

## **Strong Spirits: A 1941 Court Martial Case of Canadian Sappers in England Who Decided to Shoot Up the Town**

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This paper presents the story of two Canadian sappers Lorne Long and Maurice Francis Flynn, who were stationed in England in February of 1941. In the true spirit of a hard days' night, these sappers went pub crawling, got drunk, and decided to grab a rifle and shoot up the nearby town. When their bunkmate overheard the conversation, he reported it to their Lance Corporal, also drunk at the time, who in turn tried to apprehend them in the dark English countryside. Sapper Long did not like that and shot at him five times, missing every shot. Armed with a flashlight, the intoxicated Lance Corporal returned to the garrison garage and attempted to commandeer a truck for the manhunt. A sober captain stepped in and stopped him. The next morning, the hungover Long woke up in the woods as a stray dog was licking his face. He walked back, passed the guards without a problem, missed the formation while cleaning his rifle, and was promptly arrested. Looking at this incident through courts martial files and related documents, we will reconstruct the events and characters involved and try to understand why these men could behave like this only twenty years after prohibition.

The actions of the sappers and their subsequent trial only constitute the nucleus of our story. This event resulted in an unusual set of circumstances. Paradoxically, it also defined the usual, expected behaviour of 1940s enlisted men. This paper will conduct a bottom–up analysis, by narrating the core and the layers around the trial, which in the end will form a metaphorical onion. Surrounding the core event is the discovery of legal, political, and socio–cultural layers. The “onion” represents the microcosm of wartime behaviour by Canadian enlisted men, opening a window into the world of strict regulations that balance army tradition with combat efficiency.

The manner of the sappers' trial illuminates relaxed attitudes towards drunk and disorderly behaviour in the wartime Canadian Army, as opposed to the similar charges that appear alike to the modern reader.<sup>1</sup> Different purposes of military law can be seen, as opposed to civilian law enforcement and priorities. To put things in perspective, the prohibition movement swept the country twenty years earlier, invoking a stark image of alcohol consumption. The Canadian Army of 1941 was deeply concerned with the morale of their soldiers, regimenting their behaviour, and creating a disciplinary framework for a middle–class officer corp.

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<sup>1</sup> Having reviewed hundreds of courts martial cases, it is difficult to establish consistency in sentencing. However, it is my opinion that drunken behaviour was met with a degree of understanding, as opposed to showing to the formation with a messy kit, or even minor cases of absence without leave.

One layer around our core event is the discipline and morale of a 1940s Canadian soldier. The *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale* was a handbook written a year after our trial, listing physiological impulse control mechanisms for junior officers, so they could control the soldiers under their command. Topics like sexual abstinence or lack of appetite were discussed in detail, but there was scarce mention of alcohol consumption. Drunkenness was only mentioned twice, mostly as a by-product of boredom.<sup>2</sup> There were no recommended steps to moderate alcohol consumption since it was seen as a natural outlet for soldiers. As a result, there were no mechanisms to discourage drunken behaviour since it was understood separately from misbehaviour and boredom. In our case study, only the third, alternative charge was associated with drunkenness and was promptly disregarded by the court.<sup>3</sup>

From our modern perspective, the incident is curious. The judge and the prosecution did not take note that almost all officers were absent at the time of the crime for a significant period, and every key witness was intoxicated, including the Lance Corporal himself. He intended to commandeer a truck while drunk and chase down the other two men while being cheered on by the whole company. This is when his captain showed up to stop the Lance Corporal. This captain was also the head of the prosecution that vouched for the good character of both defendants.

Another layer surrounding our court martial case is the place and time. Sappers Long and Flynn were stationed in Guillemont Barracks in the village of Minley, Hampshire. The towns of Farnborough and Camberley were nearby, with two pubs in the vicinity of the barracks. There was also the onsite recreational establishment run by the Navy, Army, and Airforce Institutes (NAAFI).<sup>4</sup> It was February of 1941, with the looming threat of German invasion of the British Isles. The United States was still neutral, and the German Reich had not yet invaded the USSR. The defensive phase of the war contributed to the low spirit of fresh recruits, who were training for the potential invasion of the United Kingdom. We must also consider the cultural dichotomy of Canadians in England, with predominantly anglophone, rural Canadians from the crown dominion going back to their “mother country”.

The third layer surrounding our story is the socio-cultural role of Canadian masculinity and the political attitudes towards temperance. By the 1940s, the militancy of the temperance movement had dissipated, but even at its peak during the Great War, there was a divide between temperance at home versus temperance in the Canadian Expeditionary Force overseas. The change in political trends, in conjunction with the

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<sup>2</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, (Canadian Military Headquarters, 1942), 10.

<sup>3</sup> The third optional charge for Flynn and Long is the Army Act section 19: drunkenness. Flynn already had a drunkenness charge a year earlier, so he plead guilty.

<sup>4</sup> NAAFI is a company created by the British government, that operates facilities like bars, shops, and launderettes for the British soldiers.

cultural expectation that soldiers need their drink, explains the triviality of the verdict at the end of our court martial case.

The priorities given to specific aspects of Long and Flynn's actions illustrate the *modus operandi* of the field court. At the base level, the military court existed to sort salvageable service members from those who had gone too far. The subsequent conscription crisis was a complex issue in the Canadian politics of this period. In the sappers' case, miraculously, nobody was hurt. The court was more worried that two sappers could have gone to Farnborough, or wandered towards other settlements and hurt English civilians, which would certainly cause a great scandal and hurt the image and prestige of the Canadian troops. Somehow, Sapper Long could argue that he did not hear an order from his Lance Corporal to stop—therefore he did not disobey an order; Long also argued that he was too drunk to recognize Lance Corporal Holland chasing him in the dark—therefore he did not shoot at his superior; The president accepted these justifications, and Sapper Long was charged for shooting, but not for shooting at his superior and disobeying a lawful apprehension.

There are certain limitations to providing these conjectures, so for this paper, we will review the evidence from the court files and make an academic guess by weighing in the variables that constitute our microhistory case study. The format of this paper identifies political and socio-cultural tangents related to the court martial case, but each one of those cases can be studied in greater depth. To create vivid imagery of the situation, visual aids and war diary entries have been used to describe the people and places involved.

Methodological limitations include a lack of in-depth study of the personnel files of the accused and the characters involved in the court. Luckily, all of them survived the war, but that means that their service files are not in public access. Genealogical resources, newsreels, blogs, newspapers, and magazine articles have been used to gather scarce references of data. The key sources for characters, events and dialogue are the courts martial files of Long and Flynn, as well the war diaries of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, and the Black Watch of Canada.

### *The Accused*

- Lorne Long                    **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is one of the main defendants—the one who carried the rifle. Long is the first defence witness.
- Maurice Francis Flynn                    **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is one of the main defendants, accused of inciting Long to grab his rifle and shoot up the town. He is the second defence witness.

### *Officials and Members of the Court*

- V.W. Odlum                    **Major–General** of the Canadian Army, Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. He is the convening officer, who selected the members of the court, was a teetotaler, and had minimal involvement in the procedure.
- J.P. Mackenzie                    **Lieutenant–Colonel** of the Royal Canadian Engineers, Commander of the Royal Engineers at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. He signed the document acknowledging the charges against Flynn and Long.
- J.B. Weir                    **Major** of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada. He is the president of the court. A career infantry officer from Montreal, he later commanded the Cape Breton Highlanders.
- K.C. Thorne                    **Major** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Field Company, member of the court.
- B. Laurin                    **Captain** of the 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance unit, member of the court.
- W.D. Meidle                    **Lieutenant** of the Toronto Scottish Regiment (Machine Gun) and a waiting member of the court.
- G.L. Bodwell                    **Captain** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers, recently promoted. He is the prosecutor of the court, and a participant in the events.
- R.C. Garrett                    **Lieutenant** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the defending officer.
- J.H. Spence                    **Staff Sergeant** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division Headquarters. He is the shorthand writer.

### *Prosecution Witnesses*

- M. Richard            **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the first prosecution witness, who is testifying on drinking with Flynn and Long and overhearing them.
- E.A. Sweet            **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the second prosecution witness, who is testifying on Long grabbing his rifle and walking out of the barracks. He was cleaning his rifle.
- F.F. Morton           **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the third prosecution witness, who is testifying on Long loading his rifle, as he was reading in his bed. Morton reported this to Corporal Holland.
- J.J. Holland           **Lance Corporal** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the fourth prosecution witness and attempted to apprehend Flynn and Long.
- F.W. Hill              **Sapper** of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. He is the fifth prosecution witness, testifying on Corporal Holland and the flashlight.

### *Background Actors*

- George VI            **Admiral of the Fleet (Lieutenant)**; King of the UK and British Commonwealth Dominions. He was visiting Aldershot with his wife, the Queen, the day after Odium selected the members of the court.
- Elizabeth II           **Colonel-in-Chief** of the Toronto Scottish Regiment; Queen of the UK and British Commonwealth Dominions.
- P.E. Leclerc           **Brigadier**, Commanding Officer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Brigade. He experienced health problems and is replaced by Lt-Col Blackader. Leclerc was the first Francophone in Canada to command a division.
- K.G. Blackader       **Lieutenant-Colonel**, Commanding Officer of the Black Watch. In March 1941, he replaced Leclerc as Commanding Officer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Brigade.
- V. Massey            **Lieutenant-Colonel (discharged)**; The Right Honourable Canadian High Commissioner to London. He was visiting Aldershot for the divisional soccer final and to award the Vincent Massey Trophy. He later became the first Canadian-born Governor-General of Canada.

## *Preparing the Court*

March 26, 1941. It was a cloudy Wednesday morning in Hampshire, with snow still melting on the lawn of the Aldershot Garrison.<sup>5</sup> Life in this military town was carrying on, with soldiers looking forward to the divisional final soccer game in the afternoon. Things were relatively quiet for Canadians stationed here, and it would not be anyone's guess that the first Canadian soldiers to die by enemy action in Europe were killed here, in the camp.<sup>6</sup>

Almost nine months earlier, on July 6, 1940, three Canadians from the Royal Canadian Army Ordnance Corps were mounting Bren, Lewis, and Vickers machine guns onto motorcycles on a Saturday afternoon. This was at the crowded parade grounds near Salamanca Barracks when a single Heinkel 111 bomber appeared out of nowhere and bombed the parade ground. By the time the plane was spotted, and the barracks were telephoned, the German plane had made another bombing run and disappeared. Two NCOs and a private were killed.<sup>7</sup> One officer and twenty-seven men were wounded.

As the Wednesday morning was ending, soldiers of the Royal Highland Regiment of Canada (the Black Watch) were returning from the third day of the revision training, just in time for some rest and the final game. It was raining when Colonel K. G. Blackader left the battalion to take over from Brigadier P. E. Leclerc.<sup>8</sup> Leclerc was a popular divisional commander and a veteran of the Great War, who served as a combat engineer. He was selected as a Brigadier to what was supposed to be an all-Quebec brigade, but his health forced the Command to send him home.<sup>9</sup> Col. Blackader was going to miss the game.

In his office, Major-General Victor Wentworth Odlum was likely wrapping up the paperwork before the game. He came across a court martial schedule on his desk for Sappers Lorne Long and Maurice Francis Flynn. There were three charges for both, including Army Act Section 8(2)—using violence against a superior officer; alternative charge of Section 41—civil offence, shooting at a person with intent; and third, a further

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<sup>5</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, "War Diary," entry for March 26, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 244, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/123](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/123).

<sup>6</sup> "Aldershot and the Canadian Army: An Anniversary," Hampshire Cultural Trust, July 5, 2020, <https://www.cultureoncall.com/aldershot-and-the-canadian-army-an-anniversary/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Aldershot and the Canadian Army." The casualties were QMS Robert Thomas Knox (39), Staff Sergeant John Francis Bailey (35) and Private Leslie Herbert Sword (29).

<sup>8</sup> The Black Watch of Canada, "War Diary," entry for March 26, 1941, Black Watch Blog, accessed March 1, 2022.

<https://blackwatchwardiary.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/march-41-diary.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Jack L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (University of Calgary Press, 2005), 249–250.

alternative charge of drunkenness;<sup>10</sup> The last charge was ironic for his command since Major-General Odlum was a teetotaler who detested alcohol, and at some point (much to his soldiers' dismay) attempted to replace rum rations with hot soup.<sup>11</sup> Already in his 60's, Victor Odlum was a cunning, aggressive, and stubborn general, who took great care about the image of his troops. He was a strict, but fair disciplinarian, according to his subordinates.<sup>12</sup> He selected Major J.B. Weir as the court president and added his squirmy signature at the bottom of the document.<sup>13</sup> The dispatcher took it to Lt-Col. Mackenzie.

This was Odlum's third war. He previously fought during the Second Boer and the Great War, with great bravery, leading his troops from the frontline.<sup>14</sup> After the war, he lived in Vancouver, returned to Journalism, and bought the *Vancouver Star*.<sup>15</sup> Odlum dabbled in politics, became elected into the Legislative Assembly, and used his newspaper to aggressively promote his views. In 1924, his paper stirred anti-Chinese sentiments in the case of Janet Smith's murder,<sup>16</sup> primarily to embarrass his rival Major-General McRae.<sup>17</sup>

When the Second World War started, Victor Odlum used his political connections and got promoted to a Major-General over several permanent force officers, despite being retired from active force. He was put in charge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. Instead of focusing on combat training desperately lacking in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Odlum devoted a lot of attention to the image of his troops, making time for things like designing heritage arm patches, changing map reference codes and crusading for the regimental brass band.<sup>18</sup> This was curious, since in the past, Odlum detested people like Major-General McRae being promoted over him and other combat officers since the latter never saw direct action and was behind the desk during the war.<sup>19</sup> Yet now, Odlum himself was turning into a desk general like McRae and was promoted over other officers in the active service.

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<sup>10</sup> Lorne Long, "Field General Court Martial: Long, L. A-19419. Spr.," File RG 150, Reel T-18368, Image 5, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed February 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t15827/3](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15827/3).

<sup>11</sup> Charles L. Shaw, "Odlum: O.C. 2nd Division," *Macleans*, May 15, 1940, 65. Odlum never smoked and was an avid reader.

<sup>12</sup> Shaw, "Odlum: O.C. 2nd Division," 64.

<sup>13</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 5.

<sup>14</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Odlum was staunchly anti-communist. When his employees unionized, instead of negotiating, he shut down the offices of the *Vancouver Sun*.

<sup>16</sup> Ian Macdonald and Betty O'Keefe, *Canadian Holy War: A Story of Clans, Tongues, Murder, and Bigotry* (Heritage House, 2000), 18.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Duncan McRae (1874-1946): Major-General, Member of Parliament, Senator, one of the richest men in Vancouver, and Odlum's old rival.

<sup>18</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Macdonald and O'Keefe, *Canadian Holy War*, 10-11.

Division finals started in the late afternoon, as the rain was dissipating. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI) was playing against the Black Watch (RHC). The Right Honourable Vincent Massey, High Commissioner to London for the Government in Canada, was in Aldershot. He was going to give the Vincent Massey Trophy to the winning team. General Odlum walked onto the wet, muddy field and kicked off the ball, starting the soccer game.<sup>20</sup> Hamilton Light scored two goals, but the Black Watch scored four. Hon. Vincent Massey congratulated both teams and handed the trophy to the Black Watch.<sup>21</sup>

Vincent Massey was not visiting Aldershot garrison because of the game. On March 27, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were coming for an inspection. The Black Watch moved out a battalion by transport to Yately Commons, to be checked by the Royals. It was a mild and cloudy day.<sup>22</sup> The band played during the inspection,<sup>23</sup> and the companies put on a practical demonstration of their progress in the field, and “gave three hearty cheers” when the inspection was over.<sup>24</sup> This was not their first Royal inspection, and the weather was better than last year.<sup>25</sup>

As the Royal couple were inspecting troops, the dispatcher brought the court martial schedule and stated that the commander must sign it. The charge sheet came out of a typewriter that used fresh ribbon and carbon sheet, giving the paper a subtle black tint.<sup>26</sup> By the time Lieutenant Colonel John Peter Mackenzie got his hands on the charge sheet, Captain REV Prangley had already signed it. Prangley was an Acting Officer, plucked from the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company and attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division HQ.<sup>27</sup> Lt-Col. Mackenzie, as the Commander of the Royal Engineers at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, had to acknowledge the charges brought forth against his sappers himself, so he struck Prangley’s signature and signed it himself.<sup>28</sup> Despite being short in stature,<sup>29</sup> Mackenzie was a well-respected officer and

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<sup>20</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 37. Nicknamed “Hoodlum” by his men, Odlum was fit for his age.

<sup>21</sup> Black Watch, “War Diary,” March 26, 1941.

<sup>22</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, “War Diary,” entry for March 27, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 245, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/245](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/245).

<sup>23</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, “War Diary,” March 27, 1941. As mentioned before, General Odlum wanted to have a proper brass band for the division.

<sup>24</sup> Black Watch, “War Diary,” March 27, 1941.

<sup>25</sup> John Taylor, dir., *Letter from Aldershot*, (1940; Ottawa, ON: National Film Board of Canada), [https://www.nfb.ca/film/letter\\_from\\_aldershot/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/letter_from_aldershot/).

<sup>26</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 6.

<sup>27</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, “Field Return of Officers,” February 21, 1941, in “War Diary,” File RG 24, Image 174, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/174](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/174).

<sup>28</sup> This little detail is at the bottom right corner of page six.

<sup>29</sup> Considering the expectations of masculinity at the time, several generals (Mackenzie was soon promoted to Major-General) who were physically lacking in their expected characteristics made up for it with their larger-than-life personalities. Short Mackenzie



wanted to leave the correct impression by signing his administrative paperwork, especially coming from the brass.

### *Court Martial*

The cloudy morning of March 28, 1941, marked the one-month anniversary of the incident. Sappers Long and Flynn were locked near Talavera Barracks, hearing the violent electric storm in the sky.<sup>30</sup> For the next two days, they were transferred to the Barossa Barracks,<sup>31</sup> and the court convened on March 29.<sup>32</sup> Lieutenant Garrett freshly returned for the court martial from his week-long instructional attachment to the Royal Canadian Engineers 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division and assumed the role of defence counsel.<sup>33</sup> Freshly promoted Captain Bodwell assumed the role of prosecution. Lieutenant Meidle was appointed a waiting member, whose purpose was to fill in, should any member of the court except for the president be ill or indisposed. President of the court, Major Weir<sup>34</sup> motioned for the order convening the court to be read. Sappers Long and Flynn had no objections to the members of the court or the shorthand writer Staff Sergeant Spence.<sup>35</sup> Thanks to Spence's good records, we can track the events in detail.

Defence mentioned that Sapper Flynn has already been passed judgment by his acting commanding officer and asked if there is a need to try him together with Long. Prosecutor Bodwell stated that he does not intend to call Flynn as a witness against Long, so they can still be tried jointly.<sup>36</sup> The prosecution read the charges and called the first witness, Sapper M. Richard from the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company.

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was tough, overweight Leclerc was charismatic, with a gregarious smile, and aging Odlum was opening the soccer matches with a ball kick himself.

<sup>30</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, "War Diary," entry for March 28, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 245, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/245](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/245).

<sup>31</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 7.

<sup>32</sup> The court file starts with the date of March 30, but this must be an error. After all witnesses speak, there is a note that the court is adjourned until the next day, Sunday, March 30. All the testimonies are heard on March 29.

<sup>33</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, "War Diary," entry for March 24, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 244, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/244](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/244).

<sup>34</sup> James Buchanan Weir (1906–1974). A year after the trial, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and commanded Cape Breton Highlanders. As a Colonel, he was later in charge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Training Regiment. Unlike other officers listed, I found a wealth of information on Weir, including photographs, information on his family, postwar residence and grave. He married in 1950, lived in South Africa, and was buried in May 1974 in his native Montreal.

<sup>35</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 7.

<sup>36</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 7. This is also likely done for the sake of efficiency and speed. Based on the corrections made to the dates throughout the court files, the authorities intended this court to last one day.

The court documents fail to illustrate the situation before the incident. According to the war diary entries, the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company was participating in an exercise codenamed “Dog”, which started on February 26 and ended two days later. It involved loading trucks with troops and bridging equipment, crossing the river Rother, and then returning to the Guillemont Barracks. February 26 was a cold day, and starting from 2:30 in the morning, it rained well into the next day. This caused minor accidents on the road, with trucks sliding into a ditch, and driving being very slow. By the afternoon of February 28, all trucks arrived back at Guillemont, and it was determined that strict traffic control and guides were needed.<sup>37</sup>

The events in Sapper Richard’s story transpire between the onsite NAAFI at the Guillemont and two rivalling pubs in the nearby towns named Crown & Cushion and Plough & Horses. The barracks have been long abandoned by 2022, but both pubs continue to function.<sup>38</sup> Looking at the Google maps, Plough & Horses in the town of Farnborough is about a 20–minute walk to the southeast from the barracks. Crown & Cushion in the town of Camberley is a roughly 10–minute walk to the North–West.

According to Sapper Richard’s testimony, he went to NAAFI with Long and started to drink at 6:00 pm on February 28. There they met two men from the “I” wing, and at around 8:30 pm, all three walked to the Crown & Cushion Pub, where they had a few more beers. The “I” wing men bought two bottles of wine. All three men walked back to the NAAFI around 9:00 pm, where they met Sapper Flynn and drank together. Richard heard Flynn tell Long to get his rifle, and “we’ll go and blow the town up”.<sup>39</sup> Richard went to get a bottle of beer, while Flynn led Long away by his hand. Later, Sapper Richard was near the “spider” in the barracks and heard two shots in his general direction.

There is scarce information publicly available on the internal layout of the barracks. According to the memories of a British soldier Denis Carrington, the wooden clapboard buildings were made for the Canadian troops during the Second World War:

*The first elements of the Canadian Army arrived in Aldershot on 18 December 1939. They were the forerunner of 330,000 Canadians who passed through Aldershot between 1939 and 1946. All we raw recruits, speaking with many different accents, from the four corners of the U.K. on arrival at Farnborough station the first morning, were met by shouting N.C.O.s directing us to 3–ton Bedford trucks and T.C.V.s, (Troop Carrying Vehicles,) which transported us to Southwood*

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<sup>37</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, “War Diary,” entries for February 26–28, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T–18368, Image 139, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/139](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/139).

<sup>38</sup> The Crown & Cushion is a sixteenth–century pub.

<sup>39</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 8.

*Camp. There were... two barracks on this site, called Morval and Delville, and one further down the road called Guillemont. All named after battles fought in France during the W.W.I Somme offensive in 1916.*<sup>40</sup>

When Sapper Richard mentioned “spiders”, he was referring to the huts that housed the troops. Each “spider” had a main block with toilets, a squadron office, and a laundry room. This block extended to six dormitories (squads), each housing twenty men. Each corporal had a room of his own at the head of each dormitory, and lance corporals had bed space next to the exit doors.<sup>41</sup> The next witness called by the prosecution was inside the “spider” bedroom when Flynn and Long walked in.

The second witness was Sapper E.A. Sweet, from the same company. Sweet was sitting next to Long’s bed and cleaning his rifle.<sup>42</sup> He saw how Lorne Long walked inside, put on his overcoat and sweater, and rolled out his blanket.<sup>43</sup> Long then changed his mind and left the blanket, grabbed his rifle by his bed and closed the bolt action. Sweet witnessed Sapper Flynn asking if the rifle was loaded, to which Sapper Long nodded. This happened around 9:15 pm. Sweet saw Lance Corporal J.J. Holland walk into the room, and shortly afterwards Flynn and Long left.<sup>44</sup>

The third witness called by the prosecution was Sapper Frank F. Morton. Morton was reading in his bed inside the “spider” when he overheard Long and Flynn talking. He was three or four beds away and overheard them mention “London”, and saw Sapper Long his load rifle, with what looked like a clip. As they were leaving, Lance Corporal Holland walked in, so Sapper Morton rushed and warned him about Long and Flynn’s intentions.<sup>45</sup>

The fourth witness called by the prosecution was Lance Corporal J.J. Holland. His story is fast paced, as opposed to the more gradual development told so far.<sup>46</sup> It is also important to note that Long was in the same section as Holland, so he should have recognized his face and voice well. Allegedly, Long ran past him as Holland entered the “spider”. This was when Holland heard someone (presumably Morton) shout “Stop that man he has a loaded rifle.” Sapper Hill nearby went to grab his flashlight and joined Holland, and together they searched the billets and the gate area for Long and Flynn. Holland shouted for Long, but he would not respond.

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<sup>40</sup> Carrington, Denis. “Southwood Camp – Cove.” Military Survey, March 2010. <http://www.militarysurvey.org.uk/Historic%20Archive/Miscellaneous/National%20Service%20Carrington%20Southwood.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Carrington notes that a spider has eight legs, as opposed to “spiders” with six dorms.

<sup>42</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 21.

<sup>43</sup> In his sworn testimony the next day, Sweet states that Long intended to use the blanket to sleep in the ditch on his way to London.

<sup>44</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 10.

<sup>45</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 11.

<sup>46</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 12.

At the gate, Holland met a very drunk Flynn and asked about Long's whereabouts. Flynn stated that "he's gone to London". Holland left Sapper Hill with Flynn, went to the guard post "where the highway runs by the cove" and notified the HQ guard about the situation. On his way back, in the darkness, Holland stumbled into someone walking toward him. Using Hill's flashlight, he identified Long and asked him to come back.

Long started running away and up the road, so Holland chased after him. After a bit, Long pulled the bolt and turned around. Holland turned off his flashlight and threw himself to the pavement. Long fired a bullet, ran to the bush, and fired again, then escaped towards the highway. Hill came running up and asked Holland, "Are you hurt?" A few minutes later another shot was fired. Holland came across an unidentified soldier in the dark and asked if he saw someone running with a rifle. This is when he heard the fourth shot in the distance. At this point, quite a few people from the camp were approaching and considering organizing a search party for Sapper Long. Far away, they heard Long shout incomprehensibly and the fifth shot, so Holland decided to commandeer a truck. As the truck was backing up, Captain Bodwell arrived, ordered the truck returned and everyone was confined to the barracks.

Lt. Garrett cross-examined Lance Corporal Holland. It was established that Holland could not have recognized Long without a flashlight, or the direction in which he was firing, due to being on the ground, looking down with a steel helmet on. Garrett asked Holland how many drinks he had, and Holland said one bottle of beer. Garrett pressed further and Holland said maybe two bottles of beer, but not three or four. He established that there was no animosity between Holland and either Long or Flynn.<sup>47</sup> Finally, Garrett learned that Holland never gave Long any orders inside the billets but just called his name.<sup>48</sup>

The prosecution called the fifth witness, who was Sapper F.W. Hill. Hill's story supports what Lance Corporal Holland stated earlier. When cross-examined, Hill stated that before this, they were drinking together at NAAFI. Sapper Hill had few beers, while Lance Corporal Holland had six or seven large glasses of beer.

Sapper Lorne Long was called as the first defence witness.<sup>49</sup> He mentioned coming back from a three-day scheme on the February 28 (Operation "Dog") and not having any sleep. Long got back in the morning, did not nap, and started drinking. In his separate sworn testimony, he specified taking a shower and doing some washing as well.<sup>50</sup> He was not hungry, so he had no dinner and only a cup of tea for supper. Afterwards, Long went to the pub and started drinking a mix of beer, wine, and scotch.

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<sup>47</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 13.

<sup>48</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 14.

<sup>49</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 16.

<sup>50</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 10.

After this, his memory went blank. He had a vague recollection of carrying the rifle but was not sure if he had fired the rifle or not.

Sapper Long's sworn testimony was given separately and was curiously struck with a pen mark by the prosecutor. We can reveal in this dismissed section of Long's testimony under oath that after supper he went to the Crown & Cushion in Camberley with men from "I" Wing and had a few drinks and three bottles of wine. Then he allegedly returned to the Guillemont barracks, met Sapper Richard, and went back to the Crown & Cushion. After several beers there, they returned to the NAAFI, met Sapper Flynn, and had several more beers. There was some talk involving rifles, and Long decided to visit the Plough & Horses. His sworn testimony was vague on the events of the night but revealed that he woke up in the nearby woods in the morning after a dog was licking his face. He found his rifle thirty feet away from him. Sapper Long grabbed his rifle, walked back to the barracks at 9:15 am (passing the guards!), had a chance to clean his rifle while missing the parade, and was arrested fifteen minutes later.<sup>51</sup>

Sapper Maurice F. Flynn was the second defence witness. He did not agree to give testimony under oath, but they proceeded anyway. At 8:00 pm on February 28, he allegedly went to NAAFI dressed in fatigues, an overcoat, and deck shoes. There, he had a few beers and was joined by Long at 8:30 pm. At 9:30 pm, NAAFI closed, so someone suggested that they visit the Plough & Horses Pub. Both Flynn and Long went back to the "spider" and considered visiting Plough & Horses.<sup>52</sup> Sapper Flynn could not recall suggesting to "shoot up the town", he thought he would have said to "go to town" instead. Flynn was very drunk, and sleep-deprived, vaguely remembering Long carrying a rifle, but has no recollection of anything else.<sup>53</sup> Following his testimony, the defence wanted to call a character witness, but Captain Bodwell from the prosecution agreed to avoid this by providing a good character testimony for both defendants. The court was then closed for consideration and adjourned until 11:00 am on Sunday, March 30.

Sapper Long pleaded not guilty to all three charges, while Flynn only pleaded guilty to the third drunkenness charge. From the war diary entry, we learn that on the morning of March 1<sup>st</sup>, Sapper Lorne Long was briefly considered absent without leave (AWL) for the parade. He made his way back at 09:30 and was immediately arrested.<sup>54</sup> His arrest was exactly a week short of his first enlistment anniversary with the unit.<sup>55</sup> His brief AWL was not reflected in the court records; however, it was stated that he was imprisoned for 29 days until a court could adjourn. Sapper Flynn was

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<sup>51</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 22.

<sup>52</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 20.

<sup>53</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 17.

<sup>54</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, "War Diary," entry for March 1, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 236, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/236](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/236).

<sup>55</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 25.

imprisoned on March 3, 1941.<sup>56</sup> These days were counted towards the punishment that they received. Both the defence and the prosecution asked the president for leniency, considering Long and Flynn's past conduct. Long had a clean conduct sheet, while Flynn had one drunkenness charge from 1940.

In terms of the field court martial, both Sappers were awarded detention sentences, where Long received six months, and Flynn received ninety days.<sup>57</sup> Lieutenant Garrett stood his ground and showed himself as a capable defence counsel. He was glad that this court martial did not drag on for long since he was the orderly officer the next day at Guillemont Barracks.<sup>58</sup> This concluded the 26–page–long primary source.

### *Temperance*

Consumption of alcohol has been historically an inalienable part of the British military culture. British Navy used alcohol as a popular method of rewarding sailors for their actions and keeping their morale intact.<sup>59</sup> The types of spirits used were varied, but the practice remained the same for hundreds of years. Canada inherited these traditions from Britain, and when the temperance movement began to gain popularity, the practical role of alcohol consumption as a stress and boredom reliever was lost on the temperance groups, who were eagerly printing leaflets and preaching the moral decay presented by the drink.

The temperance movement targeted alcohol itself as the source of economic, social, and moral problems. When Canada became involved in the Great War, the moral discourse of the prohibition obtained a patriotic rationale as well. A common narrative neglected the agency of soldiers, calling for them to be protected against the drink and their urges.<sup>60</sup> This patronizing behaviour was not appreciated by the soldiers, when in 1919, over 400 veterans disrupted women's pro–temperance parade, showing that they did not agree with this philosophy, finding temperance to be effeminate and wrong. After the war, repealing the prohibition was a common goal, as it was perceived to be misguidedly passed on behalf of the soldiers.<sup>61</sup>

The polarity of the pro–temperance civilian attitudes and the military perception of alcohol consumption coincide with the promotion of

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<sup>56</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 29.

<sup>57</sup> Long, "Field General Court Martial," Image 5.

<sup>58</sup> 7th Field Company, "Daily Orders," March 31, 1941, in "War Diary," File RG 24, Image 285, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/285](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/285).

<sup>59</sup> James H. Morrison and James Moreira, eds., *Tempered by Rum: Tempered by Rum: Rum in the History of the Maritime Province* (Pottersfield Press, 1988), 33.

<sup>60</sup> Tim Cook, "Wet Canteens and Worrying Mothers: Alcohol, Soldiers, and Temperance Groups in the Great War," *Histoire Sociale* 35, no. 70 (2002), 322.

<sup>61</sup> Cook, "Wet Canteens," 313.

drinking culture for soldiers, while some Canadian towns tried to pass local dry zones. For the military, providing easy access to alcohol may have correlated with the increase in disciplinary issues. But the command must have decided that the benefits of keeping the soldiers contained in their boredom outweighed the risks. In our case study, Sappers Long and Flynn had access to two civilian pubs within walking distance and had a government-run NAAFI establishment within the Guillemont Barracks. While specific commanders like Odlum may have attempted initiatives to restrict alcohol in the past, this was a personal initiative of a teetotal commander and not one of the headquarters.

NAAFI canteens served beer, as opposed to hard liquors since it was hoped that low alcohol drinks would make the discipline issues more manageable. Establishing onsite institutions was initially done to confine drinking to beer within barracks,<sup>62</sup> but this is no longer the case in Guillemont. In the court martial case, when asked by the defence if drinking could affect his voice and thus the ability of Long to recognize him, Lance Corporal Holland scoffed: “it would take a lot of NAAFI beer to change the interpretation of my voice.”<sup>63</sup> With Sapper Hill’s testimony, it becomes clear that instead of Lance Corporal’s initial claim of drinking only one beer, Holland drank six or seven. Lance Corporal Holland thought that NAAFI beer was not strong enough, which may explain why he undersells how much he consumed. It is also possible that he wants to purport an image of being either sober or in control, as a man of authority during the apprehension attempt.

Managing stress, impulse control, and discipline in the 1940’s Canadian Army is a subject worthy of a separate study. Canadian doctor Brock Chisholm, who later helped found the World Health Organization, became the first psychiatrist belonging to a major country to be appointed as the head of the army medical service, since General Hammond in the US Civil War.<sup>64</sup> Chisholm’s mandated consideration of psychological factors represents an evolution in medical thinking since the Great War period. The understanding of issues like PTSD was still at the rudimentary stage of calling it a shell shock, but the agency in such matters was slowly shifting from the personality of the soldier to the environmental impact.

### *Morale*

The Chisholmian<sup>65</sup> approach attempted to pinpoint mental and psychological factors that influence discipline and morale in the Canadian

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<sup>62</sup> Cook, “Wet Canteens,” 320.

<sup>63</sup> Long, “Field General Court Martial,” Image 14.

<sup>64</sup> David McK. Rioch, “George Brock Chisholm, 1896–1971,” *Psychiatry* 34, no. 3 (1971), 330.

<sup>65</sup> Naturally referring to Brock, not Roderick Chisholm, I think that this represents a unique period in the evolution of Canadian military medicine. Revolutionary for its

Army. During this period, a short but significant manual was written for Canadian junior officers. Written a year after our trial, the *Canadian Overseas Morale Handbook* presents a valuable window into the logic of the military establishment. One of the threats to the Army discipline it identifies is impulsive behaviour.

Physiologically speaking, five categories of impulsiveness appear in the manual: hunger, sex, rest, change, and elimination.<sup>66</sup> Impulsiveness is not a negative or destructive trait by default. Lack or abundance of it is counterproductive. Lack of impulse is a sign of being inefficiently “wedded to familiarity,”<sup>67</sup> while an abundance of impulse is something too difficult to control. This approach fits with the overarching narrative of praising moderation and restraint throughout the manual.

The *Overseas Morale Handbook* avoids the theme of drinking, so the moderation advice was not applied to alcohol consumption. This is likely due to the already-discussed relationship between temperance and the Army. Moderation is also undermined when it comes to appetite. The manual takes a masculinity-centered approach towards being hungry or wanting more, presenting it as a natural and expected trait. “The lack of appetite is the man’s response to lowering of morale”.<sup>68</sup> This is further elaborated as a sign of a daring, enthusiastic trooper.

Some of the advice given is not as deeply substantiated. Elimination is outlined as a need for sanitary evacuation and a desire for comfort and privacy. Abstinence is suggested when discussing sex. Change is another listed category, said to be necessary as a need to avoid boredom. Active entertainment is encouraged since passive activities fortify boredom and can lead to drunkenness. This is rationalized by stating that boredom fuels impulsive behaviour that can push men to petty breaches of discipline.<sup>69</sup> The category about change is one of the few places where alcohol is mentioned.

One of the categories that is deeply connected to our court martial case is rest. Lack of rest is a significant contributor to Long and Flynn’s state, besides their extreme intoxication. “Tiredness and fatigue are not necessarily the sign of lowered morale: it may simply mean that the man does not have enough sense to go to bed early.”<sup>70</sup> Surprisingly, the handbook does not mention the need to ensure that after long and arduous training exercises, a good officer should watch out for the rest of his men. In the case of Long and Flynn, there may be a reason tied to their

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time, the doctrine attempted to aid the army-level mental training with the help of sociologists and psychologists, viewing the moral conceptions of restraint through quantifiable scientific observation.

<sup>66</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 8.

<sup>69</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 9.



environment, explaining why they chose to drink and forget instead of resting.

The company war diary mentions that on February 25, just a day before the operation “Dog” exercise, several former members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company were selected as part of the draft which left for Canada.<sup>71</sup> It is a conjecture, but this may be the motive for Flynn and Long to get exceptionally drunk, due to having several members of their company return home while they are stuck in England, anticipating a German invasion.

### *Environment*

In February of 1941, the British Isles were anticipating the German invasion. The 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company war diaries indicate numerous secret exercises to mine roads, bridges, and other infrastructure in case of the German landing. Posted daily orders and provided security advice on numerous subjects. The US was going to remain neutral until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December. The Soviet Union was still in a non-aggression pact with Germany, at least until June 22, 1941. Canada was one of the biggest allies of the British Empire at this point.

When Canadians arrived in England, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division commanded by General McNaughton landed in Brest to defend France on June 13, 1940. On June 17, the Germans took Paris and France surrendered. The Canadians had to evacuate and leave behind their vehicles, which was a huge blow to their morale. By 1941, the battle in the Atlantic was going well for the Kriegsmarine, and the U-boats were threatening the Allied supply lines. At this point, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was green and poorly trained, and Odlum’s performance did not impress or meet the training expectations of the VII Corps.<sup>72</sup> This would eventually cause Odlum’s replacement.

The environment in which Lorne and Flynn found themselves was that of anticipation, stress, and aggravation. The English weather was also miserable, and the supply shortages due to the unrestricted U-boat menace made things worse. War diaries include numerous notices for recycling and waste reduction, noting it is because of material shortage.

We must also consider the cultural shock of having Canadian soldiers in England, with predominantly anglophone, working-class men from the Crown Dominion going back to their “mother country”. Witnessing “misbehaving” Canadians was a reoccurring topic in the local English papers. In response to this a Canadian propaganda film titled *A Letter from Aldershot* was made as part of the “Canada Carries On” series. Produced by the National Film Board, it talked about the perilous journey

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<sup>71</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Field Company, “War Diary,” entry for February 25, 1941, File RG 24, Reel T-18368, Image 138, Library and Archives Canada, Heritage Canadiana, accessed March 1, 2022, [https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_reel\\_t18368/138](https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t18368/138).

<sup>72</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 37.

for Canadian troops through the U-boat-infested Atlantic and the amenities at the Aldershot garrison. Soldiers cheered and sent greetings home, assuring that everything was going well. The increasing breakdown of morale, witnessed by Canadian courts martial cases may hold an additional clue on why such a film was made. The end of the film states that “London knows us now, for we are in a sense ambassador from the new world... and if we can bring peace and resolution, we shall not have left home in vain.”<sup>73</sup>

The movie’s message can be interpreted as a veiled message sent to both Canadians and the English. For Canadians, it carries the warning that they are to behave as representatives of the whole of Canada. For the English, it is a reminder that Canadians have left their homes to protect them. With passions so high, luck was on Long and Flynn’s side that they got drunk and fired at a Canadian lance corporal, and not at an English civilian.

### *Masculinity*

At its root, this court martial case is about men judging other men’s actions in 1941. Besides looking at the environment and the legal expectations of the authority, it is also important to understand those who are doing the judging and those who are being judged. The socio-cultural attributes of masculinity for a Canadian soldier are deeply tied to where these men originated from. In our case, the difference between the backgrounds of officers and enlisted men is not as severe, as it would’ve been in the past.

After the Great War, there was a widening opportunity for immigrants, middle-class men like Major Weir, or francophones like Brigadier Leclerc to serve in the Canadian armed forces as officers. This created a dichotomy between professional soldiers and working-class conscripts who had been plucked from their urban or rural environments to be governed by professional authority. Working-class masculinity formed with the influence of expectations, responsibilities, and opportunities to use the patriarchal privilege. For conscripts, shared experiences of stress, fatigue, poor food, and strict management created an environment with anti-authoritarian elements, strong bonds of loyalty for each other, and an intense desire to smoke, drink, gamble, womanize, and indulge in other methods of escapism.<sup>74</sup> Besides providing an escape, these opportunities were also outlets to express individuality and exercise social independence.

Individuality was a scarce resource for conscripts. Wearing the same fatigues, sporting similar buzz cuts and policed facial hair,

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<sup>73</sup> Taylor, *Letter from Aldershot*.

<sup>74</sup> Craig Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-class Hamilton, 1890–1946,” *Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (2005), 411–452.

regimenting days, and routines in a communal fashion acted as a strong push factor. Granted leaves were and continue to be so essential in army culture. As much as barracks attempt to provide recreational and leisure facilities, it does not compare to civilian facilities. The diversity of such establishments is directly proportional to the size of the towns and for those stuck at the backwoods barracks of Aldershot—the ultimate choice is London. Even the *Morale Handbook* states that junior officers should be familiar with London’s potential leisure activities to be able to better direct their men, “since London is a mecca for all those on leave.”<sup>75</sup>

Lorne Long was intoxicated to the point of being unable to recognize his section corporal, and Flynn was too drunk to remember his actions from the day before, but both were still subconsciously drawn to visit London. It is a twelve-hour walk from Farnborough to London, and the intoxicated mind of Long was packing a blanket to sleep in the ditch.

A significant role in masculinity is occupied by the physical prowess and ability to do the demanded work. Bodies were a source of pride and became the measure of achievement or failure.<sup>76</sup> When physical features were lacking, successful men were able to overcome social discredit by compensating for their images with their personality, actions, or specific skills. This can often be seen in nicknames given to officers as well. If their physical attribute were not desirable one, but their command was respected, hurtful nicknames were used with love and care among the enlisted men.

Our case study indirectly involves several figures who knowingly or subconsciously fit into the compensating masculine pride narrative: Leclerc was overweight but charismatic,<sup>77</sup> Mackenzie was short but tough, and Odlum was old but fit. When age limits were later passed as an excuse to replace General Odlum, he felt personally attacked and betrayed, claiming that it was fitness that mattered more than age. “In fitness, I was ahead of every senior officer in the Corps... I am so much more physically fit than is General McNaughton<sup>78</sup> that the contrast is fantastic.”<sup>79</sup> This was a challenge to Odlum’s masculine pride.

A negative by-product of the masculine pursuit of physical pride is self-destructiveness. Neglecting the needs of their bodies and minds, “working men literally wore themselves out in pursuit of masculinity.”<sup>80</sup> This can be applied to both sappers in our case study as well: instead of resting after a three-day training exercise, properly hydrating,<sup>81</sup> and

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<sup>75</sup> *Canadian Army Overseas: Morale*, 20.

<sup>76</sup> Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze,” 8.

<sup>77</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 249–250.

<sup>78</sup> McNaughton was Odlum’s superior, commander of the British VII Corps.

<sup>79</sup> Granatstein, *The Generals*, 38.

<sup>80</sup> Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze,” 8.

<sup>81</sup> It is terrifying to think that the only non-alcoholic liquid likely consumed by Long on February 28 was a cup of tea that substituted his supper.

nourishing their bodies with food, Long and Flynn decided to excessively drink, putting themselves and others in danger of their reckless behaviour.

The court martialing of Lorne Long and Maurice Francis Flynn is a multi-faceted story. It combines the elements of drama and comedy, luck and misfortune, including a wide array of colourful characters. These people present a small window into the lives of Canadians serving in England, representing the issues of low morale, uncontrolled drinking, and toxic masculinity. Theirs is a little-known story, hidden in plain sight across dozens of public documents. The metaphoric “onion” is an attempt made in the 1940s to modernize the Canadian conscript army, turning it into an efficient fighting unit. The dramatic issues arising from this attempt tell multiple human stories, ranging from incompetent to compassionate.

This is a constructed story, almost certainly missing crucial elements. This tale cannot be told from the perspective of its original participants, and the lessons we may extract from it today are likely far different than the ones Lorne and Flynn learned. At its face value, this is a story of one unit, and at each level, the participants have different priorities. Long and Flynn want to get away from the consequences of the night they vaguely remember. Lieutenant Garrett wants to be done and rest before his duties in the morning. Lieutenant-Colonel Mackenzie wants to make sure that all the issues under his command are resolved under his watchful eye. General Odlum wants to make sure that there is a brass band to impress the visiting King. And King George is visiting the troops from his faraway dominion as part of his Royal duties.

Digging deeper, we can see how seemingly distant files can be interconnected with the proverbial yarn of the investigator. Regardless of their motives, the actions of the participants resonate with the lives of others, leaving behind traces that extend far beyond their lifespans, aspirations, and ambitions. The seemingly irrelevant weather report in conjunction with the half-heartedly typed sports newsletter can be combined to illustrate a muddy, wet English field in 1941, where soldiers of the Black Watch gather to relax and cheer for their team. The documents used were made for utilitarian reasons, for war records. The resulting image we conjure in our minds is far beyond the document’s original intention, almost as good as us being present there, seeing the faces we see in the faded photos, and hearing them tell their testimonies themselves. Almost.

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