

CANADIAN UNITS FINALLY REACH END OF LONG ROAD

(By Douglas Amaron, Canadian Press
War Correspondent)

With the Canadians in Germany, May 7.—(CP Cable)—Canadian soldiers marched through German streets to-day to the end of a road they first trod 11 months ago on the bloody beaches of Normandy.

From Bernieres-sur-Mer to the bomb-ravaged North sea naval base of Emden came the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders of Cornwall, Ont., proud, happy and humble. From other beaches to other ports and towns in northwest Germany came other Canadians, Poles and Britons of Gen. Crerar's army.

The western war ended for these soldiers at 8 a.m. Saturday, when the cease-fire sounded all along this front. But the reality of the day for which they had all waited didn't strike home until Sunday, when they saw what the peace means.

All Fight Gone

The Germans—who, two days ago, were fighting as hard as they ever fought—stood passively by the road, watching the Canadian columns stream by. Some were still armed but all the fight was gone out of them.

The formality of the surrender of 30,000 Germans holed up in the Emden-Wilhelmshaven peninsula and the Frisian islands was completed at 8 p.m. Saturday, in the resort town of Bad Zwischenah, eight miles west of Oldenburg.

German Is Late

Lieut.-Gen. G. G. Simonds, of Kingston, Ont., commander of the 2nd Canadian Corps, and German Gen. Eric von Straube signed the agreement in the presence of senior officers of the corps and the commanders of the five divisions under Simonds' command when the campaign ended.

The conference was scheduled for 5 p.m., but Von Straube was 40 minutes late, and Simonds and his senior officers paced one of the resort's gardens waiting.

The Germans were escorted to the meeting by four members of the Canadian Provost Corps, under Sgt. Chick Thompson, of Welland, Ont.

Brig. Jim Roberts, of Toronto, the Canadian mediator in negotiating the surrender, came with Von Straube.

The German general was a slight, stern-looking officer wearing a fawn uniform with red lapels under a long greatcoat. His high-brimmed cap was trimmed with several rows of gold braid.

Newspapermen were not admitted to the conference, but it was understood Von Straube was

most co-operative.
The meeting lasted two hours. Then the German returned to his own headquarters, about 90 miles away. Roberts accompanied him as far as the German lines.

Leader Refuses

The preliminary negotiations had been proceeding since early on Thursday when a prominent civilian from Aurich and a uniformed German Red Cross officer came to the forward positions of the Queen's Own Rifles, of Toronto.

They met Roberts, commander of the 8th Infantry Brigade, and told him the garrison and civilians of Aurich wanted to surrender, but the garrison commander had refused. They asked if the Canadians would enter the town secretly under their guidance, and expressed belief the enemy commander would not fight if the town were occupied in that manner.

Roberts, telling about the meeting, related:

"I told them I wouldn't risk one Canadian soldier's life at this stage of the war, and explained we had enough equipment to pound them into submission if they wouldn't surrender unconditionally."

The brigadier, however, agreed to hold his artillery fire until the following day, and told the Germans he would listen to further representations until then. If nothing more were heard, the Canadian guns would smash the town.

Has Queer Feeling

On the stroke of noon, Friday a German colonel bearing a white flag came to the Queen's Own positions and Roberts agreed to go to Aurich to discuss terms. That afternoon he jeeped and walked along a muddy, cratered road to the German-held town, accepting and returning the salutes of enemy soldiers.

"It was a very queer feeling," he said.

A temporary cease-fire order was arranged to allow Roberts to pass through the lines, but the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment of Newcastle, on the left flank had not been advised and was probing forward with Bren guns blazing. A German officer on that sector of the front was "quite annoyed," but did not return the fire.

When Roberts got to Aurich, the garrison commander said he was not at liberty to negotiate after all because Allied authorities were discussing with Admiral Doenitz a much broader surrender. He asked if Roberts would consider Aurich an open city if the German troops withdrew to its outskirts, but Roberts said "No."

"I left at 5 o'clock, after being there since noon," said Roberts. "I warned the commander we'd march in at 7 o'clock the next morning, and if one shot were fired we were going to level the place."

While he was making out his report to divisional headquarters, a radio announcement was heard, reporting a cease-fire order would be effective on the entire 21st Army Group front the following morning.

Held Services

The end of the fighting left the Canadians somewhat breathless. They had waited a long time for the peace, yet when it came they scarcely knew what to do.

Roberts probably summed up the feeling as well as any one when he said:

"I feel more like going to church than celebrating."

Some units, including the Queen's Own, did hold church services yesterday.

"It came as such a shock I nearly fell off my chair," said Pte. Joseph Stockl, of Hamilton, Ont., and Sydney, N.S.

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