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August Extra #1, 2020

PRIVATE HARNOM SINGH

143rd Battalion, British Columbia Bantams

Researched and compiled by Indra Teekasingh and Allan Ross

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Brigadier WS Ziegler CBE, DSO, ED (1911-1999)

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A WAR STORY

Brigadier Ziegler brings "Monty's Moonlight"
To the Italian Campaign in September of 1944

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military and the police, and the heritage
of

Canada, the British Empire, and the
world

as well as the preservation of military
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar
month at: Petty Officers' Mess

HMCS Tecumseh

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Calgary AB T2T 0G6

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**August Extra #1 contributions by Indra Teekasingh & Allan ross. Monty's
Moonlight by David Gale**

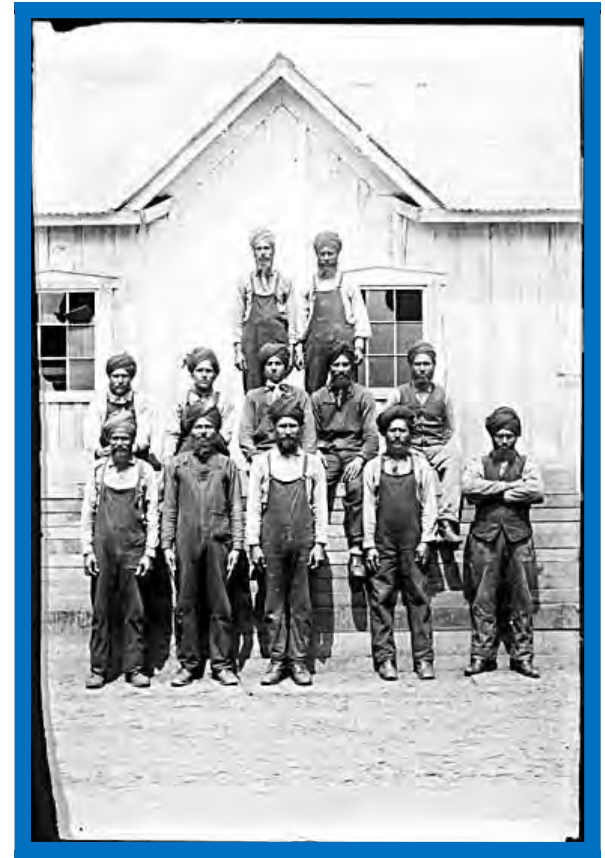
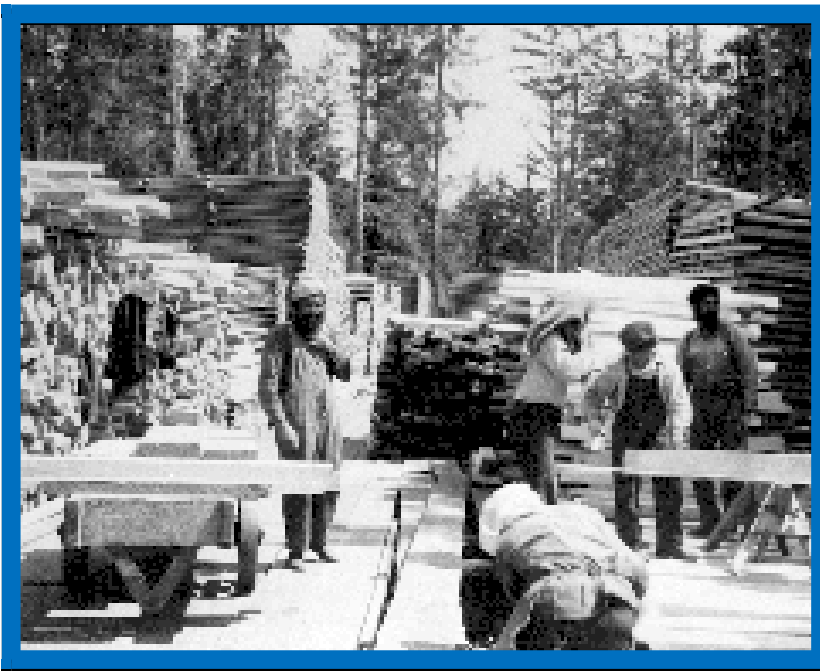
PRIVATE HARNOM SINGH

143rd Battalion, British Columbia Bantams

Harnom Singh aka Harry Robson was born July 4th 1888 in Juarez Mexico. His father was Joseph Singh aka Joseph Robson who lived in Singapore, India, his mother was Bishina Counom. Harry had a wife in India, Indu Kaur who resided in Raipur Village, Punjab, India. Harnom enlisted in Vancouver on October 26th 1916 at the age of 28 years with the 143rd Battalion, British Columbia Bantams. He transferred to the unit Quebec Recruiting Depot and completed a second set of attestation papers in French. His trade or calling on his attestation papers was "Sawyer". Likely Harnom had been previously employed at one of the numerous sawmills in British Columbia. Tod Inlet on Vancouver Island had a cement plant and is recognized as one of the first settlements for Sikhs arriving in Canada and where they also found employment. Harnom and his unit sailed on the SS Saxonica for England on March 3rd 1917. He was transferred several times during his military career to the following Battalions; 10th Reserve Battalion, 23rd Reserve Battalion, 16th Reserve Battalion, 47th Canadian Infantry Battalion, 1st Canadian Infantry Works, and the 3rd Canadian Infantry Works. The majority of Harnoms military experience was involved with the Railway Construction Battalion and involved either the construction or the destruction of strategic rail lines. It was while he was with the 47th Battalion that he was injured by a gun shot wound on January 18th 1918. Not serious enough to be hospitalized he remained on duty. Harnom served out his military service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force through to the conclusion of the war and was discharged on May 21st 1919. He returned to Canada and in 1921 was living in a lodge in Qualicum BC working as a logger. His last known address was Chilliwack BC where he worked as a farmer. Private Harnom Singh died June 25th 1956 at the age of 68 years.

The 143rd Battalion of the [Canadian Expeditionary Force](#) (CEF), who came to be known as the "BC Bantams", was one of two "bantam" battalions raised in Canada during World War 1. The other Canadian bantam battalion was the 216th Battalion, known as the "B.B.B.", or Burton's Bantam Battalion which was raised in Toronto.

In order to enlist in the British or Canadian Army you had to be at least 5' 4" tall, single, between 19 and 30 years old and a minimum chest measurement of 34". Men under 5' 4" were regularly rejected although it was not unusual for battalions to accept men under the regulation height.



Many Sikhs first arrival to Canada was at Tod Inlet on Vancouver Island British Columbia. Some were employed at sawmill's and they worked as "Sawyers" as did Harnom Singh. Pictured , are Sikhs working in some of the Sawmills of British Columbia. Images: Royalmuseum.bc.ca

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alias Singh Harnom
Signalement de HARRY ROEBSON à l'Enrolement

Age apparent..... 28ans.....mois. <small>(Déterminable d'après les instructions contenues dans les règlements du Service Médical de l'Armée.)</small>	Signes distinctifs, et indices d'affections congénitales ou de maladies antérieures. <small>Si le Médecin-Officier est d'avis que le Recrue a fait du service antérieurement, il devra, à moins que l'engagé reconnaisse le fait, ajouter une note à cet effet pour l'information de l'officier approuvateur.</small>
Taille 5 pieds 3 1/2 pouces	
Mesure de la poitrine { Tour de poitrine, à pleine expansion..... 36pouces Marge d'expansion..... 3 1/2pouces	3. Vac. R.
Teint..... Malay	Scar R. fore arm anterior 3" above wrist.
Yeux..... D. Brown	Records show that the 143rd was having difficulty's enrolling enough men, both short and regular. Harnom Singh probably could have passed in a non Bantom Battalion. He also appears to be married
Chevelure..... Black	
Anglican.....	



Brigadier WS Ziegler CBE, DSO, ED (1911-1999)

An Alberta native, Brigadier William Smith Ziegler was born in Calgary and received his early education at the Strathcona High School in Edmonton. He later attended the University of Alberta, graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering.

He enlisted in the 61st Field Battery of the Non-Permanent Active Militia in 1926. He earned his first chevron in 1928 and by 1931 was Battery Sergeant-Major. Commissioned the following year, he rose to the post of Adjutant 20th Field Brigade by 1938.

In 1939, while still attending university, he was mobilized with the 1st Canadian Division, and in January 1940, he went overseas. He served as Battery Captain 61st Field Battery and later in the same position with X Super Heavy Battery. Selected because of his considerable experience, he returned to Canada to become the first Brigade Major Royal Artillery of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. He shortly found himself heading to the United Kingdom once again, this time to attend the Camberley Staff College. On completion, he was appointed to the staff of the First Canadian Army as General Staff Officer (Grade 1), Royal Artillery.

In May 1943, he commanded the 13th Field Regiment. During his tenure as Commanding Officer the Canadian Artillery, his unit worked hard at mastering the intricacies of handling and using artillery. From October 1943 until February 1944, he served as "Colonel GS Staff Duties and Training" at Canadian Military Headquarters in London. Early in 1944, he left the regiment and was promoted Brigadier to fill the appointment of Commander, Royal Artillery in the 1st Canadian Infantry Division, then on Italy's Ortona Winter Line. By the end of April, the Canadian guns were out of action and ready to assume the spring offensive. Ahead of them on the road to Rome lay the Liri Valley with its three fortified defence lines: The Gustav Line anchored on Monte Cassino, the Hitler Line hinged at Mount Cairo and the Caesar Line some thirty kilometres South-East of Rome. **(See page 5 for one of his initiatives that proved successful. Artificial Moonlight)**

Ziegler's skillful use of artillery and his masterful fire plans during the Liri Valley operations contributed to the success of the advance to Rome and resulted in his appointment to the Distinguished Service Order. At the end of operations in Italy in early 1945, the Brigadier accompanied his gunners to North-West Europe and a role in the final defeat of the Third Reich. In September 1945, he received the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the grade of Commander.

At the end of hostilities, Brigadier Ziegler served with the British Foreign Office (German Section). He was Deputy Commander Hannover Region with the Control Commission for Germany and later, until 1950, served as the Regional Administration Officer, Land in Niedersachsen.

Leaving the army in 1950, he joined the Canadian National Railway where he served in many senior positions across Canada until 1956. He then joined Inland Cement Industries and worked in many senior management positions until his retirement in 1971.

Active in a wide variety of community-related activities, he served as an advisor to the University of Alberta School of Commerce, as Governor of the Arctic Institute of North America, as Director of the Alberta Chamber of Resources, on the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army and as a member of the Alberta and Northwest Territories Council, the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Canada.

Brigadier Ziegler's contributions to the Royal Regiment and Canada will inspire future generations of Canadian Gunners to the service of Canada. He died in Edmonton in 1999.

THE BATTLE OF THE RIMINI LINE

The renewal of the battle on the night of 17-18 September 1944, brought a strange portent to the enemy as the 4th Division attacked towards the Ansa.

German sentinels that night saw the omen of a battlefield illuminated by moonlight, but without a moon. The technique of employing anti-aircraft searchlights for such a purpose had been used before, in Italy in 1918. It was further used in Normandy during the push inland after D-Day. It had taken on the name "**Monty's Moonlight**"

During the summer of 1944 details were worked out in rear training areas, and after being successfully used by British and Canadian formations in Normandy in mid-July, the device was introduced into operations in Italy by the 5th Corps during its attack on the Gothic Line.

At that time **Brigadier Ziegler** had advanced the idea for adoption by the 1st Canadian Division. If searchlights could be deployed on high ground and on the flanks to provide cross illumination on the principal enemy features while the infantry assaulted across the dark, low ground between, the C.R.A. had argued, they would both create surprise and help the attacking troops to their objectives."

Now the Canadian Corps was trying the lights for the first time, to assist the 4th Division's attack on the flank. The artifice worked satisfactorily, and during the remainder of its fighting in Italy the Canadian Corps continued to use searchlights provided and operated by the 323rd and 422nd Searchlight Batteries R.A. It was used to illuminate the battlefield for not only infantry attack but also, because of the ridge nature of the terrain, catching out German Artillery in the full glare of light on the opposite slopes. Careful reconnoitring of the area and individual placement achieved excellent results.

To the Germans the innovation was demoralizing. The admission is to be read in the Tenth Army's war diary for the 19th. "At night, since 18 September, the enemy has been illuminating our part of the battle area with searchlights installed out of range of our artillery, whereby transfer and relief movements, as well as supply operations, which on the field of battle can hardly be carried out except at night, are seriously handicapped. The psychological effect produced on the troops by the battle of materiel itself is heightened by the feeling of helplessness against this new technical weapon.

Thus floodlit and stabbed by the flashes of many guns, the night of the 17th-18th saw the eastern wings of the Eighth and Tenth Armies locked in a battle of savage fury.



Searchlights being used in the forward areas near Rimini (during World War 2) to create 'artificial moonlight' to assist infantry attacks and the observation of enemy positions." Photograph taken by George Frederick Kaye, 21 September 1944.



Sherman Tanks Taking Up Positions Under Artificial Moonlight by Bruno J. Bobak (1973)
© Canadian War Museum



Notes :The Canadians In Italy Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War , Volume II

To the Membership:

Hi everyone, this is Dave Love. I hope this note finds all of you and your families safe and healthy. A week or so ago, I had a query from one of our members asking if the executive was considering starting up in-person meetings. If there is one query, I am sure there are more of you wanting an update. I re-conferred with your executive and by unanimous agreement, the short answer is no. The Covid situation remains essentially unchanged except we now have confirmation that social distancing is quite effective. So we will continue our strategy of re-visiting the question on more or less a monthly basis and will let you know if there is any change. Safety first!

On another note, I am going to set up a series of monthly (or more frequently) virtual meetings. A week ago, I signed up for a Zoom account so that I could host such meetings. For those who are not familiar with Zoom, it is an app which enables groups of people to quickly, efficiently and easily connect through the internet and their phones or computers (computer is best). You can 'attend' a meeting with video interaction or just audio if you are using your phone. To participate and actually see and converse with the other attendees, you would need a computer camera. Most laptops now have the cameras pre-installed while desktop computers usually need an external camera connected to the computer. I use my laptop for such things because my main computer does not have a camera. Essentially what happens is that you will receive an email with an invitation to join a meeting. The email will tell you the date and time and will have a link that you just connect on at the time of the meeting to join it. Once you are connected you enable the video and just go from there. As the host, I will be able to walk anyone through the logistics if that is needed. Again, as the host, I facilitate the conversation according to the wishes of the attendees. At any point, you can indicate if you wish to speak and I will enable you at that point. There is no charge to any participant. The cost of the service will be handled by myself (which is nominal). The Zoom version I chose allows for meetings of maximum 24hr duration and up to 100 participants. We can have as many meetings in any given month as we wish. Apart from the large CMHS meetings, I can also facilitate a smaller meeting between individual members or groups of members if asked to do so. It will allow you to show and tell either by just holding an item up to your camera and you can describe it, or you can take a electronic photo of the item and share the photo with all participants. It is easy to use and quite efficient. Better than Skype. The security is pretty good.

I will be sending an invite out to all members having computers (all but 1) about a week after Dave Gale sends this message on my behalf so you can look for the invite. If anyone has questions or concerns please don't hesitate to either phone me (403-818-0831) or email me directly (dlove@davincibb.net). I think this is probably the best way to have some sort of ongoing direct connection during these difficult times.

Dave



Our last meeting. Find Floyd