

Lieutenant Bentley Collingwood (B.C.) Hilliam (1890 – 1968)



B.C. Hilliam was born in Scarborough Yorkshire England and although he already had some success as an entertainer listed his occupation on enlistment as a rough carpenter and clerk. He was to have gone overseas with the 19th draft, however, his talents as a songwriter and organizer were recognized when he arrived in Ottawa. There he produced and directed a stage show attended by Sir Sam Hughes who was so impressed that he immediately took him out of the draft and commissioned as a lieutenant.

For the rest of the war Lt B.C. Hilliam took Canadian Army variety, charity and fund raising shows on tours throughout North America. His autobiography "Flotsams Follies - The Autobiography of B.C. Hilliam" covers this period of his life in considerable detail.

In the 1920s he returned to England and became Flotsam in the popular English music hall duo "Flotsam and Jetsam". BC Hilliam wrote most of the duos songs, played the piano and sang in a light, high tenor voice. By contrast, Jetsam (Malcom McEachern, an Australian) had a deep bass voice. Their material consisted of comic, patriotic, sentimental and social commentary songs.

His connections to the military did not end in 1918. During the Second World War he volunteered to entertain the troops, and traveled extensively with military stage shows to the various fronts.