

Engineers and the Reconstruction of All Saints Church

The arrival of large numbers of Canadian Army troops in the United Kingdom during the first years of the Second World War created a crisis because of a shortage of accommodation and training facilities. The Royal Canadian Engineers soon found themselves involved in construction projects. Even the Divisional Engineers companies, whose primary activity was training for operations, were tasked with constructing their own barracks and other facilities. Some of the construction tasks undertaken by the Royal Canadian Engineer included building camps, barracks, hospitals, training areas, roads and airfields, and coastal defences.

One unusual project that was undertaken was the reconstruction of All Saint's Church in South Merstham (near Redhill), which had been destroyed by aerial bombing. In keeping with the tradition of military engineers helping others in need, a detachment of 1st Canadian Troops, RCE undertook the reconstruction. They billeted with the parishioners while they built a new church from the stones and timbers of the old church and the vicarage. With its unique Canadian prairie-style construction, the Southwark's Bishop consecrated the new church on Easter Day 1943.



This was but one of many such construction projects undertaken by our engineers in England during the war that earned the goodwill of the local populace.



In 1952, a new church building was consecrated, and the temporary church became 'Canada Hall.' The building continues to be used by the church to this day, as shown here in a 2013 photograph.