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Canadian Corps Exercise "DOG".

Canadian Military Headquarters,
2 Cockspur Street, S.W. 1,
London, ENGLAND.

The Director,
Historical Section,
General Staff,
National Defence Headquarters,
Ottawa, CANADA.

1. A further report is submitted. This report deals
with the Canadian Corps Exercise known by the code-name "DOG",
conducted on 26-28 Feb 1941.

2. I was present in the area of operations during the
later phase of this exercise, and also attended the Corps
Commander's conference upon it held on 5 Mar.

GENERAL IDEA OF THE EXERCISE

3. In its general conception, and to a considerable
extent in the actual phrasing of its general instructions
(see C.M.H.Q. file 2/Exercises/5) this exercise was precisely
similar to the earlier one known as "FOX" (see my Report
No. 11). However, the Second Canadian Division played the
role taken in "FOX" by the First Canadian Division, and the
exercise took place in the western instead of the eastern
section of the Canadian Corps' prospective field of operations.

4. The troops taking part were a skeleton Corps H.Q.,
the Second Canadian Division, and a large force of Corps
Troops including 2 Field Regt, 11 Army Field Regt, and 1
Medium Regt. Also included were 110 Sqn., R.C.A.F., 1 C.S.B.C.
(Close Support Bomber Control), and 2 Group R.A.F.

5. The objects of the exercise were exactly the same
as in the case of "FOX" (Report No. 11) and the assumed situa-
tion as outlined in the "General Idea" was also the same: i.e.,
the enemy had landed both in the Dover peninsula and the region
of the South Downs, and the Canadian Corps was being called
upon to counter-attack and drive him into the sea. In this
case, however, the field of activity was the South Downs sector,
whereas in the First Division exercise it had been the DOVER
peninsula.

6. At 1000 hrs on 26 Feb. (see Umpires' instructions
in C.M.H.Q. file 2/Exercises/5) the Corps Commander, as Direc-
tor of the exercise, held a conference at Corps H.Q. At this
he gave the information that in the South Downs sector between
BOGNOR REGIS and LITTLEHAMPTON the enemy had made considerable
progress, advanced elements being in places as far north as the
road CHICHESTER - ARUNDEL and as far west as Oving. East of
the R. ARUN he did not appear to have penetrated north of the
railway at TODDINGTON. Canadian Corps had been ordered by
G.H.Q. to concentrate north of the River ROTHER between MIDHURST

and PULBOROUGH preparatory to operating in a southerly direction; 1 Armoured Div. had been placed under 4 Corps to operate against a hostile armoured force north of NEWHAVEN; 1 Canadian Div. was remaining in reserve in its present area.

7. Following the lines of the previous exercise, the Corps Commander ordered 2 Cdn Div. to strengthen the Home Guard on the ROTHER line between MIDHURST and PULBOROUGH with mobile units; and to concentrate the Division in the area DUNSFOLD - FIRDORF - FERNHURST - CHIDDINGFOLD, leading troops to cross the Corps start line at 1800 hrs. For complete details, see Umpire's instructions as above, para. 6.

8. At 2000 hrs on 26 Feb. the Corps Commander held another conference at WISBOROUGH GREEN, when he informed the G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div. that the enemy had secured CHICHESTER - WESTHAMPTON - the general line of the road to ARUNDEL - ARUNDEL - CROSS BUSH - POLING, and instructed him to operate southwards to the west of the ARUN and restore the beach defences between BOGNOR REGIS and LITTLEHAMPTON.

VISIT TO THE AREA OF OPERATIONS, 27 FEB.

9. In company with Lt.-Col. H.A. YOUNG (G.S.O., S.D., C.M.H.Q.) and Major W.B. WEDD (A.G. 1, C.M.H.Q.) I left London about 0800 hrs on 27 Feb. to visit the area where the exercise was in progress. We proceeded via LEATHERHEAD and DORKING to KINGSFOLD, north of HORSHAM, where we found a rear Corps H.Q. and obtained information on the operations from Col. GENET (C.S.O., Cdn Corps). On his suggestion we drove on to WARHAM, where we found the Close Support Bomber Control installed in a large R.A.F. motor-coach. We saw something of the process of receiving by wireless requests for support from the troops in front and passing them on to the bomber group; but owing to the miserably wet and overcast weather planes were not actually flying.

10. Moving forward by the route FIVE OAKS - BILLINGHURST - WISBOROUGH GREEN - PETWORTH we reached STAGPARK FARM, on the Petworth Estate, where the Headquarters of 2 Cdn Div was located. The G.O.C. (Major-General ODLUM) was not present, having gone to a divisional conference which he had called at DUNTON; but we got further information from Major T.G. GIBSON (THE ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT) and other officers. We were told that the divisional reconnaissance battalion (commanded by Lt.-Col. CHURCHILL MANN, and to be known as 8th Reconnaissance Battalion (14th CANADIAN HUSSARS) had duly made contact with the enemy and had now withdrawn; the TORONTO SCOTTISH (the divisional machine-gun battalion) was now in contact on the South Downs in the region of SINGLETON and EAST DEAN. The 4th and 5th Cdn Infantry Brigades were advancing (the former being on the right), the heads of columns having crossed the ROTHER at 0600 hrs. The 6th Brigade was in support, but would move through later and clean up the situation on the beaches.

11. We now moved towards the front via PETWORTH and DUNTON. South of the latter we passed LE REGIMENT DE MAISONNEUVE, of the 5th Bde, toiling up the steep ascent of the South Downs; and at LITTLETOWN Farm we found the Headquarters of the 5th Brigade. Here we were present at a conference in a barn at which the brigade-commander (Brig. P.E. LECIERC, M.M., E.D.) ordered his units to be in position at 1330 hrs for an attack at 1400 hrs. The O.C. CALGARY HIGHLANDERS was missing from this conference, and indeed we were told later that General Odlum had had only one of his three brigadiers actually present at his conference at Duncton earlier in the day.

12. Pushing on via UPWALTHAM HILL, we met at the gate of EASTDEAN PARK an umpire who gave us further information on the situation. Here we were in the region of contact with the theoretical enemy, whose advanced elements were reported to be

strongly posted just to the south (i.e. in the vicinity of OPEN WINKINS and SELHURST PARK FARM). We proceeded to EAST DEAN and thence to CHARLTON (where we encountered a company of the ROYAL HAMILTON LIGHT INFANTRY) (4th Bde) and on to SINGLETON and COCKING. On the road between the two latter villages we met the ESSEX SCOTTISH (reserve bn., 4th Bde) moving forward with their carriers.

13. In an inn at Cocking we found the Headquarters of the 4th Brigade and heard the brigade-commander (Brig. C.B. TOPP, D.S.O., M.C.) issue orders for an attack to take place at a time which might be 1530 hrs but would be definitely notified after a divisional conference which was to take place at UP WALTHAM. The R.H.L.I. were to attack on the right, the ROYAL REGIMENT OF CANADA on the left; the ESSEX SCOTTISH would be in support, their role being mopping-up and covering the brigade's flank after the other battalions had executed a pivoting-movement against CHICHESTER.

14. We now returned to UP WALTHAM for the divisional conference, which was held in the open at a very muddy crossroads at 1430 hrs. Here I was introduced to Major-General Odium and had some conversation with Lieutenant-General McNAUGHTON. We listened to General Odium as he gave his brigade-commanders and C.R.A. brief and incisive orders for the attack, which was now timed to begin at 1630 hrs. We were unable to follow the final phase, but had to return to LONDON at this point. The plan for the exercise called for it to terminate at zero.

15. Up to this point the traffic arrangements, so far as we had ourselves been able to observe them, had worked well; we had seen some ditched lorries (which in view of the state of the weather was not surprising) but the convoys in general were moving smoothly and maintaining proper spacing between vehicles. On the narrow road between UP WALTHAM and PETWORTH, however, we now ran into repeated traffic-jams. Though these were worsened by the presence of civilian vehicles, the latter did not seem to be primarily responsible for the difficulties. There were, I think, one or two cases of mechanical breakdown (and on a narrow road with traffic moving in both directions one stalled vehicle can cause a complete tie-up) but the worst trouble appeared to be the result of military drivers cutting-out of the column and attempting to pass stalled or slow vehicles. Guns of the 5th and 6th Field Regts with their tractors, and infantry and other vehicles, were jammed along the road nose-to-tail, and several times we were completely halted for some minutes.

16. We reached London about 1800 hrs.

CORPS COMMANDER'S CONFERENCE ON EXERCISE

17. Along with Major Wedd, I attended the Corps Commander's conference on this exercise, which was scheduled to take place at ALDERSHOT at 1030 hrs on 5 Mar. We arrived at the Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot, about 1940 hrs on that date and found Lt.-Gen. McNaughton already speaking; the time for the conference had been advanced an hour, but no information had reached C.M.H.Q. We were in time, however, for the main portion of the Corps Commander's remarks on the exercise.

MOVE TO THE CONCENTRATION AREA

18. General McNaughton began his detailed consideration of the operations with an analysis of the move to the concentration area. There had been, he said, a very serious error regarding routes. In at least one case a brigade had taken a different route from that ordered by Corps, with the consequence that no traffic-control personnel were present. Although the policing and marking of routes were exceptionally well done, certain units caused confusion; for example, one infantry unit

went forward in small scattered groups of vehicles (the G.O.C. used the phrase "column of hunks") and got involved with other units; and "one gunner unit" was three hours late getting into the concentration area. The Corps Commander urged his subordinate officers not to be "complacent"; commanders, he said, must take stock candidly and take whatever remedial action is needed.

19. He mentioned that dispersal, in general, was well handled.

20. One great lesson of the exercise was the value of the reconnaissance battalion and of its co-operation with the machine-gun battalion. The reconnaissance battalion's responsibility ran beyond its own division - it was covering the concentration of the Corps. Once more, as in the case of "FOX", the Corps Commander emphasized the fact that the reconnaissance unit's role was to get information back; he observed that there is a tendency, when in action, to forget this. In this exercise, the first role of the battalion had not been a fighting one; however, when it fell back it assumed a protective role, covering the concentration and advance, and in this it must fight if necessary.

THE ADVANCE TO GAIN CONTACT

21. Passing on to the advance to gain contact with the enemy, General McNaughton reviewed the roles of different formations. In connection with the artillery, in particular, he spoke of the difficulty arising from some of the units being equipped with the old 75 mm. gun (cf. my Report No. 12). The attempt made during this exercise to detach from the brigade-groups the field regiments armed with 75's and replace them with army field regiments armed with 25-pounders had not proved a good idea; and a semi-permanent grouping of artillery regiments with infantry brigade-groups was shortly to be effected.

22. Normally, the General pointed out, the reconnaissance battalion will, as in this case, be relieved by the machine-gun battalion. The commanders of these units must practise the takeover, decentralizing this drill down to companies and platoons, as these are likely to be acting independently.

23. In the matter of traffic-control: the Corps undertook the responsibility for this north of the ROTHER at 0600 hrs (of 27 Feb) to relieve the Division of the burden. Forward of the Rother, however, the traffic-control was not effective. The arrangements laid down had not, apparently, "got through" to all concerned.

24. The General pointed out the importance, in handling motorized formations, of always thinking ahead. There must always be a known turning circuit in front; in these narrow roads one cannot count on turning the vehicles themselves.

THE DEPLOYMENT FOR THE ATTACK

25. In connection with the deployment for attack, General McNaughton commented on the slowness with which this was effected. The Division was not ready to cross the starting line when the time specified in General Odum's orders came. There was, however, no cause for despondency here: the amount of time needed for this operation would be reduced with practice.

26. A drill, the G.O.C. said, must be laid down to ensure that all concerned get the information they require. He called attention to two pamphlets, G.S. publications of 1939: Divisional Standing Orders and Infantry Brigade Standing Orders. These supplied the framework for operations, and should be carefully digested.

27. At conferences, the commanders must give their orders clearly; but their "audiences" too had a part to play - not merely taking the orders in, but asking questions on vital points when necessary.

28. With special reference to the artillery deployment, the General remarked that this would improve with the adoption of the semi-permanent brigade-group organization. "What we want from the artillery is shells on the enemy" - and not traffic-jams. What was needed from a regiment was (1) "a troop or so" forward in close support, and (2) the bulk of the regiment further back, firing on map targets and taking full advantage of the new long-range weapons to keep the forward roads clear for the infantry, to whom every consideration must be shown. After the infantry had deployed, the guns could be "dribbled forward", by troops, sections, or even single guns.

29. In connection with communications, the General again emphasized the need for giving due weight to Signals considerations in planning. He spoke of the importance of reporting arrival at new locations immediately, and remarked that it might be necessary for divisional commanders to fix the routes for brigade moves so that Signals would know. He mentioned the dependence of Signals upon the G.P.O. lines in operations in this region. He cautioned commanders against imposing wireless silence without permission of the next higher formation; and he pointed out in passing that at headquarters of formations there must always be present some officer armed with full authority to act in the commander's absence.

30. Turning to the question of air co-operation, General McNaughton said that while air reconnaissance was impossible on the second day (27 Feb), on the previous day the T and Ball code was used with 100% success. He stressed the importance, "in this battle of England", of getting information by air concerning conditions in forward defended localities, and again referred to the yellow-triangle system of identification (Report No. 11). Incidentally, he mentioned that the Cdn Corps Army Co-operation Squadron, R.C.A.F., formerly No. 110, is now numbered 400.

31. The Corps Commander then drew some further morals for the artillery. Unless the artillery task is well set out in advance, he said, the ammunition expenditure inevitably drops. An investigation which he had had undertaken into Canadian artillery activity during the "Hundred Days" of 1918 revealed that only one-quarter of one per cent of the shells fired were fired on request or against targets of opportunity. It was necessary to think in terms, not of numbers of guns, but of numbers of shells on the enemy: "and keep the guns shooting".

32. Speaking of the Close Support Bomber Control, he said that while the bombers could not fly on this occasion, the system worked well so far as passing messages was concerned. He hoped to use the system of "tentacles" at forward headquarters (see Report No. 11) for obtaining Heavy Artillery as well as bomber support - but the brigades commanders must pass back the targets and treat the tentacles properly. "Look after the tentacle personnel and they will serve you well."

33. Reverting to traffic matters, the General said that a plan is essential - and the plan must get through to those who are to use it. Simplicity is a great desideratum. For control, policing as well as signs is required. "One vehicle can stop the movement of a brigade." The failure to get off at zero grew out of weakness in traffic control. Orders must be carried out: there must be no excessive speed. Incidentally, despatch-riders must be made to moderate their speed;

they had been a menace. As for lighting, in this exercise it showed substantial improvement over anything before seen.

34. In general, the Corps Commander said, "Everybody's got to become traffic-minded". He called attention to the Field Service Pocket-Book pamphlet on Mechanized Movement by Road, and to Sec. 9 of G.H.Q. Standing Operation Instructions 1941. A Corps Traffic Manual is being prepared and will shortly become available,

35. Summing up in conclusion, General McNaughton said, "I have been neither praising nor blaming." This was the first time the Second Division had been out as a division, and the result gave him great confidence. He had been particularly pleased to note the manner in which the officers looked after their men. He was confident that it would not be long before everything was working well.

MISCELLANEOUS

36. It may not be out of order to say that the party from C.M.H.Q. returned from this exercise feeling that the Second Division had "put on a show" which compared quite favourably with the First Division's in the previous exercise. We were particularly struck by the efficient administrative arrangements at Divisional Headquarters during our visit - the examination of passes, the handling of traffic, etc. And it is worth recording that the badness of the weather presented special difficulties which did not arise on the former occasion.

37. One note of humour may be added as a postscript. On the night of 26-27 Feb a Canadian Legion War Services supervisor in the Aldershot area telephoned to C.M.H.Q. to say that the British Broadcasting Corporation was presenting a programme which he felt was conveying information to the enemy about the exercise then in progress; it contained numerous references to dogs which he thought might well be bulletins on the state of DOG. Our Intelligence Officer (Capt. L.G.B. LAVOIE, of the ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT) investigated, and (in answer to a letter of 27 Feb with which the supervisor reinforced his telephone call) wrote assuring him that all was well. The programme in question was a revival of a comedy by H.R. Jears, entitled "Five Hundred Thousand Dogs Went to Town".

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ADDENDUM 8 Apr 41.

38. Attention may be directed to the Cdn Corps reports on "FOX" and "DOG", addressed to G.H.Q. Home Forces and dated 8 Mar 41 (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Exercises/5).

39. These reports, naturally, cover much the same ground as the Corps Commander's remarks in the conferences on the exercises. As they will presumably be available to the future historian, there is no particular point in describing them at length here, but a couple of passages may be quoted.

40. The last stage of "DOG" is thus summarized:

"At 1630 hrs (27 Feb), the Div. with two Bdes up, attacked astride the road PETWORTH - BOGNOR REGIS, its start line running east and west through SELHURST PARK.

"Deployment for the attack was impeded by traffic congestion in and about the debussing areas, and several units were not in position at zero."

41. In the course of comments on the lessons of these two exercises it is pointed out that the deployment of a division is "dependent firstly on the roads available"; and "it will often be better to move with one Bde Gp up with room to deploy, rather than with two up, each being cramped and congested".

42. The Official Historian, if he wishes to make reference to these exercises, should consult these reports, which are brief but valuable.

C.P.S.

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(Copied in Historical Section, Jul 43.)