NOTE

This is a preliminary narrative and should not be regarded as authoritative. It has not been checked for accuracy in all aspects, and its interpretations are not necessarily those of the Historical Section as a whole.

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Directorate of History
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Ottawa, Canada
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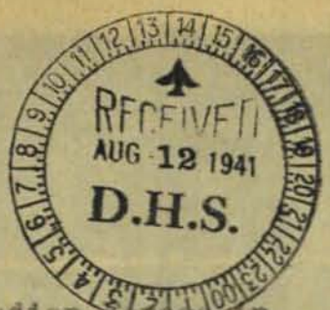

SECRET

CANCELLED

15
13 Mar. 41

Activities of Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom, 1939-40.

Canadian Military Headquarters,
2 Cockspur Street, S.W. 1,
London, ENGLAND.

The Director,
Historical Section,
General Staff,
National Defence Headquarters,
Ottawa, CANADA.

1. A further report is presented.

2. This report consists basically of a copy of an article prepared by me at the suggestion of Lt.-Gen. A.G.L. McNAUGHTON for the Canadian Geographical Journal of Ottawa. As stated in my Report No. 10, however, I have added to this certain material which could not be published at the present time but which possesses historical interest or importance.

3. The arrangement of this material is as follows:

APPENDIX "A" Article "The New Canadian Corps" written for Canadian Geographical Journal.

APPENDIX "B" Notes to the article: Sources of information and additional facts.

APPENDIX "C" Special note on the Norwegian project of April, 1940.

APPENDIX "D" Special note on the Canadian aspect of the campaign in France, June, 1940.

APPENDIX "E" Letter from General McNaughton, 24 Feb 41.

4. It is obvious that the material on the events of the year 1940, here presented, can constitute nothing more than a very brief and incomplete sketch of those events. It may, however, be of some slight ultimate assistance to the Official Historian in indicating certain sources of information and providing a contemporary outline which may help him in assembling the framework

of his narrative.

C.P.S.

(C.P.Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q.

REPORT No. 15, APPENDIX "A"

THE NEW CANADIAN CORPS

On Christmas Eve, 1940, the Prime Minister of Canada made an announcement which his countrymen recognized as marking an epoch in the effort of the Dominion in the Second World War. A Canadian Army Corps, he said, would exist in the United Kingdom as from Christmas Day.

To the minds of people throughout the country, and to those of Canadians beyond the seas, the phrase "Canadian Corps" suddenly called up a host of memories. Even those too young to remember the last war knew its meaning well. More than any other words could do, these two expressed the essence of the national recollection of 1914-1918: years of pride and sorrow, when earth's foundations were shaking almost as they are to-day, and when the soldiers of Canada, intervening for the first time on European battlefields, helped to set at rest a menace to the peaceful development of the world which had come out of Germany, and bought a new status for their country with their skill, their courage and their blood.

THE FIRST CANADIAN CORPS.

It was on 13 September, 1915, that the first Canadian Corps came into existence. There had been Canadian fighting units in France since December, 1914, when Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry landed there. The First Canadian Division went to France in February, 1915, and entered the line for the first time in March. Next month, in front of Ypres, it stood up to the first German gas attack and wrote one of the proudest pages in its country's history. Now a Second Canadian Division was arriving in France; and the consequence was the formation of the Canadian Corps, commanded by Lieutenant-General E.A.H.Alderson (who had formerly commanded the First Division) and consisting of the two divisions plus corps troops.

This was the beginning of a fighting career counting few reverses and many triumphs, which continued until the cease-fire bugles sounded at Mons on 11 November,1918. The Third Division joined the Corps just before the end of 1915; and in August of the following year the Fourth Division crossed from England to France. This raised the Corps to its final full strength, at least in infantry; for the Fifth Division, though formed in England, never arrived in the field as such, save that the Fifth Divisional Artillery joined the Corps, adding materially to its strength in guns, and fought until the Armistice. In May of 1916 General Alderson was succeeded as Corps Commander by another officer, from the British Regular Army, Sir Julian Byng - afterwards Lord Byng of Vimy and a post-war Governor General; and when General Byng left the Corps thirteen months later a Canadian officer, Major-General (afterwards General) Sir Arthur Currie, was placed in the command, and continued to hold it until the end of the war. Under his direction the Corps became a more autonomous force - more independently and distinctively Canadian than it had been before.

On the career of the old Corps in battle, it is hardly necessary to dwell at length. For it, as for the rest of the British forces on the Continent, 1916 was a hard and bloody year; the names of St.Eloi, Mount Sorrel and the Somme serve to commemorate it. The spring of 1917, however, brought a full measure of triumph and reward, in the great "set-piece" attack on Vimy Ridge. In this operation, most carefully prepared over a period of more than three months, "for the first and only time all four of our divisions attacked simultaneously, and for the first time the possibility of breaking through a fortified position was demonstrated". It was an important and heartening success for the Allied arms; but from the point of view of Canada, Vimy had a further special significance. The Canadian official historian, Colonel Duguid, has thus expressed it:

"There the Corps was consolidated into one homogeneous entity; the most powerful self-contained striking force on any battle-front".

Later in the same year the Corps won further victories at Hill 70 and (at a heavy cost) in the mud at Passchendaele. In the great German attacks in the Spring of 1918 it was not involved (though certain Canadian mobile forces, cavalry and motor machine-gun units, distinguished themselves). Its opportunity came with the moment for the counter-offensive, and in the tremendous assault delivered in front of Amiens on 8 August ~~——~~ "the black day of the German Army" Ludendorff called it - the Corps, with the Australians alongside it, effected a complete strategic and tactical surprise and crashed through the enemy defences to a depth of eight miles. This was the beginning of the end, the first of those "Hundred Days" of uninterrupted victory which led to the Armistice. Throughout this period General Currie wielded with sureness and confidence the splendid weapon which four years of fire had formed and tempered; and in these final months the Corps reached its highest pinnacle of efficiency and achievement. The part which it had played in the drama of the German overthrow received symbolic recognition on 13 December, when the First and Second Canadian Divisions marched across the Rhine at Cologne and Bonn as parts of the Army of Occupation. Within a few months the men of the Corps had again become civilians, and the Dominion was busily engaged in dismantling the great fighting machine which it had created for the emergency, and reducing its defence services to almost less than their pre-war scale of insignificance. In those happy far-off days a second World War seemed to most Canadians quite unthinkable.

The remarkable force which thus came to the end of its career bequeathed to the people of Canada a tradition of service, sacrifice and victory; but it left behind it other things too. One of them

was a wealth of military experience acquired in the hardest of schools, experience which,far from perishing with the disbandment of the Corps, continued in the years that followed to furnish the officers of the Dominion's military forces with much material for thought. Reading and re-reading the records of 1914-1918, they traced in them the causes of the Canadians' success in action: and, nowise depreciating the influence of their countrymen's native courage and military aptitude, they realized that these had been turned to the best advantage by sound organization.

They recognized the particular importance of the fact that the Corps had been a national unit, with all the force and vigour of national pride and national tradition to drive it forward. They noted, too, that certain special elements of strength had been present in its make-up. The technical arms of the service had been stronger in the Canadian Corps than in any similar formation in the British service. For instance, from the spring of 1918 each Canadian Division possessed an Engineer Brigade of three Engineer Battalions and a Pontoon Bridging and Transport Unit, a considerably larger provision than was found in the divisions of the British Army.The Canadian Signal service was likewise stronger in proportion than its British counterpart. Particularly remarkable was the strength of the Canadian artillery, which as already note, had five divisional artilleries for four divisions, and also possessed other extra elements not found in the ordinary British corps. And not the least of the Corps' advantages was the system by which Canadian formations - divisions and brigades - had double staffs: each brigade, for example, having two staff captains instead of one. This arrangement eased the strain on the staff during protracted operations, minimized the reduction of personal efficiency inevitable in their later stages, and contributed materially to the admitted general excellence of Canadian Staff work. All these things

must in fairness be kept in mind in comparing the performance of the Canadian Corps with that of other formations which, without these advantages, fought hard and effectively.

It has been remarked that by 1918 the word "Corps" was "a very uncertain and indefinite military term". The nature of the Canadian Corps lent force to this observation; for in the special features of organization just noted, and in its relative autonomy in tactical and even in strategic matters, which increased towards the end of the war, it approximated almost more to an Army than an Army Corps.

It was not merely sound organization and directed national spirit, however, that made the Old Corps what it was. Added to these was the skill and competence with which all ranks did their duty: a skill, the outgrowth both of careful training and hard experience, which can in the best sense be called professional - though only comparatively few of the officers and men of the Corps were regular soldiers. It was this skill, common alike to the infantry soldier fighting his way forward, and the staff officer who drafted the battle plan and supervised its execution, which enabled the Corps to combine effectiveness in action with a relatively low cost in casualties. It appeared particularly in the smooth and effective co-operation between the various arms which was an especially notable feature of the battles of the Hundred Days; and nowhere was it more admirably displayed than in the manner in which the Canadian artillery was used to prepare the way for the assaulting infantry. The policy of General Currie, as described by his successor, the Commander of the present Corps (in an article written in 1933), was "to pay the price of victory, so far as possible, in shells and not in the lives of men"; and the same authority, commenting on the fact that during the last Hundred Days the guns supporting the Canadian Corps fired nearly 3,300,000 shells, has

written further, "I know of no organization in the history of the War which was able to produce such a high ratio in shell to troops, nor any in which th price paid for victory was lower in personnel".(1)

It is interesting to note that two of the artillery officers who played significant parts in this work in the last war now hold the most important appointments in the Canadian Army. Brigadier-General (now Lieutenant-General) A.G.L. McNaughton, who was General Officer Commanding Canadian Corps Heavy Artillery in 1918, now commands the new Corps abroad; and Lieutenant-Colonel (now Major-General) H.D.G. Crerar, who in 1918 was Counter Battery Officer of the Corps, is now Chief of the General Staff at Ottawa. This may serve to symbolize the manner in which the military experience gained in 1914-1918 is being turned to account in the present conflict; were space available, these two important appointments could be made the starting point of a long catalogue of names.

THE CANADIANS IN BRITAIN, 1939-40.

Such was the old Corps, whose traditions are not the least important item in the outfit of the present one. In this sense the history of the new formation began long before 25 December, 1940, when it was officially created; and even in a narrower sense it can only be understood by reviewing events in Canada and in Europe stretching back to the day when Germany invaded Poland.

Not so many months before the outbreak of the Second World War, British statesmen were talking in terms which excluded the idea of a British army fighting again on the continent of Europe. In these circumstances it is not perhaps altogether surprising that Canadian statesmen of more than one party, as recently as March 1939, declared their belief that Dominion expeditionary forces were unlikely to be required in a future war; but the prediction was soon falsified by the event.

When the invasion of Poland began on 1 September, 1939, the Canadian Government, supplementing certain earlier precautions taken on 25 August, issued orders for the mobilization from the Militia of a force of two divisions with ancillary troops. This measure, taken in accordance with plans previously prepared, was calculated to provide against any needs which might arise, at home or abroad. In contrast with the system adopted in 1914, when new units were created for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and the Militia regiments merely contributed officers and men to them, the units of the new "Canadian Active Service Force" were actual Militia regiments mobilized for the purpose and completed to war establishment by voluntary enlistment. They thus carried with them on this new service regimental traditions dating, in some cases, from before the birth of the Dominion, as well as those of the C.E.F. units which they perpetuated. Every man attested into the Active Service Force was a volunteer.

It is worth noting in passing, that in November of 1940 the ancient term "Militia", formerly the official appellation of all branches of the Canadian military service, was by Order-in-Council finally discarded in favour of the term "The Canadian Army". The regiments on permanent duty were henceforth designated as Active: those still unmobilized, known till then as the Non-Permanent Active Militia, became Reserve units of the Army. The term Canadian Active Service Force passed out of official usage, and the force then serving abroad was labelled Canadian Army (Overseas).

On 19 September, 1939, it was announced that the First Division would in due course proceed across the Atlantic. General Crerar (then holding the rank of Brigadier) crossed to the United Kingdom to set up a Canadian headquarters there; and on 17 December the first contingent of the Division landed at a British port. Accompanying it was the divisional commander, Major-General McNaughton. Another contingent arrived before the end of the year; and a third, composed of ancillary troops early in February, 1940. As a result of these

arrivals, there were approximately 25,000 Canadian troops in Britain. The ancillary units represented a part of the Canadian provision of "corps troops" for the British corps which, it had been assumed, the division would join in due course. Already, however, it had been announced that the Second Canadian Division would also go abroad; and the first small units of this formation, which was to be commanded by Major-General V.W.Odlum, another officer who had served with distinction in the last war, landed with the Fourth and Fifth Contingents on 22 May and 21 June. The main contingents of the division disembarked on 2 August and 5 September, and with its concentration virtually completed General Odlum now took command, on 6 September. The last infantry units did not join it, however, until the arrival of the Eighth Contingent from Canada, which took place on Christman Day, - the day on which the Canadian Corps came into existence and the Second Division came under the Corps Commander.

Long before the Second Division even began to arrive in England, the world had been shaken by tremendous events . In the drama of the spring and early summer of 1940 the First Division, and the other Canadian troops then abroad, played a part, though it was a small one. To carry on the theatrical metaphor, it consisted mainly of waiting hopefully in the wings; and on the one occasion when the Canadians in any numbers did actually manage to get on to the stage the curtain was suddenly rung down before they could play the role for which they had been intended.

NORWAY.

The brief and brutal campaign in Poland with which the war began was succeeded, it will be remembered, by a long winter's lull. During this period the First Canadian Division was training in England - training with an intensity which impressed those who

saw it - and looking forward eagerly to the day when it might join the British Expeditionary Force in France. April of 1940 found it putting the finishing touches to its equipment and its efficiency, and anticipating a very early move. Then, on the 9th of the month, came the sudden and unscrupulous German assault on Norway, and the urgent need for sending troops to assist the Norwegians against the invaders.

In these circumstances, it was natural that the War Office, with most of its own well-trained troops already across the Channel, should turn to the Canadians. The exposition of the Scandinavian campaign which Mr. Churchill later gave to the British House of Commons may be recalled here. It was considered essential to recover from the enemy the port and aerodrome of Trondheim. With this end in view, two "diverionary attacks" were undertaken from the north and south - from Namsos and Aandalsnes respectively. Following these, a frontal attack was to be launched against Trondheim itself. In this last, it was considered, a Canadian component might play a valuable part, and at the request of the War Office a small force, composed of picked units and individuals, and commanded by a specially selected officer, was rapidly organized for the purpose.(2)

In high hopes and with great secrecy this little contingent moved off; but it got no further than an embarkation port in Scotland. The deceptive good fortune at first encountered by the subsidiary attacks led to the optimistic conclusion that the main assault would not be necessary, and it was cancelled accordingly. The Canadian detachment's occupation was gone, and after a short period in reserve they found themselves back at Aldershot, a station of which (they doubtless felt) they had already seen enough. Only <u>two</u> Canadians were actually allowed to take part in the Norwegian

campaign. They were privates of a Saskatchewan regiment who had volunteered as interpreters, and who were lent to a British Unit in this capacity. They spent ten days in Norway, three of them in actual fighting in the Dombaas area - for they used their rifles as well as their linguistic knowledge - before they were safely evacuated on a destroyer. (The battalion to which they were attached was part of a famous regiment from the North of England; and the two interpreters have left it on record that they found the English of the Norwegians easier to understand than that of the soldiers of this battalion). ③

This month of April, a month of disappointment and frustration, was nevertheless distinguished for the Canadians by marks of royal favour. On the 8th Their Majesties the King and Queen visited them at Aldershot; and from the 17th to the 24th inclusive two Canadian regiments, first the Royal 22e Regiment, and then the Toronto Scottish Regiment (M.G) mounted guard at Buckingham Palace. It was not the first time that Canadians had guarded the royal residence; but the French Canadians of the "Vandoo" were the first non-English speaking troops to perform this duty, and the occasion naturally attracted considerable notice. The King is Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal 22e, and the Queen Colonel-in-Chief of the Toronto Scottish.

THE LOW COUNTRIES.

The British evacuation of Central Norway was followed immediately by a still more violent and more tragic phase of the war, beginning with the German violation of the neutrality of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg on 10 May. Holland was overrun in a few days of bitter and ruthless fighting. An Anglo-French army went forward to assist the Belgians, only to find its communications with the main French forces severed by a German thrust in the vicinity of the Sedan, followed on 21 May and succeeding days by a mechanized dash to the Channel coast and a movement northward along it which threatened to cut every link between England and the British Expeditionary Force.

In this moment of desperate peril it was natural that proposals should again be made for utilizing the First Canadian Division, which was one of the very few formations in the United Kingdom in an advanced state of equipment and training, and which, needless to say, was more than anxious to get into the fight. On 23 May, General McNaughton was told that the British command proposed to entrust to him the task of restoring the communications of the B.E.F. with the Channel ports, and with this idea in view he was requested to undertake a personal reconnaissance. The Canadian troops had been on short notice for a move since 10 May; now those detailed to take part in the proposed venture rapidly loaded their equipment and started for embarkation points. Meanwhile their commander, within a few hours of receiving the first intimation of the scheme, was speeding across the channel in a destroyer to see things for himself. With him went a few staff officers and a small party of Canadian military police. He visited both Calais and Dunkirk, interviewed the British and French officers on the spot, collected all possible information, and on the afternoon of the 24th was back in London, reporting first to the military chiefs and then to Mr. Churchill and the War Cabinet what he had seen and heard. The decision of the powers was that the existing military situation would have to be dealt with by the men and guns already in France: there was not sufficient time to move troops with the necessary heavy equipment from the United Kingdom to the critical points. The proposed operation was called off; and Canadian soldiers who had already boarded transports were disembarked and moved back to Aldershot ("A very flat feeling for all of us", wrote one of their officers). Twice more in this same week - the one immediately preceding the surrender of the Belgian army - further proposals were made for using the Canadians, and on the first of these occasions troops were actually under orders; but the authorities decided that landing more men on the French channel coast would not contribute to the salvation of the B.E.F.

The safety of the United Kingdom itself was now becoming a matter of grave anxiety; and for defence against invasion the Canadians were one of the most important weapons in the British armoury. On 29 May the First Division and its ancillary units were constituted as a self-contained "Canadian Force" and on the same day they moved to an area in the Midlands where they would be in a position to strike rapidly and heavily at any invading force which might succeed in penetrating the defences of the East Coast. (6) Here they remained during "Dunkirk week", while across the Channel the Navy, the Army and the R.A.F. held off the exultant enemy and saved the British Expeditionary Force from destruction by an improvised combined operation which will rank as a classic for all time.

THE BATTLE OF FRANCE.

The Germans, however, did not turn against England. They occupied the shell of Dunkirk on 4 June; and the next day they launched a terrific assault upon the main French armies in the region of the Somme. If France was to be saved from collapse it was now essential to provide a new British Expeditionary Force to support her. There were few British troops left upon her soil, but it was resolved to despatch from England such further divisions as were sufficiently trained and equipped for the purpose, and to send Lieutenant-General Sir Alan Brooke to take command. The Canadians' rôle now changed again; they suddenly found themselves back in Aldershot, where on 8 June they had the honour of another visit by Their Majesties the King and Queen; and within a few days they were moving out on their way to France. Again their hopes were high; they might, perhaps, be vouchsafed a share in saving the situation, even at the eleventh hour. (7)

The situation, unfortunately, was past saving. In the event, only the leading elements of the First Canadian Division - one infantry brigade with its attached technical units and some artillery (8) - actually trod the soil of France. Most of these troops

landed at Brest on the morning of 14 June - the day on which the Germans marched into undefended Paris. The infantry immediately entrained and began to move up country towards the centre of operations, while their transport came on by road. By the early morning of the 15th the trains were approaching the appointed divisional concentration area. The men aboard them had no idea whatever of what was happening beyond their own range of vision. In fact, however, a discussion on the 14th between Generals Weygand, Georges and Brooke had resulted in the agreed conclusion that since organized resistance by the main French armies was virtually at an end it was hopeless to think of holding out in Brittany with the forces still available; and that evening the Cabinet in London had decided to order the withdrawal of the British forces through Cherbourg and Brest. The Canadian movement then in progress was immediately put in reverse.(9)

The new orders reached the Canadian infantry battalions in the small hours of the morning, through the mouths of French railway transport officers on the moonlit platforms of stations far in the interior. There was temporary doubt of their authenticity (for in those days false orders were only too common); but confirmation was sought and obtained from competent authority, and the various trains started back towards the coast. That which had penetrated farthest, carrying the brigade headquarters and a well-known Highland regiment,(10) received the instructions at Sablé-sur-Sarthe, rather more than 200 miles by rail from Brest. The troops felt some uncertainty as to the disposition and intentions of the train crew; but a Highland captain took up his station in the engine-cab, provided with both red wine and ready cash for the purpose of influencing the driver (while in the event of these arguments failing, there were men with sub-machine-guns in the tender); and the journey began, with "all ranks keen and ready for trouble" and the 27-car train "a veritable travelling fortress".(11)

Thus they clanked on through the countryside, expecting momentarily to collide with a German armoured column: a little moving island of Canadian territory, with the Third French Republic falling into ruin all about it. As things turned out, they got through without mishap, though by no means by the route intended; for (in consequence, it appears, of some flustered railway official en route handing the train crew the wrong orders) they came out on the coast, not at Brest, but at St.Malo. Luckily, however, there was a British transport in the harbour; and on the 16th these troops found themselves back at Aldershot yet once more. They had been in France a little less than forty-eight hours. The other units were duly carried back to Brest and thence to England; and the divisional commander, who had received news of the orders countermanding the movement while at an English port preparing to embark, had the satisfaction, after a considerable period of anxiety, of hearing that the whole of his advanced brigade-group, and the gunners, were safely back on British soil.(12) No other Canadian troops had actually sailed, though many had been aboard ship ready to sail when the new orders were received.

It had been one more bitterly disappointing experience for the Dominion troops, who by now were translating C.A.S.F. as "Canadians Almost Saw France". Of the voyage back across the Channel, one officer recorded " We all feel a terrific sense of exasperation and frustration"; nor were his feelings smoothed by reading later what he called " a lot of damned fool and misleading newspaper reports of our trip".(13) One especially sore point was the loss of the brigade's transport vehicles, destroyed (under orders from higher authorities in the area) before embarkation; the only bright spot here was the fact that the one Canadian artillery regiment which got to France had, by the use of a little pertinacity, managed to bring its guns back with it, despite instructions that they too were to be destroyed. Reviewing the whole episode with what objectivity they could muster, the sole satisfaction the Canadian officers and men could find in it was that throughout the affair they had carried out orders received

from higher authority; that they had had to withdraw without meeting the enemy whom they had longed to encounter was no fault of theirs.

Fortunately, the affair had passed off almost without losses in men. There were no casualties due to enemy action. One non-commissioned officer of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals died as the result of a motorcycle accident on the Brest-Morlaix road. In the first days after the return to England, a considerable number of men were missing and were believed to have become prisoners; but small parties and individuals continued to turn up smiling until early in 1941 the total was down to five. Of these, two were known to be in prison camps in German-occupied France; while two more were interned in unoccupied France and a third in Switzerland. Still more recently, news came that two of these men (one prisoner and one internee) had succeeded in making their way to England. (14)

IN THE FORTRESS.

The position of Britain after Dunkirk needs no laboured exposition. She had saved her army, but the army had lost most of its equipment; and she was now faced with the imminent threat of invasion by a most powerful enemy, flushed with victory, who controlled the whole western coastline of Europe, from the North Cape to the Pyrenees. It was a high and terrible moment in her history; but under the inspired leadership of the new Prime Minister whom the crisis had made, she rose to meet it in a manner worthy of the conquerors of Napoleon. Her armies dug and sweated on the beaches, the roads and the aerodromes; her navy watched ceaselessly for the invader's barges; her splendid air force, superior to the enemy's in all save numbers, shot his attacking squadrons out of the skies day after day; a new citizen army of Local Defence Volunteers - since re-christened the Home Guard - sprang into existence to meet the threat of the German air-borne infantry; and in the factories, from one end of the country to the other, the workers of Britain bent their backs to the task, not only of replacing the arms and equipment lost in France and Flanders, but of providing those needed for vast

* This passage was deleted by the British Censor from the version for publication. C.B.S. 17 Apr 41.

new armies. Our task now is to record the part - necessarily a relatively small one - played by the Canadian troops in the events of that amazing summer.

With invasion now a possibility at any moment, the "Canadian Force", reunited and reconstituted, returned to its role of Dunkirk week: a striking force in reserve, ready to launch a crushing counter-attack against any invading body which might succeed in getting through the coastal defences. On 23 June it rolled out of Aldershot once more to take up a station in a Midland area - (15) though not the same which it had occupied in May. Here again, however, it did not linger. Within ten days it was on the move to (16) yet another section of the country where it was considered that its services might be more useful in the anticipated emergency.

The arrival of the Canadians in their new area was closely followed by an important change in organization. The British authorities had intimated that they desired to form a new Corps, incorporating the Canadian Force within it, and to utilize the services of General McNaughton to command it. The Dominion Government agreed; and the General handed over the First Canadian Division to another distinguished officer, Major-General G.R.Pearkes, on 18 July, retaining command of the Canadian Force until 21 July, when the whole was absorbed in the new 7th Corps. General McNaughton's appointment as Corps Commander brought with it promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-General. The Corps was a powerful force; it comprised a number of British formations in addition to the First Canadian Division and its ancillary units, and included formidable armoured components.(17) The staff was drawn from both British and Canadian sources. This organization lasted until it was in part merged with the new Canadian Corps.

Through the summer and autumn, while the invasion clouds hung heavy in the English skies, the troops of the 7th Corps laboured incessantly on perfecting their own efficiency and the arrangements for meeting the assault which they fervently hoped would be attempted. It did not materialize; but there is good reason to believe that it was intended. In August the German Air Force began to make large-scale attacks upon England which mounted to a ferocious climax early in September; the great raids on London began on the 7th of the month. Everything indicated that the Luftwaffe was attempting to gain mastery of the air as an immediate preliminary to invasion. The defending army now made its final dispositions. The Corps was warned that the moment might be at hand; and for nearly a fortnight the troops were kept on very short notice,(18) hourly expecting to hear the church-bells that would warn the people of England that Hitler was putting it to the touch. On 11 September Mr. Churchill told the nation that the coming week ranked "with the days when the Spanish Armada was approaching the Channel, and Drake was finishing his game of bowls; or when Nelson stood between us and Napoleon's Grand Army at Boulogne".(19) Four days later the Germans made their greatest air attack; and that day the R.A.F. shot down 185 of their machines. The invasion did not come. Gradually the imminent menace was dissipated; the tension relaxed; and the Canadians resigned themselves to the fact that their hopes of action had again gone unrealized.

In the midst of this crisis, the Second Division came into corporate existence. It was immediately assigned such operational rôles as its training and equipment warranted; and after three months' additional hard and intensive training it was considered ready to take its place in the order of battle of a fighting Corps. The consequence was the organization of the new Canadian Corps before the end of the year. Except for a few British units which remained under the Corps for the moment, General McNaughton's

command was again exclusively Canadian. It remained for Canada to replace these units with Canadian ones and to supply certain additional Corps troops and a proper proportion of Army troops, a task which had been anticipated and is now well in hand. Beyond this, the Overseas Army Programme for 1941, announced by Mr. King on 3 February, provides for strengthening the Corps, at early dates, by the addition of, first, an Army Tank Brigade; secondly, the Third Division, mobilized in Canada in the tense days of the Summer of 1940 and recently concentrated in the Maritime Provinces; and, finally, an Armoured Division. This Programme involves almost doubling the strength of the Corps and its ancillary units. It will give it, including the Armoured Division, a total of four divisions - equal to that of the old Corps in 1916-18; but its actual striking-power will obviously be far greater.

Merely to rehearse the development of the organization and functions of the central Canadian formations in the United Kingdom during 1940 is not to tell the whole story of Canada's part in the Battle of Britain. The complete chronicle would have to include a myriad of miscellaneous jobs, large and small, which the Canadian troops have undertaken. It would tell of aerodromes prepared for defence against parachutists. It would have to tell how certain of the lower formations have done tours of duty in the coastal positions which overlook the beaches where Hitler's troops <u>might</u> try to land, but have not up to the time of writing. It would tell how various Canadian engineer units have laboured on those coastal works at many points, helping to girdle the island with a system of defences calculated to render invasion a far more perilous enterprise than it would have been at the time of the French collapse. It would speak of experiments with various novel weapons. It would tell of Canadian signallers repairing telegraph and telephone lines damaged by enemy action. It would describe detachments constantly at work

assisting local authorities by disposing of unexploded bombs and removing debris; and it would mention dozens of homely but useful enterprises in the way of construction and repair.[20] Let one example suffice.

In the late summer a company of the Royal Canadian Engineers was assigned a special job: the construction of a by-pass road which, in addition to being desirable for the purposes of civil traffic, was considered to be an essential addition to the strategic communications of the Canadian area. The by-pass was to be two-and-a-half miles long; half of it was to be new concrete road, the rest to be made by widening and straightening existing roads. Authority to proceed with the job was given on the afternoon of 3 September, and ground was broken one hour later. By 8 September, the whole route was "ready for use of any type of transport from end to end should necessity arise and weather remain dry". The first concrete was poured on 18 September, and the last on 19 October: after which the Canadian sappers, with only the finishing touches left, took their first Sunday's rest since the job began and listened to the astonished comments of the local authorities, to whom the whole affair seemed rather like a piece of white magic. Then the engineer company, having caught its breath, moved to another part of the area and began on another by-pass.[21]

THE NEW CORPS, 1941

Even in the last war, an army was a very complicated mechanism, but it is far more so to-day, for war has become a much more three-dimensional affair than it was in 1918. At that time, the revolution produced by the application of the internal-combustion engine to the business of warfare was only beginning; to-day it appears in its full effect. The air arm has lent new scope and elasticity to tactical

and strategic conceptions; and in the campaign in France and Flanders it was seen to have assumed some of the bombardment functions formerly assigned to the artillery, as even in the last war it had assumed many of the old reconnaissance functions of the cavalry. On the ground, at the same time, the development of fast armoured vehicles, the numerous and amazing progeny of the clumsy monsters first seen in action with the British Forces on the Somme in 1916, has restored the dynamics of war. France and Flanders in 1940, and - ~~more~~ happily - Libya and East Africa in 1941, have demonstrated that modern campaigns, instead of bogging down in the mud of trench-systems as in the last war, may sweep across the map as in the days of Napoleon; but the stroke of an army to-day is delivered with speed and force such as the Corsican never dreamed of. The men of 1862, watching with amazement the manoeuvres of Jackson's infantry in his campaign in the Shenandoah, dubbed them "the foot cavalry"; but to-day the infantryman goes to battle on wheels (or tracks), even horsed cavalry has vanished from the scene, and Stonewall's brigades would be left at the post. The principles of war have not altered, but the application of them has altered mightily with the rise of new weapons; and the organization of armies has had to change in the same proportion. It has been necessary to provide not only striking units of the new types, but also protective organizations for defence against the striking units of the enemy; the old units have had to be made mobile; while the increasingly numerous motor-vehicles of many varieties required for this and dozens of other purposes have to be repaired by other units and supplied with fuel by still others.

In consequence a modern force such as the new Corps must include many units not found in the classification of former days. To describe the new situation at length would be both tedious and impolitic; but a few general remarks are in order. In place of the cavalry regiments of 1914-18, the Corps has "Reconnaissance

Battalions" equipped with motorcycles and armoured "scout cars". Its Artillery must have not only the "Field Regiments" and "Medium Regiments" familiar (under different designations, and with much less effective armament) in the last war; it requires Anti-Tank Regiments and Anti-Aircraft Regiments also, to counter the fast armoured vehicle and the Stuka. The Engineer and Signals arms have had to alter their own organization and equipment to enable them to serve the needs of a more mobile army; the advent of the fast motorized column has, for instance, given wireless communication a much enhanced importance. To make the infantry mobile, the Army Service Corps must provide Troop-Carrying Companies; to keep the army's vehicles moving it must provide Petrol Companies and Petrol Parks; and for its older and more familiar functions Ammunition Companies, Ammunition Parks and Supply Columns must be on hand. The Ordnance Corps has found its work and its importance greatly increased by the multiplication of motor vehicles and the growing complexity of armament. It provides the higher formations with Ordnance Field Parks and Army Field Workshops, and the lower ones with numerous Light Aid Detachments which have the function of keeping the units' transport and equipment in repair. The Army Medical Corps too has had to adapt itself to the new conditions, especially with respect to the equipment of the Field Ambulances which serve with the forward fighting units. And one could go on indefinitely with the catalogue of the various other units, some old, some new, which go into the makeup of a modern army; one might speak of Recovery Sections, Provost Companies and Postal Units, of Salvage Units, Field Hygiene Sections and Mobile Bath Units; all these and many more have useful parts to play - but to enumerate them all would perhaps weary the reader. And in all this, it must be noted, we have spoken only of the Army proper; we have said nothing of the Air component which the Royal Canadian Air Force supplies to the Corps, or of the importance of Air Force co-operation generally and the arrangements made to ensure its effectiveness.

Of the infantry we have said little. Yet the infantry is still the hard core of the army: it is the infantry, in the last analysis, which, duly aided by the other arms, must occupy the ground and hold it. Let us glance for a moment then, at a standard rifle battalion under the new dispensation. It will be understood that the description cannot be exact.

The modern infantry battalion possesses several score motor-vehicles, in its own right. These, however, are primarily for the purpose of transporting its heavier armament, ammunition and stores, not for carrying personnel. If the battalion is left strictly to its own resources, therefore, only a small proportion of the men ride; the remainder march in the old-fashioned way - and they must be fit to march twenty miles should the occasion require. For a cross-country operational move, however, the unit is not left to its own resources. The men, insuch a case, are carried in vehicles supplied by an R.C.A.S.C. Troop-Carrying Company, or from some other outside source; and in this way the battalion becomes, for the moment, fully "motorized".

This is the procedure for the approach to the scene of action. In the presence of the enemy the battalion relies on its own equipment, and as in the old days the infantryman normally fights on foot. Nevertheless, the battalion's tactical mobility has greatly increased since the last war - chiefly through the provision for it of a considerable number of "Bren gun carriers". These are fast handy tracked vehicles which are often mistaken by civilians for light tanks. They supply the means of rushing the battalion's light machine-guns rapidly to the front over almost any sort of terrain, occupying points of vantage and clearing the way for the riflemen. As a rule they are carriers pure and simple, but the guns can be fired from them if circumstances render it desirable.

The battalion of to-day is a little smaller than its prototype of the last war, yet it has far more actual fire-power. In this the soldier's rifle is still a most important element, though it is now supplemented by other weapons. Even in 1918, the multiplication of light machine-guns had gone far, producing a total of 32 per battalion; but the present total is much higher (and the tendency still seems to be towards increase) while in addition the modern Bren gun is lighter and more efficient than the old Lewis. A new addition to fire-power is supplied by the sub-machine-gun. Furthermore, the battalion has what may be termed its own artillery, in the form of an allotment of light and medium mortars. It has its own protection against low-flying aircraft in a platoon armed with anti-aircraft machine-guns, and for protection against armoured vehicles it has a proportion ofaanti-tank rifles of heavy calibre. (The heavier anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons are provided by the artillery). It will be gathered that the modern Canadian infantry battalion is a very formidable fighting machine.

One or two comments on the consequences of mechanization are perhaps apposite at this point. One which occurs to everyone who has seen a modern army on the move is that, while the motor vehicle has made many formerly difficult tasks easy, it has also brought new and complicated problems in its train. The provision of a sure supply of motor fuel at all stages of an operation extending over many leagues is in itself a tremendous task for the Army Service Corps and the Staff. Even more fundamental is the all-pervading problem of traffic control. Properly used, the thousands of vehicles provided for an Army Corps of to-day have the effect of giving it mobility surpassing the wildest dreams of earlier generations; without proper control, on the other hand, they serve only to block the roads and destroy that mobility which they are intended to enhance. Motorized artillery, for instance, if pushed forward at the right moment over arranged routes kept free for the purpose, may strike the enemy suddenly and heavily and facilitate a rapid and inexpensive infantry advance; but if, on the other hand, it moves at haphazard with its many guns and vehicles, it may become entangled with other units

and dwindle into the status of a mere obstacle to advance, a positive hindrance to the units it seeks to aid and a most tempting target for enemy aircraft. There is no problem in this war more basic than this homely and apparently simple one; it can only be solved by steady application and hard actual practice on the roads; and the staffs and regimental officers of the Canadian Corps have been giving it this treatment for months.

This is not the place to describe the industrial structure which must support such a modern army as this which we have been describing. Yet it is in order to point out in parenthesis how vast a structure is required for the purpose - and how gigantic is the task of creating it in a country ordinarily devoted to the arts of peace and possessing no armament industry worthy of the name. There was a tremendous problem of equipment in the last war, but it was nothing compared to the present one. Then it was basically a matter of shells and guns; to-day we need these, but we also need a multiplicity of armament big and small which was unknown in 1914-1918; and for work which then was done by horses and mules we need motor-vehicles and more motor-vehicles - armoured or unarmoured, wheeled or tracked. Meeting these needs has been a slow process, even in England where the foundations already existed; in Canada, where in the main the work had to proceed from the ground up, it was necessarily still slower. The Dominion has been discovering that an armament industry cannot be created overnight. Already, however, a vast amount of valuable material has crossed the ocean from Canada to the British and Canadian forces; and the flood of equipment of the higest quality is now beginning in earnest.(22) A country which never before made tanks, artillery or machine-guns is labouring on these and many other items equally unfamiliar; an industrial development much larger in quantity than the considerable Canadian effort of the last war, and infinitely greater in variety, is far advanced; and when the Canadian factories reach full production in

support of the Dominion's troops and the other armies of the Empire, victory will not be far away.

We have now said enough, perhaps, to enable the reader to form at least a general idea of the units composing the Corps. Of its actual organization we can say only the most obvious things. It consists for the moment of two Divisions, while in addition the Corps Commander has at his disposal a large force of "Corps Troops". Each Division has allotted to it a machine-gun battalion armed with guns of a heavier type than those used by the "rifle" battalions, and a proportion of the technical arms, including its own Divisional Artillery; while the Corps Troops provide the Commander with further large resources for use in whatever manner and place the situation may dictate - among them being another strong force of artillery. Soon, as we have noted, the Third Division will join the Corps; and its striking power will receive most important further reinforcements with, first, the addition of an Army Tank Brigade to the roll of Corps Troops, and in due time the arrival of a complete Armoured Division.

In many respects, then, the new Canadian Corps is very different from the old. Its organization and equipment reflect the technical developments of a quarter of a century; and if a soldier of 1918 who had heard nothing of those developments were suddenly to be set down in the midst of one of Canada's modern divisions he would find many things to astonish him. In particular, he would certainly wonder at the new mobility. The old Corps was a marvel of offensive power in its day; but it never possessed those means of striking rapid and heavy blows across great tracts of country which have come to its successor, and which the Canadian Commanders are still seizing every opportunity to develop and improve.

Nevertheless, the old soldier would soon find that the new organization had a great deal in common with that in which he served. He would recognize in it another "powerful self-contained striking

force" with different equipment but much the same essential character as the one that was the British spearhead in the Hundred Days. He would sense the desire to attain the same sure skill, the same effective co-operation of every part which made the old Corps such a formidable fighting machine. He would certainly feel that this was in the real sense a Canadian national army; he would recognize the pulse of the national life beating steadily within it, as it beat, more and more strongly, towards the end of the last war. If he was a man of imagination, he might well feel that he was in the presence of something more than a great material fact: of a living symbol and bodily expression of the Dominion's new position in the world - the position which he and his comrades of the old Corps did so much to win.

A LITTLE BEHIND THE FRONT.

The Corps is not the whole story of the Canadian Army Overseas, though it is certainly the most important part of it; behind it are a whole group of organizations auxiliary or supplementary to it, without which it could not long exist, at least under conditions of active warfare.

Important among these are a group of extensive and growing medical establishments, including several General Hospitals, a Neurological Hospital, and accommodation for convalescents. The need for these, and the functions they perform, require no explanations They have been kept fairly busy even while the Corps has been peacefully employed; for while the health of the troops has in general been good a proportion of accidents and illness is inevitable in a large force under training.

A considerable fraction of the Canadian troops in England are not in the Corps, but are on the strength of "holding units", of which a sizeable family have come into being. These units serve the purpose of maintaining close to the Corps a "first reinforcement" available to fill the gaps in the ranks which may result from battle casualties or any other cause; while in addition soldiers posted to

them may acquire further efficiency through training before being sent to regiments in the field. They are organized by arms and services, the Infantry, Artillery, Engineers, Signals and Army Service Corps each having their own unit or units, while there is also a "general" unit.

Military education naturally gets much attention. To ensure a supply of young staff officers trained in accordance with the latest teachings of experience, a Canadian Junior War Staff Course is being conducted in England. Another essential organization is the Canadian Training School, whose different wings give specialized instruction in various branches. One of these wings is an Officer Cadet Training Unit, whose business it is to train candidates for commissions chosen from the ranks; this is now the only procedure by which officers are obtained for the Canadian Army, whether at home or abroad.

One could go on at length with the catalogue, speaking of the units of the Dental Corps (a service to which special attention has always been given in the Canadian Army), of the Pay Corps, or of a dozen other essential units or establishments; but time and space would fail. Room must be found, however, for at least a mention of two other special branches of activity.

During the last war, the British Government, faced with a serious shortage of timber for war purposes and with the fact that ship tonnage could not be spared for adequate imports from abroad, asked Canada to raise a Forestry Corps which might meet the situation by exploiting to the utmost the timber resources of Britain and France. This was in 1916. By the end of the war, the Corps was nearly 24,000 strong. Companies were at work in England, Scotland and France, and over 600,000,000 board feet of sawn lumber had been produced. In the present war similar needs soon recurred; during the summer of 1940 Canada was again asked for help, and again a Canadian Firestry Corps was rapidly mobilized. A considerable part of this Corps came to Britain with the Eighth Contingent, and still more with the Ninth (which landed at the end of February, 1941); these units are already hard at work.

hospitality for soldiers on leave. To tell the whole story would require a volume.

A most important additional activity coming under the Auxiliary Services organization is the army educational programme, a special concern of the Canadian Legion War Services. The Director of Education is Dr. A.E.Chatwin of Saskatoon; while a most important role has also been played by Mr.J.B.Rickersteth of the University of Toronto, who has been carrying on this work at Corps Headquarters. A comprehensive plan with many aspects is now being pursued. The object is, in part, to contribute to the maintenance of morale by giving the soldier useful and interesting occupation in his leisure hours; but the primary object is to give him the chance of leaving the army better educated than when he entered it. Universities throughout Canada have co-operated by agreeing to a standardization of matriculation and degree requirements - no small achievement in itself for the Canadian Legion to have brought about; and it will be possible for a man to continue an interrupted education, and to qualify for entrance to a university and even for a university degree by work done in the army. Instruction is proceeding through week-end and evening classes, many of them held in civil school buildings, and with the aid of civil instructors; a careful system of correspondence courses has been worked out; and in addition a programme of "directed reading" has been instituted, by which a soldier interested in a special topic is placed in touch with an authority in that field who can recommend books and advise him in the use of them. It is still early to attempt an estimate of the results of this enterprise; but its possible ultimate national significance needs no underlining.

All these various important military activities outside the Corps come under the direction of Canadian Military Headquarters,

London, The Senior Officer of this Headquarters is Major-General P.J. P.J. Montague, who has served in England since the first advanced party sent to establish the Headquarters landed on 13 November, 1939. In addition to administering the long list of base units of various sorts, General Montague with his staff, is responsible for a great variety of duties connected with the quartering, equipment and general maintenance of the Canadian troops in the United Kingdom, and for maintaining close liaison with the War Office, the General Officer Commanding the Corps, and the High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom; and Canadian Military Headquarters is the link between the Canadian field forces and the Department of National Defence at Ottawa. The Headquarters has inevitably grown in size with the growth of the Canadian forces in the United Kingdom. During the period when London was subjected to intensive bombing in the Autumn of 1940, it was the part of those forces which was closest to the centre of military activity - a situation which seemed decidedly strange to veterans of the last war.

THE COMING TEST.

These lines are written after some eighteen months of the Second World War, at a period equivalent in time to January of 1916 in the previous war. At that time Canadian troops had been engaged in heavy fighting in France for ~~nearly~~ nine months. So far, in the present war, the Canadians have not found a battlefield; deprived repeatedly of opportunities that seemed within their grasp, they are still waiting and hoping for the moment that will bring them contact with the enemy and a chance to do the job for which they crossed the sea. Their impatience to be up and doing has not been lessened by the news of Australian victories in North Africa.

It must not be supposed, however, that in these circumstances the troops are merely idly waiting for an opportunity to knock once more. In this war there is good use to be made of time. Time itself is an opportunity - an opportunity to be improved by completing

~~part of this Corps came to Britain with the First Contingent and is already hard at work; the remainder will arrive soon.~~

The comfort and welfare of the individual soldiers who compose the Canadian Army Overseas are the concern of the Canadian Auxiliary Services. At the outbreak of war a number of public-spirited organizations in Canada offered their services in behalf of the troops in the field. It was desirable both to accept these generous proffers and to provide against duplication and waste; and the answer was found in the organization of the Auxiliary Services. These operate in the United Kingdom under a Senior Officer in London whose function it is to co-ordinate the many services supplied to the troops by the Salvation Army Canadian War Services, the Canadian Y.M.C.A. Overseas, the Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts, and the Canadian Legion War Services; to supervise the distribution of the comforts generously supplied by the Canadian Red Cross Society; to provide a sort of general co-ordinating clearing-house for all the organizations, British or Canadian, which are offering kindness and hospitality to our troops in the United Kingdom; and to perform a miscellany of other tasks falling in the same field. Each of the four organizations mentioned above has a staff of supervisors working among the troops. These men have earned golden opinions. They are often seen appearing with a mobile canteen to distribute free tea and biscuits to units that have just marched in from a wet day's training; they industriously organize games and entertainments, and provide motion pictures (I have heard of one supervisor who sometimes shows his current films three times in one evening, running the projector himself); they keep the recreation-rooms supplied with notepaper and other necessaries; they manage canteens where men can buy cigarettes, food and other things at low prices; and in general they perform an invaluable service to the comfort of the troops and the morale of the army. These are the services supplied to the men while in the field; but in addition the same organizations and many others have made special arrangements to provide comfort and

equipment and perfecting training. The Corps is battle-worthy; but each month that passes makes it more so. Battalions, brigades and divisions, making mimic war down the twisting roads and across the green fields and hillsides of England, are becoming steadily more proficient. The proper use of weapons which not so long ago were unfamiliar is becoming second nature to the man in the ranks; the regimental officer is handling his men and equipment in the field with the skill and confidence that come only with long practice; the staff, living with the complicated practical problems of moving great masses of men and directing them in action, have learned what the difficulties of their tasks are, and what are the best means of mastering them. These constant exercises are the oil of the military machine; thanks to them it will move with smoothness and precision on the day of battle. When the time comes to take the enemy by the throat, the months of hard work will be rewarded.

The time is coming. It may have come before these lines are read, or it may be deferred still longer; but sooner or later the Canadian troops will find their battlefield. Perhaps it will be in the same lovely English countryside where they have spent this time of preparation; for it is always possible, at least, that the enemy will yet pluck up courage to attempt the invasion of which he has long talked so loudly. Perhaps it will be on the continent of Europe - possibly on those same fields of France and Flanders where the Old Corps gathered its laurels. Perhaps, on the other hand, it will be found in some corner of the world of which at the moment we have no inkling; for wise men are chary of predicting the future course of this struggle. But whenever and wherever the test may come, the Canadians will meet it with satisfaction, pride and confidence; satisfaction in the opportunity of giving active service at last to the good cause to which they have devoted

themselves of their own free will; pride at being in this crisis the representatives of their country and the inheritors of the traditions of the Old Canadian Corps; and confidence unbounded in their training, their commanders, and themselves.

REPORT No. 15

APPENDIX "B"

NOTES TO ARTICLE "THE NEW CANADIAN CORPS"

. . . .

(1) The quotations are from two articles written by Lt.-Gen. McNaughton; the first is from "The Capture of Valenciennes" (1933), the second from "The Development of Artillery in the Great War" (1929). Both have lately been reprinted in a pamphlet (n.p., n.d.) containing five of General McNaughton's papers.

(2) See Appendix "C".

(3) The two interpreters were Privates A. JOHANNSON (or JOHANSON) and G. HANSEN (or HANSON) of the SASKATOON LIGHT INFANTRY, who were attached to the 1st Bn KING'S OWN YORKSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY (the unit with which the S.L.I. is allied). A transcript of their testimony is in Appendix XCI of "G" War Diary of 1 Cdn Div for May, 1940. See also Appendix LXII - S of same diary for April. Their names as given in these documents are obviously not reliable.

(4) The warning codeword "JULIUS" was received on 10 May: see "G" Diary of 1 Cdn Div. On the "JULIUS CAESAR" or J.C. plan for the defence of Britain, see Appendix I of same diary for May, 1940.

(5) Very complete documentation for the events of May, 1940, is found in the "G" Diary of 1 Cdn Div. This diary, during the period when General McNaughton commanded the formation, must be one of the most complete ever compiled, and is an historical source of very great value. A very complete account is appended of the General's reconnaissance to CALAIS and DUNKIRK: see Appendix LXV. General McNaughton explained to me during our interview at UP WALTHAM on 27 Feb 41, that the possibility of later inquiries into the

events then in progress led him and Colonel (now Brigadier) TURNER, who accompanied him on this trip, to take very full notes at the time. He remarked that it would probably be ten years before the full story could be told. He mentioned that he arrived at DUNKIRK with two sets of orders in his pocket: one authorizing him to take command there, the other instructing him to return to England and report. He found almost no British troops in the town, and got the impression that the French would have been only too glad to shift the responsibility on to his shoulders and leave him in the lurch, had he produced the former orders.

(6) On 20 May most of the 1st Cdn Div moved to the NORTHAMPTON area.

(7) On the Canadians' part in the French events of June, 1940, see Appendix "D".

(8) The 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade Group got to France. The 1st Field Regt., R.C.A., grouped with the brigade for this operation, also crossed the Channel, and its road party was in France for five days. The infantry regiments involved were THE ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT, THE 48TH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA, and THE HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENT.

(9) See Appendices to "G" diary, 1 Cdn Div., for June, 1940, for details. Account of circumstances leading to order to withdraw is from Appendix LXV - D: Maj.-Gen. CRERAR to C.G.S., 15 Jun.

(10) The 48TH HIGHLANDERS.

(11) Quoted from diary of 1 Cdn Inf Bde., June 1940. The quotation on p. 11 ("A very flatt feeling...") is from the same diary for May.

(12) General McNaughton was at PLYMOUTH. He told me on 27 Feb 41 that he had a plane in readiness to take him across the Channel, had there been anything useful that he could do in France towards extricating the Canadian units; but the first reliable information that he received of the whereabouts of any of them told of their re-embarkation for England.

(13) Diary of 1 Cdn Inf Bde., June 1940.

(14) Statement addressed to Major Stacey by Casualty Section, Records Office, C.M.H.Q., 6 Feb 41; modified by later memo, 28 Mar 41.

(15) On 23 June the Canadian Force began to move to the OXFORD area; its H.Q. was fixed at SHOTOVER HOUSE, WHEATLEY.

(16) On 2 July the Canadian Force moved to the GUILDFORD - HASTEMERE area, where 1 Cdn Div still remains (March 1941). I am told that these frequent moves led the Force to be labelled "McNaughton's Travelling Circus".

(17) As noted in my Report No. 10, 7 Corps included 1 Armoured Div and 1 Army Tank Bde, as well as 2 New Zealand Div.

(18) See "G" Diary, 7 Corps, Sept. 1940. On 7 Sept at 2000 hrs the Corps received the codeword "CROMWELL", "indicating troops should take battle positions as if invasion were imminent". The following day the Corps was placed on 4 hours' notice, and so remained until both "CROMWELL" and the 4 hours' notice were cancelled separately on 19 Sept. On 22-23 Sept. the Corps was again on 4 hours' notice. On termination of this, see same diary, Appendix CXXI, General Report Canmilitry to Defensor.

(19) In a broadcast: see Randolph S.Churchill (comp.), Into Battle: Speeches by the Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, P.C., M.P. (London, 1941), p. 273.

(20) See the list of activities included in "Constitution of Canadian Corps: Note for C.M.H.Q. War Diary" (prepared by Brig. POPE), 30 Dec 40.

(21) The by-pass is at REDHILL; the unit concerned was No. 2 Road Construction Company, R.C.E. See my Report No. 11. The narrative here given is based on the unit's diary, Aug.-Nov. 1940. It began work on the LEATHERHEAD By-pass on 6 Nov.

(22) I note from recent cables that deliveries of Canadian-made universal carriers were to begin "almost immediately" (13 Feb 41) and that deliveries of field guns at a rate of 8 guns and carriages per week are expected to begin in April (23 Feb 41).

REPORT No. 15

APPENDIX "C"

THE PROJECT FOR EMPLOYING CANADIAN TROOPS IN NORWAY, 1940.

1. The proposal for using Canadian troops was first made, it appears, on 16 April, 1940. The War Office explained that what was needed was eight parties of about 100 men each to "neutralize" the forts at the entrance to TRONDHEIM Fjord by taking them in the rear at the proper moment, so as to permit the passage of the main force (which was apparently to consist of two battalions of the GUARDS) for the attack on TRONDHEIM aerodrome. General McNaughton finally organized a force totalling about 1300 men, including in addition to the P.P.C.L.I. and the EDMONTON REGT. (selected because they were most advanced in training, and had a proportion of Scandinavians in their ranks), details of R.C.A., R.C.E., R.C.C.S., and R.C.A.M.C., and selected personnel of the administrative services. The force was commanded by Colonel (now Major-General) M.H. SANSOM, D.S.O., an officer with Staff College training in combined operations.

2. The force was very rapidly organized and sent forward for embarkation, but the proposed combined operation was called off on the afternoon of 19 April. The Canadian detachment remained for a time in reserve (at DUNFERMLINE) but was back at ALDERSHOT by 26 April.

3. There was considerable cabling between Canmilitry and Defensor over this episode, and the authorities at OTTAWA complained that the use of Canadian troops in Norway had been sanctioned without consultation with them.

4. These and many other facts relating to the project are to be found in "G" diary, 1 Cdn Div., April 1940. See especially Appendices XXXV, XXXVII, XLII - a, LXII.

APPENDIX "D"

CANADIAN TROOPS IN THE CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE, JUNE, 1940.

1. On 5 June 1940 the 1st Cdn Inf Bde Group (then in the NORTHAMPTON area with the rest of the CANADIAN FORCE) was warned for a move back to ALDERSHOT on 6 June; the remainder of 1 Cdn Div was to follow on 7 June. These movements were the result of the contemplated move to France, which had presumably been determined upon in view of the new German offensive which had just opened there. The troops of 1 Cdn Div began to leave ALDERSHOT for the coast on the night of 11-12 June. On 7 June it had been decided that the Division would go to France in four convoys, sailing on 11, 13, 15 and 17 June; the balance of the non-divisional troops would follow in another convoy on 18 June. The Canadians were to form part of a Corps being created under the command of Lt.-Gen. BROOKE, the other divisions being the 51st, already in France, and the 52nd, "now en route" (7 June).

2. Certain advanced units, including the road party of 1 Field Regt., landed at BREST on 12 June; while the main body of 1 Cdn Inf Bde Group, as noted in Appendix "A" above, disembarked at the same port on 14 June, the day on which it was decided to "put the movement in reverse". The infantry units were re-embarked at ST. MALO and BREST and sailed on 16 June, the Field Regt. xx sailed from BREST on 17 June. This latter unit received the order to withdraw while in billets at PARCE, 6 mi. N.-E. of SABLE. The infantry got the news while still entrained: the HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENT at LAVAL, the 48TH HIGHLANDERS at SABLE, while the ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT notes, "The actual point reached is doubtful but it is believed to have been CHATEAU BRIANT".

3. General McNaughton himself, as noted, never got beyond PLYMOUTH. (See above, Appendix "B", note 12). He had been informed that his Division would be concentrated in the close vicinity of BREST before moving up-country; and the first intimation he received that this plan had been changed was on 14 June at 2000 hrs, when he heard from General Crerar that the concentration area was in the

region of LE MANS. (See "G" diary, 1 Cdn Div., June, 1940, Appendix LXIX - C.) It appears also that the Canadian transport was thrown forward towards that region, by orders of the Movement Control authorities at BREST, in such a manner that small groups of vehicles were scattered all along the lines of communication.

4. The destruction of the Canadian transport before re-embarkation was a source of great dissatisfaction to the Canadian troops and their commander. General McNaughton confirmed to me on 27 Feb 41 his opinion that many more vehicles could have been saved. 1 Field Regt. only saved its guns with great difficulty. The narrative of this unit's operations attached to its diary for June 1940 notes under 17 June: "At 1100hrs Lieut. Col. Roberts went to Garrison H.Q. [BREST] and fought hard for nearly two hours to save the guns." Finally he was told to load as much as possible by 1600 hrs - by which time "not only were the 24 guns loaded [I believe the total ought to be 23, as one had been damaged in a road-accident and turned in to Ordnance], but also 12 Bofors with 7 predictors, 3 Bren Carriers and several heavy technical trucks from the R. .F. and Signals." Several officers have told me of seeing valuable material destroyed under orders when it could have been embarked with little difficulty. Lt.-Col. (then Major) W.A.I. ANGLIN, M.C., now A.J.A.G., C.M.H.Q., but last summer serving as G.S.O. 2 (Liaison) at General McNaughton's H.Q., was detailed by the General to collect reports on the affair in case of an enquiry. He tells me that the only reason that Lt.-Col. ROBERTS did get permission to embark his guns was that the British movement control officer on the spot was an ex-cadet of R.M.C., KINGSTON. He tells me further that in some cases French officials or civilians tried to prevent the destruction of vehicles by our troops.

5. General McNaughton made no particular secret of his dissatisfaction with the manner in which his troops were treated on this occasion. On 21 June General DILL wrote to him about the episode, saying, "Even you and the Canadian Division could not have saved the situation". In his reply (29 June) General McNaughton referred to

the change in the concentration area and the loss of transport. (See "G" diary, 1 Cdn Div., June, 1940, Appendix CXLV.) At a divisional conference on 30 June, General McNaughton mentioned his dissatisfaction with the late events, but added that this incident was now over: the new task was resistance to an invasion "which may be attempted within the next few days", and with a view to this function the Canadian Force was now in G.H.Q. Reserve, "a hard-hitting mobile force ready to proceed North, South, East or West."

6. It may be noted that the parts of 1 Cdn Div which actually got to France were the same that had been led to expect action in the preceding month. On 24 May, 1940, 1 Cdn Inf Bde was actually on board ship at DOVER, but was ordered to disembark. It received another move order on 26 May, but this was countermanded after a few hours. The proposals for action in May were three in number, and the story is a complicated one. The last revival of the idea of sending Canadian troops in through DUNKIRK was on 27 May, and was evidently the consequence of an appeal from General Lord GORT. By this time General McNaughton had decided that the idea was foolish, and had resolved, if ordered to undertake the operation, to send as few troops as possible to make this "rather theatrical sacrifice", as he called it. (See "G" diary, 1 Cdn Div., May, 1940, especially Appendices LXV and LXXXI.)

REPORT No. 15

APPENDIX "E"

LETTER FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL A.G.L. McNAUGHTON TO MAJOR STACEY ACCOMPANYING RETURNED DRAFT OF ARTICLE "THE NEW CANADIAN CORPS".

(COPY)

Dear Major Stacey

Herewith your draft of article for Cdn Geo. Journal. Brig. Turner and I have made a few notes in various places which may be of help to you.

My only comment is that I would like to have the number of times my own name is mentioned, considerably reduced, and I would be obliged if you would so arrange.

Both Brig. Turner and I consider that you have put together a very remarkable account of our doings in 1 Cdn Div, Cdn Force, 7 Corps and Cdn Corps and on this I offer my very best congratulations.

Sincerely yours

(signed)

A. McNaughton

24 P/41

Duplicate

SECRET

Addendum to Report No. 2,
dated 7 Jan 41.
10 Mar 41

Work of the Public Relations Officer,
C.M.H.Q.

The Director,
Historical Section,
General Staff,
National Defence Headquarters,
Ottawa, CANADA.

1. The following should be appended to my Report No. 2, with reference to paras. 5 and 6.

2. Captain ABEL at first performed the duties of Public Relations Officer as a civilian. On 16 Mar 40, however, A.G. Cable 456 authorized his appointment as Lieutenant with acting rank of Captain, C.A.S.F., with the grading of Staff Captain whilst employed as Public Relations Officer. His military rank was dated from the day of his original appointment (25 Jan 40). (See Supplement to Canadian Active Service Force (Overseas) Routine Orders, No. 60, 10 April 40.)

C.P.S.

(C.P.Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q.