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

July 1986

Ref. Ordnance Survey of Great Britain : Quarter-Inch, Sheet 12; One-Inch, Sheets 124, 125, 133, 134, 135.

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19 Jan 42

Situation of the Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom, Winter, 1941-42 : DECLASSIFIED

Position and Role of Canadian Forces

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Date: _____

NOV 13 1985

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1. A further report is presented. This briefly summarizes the distribution and present role of the Canadian military forces in this country. Attention is directed to an earlier Report (No. 33, dated 23 Jun 41) which dealt with the situation in these respects as it existed during the first six months of 1941. The present report surveys the latter half of the year, which, though there have been no operations in this country, has witnessed important developments.

MOVE OF CANADIAN CORPS FROM G.H.Q. RESERVE TO A COASTAL ROLE

2. The most significant of these developments has been the move of Cdn Corps from an inland role in G.H.Q. Reserve to a static front-line role on the Sussex coast, facing German-occupied France. This change will be the main subject of this report.

3. With this move, it may be pointed out, the basic role of the senior Canadian formation in this country enters a third phase. The earlier phases are outlined in Report No. 33 (paras. 22-28). The three may be stated as follows :

- Phase I Preparation for anticipated role with B.E.F. in France (Dec 1939 - Jun 1940) (1 Cdn Div and Cdn Force).
- Phase II Mobile counter-attack against anticipated invasion of United Kingdom (Jun 1940 - Nov 1941) (G.H.Q. Reserve) (Cdn Force, 7 Corps, and Cdn Corps). (1)
- Phase III Defence of Sussex (Nov 1941 - ?) (Cdn Corps).

(1) As mentioned in Report No. 33, the assumption of this role was anticipated in the move to NORTHAMPTON, 1940. May and June, 1940, constitute in fact a period of transition from Phase I to Phase II.

4. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF A NEW ROLE
 It would appear that the possibility of a move of Cdn Corps to the coast was first suggested to Lt.-Gen. McNAUGHTON by the then Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces (General Sir Alan BROOKE, now G.C.B.) in the course of a conversation at FORD MANOR, LINGFIELD (where the first Canadian Junior War Staff Course was then in progress) on 28 Mar 41. Brigadier MURISON was also present. The account which follows derives from the notes of the meeting by Brigadier MURISON, dated 7 Apr 41 and placed upon the "G" War Diary of Cdn Corps and communicated to C.M.H.Q.

5. General McNaughton opened the discussion by referring to the problems of accommodation presented by the prospective arrival of new formations from Canada under the Overseas Army Programme for 1941 (cf. Reports Nos. 38 and 45). General Brooke's reply is reported as follows:

3. The C.-in-C. said that he had just attended a meeting at which the man power problem had been under review and that the position was such that a considerable re-organization of the Army at Home would have to be effected in the course of the next few months. This re-organization would result in a decrease in the number of infantry divisions and an increase in the number of armoured divisions. While a snap decision on such an important question of policy as that raised by General McNaughton was not possible, he had reached the tentative conclusion that when the re-organization had been completed and when the Canadian Forces had completed their concentration, the Canadian Corps would constitute such a large proportion of the whole that to retain this large force in C.M.H.Q. reserve would not be sound. The future role he had in mind for the Canadian Corps was the defence of a sector of the coast with two infantry divisions up and one in reserve with, later, the Cdn Arm'd Div also in reserve. The Cdn A Tk Bde would in this scheme have to be split up in support of the divisions "in the line". The sector he had in mind for the Canadian Corps was that at present held by 4 Corps. He would like to know General McNaughton's reactions to this idea.

4. General McNaughton replied that he fully appreciated the C.-in-C.'s problem and that he was prepared to co-operate to the full. He hoped, however, that in assuming the role of a static Corps, the claims of the Canadian Forces to form the spearhead of any offensive would not be forgotten.

5. The C.-in-C. assured General McNaughton that there was no danger of the claims of the Canadian Forces being overlooked.

6. A short discussion on areas for the Cdn Cor followed and the tentative conclusions reached were as follows:-

- (a) Corps Troops to remain in present area.
- (b) One Cdn Div (Corps Res) to be located in area selected for 38 Div. (4 Corps).
- (c) Two Cdn Divs coastal sectors.
- (d) Cdn Army Tk Bde less bns in coastal sectors ASHDOWN FOREST area.
- (e) Cdn Armd Div to relieve eventually 1 Armd Div and take over its area.

The realization of this scheme would take place gradually but moves (b), (c) and (d) would be complete by the autumn and hence represented the accommodation commitment for the winter 1941/42.....

6. With a view to obtaining clear understanding of the role of Cdn Corps in the defence of the United Kingdom, and in elucidation of General Brooke's remarks just quoted, it is desirable to review the principal military resources at the disposal of the C.-in-C. Home Forces in recent months.

7. War Office Location Index No. 6 (corrected to 14 Jun 41) lists the following formations as stationed in the United Kingdom (purely minor and static formations omitted) :

Infantry Divisions : Twenty-five (1)
 Armoured Divisions : Five
 Army Tank Brigades : Three

War Office State of Equipment... as at 1st December, 1941 of Formations, Groups and Army Contingents including Allied Contingents in U.K., Iceland (C) and the Faroe Islands lists the following :

Infantry Divisions : Twenty-six
 Independent Brigade Groups : Four
 Armoured Divisions : Seven
 Army Tank Brigades : Nine (2)

This indicates that while the net infantry force in the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland) has increased (so far) rather than decreased, the armoured force has grown materially, and this in spite of the fact that one armoured division has evidently been withdrawn from the country in the interim. This growth is due to the creation of two new armoured divisions (42 Armd Div and Guards Armd Div) by conversion, and to the arrival of 5 (Cdn) Armd Div from Canada. The increase in Army Tank Brigades has apparently been effected by the creation of five new ones (one being Polish) and by the arrival of 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde from Canada.

- (1) Includes 1 and 2 Cdn Divs, and three divisions in N. Ireland. Independent Brigade Groups are not separately identified in this Index.
- (2) Troops in Iceland and Faroes evidently not included in these totals. Among infantry divisions, 3 Cdn Div now included, and 76 and 77 Divs have appeared. 18 Div has evidently left the United Kingdom. 42 Div, was noted above, was converted into an Armd Div; but the brigades composing 42 Armd Div were not formerly incorporated in any division. Training and equipment of the new armoured formations will not be completed for some

8. It was noted in Report No. 33 (para. 24) that the Canadian force in this country had by the end of 1940 somewhat declined, relatively speaking, from the position of importance in the British defensive organization which it had occupied immediately after the evacuation from DUNKIRK. This decline was inevitable and indeed desirable; for it resulted from the re-equipment of old British formations and the provision of new ones. On the other hand, it is clear from the foregoing paragraphs that the relative importance of the Canadian force began to increase again during the second half of 1941. This was the consequence of the Canadian Overseas Army Programme for the year, which brought to Britain two new Divisions (3 Cdn Div and 5 Cdn (Armd) Div) in addition to an Army Tank Brigade. If the re-organization of the British Home Forces described by General Brooke (above, para. 3, sub-para. 3) is carried further, this increase will continue.

9. The programme sketched by the C.-in-C. at the conference on 28 Mar 41 was ultimately carried out almost to the letter, but only after some postponements. On 2 Sep 41 a Warning Order was issued from H.Q. Cdn Corps beginning with the words "Cdn Corps will relieve 4 Corps in SUSSEX between 15 - 23 Oct 41 . . ." Appendices to this order provided that 1 Cdn Div would relieve 55 Div on 14-16 Oct; H.Q. Cdn Corps would relieve H.Q. 4 Corps on 19 Oct; 2 Cdn Div would relieve 55 Div on 20-23 Oct; and Cdn Corps Troops would relieve 4 Corps Troops on 15-23 Oct. The order added:

6. 3 Cdn Div will relieve 47 Div, and 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde will relieve 25 Army Tank Bde in accordance with details of reliefs to be notified later, and NOT before 15 Nov 41.

10. This schedule was not adhered to, though files at C.M.H.Q. reveal no actual record of its having been negated by a subsequent order. It was decided to postpone the move of the Corps except that 2 Cdn Div would move in October to relieve 55 Div in the same positions on the Sussex coast in which it had relieved them for some weeks during the past summer (see Report No. 41). The move of the remainder of the Corps would be put off until 3 Cdn Div and 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde could move more or less simultaneously with the other formations. In the meantime 2 Cdn Div would be under command of 4 Corps.

11. Canadian Corps Operation Order No. 1 (26 Sep 41) provided for the relief of 55 Div by 2 Cdn Div on 15 - 16 Oct 41. It was noted that on relief 55 Div was moving into SOUTHERN COMMAND. 2 Cdn Div would be under 4 Corps for operational and local administration but would remain under Cdn Corps for general administration.

12. This move duly took place as scheduled, 2 Cdn Div taking over command of the coastal sector DUNHAVEN - RYE both inclusive from 55 Div at 1200 hrs 15 Oct 41.

13. COMPLETION OF CORPS MOVE. On 3 Nov 41 a Canadian Corps Warning Order beginning "Cdn Corps will relieve 4 Corps in defence of SUSSEX" provided that 1 Cdn Div would relieve 38 Div on 20 - 24 Nov, H.Q. Cdn Corps would relieve H.Q. 4 Corps on 19 (subsequently altered to 17) Nov, and Cdn Corps Troops (less large elements not moving) would relieve 4 Corps Troops on 17 - 25 Nov. These arrangements were duly carried out, and H.Q. Cdn Corps closed at HEADLEY COURT (near LEATHSHEAD), where General McNaughton had had his H.Q. since July of 1940, at 1200 hrs 17 Nov 41, and opened simultaneously at 755534, NORTH PRIORY, PARDOCKHURST, (south-east of CRAWLEY), Sussex. At the same hour it took over command of 4 Corps Area as Cdn Corps Area.

14. A subsequent Cdn Corps Operation Order (No. 4, dated 24 Nov 41) provided for the relief of 47 Div by 5 Cdn Div on 29 Nov - 1 Dec 41. Command of the Divisional area passed at 1200 hrs on 1 Dec.

15. As a consequence of Cdn Corps assuming command of 4 Corps Area, two British divisions (38 Div and 47 Div) came under operational command of Cdn Corps, and are shown in Cdn Corps Order of Battle dated 18 Nov 41 (C.H.Q. file 1/FORMATIONS/6). 38 Div was deleted from the Order of Battle by an amendment dated 27 Nov 41, and 47 Div by an amendment dated 10 Dec 41.

16. Even after the withdrawal of these two divisions, however, considerable forces of British troops continued under operational control of Cdn Corps in the new area. These included a large force of Royal Artillery manning the static coastal defences: the Corps Order of Battle of 18 Nov 41, as amended, shows the following units under command at the time of writing (8 Jan 42):

552 Coast Regt
553 Coast Regt
521 Coast Regt
5 Defence Regt
917 Bty
918 Bty
915 Defence Bty
56 Hy Regt
13 Super Hy Bty
19 Super Hy Bty
14 Super Hy Bty
157 Lt A.A. Bty

In addition, there are units of R.E., R. Sigs, Infantry (6 and 70 R. SUSSEX), R.A.S.C., R.A.M.C., and A.A.C.C.

17. The last Canadian formation to move to the new area was 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde, which moved during the week ending 20 Dec 41. The move to the coastal sector may be said, in the cases of both 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde and 3 Cdn Div, to mark the end of the period of mobilization and the appearance of the brigade and the division as fully operational formations. Both have been carried on the Order of Battle of Cdn Corps since their arrival in this country, but until recently their training and equipment would not have warranted their employment in operations.

18. The special administrative problems arising from the fact of British troops being under command of Cdn Corps, and from the change in the Corps' role generally, are treated in a separate section below.

CORPS UNITS TRANSFERRED TO COMMAND OF CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

19. Before the move to the coast was carried out, a considerable regrouping of formations and units of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom was carried out under the terms of a SECRET Routine Order (C.A.R.O. (Overseas) No. 1217, dated 8 Nov 41) which defined the division of command between H.Q. Cdn Corps and Canadian Military Headquarters.

20. A considerable number of Corps units remaining in the old Corps area in Surrey were transferred to command of C.M.H.Q. Those so transferred fall into the following categories: (a) Units which have yet to complete mobilization and training (b) Engineer units required for construction work in the Canadian Reinforcement Units area (cf. Report No. 38) (c) H.Q. Cdn Corps Medium Artillery (d) The Chief Engineer, Cdn Corps, and part of his staff.* (See Cable GS 2394, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 1 Nov 41, attached as an Appendix.) Additional units of Corps Troops will proceed to Cdn Corps District (as it is now termed) and come under H.Q. Cdn Corps from time to time as they complete mobilization and training.

21. Certain detachments of H.Q. Cdn Corps remained at HEADLEY COURT, under H.Q. Cdn Corps Medium Artillery (which also remained there) for local administration. These detachments were (see Cdn Corps Special Order, 15 Nov 41):

Cdn Liaison
Chief Engineer and staff
D.B.C.S. and staff
Corps Chemist (att 1 Cdn C.W. Def Lab) (1)

This Special Order added:

6. Communications intended for Lt.-Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton CB, CBE, DSO, in his capacity as Senior Combatant Officer, Cdn Army Overseas, will be so addressed and marked c/o Cdn Liaison.

It will be recalled (cf. Report No. 55, paras. 8-9) that as a result of General McNaughton's absence on sick leave Major-General PEARCES was detailed to command Cdn Corps in an acting capacity, as of 15 Nov 41 (C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1277). Subsequently Major-General H.D.G. CRERAR, on his arrival in the United Kingdom with T.C. 16, was detailed temporarily to command Cdn Corps, and granted the acting rank of Lieut.-General whilst so employed, as of 25 Dec 41 (C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1423). Thus General PEARCES superintended the move to the coast, and General Crerar now commands the Corps in the new area; but questions of high policy are still the concern of General McNaughton as Senior Combatant Officer, and he has

(1) These detachments also come under C.M.H.Q. For details of division of command, consult C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1217, and amendments.

X Rejoined H.Q. Cdn Corps, 15 Jan 42.

continued to deal with them from his quarters near HEADLEY COURT.

22. General Grerar did not assume active command of Cdn Corps until 1200 hrs 31 Dec 41 (Cdn Corps General Report for week ending 3 Jan 42).

23. Except where otherwise indicated, the above narrative of the move to the coast and subsidiary arrangements is based upon documents on C.M.H.Q. file 3/CAOS - HW/2 ("Operations - Canadian Corps, Home Forces, Sussex").

24. It will be noted that whereas the troops under command of H.Q. Cdn Corps are "in combination" with the British Forces (under the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act, and of Orders of Detail issued from time to time by the Corps Commander), the troops under C.M.H.Q. are not in combination "until change in situation so requires" (Cable GS 2594: see Appendix). It has been customary to include Orders of Detail under the Visiting Forces Act as appendices to the "G" War Diary of H.Q. Cdn Corps. The question of the legal position of the Canadian forces in the United Kingdom under this statute is one of great historical importance, and it is hoped to deal with it separately in a subsequent Report.

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION ARISING FROM NEW CORPS ROLE

25. The assumption by Cdn Corps of a static coastal role in place of its former role as a mobile reserve, and the fact of its simultaneously taking under command a considerable body of British troops, have necessitated certain important changes in the staff of H.Q. Cdn Corps which must be at least briefly referred to.

26. Another factor in the situation is the recommendations of a body known as the "Gale Committee" which has lately reported on matters of "decentralization and chain of command". No copy of this report is available at C.M.H.Q., though one is understood to have been forwarded to F.D.H.Q. for the use of the C.C.S. Its general effect with respect to Cdn Corps, however, is perhaps sufficiently conveyed by the following quotation from Notes prepared for the Corps Commander by Brigadier MURISON (then D.A. & Q.M.G., Cdn Corps) and dated 24 Oct 41 (copy on C.M.H.Q. file 3/CAOS - HW/2).

1. Effect of the Gale Committee Recommendations
Insofar as they concern Canadian Corps when Canadian Corps takes over from 4 Corps the effect of the Gale Committee recommendations is that Canadian Corps assumes full responsibility for the command and administration of all troops both British and Canadian in its area and performs on behalf of the War Office and the Army Command all those tasks hitherto jointly performed by the Static Corps and Area H. (1)

- (1) For boundaries of SURREY AND SUSSEX AREA, see map of Command and Area boundaries attached as an Appendix. This presents the situation previous to the Report of the Gale Committee.

2. In the proposed British organization Corps H.Q. becomes a static headquarters with a small mobile operational element in place of a fully mobile field unit. This change in character is reflected in its name, which becomes a Corps District H.Q., and in its establishment which is revised and includes a static element to ensure continuity in administration and to enable the District H.Q. to discharge those functions hitherto performed by Area H.Q.

27. Brigadier Hurison proceeds to point out certain necessary divergences between the organization of Cdn Corps and the new British organization. First, "H.Q., Cdn Corps is and will remain on full war establishment augmented to enable it to command and administer a Canadian Expeditionary Force considerably larger than the normal British Corps." Secondly, "The administration of the Canadian Corps is more complex than that of a British Corps owing to the fact that some administrative matters are solely a Canadian concern while others follow British channels. As a result when H.Q., Cdn Corps assumes responsibility for the command and administration of British troops administrative duplication, going as far, in certain cases, as the issue of different orders to British troops from those issued to Canadian troops, is inevitable." At the same time, H.Q. Cdn Corps will now be concerned with certain questions "of an entirely British character having no Canadian counterpart e.g., Home Guard and A.T.S."

28. As the proportion of British troops in the area would be relatively small, Brigadier Hurison pointed out that Corps should be able to relieve Divisions of special administrative responsibility for them, and the assistance which it would be necessary to provide from British sources for this purpose could be mainly concentrated at Corps H.Q. He proceeded to analyze the "anchored" staff (the static element referred to above, para. 26, sub-para. 2) proposed by the Gale Committee, pointing out elements not required in the case of H.Q. Cdn Corps District, and certain additional appointments which would be necessary. This discussion will not be noted in detail here.

29. At a Conference at the War Office on 31 Oct 41 with General McNaughton and Brigadier SIMONDS (B.C.E., Cdn Corps), Lt.-Gen. Sir Henry POWELL (then V.C.I.C.S.) agreed in general to these proposals and stated that the War Office was prepared to provide an adequate "anchored" staff for H.Q. Cdn Corps District. (Copy of minutes of meeting, C.E.H.Q. file 3/CAOS - HF/2).

30. It is of interest to note that in the course of this conference "General McNaughton pointed out that the Headquarters of Canadian Corps could not in all respects conform to the 'mobile' element of the British Corps District Headquarters as it was essential to keep in training the Canadian officers required for a Corps Headquarters Staff with a view to possible developments in the future".

31. Reference to Cable GS 2394 (Appendix) indicates the manner in which certain officers of Corps H.Q. not needed for the new static role of Cdn Corps are being temporarily withdrawn for duty at C.M.H.Q., H.Q. C.C.M.A., or with C.E. Of special importance is the provision that these officers will not be dispersed, "as they will be needed when Cdn Corps again required as a mobile formation, on ceasing to hold Coastal Defence Sector".

GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGE OF ROLE OF CANADIAN CORPS

32. The Official Historian will be able in retrospect to make a much more accurate assessment of the significance of the recent moves and changes than can be provided at this moment. Only the most obvious comments, therefore, will be attempted here.

33. The coastal sector which Cdn Corps now holds is a most important one. Its allotment to the Canadians may be regarded as an honour, and in the event of the enemy attempting the invasion of this country which he has so long threatened the Corps will, in consequence of it, almost certainly be involved in heavy and decisive fighting. An invasion attempt in the Spring of 1942 is regarded as by no means impossible (and its likelihood does not appear to have been diminished by the assumption of the supreme command of the German Armies by HITLER in person, which was announced on 21 Dec 41).

34. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly the case that the opinion has lately grown in this country - partly as a result of the improvement of the United Kingdom's defences, partly as a result of the Germans' involvement in Russia since their attack upon that country on 22 Jun 41 - that such an invasion is scarcely a practicable operation of war. If this opinion is justified, the assumption by Cdn Corps of the role of a static corps on the coast of the ENGLISH CHANNEL would seem at first glance to reduce the chance of the Corps seeing action, and to condemn it to a further long period of inactivity such as that which has elicited so many complaints from the troops and so many comments in Canada.

35. It will be noted that General McNaughton noted this possibility and attempted to provide against it on the very first occasion when the move was suggested, and that more recently he has insisted upon the necessity of keeping in being the organization required to enable the Corps to resume a mobile role and play the part which he obviously considers as its natural destiny: that of the spearhead of the British attack in the event of an offensive movement being undertaken towards the Continent (above, paras. 5 (sub-para. 4), 30, and 31).

DISPOSITIONS OF CANADIAN CORPS

36. The new dispositions of the Canadian Corps will now be briefly outlined, without attempting to reproduce the complete Location Statement or to go into detail.

37. The Corps front embraces almost the whole of the coast of Sussex. It extends from the Hampshire border at Q 1917 (i.e., the channel connecting CHESTER HARBOUR with the sea) in the west, to the coast just south of FAIRLIGHT Church (i.e., 299295), less than two miles east of HASTINGS. (In Oct 41 2 Cdn Div took over from 55 Div the whole front which it had held during the summer, extending some miles further east, to BROOMHILL SANDS, east of RYE (see Reports Nos. 41 and 52); but an adjustment of the Corps left boundary in the manner just noted was notified by Cdn Corps (Ops 2-2-1) on 12 Dec 41.) The front is thus approximately 80 miles in length. Cdn Corps has on its left 12 Corps, also under South-Eastern Command (see Report No. 33, para. 27) and on its right 5 Corps, under Southern Command.

38. 1 Cdn Div holds the right sector of the front and 2 Cdn Div the left sector, the inter-divisional boundary remaining in its previous position (see Report No. 41), i.e., cutting the coast at the western edge of PEACHEHAVEN, just west of NEWHAVEN, map reference Q 8321. 3 Cdn Div less one brigade (see below) is in reserve. 1 Cdn Army Tank Brigade, instead of having its H.Q. and part of its strength in the ASHDOWN FOREST area as originally proposed, (para. 5, sub-para. 6, above) has all its units close to the coast in the LITTLEHAMPTON - SEAFORD area.

39. The terrain of the area occupied by 2 Cdn Div was described at some length in Report No. 41, in which the importance of the SOUTH DOWNS was noted. The same great feature dominates the area occupied by 1 Cdn Div to the west. In the easterly sector of this area, in the vicinity of BRIGHTON, the DOWNS are close to the sea; in the westerly sector they recede somewhat, and from the tip of the flat point known as SEISEY BILL to the 200-foot contour is a matter of 10 miles.

40. The defensive problems arising from this terrain were well illustrated during Exercise "WATERLOO", and attention is directed to Report No. 34, dealing with that exercise. The steep escarpment of the DOWNS facing north, were it to fall into enemy hands, would be a most formidable obstacle to British reserve formations advancing to restore the situation in the coastal area; and the enemy's parachutists and airborne troops offer him a ready weapon for the occupation of the DOWNS.

41. As noted in Report No. 41, the dispositions of 4 Corps while it held this area paid comparatively little attention to these possibilities. The DOWNS were largely disregarded in favour of a linear system of defence along the beach, and the dispositions made little or no provision for defence in depth. The comments of Lt.-Col. SIMONDS (now Brigadier and B.G.S., Cdn Corps) mentioned in Report No. 41 reflect Canadian dissatisfaction with these arrangements, and it was suggested that in the event of Cdn Corps

taking over this sector there would be material changes. This forecast has been borne out by the issuance of Cdn Corps Operation Instruction No. 27 (dated 27 Nov 41 : three copies reserved for War Diary, "G", Cdn Corps). This instruction lays down new principles for the defence of Sussex, and provides the basis of a complete reorganization. It is a document of considerable length and detail, and cannot be fully summarized here; but a few extracts must be given.

42. The instruction begins with an appreciation commencing thus :

1. The Object

The object of Cdn Corps in defence of SUSSEX, as defined by the Commander, South Eastern Army, is:-

- (a) To prevent the enemy establishing a bridgehead through which his main attack can be supplied and reinforced.
- (b) If the enemy succeeds nevertheless in establishing a bridgehead, to stop and break up his main thrusts towards LONDON and to counter-attack in order to recapture the enemy bridgehead.

The Cdn Corps has a frontage on the coast of about 65 miles. An attempt to hold the whole of this front with the troops available would result in a thin linear defence, weak everywhere, strong nowhere, without depth or reserves. It is therefore essential to concentrate field troops in defence of vital areas, leaving the less important places to be defended by such local forces as may be available on the spot.

43. The appreciation continues by pointing out that in the event of invasion the enemy's most likely operation is an attempt at double envelopment with one landing in Sussex and another in East Anglia, "the two directed west of and enveloping LONDON as the main objective". A landing in Sussex "might have the alternative object of cutting off troops in the KENT peninsula in combination with a landing in EAST KENT". For successful invasion, the enemy would require either a port equipped for the landing of heavy equipment, or a beach on which tracked and wheeled vehicles can land at most or all states of the tide. Sea-borne raids against the Sussex coast are also a possibility.

44. Vulnerable areas in case of invasion are then considered, and the view is expressed that taking into consideration the beaches, the hinterland, and probable main objectives, the vital areas on the shore are (a) BOGNOR REGIS - WORTHING (b) SHORHAM (c) NEWHAVEN (d) PEVENSEY LEVELS. In the area BOGNOR REGIS - NEWHAVEN the main communications run N.W. and N., west of and towards LONDON; and reserves must be placed to provide

defence in depth on these approaches. A landing in the PEVENSEY area, on the other hand, would probably be with the object of outflanking either (a) NEWHAVEN or (b) the Kent peninsula. Of these, (b) is mainly the concern of 12 Corps; Cdn Corps dispositions in this area should be "made with a view to blocking the approaches to the north-west and counter-attacking eastwards".

45. Air-borne landings, so far as main efforts are concerned, will, it is suggested, probably be employed in conjunction with the main sea-borne attack; vital areas in this respect are therefore those contiguous to vulnerable beaches or ports, and include the DOWNS north of WORTHING, SHORVELAND and BRIGHTON, and NEWHAVEN, and "the 'bridgehead' west of the PEVENSEY LEVELS". Attention is directed to the importance of the tracks and roads forming "the gateways to the DOWNS" by which armoured formations advancing from the north with a view to developing a counter-offensive can reach covered assembly areas.

46. Fighter aerodromes vital to the R.A.F. in Cdn Corps area are TANKVILLE Q.3426, FORD Q.4322, WERSTON Q.3223, and WEST HAMPTON Q.3236. (It will be noted that all of these lie within a relatively small area, in the flat coastal plain between CHICHESTER and LITTLEHAMPTON.)

47. Certain nodal points of communications are noted as providing for defence in depth in the event of a temporary enemy success. These are CHICHESTER, HORSHAM and EAST GRINSTEAD.

48. It is pointed out that the most likely objectives for enemy raids are the various radiolocation stations situated close to the shore.

49. METHOD OF DEFENCE. The method of defence to be adopted cannot be described at length here, but the following points from Operation Instruction No. 29 should be noted.

50. It is laid down that THERE WILL BE NO WITHDRAWAL.

51. Infantry Localities : "The defensive system will be based on battalion localities developed for ALL ROUND DEFENCE. No single post will consist of less than one platoon and sections will be so sited in relation to platoon headquarters that the platoon commander can, in battle, reach any of his sections within fifteen seconds."

52. Artillery : Field and A.Tk artillery positions are to be sited within infantry localities. As in many cases battalion localities will be too widely separated for mutual support by small-arms fire, mutual support will be effected "by siting O.Ps. from field batteries within one battalion locality, in the localities of adjoining battalions"; and artillery communications will be developed so that one or more regiments may bring observed fire in support of any battalion.

53. Army Tanks. "The role of the army tanks is to counter-attack immediately any hostile tanks landing at the beaches and ports", and special plans will be prepared for dealing with threats against WORTHING, SHOREHAM and NEWHAVEN. This immediate and local counter-attack role is distinguished from the general counter-offensive, which "is the role of armoured formations in G.H.Q. Reserve".
54. Reserves. 3 Cdn Div (less one brigade) is in Corps reserve, with the roles of holding localities in depth astride the main communications leading to and west of LONDON, or counter-attacking and destroying any enemy gaining a foothold on the coast.
55. The remaining brigade of 5 Cdn Div, with one Army Fd Regt and one M.G. Coy under command, is allotted the role of counter-attacking the TANGIER group of aerodromes, acting under direct command of H.Q. Cdn Corps.
56. Maintenance of Mobility is the subject of a special paragraph. It is pointed out that it is possible that Cdn Corps might, after repulsing an attack on the South Coast, be required to move to the assistance of another Command (cf. the situation in Exercise "BUSTER", Report No. 49). In this connection, it is noted that "Though administrative units will be employed to defend localities in the rear areas, personnel will NOT be separated from transport and these units will NOT be given tasks which would jeopardize the mobility of the Corps."
57. Manning is dealt with in paras. 22-25. Prior to "STAND TO", posts will not be manned in daylight; but from one hour before dark to one hour after daylight "one duty company per battalion will be detailed as inlying picket, in billets". Action to be taken by duty companies on receiving the warning "AFLOAT - (Sector)" is as follows: those of forward battalions, man beach defences; those of reserve battalions, move to a forward R.V. "at instant readiness to deal with any hostile parties which may land".
58. Defended Towns. The three towns mentioned in para. 47 (above) are to be developed as tank-proof localities, with in each case an outer tank-proof perimeter, an inner keep, and "switches" dividing the area within the perimeter into sectors.
59. General Distribution of Troops. A map accompanying Operation Instruction No. 27 (as Appendix "B") shows the general distribution of troops under the new defence scheme, without designating battalions or brigades. The distribution may be outlined as follows, and should be compared with the 4 Corps scheme described (as affecting the 2 Cdn Div sector) in Report No. 41.
60. Under the new scheme, only five of the nine Infantry Brigades of Cdn Corps will be actually holding coastal sectors; and of the fifteen Infantry Battalions of these five Brigades only seven will actually man beach defences.

61. All three brigades of 1 Cdn Div are "in the line", depth in this sector being provided by 3 Cdn Div. A large proportion of these brigades' strength is, however, devoted not to the beaches but to the DOWNS. The right brigade's sector extends from the west boundary of the Corps District to RUSTINGTON (excl), east of LITTLEHAMPTON. Two battalions are on the beaches and the area behind them, between BOGNOR REGIS and RUSTINGTON; the third is on the DOWNS in the area BURY - HOUGHTON. The centre brigade's sector is RUSTINGTON - S. LANCING, both inclusive; it has one battalion on the beach west of WORTHING and two on the DOWNS. One Army Tank Bn is allotted to this brigade sector. The right brigade's sector is S. LANCING (excl) - PEACOCKHAVEN (excl); it has one battalion on the beach (in the SHORNEHAM area, west of BRIGHTON) and two on the DOWNS, while this sector also is allotted one Army Tank Bn. It will be noted that 1 Cdn Div has five battalions along the summit of the DOWNS from BURY to DITCHLING BEACON.

Left

62. 3 Cdn Div has one Infantry Brigade Group in reserve in the area FRAINFIELD Q 9639 (excl) - HEATHFIELD R 0339 (excl) - HELLINGLY R 0232 (incl) - EAST HOATHLY Q 9635 (incl). Of the two brigades in coastal sectors, one (on the right), in the sector PEACOCKHAVEN (incl) - CUCKMERE HAVEN (excl), is relatively closely concentrated, with two battalions on the beaches in the important NEWHAVEN - BISHOPSTONE area, and the third on the DOWNS divided between two localities, one west and north-west of LEWES on SIMON DE MONTFORT's battlefield of 1264, the other immediately south and south-west of WEST WIRLE (Q 9126). An Army Tank Bn is allotted to this brigade sector. The left brigade has a very extended sector, CUCKMERE HAVEN (incl) - FAIRLIGHT (excl) and has only one battalion on the beach (in the EASTBOURNE (excl) - PEVENSEY area). The others hold localities in the FOLKINGTON - JEVINGTON area (i.e., the east end of the DOWNS, north of BEACHY HEAD) and about HAILSHAM ("the 'bridgehead' west of PEVENSEY LEVELS").

63. 1 Cdn Div's reconnaissance unit (4 Cdn Recce Bn) is shown covering the Corps' right flank in the vicinity of TELLINGTON Q 4042, and 2 Cdn Div's (8 Cdn Recce Bn) as covering the left flank about NINFIELD R 1432.

64. 3 Cdn Div has one reserve brigade group in the area roughly HORSHAM - COWFOLD Q 6542, and one a short distance to the south-west in the area PETWORTH - BILLINGSHURST Q 5345 - PULBOROUGH Q 4833. The third brigade group (that referred to in para. 55 (above)) is stationed immediately to the east and north-east of CHICHESTER, roughly between OSCKING Q 3237 (excl) and MERSTON Q 3323 (incl).

65. The preparation of the new positions just described is now in progress and will shortly be completed. On 5 Dec 41, H.Q. Cdn Corps sent out the following message in this connection:

S E C R E T . From 1 Feb 42 on action stations formations will occupy new posns as in Ops instruction 27 dated 24 Nov 41. Defence works will be developed accordingly including high priority for storage of res am rations water supplies within localities. Before 1 Feb 42 unless occupation of new posns has prior approval of Corps Hq formations will occupy posns as taken over from 4 Corps

PRESENT STATIONS OF CORPS FORMATIONS

66. The completion of the new battle positions may result in some re-adjustment of the present quartering of formations and units of Cdn Corps, but it appears rather unlikely to necessitate very fundamental changes. The present distribution of Corps formations, as notified in C.M.H.Q. Location Statement No. 11 (10 Jan 42), is as follows.

67. H.Q. Cdn Corps remains at WORTH PRIORY (above, para. 13). (1)

68. Corps Troops, apart from those remaining in Surrey, are chiefly distributed in the rearward areas of Sussex: e.g., 8 Cdn Army Field Regt has its H.Q. at HAZELHURST (031525), near FRANT, south of TUNBRIDGE WELLS, and 1 Cdn Medium Regt has its H.Q. at SINGLETON (313326), north of CHICHESTER.

69. 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde, in accordance with the defence scheme already described, is close to the coast. It has its H.Q. at ROTTINGDEAN, and its three battalions are stationed as follows: 11 Cdn Army Tk Bn, BRIGHTON (746265); 13 Cdn Army Tk Bn, CLAPHAM (536249); 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn, SEAFORD (987183). It may be noted here that an order from H.Q. Cdn Corps dated 2 Jan 42 provides that on STAND TO 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde less 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn will come under command of 1 Cdn Div, and 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn will come under 2 Cdn Div.

70. The First Canadian Division, as already noted, occupies the right or western sector of the coast of Sussex. H.Q. 1 Cdn Div is at RNEPP CASTLE (593410), a crenellated Early Victorian structure in the Vale of Sussex east of SHIPLEY (not to be confused with the small remains of the medieval castle on a mound about three-quarters of a mile to the south-east). The Division's brigades are disposed as follows:

- H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Bde (Right): SLINDON HOUSE (392279), SLINDON, north-east of BOMNOR REGIS.
- H.Q. 2 Cdn Inf Bde (Left): WHITTINGHAM COLLEGE (742263), PRESTON (BRIGHTON).
- H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Bde (Centre): GREYFRIARS (521326), STORRINGTON (at the foot of the DOWNS, north-east of ARUNDEL).

71. The Second Canadian Division, holding the left sector of the Sussex coast, has its H.Q. at HEATHFIELD HOUSE (036397) (see Report No. 41). Brigades are disposed as follows:

- H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde (Reserve): THE GABLES (009474), near ROTHERFIELD, south of TUNBRIDGE WELLS.
- H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde (Left): CROSSWAYS HOUSE (987286), UPPER DICKER, west of HAILSHAM.
- H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde (Right): FIRLE PLACE (906260), WEST FIRLE, south-east of LEWES.

72. The Third Canadian Division (in Corps Reserve except for 9 Cdn Inf Bde) has its H.Q. at COURTLANDS (819314), SHARPTHORNE, east of WEST HOATHLY and south-west of EAST GRINSTEAD. Brigades are disposed as follows:

(1) On 15 Jan 42 H.Q. Cdn Corps advised (OPS 9-1-1) that as from 1800 hrs 27 Jan 42 Advanced H.Q. Cdn Corps (comprising G.O.C., G(O), G(Int), G(Air), C.C.R.A., C.E., C.S.O., and Sig (Cdn Corps)) would be located at WAKEHURST PLACE 778506.

H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde (Right), THE WEALINS (783440), LINDFIELD, north of HAYWARDS HEATH.

H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde (Left), WOODGATE (843474), DANESHILL, south of EAST GRINSTEAD.

H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde (Aerodrome defence under H.Q. Cdn Corps), HALMAKER HOUSE (343278), north-east of CHELCHESSTER.

73. BOUNDARIES OF CORPS DISTRICT. It should be noted that the boundaries of the new Canadian Corps District are those of the County of Sussex, except on the east, where the adjustment mentioned in para. 57 (above) has had the effect of transferring the eastern point of Sussex to 12 Corps. The boundary ceases to coincide with the Sussex - Kent border at 846444 (east of BODIAM CASTLE) and runs thence irregularly through BREDE and WESTFIELD (both incl 12 Corps) to the coast south of FAIRLIGHT Church. (Tracing issued with Cdn Corps message Ops 2-2-1, 12 Dec 41.)

UNITS UNDER CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

74. The locations of the most important bodies of troops at present under command of Canadian Military Headquarters, and not forming part of Cdn Corps, will now be briefly outlined.

75. Fifth Canadian (Armoured) Division. As explained in Report No. 54, 5 Cdn (Arm) Div remains under command of G.H.H.Q. while completing mobilization and training. It has its H.Q. at ROYAL PAVILION, ALDERSHOT. H.Q. 1 Cdn Arm Bde is at KNOLLYS ROAD HOUSE, ALDERSHOT, and H.Q. 5 Cdn (Arm) Div Support Group is at YORK COTTAGE, WATERLOO WEST BARRACKS, ALDERSHOT. Location Statement No. 11 shows H.Q. 2 Cdn Arm Bde as at LITTLECOTE, Wilts (746905), in the locality close to SALISBURY PLAIN where this brigade has been since its arrival in this country; but "on or about" 15 Jan 42 this brigade moved to the HINDHEAD area (south of ALDERSHOT), into quarters occupied by 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde for several weeks between its departure from the LAVINGTON area and its move to its present station on the coast. H.Q. 3 Cdn Arm Bde will now presumably be at TWEENWAYS (328548), near HINDHEAD, where H.Q. 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde was formerly located.

76. First Canadian Anti-Aircraft Brigade. H.Q. 1 Cdn A.A. Bde still remains at COLCHESTER. On distribution and employment of units under its command, see Report No. 57.

77. CANADIAN REINFORCEMENT UNITS. It was explained in Report No. 39 that a reorganization of Canadian Base Units (now called Canadian Reinforcement Units) was pending, and that it was proposed that these units should this winter take over a considerable proportion of the accommodation in ALDERSHOT. Both of these developments have now, in great part, taken place. Headquarters, Canadian Reinforcement Units, is now located at SMALL-SHOT LODGE, HAMPSHIRE ROAD, ALDERSHOT, and the four Groups now organized are located as follows:

- H.Q. "A" Group, C.R.U. (Inf) : LAURENTIDE CAMP, WITLEY (as before).
 H.Q. "B" Group, C.R.U. (R.C.E., R.C.C.S., R.C.A.S.C., R.C.O.C., GENERAL) : OAKLEY COTTAGE, COVE AREA (N. ALDERSHOT).
 H.Q. "C" Group, C.R.U. (R.C.A. and C.A.C.) : BROOKHEAD HOUSE, BORDON.
 H.Q. "D" Group, C.R.U. (Inf and N.G.) : LEIPZIG BARRACKS, GROOMHAM (West of ALDERSHOT).

78. Canadian Forestry Corps. The C.F.C. continues its work in the Scottish Highlands, as noted in Report No. 29.

79. Medical Units. Canadian medical units in this country have multiplied in recent months, and there have been some changes of location. It may therefore be well to list the most important of these units and their locations as in Location Statement No. 11 :

- 1 Cdn General Hospital : Sussex County Council Hospital, HORSHAM. (Formerly at MARSTON GREEN).
 x 5 Cdn General Hospital : TAPLOW, Bucks.
 7 Cdn General Hospital : MARSTON GREEN, COLTSHILL, near BIRMINGHAM.
 14 Cdn General Hospital : CONNAUGHT HOSPITAL, ALDERSHOT.
 x 15 Cdn General Hospital : BRALSHOTT, Surrey.
 x 1 Cdn Neurological Hospital : BASINGSTOKE, Hants.

x - No change.

Some notes on the question of hospital accommodation will be found in Report No. 33.

80. The great variety of minor units under command of C.M.H.Q. cannot be dealt with here. Among them are the considerable group of Engineer units at work on construction in the Reinforcement Units area under the direction of the Works Organization, which has its H.Q. at PINWOOD, WHITE HILL, near BORDON. A large number of miscellaneous units are stationed in this area. For details, see Location Statement No. 11.

SURVEY OF OPERATIONS, RECENT MONTHS

81. It may be desirable to include in this report, as in No. 33, some remarks on the operations of the past few months. Again the matter can be very briefly dealt with. There has been only one operation which has taken Canadian troops out of the United Kingdom; this was the expedition to SPITZBERGEN, which involved only a comparatively small force and brought no contact with the enemy. It is fully treated in Report No. 56. Otherwise, the troops have been engaged in further training designed to enable them to deal with an enemy invasion which so far has not materialized; in this connection, Exercise "BUTLER" was of special interest (see Report No. 49).

82. The second anniversary of the landing in the United Kingdom of the First Canadian Contingent of this war fell on 17 Dec 41. Although the Canadian Army Overseas has now grown to 123840 all ranks (Cable A.60, CAN MILITARY to DEFENSOR, 9 Jan 42 : Strength State, Cdn Troops in United Kingdom, 2 Jan 42) no unit of this force has as yet actually met the enemy.

83. The troops inevitably continue to complain of this state of enforced inactivity. The Field Censors' Notes on Canadian Army mail examined during the period 8 - 21 Dec 41 remark, "Expressions of their desire for quick action remain very emphatic, especially now that the entry of Japan has brought danger nearer to their own homeland." One Canadian soldier's letter is quoted :

Just think we have been over here for nearly two years, and no scrap yet. The Yanks already have had a "Go" at 'em. The sooner we get into action the better and the war won't seem so long. We have had a little gunfire, and bombing, so we have an idea what it is all about. But you get so fed up reading about the Auzzies. The people over here rave about the Canadians in the last war, all we do is live on the laurels of our fathers, and its getting a little stale.
(2 Cdn Wing Sig Sec).

The Notes on mail examined during the period 22 Dec 41 - 4 Jan 42 include the following quotation from a letter (unit not named) :

I have never seen the boys so disgusted as they were last week and still are. I've seen lots of tears in their eyes... I can't see how we can stand it much longer doing nothing for 2 years and those poor devils in Hong Kong sure didn't have a chance.

84. The Canadian force sent to HONG KONG, which arrived there in mid-November 1941 and took part in the defence against the Japanese (8-25 Dec 41) was the only formation of the Canadian Army to see action so far in the present war. The force consisted of the ROYAL RIFLES OF CANADA and the WINNIPEG GRENADIERS, and was commanded by Brigadier J.K. LAWSON, who is believed to have been killed in action. As the survivors of the Canadian units presumably became prisoners of war at the surrender on Christmas Day, the full story of their part in the defence will not be told until the war is over. The HONG KONG force was despatched direct from Canada and was not under Canadian Military Headquarters, LONDON. It therefore is scarcely a direct concern of the Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q. It may, however, be worth while a little later to make a digest of the material on the C.M.H.Q. file on this force, for the benefit of the Official Historian.

85. POSSIBILITY OF MINOR OPERATIONS. The move of Cdn Corps to the coast involves the possibility of Canadian units participating in minor offensive activities against the German forces in occupation of the opposite shore. Such operations are known to have taken place at various times since the French collapse.

86. Some training is in fact in progress with the possibility of such operations in view. The South-Eastern Command A.L.C. (Assault Landing Craft) School is located at HAVANT, Hants (just outside the boundary of the Command) and Major J.E. GANONG (48 HIGHERS) (formerly C.S.O.2 (M.T.) at C.M.H.Q.) is attached to it as Canadian Corps "Raiding Officer". The school has been engaged in training sub-units of the formations in the Command, including Cdn Corps, in amphibious operations. The present programme, so far as Cdn Corps is concerned, is designed to train one company of each infantry brigade; ultimately it is hoped to train one company of each battalion. References in the Field Comms Notes indicate the hope of many Canadian soldiers to be chosen for participation in such enterprises. So far, however, Canadians have not taken part in any of these cross-Channel raids.

87. It will be noted that the Senior Combatant Officer, Canadian Army Overseas, now has authority to execute minor expeditions without reference to OTTAWA (see the account of the negotiations on this matter in Report No. 56).

C.B.S.

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer (S.D.2),
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.



02040-2-11-2 1091517

C O P Y
IMMEDIATE
From Canmilitary

REPORT No. 58
APPENDIX "A"

Copy No. _____

To Defensor

D: 1 Nov. 41.

Tel. No.

GS 2394

Following for C.G.S. from McNaughton BEGINS.
Organization of Cdn Corps for operations in Suzzex Sector has been discussed in detail with VCIGS W.O. and C in C Home Forces and mutual agreement reached on following action which is reported for information.

(1) Command Sector will pass to Canadian Corps Area Headquarters from 4 Corps Area Headquarters on 19 Nov 1941.
(2) Canadian Corps Area Headquarters will comprise (a) Existing Canadian Corps Headquarters staff less (b) Certain Cdn Offrs not required including GSO 2 Cdn Liaison and other similar officers and other ranks who have been specially provided in existing Canadian establishment for purely Canadian business. (c) An Area staff of British officers and other ranks in accordance with a special W.E. to be issued by W.O.

(3) Canadian troops under command Canadian Corps Area Headquarters and in combination with British will comprise 1, 2 and 3 Cdn Divisions 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde and Corps Troops less (a) Units not yet completed mobilization and training including Cdn Armoured Division (b) Engineer units required for work in construction Canadian Base Units Area. (c) Corps Medium Arty Hdqrs. (d) C.E. and part of his staff. These units being grouped under C.C.M.A. and C.E. and will come under Command C.M.H.Q. and not in combination until change in situation so requires.

(4) Personnel referred to in para 2(b) above will be used either at C.M.H.Q. or Hdqrs C.C.M.A. or by C.E. to assist in General Administration as required. They will not be dispersed as they will be needed when Cdn Corps again required as a mobile formation, on ceasing to hold Coastal Defence Sector. Further telegram follows.

Time of Origin

1635

Time Received

CIPHER OFFICE

To be despatched by CABLE in CIPHER

Distribution

- 1.-3/CAOS, HF/2
- 2)
- 3)-Cipher Off.
- 4)
- 5)-HQ Cdn Corps
- 6) Cdn Liaison
- 7 - D.A.G.
- 8 - D.Q.M.G.
- 9 - G tele file

(sgd)

" J.C. Murchie "

Brigadier G. S.