

Duplicate

Report No. 45  
(dated 2 Sep 41)

Situation of the Canadian Forces in the  
United Kingdom, Summer, 1941: IV

Growth of Canadian Military Force in the  
United Kingdom  
Progress of Canadian Overseas Army  
Programme, 1941  
Notes on Sea Transport

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1. A further report is submitted. This is the fourth in the series initiated by No. 33, and deals with the progressive growth of the Canadian military force in Britain (chiefly as it has taken place since 1 Jan 41) and with the development of the Canadian Overseas Army Programme, 1941.

2. No attempt can be made in this report to deal with these matters in great detail. The aim has been to extract from the very considerable mass of papers relating to them on file at C.M.H.Q. a brief historical and statistical summary, which will provide the Official Historian with the most essential material for a general narrative of these developments, and may also serve to guide him in his more detailed investigation of the routine records.

#### GROWTH OF NUMERICAL STRENGTH

3. Since the advance party, sent to establish Canadian Military Headquarters, LONDON, landed from the "Antonia" on 13 Nov 39 (cf. my Report

No. 5) there has been a constant and fairly steady increase in the strength of the Canadian force in this country. Attached as Appendix "A" is a statement (extracted from returns made by C.M.H.Q. for the use of the War Office) showing the total strength at intervals of approximately three months. The first figures given (as of 22 Dec 39) present the situation immediately after the arrival of T.C. 1; the last ones (1 Aug 41) present that immediately following the arrival of T.C. 12. The very earliest figures, prepared at a time when C.M.H.Q. had just been organized, may conceivably contain minor errors, but it is doubtful whether any of greater accuracy can be found.

4. The "breakdown" of the totals given for 1 Aug 41 is as follows:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Canadian Military Headquarters	138	595
1 Cdn Div	747	14,821
2 Cdn Div	764	14,748
3 Cdn Div	489	9,268
Corps Troops	641	13,080
Reinforcements	879	12,374
Holding Units (permanent staff)		
and others not included	<u>1,435</u>	<u>16,173</u>
	5,093	81,059
1 Two brigade groups only		

5. These figures include (under the last heading) the Canadian Forestry Corps, with a strength of 149 officers and 4,139 other ranks. They do not include the detachment of R.C.E. at GIBRALTAR, the strength of which is returned separately as 9 officers and 234 other ranks.

6. It will be noted from the above figures that the actual strength of the Canadian Corps on 1 Aug 41 was 2,641 officers and 51,917 other ranks. 1 Cdn Army Tank Brigade and 3 Cdn Div were reckoned on the strength of the Corps from the time of their arrival in the United Kingdom.

7. Broadly speaking, the figures down to and including those for 5 Jul 40 represent the process of completing 1 Cdn Div and its quota of ancillary troops. Thence down to and including 3 Jan 41, they represent the further process of building up and completing 2 Cdn Div, whose HQ arrived on T.C> 6 (1 Aug 40), while its last two infantry battalions and certain other units arrived on T.C.8 (25 Dec 40). More recent figures represent, basically, the development of the Canadian Overseas Army Programme for 1941, which is dealt with below. This deployment is still in progress.

8. Attached as Appendix "B" is a list of the troop convoys which have carried troops from Canada to the United Kingdom, accompanied by certain basic statistics extracted from sources at C.M.H.Q.

9. It will be noted that there is a considerable discrepancy between the figures of increase in Appendix "A" and the totals of incoming convoys in Appendix "B". The explanation, of course, is that considerable numbers of Canadian troops have arrived in the United Kingdom on ships sailing independently and not included in convoys, while in addition certain units arrived in the United Kingdom from ICELAND and not in convoys from Canada. These latter units included two infantry battalions of 2 Cdn Div (THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF CANADA and LES FUSILIERS MONT-ROYAL) and the machine-gun battalion of 3 Cdn Div (THE CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA (M.G.)).

OVERSEAS ARMY PROGRAMME, 1941

10. The Overseas Army Programme for 1941 was announced by the Rt. Hon. Mr. KING in a broadcast speech on 2 Feb 41, as follows (Gazette, Montreal, 3 Feb 41):

The plan for our Active Army for 1941 includes the despatch overseas, successively, of the following formations:

1. The balance of the corps troops for the Canadian Corps of two divisions now in England;
2. An army tank brigade for employment with the Canadian Corps. This will enable Canadian to be represented in the United Kingdom by a Canadian formation which will be attached to and operate with the Canadian Corps, thus providing increased striking power;
3. The 3rd Canadian Division, with its complement of corps troops;
4. A Canadian armored division.

11. This programme is now far advanced. The Army Tank Brigade arrived in the United Kingdom on T.C. 11 (of my Report No 48). Headquarters and two Brigade Groups of 3 Cdn Div arrived on T.C. 12 (of Report No. 43) and the remaining Brigade Group will arrive very shortly. The provision of additional Corps Troops has gone on steadily, chiefly by the arrival of new units from Canada but partly by the formation of new units in this country. The Light Anti-Aircraft regiments which have been organized include one for Corps Troops (see my Report No 18 and Addendum); an Anti-Tank Regiment for Corps Troops (7 Cdn A. Tk Regt) has been organized at COLCHESTER and joined the order of battle of Cdn Corps on 27 Aug 41; and a Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment (2 Cdn Hvy A.A. Regt) will arrive from Canada shortly. An additional Field Company has been added to Corps Troops (14 Fd Coy, R.C.E., which arrived on T.C. 9),

and 1 Road Constrm Coy, R.C.E., arrived on T.C. 10 and is at present employed in the Base Units area. T.C. 11 brought important medical units: 14 Gen. Hosp. 5 C.C.S., and 1 Motor Ambulance Convoy. Provision of additional Medium Artillery units has been delayed by lack of equipment.

12. The last important formation to arrive under the 1941 Programme, 5 Cdn (Armd) Div, is not expected until late in the autumn.

13. In addition to the units and formations mentioned above, the Troop Convoys arriving during 1941 have brought nineteen companies of the Canadian Forestry Corps (cf. my Report No. 29), of which the Headquarters and one company has arrived on T.C. 8 at the end of 1940. (For further details, see Appendix "B").

14. Apart from organized units, most Troop Convoys bring reinforcements in considerable numbers. These are necessary to maintain the Holding Units at or close to the strength which present policy requires, with a view to replacing the minor but constant wastage which takes place under present conditions, and providing against the greater wastage which would result from active operations. The formation in this country of new units of the technical arms and services is a special drain under the Holding Units concerned.

#### NOTES ON PROCEDURE IN SEA TRANSPORT

15. A few notes, necessarily brief, are here set down in connection with the sea transport of Canadian troops to this country.

16. Reference to Appendix "B" will throw some light on the procedure which has been, and is being followed. It will be noted that the great majority of the force transported has come in Troop Convoys of moderate size (the largest

conveying just under 11,000 Canadian Army personnel). Nothing of the nature of what was done in 1914 - bringing over 30,000 men in a single lift - has been attempted. The ships used have, in general, been large fast passenger vessels capable of making a rapid passage, and convoys have rarely included more than six ships. For a description of the passage of one representative convoy (T.C. 8) see my Report No 1. In this case, the convoy includes two vessels not carrying Canadian troops; these therefore do not figure in our records at C.M.H.Q. and Appendix "B" to the present report lists only the three vessels with troops on board.

17. Naval escorts are purely on Admiralty matter and C.M.H.Q. files only occasionally contain an incidental reference to them. The War Diaries of units travelling in convoys sometimes name the ships of the escort. The usual procedure is for a battleship to serve as ocean escort, accompanying the convoy from Halifax until it is close to its destination. References in the files of the S. & T. Section, C.M.H.Q, indicate that both T.C. 7 and T.C. 8 were escorted by H.M.S. "Malaya" (see my Report No. 43). Convoys are escorted for some distance out of Halifax by Canadian destroyers and are met on the western edge of the submarine danger zone surrounding the British Isles by destroyers based on British ports. As noted in my Report No. 1, T.C. 8 never made contact with this latter escort, and having parted company with the "Revenge" it passed through the whole of the danger zone without visible naval protection.

18. Ports of Disembarkation. The vast majority of Canadian soldiers entering this country during the present war have come through the CLYDE gateway (of. Report No. 43). Two early convoys (T.Cs. 4 and 5) came to Liverpool; all others have come to the CLYDE until T.C. 12, which was divided between the Clyde, LIVERPOOL and AVONMOUTH, a port at which no Canadian troop

convoy had hitherto discharged (details on composition of this convoy, Report No. 43). Most of the ships going to the CLYDE have anchored at the TAIL OF THE BANK and discharged their troops in tenders at GOUROCK; but in some cases one or two vessels have gone up to GLASGOW and the troops have gone ashore at KING GEORGE V. DOCK. Thus in the case of T.C. 8 the "Capetown Castle" went up to GLASCOW while the "Pennland" and the "Pasteur" discharged at COUROCK: see Report No 1.

19. An example of the uncertainty attending the arrival of these troops convoys is afforded by the case of T.C. 11. It was expected until the last moment that two of the six ships of this convoy would go to LIVERPOOL; but in the event all six were brought in to the CLYDE, while moreover the convoy arrived on 30 Jun 41 instead of on 1 Jul as had been anticipated. Such changes of plan impose an extra burden upon the Movement Control authorities, both British and Canadian.

20. On the circumstances referred to in para 19, see note written for "Q" War Diary, C.M.H.Q., by Captain V.N. GILL, R.C.A.S.C. (Q2 (a)) C.M.H.Q.). Captain Gill is in charge of Movement Control (Personnel) and has adopted the custom of writing a sketch of the arrival of each T.C. for the War Diary, noting any special features of interest. These sketches should be valuable to the Official Historian.

21. Movement Control, C.M.H.Q., is primarily a liaison department, detailed arrangements for the movement of Canadian forces to this country by sea and within this country by rail being made by the British departments concerned. An officer of Movement Control, C.M.H.Q., however, is present at each port where ships of a Troop Convoy are discharged, and complete records are maintained of these and other movements of personnel.

22. Movement Control have kindly placed at my disposal their office files of Troop Convoys, and have prepared a summary of the file on each convoy to assist me.

23. It is a notable fact that no troop convoy carrying Canadian troops to this country has suffered by enemy action; the enemy has not succeeded in interfering with this great process of transport in the slightest degree. It is true that 73 officers and men of the Canadian Army lost their lives in the sinking of the "Nerissa" (see my Report No. 28); but this vessel was not part of a troop convoy or indeed of a convoy of any kind.

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STRENGTH, CANADIAN ARMY IN THE  
UNITED KINGDOM

at approximately three-month intervals, December 1939 - August 1941.

Extracted from weekly returns prepared for the War Office by A.G. (S),  
C.M.H.Q. (C.M.H.Q. file, 22/STRENGTH/2). Personnel at GIBRALTAR not included.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>OTHER RANKS</u>
22 Dec 39	412	7,445
13 Jan 40	686	15,188
5 Apr 40	1,065	22,193
5 Jul 40	1,606	25,963
4 Oct 40	2,726	45,385
3 Jan 41	3,323	55,232
4 Apr 41	3,752	58,467
4 Jul 41	4,616	72,446
1 Aug 41	5,093	81,059

CONDENSED INFORMATION RELATING TO TROOP  
CONVOYS FROM CANADA - T.C.'S 1 - 12

Note: The figures here given for the total personnel of troop convoys cannot be taken as better than rough approximations. They are figures compiled by the Records office, Acton, somewhat hastily from disembarkation strength returns (M.Fs.M. 33) and certainly contain some errors. They are given here as being the only complete set available from one source. Comparison with totals computed in the files of Movement Control, C.M.H.Q. (for T.C.'s 6 - 18 both inclusive) and with those compiled by A.G. (s), C.M.H.Q. (for which accuracy is not claimed before T.C. 8) show wide discrepancies. A considerable task of computation will have to be undertaken before a high degree of accuracy can be claimed in this matter.

It should be further noted that these totals include only Canadian Army personnel. Many troop convoys transport R.C.A.F. and Naval personnel, as well as Allied and United States officers and men, and often some civilians.

CONVOY	NO. OF SHIPS	DATE OF DISEMBARKATION	TOTAL CDN ARMY PERSONNEL, ALL RANKS. (ROUGH FIGURES ONLY)	GENERAL NATURE OF COMPOSITION
T.C.1.	5	17-18 Dec 39	7,415	H.Q.1 Cdn Div, Two Inf Bns, Three M.G. Bns, Three Fd Bdes (Regts) etc
T.C.2.	7	30-31 Dec 39	8,168	Seven Inf Bns, One A. Tk Regt, etc.
T.C.3.	4	8-9 Feb 40	7,350	Corps Tps: Two A Fd Bdes (Regts), One Med Bde (Regt) etc.
T.C.4.	2	22 May 40	2,431	One Fd Coy, Reinforcements, Holding Unit personnel, etc.
T.C.5.	3	20-21 Jun 40	3,684	Reinforcements, Holding unit personnel, minor units 2 Cdn Div, etc.
T.C.6.	7	1-2 Aug 40	8,976	H.Q. 2 Cdn Div, Two Inf Bns, etc.
T.C.7.	6	4-5 Sep 40	10,359	2 Cdn Div Arty, Three Inf Bns, etc.
T.C.8.	3	25-26 Dec 40	6,300	Two 2 Cdn Div Inf Bns, H.Q. and One Coy Forestry Corps, etc.
T.C.9.	5	1-2 Mar 41	6,007	Three Lt A.A. Btys, Five Forestry Coys, etc.
T.C.10 .	2	19-20 Apr 41	3,852	One Lt A.A. Bty and One A.Tk Bty, Seven Forestry Coys, etc.
T.C.11 .	6	30 Jun - 2 Jul 41	10,736	1 Cdn Army Tk. Bde, Seven Forestry Coys, One Gen. Hosp, etc.
T.C.12	5	29 Jul - 1 Aug 41	9,761	H.Q. 3 Cdn Div, Two Inf Bde Gps, etc.

SHIP CARRYING CANADIAN TROOPS

Troops Convoys 1 - 12

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- T.C.1. "Duchess of Bedford", "Monarch of Bermuda", Empress of Britain",  
"Aquitania", "Empress of Australia".
- T.C.2. "Almanzora", "Chrobry", "Batory", "Andes", "Ormonde", "Reina del  
Pacifico", "Orama".
- T.C.3. "Empress of Britain", "Aquitania", "Monarch of Bermuda", "Empress of  
Australia".
- T.C.4. "Antonia", "Duchess of Bedford".
- T.C.5. "Duchess of Bedford", "Duchess of Atholl", "Samaria".
- T.C.6. "Sobieski", "Monarch of Bermuda", "Batory", "Antonia", "Samaria",  
"Empress of Australia", "Duchess of York".
- T.C.8. "Pennland", "Pasteur", "Capetown Castle".
- T.C.9. "Duchess of York", "Orontes", "Dempo", "Warwick Castle", "Johan van  
Oldebarnevelt".
- T.C.10. "Georgie", "Batory".
- T.C.11. "Britannic", Indrapoera", "Stirling Castle", "Windsor Castle",  
"ANDES", "Pasteur".
- T.C.12. "Empress of Canada", "Strathmore", "Duchess of York", "Strathnaver",  
"Orion".

The above information is extracted from Strength Returns on  
Disembarkation (M.F.M. 33) at Records Office, ACTON, and files of S, & T.  
Section, C.M.H.Q.