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YEAR SINCE
(Continued from Page 1)

tion and fought in the Hochwald beside the Rhine in the late winter offensive of 1944. It finished its fighting in northwest Germany in peat bog country and along the Kusten canal south of Emden and Wilhelmshaven.

In the final stage of the European struggle, the 1st Corps under Lt.-Gen. Charles Foulkes came from Italy to rejoin the 1st Canadian Army and it carried out a Netherlands operation which drove the Germans into Fortress Holland where they surrendered in a general collapse.

The campaign started with the savage fighting on the Normandy beaches June 6, 1944, when the 3rd Division and units of the 2nd Armored Brigade went ashore as part of the 1st British Corps of the British 2nd Army.

It was a narrow beachhead and for several hectic and uncertain weeks these Canadians fought stubbornly on their sector of the beachhead perimeter northwest of Caen. German S.S. and panzer forces tried desperately to break through to the beaches but failed.

Terrific battles raged at Bretteville, Villons des Buissons, Authie and other shattered Normandy villages along the Caen-Bayeux highway. Canadian casualties were high in those weeks. Normal divisional reinforcements were used up and finally some earmarked for the 2nd Division which was coming in later were put in the line to fill the gaps in the 3rd.

**Strength
Built Up**

Despite terrific gales in the Channel, the 2nd Army built up its strength and in late June the offensive from the beachhead began. The 8th Brigade of the 3rd Division attacked and captured Carpiquet, just west of Caen. For five days the brigade held on to its long finger of a salient stuck out across Carpiquet airfield and the Germans could not dislodge it.

Then the 2nd Army launched

an all-out attack which captured Caen. Two British divisions and the other two brigades of the 3rd Canadian Division took the city. Throughout July there was bitter fighting immediately beyond Caen and the Orne River. Gen. Simonds' 2nd Corps first became operational under the 2nd Army and the British-Canadian forces slowly won elbow space south of Caen.

The Germans knew that once they lost their grip on the pivotal Caen sector the whole Normandy front would collapse. They packed troops into the defense lines south of Caen, astride the long highway to Falaise. For weeks, the fighting raged with Canadians punching out at towns like May-sur-Orne, Tilly La Campagne, and Roquancourt. Casualties were high again.

The Royal Highland Regiment of Canada (Black Watch) of Montreal was practically wiped out in one attack. The Calgary Highlanders suffered heavily. So did the South Saskatchewan Regiment, the Essex Scottish, the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, and the Lincoln and Welland. The Fusiliers Mont-Royal and Maisonneuve made great sacrifices.

They were grim, depressing weeks with the Canadian infantry and tank crews paying a terrible price to keep up the pressure at Caen which was necessary in the over-all strategy to aid the American breakthrough further west at St. Lo. Because

1st Army

In early August the 1st Canadian Army took the field as an army. The 2nd Corps south of Caen came under its command along with the 1st British Corps in the line east and northeast of Caen.

Gen. Crerar's orders from Field Marshal Montgomery were to break the Caen hinge by punching through to Falaise and beyond. Gen. Crerar gave the 2nd Corps the spearhead role.

On the night of Aug. 7-8 it attacked after heavy bombers plastered the path of advance

and a roaring artillery barrage followed up the planes. Columns of the 2nd Armored Brigade with infantry of the indomitable 2nd Division in armored troop carriers being used for the first time struck south astride the Falaise highway.

By dawn they were through the enemy gun screens. They held the slopes south of Roquancourt and Fontenay. Gen. Crerar sent the 3rd Division south to mop up in the wake of the 2nd and turned loose the 4th Canadian and 1st Polish Armored Divisions. More than 3,000 tanks churned over the brown slopes and fields in gigantic clouds of dust and smoke. They swept through half a dozen towns, overran more German gun and mortar positions and were well on the highway stretch to Falaise when German S.S. troops were thrown in against the armor.

By a miraculous effort the enemy lined up another gun screen five miles north of Falaise. Tanks were hurled against Canadians and Poles. The Poles were embroiled in a dogfight on the left flank and slowed down. The spearhead of the 4th Division smashed into terrific resistance on Hill 195. Two regiments fought there until they were decimated. The drive to Falaise was stalled.

Another attack was mounted rapidly. No time could be lost. It was made in mid-afternoon a week later after another 1,000 bomber raid in close support. Some of the bombing was short. Some Canadian troop concentrations were bombed by mistake but the attack went on. Three hundred tanks poured over the Laison River valley

northeast of Falaise followed by the 3rd Division infantry in armored carriers.

On slopes south of the valley the battle was joined and fighting raged for four days. Meanwhile the 2nd Division hacked through the hilly, wooded Laize River valley northwest of Falaise to descend on the town.

Falaise was captured by the 2nd Division, and the rest of the corps—the Poles, the 4th and 3rd Divisions—rushed on to Trun southeast of Falaise.

In that area the 1st Canadian Army linked with the American 3rd and the escape gap for the Germans was closed. In the greatest debacle on the Western Front, the 7th German Army was destroyed. The pursuit of other German forces across France followed.

The Allies could see the prospect of victory in Europe by Fall. But the Germans showed amazing recuperative powers.

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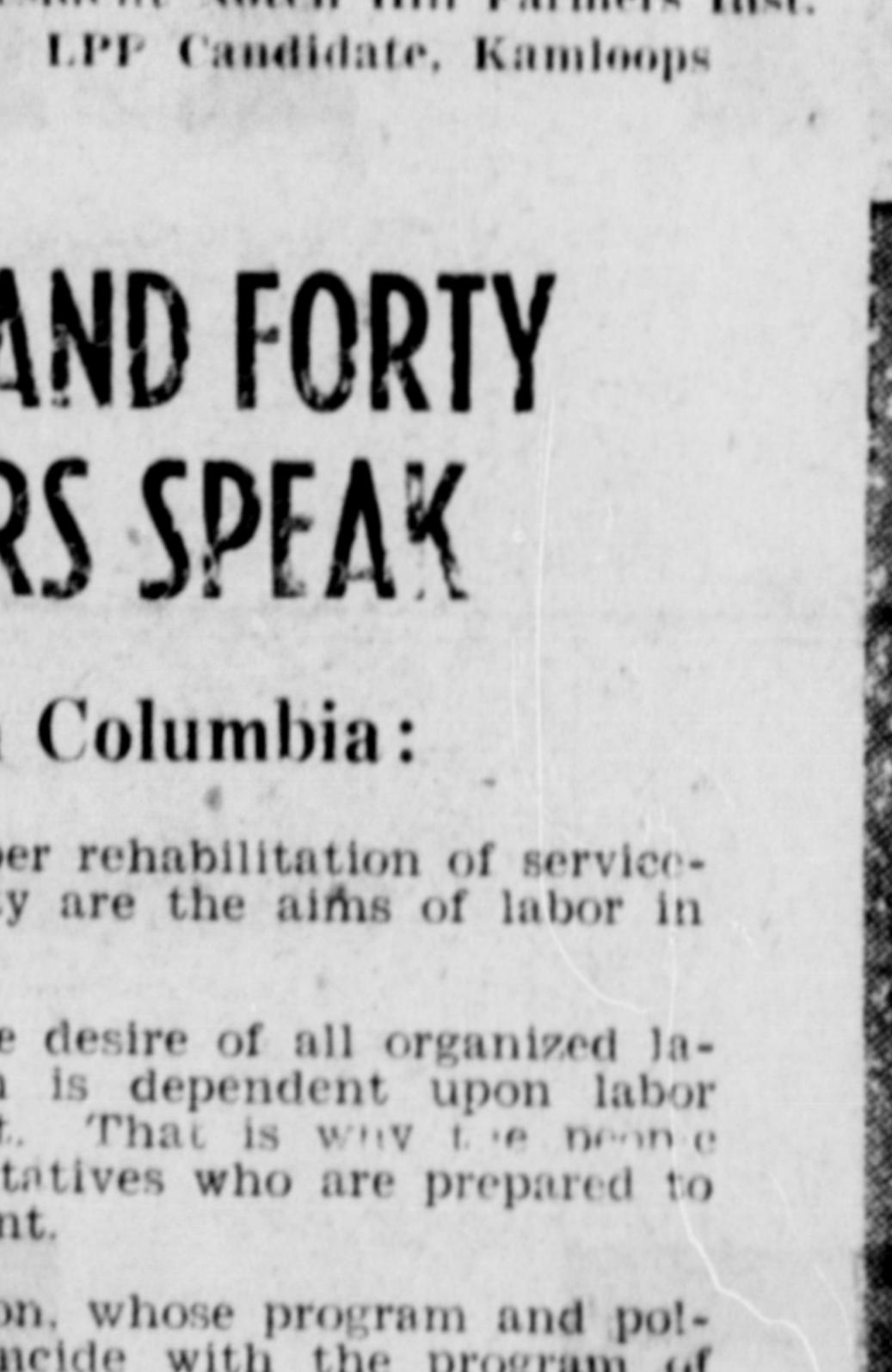
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