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Directorate of History  
National Defence Headquarters  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0K2

July 1986

DUPLICATE

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: ADHQ 33  
for DHist NDHQ  
Date: 24 JUL 1986  
32  
13 Jun 41

Canadian Base Depot  
Activities of Personnel of this Depot  
during MERSEYSIDE Air Raids.

CANCELLED



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. This deals with the CANADIAN BASE DEPOT, and in particular with the work of men attached to the Depot during the heavy air-raids on MERSEYSIDE during the early part of May, 1941.
2. The O.C. Canadian Base Depot, Lt.-Col. LOUIS KEENE, B.D. (LORNE SCOTS), has recently visited C.M.H.Q. and has given me copies of a number of documents relating to these raids. I think it proper to forward these to ensure their availability for the Official Historian, and I take the opportunity of preparing at the same time a brief summary of the development of the Depot, based on information supplied to me by Lt.-Col. Keene, or extracted from records on file at C.M.H.Q.

#### THE CANADIAN BASE DEPOT

3. The following facts are supplied from C.M.H.Q. file 6/BASE D/1 ("Organisation and Administration Canadian Base Depot").
4. A statement drawn up at H.Q. No. 1 Canadian Base Depot (Lorne Scots) 21 Nov 40, and signed by Major R.W. LENT for the Commanding Officer (folio 39 A) explains that this unit was originally mobilized as No. 1 Infantry Base Depot from The Lorne Scots



(Beel, Dufferin and Halton Regiment), N.P.A., authorized strength was Unit H.Q. and two companies. "On proceeding overseas one Company was left in Canada, and the Unit H.Q. and one Company came to England consisting of 5 Officers and 49 Other Ranks."

5. N.D.H.Q. cable A.G. 775, 10 Jun 40 (C.M.H.Q. file 5/BASE D./1) authorized the amalgamation of No. 1 Canadian Infantry Base Depot and No. 1 Canadian General Base Depot into a single new unit which was designated No. 1 Canadian Base Depot. It was intended that this unit should proceed to France (where it was then anticipated that the Canadian forces would shortly be operating) and establish itself on the lines of communication, where it would perform the function of holding, for short periods previous to their despatch to field units, reinforcements sent forward from the Holding Units in England. The Depot would presumably have been set up near the 2nd Echelon, which (as noted in my Report No. 16) was to be at PORNICHET on the west coast. Before the German advance through the Low Countries, it had been intended that both Echelon and Depot should be at ST. VALERY EN CAUX. This information is from Major M.S. DUNN (A.G. 2, C.M.H.Q.).

6. Administrative Orders No. 8, issued by the Senior Combatant Officer, C.M.H.Q., 4 Jul 40, stated that a Routine Order would shortly be promulgated giving effect to the amalgamation authorized as above, and proceeded as follows:

2. The military situation which the new organization was designed to meet does not exist at present. The two depots concerned are therefore now required to function in a manner at variance with their normal role.

3. To meet this new situation which is to be regarded as temporary, the physical amalgamation of the two depots will be delayed in order that the Canadian Base Depot may fulfil two functions:-

- (a) To act as a depot for the disposal of non-effectives, and
- (b) To receive and administer advance parties, miscellaneous personnel and transient details, awaiting courses, arriving from Canada.

The order provided for a temporary organization in two wings: "I" Wing, comprising personnel formerly of No. 1 Inf. Base Depot, for duty as in 3(a) above, and "G" Wing (personnel of No. 1 Gen. Base



Depot) for duty as in 3(b). Instructional details of the two depots not required under this organization were to be attached to "A" or "B" Group H.Q. of Holding Units. Lt.-Col. Keene was to command "I" Wing and Lt.-Col. L.M. WATSON (THE SHERBROOKE REGIMENT) "G" Wing. The new unit was to remain under command of the H.Q., Canadian Troops, ALDERSHOT, which had been temporarily organized under Colonel E.L.M. BURNS, O.B.E., M.C., as commanding officer.

7. It should be noted that No. 1 Canadian General Base Depot had been mobilized on 1 Sep 39, the Sherbrooke Regiment providing the personnel in the same manner in which the Lorne Scots provided that of No. 1 Canadian Infantry Base Depot. (G.O. 135, 1939).

8. It appears that the two "wings" of the Depot functioned in the manner outlined in para. 6, above, through the remainder of the summer of 1940. On 4 Sep 40 Major-General ODLUM, G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div, wrote to C.M.H.Q. inquiring what was to be done with "G" Wing. The arrival of more 2 Cdn Div units had resulted in removing all personnel of the Div from this wing, which was thereby much reduced; and the accommodation occupied by the wing would soon be required by further 2 Cdn Div units arriving from Canada.

9. The consequence was the liquidation of "G" Wing. This wing, its personnel not on permanent establishment having already been disposed of, moved from ALDERSHOT to BORDON on 28 Oct 40. Thereafter Administrative Order No. 23, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 5 Nov 40, provided that the arbitrary division into "I" and "G" Wings would cease as of 5 Nov, and continued:

No. 1 Cdn Base Depot, Guillemont Barracks, Cove, under command Lieut-Colonel L. Keene, E.D., will continue to perform the functions of a Disposal Depot.

10. In the meantime the G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div had complained, as early as September, 1940, of the presence of the non-effective personnel awaiting return to Canada in this depot adjacent to his own troops, upon whom he considered them to be a bad influence. Search was made for other accommodation, but the Depot remained at COVE (on the



outskirts of FARNBOROUGH, immediately north of ALDERSHOT). On 3 Feb 41 Lt.-Gen. McNAUGHTON, G.O.C. Cdn Corps, made a strong representation on the matter to C.M.H.Q., requesting that action be taken to move this unit away from Aldershot "at the earliest practicable date". Accommodation was found at SEAFORTH BARRACKS, LIVERPOOL, a position which had the advantage of being close to the embarkation ports.

11. Administrative Order No. 41, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 6 Mar 41, authorized the change in location, providing for a movement by an advance party on 6 Mar 41 and by the main body on 12 Mar 41, H.Q. Cdn Base Depot to open at SEAFORTH BARRACKS at 0001 hrs on the latter date. The same order laid down procedure to be followed in future for forwarding personnel for return to Canada to the Depot.

12. Although SEAFORTH BARRACKS had not been considered an unduly exposed location, the heavy enemy air attacks on MERSEYSIDE early in May, 1941, damaged the barracks so badly that it became necessary to move the Depot forthwith. This information reached C.M.H.Q. on 7 May 41 at 1600 hrs. The new location (confirmed by Administrative Order No. 70, issued at C.M.H.Q. on 9 May 41) was KING'S REGIMENT I.T.C., CAIRNIE HOUSE, FORMBY, LANCS. This location was merely temporary, as on 5 Jun 41 Lt.-Col. Keene telephoned to C.M.H.Q. to the effect that the Depot had moved to OULTON PARK, near CHESTER, CHESHIRE, where it remains stationed at the moment of writing.

#### PROTECTIVE DUTIES OF LORNE SCOTS

13. The LORNE SCOTS are shortly to undertake an important additional role in the work of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom. One consequence of the experience of recent campaigns has been the organization of protective units for the headquarters of formations, to provide against sudden attacks by parachutists, armoured vehicles, etc. These units at present exist in the Canadian Corps on a provisional and temporary basis, but the principle that all protective units should be drawn from one regiment was accepted some months ago. Cable Canmilitary to Defensor, A. 1708, 20 Dec 40, runs as



















































