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REPORT No. 95
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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

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Attachment of Canadian Officers and Soldiers to
First British Army in TUNISIA, 1942 - 1943.

AMENDMENT NO. 1

1. Papers of later date than those available when Report No. 95 was compiled indicate that the "Fifth Batch" of Canadian officers and N.C.Os. was duly sent forward to North Africa in May 1943, and that it consisted of 39 officers and 11 N.C.Os. The total number of Canadian Army personnel despatched for attachment to the First Army was thus 201 officers and 147 other ranks. (Documents on C.M.H.Q. file 8/Attach Ops/1/2.) These totals are exclusive of a few individuals sent to the African theatre under special arrangements.
2. Casualty returns of dates later than those available when Report No. 95 was prepared indicate that the totals of Canadian Army casualties suffered in North Africa were as follows:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>O.R.</u>
Killed	2	3
Died of wounds	1	1
Wounded	8	7
Missing	-	-
Prisoners of War	2	-
Died while P.W.	1	-
Total	14	11

3. To the fatal officer casualties noted in para 26 of Report No. 95 must be added Lieut. G.O. Curphey, West N.S.R., who died while a prisoner of war. (C.M.H.Q. file 18/N. Africa/1).

C.P. Stacey
(C.P. Stacey) Colonel
Director Historical Section

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May 43

Attachment of Canadian Officers and Soldiers to First British Army in TUNISIA, 1942 - 1943.

1. This Report deals with the attachments of Canadian Army personnel to the First British Army, which since November, 1942, has been operating in North Africa. The information here collected is additional to that appended on this subject to Report No. 92 (Appx. "B", Note 9).
2. It will be recalled that on 8 Nov 42 combined British and United States forces began the occupation of FRENCH MOROCCO and ALGERIA and shortly advanced into TUNISIA, which the Germans had immediately occupied as a counter-measure. Since that time fierce fighting has been in progress in this theatre, and at the moment of writing the enemy forces are contained in a comparatively small "box" about the cities of TUNIS and BIZERTA, and are being strongly attacked by the First British Army (commanded by Lieut.-General K.A.N. Anderson, C.B., M.C.), the Eighth British Army (commanded by General Sir Bernard Montgomery) which has carried out a remarkable advance from EGYPT, and American and French forces.
3. As has been repeatedly pointed out in these Reports, the period of more than three years which the Canadian troops have spent in Great Britain has brought them very little battle experience apart from the one day's heavy fighting at DIEPPE (19 Aug 42) in which only two Brigades were involved. It has therefore been a matter of concern to the Canadian military authorities to provide such experience for as many Canadian personnel as possible in any theatre that offered. The operations of General Anderson's First Army afforded the best opportunity that has yet become available, since the earlier operations of the Eighth Army in EGYPT and LIBYA, at the end of a line of communications stretching around the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, were very inconvenient for this purpose.
4. Steps were taken accordingly, shortly after the beginning of the North African enterprise, to attach to the First Army as many selected Canadian officers and soldiers as the British authorities could accommodate.

ATTACHMENT OF CANADIANS TO FIRST BRITISH ARMY

5. The initial arrangement made in December, 1942, covered the immediate attachment to the First Army of a total of 150 all ranks. The actual total despatched was 78 officers and 63 other ranks, and this party disembarked at ALGIERS on 3 Jan 43, the news of their arrival being announced on 5 Jan.
6. Under an arrangement made with the War Office on 21 Dec 42, further batches of Canadians to the number of 50 all ranks per month were despatched thereafter, and as of 10 Apr 43 the actual totals of Canadian personnel sent for attachment to the First Army stood as follows:

	Offrs.	O.R.
First Batch	78	63
Second "	32	25
Third "	26	24
Fourth "	26	24
TOTALS	162	136

These totals included a few individuals sent from the Army in Canada. It was found, however, that in a number of cases officers sent to England from Canada for these attachments were in fact insufficiently experienced for despatch to a theatre of war under such conditions, and some of these officers were not permitted to proceed, while others were given periods of attachment to Canadian units in this country before being sent to North Africa.

7. In April, 1943, General McNaughton obtained the concurrence of the War Office in an increase in the quota from 50 to 150 all ranks per month. When however this arrangement came to be discussed with Allied Force Headquarters at ALGIERS, some difficulties developed, and for the month of May, at least, only a total of 50 all ranks can be sent. It is possible that this "fifth batch", which is to proceed about 10 May 43, will be the last group of Canadians attached in TUNISIA, as the enemy resistance there may with luck be liquidated within a few weeks.

8. These attachments have been on a three-month basis, and the great majority of Canadians of the first batch who had left England late in December of 1942 returned to England in April, 1943, disembarking on 6 Apr.

9. The above paragraphs derive from documents found on C.M.H.Q. files 1/ATTACH OPS/1, 8/ATTACH OPS/1, and 8/ATTACH OPS/1/2.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWED IN NORTH AFRICA

10. The writer has had the advantage of an interview (on 27 Apr 43) with Lt.-Col. W.A. Bean (H.L.I. of C.), now A.A.G., First Cdn Army, who was the senior officer of the first group of 150 Canadians sent out. The account which follows derives in great part from Lt.-Col. Bean's evidence. Two reports by this officer are on C.M.H.Q. file 1/M.E./1/2, which contains a great deal of important information on the subject of Canadian activities in North Africa.

11. The party under Lt.-Col. Bean disembarked at ALGIERS, as noted, and had the experience of seeing the British Western MEDITERRANEAN Naval Squadron which had just arrived there, a sight which Lt.-Col. Bean describes as most impressive.

12. The procedure followed was that the Canadian personnel were treated as though they had been normal British reinforcements for the First Army. They were sent to the Base Depots appropriate to their various arms, and in due course (after some delay in the case of the first group) were posted by 2nd Echelon to British units. They were posted normally "surplus to war establishment", but many were subsequently absorbed into unit establishments as vacancies occurred. As far as possible, the Canadian officers and soldiers were given appointments suitable to their rank, experience and arm. Thus, as described in Report No. 92, an Infantry Captain or Major frequently found himself commanding a company in a fighting Battalion, and officers or soldiers of other arms were similarly employed in their own "jobs". Lt.-Col. Bean reports that even in the case of personnel who continued to be surplus to establishment, plenty of employment was found for them. There was no lack of vacancies, as there was a chronic shortage of officers in particular.

13. Lt.-Col. Bean states that in the earlier period of the First Army's operations, when it came very close to capturing TUNIS and BIZERTA by a coup de main, this "Army" consisted of only two Brigades (11 and 36 Inf Bdes), which moreover were very short of essential supplies. At the

time of the arrival of the first group of Canadians, the First Army had grown to two British Divisions (78 Div and 6 Armd Div) plus French and American elements. Subsequently, in the course of February and March, 46 Div, 1 Div and 4 Div arrived in succession. 25 Army Tk Bde also arrived.

14. Most of the first group of Canadians, in these circumstances, were posted to 78 Div or 6 Armd Div. The second group went mainly to 46 Div. Thereafter new arrivals were posted as reinforcements wherever there were vacancies.

EXPERIENCES OF THE CANADIANS IN TUNISIA

15. The Canadians in TUNISIA have had plenty of active employment. Lt.-Col. Bean himself spent some time at Army H.Q. Subsequently he served as A.A. & Q.M.G. 78 Div, in the absence of the regular incumbent, and later still took the place of the D.A.Q.M.G. of the same formation. He found that he got on very well; his Canadian staff training and experience made him quite familiar with the procedure of a British H.Q., where the work was very similar to what he had been accustomed to. All the Canadians, he believes, found that in general their training had been along the right lines, and enabled them to fit without trouble into their niches in TUNISIA. A few other examples of specific employment may be given. Major C.E. Brown, R.C.E., commanded 256 Fd Coy, R.E., and was very actively employed. Major F.E. White, 9 Cdn Armd Regt (B.C.D.) served as second in command, 16/5 Lancers. These two officers were retained in North Africa for a time on the return of the rest of the first group, and were the only personnel so retained. Major J.R.B. Jones, R.C.E., was also very actively employed, and Lt.-Col. Bean states that this officer was in charge of the heavy task of clearing mines during the advance following the German offensive in the KASSERINE sector.

16. At one point when a Battalion of the London Irish Rifles (a unit of 38 Bde, 6 Armd Div) had suffered heavily and lost many of its own officers, this Battalion had one Canadian officer acting as 2 i/c and three commanding companies.

17. The period during which Lt.-Col. Bean served in North Africa (January through March, 1943) was one of active though not very large-scale operations on the First Army front in Northern TUNISIA. He describes these operations as a "sparring match". Enemy and Allied strengths on this front were about equal. The Allied forces were holding large frontages and had no reserves. From their point of view the operations consisted of a "series of hole-pluggings", troops being constantly moved from one sector to another to deal with local enemy offensives. About the middle of February, the enemy put in a rather important attack in the KASSERINE area which achieved considerable initial success but which ended in a reverse for himself; thereafter he made a series of attacks along the front further north. In these heavy casualties were suffered on both sides.

18. The writer has seen an undated copy of a Report written by Capt. G.M. MacLachlan, R.Regt.C., who was also a member of the first Canadian group to go to North Africa, on his experiences. This officer's summary of his experiences may well be quoted:

NATURE OF EXPERIENCE

- (a) 22 Dec 42 to 19 Jan 43 travelling & L of C areas.
- (b) 19 Jan to 22 Feb 2 i/c and O.C. A Coy 5 Bn

The Buffs 36 Bde 78 Div. During this period in the Robaa sector I conducted patrols, sited & supervised the laying of thousands of mines, commanded my Coy through a heavy attack by German tanks supported by inf., aircraft and arty and advanced 10 miles in light contact with the enemy.

(c) 22 Feb to 16 Mar. Attached to carrier pl for a week then O.C. HQ & Sp Coy 1 Bn Royal Irish Fus 38 Bde 6 Armd Div. Here in the Bou Arada sector I experienced a large scale attack by a German Paratp Regt, several Stuka raids, a minor carrier action, a coy attack with Army tanks and further patrol activity.

(d) 16 Mar to 3 Apr. Return through L. of C.

19. Captain MacLachlan gives a long and graphic description of the enemy tank attack on 31 Jan 43 mentioned in (b) above, in the course of which the force which he commanded knocked out with a 6-pounder an enemy Mk VI ("Tiger") tank. Captain MacLachlan's company had an A.Tk troop under command. "This Mk VI was the first knocked out by any British tps on any front." Captain MacLachlan's account indicates that a total of seven enemy tanks were disabled by his own and neighbouring troops in this action.

VALUE OF THE EXPERIMENT

20. Lt.-Col. Bean has no doubt whatever of the value of the experiment conducted by the Canadian Army in North Africa. He considers that the experience obtained there by the Canadian personnel was "invaluable". The battle experience gained will be of great importance to the Canadian Army when it engages in operations on its own account. Lt.-Col. Bean believes that the infantry officers in particular learned a great deal, and gained a confidence in themselves to be obtained in no other way.

21. Lt.-Col. Bean spoke particularly of the value of the attachments from the point of view of improved understanding between the British and Canadian forces. Excellent understanding and a generally very sound relationship existed between the Canadian personnel and the British troops with whom they served. As Lt.-Col. Bean expressed it, the British, down to the men in the ranks, who have been in contact with our people in TUNISIA, now know that we think along the same lines as themselves, and mutual understanding is thereby improved.

22. The Canadians sent to TUNISIA were very carefully selected, and made a good impression there. All commanders with whom Lt.-Col. Bean had contact were unanimous on the high quality of the Canadian officers and soldiers. There were many requests from various commanders to retain Canadians beyond the period of their attachments, but as already noted this was permitted (so far as the first group was concerned) in only two instances. In the case of one unit (8 Bn Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) the C.O., Lt.-Col. Bean says, declared that he would release his Canadian personnel only if he were given Canadian replacements. He won his point.

23. Through the kindness of Lt.-Col. E.H. Jones, D.C.M., E.D., the writer has seen two letters written by Capt.

MacLachlan (referred to above) while in North Africa. In one of these, written on 23 Jan 43, while with The Buffs, he wrote:

This bn is good and I have learned as much in 5 days as one learns in 3 mths in England. If I am able to get back and pass on a few things it will all have been very worth while.

In a subsequent letter, dated 14 Feb 43, Capt. MacLachlan wrote in part:

Our training in England since the introduction of battle drill has been pretty good but no scheme can approach the physical and mental discomfort of actual battle. If I am able to get across some ideas on my return it should make the initial impact of actual battle less severe on our troops.

~~CANADIAN CASUALTIES~~

24. A considerable number of casualties have been suffered by the Canadians in TUNISIA, a fact which testifies to the active manner in which they have been employed. A first casualty list issued on 5 Apr 43, listed 13 casualties, of which 3 (2 officers and 1 n.c.o.) had been fatal. Later more complete accounts, as available at C.M.H.Q. on 4 May 43 (C.M.H.Q. file 18/N.AFRICA/1) provided the following totals of Canadian casualties in this theatre of war:

	Offrs.	O.R.
Killed	2	2
Died of Wounds	1	1
Wounded	6	6
Missing	1	1
Prisoner of War	3	0
 TOTALS	13	10

25. These figures represent a not inconsiderable proportion of the comparatively small group of Canadians sent to TUNISIA.

26. The Canadian officers so far reported as losing their lives in this theatre are as follows:

Major G. Falkner	S.D.&G.Highrs.	Died of Wounds	26 Apr 43.
Capt. O.M. Hertzberg	Tor.Scot.R(MG)	Killed	26 Feb 43.
Capt. D.A. May	R.C.A.	Killed	27 Feb 43.

VISITS OF CANADIAN SENIOR OFFICERS TO AFRICAN THEATRE

27. It is convenient in this place to note that two Canadian General Officers have visited the Eighth Army this year and have thus had the opportunity of observing the methods employed by this formation, which has achieved such a remarkable record of successes since the battle of EL ALAMEIN, which began on 23 Oct 42.

28. In February, 1943, Lieut.-General H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C. 1 Cdn Corps, had the opportunity of visiting North Africa, in company with seven British senior officers (including General Paget, C.-in-C. Home Forces, and Lieut.-Generals Gammell, Swayne, Morgan and Templer). The party travelled by air by way of GIBRALTAR, ALGIERS and TRIPOLI, and spent 14-17 Feb at H.Q. Eighth Army. The trip was made in two Hudson aeroplanes, except

between TRIPOLI and ALGIERS on the return trip when engine trouble necessitated all eight officers crowding into a single aeroplane.

29. The particular occasion of this visit was a four-day study period conducted at General Montgomery's H.Q. near TRIPOLI. In General Crerar's phrase, "A couple of score of senior offrs - gathered from as far afield as the United Kingdom, Morocco, Egypt and Persia - attended this conference and discussion, at which I was privileged to represent the Cdn Army." The programme for the study period included addresses by General Montgomery, commanding the Eighth Army, and by his D.A. & Q.M.G. and C.E., discussions led by the commanders of formations of different types, and numerous demonstrations. General Crerar writes, "The four days were fully occupied and very instructive."

30. General Crerar left England on 12 Feb and returned to it on 21 Feb. On 26 Feb 43 he addressed the senior officers of 1 Cdn Corps on Tactical and Technical Lessons and Developments from the Battle Experiences of the Eighth Army. In this address he passed on to his own officers what he termed the "high lights" of General Montgomery's two addresses during the study period. No attempt will be made here to summarize the lessons thus presented; but a couple of passages of General Crerar's address may be quoted:

4. As I have indicated, I saw nothing new in General Montgomery's tactics - even though the technical application of fire and movement to each battle problem inevitably invited, and obtained, a particular treatment. What I did see, however, was a clear understanding of each mil problem which faced him, an intelligent appreciation of how the principles of war should be applied to overcome it and the adoption in each case of a definite, forceful plan of action closely keyed to the object in view. What I saw, I want every offr in this gathering to see and to grasp to himself. Only in this way will a Comd or CO successfully fill his high responsibilities in battle.....

22....As I said, at the beginning, the most valuable infm that I can bring to you, as a result of my recent and most interesting visit, is that what has brought success to the Eighth Army is not super-human technique, but, more admirably, a clear understanding on the part of its Comd of the eternal principles of warfare and the adoption of simple, able and forceful methods in applying those principles to his plans for ops. For each one of us, to do the same may be difficult. It is not impossible.

31. The above paragraphs are based on General Crerar's Report, dated 21 Feb 43, and the text of his address, both found on C.M.H.Q. file 1/M.E./1/2.

32. Subsequently, Brigadier (now Major-General) G.G. Simonds, who immediately afterwards was appointed to command 2 Cdn Div, and subsequently took over 1 Cdn Div, also had an opportunity of visiting the Eighth Army, in company with Brigadier Chilton, of the British Army. General Simonds arrived at an aerodrome near Eighth Army Main H.Q. on 1 Apr 43, and immediately afterwards had an interview with General Montgomery at his Tactical H.Q. General Simonds' Report (29 Apr 43) reads in part as follows:

3....Gen Montgomery had arranged that Brig Chiltonshould be attached to 30 Corps, which was to make the deliberate attack to break through the WADI AKARIT position, whilst I was to go to 10 Corps which was to pass through the gap and exploit in the open country to the North.

4. During the planning stage I visited Main Army HQ to study its organization. I remained there for the opening of the battle on 6 Apr, to observe the working of the Army HQ and RAF HQ in cooperation. In the afternoon of 6 Apr I rejoined 10 Corps HQ and throughout the remainder of the operations up to the fall of SOUSSE accompanied the Corps Commander with his Recce Group. For this operation 10 Corps consisted of the New Zealand Division (Motorized) with an armoured brigade under command, 1 Armoured Division and General Le Clerc's Free French Force.

33. General Simonds prepared a very detailed Report covering many aspects of the experience of the Eighth Army. No copy of this Report is being filed at C.M.H.Q., but a copy (from which the above has been extracted) is being forwarded to N.D.H.Q. forthwith.

34. The value of such visits as these, in which senior officers of an army which has done little fighting are given the opportunity of contact with those directing the operations of a highly efficient Army in the field, and of watching that Army and its various headquarters actually at work, appears to require no comment.

35.

POSTSCRIPT

35. Since the foregoing paragraphs were written, there have been further developments in the African theatre. The capture of TUNIS and BIZERTA was announced on the evening of 7 May 43; and on the evening of 9 May it was stated that more than 50,000 prisoners, including three German divisional commanders, had been taken during the past two days (The Times, LONDON, 8 and 10 May 43). It appears, therefore, that the campaign in North Africa is virtually over.

36. Information at the moment of writing is that the Canadian group to be attached in May (para. 7, above) will be proceeding as arranged. This group, however, consists entirely of L. of C. and base units personnel.

37. Attached as Appx "A" is a list by units of attachments to 78 Div as arranged in the case of Canadian personnel of the first group. This has been furnished by H.Q. First Cdn Army, and serves to exemplify the manner in which the programme of attachments has been carried out.

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

ATTACHED - 78th DIVISION.

1st Gds Bde.

3 Gren Gds - Major D.F. FORBES, Capt. R.H. LANE.
C.S.M. F.E. DALEY, Sgt. G.E. ZWICKER.

2 Coldm Gds - Capt. A.R. CAMPBELL, Capt. F. KLENAVIC,
Lieut. P. RAMSAY.
Sgt. M. ARCHAMBAULT, Sgt. R.E. BAILEY.

2 Hamps. - Capt. A.M. McMILLAN, Sgt. E.J. SNEAD

11 Inf Bde.

2 L.F. - Lieut. A.E. CANNON, Lieut. J.W. BALDWIN,
Lieut. W.A. TEED,
C.S.M. M.S. LAWSON, Sgt. J.W. HAMILTON,
L/Sgt. J.W. DICK, Sgt. A. LACROIX, Sgt. R.A. LAW.

1 E.Surreys - Major J.F. L'Esperance,
C.S.M. G. NICHOLSON, Sgt. L. HENDERSON.

5 Northamptons - Capt. O.M. HERTZBERG, Capt. W.C. DICK
P.S.M. L.A. DUMAIS, L/Sgt. E.L.G. HASTINGS.

36 Inf Bde.

5 Buffs - Capt. R.C. COLEMAN, Capt. E.A. DUNLOP,
Capt. G.M. MacLACHLAN.
A/C.S.M. B.H. SMITH, Sgt. F.A. SPENCLEY,
Sgt. V.I. LAWSON.

6 R.W.K. - Capt. J.P. ENSOR, Capt. C.W. GRANDAN,
C.S.M. E.E. STOUTLEY, Sgt. A.J. BLACK.

8 A.& S.H. - Capt. G.A. McEDWARDS, Capt. J.P.W. TAYLOR.
C.S.M. A.B. MacINTOSH, Sgt. H.J. BISHOP.

56 Recce Regt - Major D.G. MACKENZIE, Capt. H.A. McBRIDE.
Sgt. G.G. CLARKE, Sgt. K. STEVENSON.

H.Q., 78th DIVISION - Lt. Col. W.A. BEAN, Major KISHOLM.

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BY *Plunkett* FOR *FOUROU*

DATE: *22 Mar 85*