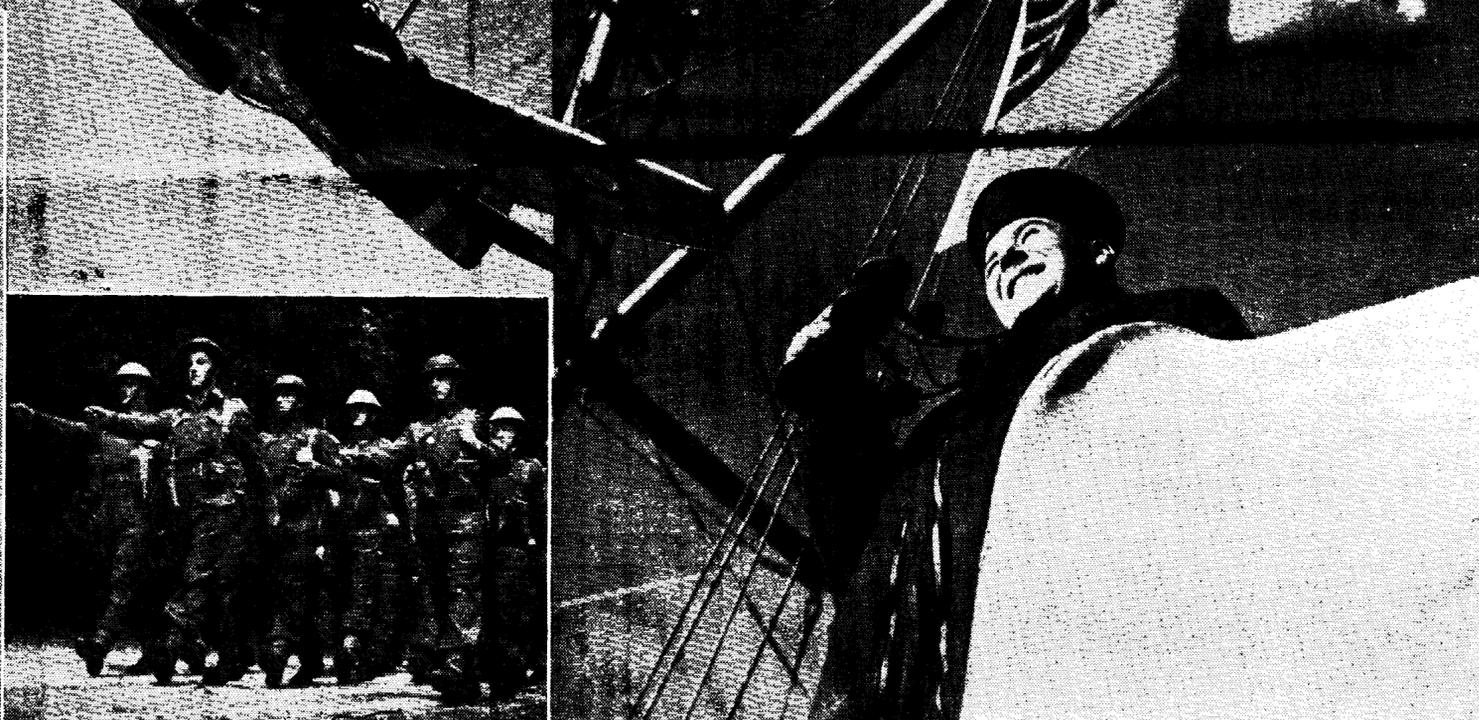


The Hamilton Spectator

HAMILTON, CANADA MONDAY JULY 15 1946

Once more with our English Dead



Hamilton Meets Challenge When Freedom In Danger

BRITISHERS grew tired of a furled umbrella and the slogan "peace in our time." Now it would be bayonets. It was September 1, 1939—the first garrison units had been mobilized—and grave, black headlines summoned the world—Hitler had smashed into Poland. As George VI said two days later: "We are at war for the second time in the lives of most of us . . . it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge."

How well Hamilton met that challenge is told in the tally of weapons produced, in the gallant actions of devoted sons by land, sea and air, and in the eloquent elegy of the soldier's cross, the sailor's pall, the charred skeleton of a lost bomber.

Hamilton Rallied To War's Call

In the first ten days of the Second Great War, 1,500 Hamilton men enlisted. The navy and air force began to recruit and the liner *Athena*, a torpedo in her belly, slipped forever into the green oblivion of the North Atlantic. That was the beginning. And before glaring headlines heralded the finish, 20,000 Hamiltonians rallied to the colours and their casualty toll was 4,000 all ranks, killed, missing or wounded. It was a long, arduous struggle—from Dunkerque to the crossing of the Rhine—an uphill fight in which men's spirits were buoyed by an unflinching faith in the cause of right. At first the allies were few. But as danger grew, so grew their number. New ships went to sea; fleet new aircraft raised their death on enemy strongholds, and reinforced legions, once pushed to Alamein, smashed the enemy half across Europe and back to his lair. It was the most awful cataclysm in the history of human combat.

Hamilton's share in the terrible task of meeting the onslaught actually began in advance of the commencement of war. There was sudden exertion of her will to fight and early recruiting of the first of her many proud units. The "Links"—the Lincoln and Welland Regiment of St. Catharines, later to fight at the side of the Argylls in France and in the

divisional Petrol Company, R.C.A.S.C.—and the air force, were sounding a call that went out to free men everywhere.

But recruiting was only the beginning. Before it was over, news reports which swelled the heart and touched the soul were to pattern the story of six long years of pride and pain, of tense waiting, of savage fighting, of rich trophies gained and great lives lost.

Looking back now, the first few squares in this mosaic it was were the embarkment of troops, their embarkment and the beginning of the long wait in England. There was the Battle of Britain—"never in the history of human combat has so much been owed by so many to so few"—and the first of the raft of air force casualties, "missing on operations."

Earlier, when they brought home little Margaret Hayworth in a simple pine casket—submarine victim and first Canadian war casualty to be buried on Canadian soil—Hon. Mitchell F. Hepburn, then Premier of the province, said: "The jury of the world finds Hitler guilty of her murder." And an editorial, telling of freedom and their gallantry at Dunkerque wrote that "in that harbour, in such a hell as never blazed before on earth, the rags and blemishes which have hidden the soul of democracy fell away."

Continual Stream Of Enlistments

In the months and years to follow, further units and thousands of reinforcements for all three services would leave the city. Dieppe was to come, and proud young lives to be snuffed out quickly over its blazing beaches on a muggy August morning. A Hamilton padre would overstep the call of duty—would risk his life to comfort the wounded and give courage to the dying—and earn the Empire's highest order of merit, the Victoria Cross.

Writing the appalling list of sacrifice at Dieppe, meeting the first of the wounded at the district depot, taking pictures from mothers whose sons had been lost at sea, or somewhere over Europe—these are among personal recollections which find their place in the pattern.

Often you saw mothers twice. First there was a promotion. And then, in a matter of days it seem-

ed, they were back again. Their sons had been killed; were missing or wounded.

The fall of France, of Hong Kong and Singapore, the moral succour of the speeches of "Mr. England," the attack on Pearl Harbor, the turning of the tide in North Africa, the first R.C.A.F. squadrons winging into action over Europe, Canadian corvettes in the North Atlantic, the Invasion, Caen, Verrieres, Falaise.

Argylls' Share In Navy

As Hamilton men commanded armed air squadrons during the years of air bludgeoning, others were on the bridges at sea, in destroyers and corvettes of the R.C.N., in the new-type frigates and minesweepers, and in heavy warships of the Royal Navy. When a Canadian ship went down, Hamilton men for sure were in her. It was that way every time. It was that way early when the *Spikenard*, heading a convoy across, was torpedoed amidships and her charges blew her to bits. It was that way when the *St. Croix* went down, whose loss was announced by the navy minister in launching *Star* at Hamilton.

What the boys endured at sea, few ashore will know. The constant heaving of the stout little "corks," the intense heat of the engine rooms; the ice and snow of the bridge; hammering seas over the gun stations; these are known best to those who endured them. While Hamilton had a just pride in all the fleet and doughty craft which helped keep open the lifeline to Britain, she had especial pride in one of the ships—an old-type U.S. destroyer—the *Hamilton*. And the same was true of the residents of Dundas, Burlington and Oakville.

First Unit Overseas

Of the half-dozen garrison units which received the call to mobilize first, the 1st Divisional Petrol

Company, R.C.A.S.C., and No. 5 Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M.C., were first to head for the coast. The Petrol Company, the first to embark for England, went aboard at Halifax on December 10, 1939, in command of Major, later Lieut.-Col. S. H. Coombes, and was the first Hamilton unit to touch down in Britain in the Second Great War.

When the next convoy went out on December 22, 1939, No. 5 Field Ambulance, commanded by Lieut.-Col. (later Brigadier) G. R. T. Coombes, was the first Hamilton unit to see the work of a century before, in April, 1915, Brig. Farmer's father had taken the same unit to England for service in the First Great War. In the years to follow, the tasks of the ambulance unit would be many and varied. It would fight the blitz and the boredom of "the long wait," evacuate the sick and injured from Spitzbergen, combat malaria and dysentery in Sicily and Italy, and join the final pursuit of the enemy through Holland. Whether expanding to the size of a stationary hospital or contracting to a mobile section; whether its transport was live mules or mechanical Buffaloes, it would maintain the highest standards of efficiency.

This is a small sketch with which to dismiss a unit of such lengthy and distinguished service. But like the others, its story is difficult to summarize. **Splendid Record Won By R.H.L.I.** The oldest garrison unit, the 11th Battery, which was mobilized as the 11th-69th, had a splendid record. Its predecessor was the old 4th Battery which Lieut.-Col. H. G. Carscallen, D.S.O., had taken overseas in 1914, and it supported the first Canadian infantry brigade to attain D-day objectives. On a bitter December morning, last year, Hamilton turned out in fitting numbers to welcome the battery home.

Best known, perhaps, of all garrison units, was the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (W.R.) whose first battalion won such distinction at Dieppe. Some died there, some escaped to England and others were taken prisoner. In the final months of war, American columns released the last of the prisoners. Reinforced in England for eventual invasion duties, it landed

in France July 5, 1944, and went into action almost immediately in the vicinity of Caen. In a subsequent attack on Falaise, it had a share in the destruction of the German Seventh Army. There followed the pursuit through Vimoutiers, the triumphant entry into Dieppe, the clearing of the seaports and the approaches to Antwerp. In the final weeks of the war, there was Moyland Wood, Goch-Calcar road and Xanten, where many Hamilton soldiers died. These were the work of a century before, in April, 1915, Brig. Farmer's father had taken the same unit to England for service in the First Great War. In the years to follow, the tasks of the ambulance unit would be many and varied. It would fight the blitz and the boredom of "the long wait," evacuate the sick and injured from Spitzbergen, combat malaria and dysentery in Sicily and Italy, and join the final pursuit of the enemy through Holland. Whether expanding to the size of a stationary hospital or contracting to a mobile section; whether its transport was live mules or mechanical Buffaloes, it would maintain the highest standards of efficiency.

clearing of the channel ports and opening of Antwerp, the Maas-Rhine offensive and the Netherland flanking operations. It lost one of its commanding officers, not long before the finish by the death in action of Lieut.-Col. Fred Wigle, D.S.O.

In addition to the 40th and 11th-69th batteries, the Hamilton district contributed three others, the 41st-102nd Battery of Dundas, the reserve 102nd from Dundas, and the 33rd from Hamilton.

The 33rd was organized in the spring of 1942, and partially formed from men in Reserve army units at Hamilton, Brantford and St. Catharines. It was moved to Petawawa to become part of the 23rd Field Regiment, R.C.A., in which it gave splendid service from the Normandy beaches to the final engagements in northwest Europe.

Following the early units out of the garrison was a third company of the R.C.A.S.C. under Major E. B. Grass; the 1st Field Squadron, R.C.E.; the 2nd-10th Dragoons, and No. 18 Canadian Field Company, R.C.E., the latter unit, which went forward in August, 1940, was accorded a welcome on its return to Hamilton in June of last year. While the second divisional army service corps company left Hamilton in May, 1940, the one referred to above, and which later was attached to the 62th Division, was not mobilized until August of 1941.

The 2nd-10th Dragoons, one of the parent units of which was descended from Brock's Rangers, was mobilized in 1942 on an infantry basis and broken up overseas to reinforce other units.

In the first few months of war, several of the garrison units had a "spell" in the Standard Barracks, Sherman avenue north. In the months to follow, the Lorne Scots and the Perth Regiment, which were to rub shoulder patches with local units in Italy or France, were temporarily quartered there.

Gave Distinguished Service In The Air In the air war, Hamilton men gave distinguished service with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force, their record of decorations in the files of National Defence for Air Services numbering 81. (Continued on Next Page)

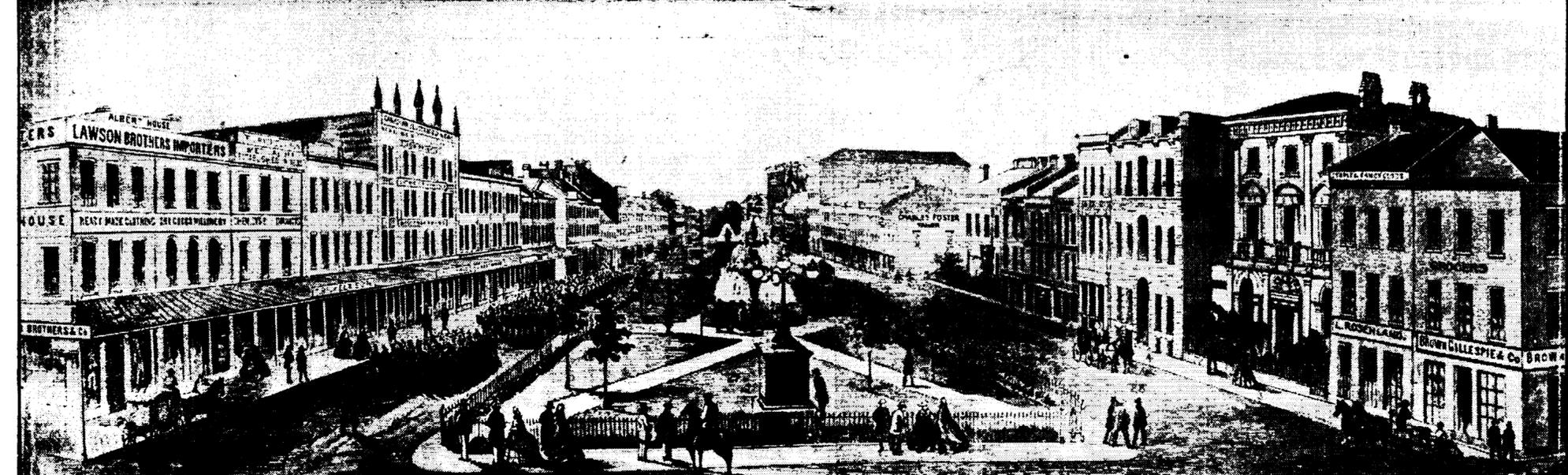


Illustration from the J. Ross Robertson Historical Collection, Toronto Public Library

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Spectator Men Gave Their Lives In World Wars



City's Industrial Plants Respond To Call Of War

WARS are fought with blood, and sweat, and tears, and these requisites to waging successful battle were offered in full measure by Hamilton and its citizens in Germany's two mighty attempts at world conquest. Of the blood and the tears, Hamilton's loss of thousands of her best men, little will be said in this summary, for her personal sacrifice is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. But the generosity with which the blood and tears were shed is evidenced by the rows of white crosses in scores of foreign fields and the thousands of fatherless homes across the broad Dominion.

Records Topple in Massive Push

Hamilton's industrial contribution, the sweat in Churchill's trinity formula for victory, was magnificent, for records set in World War I were toppled in World War II. Wherever men fought and died, on battlefields from one end of the world to the other, in the air or on the sea, there were to be found Hamilton-produced material and equipment. The city was a vast arsenal from which poured in an ever-increasing torrent a flood of arms, shells, radar parts, armoured car hulls, bomb sights, precision instruments of all types, Bofors, 3.7 anti-aircraft guns, and a host of other vital products far too numerous to mention. And, at the last, parts for the dread atom bomb were made in this city. Long before the war ended, Hamilton production was so great that no list of the greatest industrial cities in the world was complete without the inclusion of this city. The praise for this tremendous work goes to two groups in particular—courageous, intelligent, far-sighted executives, and skilled, faithful, hard-working labour.

Going back briefly to the First Great War, we find that Canada started shell-making in 1915, when a number of small orders were received from Britain. Soon, how-

ever, became greater and plants were expanded to take care of the growing demand of a Europe inundated with blood. In all a total of some 60 million shells was made in Canada from 1915 to 1918 at a cost of about \$1,200,000,000. Here again Hamilton set records, records which are still a part of her proud history.

Iron Industry Leaped Ahead

Her industrial effort was such that the Hamilton steel and iron industry rose among Canada's manufacturing group from fifth to second place. It has been said that the first war solidified this city's industrial prosperity. Be it as it may, she continued to grow in such a way as to astonish her Canadian neighbours, for even in the midst of the darkest days of the depression new industries came within her borders, attracted by her cheap power, excellent rail, water and highway transportation and by her skilful city budgets. The democracies were unprepared for war when the Huns launched their attacks on Poland in 1939 so that Hamilton, like all other industrial cities, was far from ready to switch to the complex task of turning out instruments of destruction. But this unpreparedness was physical only, for mentally local industrialists were wide-awake and eager to do their share and

more in converting to war production. They were, as a matter of fact, much quicker to act than the Canadian Government, with the result that many local executives hurried overseas to obtain contracts and blueprints from the British. Then they hurried back to start the tremendously difficult task of translating these ideas into actualities.

Armoured Car Designed Here

An example of the ingenuity and patriotism of local citizens is to be found by recalling that the first Canadian armoured car was designed and built in this city by a group of citizens who ignored warnings that it could not be done. They succeeded and as a consequence armoured car hulls were eventually produced in huge numbers.

The transformation in Hamilton from a peace to a war basis industry was staggeringly swift, thanks to the splendid co-operation between management and labour. In 1939 local industry employed some 30,000 men and produced manufactured products to the value of \$153,000,000. Then new plants sprang up like mushrooms seemingly overnight; somehow the necessary skilled labour was obtained and assembly lines started to roll.

Within three years the number of men employed in Hamilton industry more than doubled, while the value of the products soared well beyond the \$400,000,000 mark. Women from the country and from neighbouring provinces swept in on the city. For the most part they were untrained. Here then was an obstacle that had to be surmounted. It was.

No Obstacle Too Difficult

Technical classes were quickly organized and soon hundreds and more hundreds of men and women took their places on assembly lines that had been drawn up. But there were other problems, material shortages by no means the least. But even here, somehow, despite the disputes, the refusals, the smoke continued to pour from Hamilton stacks, the trains, the ships, the trucks continued to radiate out of Hamilton bearing mounds of precious war goods that helped to put muscle on the sinews of war.

As such a war production problem as the training of labour and plans and contracts, was the fact that thousands of her young men had left for active service, Hamilton saw many more thousands pour in from outlying points to work in the plants. The houses, the emergency shelters were erected by Wartime Housing, houses vacant for years were once more in use. But still the cry for more homes continued to rise. That cry has not yet been fully answered, but despite the

Both First and Second Great Wars took their toll from among the loyal members of the Spectator staff who volunteered their services with the armed forces. It was a tragic coincidence that all three publishers of the newspaper, William Southam and his partner, William Carey, during the First Great War, and F. I. Ker, C.B.E., during the Second Great War, should each lose a son in the conflict. The first three officers in the above sequence were killed in the 1914-18 conflict, the second two in the 1939-45 conflict. They are, from left to right, Major Gordon H. Southam, R.C.A.; Lieut. William V. Carey, 19th Battalion, and Lieut. Harry Adie, Royal Flying Corps. All were killed in 1916. Fourth from the left is Sub-Lieut. Frederick Ker, R.C.N.V.S., killed in convoy escort duty at sea in 1940, and next, Pilot Officer Robert Eber, R.C.A.F., who lost his life in operations over enemy territory in December, 1944.

discomforts, the heartaches, the lack of housing. Despite illnesses that accompany inadequate housing, men and women continued to work and produce. As has been pointed out, management had its troubles with re-tooling, lack of skilled workers, shortages of materials—the problems that come with tremendous expansion, but labour, too, had its difficulties. Aside from housing there was the question of wages and living costs. Wages were good, especially when compared to pre-war days, but money did not stretch nearly as far, particularly in view of higher taxation. Prices, too, rose, although price control had worked better in Canada than in any other of the United Nations. But despite the demand for

higher wages, the annoyances of wage controls and selective service, Hamilton, one of the biggest producers in the Dominion, set a no-strike record that was the envy of the nation. Some strikes there were, but they were not many, they did not last long, and they did not cripple the prosecution of the war.

The over-all picture of the relation between capital and labour can best be described by the word co-operation. There was no dearth of enterprise and courage on the part of capital, or of skill, patience, courage and steadfastness on the part of labour.

Statistics make dry reading and astronomical production figures will play no part in this brief re-

view, but the fact that Hamilton produced more than half the annual steel tonnage in Canada will illustrate vividly this city's contribution, for what was true of steel was true of a host of other materials.

Thus did Hamilton turn out her men and her women and her produce and her money—for this city's donations to war charities and her investment in bond drives, was unequalled in all Canada. What the future will bring, industrially speaking, no one can know with certainty. But one can be sure that if the future is met with the courage and faith and enterprise that was shown in the immediate past, this city will surmount any difficulty and enter at last the broad avenues of peace and prosperity.

Hamilton Meets Challenge

(Continued from Preceding Page)

It is difficult to trace the Hamilton men, because, while No. 119 Bomber Squadron had vital coastal work to carry out, there were no Hamilton designations abroad until No. 424, City of Hamilton Tiger Squadron, was adopted while operating in the Mediterranean theatre. Until the summer of 1943, however, and with the exception of the period immediately after Dieppe, Hamilton's casualties were essentially air force.

Some were lost out of Malta, flying wired-up old Wellingtons; some in the efforts to halt Rommel; to hinder the flow of his supplies, or, eventually, to harass him in his retreat from Alamein. A number of fighter pilots went down in Italy, but all this while, the greatest toll was being taken of those in the Lanks and Halifaxes, hammering away at the occupied coast, at Wilhelmshaven, the Rhineland and Ruhr.

Some of the "lucky" ones went down over the North Sea or the English channel to be tossed about on a dispersal centre and as a training school for veterans. The school was opened in June, 1941, by Hon. J. L. Ralston, then Minister of National Defence, and its thousands of graduates kept Canadian tanks on the move through Italy, across France and the Low Countries to Germany.

Major trades training centre for the Canadian army was the Canadian Army Trades School, Kenilworth avenue north, still known by that name but given over now as a dispersal centre and as a training school for veterans. The school was opened in June, 1941, by Hon. J. L. Ralston, then Minister of National Defence, and its thousands of graduates kept Canadian tanks on the move through Italy, across France and the Low Countries to Germany.

When the R.C.N.V.R. Division under Cdr. John McFetrick had attracted the attention of naval authorities by its steady "production" of recruits, work began on the new ship Star in Eastwood Park. The ship was "launched" in October, 1943, by Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, then Minister for Naval Service, who, on that date, and in the company of the late

chief of naval staff, paid tribute to the "yeoman service of the men of Star" and to the recruiting staffs which had already enlisted 5,000 all ranks and trades. It was about this time that peak production had been touched in the factories, tests at the Beach road and lake ranges of the Proof Establishment had hit new highs, and airmen received wings at district air stations in the greatest numbers during the war.

Constant Output Of Navy Recruits

Hamilton was literally surrounded by training stations under the mighty Commonwealth training plan. At Mount Hope, the establishment was No. 33 Air Navigation School (R.A.F.) and there were R.C.A.F. stations at

Hagersville (No. 16 S.F.T.S.), Jarvis (No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery), Dunnville (No. 6 S.F.T.S.), Brantford (No. 5 S.F.T.S.), and St. Catharines, which had an elementary flying training school.

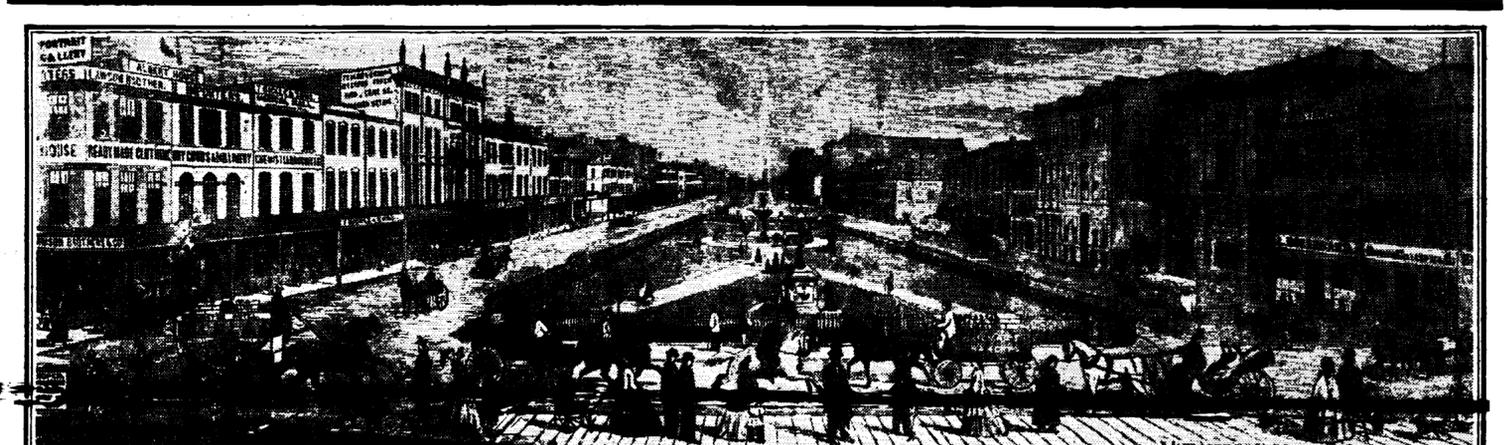
Into the montage that was the district war scene goes a Bofors gun, coming off the line at the Otis Fenson plant; the heavy guns at the west-end Westinghouse; the armoured car and the parades of the volunteer civil guard; the stories of decorations won, which interspersed the flow of casualties; the proving grounds pumping away 25-pounders and cracking half the plaster in Burlington; the boys in the military hospital having a sun bath; distinguished visitors inspecting the war prisoners' parcel plant; the Victory Loan drives and the Hollywood stars who gave their time to help put them over; the Young and Daley divisions, air force convalescent hospitals being opened; a "wings" parade; women knitting and sewing; an interview with a frigate survivor; watching the stretchers come down from a troop train; hearing the pipes skirl and brass blare as the men marched home.

City Is Proud Of War Effort

There is no file in the garrison or at Ottawa, giving a final tally on the Hamilton boys who enlisted. Some enlisted in Toronto, or were taken there for documentation after passing their medical tests here. And so the figure of 20,000, while an estimate, is a conservative one. The figure of 4,000 casualties is an estimate too, but not so conservative. Besides the enlistment and casualty toll, the effort can be measured by decorations won, by the production in the plants, the Victory Loan subscriptions and the generous giving to many voluntary war charities.

Hamilton Circled By Air Stations

As Hamiltonians and their fighting sons know, it was a magnificent effort which reached out everywhere, allowing in the diversity of its program of some assistance from every one.



THE GORE, HAMILTON, CANADA WEST.



SIX years after Hamilton became a city — 15 years before Canada became a Dominion — Hamilton's oldest wholesale grocery company was founded in 1852 by the late W. P. McLaren ... this was before the day of packaging for merchandise. Sugar, currants and prunes came in hogsheads, there was a soda cracker barrel in the corner and a barrel of whiskey with a tin dipper for the thirsty teamsters. In 1876 the late St. Clair Balfour became a partner under the firm name of Brown, Balfour & Co. with the late Adam Brown. With the opening of the West, the firm pioneered in shipments to its growing communities, using sail to Port Arthur, rail to Brandon (then the end of steel) and onward by ox train. Tartan Brand became known from coast to coast. When steel finally reached Vancouver, the first cargo of tea from the Orient was brought by the all-rail route. Dried fruits were sold direct to Holland and Germany, the company maintaining an agency in London. To-day, 92 years later, Balfours Limited continues its sturdy growth, independent in an age of combines and mergers, serving the Ontario communities; importing, distributing and supplying fine quality groceries and tobaccos.

In 1861 ... Gore Park looked like this and the warehouse of Brown, Gillespie & Co., now Balfours Limited, occupied the southwest corner where the Birks Building now stands. Subsequently the firm moved to the site now occupied by the Bank of Toronto, then to 72 McNab north and finally to its present building, 73 McNab north.

Down the Years .
 1852-1860 W. P. McLaren
 1860-1868 Brown, Gillespie & Co.
 1868-1876 Brown, Routh & Co.
 1876-1892 Brown, Balfour & Co.
 1892-1906 Balfour & Co.
 1906-1928 Balfour, Smye & Co.
 1928- Balfours Limited



and RED FEATHER BRAND

Balfours Ltd.

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