

NEWS RELEASE

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Canadian victory at battle of Kap'yong gets long-overdue attention

World War II recruiting in Guelph, POW escape story also covered in **Canadian Military History**

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WATERLOO – The Battle of the Kap'yong River was the most successful engagement fought by Canadians in Korea – earning Canada its only U.S. Distinguished Unit Citation – yet it has received little scholarly attention within our own borders. The spring issue of *Canadian Military History*, released today, attempts to address this gap by explaining how a lone battalion held Hill 677 against a much larger Chinese force.

Military historian Brent Watson attributes the success of the Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry's (2 PPCLI) to a number of factors. The Second World War experiences of the senior officers and the battalion's pre-battle training program prepared them for fighting on mountainous terrain. The battalion soldiers also benefited from high morale and significant supporting fire, while the Chinese failed to co-ordinate and press the attack.

"By emphasizing the tactical concepts of company 'islands' and all-round defence in Korea's mountainous terrain, [Lieutenant-Colonel James] Stone prepared his battalion for precisely the type of engagement it fought on Hill 677," says Watson. "It is not surprising that 2 PPCLI's morale remained high throughout the fight for Hill 677."

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The retention of Hill 677 in April 1951 made an important contribution to the Commonwealth victory at Kap'yong. In recognition of the battalion's part in holding back the Chinese offensive in central Korea, the Patricia's were awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation from the President of the United States. The PPCLI are the only Canadian unit to earn this honor.

Other stories in this issue of *Canadian Military History* include:

- A study of 52 Canadian soldiers and the life-long impact of the First World War on their health. The study — which focuses on soldiers from the 34th Battalion, a Waterloo-county unit, used personnel records from the National Archives, pension records from the Department of Veterans, personal letters, obituaries and funeral home files — concludes that the war's toll on this group of soldiers did not end in 1918 and "was nothing short of horrific."
- A look at how the city of Guelph, Ontario was affected by and responded to recruiting practices during the first 18 months of the Second World War. Supply often exceeded demand and the mobilization of Guelph's military resources was a direct reflection of the federal government's war policy. Guelph is an excellent example of how international events and political decisions at the highest levels can have a dramatic impact on a particular community.
- A personal account of a World War II Canadian soldier's escape from German soldiers after the invasion of *Festung Europa* and his three-month journey to safety. After jumping from a train and dodging German search parties, the soldier found refuge with a number of French civilians and resistance fighters, eventually being turned over to American allies and flown to England.

Canadian Military History is published quarterly by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. The journal is jointly funded by the Centre and by the Department of National Defence, and has a circulation of over 1300 copies each issue.

To get a review copy of *Canadian Military Journal*, members of the media can contact Mike Bechthold at mbechtho@wlu.ca or 519-884-0710 ext. 4594.