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.

Ce texte est préliminaire et n'a aucun caractère officiel. On n'a pas vérifié son exactitude et les interpretations qu'il contient ne sont pas nécessairement celles du Service historique.

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

July 1986

TRIPLICATE

CANCELLED

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: DHD 3-3
by ____ for DHist NDHQ
Date: NOV 13 1986

REPORT NO. 84

HISTORICAL OFFICER

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

14 Oct 42

Project for Preliminary Historical Narrative, Canadian Army Overseas, 1939-40.

1. This Report consists of material relating to the project referred to in Report No. 76 for the preparation of a "first narrative" dealing with the history of the Canadian Army Overseas from the arrival of the first Canadian troops in this country late in 1939 to the formation of the Canadian Corps on 25 Dec 40.

2. Attached as an Appendix is the detailed project for such a narrative, the preparation of which was forecast in Report No. 76. This project deals at greater length and in somewhat greater detail than that Report with the problems of preparing such a narrative as that proposed, and lays down certain tentative principles designed to make such a narrative as useful as possible to the future Official Historian.

3. The project as now attached has been submitted for the comments of the G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, and advice has been received (letter P.A. 3-7-10 from P.A. to G.O.C.-in-C. to Senior Officer, Canadian Military Headquarters, 29 Sep 42) that the G.O.C.-in-C. "is in agreement with the project for a preliminary narrative of the history of the Canadian Army Overseas 1939-40 as outlined".

4. Major G.F.G. STANLEY (New Brunswick Rangers) has arrived in the United Kingdom to take up the appointment of Assistant Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., but is at present in hospital and has not yet reported. It was notified to H.Q. First Cdn Army that it was proposed that Major STANLEY, who is both a competent historical scholar and an experienced officer, should undertake most of the work of preparing the projected narrative. The letter already quoted from General McNAUGHTON's Personal Assistant makes the following comment:

> Major Stanley will be given free access to all documents, as well as to individuals at H.Q. First Cdn Army whom he may wish to consult. Every help is to be given to Major Stanley and in addition he will be given access to all formations and units under command First Cdn Army as may be required.

5. It is now hoped that the work of preparing the initial sections of the proposed narrative may begin at once, and that these sections will be available for circulation for the comments of participants at a comparatively early date. Some of the officers whose comments will be most valuable are now in Canada, and it is proposed to request the co-operation of the Historical Section, G.S., N.D.H.Q., in obtaining the views and suggestions of these officers.

6. In the absence of comment from N.D.H.Q. on Report No. 76, in which the principles on which it was proposed to act in preparing the narrative were outlined at some length, it is assumed that the proposed course of action is acceptable to the authorities there.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: DHD 3-3
by _____ for DHist, NDHQ
Date: NOV 13 1986

PREPARATIONS FOR HISTORY OF CANADIAN MEDICAL SERVICES OVERSEAS.

7. In Report No. 76 the preparations made by the British Medical authorities looking towards the compilation of a history of their Medical Service were described; and suggestions were made for the inception of a similar programme in the Canadian Army Overseas. The Director of Medical Services at C.M.H.Q. had already given some thought to this question, and an extract of Report No. 76 was communicated to him. Subsequently action has been taken by the D.M.S. along the general lines suggested.

8. Major Atholl GORDON, R.C.A.M.C., who holds the appointment of D.A.D.M.S. (C.W.) at C.M.H.Q., has undertaken the supervision of the R.C.A.M.C. historical programme overseas. It is understood that Major Gordon is to be provided with an officer who will devote the whole of his time to the historical task under his direction. Some steps have already been taken by the D.M.S. to obtain from the A.Ds, M.S. of Canadian field formations their impressions of the developments in the United Kingdom to the present date, to supplement the material available in War Diaries and to assist in organizing a medical narrative.

9. This work is still in a very early stage, but it is most gratifying to see the problem of medical history being approached in this spirit at this date. The measures now being taken will, it is hoped, enable the Canadian Medical authorities to publish an adequate history of their service at an early date after the conclusion of hostilities. Liaison has been established between the Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., and Major Gordon, and useful discussions have taken place. Major Gordon has been furnished with copies of Report No. 76, of the Historical Officer's original instructions, and of the project for a narrative of the events of 1939-40 which accompanies this Report. It is believed that the General Staff narrative now to be prepared will be of material value to those engaged upon the medical history, and is indeed an essential preliminary to the work of organizing a medical narrative which they now propose to undertake.

10. Every assistance will be given by the Historical Officer to those concerned with the preparation of the medical history.

C.P.S.

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer,
Canadian Military Headquarters.

SECRET

PROJECT FOR PRELIMINARY NARRATIVE OF THE HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS, 1939 - 1940.

1. The object of this project is to provide the future Canadian Official Historian with a comprehensive "first narrative" of the overseas events of 1939-40, which may serve as the foundation for the section of the Official History dealing with this period and this theatre. It is hoped to compile a narrative sufficiently complete to obviate the necessity for a great deal of additional research when the time comes to write the actual History.

2. It is further hoped that by preparing this narrative now it will be possible, by circulating copies of it confidentially, to obtain the comments and criticisms of participants while their memories of the events are still comparatively fresh.

3. It is believed that for the period subsequent to the formation of the Canadian Corps, 25 Dec 40, the Reports prepared by the Historical Officer, Canadian Military Headquarters, will provide the Official Historian with a considerable part of the raw material of his story; but no such organized matter exists for the period preceding the date mentioned, and it is felt, in consequence, that the preparation of such a narrative as that now proposed is an urgent need if a Canadian Official History is to be produced with any promptitude after the cessation of hostilities.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF THE NARRATIVE

4. It is proposed that this narrative shall deal exclusively with events in the European theatre, and that happenings in Canada or other theatres shall be noticed only where they directly affect the narrative, and then only briefly. Complete historical sources for events in Canada are not available in the United Kingdom. For the purposes of this narrative, Iceland will not be considered part of the European theatre.

5. In point of time, the narrative will begin with the earliest Canadian military activities in the United Kingdom after the outbreak of war, and will carry the story down to the formation of the Canadian Corps.

6. It is proposed that the scope of the narrative shall be, roughly, such as to provide material for the preparation of one small volume. At the present time it is clearly impossible to make a definite forecast of the precise nature and scale of the Official History to be prepared after the war; and so far as is known no definite project for this history has yet been drawn. It is fair to assume, however, that the events of the first year of the history of the Canadian Army Overseas will be regarded as sufficiently interesting to justify devoting to them several chapters of any historical work prepared under official auspices.

7. It is not necessary that the scale or precise nature of the history should be known to the narrator in order to enable him to perform his task; and, indeed, the narrative which he produces will itself to a large extent furnish the means of determining how much space shall be allotted to the events of

this period in the final work. In the nature of things, moreover, the first narrative now to be produced will be considerably fuller and more detailed than the final history of the same period. The aim of the narrator in dealing with any individual episode should be to provide the Official Historian with all the material which he may require for adequate treatment of it. If the historian is given more than he ultimately needs, he can easily discard the surplus; but if he finds the material provided by the narrator inadequate, his only recourse will be further research among the original sources, with consequent delay to the production of the history. It is to be expected that the Official Historian will be obliged to undertake a certain amount of original research; but the aim of the narrator should be to ensure that the necessity for such research should be reduced within as narrow limits as possible.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

8. It will not be the business of the narrator to express opinions; but it will be his business, so far as in him lies, to provide the Official Historian with the means of forming opinions. With this end in view the narrator should be alert to perceive issues which are likely to be historically important, and he should make it his business to discover and record the evidence and views of those in a position to know, and in general to place before the historian the materials which will enable him to form sound judgments.

9. The "first narrative" now to be produced need not attempt to attain a high standard of literary excellence; this is for the Official Historian to provide. The aim of the narrator should be above all to present a full, clear, "businesslike" narrative which will serve the historian, whoever he may be, as an effective basis for the final history.

10. With respect to emphasis: active operations, or events allied to them, will take precedence of all other matters, and will be dealt with at proportionate length. Nevertheless, the Canadian history will not be exclusively operational, and there are many other subjects which must receive due attention. The growth of the Canadian Force in the United Kingdom, its composition, its equipment, the stages of its training, its relations with the people of England, its general life and activities, are all important parts of its history and of the national experience of Canada. It must be remembered that such matters as equipment and training are very closely related to success in operations, and they must be dealt with accordingly, though not necessarily in very great detail.

11. It is probably safe to assume that the Canadian Official History, like those produced under the auspices of the Historical Section of the War Cabinet Secretariat in the United Kingdom, will be designed to appeal to the intelligent general reader as well as to the military student. The Army whose work is described is Canada's Army, and the story should be told in a manner calculated to be interesting to, and comprehensible by, any intelligent Canadian civilian. With this in view, the narrator should keep the following points before him :

(a) He should not assume in the reader too much knowledge of the general situation, but should make his story complete in itself; e.g., it will be necessary to outline, clearly and very briefly, the general course of the British operations in France and Belgium during May and June, 1940, in order to clarify the movements of Canadian formations at this period.

(b) Technicalities should be avoided and technical matters generally dealt with only as they affect policy and strategic or tactical developments. The history should be approached mainly from the "G" viewpoint. Specialist aspects should be left for investigation by specialists and treatment in separate studies. The Official Historian will have the difficult task of describing a highly technical war in largely non-technical terms, while nevertheless making clear the importance of the technical aspect. The narrator must do everything possible to assist him.

DETAILS OF PREPARATION

12. For purposes of convenience, the narrative should be divided into chapters. This will facilitate the circulation of sections of the narrative to participants as they are produced, which will probably result in better co-operation than if officers were confronted with a whole volume of typescript at one time.

13. Paragraphs should be numbered serially through chapters for purposes of easy reference.

14. It is not considered that it will be necessary to attach a great number of documents as Appendices. The Canadian Official Historian will probably be working at Ottawa with the War Diaries of all units and formations immediately available to him. The narrator should, however, quote all highly relevant portions of such documents fully and accurately in the text of the narrative, to facilitate both the work of the Official Historian and the comments of participants. Where it seems unlikely that an important document will be otherwise available in Canadian sources, it should be copied in full and appended to the narrative.

APPENDICES

15. Attached as Appendix "A" is a draft outline of the proposed narrative. It must be understood that this is necessarily tentative, and is subject to modification as additional investigation is undertaken. It serves, however, to indicate the general line of procedure now envisaged.

16. Attached as Appendix "B" is a note on the sources of information which will be available for use. This also is necessarily neither complete nor exhaustive.

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer,
Canadian Military Headquarters.

APPENDIX "A"

THE CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS

A Preliminary Narrative of Events from the Landing of the First Flight of the First Canadian Division to the Formation of the Canadian Corps : 17 December 1939 to 25 December 1940.

I. THE FIRST MONTHS IN BRITAIN. The Concentration of the 1st Canadian Division and Ancillary Troops. December 1939 - March 1940.

Brief survey of measures taken in Canada to provide for an Expeditionary Force, from 1 Sep 39. Announcement of intention to despatch 1 Cdn Div. Beginnings of C.M.H.Q. Arrangements for transport of 1 Cdn Div. Proposals for rumour re transport via Marseilles. Voyage and arrival of the First Flight. Reception of troops in England, etc. Second and Third Flights.

Order of Battle of 1 Cdn Div and Ancillary Troops.

Aldershot: the winter. Progress of mobilization and training. Problems of equipment: weapons and M.T. Beginnings of reinforcement organization.

The atmosphere of this period. The lull in the West. The B.E.F. and the anticipated role of 1 Cdn Div in France. Reconnaissances for Base establishments. Proposals for aid to Finland.

II. THE STORM BREAKS IN THE WEST. Projects for the Use of Canadian Troops in Norway and Flanders. April - May 1940.

State of the Canadian force in the United Kingdom in April, 1940. Equipment.

The German invasion of Norway. British plans for action. Proposal for use of Canadian force at Trondhjem. Organization and departure of the force. Decision not to use it. Experiences of Cdn interpreters with K.O.Y.L.I. Discussion with Ottawa.

Buckingham Palace guard.

The German attack on the Low Countries. Development of the campaign. The B.E.F. imperilled. Proposal to use Cdn force to reopen its communications. General McNaughton's reconnaissance to Calais and Dunkirk. Abandonment of the project and its subsequent revival. The Dunkirk withdrawal.

The danger to Britain. Formation of Canadian Force, and the move to Northampton.

Visit of Hon. N. McL. Rogers.

III. FRANCE AFTER DUNKIRK. The Employment of Canadian Troops with the "Second B.E.F.", June, 1940.

The situation in France after Dunkirk and the decision to despatch further British troops. The plan for the Second B.E.F. and Canadian participation. Plans for Base establishments, etc.

Preparations for the move to France. Royal Visit. Equipment, etc. The plan for cross-Channel transit. The first flight crosses to Brest.

The decision to withdraw the British forces and reverse the Canadian movement. Situation of 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp in France. Change of concentration area. Experiences of the units individually. The successful withdrawal. Loss of transport. Return of various parties. Casualties. Subsequent experiences of prisoners. Summary.

IV. ENGLAND AFTER DUNKIRK.
June - July, 1940.

Military situation of Britain, June 1940. Mr. Eden's remark, "less than one division". Canadian Force (with one Bde Gp immobilized) the only effective counter-attack force. General lack of equipment. (Accounts since given to Parliament.)

Canadian Force and its new role. The move to Oxford. The move thence into Surrey. Re-equipment of 1 Cdn Inf Bde Group.

Formation of 7 Corps as a counter-attack force. Its composition and functions. Mixed staff. Changes in command in the field and at C.M.H.Q.

V. THE SEVENTH CORPS.
July - December, 1940.

General activities of 7 Corps. Training and anti-invasion preparations. Changes in Order of Battle. (N.Z. Div.) Equipment.

Beginnings of enemy air action against the United Kingdom. Casualties from bombing. "The Battle of Britain". The invasion alarm in September. Effects of bombing at C.M.H.Q.

Miscellaneous activities. Canadian brigades in coastal positions. Assistance in dealing with bomb-damage. Experimentation (Tunnelling Coy, etc.). Tunnellers to Gibraltar. Road construction.

Beginnings of the education programme. Auxiliary Services generally.

VI. THE CONCENTRATION OF THE SECOND CANADIAN DIVISION AND THE FORMATION OF THE CANADIAN CORPS, August - December, 1940.

Gradual concentration of 2 Cdn Div in Britain. Its Order of Battle. State of its training and equipment. Roles assigned to it in event of invasion. Brigades in coastal sectors.

Announcement of expected formation of Corps. Arrangements with British. Visit of Col. Ralston and C.G.S. Formation of Cdn Corps, 25 Dec 40. Its Order of Battle as formed, and projects for development.

APPENDIX "B"

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The chief sources of information available for use in the preparation of a narrative of the Canadian overseas events of 1939-40 are listed below.

The basic sources will, of course, be the War Diaries of Canadian formations and units (the triplicate copies of which are available in the Overseas Records Office at Acton), and the files of Canadian Military Headquarters, supplemented by any documents which may be available at the headquarters of higher field formations. Where gaps occur it will be necessary to seek supplementary information from individuals; and it is proposed that when the "first narrative" is completed it shall be circulated for the comments of participants, which will be preserved to assist the Official Historian.

There are already in print a certain number of official and unofficial publications which will be of material assistance.

A. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

(i) War Diaries

The War Diaries preserved at Acton will be the foundation of the narrative. Most of the fundamental documents will be found included as Appendices in these Diaries.

The narrator should read all War Diaries of formations for all periods, quiet or otherwise. When dealing with periods of active operations, he should examine the diary of every unit concerned in them. When dealing with quiet periods he should "sample" very widely among unit diaries, which will afford him very valuable illustrative and corroborative material.

British War Diaries. For the period of active operations in June 1940, during which 1 Cdn Inf Bde Gp reached France, photostats of the War Diaries of higher British formations are available at Acton.

(ii) Files

The files in Central Registry, C.M.H.Q., are a mine of important historical information, and must be carefully consulted. They will be found to throw light on almost every phase of the story.

In any cases where formation headquarters have retained files throwing light on the events of 1940, these should also be consulted.

The G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, has turned over to the Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q., certain important documents for safe-keeping, and these will be available for the purposes of the narrative.

It is probable that in the earliest phase of the story, important assistance might be obtained from the files of Canada House, if permission to consult these could be obtained.

At certain points, Reports already prepared by the Historical Officer will be of use.

B. PRINTED SOURCES

(i) Official Publications

The following will be consulted: General Orders, Canada; Routine Orders, Canada and Overseas; the Parliamentary Debates of Canada and the United Kingdom, where relevant; and any other Government documents which may throw light on the matters in hand, including particularly Lord Gort's Despatches on the campaign in France and Belgium (Supplement to London Gazette, 10 Oct 41).

Several booklets and pamphlets of material value have been published under official auspices in the United Kingdom. These include the following:

Eric Linklater, "The Defence of Calais" and "The Highland Division".

H. St.G. Saunders, "The Battle of Britain" and "Bomber Command".

Ian Hay, "The Battle of Flanders".

(ii) Unofficial Publications

A certain number of useful books, some of them including much material from official sources, have been published privately. Examples are John Masefield, "The Nine Days Wonder", and the two volumes of Mr. Churchill's war speeches, "Into Battle" and "The Unrelenting Struggle". All such material should be drawn upon where relevant.

C. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

The narrator should make use of newspaper and periodical material for the sake of atmosphere as well as for additional information.

A complete file of The Times (London) for the war period is available at Acton, and will be found useful.

Canada's Weekly will also have some value.