

Local veteran endured living in trenches, facing snipers and malaria

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tion that was available since the last tourist had been there before the war. The information was to be used by the 1st Armoured Brigade, so they could cope with the conditions as they began the invasion (of Sicily)."

The orders were all packed in colour-coded bags and Rollinson was responsible for delivering them to Scotland before the invasion.

Upon completion of his assignment in London, Rollinson was promoted to Corporal Intelligence Ontario Regiment and returned to his regiment, now stationed in Hawick, Scotland.

"I was back three days before we sailed, on June 21, 1943," said Rollinson, "We left Wynn's Bay Scotland in LST (Landing Ship Tank) #200, with 18 tanks, 10 trucks and 150 troops, to meet a convoy en route to Sicily."

Moving at five knots, the convoy made its way in an uneventful sea crossing, except for one incident when they were almost sunk by a German sub in the Mediterranean east of Malta. The invasion did take place July 10, as the Canadian, British and American troops started the long journey liberating Sicily and later Italy.

Rollinson's LST landed at Siracusa, Sicily, July 12, executing a dry landing eight miles from the harbour.

"It was fairly quiet when we landed there," said Rollinson, "I only saw a few enemy planes overhead."

It was soon after Rollinson saw his first German Tiger tank, considered to be one of the most formidable weapons the Germans had. It was burned out, but still looked impressive.

"The Tiger (tank) was so huge, so impressive," said Rollinson, "Those 88's (88 mm guns) on them were simply unreal—they could inflict so much damage."

It was at the same time Rollinson witnessed the unfortunate incident of one of his regiment's medical officers, who got tangled up in barbed wire, and the barbed wire was also tangled in a tank. The poor fellow was almost torn apart when the tank advanced, receiving extensive damage to his legs and back.

"You don't forget something as graphic as that," said



Ed Rollinson's military photo. The local veteran spent more than four years fighting overseas.

Rollinson, "It stays with you forever."

Fighting in Sicily in August was a tough job, with the daytime temperatures reaching 110F to 116F.

"Many troops were sick," said Rollinson, "They came down with dysentery, and the cooks were even too sick to cook. There was a lack of drinking water, and all in all it was a pretty bad scene."

By August 18, the Sicilian campaign was over, the Germans had escaped to mainland Italy. Sicily was now in Allied hands.

"We entered Italy September 3, after heavy shelling from our naval guns," said Rollinson, "We landed at Cannitello with no opposition, and moved north to

Reggio di Calabria, which is located on the mainland at the 'toe' of Italy.

"It was tough going, moving up the narrow steep roads, but the Germans had left the Italian army ready to surrender—which they did September 8."

With tanks and a few trucks, Rollinson's squadron began the impossible task of traveling about 200 miles by road, railway tracks, any way possible, to get to Potenza and Foggia, to a main German air base that controlled the Mediterranean.

"We had to take that air base," said Rollinson, "To lose it meant to lose control of the Mediterranean."

Three weeks later, Rollinson and his squadron stood in the harbour at Manfredonia, to await the arrival of the other two squadrons of his regiment by sea. They had been swamped by sea water, and lost some equipment in the process.

Fighting through Italy in the fall, Rollinson's squadron pushed to Ortona and finally captured it December 28, 1943.

"I had lived in a trench that whole time, including Christmas Day," said Rollinson, "But we (the Canadians) had finally taken Ortona."

It became a different kind of warfare for Rollinson, street fighting, house to house fighting, never knowing where the next shot was coming from.

"It put shivers up my spine," said Rollinson, "There were snipers everywhere and we never knew where they were."

Rollinson developed malaria in February of '44, and was hospitalized, returning to his unit in May 1944, this time as a Lance Sergeant. At Cassino, he was stationed with Ghurka and Sikh troops, who Rollinson called 'extremely effective fighters' and after four days at Cassino, they had taken it as well.

By early June, they were outside of Rome, and the Germans had retreated, leaving it an open city.

"We stopped outside of Roma (Rome) and let the Americans walk in to take the glory," said Rollinson, "It was June 4, two days before D-Day and as a result, all

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