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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

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Date:

29 Mar 45

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The Organization of the Canadian Reinforcement Units
(United Kingdom): Historical Outline, 1940 - 45.

1. Attached is a very brief historical outline of the development of the organization of the Canadian Reinforcement Units in the United Kingdom from their inception in 1940 to the present time.
2. This outline was prepared at the request of Lieut-General E.W. Sanson, C.B., D.S.O., who has been in the United Kingdom for some time past as Inspector-General for the purpose of preparing, for the information of the Minister of National Defence, a survey of the reinforcement situation overseas as it has developed since the beginning of active operations. It is understood that the document now attached is to form an appendix to General Sanson's survey, which it is believed is now completed.
3. The attached outline is necessarily extremely brief, and no attempt has been made to digest the great mass of correspondence found in C.M.H.Q. files on the question of the organization of C.R.U. All reference to proposals for reorganization not actually implemented has been avoided.
4. Attached as appendices to the document are simplified charts of organization as of dates in 1941, 1942 and 1944, plus a chart of the organization of 13 Cdn Inf Trg Bde, as of November, 1944.
5. Also attached, with a view to historical utility, are brief references to the sources of information drawn upon. These references were not included in the outline as handed to General Sanson.
6. The outline was prepared by Lt.-Col. G.F.G. Stanley and Major R.J.C. Hamilton. It was checked by Brigadier W.H.S. Macklin, C.B.E. (D.C.G.S., C.M.H.Q.) before being handed to General Sanson, and certain alterations were made on his suggestion.

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THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CANADIAN REINFORCEMENT
UNITS

HISTORICAL OUTLINE, 1940-45

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: DHD 3-3

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Date:

I. ORIGINAL ORGANIZATION OF HOLDING UNITS, 1940 (1) NOV 26 1986

1. Following preliminary discussions with N.D.H.Q. concerning the organization to be established in England to receive reinforcements who had completed training in Canada, the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., on 28 May 40 cabled N.D.H.Q. that he was proceeding with the organization of Holding Units.

2. By 30 Jun six Holding Units, - three Infantry, one General, one Artillery and one Machine-Gun - had been organized. They were divided between "A" Group, comprising the three Infantry Units, and "B" Group comprising the remainder, both in the first instance under command of the newly created Headquarters, Canadian Troops, ALDERSHOT. From 30 Jun, however, the Holding Units passed under the direct command of the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q.

3. The Holding Units had been organized primarily as reinforcement pools and were not intended to function as training centres. Correspondingly, the original establishments were not intended to deal with incompletely trained recruits. From the outset, however, it was found necessary for the Holding Units to shoulder the task of training the drafts arriving from Canada.

4. Establishments of each Holding Unit provided for a Headquarters, an Instructional Wing, a Headquarters Company and Training 'Companies' or 'Batteries', corresponding in number to the field units for which reinforcements were held and trained, or proportionate in size to the Corps or Arm, as the case might be.

5. The Holding Units thus organized were designed to maintain in the United Kingdom a reinforcement reserve, undergoing training, equivalent to three months' intense wastage. C.M.H.Q. planned also to maintain a reserve against an additional month's wastage, to be held at the Base Depot in a theatre of operations.

II. REORGANIZATION OF HOLDING UNITS, SEPTEMBER, 1940 (2)

6. On 14 Aug 40, with General McNaughton's approval, a telegram was sent to N.D.H.Q. pointing out "the radical change in the general military situation which has obtained during the past two months", which necessitated a "completely new appreciation of proportionate strength of the reinforcement reserve which should be held for field units now serving in the United Kingdom". The telegram suggested a new schedule of rates of wastage and indicated that in the event of its adoption "important changes in proposed Holding Unit Organization will become necessary". The three existing Infantry Holding Units then holding 60 percent reinforcements for the 1st Canadian Division might serve the needs of both the 1st and 2nd Divisions at the proposed 30 percent rate. On 24 Aug 40 N.D.H.Q. agreed to the proposed percentages.

7. This change in policy, coupled with the despatch of the 2nd Canadian Division overseas, necessitated a re-examination of the existing organization of the Holding Units. On 11 Sep 40, recommendations were sent to N.D.H.Q. for the re-organization of the Holding Units into three groups: "A" Group, to consist of Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Infantry Holding Units; "B" Group, to consist of an Engineer Holding Unit, a Signals Holding Unit, an Army Service Corps Holding Unit and a General Holding Unit (Comprising Medicals, Ordnance and Provost); and "C" Group, to consist of No. 1 Artillery Holding Unit (Field Artillery) and No. 2 Artillery Holding Unit (Medium, Survey, Anti-tank and Anti-Aircraft Artillery). These recommendations were approved by N.D.H.Q. on 20 Sep 40.

8. Headquarters, Canadian Base Units, was formed with effect from 1 Nov 40 (see Chart, Appx "A").

9. As a consequence of the arrival of the 2nd Canadian Division in the United Kingdom an expansion of the three Infantry and No. 1 Canadian Artillery Holding Unit was made necessary; authorization was given 8 Jan 41 for the addition of three companies to each of the former, and two additional batteries to the latter. (3)

10. No. 1 Canadian Ordnance Holding Unit was formed with effect from 1 May 41. (4) This Unit replaced an R.C.O.C. Company, No. 1 Canadian General Holding Unit and came under command H.Q. "B" Group Holding Units.

III. REORGANIZATION, 1941-42

11. During the early months of 1941 a further re-organization was projected. It was apparent that when Canada's military forces based in the United Kingdom increased to a Corps of three infantry divisions, plus an army tank brigade, an armoured division and the agreed complement of Army, G.H.Q. and L. of C. troops, the problem of training and holding reinforcements on the requisite scale would completely overtax the existing facilities. The first concrete proposals towards the reorganization was sent to N.D.H.Q. by C.M.H.Q. on 1 May 41. (5)

12. The principal point of discussion was the substitution of the divisional for the territorial principle of affiliation in the Infantry Holding Units; in other words, each infantry division in the Corps was to be represented by a single H.U.; each unit in the H.U. reinforcing one infantry brigade and each company reinforcing one battalion. During the summer of 1940 each H.U. held for one brigade of the 1st Canadian Division. In this instance there was a coincidence of the divisional and territorial principles owing to the fact that the brigades were themselves organized on a territorial basis representing central, western and eastern Canada respectively. When the 2nd Division arrived overseas the infantry units of the division were added to the existing holding units on a territorial basis, i.e. the Ontario units (R. Regt C., R.H.L.I. and Essex Scot) were associated with those of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade in 1 C.I.H.U.; similarly the western units of both divisions were grouped together in 3 C.I.H.U. and the Maritime units of the 1st Canadian Division and the Quebec units of the 2nd Canadian Division were grouped together in 2 C.I.H.U. The arguments put forward in favour of the adoption of a purely divisional organization were two-fold; the units would be smaller and more easily administered, and the organization would match the units in the field thus facilitating liaison between the Reinforcement Units and the field units. (6)

13. Before formal approval of the new reorganization was forthcoming from N.D.H.Q. the arrival of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division necessitated the organization of No. 3 Canadian Division Infantry Holding Unit with effect from 29 Sep 41. This was similar to No. 1 Infantry Holding Unit mentioned in para 7 with the exception that nine training companies were formed instead of six. (7)

14. It might be noted at this point that during 1941 and early 1942 the Holding Units were progressively redesignated Reinforcement Units. It was considered that the term "holding", previously used, had a bad psychological effect on reinforcements. (8) Accordingly H.Q. Canadian Base Units became known as H.Q. Canadian Reinforcement Units as from 1 Oct 41. (9)

15. N.D.H.Q. approved the reorganization of C.R.U. on 14 Oct 41. (10) The new formations, redesignations, conversions and regroupings involved took effect over a period up to the middle of 1942. The revised organization called for permanent establishments of 7,350 all ranks and was designed to hold reinforcements numbering approximately 25,000 all ranks - a total for C.R.U. of 32,350 all ranks. (11)

16. Each Reinforcement Unit consisted of a Headquarters, a Training Wing, and an Administrative Wing. The Training Wing was subdivided into Training Companies. There was a considerable degree of flexibility and the number of Training Companies varied according to the arm or service. In the case of the three Infantry Reinforcement Units each had three Training Wings - one for each Brigade in the Division - each of which consisted of three Training Companies, corresponding to the battalions in the Brigade. (See chart Appendix "B").

17. During the latter part of 1941 and early 1942 three additional Groups were organized, "D" (15 Oct 41), "E" (31 Mar 42) and "F" (20 Jan 42). Upon completion of this organization the grouping of the Reinforcement Units was as follows:-

H.Q., C.R.U.

"A" Gp

1 Cdn Div Inf R.U.
2 Cdn Div Inf R.U.
5 Cdn Div Inf R.U. (Armd)

"D" Gp

1 Cdn M.G. R.U.
3 Cdn Div Inf R.U.

"B" Gp

1 Cdn Eng R.U.
1 Cdn Sigs R.U.
1 Cdn A.S.C. R.U.
1 Cdn Gen R.U.

"E" Gp

1 Cdn Armd Corps R.U.
(Rece Bns & Armd C Regts)
2 Cdn Armd Corps R.U.
(Army Tk Bns)
3 Cdn Armd Corps R.U.
(Armd Regts)

"C" Gp

1 Cdn Arty R.U. (Fd)
2 Cdn Arty R.U. (Med,
A/Tk Svy)
3 Cdn Arty R.U. (A.A.)

"F" Gp

1 Cdn Ord R.U. (and Static
Units)

IV. REORGANIZATION OF C.R.U. - 1943

18. The reorganization of the Canadian Army Overseas during 1943 was accompanied by the reorganization of the Reinforcement Units. On this occasion the divisional principle was abandoned and the territorial principle which had been the basis of the organization of the holding units in 1940 was resumed. Subsequent additions to the Reinforcement

Units made during the year were organized on a territorial basis. Two additional Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Units (Nos. 6 and 7) were formed, No. 1 M.G.R.U. was redesignated No. 4 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit and No. 5 Canadian Division Infantry Reinforcement Unit (Armoured) was redesignated No. 5 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit; all with effect 1 Feb 43.⁽¹²⁾ On 8 Apr 43 H.Q. "G" Group C.R.U. was formed. Consequent upon the formation of this headquarters the following regrouping took place:

"A" Gp
2 Cdn Inf R.U.
6 Cdn Inf R.U.

"B" Gp
1 Cdn Eng R.U.
1 Cdn Sigs R.U.
1 Cdn A.S.C. R.U.

"C" Gp
1 Cdn Arty R.U.
2 Cdn Arty R.U.
3 Cdn Arty R.U.

"D" Gp
3 Cdn Inf R.U.
4 Cdn Inf R.U.
7 Cdn Inf R.U.

"E" Gp
1 Cdn Arm'd Corps R.U.
2 Cdn Arm'd Corps R.U.
3 Cdn Arm'd Corps R.U.

"F" Gp
1 Cdn Ord R.U. (and Static Units)

"G" Gp
1 Cdn Inf R.U.
5 Cdn Inf R.U.
1 Cdn Gen R.U.

V. REORGANIZATION C.R.U. MARCH 1944

19. In March 1944 yet another change in the organization of C.R.U. took place. This reorganization was not characterized by any departure from the basic principles adopted in 1943; the changes were largely those brought about by regrouping.

20. Following the decision that the Canadian Army Overseas should be employed in two separate theatres of operation, i.e. in the Mediterranean and North-West Europe, it was considered that reinforcements equivalent to two months' wastage at intense rates, or approximately 10,000 all ranks, should be held in the Mediterranean theatre and that one months reinforcements at intense rates, should proceed with the North-West Europe force. In this event it would be possible to reduce the number of reinforcements held in the United Kingdom from approximately 42,000 to 23,000. Accordingly "G" Group was eliminated and Nos. 5 and 7 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Units and No. 3 Canadian Artillery Reinforcement Unit was disbanded.⁽¹³⁾

VI. THE FORMATION OF THE 13TH CANADIAN INFANTRY TRAINING BRIGADE

21. Early in 1944, in order to stimulate the flow of infantry reinforcements, the policy of sending formed units overseas was adopted.⁽¹⁴⁾ The first units to arrive in the United Kingdom as a result of this policy were those of the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade. This formation landed in England on 2 Jun 44 and proceeded to Yorkshire where it carried out training independent of the Infantry Reinforcement Units of C.R.U.⁽¹⁵⁾

22. The relationship of the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade and C.R.U. was clarified in the autumn of 1944 when it was proposed to amalgamate the training facilities of the Brigade and those of the Infantry Reinforcement Units under command of "A" and "D" Groups. The object of this proposal was to "enable training of infantry reinforcement personnel to be conducted along lines similar to those of field units". (16) The proposal was approved and a new organization was established in November as shown diagrammatically in Appendix "D".

23. Among the conversions, redesignations, regroupings and disbandments thus brought about, the following important changes may be noted: "A" and "D" Groups were reduced to nil strength; the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade was disbanded and a new organization formed known as the 13th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade. This formation consisted of four Infantry Training Regiments numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, each of which contained as sub-units one Depot Battalion and one Training Battalion. (17)

24. On 23 Nov 44, one more Training Battalion was added to each Regiment thus making eight Training Battalions in all. (18) With effect 18 Dec 44 a further expansion of the 13th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade took place, with the formation of the 5th Canadian Infantry Training Regiment. (19)

25. A word of explanation regarding the functions of the Depot and Training Battalions. The former is responsible for all administration in connection with the reception, holding and despatch of drafts. It also holds all reinforcements who, for any reason, are not available to go forward on draft. The Training Battalion carried out refresher and collective training up to the company level. For this purpose it has an appropriate scale of weapons and transport.

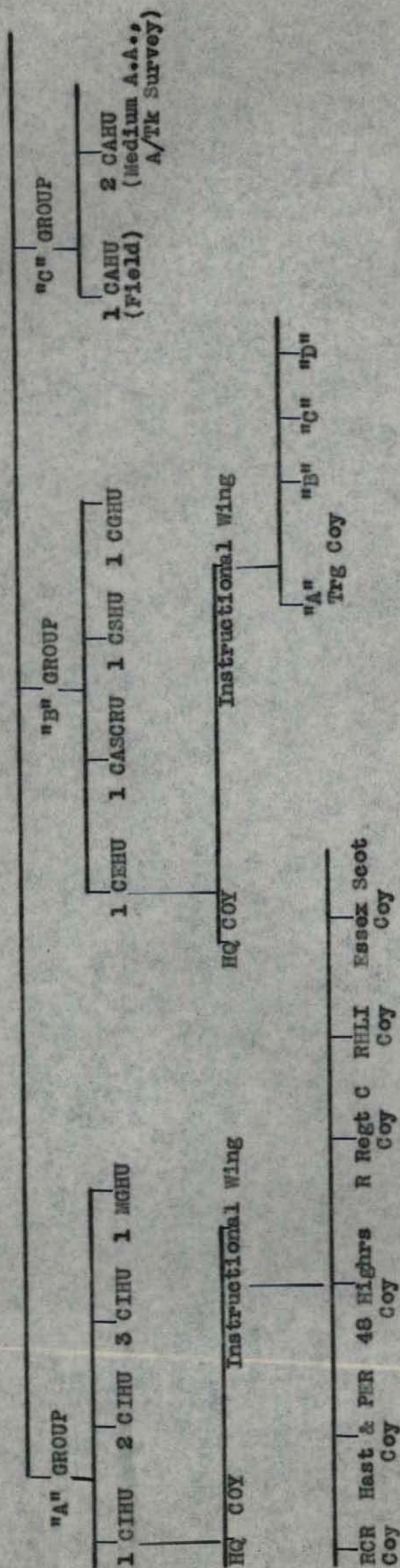
VII. FORMATION OF THE 14th CANADIAN INFANTRY TRAINING BRIGADE

26. In preparation for the anticipated arrival of the 14th and 15th Canadian Infantry Brigades approval was given for the formation of the 14th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade with effect from 2 Jan 45. The brigade consisted of 6, 7, 8 and 9 Canadian Infantry Training Regiments with sub-units 6, 7, 8 and 9 Canadian Infantry Depot Battalions respectively and 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 Canadian Infantry Training Battalions respectively in pairs of consecutive numbers. (20)

27. The 14th Canadian Infantry Brigade arrived in the United Kingdom 10 Jan 45 and was disbanded with effect of date of arrival. (21) The 15th Canadian Infantry Brigade which arrived on 18 Jan 45 was also disbanded with effect of date of arrival. (22)

ORGANIZATION OF CANADIAN BASE UNITS
AS OF 31 JAN 41

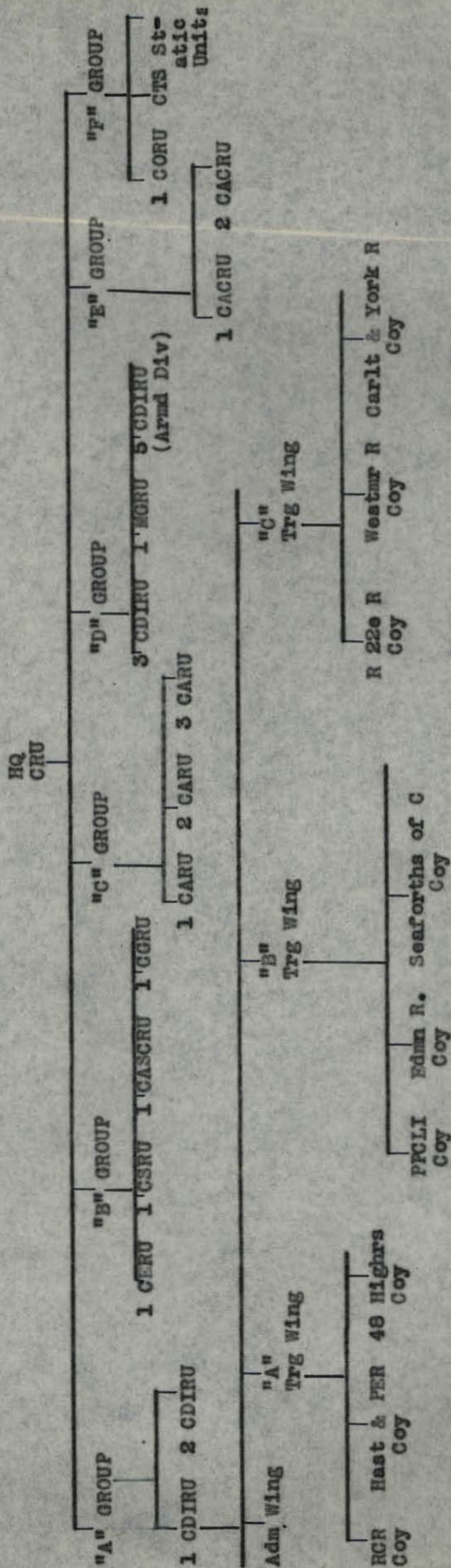
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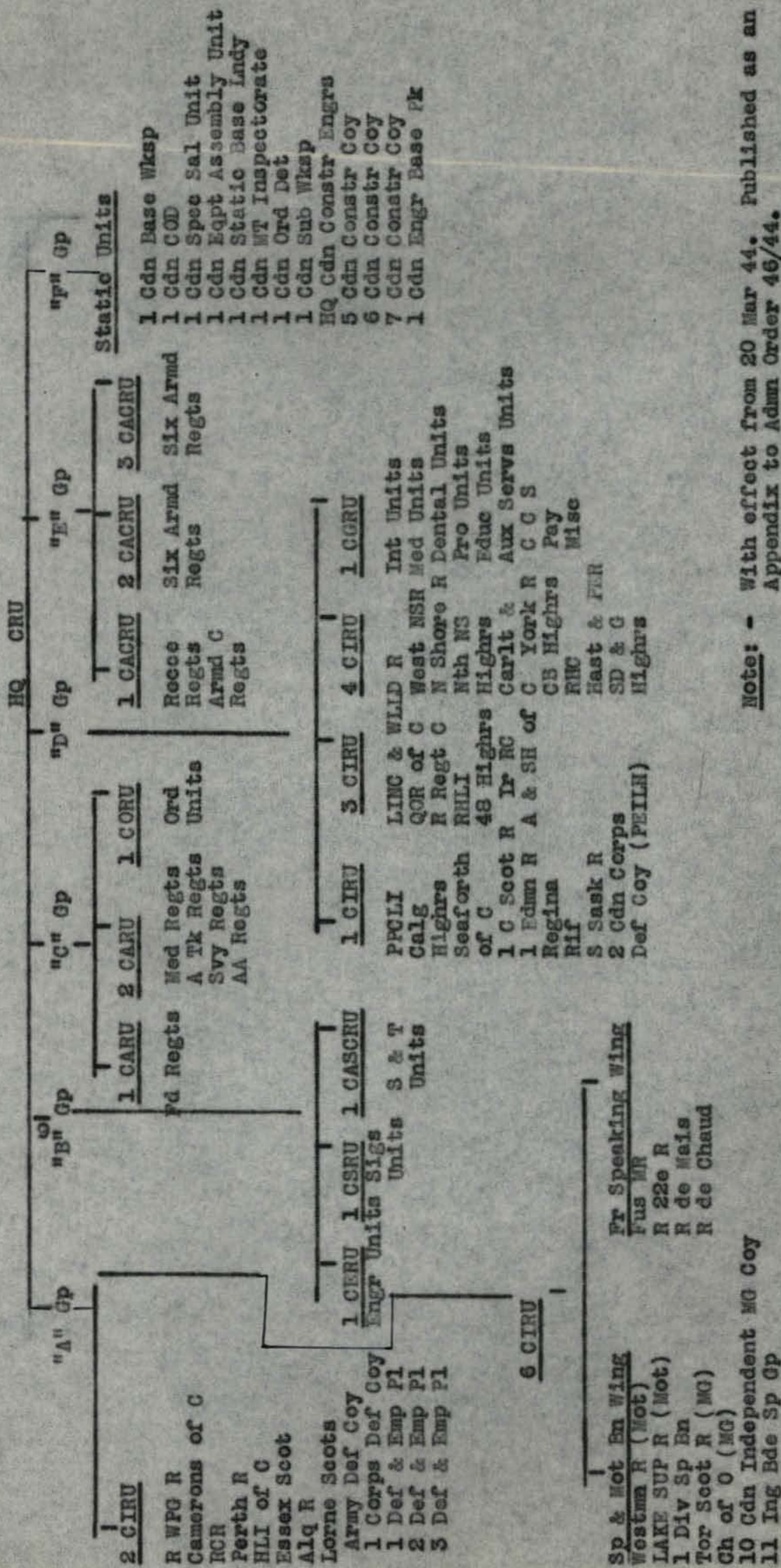
Appendix "B"

ORGANIZATION OF CANADIAN REINFORCEMENT UNITS

1 May 1942



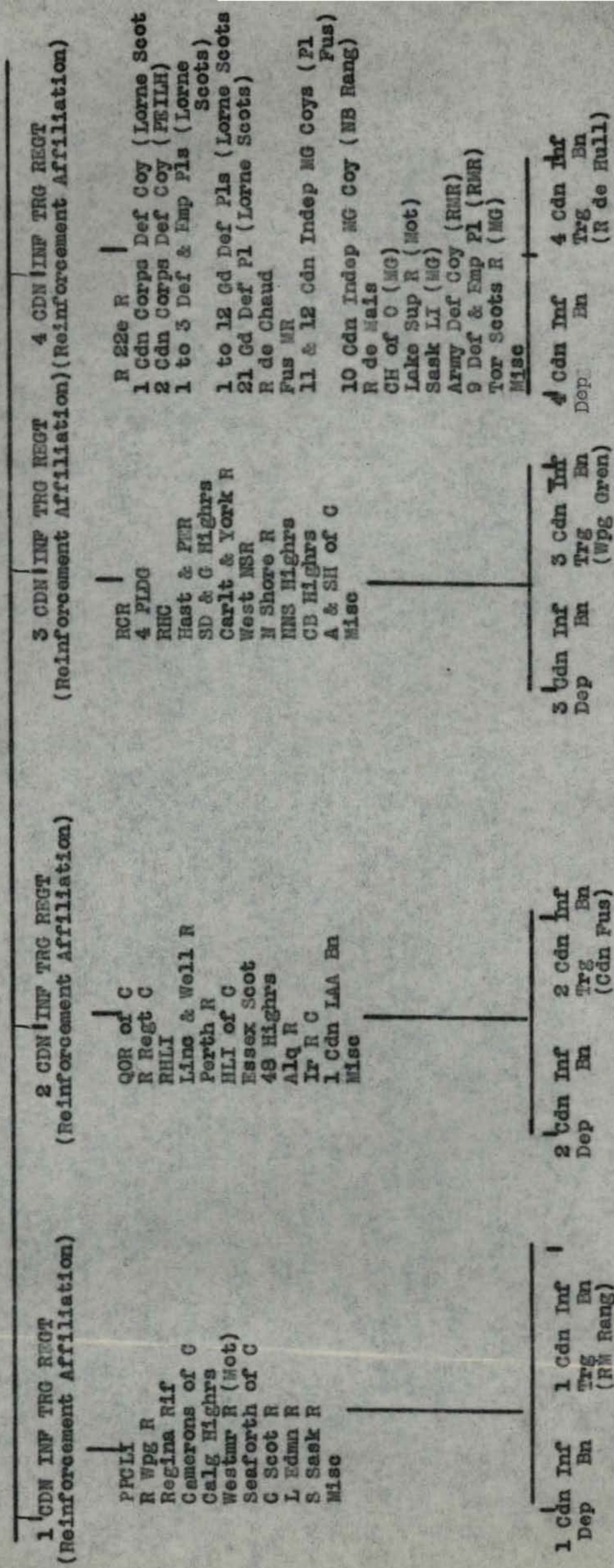
ORGANIZATION OF CANADIAN REINFORCEMENT UNITS
as of 20 Mar 1944



Note: - With effect from 20 Mar 44. Published as an Appendix to Admin Order 46/44.

ORGANIZATION OF 13TH CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE
as of 1 NOV 1944

13TH CANADIAN INFANTRY TRAINING BRIGADE



NOTES ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CANADIAN
REINFORCEMENT UNITS

HISTORICAL OUTLINE - 1940-45

(Numerical references are the red figures in the text.)

1. See Preliminary Narrative, History of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas 1939-40, Chap. IV, paras 92-108.
2. Ibid: Chap. VIII, paras 68-77
3. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 29, 8 Jan 41 ✓
4. Ibid: No. 102, 26 Jul 41
5. C.M.H.Q. file 6/Reinf/2: Tel GS 751, Canmilitary to Defensor, 1 May 41.
6. Ibid: Minutes of meeting of committee on further Organization and Accommodation of Cdn Base Units, 18 Mar 44. See also "Memorandum - The Basis of Further Organization of Infantry Holding Units", 21 Mar 41. This memorandum contains the arguments in favour of the divisional organization which were advanced during the discussion at the conference of 11 Mar 41.
7. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 142, 27 Sep 41.
8. C.M.H.Q. file 6/Reinf/2: Brigadier F.R. Phelan (D.A.G., C.M.H.Q.) to Brigadier G.R. Turner (B.G.S. Cdn Corps) 18 Jul 41.
9. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 32, 12 Feb 42.
10. C.M.H.Q. file 6/Reinf/2/2: Tel G.S.D. 1486, Defensor to Canmilitary, 14 Oct 41.
11. Ibid: Lt.-Col. W.B. Wedd (A.A.G.(Org) C.M.H.Q.) to S.D. C.M.H.Q., 23 Dec 41.
12. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 28, 31 Jan 43.
13. C.M.H.Q. file 1/Org RU/1: General Stuart to General Crerar 9 Mar 44. See also C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 46, 23 Mar 44.
14. C.M.H.Q. file 1/Cdn Army/1/3: Tel AG 290, Defensor to Canmilitary, 28 Mar 44. See also 1/Wastage/2: Tel COS 28, Canmilitary to Defensor, 29 Mar 44.
15. C.M.H.Q. file 1/Cdn Army/1/3: Minutes of conference at C.M.H.Q., 5 Jun 44
16. C.M.H.Q. file 1/Org RU/1/2: General Stuart to General Crerar, 28 Oct 44.
17. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 116, 1 Nov 44; No. 170, 9 Nov 44; No. 172, 16 Nov 44; and No. 173, 20 Nov 44.

18. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 176, 28 Nov 44.
19. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 184, 18 Dec 44.
20. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 2, 3 Jan 45.
21. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 9, 22 Jan 45.
22. C.M.H.Q. Adm Order No. 13, 31 Jan 45.