

ENGINEERS AND ALL SAINT'S CHURCH



The arrival of large numbers of troops in the United Kingdom, during the first years of World War II created a crisis in accommodation and training facilities. The Canadian Engineers found themselves involved in constructing barracks, training areas, roads and airfields. Even the divisional engineers, whose primary activity was training for operations, were tasked with the construction of their own barracks and other facilities.

Some of the specific tasks involving Canadian Engineer units included: construction of coastal defences; reassembling wooden assault landing craft shipped from Canada in sections; erecting camouflage nets to cover flotillas of small craft; construction of an anti-tank range; constructing a replica of German defensive works for demolition training; building roads in an artillery camp in Wales; conversion of a camp for hospital use and the erection of many barracks.

In keeping with the tradition of the Military Engineers to help others in need, a detachment of 1st Canadian Troops RCE undertook the reconstruction of All Saint's Church, South Merstham, near Redhill. The church had been destroyed by bombing. The sappers salvaged the stones and timbers from the original church and built a new one. The church was dedicated by the Bishop of Southwark on 25 April 1943.

This is but one of many similar projects undertaken by our engineers that earned the goodwill of the local populace. The staff had become very adept at cutting red tape to enable these projects to proceed. The public relations fall out was very positive and our sappers were held in high esteem locally.