

Transportation Vital Function of U.S. Army at Rupert

FAREWELL TO YANKS

Prince Rupert Daily News

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COASTIES' ASSIGNMENT UNUSUAL

BY A COAST GUARDSMAN

One of the first Coast Guardsmen to supervise the loading of ammunition ships at the Watson Island back-up storage dump arrived in Prince Rupert just a few more than a year ago. It was an unusual assignment for sailors were to work for and live in army messes and eat in army messes.

It was soon discovered that 50 men were not enough to handle the 24-hour job assigned to them and more were requisitioned until the strength of the Coast Guard Explosive Loading Detachment reached the 100 mark.

The fine work displayed at this loading depot and co-operation of the services is evident in that no serious accidents occurred during the time they worked together. During their operation here, the Coast Guardsmen and their commander, Lt. Jg W. C. Greer, have received many commendations from the Army and from units

operating in the South Pacific for the orderly manner in which the ammunition ships were loaded.

In January of this year, a box car of ammunition caught fire, and, without a moment's hesitation, two Coasties and a soldier leaped into the car and with great danger to themselves, extinguished the blaze and prevented what might have been a major catastrophe. For this, Henry Buxton, Spic, and Jack Rediger, Slc, were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, and Sgt. David Nevins, the Soldiers' Medal.

Million-and-Half Tons Of Freight Handled Here

How Port Was Utilized to Move War Supplies to North and West

By Major Marion G. Stewart Jr.
Port Transportation Officer

The Transportation Division of the Prince Rupert Sub-Port of Embarkation came into being the morning of March 26, 1942, with the docking of the good ship Eli DOG Hoyle. As the ship hove to the ocean dock, the lines were thrown out, one being caught by Colonel Fred W. Adams and the other by Lt. George E. Mack II, who were the only persons to greet three civilians, Ray Nickelson, Bob Devlin, Ed Writer, and one very down-hearted second lieutenant, myself.

Our little group was given a corner in the hanging office on the Ocean Dock and we set about to requisition everything necessary to set up a Port of Embarkation. This was promptly done by M/Sgt. McCurdy and M/Sgt. Bequette. Between the two of them my first month was spent continually signing requisitions. At this time the Transportation

Division was part of the Quartermaster Corps.

It was not long after our arrival that things really started to move, as the Engineers were busy building the Alaska Highway, Canal Project, Port Edward Staging Area and our own installation.

We also assumed the duties of the Troop Movement Division. It was my pleasure to meet all trains and boats and welcome the fellows upon their arrival. One incident that remains

clear in my memory was the arrival of the 139th QM Truck Company. I don't know which I was more glad to see, the personnel or their trucks. I didn't realize then that Capt. John "Doe" Hill, Company Commander, would later on assume my Troop Movement duties.

In May, 1942, the Transportation Corps was divorced from the Quartermaster and we moved to Boston Cafe Building. During our stay in the Dominion Building, the site now occupied by the Administration Building was being cleared of solid rock, and with each blast of dynamite the Dominion Building rocked and shuddered and then settled back on its joists—practically front line fire! The building was finally completed in April 1943, and we moved to our present location.

The history of the Transportation Division would not be complete without mentioning the railway officials who played a major part in accomplishing anything we set out to do. It was through the efforts of George A. Gray, superintendent, and C. A. Berner, assistant superintendent, that we were able to use our Army locomotives to perform the necessary switching. They also secured permission for us to erect temporary crossings and erect buildings on railway property that enabled us to do the job then required. At times, buildings and crossing were installed at night and permission requested later. This would sometimes draw a few harsh-spoken words which were soon forgotten when Mr. Gray was reminded that he was born in the States and, "what could

you expect from a bunch of Yankees?" The Transportation Division at this time was expanding so rapidly that it would be hard to recall incidents of interest without excluding some one or something.

For those who have an eye for statistics, the Transportation Division unloaded more than 20,000 cars, shipped more than 5,000 cars, and handled a total of almost a million and a half tons of freight during its stay in Prince Rupert. This could not have been accomplished without the co-operation of our many Canadian and American civilian employees, military personnel, and the Canadian National Railways.

Commander of troops on Acropolis Hill is Lt.-Colonel Eugene J. McNamara.

Near Acropolis Hill . . .

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International understanding is a form of spiritual brightness which must shine on the paths of nations in the coming years of peace.

It is only by "knowing the other fellow" that this understanding can be achieved.

In Prince Rupert these last three years we have had the opportunity to form those personal friendships with the Americans which are the basis of international good will. These, we are sure, will be cherished both by Prince Rupert people and their American friends.

"Come Again, Americans"

This message sponsored by

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Largest Single Operation—

WATER DIVISION PUT 3000 SHIPS THRU PORT

Thirty-five days after the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, the first Army Transport vessel sailed from Prince Rupert. Aboard her were men and materials to bolster the practically non-existent northern defences of the continent. Since that day in January 1942, more than 3,000 vessels have put out

Nerve Centre—

SIGNALS DID GREAT WORK

Most Specialized Branch of Service at Sub-Port of Embarkation Here

Highly technical, the Port Signal Office, under the supervision of Captain Leonard E. Nossor of Rockford, Illinois, formerly connected with Bell Telephone, is the most specialized branch of the Prince Rupert Sub-Port of Embarkation. The unit is composed of telephone, teletype, crypto, radio, photo and film technicians and has played an important part in the successful completion of the mission of the port.

From a half-dozen old, wooden box telephones of ancient vintage, a 1918-model "applebox" switchboard and 20 hastily-strung wires to Acropolis Hill, the telephone exchange has been developed into a vital nerve centre of the port. Co-operation of the city telephone exchange was largely responsible for efficient operation of port communications until equipment and materials could be procured to instal an army network of 250 miles of wire and more than 50,000 feet of cable.

Two years after the arrival of the first troops in Prince Rupert there were more than 650 telephones on Army lines as well as direct lines to the Canadian Army, Navy and city exchanges. Telephone operators were handling more than 1,000 calls an hour. With this rapid growth of the exchange, the staff of five original operators — Mrs. Rhea Morris, Miss Joan Watt, Miss Ruby Lindsay, Miss Bea Didrickson and Mrs. Elsie Husoy — soon reached a total of twenty in the offices at Prince Rupert, and Port Edward, Miss Phil Murray of Prince Rupert being the chief operator.

The Signal Centre and Radio Operations expanded rapidly during the early days of the Sub-Port until traffic reached its peak in August 1944. At that time more than 10,000 messages were going through the teletypes each month. Activities in radio operation have steadily decreased but ship to shore radio service is still maintained.

An extensive training film library is maintained by the Signal Office. These films are used extensively by Canadian forces in this area as well as Sub-Port personnel and transient personnel clearing through Port Edward. At one time attendance figures ran as high as ten thousand monthly.

The photo-lab was established in April 1942 and provided a pictorial record of operations of the Sub-Port. Photographers Sgt. Audley Allison and Sgt. Alex Stepick were largely responsible

from the Prince Rupert Sub-Port of Embarkation.

The million or so tons of equipment and supplies and the thousands of passengers these vessels transported built up Arctic defence, aided in flinging the Japanese from their hold in the Aleutians and provided the punch, in the way of bombs and bullets, for our air armadas in the Pacific. This was the task accomplished by the Water Division of this U. S. Army Port of Embarkation.

The first office of the Water Division (then Army Transport Service) was a "two-by-four" affair staffed with a half dozen employees and located on one small corner of the Ocean Dock. In less than two years the division was the largest single operation of the port, employing almost 600 people. Some of the first employees still with the Water Division are Mrs. Catherine Fraser, of 222 Fifth Avenue West, and Allan E. Crawford, employed as assistant port steward. Mrs. Millicent Collins of 201 Eighth Avenue East was honored for her long and meritorious service by the port commander last June, shortly before she retired.

Under the guidance of Major William T. Fisher and Major William F. Naumann, the Water Division embraces a wide field of activity. Vessels of all classes are serviced and repaired by the marine repair section. As many as 50 vessels have been repaired in a single month. It also includes the operation of the Annette-Ketchikan shuttle service, the seaplane float, ammunition loading at Watson Island, cargo operations and dock operations.

Coastguard Thanks Port Personnel

Lt. Greer and his officers and men of the Coastguard are grateful to Colonel Mellom, his staff and the personnel attached to the Prince Rupert Sub-Port of Embarkation and say that it has been an honor to work with them through the final stages of the war. Especial thanks are also given for the warm hospitality accorded by the many fine citizens of Prince Rupert.

Port Edward Theatre Seats 1000 Persons

The post theatre of the Prince Rupert staging area at Port Edward will seat more than 1,000 people. The theatre is equipped with the latest sound, projection and lighting equipment.

for the processing and printing of some 30,000 photographs and 20,000 identification pictures taken during the past three years. The lab has worked in close conjunction with various branches of the Canadian Armed Services.

The Alaska Department maintains a liaison office in Prince Rupert under the direction of Major James H. Cowan.

Salute to THE AMERICANS!

To the American soldiers and civilians who served during the war in this strategic city goes full honor for their share in their country's mighty contribution to Victory.



We in Prince Rupert were glad of your presence during the dark days of the Japanese advance, and now, in Victory, we say:

"Thank You, Americans."

We look forward to seeing you again as visitors during the coming years of Peace. You will always be welcome.

WATTS & NICKERSON

532 THIRD AVENUE

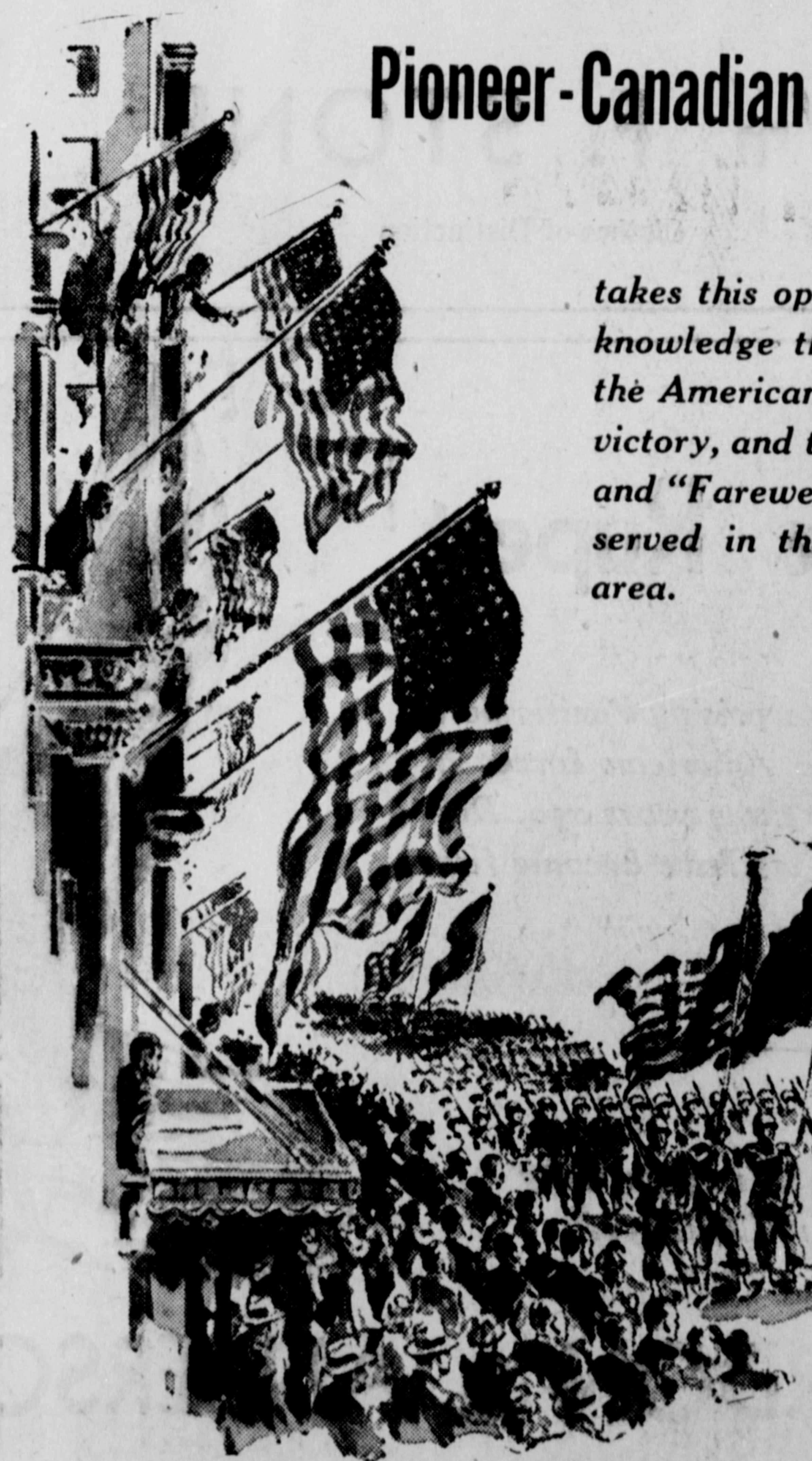
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takes this opportunity to acknowledge the greatness of the American contribution to victory, and to say "Thanks" and "Farewell" to those who served in the Prince Rupert area.



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