Moving Mountains: The No. 2 Construction Battalion and African Canadian Experience During the First World War

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Description:
Excerpt from introduction: “This thesis will help clarify the history of racism in the CEF by exploring the enlistment issues, training, and overseas experience of the men who served in the No. 2 CB. A number of sources focus on the struggle to enlist because of the racism experienced by African Canadians; but they say little about the experience of African Canadians when they served overseas. Among the most significant studies of the No. 2 CB is Calvin Ruck’s book which provides a brief overview of the battalion. It is essentially a commemorative work, thus its most valuable section includes summaries and quotes from interviews Ruck performed with members of the battalion before they died. The most extensive scholarly study is Seen Flynn Flynn’s Master’s thesis, which focuses mainly on the recruitment of African Canadians in the No. 2 CB and the key personalities involved with the formation of the unit. Neither of these important works explore the unit’s overseas experience in appreciable detail. James W. St. G. Walker’s work examines how racism affected the enlistment of visible minorities in the CEF as a whole, including the enlistment of African Canadians. Finally, John G. Armstrong’s essay provides a brief analysis of resistance to the enlistment of African Canadians, and the subsequent overseas service of the No. 2 CB. However, neither Walker nor Armstrong analyze the degree to which racist attitudes changed over the duration of the war, particularly with respect to contrasting service conditions in Canada and France. Primary sources for this study include the content of No. 2 CB’s official war diary, the routine orders of No. 5 District, Canadian Forestry Corps, Jura Group, and the soldiers’ service records. These documents were not employed as extensively in earlier studies of the No. 2 CB. In addition, this thesis analyzes Reverend Captain William Andrew White’s personal war diary, a source that was not utilized previously in scholarship regarding No. 2 CB.”

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During the Second World War, the North African Campaign took place in North Africa from 10 June 1940 to 13 May 1943. It included campaigns fought in the Libyan and Egyptian deserts (Western Desert Campaign, also known as the Desert War) and in Morocco and Algeria (Operation Torch) and Tunisia (Tunisia Campaign). The Canadian field hospital was overworked, so had no time to try to save the arm amputation being the only recourse. Unfortunately noting that he was South African, they sent him to the South African field hospital, where he was the first ‘customer’ so they had plenty of time to save it. The horrible scar was evident in an old family photo. During World War II, many South Africans saw military service. Introduction SIDNEY ASTER. War as a National Experience. THEODORE ROPP. The Second World War as a National Experience. Canada C.P. STACEY. A curious Lack of Proportion: Canadian Business and the War. ROBERT BOTHWELL. Britain and the Politics of Social Patriotism. PAUL ADDISON. As the Second World War recedes in time and further into history, the obsession with that conflict alarmingly intensifies. Popular accounts, particularly of World War II, multiply to satisfy a growing market. During the war Canadian society matured, its industrial structure expanded and diversified, and its international status rose. In contrast, Norway of course collapsed under the German assault and the nation’s industries were totally upended. World War II: The Allied Invasion of Europe. Canadian soldiers land on Courseulles Beach in Normandy, on June 6, 1944 as Allied forces storm the Normandy beaches on D-Day. June 6, 1944. Title / Titre: Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in a transit camp staging area before D-Day, England. June 1944 / Parachutistes du 1er bataillon canadien de parachutistes dans une zone de transit avant le Jour J, Angleterre, juin 1944 Creator(s) / Créateur(s): Seargent Elmer R. Bonier Date(s) / Date(s): circa June 1-5, 1944 / vers 1-15 juin 1944 Reference. No / Wartime Canada is a window into the Canadian experience during the First and Second World Wars. Take a step back in time. Pinterest.