435-436.

General Vokes himself, in a rage, had ordered the town to be burned.¹⁹² Nevertheless, Friesoythe served as a constant reminder that even professionally trained soldiers are not immune to war crimes, and the close bond the Argylls had with their commanding officers in this instance served as a fault rather than a virtue.

Following Friesoythe, the Argylls pushed on toward the Küsten Canal, a formidable obstacle nearly 100 feet wide that linked the lower reaches of the Ems and Weser rivers.¹⁹³ The battle for the canal was marked by intense urban combat by a determined enemy force made up of the 7th Parachute Division and a Kriegsmarine marine regiment of two battalions. Like previous engagements, the Argylls were forced to hold a bridgehead against German counterattacks, hoping to dislodge them. The regiment, however, persevered, allowing for a bridge to be built and armoured squadrons to arrive.¹⁹⁴ It was here that the battalion received a new commander, Lieutenant Colonel Albert F. Coffin, who had served as second in command of the South Alberta Regiment and was familiar with the Argylls.¹⁹⁵

By the end of April, the final push into Germany had left the Argylls battered, with a total strength of eight officers and 205 men among the four rifle companies, compared to the normal fighting strength of twelve officers and 400 men.¹⁹⁶ The final push into the Rhineland and Germany was a bloody conclusion to the Argylls' participation in the war, as they suffered heavy losses, especially among its junior and company officers. On May 4, 1945, the Argylls prepared for a night attack on the village of Spohle (south of Wilhelmshaven), but just thirty

¹⁹² Mark Zuehlke, *On to Victory: The Canadian Liberation of the Netherlands, March 23 – May 5, 1945* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 308.

¹⁹³ C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 559.

¹⁹⁴ C.P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe*, 560.

¹⁹⁵ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 208.

¹⁹⁶ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 214.

minutes before they signalled the assault, they received orders to cease all offensive operations.¹⁹⁷

Legacy

The Argylls returned home to Hamilton, Ontario, on January 29, 1946. They were met at the train station by thousands of cheering citizens, and the 2nd Battalion bands, and it was truly a hero's welcome. Marching through the city to the armouries, the 1st Battalion was met by the Mayor and Lieutenant Colonel Sinclair, who was serving as a General Staff Officer at Headquarters Military District Number 2. In his speech to the Battalion, he said "We knew that no finer regiment ever left Canada and your subsequent record on the fighting fronts is something of which we are all proud."¹⁹⁸ With this final parade, the 1st Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada ended their war.

The Argylls as a unit received many battle honours for its service overseas. Its members were also recognized for their outstanding bravery, earning commendations that highlighted the regiment's exceptional performance. The regiment's professionalism was exemplified by its competent commanding officers, who ensured the Argylls were always prepared for combat and led from the front. The non-commissioned officers, particularly the Regimental Sergeant Major Peter C. McGinlay, were the cornerstone of the Argyll identity, instilling discipline and upholding the regiment's proud traditions.

List of Decorations awarded to members while serving in the regiment:

¹⁹⁷ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 4 May 1945, RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

¹⁹⁸ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 239.

Type of Decoration Awarded	Number of recipients
George Cross	1
Distinguished Service Order	5
Military Cross	3
Distinguished Conduct Medal	3
Military Medal	14
Croix de Guerre 1940 avec Palme (Belgian)	4
Croix de Guerre avec étoile d'Argent (French)	1
Croix de Guerre avec étoile de Bronze (French)	1
Bronze Lion (Dutch)	4
Bronze Cross (Dutch)	2
Knight Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau (with swords) (Dutch)	1
Distinguished Service Cross (U.S.A)	1

199

One other notable mention was Sgt. Aubrey Cosens, who served with the Argylls until 1944 when he transferred to The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. He received the Victoria Cross for actions taken on the night of February 25-26, 1945, in the village of Mooshof.²⁰⁰

Their achievements came at a price, as the Argylls endured significant casualties throughout the war. From December 1940 to May 1945, they suffered 267 killed and 880 wounded.²⁰¹ There were many in the regiment who were wounded twice or three times or taken

¹⁹⁹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 318-319.

²⁰⁰ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 321.

²⁰¹ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 407.

prisoner. Despite these heavy losses, the Argylls' resilience and sacrifice were integral to the success of Allied operations, cementing their legacy as one of Canada's most distinguished regiments of the Second World War. The experience of the Argylls highlights the ability of the Canadian Army to replace losses with new replacement soldiers to ensure the continued combat capability of its units.

Conclusion

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada landed in France as a battalion with no combat experience but emerged as one of the most effective infantry units in the Canadian Army. Their quick transformation from green novices into battle-hardened veterans was the result of years of disciplined training, strong leadership, and the shared commitment of its members. From the fields of Normandy to the flooded battlegrounds of the Scheldt and the final push into Germany, the Argylls upheld their reputation as a highly capable combat force. Their experiences underscored the importance of rigorous training, adaptive leadership, and unit cohesion, lessons that remain relevant to military organizations today.

The regiment's service in the Second World War solidified its place in Canadian military history. Its ability to adapt to the evolving conditions of modern warfare, maintain high morale under extreme pressure, and execute complex operations with precision exemplifies the effectiveness of Canadian infantry units during the conflict. The legacy of the Argylls lives on through their traditions, their contributions to military doctrine, and the remembrance of their sacrifices.

Conclusion

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada entered the Second World War as a peacetime militia unit but emerged from the conflict as a battle-hardened and highly effective fighting force. Through extensive training, adaptation, and operational experience, the regiment overcame significant challenges to distinguish itself in combat. While the transition from an interwar reserve unit to an active combat battalion was not without difficulties, the regiment's eventual success was a testament to the leadership, rigorous training, and strong regimental culture that shaped its development.

At the outset of the war, the Argylls faced numerous obstacles, including limited equipment, outdated training methods, and a lack of combat experience. The initial years of mobilization saw the regiment undergo rigorous training in Canada, the Caribbean, and Great Britain, refining its tactical proficiency and fostering unit cohesion. The lessons learned from earlier Canadian military failures, such as those at Hong Kong and Dieppe, reinforced the importance of preparation and professionalism, which the Argylls embraced as they readied themselves for deployment in Europe.

By 1944, the Argylls had transformed into a well-trained and disciplined battalion, fully integrated into the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division. Their performance in Northwest Europe, particularly in the liberation of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, demonstrated the effectiveness of their extensive training and regimental spirit. The unit's adaptability in combat, ability to integrate combined arms operations, and commitment to maintaining high standards of discipline and leadership ensured its effectiveness in battle.

The legacy of the Argylls' wartime service extended beyond the battlefield. The regiment's experiences underscored the importance of training, leadership, and unit cohesion in military success. Commanders such as Stewart, Wigle, and Coffin exemplified the Argyll culture of discipline, preparation and leading from the front. NCOs like RSM McGinlay helped mentor those in the regiment while maintaining standards and being an example to all on and off the battlefield. This kept the Argylls grounded as a unit and maintained their proficiency despite casualties. Furthermore, their contributions to the Canadian war effort reinforced the value of militia units in modern warfare, shaping future policies on military preparedness and training.

Ultimately, the transformation of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada during the Second World War exemplifies the broader evolution of the Canadian Army. From a peacetime force with limited resources to a capable and respected combat unit, the regiment's journey highlights the essential elements of adaptability, perseverance, and professionalization in achieving battlefield success. Their story serves as a valuable case study in military history, demonstrating the importance of preparation before a conflict in both men and material, as well as how rigorous training, effective leadership, and a strong regimental culture can help overcome the challenges of war and shape the evolution of a nation's military. Looking at the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders' experience, there are a few key takeaways that still apply to the Canadian military today and especially the Canadian Army Reserve units. First, this historical record illustrates how important it is to stay ready, even in peacetime, so that soldiers are prepared to act quickly when things change. Second, it reminds us that ongoing training and strong leadership are essential to building effective, cohesive formations. Finally, it shows how a strong sense of identity and culture within an organization can keep morale high and the role of officers and NCOs on campaign.

Appendix A: Maps of the Argylls' travels during the Second World War

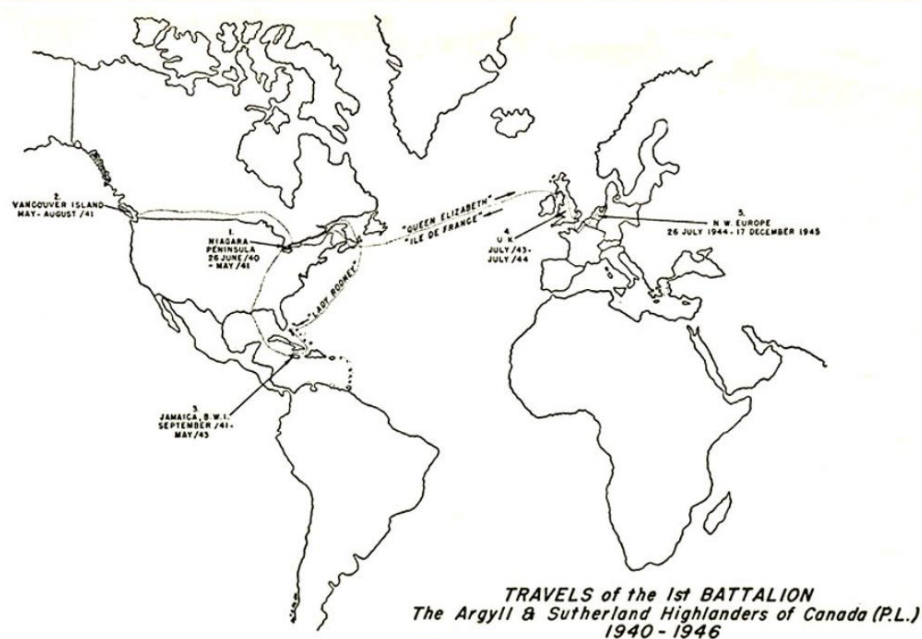


Figure 4.1 The Argyll's overall travels from Ontario in 1940 to repatriation back to Canada in 1946.²⁰²



²⁰² Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 21.

Figure 4.2 The Argyll's campaigns through North-West Europe along with major battles.²⁰³

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Regimental Records & War Diaries

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (P.L.) (M.G.). *Battalion Order, Jan 25th, 1939*.

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada War Museum.

2nd Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF). *Battalion Orders*. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, May–June 1941.

2nd Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (RF). *Battalion Orders*. Hamilton: Argyll Regimental Museum, January–May 1942.

1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, *War Diary*, 1 September 1941 - 19 November 1941, R112, RG24, Volume 38033, File part 7. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. *War Diary*, 14 February 1942 - 8 June 1942. R112, RG24, Volume 38033, File part 9. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. *War Diary*, July 1944 – November 1945. RG24-C-3, Volume 15005, File 300. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Official Military Documents & Reports

Army Historical Section. *The Regiments and Corps of the Canadian Army*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964.

McGinlay, Peter Caithness. *Military Medal Citation*. Canadian Army, July 30, 1945.

Warren, Trumbell. *Letter to Group-Captain Douglas Wigle*. April 17, 1945. Tac HQ 21 Army Group.

Memoirs & Interviews

²⁰³ Jackson, *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 69.

- Allan, Spence. *Interview with Robert Fraser*. Hamilton, 1984.
- Dempsey, Robert Fraser. *Interview with Robert Fraser*. Hamilton, 1984.
- Dickinson, Edward. *Interview with Robert Fraser*. Hamilton, June 26, 1984.
- Foulds, James Douglas. *Interview with Robert Fraser*. Hamilton, June 13, 1985.
- Mackay, William. *Interview with Robert Fraser*. Hamilton, June 19, 1984.
- Whitehead, Philip. *Interview with Billy Wiley*. Hamilton, January 3, 1985.

Secondary Sources

Books & Academic Studies

- Bercuson, David. *The Fighting Canadians: Our Regimental History from New France to Afghanistan*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2014.
- Brown, Andrew L. *Building the Army's Backbone: Canadian Non-Commissioned Officers in the Second World War*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2022.
- Campbell, David. *It Can't Last Forever: The 19th Battalion and the Canadian Corps in the First World War*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017.
- Caravaggio, Angelo. *21 Days in Normandy: Maj. Gen. George Kitching and the 4th Canadian Armoured Division*. Havertown: Pen and Sword, 2016.
- Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Census of Canada, 1931: Population by Sex, General and Detailed Origin, Age Groups, Conjugal Condition and Other Characteristics, for Canada, Provinces, Counties or Census Divisions and Subdivisions*. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1931.
- English, John. *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign*. New York: Praeger, 1991.
- Fraser, Robert. *Black Yesterdays: The Argylls in War and Peace*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996.
- Graves, Donald E. *South Albertas: A Canadian Regiment at War*. Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2004.
- Gullachsen, Arthur W. *An Army of Never-Ending Strength: Reinforcing the Canadians in Northwest Europe, 1944-45*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021.

- Hayes, Geoffrey. *The Lincs: A History of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment at War*. Alma: Maple Leaf Route, 1986.
- Heron, Craig. *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883–1935*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Jackson, Harold McGill. *The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*. Montreal: Industrial School of the Deaf, 1953.
- Stacey, C.P. *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945*. Ottawa: National Defence and the Canadian Forces, 1970.
- Stacey, C.P. *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955.
- Stacey, C.P. *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe, 1944-1945*. Vol. III of *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960.
- Swettenham, John. *McNaughton*. Vol. 1: 1887-1939. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968.
- Zuehlke, Mark. *On to Victory: The Canadian Liberation of the Netherlands, March 23 – May 5, 1945*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010.