Introduction

“Little Norway”

Toronto Island Airport 1940-1943
After spending four years in the Canadian [Army Military Police] Provost Corps, I completed the entrance exam for the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force in August 1965, being sworn-in on 6 October 65, and graduated from the [Metropolitan Toronto] police college in March 1966. After four months of walking the beat in #14 Division [Little Italy, which was another country to this western born guy] I was posted to #23 Division in Etobicoke. After just five weeks, I was detailed to a part-time posting at a special police station which only operated in the Canadian National Exhibition grounds during the month of August, closing on 2 September each year. Born and raised in western Canada, I had no idea of what to expect or the long Toronto history involved. First opened in September 1879 as the Industrial Exhibition, the name was changed in 1912, “Canadian National Exhibition” and a new police station was constructed in the grounds. That is where this rookie police officer arrived, and what an eye-opening experience, as the 1960s and 70s was the golden age for the grandstand shows where world class entertainers performed. Each day you were assigned a different beat in the C.N.E. grounds, and the most hated was standing seven long hours [boring, boring] guarding the Royal Bank of Canada. Out of four weeks each rookie cop got the boring bank duty twice; however I also received the beat on the Toronto Island Airport twice, pilots, aircraft, and the last week of August air show. During my police college training, all recruits received a course on the important historical parts of Toronto, which included Ward’s Island and the creation of the Toronto Island Airport, but nothing was said about the training of Norwegian pilots during WWII.
In 1968, a new senior police constable arrived at #23 Division and from time to time we were assigned to the same [scout] car. This senior constable [can’t recall his name] was posted to #23 for only four winter months, as he was assigned to one of three police boats which patrolled the Toronto harbour front. During those cold winter night shifts, [which he hated] we would get a warm coffee and he would relate his summer time duties to me. He was the very first person to tell me about the Norwegian Air Force that lived and trained at Little Norway from 1940 to April 1943. This came as a complete surprise and my early beginnings to learn more about this Norwegian wartime Toronto history.

As the years passed, I was always assigned duties at the CNE, and then in 1974, I was given the plum-job of the police force, driving the one and only police car on the CNE day shift. The following year, I was working plainclothes and for the ninth year in a row assigned duties at the CNE grounds, including the historical Island Airport.
This was police duty dress for the CNE in August 1975. After working the day-shift, I would stay and work an afternoon [pay duty] which included some big name entertainers. Yes, I got paid to sit in the front row and provide extra security for John Denver and old blue eyes, Frank Sinatra. During this same time period, I was slowly conducting my own research into the history of Little Norway and had a very good understanding of just what took place during the war years, on the very same grounds I was patrolling. In the last week of August 1975, a great world class airshow was performing each day at the CNE and one hot, humid, morning, my partner and I took the short ferry boat to the Toronto Island Airport control tower. The main ground floor of the control tower had a very good restaurant serving pilots, airport staff, and police officers, which was private from the prying eyes and madding crowds of the CNE grounds. As we walked to the control tower, I noticed to my left, one of the Toronto Police boats moored on the east side of the original aircraft hangar used by the Norwegians during WWII. Upon entering the control tower restaurant, there stood my old winter time partner, getting his morning brew. I wish I could recall his name, but I did take his photo, the very last meeting we ever had.
August 1975 ferry crossing to the Toronto Island Airport.
The same spot recorded thirty-five years earlier, late August 1940, the first year Norwegian student pilots taking the ferry from the Island Airport to their training and living quarters Little Norway. The first training class of eleven student pilots began on 21 September 1940, and twenty more soon followed.
The Toronto Island Airport control tower in late August 1975.
The [nameless] Toronto police officer who inspired all my research, holding his morning coffee. The CN Tower was very new to the Toronto skyline and still under construction.
The first history of the Norwegians who came to Toronto “Little Norway” appeared in the January and February 1942 issues of Canadian “White” comics, during the peak period of their training at Toronto Island Airport. When Canada passed the War Exchange Conservation Act in 1941, this opened the door to our first Canadian comic book publishing industry. Maple Leaf Publishing, Vancouver, and Anglo-American Publishing, Toronto, were the first to print Canadian comics in March 1941. In August 1941, three unemployed Toronto artists [brothers Andre and Rene Kulbach and Adrian Dingle] formed Hillborough Studios, 64 Grenville St. Toronto, and began printing their own comic books, Triumph Adventure Comics.
The first issue in August 1941, Vol. #1, issue #1

Each inside cover contained a letter from the editors with the month, volume, and issue number.
Dear Readers:

It is with pride that we advise you that TRIUMPH-ADVENTURE-COMICS has been very well received throughout the Dominion of Canada. We are gratified with the many excellent comments sent to us by our readers on the initial publication of our magazine.

The late Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada, wrote (as John Buchan) some of the best adventure stories ever written. There is a paragraph in his book "Mr. Standfast" secret service tales, that is quite worth while in these days of uncertainty and struggle. It reads:

"But the big courage is the cold-blooded kind, the kind that never lets go even when you're feeling empty inside, and your blood's thin, and there's no kind of fun or profit to be had, and the trouble's not over in an hour or two but lasts for months and years. One of the men here was speaking about that kind, and he called it fortitude. I reckon fortitude's the biggest thing a man can have—just to go on enduring when there's no guts or heart left in you."

The "big courage" the young people of the British Isles are showing when the Nazi bombers come over to devastate their homes is a thrilling example of fortitude. They are going through these terrible nights of darkness to make sure that in the very near future their homes and those of ours in Canada will again be lighted by a victorious peace.

The other day a reader advised us that a copy of TRIUMPH-ADVENTURE-COMICS had been mailed to a nephew in England. We think that our reader's example quite worth while going on, because we feel sure that many Canadian young people have a youthful cousin in Britain who would like to read this magazine.

Would you pass on your copy to a cousin in Britain, who lives in uncertainty throughout these long autumn nights? If this magazine has given you enjoyment, we feel certain it will do the same for your cousin in the British Isles.

If your copy of TRIUMPH-ADVENTURE-COMICS can broaden the victorious smile of a gallant British lad you have added a little something to his "fortitude". A smile triumphs over the cares of the long night, so that is why we suggest mailing this magazine to your cousin in Britain.

Yours for TRIUMPH,

The Editor
In total six issues were published by Hillborough Studios at 64 Grenville St. Toronto. No issue appeared in December 1941.

With the very first issue, it became clear these Canadian comics were different from the others which were just a creation of what might be classified as kid’s fantasy fun. The Triumph Comic drawings and story lines were much better researched and contained stories which could in fact educate Canadian wartime youth.

Churchill appeared in September 1941 and Capt. Cunnington in November 1941. Artist Adrian Dingle created these full-page drawings of WWII heroes and world leaders, the very same style the forbidden American comics were producing on Canadian and RCAF heroes. The Canadian fictional hero characters, like Spanner Preston, were also based on real WWII historical events.
The Canadian Prime Minister appeared in Vol. 1, #4, November 1941.
Today the comic book historians and rich collectors are only inspired by Canada’s first female super hero “Nelvana of the Northern Lights” and her dog Tanero, Vol. 1, #2 cover. The Canadian war content is totally over looked and forgotten. It’s all about money and greed, not history.
In March 1942, the talent of Adrian Dingle was recognized by the more powerful Bell Features comics, who offered to buy Hillborough Studios publishing. Adrian sold the company and most of his staff moved to the more powerful Bell Brothers organization in Toronto. Bell comics were now drawn by a large pool of artists and Dingle would later be promoted to manager in charge of production.
Twelve Bell Feature Canadian comic artists are listed in this 1942 full-page advertisement, created and drawn by Adrian Dingle, at 165 York St. Toronto.
The last two issues of Triumph Comics published by Hillborough Studios featured a two part eight-page strip series [ESCAPE] appearing in January 1942, Vol. 1, #5, and February 1942, Vol. 1, #6. The artist was named H.B. Caulfield, however I believe this was all drawn by Adrian Dingle, under an assumed name. This rare Norwegian comic page series is now public domain.
This is the story of a youthful Norwegian patriot who made a daring escape from his homeland, which is now under the heel of the German oppressor. This young man is now in Canada, ready once again to serve his country in its fight against the Nazi yoke.

To protect the young Norwegian and members of his family that are still in Norway, we have changed the names of the people in this story.

Peter Bergenson, a member of the King's Guards, discusses with his companions the possibilities of an invasion. They little realize that Oslo, their capital, has, at that very moment been captured by a surprise attack of the German army.

The door suddenly bursts open and the radio operator, with surprise and anxiety written on his face, hands the Commander a message.

Gentlemen—word has just been received from headquarters that Germany has attacked Oslo. It is now our great privilege to serve and defend our King and country.
PETER BERGENSON LISTENS INTENTLY AS HIS COMMANDER ANNOUNCES THE STARTLING NEWS OF THE UNWARRANTED ATTACK BY THE NAZIS. HE REALIZES THAT HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE IN DANGER. AT ALL COSTS THE HUN MUST BE STOPPED.

IN THE CITY OF OSLO, BOMBS RAIN DOWN ON THE DEFENCELESS POPULATION. THE FOG ENSHROUDED CITY EXPERIENCES ITS FIRST TASTE OF THE NAZIS RUTHLESS DESTRUCTION OF THE LIVES AND PROPERTY OF A PEACE LOVING PEOPLE.

DURING THE NIGHT, KING HAAKON AND HIS FAMILY SPEED THROUGH THE VALLEY TOWARD THE SAFETY OF ELVERUM.

AS DAWN BREAKS, THE ROYAL PARTY REACHES SAFETY AND THE PROTECTION OF THE KINGS GUARDS.

THE TRAITOROUS GERMAN ATTACK TAKES THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT BY SURPRISE. LOYAL OFFICIALS ACCOMPANY THEIR KING TO SAFETY IN THE INTERIOR. CARS ASSEMBLE IN FRONT OF THE ROYAL PALACE FOR A QUICK DASH TO THE NORTH.
The brave cadets of the King's Guard, cover the road with machine guns in an attempt to trap the German invaders.

The German panzer division speeds unchallenged along the country roads. They are totally unaware that the King's Guard have deployed and are in a position to give them a warm reception. The advancing Huns fall into the trap and are mercilessly slaughtered by the cadets.

Still the hordes of warring Germans come on. By their overwhelming superiority in numbers they force the valiant Norwegians to fall back toward the North.
The gallant men of the King's Guard take steady toll of the enemy—their losses are extremely heavy.

Swooping over the peaceful villages of Norway, the German planes drop tons of bombs on the civilian population.

Soldiers and civilians alike are forced to flee from the unprotected villages.

Many of the Norwegian youths, who fought bravely for their homeland, lost their lives in the futile attempt to stop the invaders.
KING HAAKON HAD BARELY REACHED THE SAFETY OF ELVERUM WHEN THE GERMANS ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM.

FLYING LOW OVER THE COUNTRY, A NAZI PILOT SEES THE KING AS HE CROSSES AN OPEN FIELD. THE GERMAN DIVES CLOSER—ALL GUNS BLAZING.

THE KING DROPS TO THE GROUND, BULLETS SPATTERING AROUND HIM. THE NAZI, CERTAIN THAT HE HAS KILLED KING HAAKON, FLIES ON.

ONLY WHEN THE PLANES ARE OUT OF SIGHT DOES THE KING SCRAMBLE TO HIS FEET AND HASTILY TAKE SHELTER AMONG THE TREES. KING HAAKON LIVES TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT.

DESPITE THE SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT OF THE INVADING FORCES, THE DEFENDERS FIGHT BRAVELY ON.
EVEN WITH A MURDEROUS BARRAGE OF SHELLS BURSTING AROUND THEM, THE DEFENDERS SPARE NO EFFORT TO STOP THE ENEMY.

OFFSHORE, THE BRITISH BATTLESHIPS POUR TONS OF SHELLS INTO THE NORWEGIAN PORTS THAT THE GERMANS HAVE CAPTURED. THE WARSPIE, FIRING TERRIFIC BROADSIDES, SOON REDUCES THE PORT OF NARVIK TO A MERE SHAMBLE, AND THOUSANDS OF THE HATED INVADERS ARE KILLED.

A SMALL BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE LANDS TO HELP THE VALENT NORWEGIANS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION.
THE THIN LINE OF BRITISH TROOPS, FIGHTING HEROICALLY, STEM THE ADVANCE OF THE HUNS.

IN LONDON, THE BRITISH CABINET MEET IN SOLEMN CONCLAVE. THEY DECIDE THAT DUE THE LACK OF PROPER EQUIPMENT, THE BRITISH TROOPS MUST EVACUATE THE NORWEGIAN PORTS.

PETER BERGENSEN AND HIS COMPANIONS PROTECT THE EVACUATING, ALLIED TROOPS. IN A DOGGED REAR GUARD ACTION THEY SUCCEED IN HOLDING BACK THE GERMAN WORLDS.

KING HAAKON BOARDS A BRITISH BATTLESHIP WHICH IS TO CARRY HIM TO ENGLAND FROM WHERE HE CAN CONTINUE THE FIGHT.

WHEN THE KING'S GUARD RECEIVE THE MESSAGE THAT THEIR KING IS SAFE, THEY SURRENDER TO THE GERMANS. ONLY FIVE OF THE GALLANT COMPANY REMAIN ALIVE.
The remaining five of the Kings Guard are imprisoned behind barbed wire fences and guarded by brutal Huns. The prospect of spending the rest of the war this way did not appeal to Peter.

I can't stomach these Huns any longer. Let's escape to England—then join up with our Air Force in Toronto. Are you with me?

I am, Peter, but can we get a boat that will stand the trip?

In a secluded hayloft, Peter and his companions plot their escape to England.

Father, we have decided to go on a long fishing trip. Can you arrange to buy us a boat?

The boys canvass the beaches and docks without finding a suitable boat for their purpose.

Follow the story of Peter Bergenson in his escape to Canada. Escape will be concluded in the next issue of TRIUMPH!
February 1942, Vol. 1, #6, the last comic issue
printed by Hillborough Studios, Toronto.
ESCAPE

PART II.

ILLUSTRATOR - H. CAULFIELD.

THIS STORY OF A NORWEGIAN COLLEGE YOUTH, PETER BERGENSON, BEGAN IN THE JANUARY ISSUE OF TRIUMPH. ONLY THE NAMES OF CHARACTERS ARE CHANGED SO AS TO PROTECT THEM AND THEIR RELATIVES IN NORWAY WHERE OUR HERO WAS A RECRUIT IN THE KING'S GUARDS.

WHEN THE GERMS INVADED THE COUNTRY, IN APRIL 1940, THEY LAID SIEGE TO THE CAPITAL CITY OF OSLO AND KING HAKON AND HIS GOVERNMENT WERE FORCED TO FLEE TO ENGLAND.

THE REMNANT OF THE KING'S GUARDS, INCLUDING PETER BERGENSON, WERE CAPTURED BY THE GERMS AND SENT TO A PRISON CAMP. LATER THEY WERE RELEASED ON CONDITION THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST THE GERMS AGAIN. REALISING THAT THEY MUST HELP TO FREE THEIR COUNTRYMEN OF NAZI TYRANNY, THE BOYS PLANNED TO ESCAPE TO ENGLAND.

OUR STORY OPENS AS THEY EXAMINE A BOAT FOR THE PURPOSE.

THEY FIND AN UNSERVANTLY BOAT AND PURCHASE IT WITH FUNDS SUPPLIED BY RELATIVES.

HOW MUCH, CAPTAIN?

TWO HUNDRED POUNDS!
The old fishing boat is towed into drydock.

The pumps are not timed properly, causing the drydock to drain too quickly, this leaves the boat without proper support and it starts to topple over.

Reverse that pump and fill her up again!

Any harm done?

A few of the old planks are cracked.
WILL THAT ACCIDENT DELAY US LONG? THE NAZIS ARE INQUISTEME.

WE WON'T KNOW TILL WE TRY AGAIN.

A SECOND ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE ROCK IS SUCCESSFUL.

OH BOY! WE'RE AWAY! NOW LET'S GET BUSY.

THE FISHING CRAFT IS COMPLETELY OVERHAULED AND MADE SEAWORTHY.

WELL, YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU WILL GET US SAFELY TO ENGLAND WHERE FREEDOM LIVES!

AS THE JOB NEARS COMPLETION, PETER PATS THE SIDES OF THE OLD HORSE SHIP.
With repairs completed, the boat is launched.

In a test run down the harbour, the old fishing vessel measures up to Peter's expectations.

Unknown to Peter and his friends, a Nazi pilot, riding high overhead, takes note of the little fishing boat in the harbour below.

The ship answers to her helm, but the compass is erratic and must be reset.
CALLING SCHARNHORST:
INTERCEPT FISHING CRAFT
OFF YOUR STARBOARD BOW.
INVESTIGATE.

THE NAZI
SCOUT PLANES
SWOOPS LOW
OVER THE LITTLE
FISHING CRAFT
AS A BOMB FROM
THE BATTLESHIP
SPREADS TOWARD
IT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING
HERE?
WE'RE
FISHERMEN,
ABOUT OUR
BUSINESS.

PULLING ALONGSIDE, A NAVAL OFFICER
QUESTIONS THE OCCUPANTS OF THE BOAT.
Left to themselves again, the young Norwegians return to port and seek out an old and trusted captain to consult him regarding the boat's compass.

With all the skill of these old hands I'll fix this compass. Why it guide you to the shores of Old England, where our brothers prepare to return and free Norway of the Nazi tyranny.

Peefly manipulating the instruments of his trade, the old skipper makes the necessary adjustments while the boys look on.

Under cover of darkness, supplies are loaded on board as the patriots prepare to sail.

Courageously Peter and his friends glide their craft into the fiord, under the very nose of an enemy cruiser.

They are hailed from the cruiser's look-out.
AT SEA, THE NORWEGIAN YOUTHS PRETEND TO BE BUSY FISHING.

TRAVELLING BY NIGHT, THE LITTLE CRAFT SILENTLY CREEPS INTO A PORT ON THE SHETLAND ISLANDS.

ACH! THESE NORWEGIANS, SO THEY FISH FOR THEIR PEOPLE. HA, HA! THE FOOLS DO NOT KNOW THAT GERMANS TAKE EVERYTHING.

YOU SAY YOU ARE NORWEGIANS, CAN YOU PROVE YOUR IDENTITY?

YES, WE WISH TO JOIN OUR FORCES IN ENGLAND!

UPON LANDING, A BRITISH OFFICER QUESTIONS THE LADS CAREFULLY.

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE BOYS LEAVE THE SHETLANDS FOR A HUNT IN SCOTLAND.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT JOINING THE AIR FORCE?

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, LET'S SEE THE COMMANDANT ABOUT IT!

THE BOYS ARE SOON OUTFITTED ONCE MORE IN THE UNIFORM OF THEIR KING.

YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE AIR FORCE. PREPARE TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.

A FEW DAYS LATER, PETER RECEIVES ORDERS TO LEAVE FOR CANADA, WHERE THE NORWEGIAN AIR FORCE IS TRAINING.

AS ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE PLANE FLY OVERHEAD, A BOAT DOCKS AT AN EASTERN CANADA PORT, TO DESEMBARK PETER AND HIS COMPAVERS.

WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF THEIR ARRIVAL, PETER BERGENSON IS SOON FLYING A TRAINING PLANE HIGH ABOVE "LITTLE NORWAY", THE OUTPOST OF FREEDOM ON THE SHORES OF LAKE ONTARIO. WITH THOUSANDS OF HIS FELLOWS, HE PREPARES HIMSELF TO AVENGE THE HATED NAZI SCOURGE WHICH HOLD HIS HOMELAND IN ITS TERRIFYING GRASP. HE SALUTS THE CANADIAN PEOPLE WHO FIGHT BY HIS SIDE TO ASSIST IN BRINGING FREEDOM TO HIS HOMELAND.
This Canadian “White” comic book adventure was in fact based on real events, which I believe were related to artist Adrian Dingle, from which he completed his comic strip drawings under the artist name H. B. Caulfield.

This is the original Norwegian boat in which these three young men sailed to Scotland during thirteen days of terrible storms and Nazi surveillance aircraft.
They were found by a British Royal Navy destroyer and taken to England and then sailed for Little Norway at Toronto, Canada.
Triumph Comics are now owned and published by Bell Features and Publishing Co. Ltd. at 165 York St., Toronto. Adrian Dingle continues to honor WWII heroes with a full-page drawing.
On the night of July 7, 1941, Sergeant James A. Ward, age 21, of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, was second pilot of a "Winston" bomber which was then returning from an attack on the enemy. The bomber, flying at an altitude of 13,000 feet, was attacked by a German Messerschmitt "110." His ship was hit by a cannon shell and bomb fragments. The wing was sighted. Flames were pouring out from a damaged gasoline pipe.

Sergeant Pilot Ward volunteered to climb out on the wing and attempt to extinguish the fire with an engine saw. "I gripped the metal wing with my left-hand" said Ward in an interview, and "tightly held down the side of the fuselage, which gave me a foothold. I held on with one hand until I got two footholds on the wing, then I caught hold of some sections of the wing and managed to get down flat."

One picture portrays the dramatic instant when Sergeant Pilot Ward first extinguished the fire in the fuselage. At last, nearly exhausted by his efforts, he managed with some difficulty to get back into the aircraft. A feature in this issue shows Sergeant Pilot Ward after the "Victory Green" the highest distinction for gallantry the Empire can confer on its sons.
December 1940

August 1975

The full “Little Norway” history in photos and research follows in two parts.