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Canadian Participation in Civil Affairs/Military Government
Part III: France, General Historical Survey, July-October 1944.

INTRODUCTION

1. Previous reports on Canadian participation in Civil Affairs/Military Government have been:-

- (a) Report No. 140: Part I : Background and Beginnings
- (b) Report No. 148: Part II : Planning and Training

The present report gives a general survey of the activities of Civil Affairs under First Cdn Army in France during the period 23 Jul 44 to 2 Oct 44 and it is planned that subsequent reports will be:-

Part IV: Belgium and The Netherlands, General Historical Survey

Part V : Germany, General Historical Survey.

2. Once these reports have been completed, it is proposed to prepare a further series of reports which will deal with each of the several Civil Affairs "functions" (e.g. Refugees, Supplies, Legal, Public Safety, etc.) for the entire campaign.

3. In the preparation of these reports, the narrator has had, and will continue to have, access to the SHAEF G-5 Historical Records (which will eventually be held at the Offices of the Historical Section of the Cabinet Secretariat, 8 Barton Street, London, S.W.1) in addition to C.M.H.Q. files, War Diaries of the Staffs concerned and miscellaneous documents on file at Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.

4. The Civil Affairs staff at Headquarters First Cdn Army "commenced functioning at 1200 hours 23 Jul 44 when 1 British Corps came under command" (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3). At this time, 1 British Corps occupied a cramped position in the eastern end of the bridgehead in which four Civil Affairs detachments were deployed; military operations were static; Caen and its suburbs had been liberated by formations of Second British Army and the break out from the bridgehead was about to take place. Civil Affairs problems were few and of routine quality. As a result, the members of the staff, who arrived in Normandy in two shifts on 24 and 27 July, had an opportunity to consult their opposite numbers at Second British Army and to learn from them the extent to which the plans and policies which had been laid down for Civil

Affairs had been modified or extended to meet actual circumstances and conditions. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, 24 Jul 44 et seq.). *

RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH

5. The planning which had preceded the invasion had been complicated by the fact that there had been no agreement in existence between the Allies and General de Gaulle's French National Committee of Liberation such as had already been drawn up by the London Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands. It had therefore been necessary to prepare and plan for a complete breakdown in local administration and even for a refusal by the local authorities to co-operate with the Allied Military Commanders. Such drastic action was never necessary.

6. From D-day onwards it became increasingly clear that the French local administration was able and willing to carry out its normal functions with the minimum assistance from the Civil Affairs organisation. The absence of any formal agreement between the Allied Governments and the French National Committee of Liberation was remedied by the action of the Senior Civil Affairs Officer of Second British Army in treating General de Gaulle's representatives as the de facto civil authority for the Region of Rouen following his "coup d'etat" of 14 Jun 44. On that day, General de Gaulle landed in France, addressed a meeting in the market square at Bayeux, and left behind him for the Region of Rouen a Civil Commissioner, Monsieur Francois Coulet, ** and a Military Commander, Colonel P. de Chevaline.

7. Although "full and unreserved recognition of General de Gaulle's administration as the Provisional Government of the Republic of France" was not to be given by the Allied Governments for a further four months (The Times, 24 Oct 44), this limited and local recognition of it was fully justified by the events and the results which followed. Within a month of D-day the task of enforcing restrictions and controls on the civilian population had been made considerably lighter as a result of an instruction which Monsieur Coulet issued to the Maires of liberated communes and following his agreement to issue "Arretes" in

* 1 British Corps and 2 Cdn Corps, the two formations which were to come under command of First Cdn Army, had assumed operational roles on 6 Jun 44 and 11 Jul 44 respectively and were engaged in active Civil Affairs Operations from these dates (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 6 Jul 44 et seq.).

** M. Coulet had been a diplomat before the war and became a close collaborator with General de Gaulle in 1940. After the liberation of Corsica, he was appointed Secretary General of Police and later he became head of the organisation of the Provisional Government to take over administration in France.

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accordance with the French law of "Etat de Siège". This instruction, issued on 6 Jul 44, laid down the general principles to be followed in the reception to be given by all local officials to Allied demands "it is the duty of the French to give the maximum assistance to the Allied Armies in their struggle against the common enemy and for the liberation of France. Therefore, without hesitation, you must submit to the demands made upon you by the commander...." (SHAEP Records, 21 Army Group file 21 Army Group CA/Mil Gov/50865, "Historical Survey, D-day to fall of Caen"). The "Arrêtés" issued in accordance with the French law of "Etat de Siege" were published in the "Bulletin Officiel" and repeated in notices over Monsieur Coulet's signature. Copies of both were issued to Civil Affairs detachments for distribution to Maires by whom the notices were posted throughout the communes. In this way the restrictions became effective French law and any infringement became actionable in the appropriate French courts. (SHAEP Records, Second Brit Army file. Hist Sec 17.19. "Report on Relations with the French" June 1944.)

8. Liaison officers.

Following the visit of General de Gaulle to Bayeux a total of 268 French liaison personnel comprising "members of the Mission Militaire de Liaison Administratif, legal officers, surgeons and nursing staffs" were attached to formations of the Allied Expeditionary Force. The liaison officers were of two classes:-

(a) those attached to the military forces under orders of the formation commanders, whose duties were to "assist the commander in his relations and problems with the civilian population". They were also available to give information and advice based on their knowledge of local topography and they could be used as tactical liaison officers but their principal duties were in connection with the civil population.

(b) those attached to the French civil authorities whose chief function was to assist the civil administration in its relations with the military. These were under control of the senior French officer with the head civil official in the liberated territory.

(SHAEP Records, 21 Army Gp file, 21 A Gp. CA/Mil Gov/50865, "Historical Survey, D-day to fall of Caen".)

Lt.Col. P. H. Pierrené, who reported for duty on 31 Jul 44, was the senior of those attached to First Canadian Army and, in addition, one officer was attached to each corps headquarters and one to each of the "spearhead" detachments. From the start the services of these officers were of inestimable assistance to Civil Affairs. The fact that they were French officers and wore French uniform ensured that they were received with enthusiasm by the civil population of the newly liberated areas and, since they spoke "with the voice of France" and possessed undisputed powers to replace "undesirable" fonctionnaires by more reputable characters, they were able to relay the instructions and orders of the military commanders to local authorities and to relieve the Civil Affairs officers of the necessity of meddling in French politics.

GENERAL SITUATION

9. This reduced scope of Civil Affairs, which had prompted Brigadier Vedd as early as 20 Jun 44 to decrease his staff (C.M.H.Q. file 9/Civ Affairs/5: Letter, S.C.A.O., First Cdn Army, to D.A. & Q.M.G., First Cdn Army, 20 Jun 44) was summarized by Colonel A. E. Hodgkin, M.C., Colonel Executive of the Civil Affairs Staff at Headquarters 21 Army Group, who wrote on 12 Jul 44:-

We have really reached the state of affairs envisaged in our original Civil Affairs Plan as Stage 2, in which the Civil Affairs organisation 'liaises' with a flourishing French Civil administration.

(SHAFF Records, 21 Army Group file 21 A Gp/15902/CA: D.O. from Col. A.E. Hodgkin, M.C., to Brig R.M.H. Lewis, M.C., Second Army (C.A.) 12 Jul 44).

10. The fortnightly reports prepared by the Civil Affairs staffs at both First Canadian Army and Second British Army and included as appendices in their respective War Diaries, give a detailed review of the Civil Affairs activities during the various stages of the campaign. It is apparent in retrospect that few problems of major importance were encountered in France.

11. Refugees.

Refugees provided the main problem. In the early days they came in a steady trickle and not in the flood which had been anticipated in the pre D-day planning. With the liberation of Caen, there was some difficulty in finding suitable shelter for the evacuated civilians due to the destruction of many buildings by shelling and bombing and the restricted size of the bridgehead. But this problem at Caen was dealt with by Second British Army before First Cdn Army had assumed an operational role and thereafter - although the freeing of the Channel ports necessitated the movement and resettlement of large numbers of refugees - the problem never again became so acute or interfered with the military effort.

12. Supplies.

Although certain non-essential commodities were in short supply and there were occasions when lack of transport or the military situation made distribution difficult, food was on the whole plentiful. This was as well since the Supply and Resources Section of the Civil Affairs Staff at First Cdn Army was beset with difficulties throughout the campaign in France. The main trouble was that, for the first month, all supplies had to be drawn from 3 Civil Affairs Inland Depot which was under command of Second British Army. It was therefore necessary to ascertain from Second British Army the availability of any item demanded by Corps. This necessity complicated an already elaborate system and caused added delays and embarrassment. (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3 and 9.)

When 4 Civil Affairs Inland Depot was placed under command, the time lag between the demand for and the issue of Civil Affairs supplies was, if anything, greater than before due to shortage of transport and the great distances over which such supplies had to be hauled. After 12 Sep 44, when the depot went into "a state of suspended animation", hard rations drawn from Second British Army Inland Depot at Amiens were supplemented by "condensed milk, preserved meat, etc., allocated to Civil Affairs from captured enemy stocks... to relieve communes near the battle area, which accommodated evacuees and refugees who were cut off from normal sources of supply" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

13. Law and Order.

In France the state of law and order was generally satisfactory. The civil population was law-abiding and conformed readily with what must have been considered irksome military restrictions on their freedom. The police services "functioned normally", were "adequate and efficient" and "most willing to co-operate on any matter on which their assistance was asked". (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3 & 9). The most tedious restriction imposed upon the civilian population, and that most difficult to enforce without an absurdly large military and police control and in the absence of some natural barrier such as a river or canal, was against movement without a permit for a distance greater than six kilometres from the civilian's native commune. Infringements occurred throughout France, Belgium and Holland and subsequently in Germany. Inevitably thefts of military stores occurred and petrol was pilfered and put to uses other than had been intended. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.) These crimes were, however, minor and in no way impaired the efficiency of the Army.

14. Fire & Civil Defence.

The German rate of withdrawal prevented their taking fire-fighting equipment with them and as a result "the fire and Civil Defence arrangements in all liberated areas were sufficient to deal with normal risks". (*ibid.*)

15. Legal

There were no legal problems encountered by First Cdn Army in France and the Staff Officer (Legal) on the Civil Affairs staff divided his time between "advising within the headquarters on the legal aspect of routine Civil Affairs matters arising from day to day" and "maintaining liaison with higher and flanking formations and with corps under command to ensure uniformity of legal policy in these routine matters". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9.)

16. Financial.

The vacancies on the Civil Affairs staff at First Cdn Army for Staff Officers (Finance) were not filled during the campaign in France. Civil Affairs detachments who landed in the early days of the invasion had been provided with "Civil Affairs funds" which were to be issued to responsible authorities against signature or used by the detachment commanders themselves if the economic situation warranted. It had become

apparent by the time that First Cdn Army assumed an operational role that these funds would not be required and they were withdrawn from the detachments to which they had been issued. As there were no sub-accountants operating with detachments of First Cdn Army, all Civil Affairs accounting was done by the two financial officers at Corps Headquarters, who, after consulting Army Headquarters, reported direct to the Director of Finance at Headquarters 21 Army Group. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9.) As no pressing financial problems arose, these reports were routine by nature and innocuous in content since most bank officials were wary of the questions asked by these financial experts. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 24 Aug 44).

17. In order to ensure that the Armies and, if necessary, civilian authorities should be supplied with funds, a form of supplementary French currency had been printed prior to the invasion to be issued in France ("Emis en France"). This currency for France, unlike similar supplies for Belgium and the Netherlands, which had been prepared with the approval and co-operation of the London Governments, had not been sanctioned by the French National Committee of Liberation prior to D-day. Following the coup d'etat of General de Gaulle, this supplementary franc currency became the cause of a dispute between the Senior Civil Affairs Officer, Second British Army and the Regional Commissioner for the District of Rouen when the latter instructed tax collectors that it would not be accepted in payment of taxes. The Regional Commissioner was persuaded to suspend this instruction pending the decision of higher authority which had the effect of abrogating the instruction in its entirety. (S.H.A.E.F. Records, Second British Army file 17.19 "Report on Relations with the French", June 1944). Thereafter, since it was realised that this "Emis en France" currency was the only money that the troops had, it was accepted without question by the civilian population who, in certain areas, were "anxious to exchange money currently held" for it. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 24 Aug 44.)

18. It had been feared that the advent of the troops might have the effect of inflating the currency. This was not the case partly because a considerable inflation already existed and the rate of exchange made all prices seem exorbitant, and also because most of the purchases made by troops were by barter of cigarettes, chocolate and even Army equipment (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.)

19. Medical.

The medical situation was never good. There existed throughout the campaign a shortage of drugs and medical supplies. In the most severe and urgent cases this shortage was at least partially remedied from Civil Affairs and Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps stocks and, as they were uncovered, enemy supplies were frequently handed over to the civilian authorities. Lt.Col. H.A. Ansley, R.C.A.M.C., who was in charge of the Public Health Section of the Civil Affairs Staff, maintained liaison throughout the campaign with the French Public Health and Welfare authorities and was able from time to time to assist them with provision of medical supplies and drugs. The general health of the people was good throughout and few cases of infectious diseases were encountered.

20. Medical and surgical personnel were on the whole adequate and great assistance was given in handling and treating civilian casualties by members of the Volontaires Francaises of the Corps Feminin who had been trained in England and who, from the time that they landed in Normandy, worked tirelessly and unsparingly to improve the condition of their fellow countrymen. They worked either alone, assisted by Civil Affairs resources (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Aug 44), or they were attached to the Refugee Detachments. At Caen and elsewhere they were to be found working close to the front line and under constant shell and mortar fire.

21. Technical.

The Technical Section of the Civil Affairs staff, under the extremely mobile conditions which obtained in France, were only lightly burdened with problems since there was no opportunity to initiate any scheme of long-term rehabilitation and little chance to do anything but make reconnaissances with a view to first aid repairs. On two occasions, at the request of the Deputy Director of Supply and Transport, figures as to the availability of civilian transport were obtained but in neither case was any attempt made to obtain such transport for military purposes because of the "general bad state of road worthiness of the vehicles". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9 and September 1944, Appx 6.) Detachments in the larger centres were given "valuable assistance in restoring Public Utilities" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5) and, at the request of the Chief Engineer, a policy for division of responsibility for maintenance of roads as between the local engineer authorities and the R.C.E. units was put into effect. This policy provided that the "surfacing of all military routes would be a responsibility of the Army and drainage of these roads and complete maintenance of all other roads would be the responsibility of the Ponts et Chausees." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

CAEN

22. No account of Civil Affairs in France would be complete without some reference to Caen which, being the first town to present any serious problems, tested many theories and taught many lessons which were to influence and guide the conduct of Civil Affairs throughout the entire campaign.

23. It had been realized by the General Staff in the planning of the invasion that failure to capture Caen in the initial stages would necessitate a major effort later on. Caen was therefore one of the original objectives for D-day. It was not taken and the enemy, realizing its importance as the hinge on which his line was hung, concentrated a large number of his best divisions (a high proportion being either S.S. or Panzer or both) in the Eastern portion of the Normandy front. Towards the end of June a series of operations with limited objectives were carried out with the purpose of improving the tactical situation from which the assault on Caen on 9 Jul was one of general consolidation (See Hist Sec Report No 131, para 79 et seq). During this period the attention of the Civil Affairs staffs was focussed on Caen and on the problems likely to result from its liberation. Because of the frequent and heavy bombardments to

which the town had been subjected a refugee problem was inevitable and of paramount importance. It was essential that the civilian population should not be allowed to panic, to break out of the town and to scatter in all directions. Other problems which would have to be solved included the provision of food, of medical and hygiene supplies; the evacuation of civilian casualties; the restoration of water supply, of sanitation and other essential services; the removal of minefields and booby traps; the burial of civilian dead. These and other matters were the subject of discussion between the Civil Affairs Staff of Second British Army and the Regional authorities. Tentative arrangements and plans were made to deal with any emergency which was thought likely to arise.

24. British and Canadian troops entered Caen on the morning of 9 Jul 44. Shortly after 1400 hours of the same day a British major, commanding 201 Civil Affairs Detachment designated as the municipal detachment for Caen, entered the town. During his preliminary reconnaissance he ascertained that about 80 percent of the buildings were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that they were uninhabitable; that most of the streets were so badly cratered or blocked with debris that they were impassable; that shortage of water was acute and that it was suspected that available supplies were contaminated; that the sewage disposal system had failed; that there was neither electricity nor gas; that of a normal population of 65,000 the estimated number remaining was between 20,000 and 25,000, of whom 13,000 homeless were concentrated in three public buildings, the Lycée Malherbe, the Eglise St Etienne and the Hospice du Bon Sauveur. There were reports that further concentrations of refugees were located in caves in the western outskirts of the town, in shelters at Ste Therese, and yet another, which included a high proportion of sick, aged and infirm, in caves and quarries at Fleury-sur-Orne. There was still sniping in the town, which was to remain subject to intermittent shelling and mortaring for the next ten days. Estimates of civilian casualties were that 2,500 to 3,000 had been killed and 1,350 wounded. Some 600 corpses lay under the ruined buildings and, in those parts of the town which had been most severely hit, the stench was nauseating and demoralizing. One prison was destroyed and the prison staff had disappeared; the other prison was badly damaged; the courts were partially destroyed; the fire and civil defence services were without water and lacked fire-fighting equipment. (SHAEP Records, Civil Affairs Fortnightly Report No. 3, Second Army, 23 Jul 44 and W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.)

25. Words fail to describe the anguish of Caen. It had indeed paid a fearful price for its liberation. However, the civilian morale was high even though most inhabitants could not understand the reason for the severe Allied bombardment of the city. A skeleton civilian administration was available. The refugees were well organized and well cared for. Arrangements for the care of civilian casualties were good despite the customary shortage of medical supplies. Health was extremely good; 20 cases of typhoid and four cases of diphtheria were the only known cases of epidemic disease. Although bread was in short

supply and there were certain other deficiencies, food was adequate. (Ibid.)

26. By the evening of the 10th, Civil Affairs rations for 20,000 persons, supplies of soap, anti-louse powder, creosote and chloride of lime had reached the town. Water points had been provided for both military and civilian use. Civil labour had been directed to assist the bulldozers in clearing the principal streets so as to permit military traffic. It had been ascertained that damage to water mains was not severe and that if enough pumps were obtained from military sources the water supply could be restored. Arrangements were made to supply these pumps.

27. At 1200 hours on the 11th, 2 Cdn Corps, coming under command of Second British Army, assumed responsibility for Civil Affairs in the town. On the same day, two Pioneer companies arrived to help in clearing the streets, burying the dead and to demolish those buildings which were dangerous. Arrangements were made by which unauthorized movement of civilians was checked by the Provost who were reinforced with members of resistance groups and civil police. For the next five days, despite the fact that "the front line ran through the centre of the town" resulting in "very trying conditions for the men on the spot" (SHAEP Records, Second Army, C.A., Fortnightly Report No. 3, 23 Jul 44.), the restoration of comparatively normal conditions progressed.

28. On 12 Jul, in order to relieve the overcrowding of the three main refugee shelters which constituted a menace to health and to prepare for the reception of those refugees who were to be uncovered in the course of future operations, evacuation of refugees commenced. Within a week over 9,700 refugees had been evacuated including 800 wounded and many hundreds sick and infirm people. In addition many civilians had left the town under their own arrangements.

29. On 18 Jul, 2 Cdn Corps, consisting of 2 and 3 Canadian Infantry Divisions and 2 Canadian Armoured Brigade, cleared the East bank of the River Orne. (See Hist Sec Report No 131, para 97, et seq.) In the faubourg of Vaucelles there were about 1,000 persons with a well organized community of some 500 refugees living in shelters. When Fleury-sur-Orne was reached there were some 2,000 persons living in the caves and quarries. They included 400 bedridden old people and 100 orphaned children. At first a "Stay-put" policy was enforced but when, on 30 Jul, the 2 Cdn Corps General Staff ordered their evacuation, the total of refugees had shrunk to 822 who were evacuated by way of Caen to the area of Bayeux. (W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, July 1944, Appx 10. "Report on Evacuation of Refugees" 30 Jul 44.) Throughout this period invaluable experience in handling and controlling refugees was gained and, as a result, Brigadier Wedd set up within his staff organization "a separate Refugee Section.... to co-ordinate the whole concentration and evacuation of civilians back through Army areas, including questions of supply, transport, accommodation, etc." (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.) This Refugee Section was to deal with all refugee problems throughout the campaign and eventually it was to be expanded to supervise and control Displaced Persons as well.

30. Policy.

From every point of view Caen was a definite landmark in the history of Civil Affairs. The planning for it had been based on practical experience gained in the bridgehead and not on pre-D-day hypotheses, and had been co-ordinated with French Regional authorities. That this planning was sound is borne out by the fact that the relief measures were quickly carried into effect. A number of errors were inevitable and some misfits among the personnel of detachments had to be weeded out. However, the experience gained by the detachments who had been deployed between D-day and the end of July had been sufficient to mould the heterogeneous collection of individuals forming them into a group of trained teams. From the first eight weeks of Civil Affairs in Europe two important decisions as to policy emerged. These concerned the deployment of detachments and the evacuation of refugees.

31. Deployment of Detachments.

After various alternatives had been tried out, it was decided to allot Civil Affairs detachments to Corps on the basis of one for each division under command. These "spearhead" detachments were moved forward in support of divisions and were responsible for any immediate tasks which required urgent action. They were relieved as soon as possible by static detachments called forward by arrangement between Corps and Army. These static detachments remained indefinitely in the area to which they were allotted and they passed under command of the formations successively responsible for their areas - from Corps to Army to Lines of Communication. By this means a measure of continuity was achieved. Each division got to know and to depend upon its own particular "spearhead" detachment. The members of the detachment understood and were able to deal with the problems and the personalities in their respective areas or divisions.

32. Evacuation of Refugees.

During this period the refugee organization took its final shape. The transit chain consisted of one Civil Affairs Refugee Detachment with each Corps and one with Army and though these detachments were not always deployed they remained under command or at the call of their respective formations throughout the campaign. There was considerable difficulty in providing adequate administrative and medical personnel. In the initial stages a Prisoner of War Cage element and some General Hospital medical personnel had been attached to these detachments. When these reverted to their normal employment, they were replaced by Friends Ambulance units, French enlisted personnel and members of the Corps Feminin (Volontaires Francaises).

THE BREAK-OUT

33. By the time that First Cdn Army assumed an operational role on 23 Jul, the military situation was changing. The fall of Caen was a serious reverse to the enemy, the United States forces to the south were about to commence their thrust towards Paris and the general tempo of the fighting was increasing.

34. Harvesting had become a problem. To ease the food situation for the coming winter it was essential that the crops be brought in. But there were many difficulties. There were shortages of labour, of horses, of equipment, of transport. By pooling all these commodities, the French authorities managed to a great extent to solve the problem. However, the fear of mines was constantly recurring and though known minefields were reported to the French, it was not possible to provide military personnel to clear them and there was no means of telling with any certainty where the German minefields were. As a result of the accidents which occurred the farmers showed an understandable reluctance to get on with the job. In the Bridgehead area, it was estimated that 50 percent of the harvest in the depopulated areas would be saved. In the larger areas, not in the immediate vicinity of military operations, the percentage of crops harvested was considerably higher since most of the work had already been done before the German retreat commenced. In addition, once the break-out occurred, the speed of advance was such that the damage done to crops was negligible. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.)

35. Handover to H.Q., L.of C.

At 1200 hours on 31 Jul, 2 Cdn Corps was placed under command of First Cdn Army. At the same time, anticipating a break-out from the bridgehead and a rapid advance over a considerable distance, it was decided to hand over to H.Q. Lines of Communication all Civil Affairs responsibilities as far as possible. (Ibid.) By the third week in August, when the Falaise Gap had been closed and the Army was preparing to move eastward, it was realized that the greatest strain was likely to be placed upon the Civil Affairs Staff at Headquarters, Lines of Communication and discussion of an increase in the war establishment took place. Brigadier Wedd, while not advocating any change in the War Establishment of his own staff since "the staff providedwas deemed necessary in the early study for the implementing of complete government in case the civil administration broke down" and it might "be necessary when we undertake such full control on entering Germany", suggested that the unfilled vacancies on his own staff might be put at the disposal of Lines of Communication to assist them until arrival in Belgium. (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9). This offer was not acted upon and although as the advance gained impetus, the Civil Affairs staff at Headquarters, Lines of Communication was in certain cases not ready to take over responsibility for areas immediately on liberation (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 8, 20, 25 Sep 44), they seemed not to be embarrassed by the smallness of their staff. Towards the end of September arrangements were made by which all Civil Affairs responsibility in France passed to Lines of Communication (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5.) and at that time, the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer at Headquarters 21 Army Group wrote:

Satisfactory progress has been made under the Regional Administration towards more normal conditions of life. Co-operation with the military authorities leaves nothing to be desired and as a result it has been possible

to withdraw the majority of detachments in France for employment elsewhere. The policy is now being developed of leaving detachments at the regional level only.

(SHAFF Records, 21 Army Gp file, 21 A Gp
CA/MIL Gov/50865, Historical Survey,
D-day to fall of Caen.)

FALAISE

36. The first few days of August passed quietly and uneventfully but the advance to Falaise which commenced, after an unsuccessful attack launched on 25 Jul on the night of 7/8 August, was accompanied by much bitter fighting resulting in a great deal of damage to civilian property. The population had been largely evicted by the Germans and, as they were overtaken, they were made to stand still until the battle had moved on when their return to their homes would not interfere with military operations. In this as in other ways, the French Liaison officers proved of the greatest value. Between Caen and Falaise, many villages were razed to the ground and farm buildings - whose inhabitants had been driven out by the enemy - were in ruins. Livestock were left unattended and rounding them up placed an additional burden on the spearhead detachments who, in the depopulated areas, were sometimes forced to do this work themselves. Carcasses of horses and cattle littered the fields and the roadsides. They decomposed rapidly in the hot August weather and the buzzing of the flies provided a macabre undertone to the noise of battle.

37. Falaise fell on 17 Aug. It was a smoking shell of a town. St. Pierre-sur-Dives was already in our hands and Lisieux was to be liberated within the week. Static detachments to take over these towns had been called forward and were sent in at the earliest possible moment.

38. Meanwhile, communications suffered as a result of the rapidly changing situation and the distances that separated formations and detachments from each other. The only satisfactory method of passing orders or information was by means of staff officers on liaison duties. At first both Corps and eventually on 19 Aug, the Civil Affairs staff at Army as well inaugurated a "liaison run" by which an officer visited the lower levels "daily to pass and receive tactical and Civil Affairs picture, mail, etc." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, 19 Aug 44.)

39. The deterioration in communications and the increasing distance from front to rear placed detachments who wished to provide the civil authorities with emergency Civil Affairs supplies in an impossible position. The method by which such stocks were indented for, authorized and released was cumbersome at the best of times, and, since the "stay put" policy for refugees was being rigidly enforced, it was obviously necessary that some arrangement be made whereby those civilians who were stranded could be speedily provided with sufficient food on which to subsist until the ban on movement was lifted or distribution of civilian stocks could be organized. The first

measure adopted by 2 Cdn Corps was a "friendly arrangement with S & T, whereby the Senior Civil Affairs Officer received permission to draw limited quantities of supplies at all levels when required for an emergency" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army August 1944, Appx 6.) After the fall of Falaise, and following the example of 30 British Corps, spearhead detachments were provided with a small number of Civil Affairs rations for issue piecemeal in similar emergencies. This improvisation worked satisfactorily for the 1st of the campaign in France although, in the case of Rouen and the mass evacuations from the Channel ports, it became necessary to make special arrangements whereby captured enemy supplies were released and Civil Affairs supplies were brought forward in bulk. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, September 1944, Appx 6.)

THE PURSUIT THROUGH FRANCE

40. The 19th of August was a black day for the German Army. On that day the Trun-Chambois "Escape Gap" was closed. The battle of the Falaise Pocket, apart from mopping up, was over. Within a few days the liquidation of the pocket was complete; the chase was on and what remained of the enemy were being vigorously pursued across France. On the right flank Second British Army, having forced a crossing of the river Seine at Vernon during the night 25/26 Aug, was advancing towards Brussels. Beauvais was reached on 30 Aug, and Amiens the following day; on 1 Sep Arras was liberated followed by entry into Brussels two days later. Antwerp was reached on 4 Sep and the rout continued. Within six days a distance of some 200 miles had been covered and a wide expanse of French territory liberated. (SHAEP Records, Second Army CA Historical Report, Part I, File Ref 17.19).

CLEARING OF THE CHANNEL PORTS

41. Meanwhile, First Cdn Army was moving eastwards on the general axis Rouen-Abbeville-St Omer. The speed of their advance was not so great as that of Second Army due to the necessity for clearing the Channel ports, which were strongly garrisoned and in which many retreating Germans had sought refuge. The River Seine was crossed on 27-31 Aug and during the month of September Dieppe, Le Havre, Boulogne, Cape Gris Nez and Calais were in turn attacked and captured. (Sec Report No 146).

42. This was a period of "no outstanding Civil Affairs difficulties". The main concern was with refugee problems resulting from evacuation in the vicinity of the ports. These problems were "handled by the local administration, under guidance and with practical assistance of our staff and detachments." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.) Arrangements for Civil Affairs in Rouen were made by 21 Army Group and responsibility in the town did not directly concern First Cdn Army.

43. Spearhead Detachments.

At this time the Army was passing through "a section of the country where food and accommodation are plentiful" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.) The roads were good, there was no risk of starvation or of breakdown of essential services. The spearhead detachments were hard pressed to keep up with their respective divisions and, at the same time, to accomplish even the minimum of day-to-day Civil Affairs work. Arriving in a town or area from which the enemy had only recently departed, they were greeted as heroes and were expected to take part in the liberation celebrations of which they were the focal point. In this atmosphere of almost hysterical jubilation it was sometimes difficult for the detachment officers to carry out their essential tasks; to contact the Maire and give him the necessary instructions and proclamations to post; where the town was situated on a direct military route, to ensure that the streets were kept free from demonstrations and celebrations; to discover the information required for inclusion in the "First Report" such as details of those holding civic office, the situation as to water, health, food, law and order, the state of the Passive Air Defence services and of other essential services, the existence and location of abandoned enemy stores, of mines and explosives, the presence of German agents and collaborators, and so on. In addition to obtaining and reporting this information, the spearhead detachments had to be prepared to assist the civilian population wherever possible, by issuing petrol to maires and doctors, by organizing food distribution and supplying urgent requirements from the small stocks which they now carried with them and in innumerable other ways.

44. The activities of 225 Civil Affairs Detachment, in support of 3 Cdn Div, as reflected in the reports made to the Senior Civil Affairs Officers at 2 Cdn Corps during this period, give a good picture of the hectic life that spearhead detachments led. This detachment consisted of four officers and six other ranks with transport consisting of a three-ton lorry, a fifteen hundredweight truck and a motorcycle in addition to one civilian car requisitioned by the attached French liaison officer. During a twelve-day period from 24 Aug 44 to 6 Sep 44, this detachment, covering the 200 odd miles between Falaise and the area surrounding Boulogne in eight moves, submitted a total of ten reports giving detailed information on twenty-two communes. At the same time the detachment dealt with such varied problems as distribution of wheat by military transport, ensuring - by obtaining and supplying petrol - that flour mills were reopened, expediting arrangements for the disposal of the carcasses of dead animals, supervising the resistance groups in implementing "control of movement" orders, instituting a system whereby German military horses were registered and loaned to local farmers, arranging for the transportation to Rouen from Neufchatel of considerable quantities of dairy produce and undertaking the temporary custody of German prisoners of war. (Hist Sec file, AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/O/F.)

45. Static Detachments.

The deployment of static detachments to relieve the hard-pressed spearhead detachments was no easy task. The numbers available for the area to be covered were seldom adequate and the bad state of communications resulted in delays so that, in many cases, it was not possible for the spearhead detachment to remain behind to "hand over" the town or area to the incoming static detachment.

46 The primary tasks of the static detachments were to ensure at their respective levels of responsibility the resuscitation of an active French civil administration, the maintenance of an adequate distribution system, and the enforcement of the various restrictions which had been imposed on the civil population at the request of the spearhead detachments. Civil administration had been dislocated by the removal of collaborators. There was interference with the distribution due to the necessity of bypassing pockets of enemy which continued to resist. Partisans of the various resistance groups were over-enthusiastic and in certain areas their enthusiasm outran their discretion.

47. Dieppe.

230 Detachment, in support of 2 Cdn Div, entered Dieppe on the day of liberation (1 Sep 44) and was relieved two days later by the static detachment. Although the enemy had demolished certain port facilities and blown a number of bridges prior to surrender, there was no shortage of food, no refugee problem and the Civil Affairs detachment had "no serious questions to contend with". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 4 and 6 Sep 44.)

48. Le Havre.

At Le Havre, over 100,000 of the normal population had been evacuated for some weeks and were billeted in the arrondissement. There was no distress among these evacuees, who were well provided with essential food from the countryside. A number of reception centres for refugees had been set up by the French in nearby chateaux, barracks, etc., and, though overcrowded, were efficiently and hygienically run. 1 British Corps opened a refugee camp at Goderville but only 153 refugees passed through it. These were dispersed locally, leaving the detachment personnel free to undertake "rescue work in devastated villages as soon as the troops moved forward into Le Havre". When on 12 Sep the Germans in Le Havre capitulated there were approximately 50,000 civilians in the town. Public services, food and accommodation were available for that number of people only and strenuous precautions were taken to prevent the evacuees from flooding back into the town. Police points were established on the main entrances to the town. Large numbers of "Stay Put" notices were distributed throughout the arrondissement, posted at all entrances to the town itself and published in the local press. In addition, the Amplifier Unit was used constantly for this purpose. As a result of this action, civilian movement was very limited and neither interfered with operational traffic before the town fell nor embarrassed the Civil Affairs personnel or the local authorities after liberation. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

49. Boulogne.

Boulogne was attacked on 17 Sep and was completely in our hands five days later. Some ten days previously 3 Cdn Div had ordered the evacuation of the area immediately surrounding the town. About 2,000 inhabitants and evacuees from Boulogne were evacuated and found refuge in a dispersal area which had been selected by the Civil Affairs staff of 2 Cdn Corps and where they were handed over to the civil authorities, who were "most helpful in finding accommodation, providing communal feeding, and arranging for medical care." The "spear-head" detachment in support of 3 Cdn Div, assisted by the detachment designated for Boulogne, "arranged all transport and co-ordinated civilian and military aspects of the problem. Control points were established, and refugees collected by divisional transport after security checking". Some rations, from Civil Affairs sources and from captured German stocks had to be provided. On 12 Sep, the Germans started to evacuate the remaining population of Boulogne and, in accordance with a plan which had been made to take care of such an eventuality, 7,000 people were handled from this source. (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8 and W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, September 1944, Appx 4, 5 and 6.).

50. When 219 Civil Affairs Detachment entered Boulogne in the wake of the forward troops, they found that "only 200-300 civilians remained, and most of these wisely stayed in their cellars, because of the continual shelling. No uproarious welcome awaited them...instead they were confronted by a grim scene of desolation and destruction...Progress into the town was slow because all the roads and even the farm tracks leading in had been heavily mined and booby trapped". (The Times, 21 Sep 44) In order to prevent civilians from returning to the town, some 200 members of the French Resistance were co-opted to assist military police and the Gendarmerie in enforcing the restrictions on movement which had been notified in much the same way as at Le Havre. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44.)

51. Resistance Groups.

This was the first time that Civil Affairs had utilized the services of members of a resistance group for such a purpose and the experiment was not entirely successful. About the same time a plan by which members of the same organization planned to "put in a night attack on a German strong point holding a canal bridge in front of Calais" was disclosed and squashed by the French Liaison officer attached to 2 Cdn Corps.

* Commandant Mengin, French Liaison officer, reported that "1200 inhabitants remained in Boulogne" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44.) It is suggested that both these figures can be considered merely as rough estimates and apply only to a limited area of the town since final German resistance did not end until 22 Sep 44 when the last of the forts in the dock area surrendered. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 22 Sep 44.)

(W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 4 Sep 44.) These incidents and other "over-zealous activities of the resistance groups" caused a certain amount of transitory embarrassment to Civil Affairs staffs and detachments and, no doubt, resulted in the recommendation that the "central authorities take action to regulate matters". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army #, September 1944, Appx. 8.) However, generally speaking and in retrospect, the resistance groups at this stage of the campaign rendered useful assistance both to the Army as a whole and to Civil Affairs. Not only did they undertake mopping up operations against small pockets of the enemy who had been by-passed by the forward troops but they were ready to assume auxiliary police duties, to act as guides, to guard German prisoners and in many cases they were responsible for the liberation of whole towns and villages. It is scarcely surprising that, in the ebullience of liberation after four years of enemy domination, their highly demonstrative behaviour caused misgivings in the minds of Civil Affairs officers whose sense of fair play was sometimes outraged by the shaving of the heads of those wantons who had "collaborated" with the enemy. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 26 Aug 44.)

52. Calais.

While the battle for Boulogne was being waged, plans were made for the capture of Calais where, though a certain amount of local dispersal had taken place, there was still a population of some 20,000. The static detachment destined for Calais was moved forward on 13 Sep and another detachment to assist in any large scale evacuation that the enemy might order joined it a week later. Plans for the reception and dispersal of refugees, based on the experience of Boulogne, were prepared. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 13, 17, 19, 20 Sep 44.) On 28 Sep a report was received by the Civil Affairs staff, 2 Cdn Corps, that the "German Commander was about ready to consider surrendering". Colonel Hurley passed this information to the G.O.C. 3 Cdn Div and, at his request, arranged a meeting with the German Commander for the following day. At this meeting although the German Commander expressed his intention to "resist until all hope was gone", a 24-hour truce was arranged "to enable total evacuation of civilians from Calais to be made" (*Ibid*; 28, 29 Sep 44.) During this period, approximately 12,000 refugees were received in First Canadian Army area and dispersed by local and sous-prefectural authorities in accordance with the pre-arranged plans. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5.)

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- * In his fortnightly report of the 26th September, which may be read as a final report on France since within a week all Civil Affairs responsibility had passed to Lines of Communication, Brigadier Wedd wrote:-

There is discipline and control of FFI (Force Francaise de l'Interieur) though isolated cases of improper arrest and hooliganism continue to be reported. Early incorporation of these forces in the French Army and the disbanding of those not required for military service, will correct these evils." (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

53. Dunkirk.

Meanwhile similar plans had been made in the event of the evacuation of civilians from Dunkirk. (W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44, et seq.) This plan was put into effect on 3 Oct when a 60-hour truce began at 1800 hours to allow 20,000 civilians to leave the town. This mass evacuation was "carried out according to plan, and the civilian authorities were able to care for the dispersal of the 17,500 people evacuated, as well as the 5,000 estimated to have come out, prior to the operation of the scheme, under their own excellent arrangements". (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 9.)

54. While 3 Cdn Div was mounting the attacks on Boulogne and Calais the other formations of 2 Cdn Corps had advanced into Belgium and 1 British Corps had crossed over to the right flank to assume responsibilities in the north-eastern sections of Belgium and thereby to relieve Second British Army for their advance into the Netherlands. During the latter part of September, a shifting of responsibility took place and, by 2 Oct 44, First Cdn Army had handed over to Lines of Communication all responsibility for Civil Affairs in France. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5 and 9.)

54. This report was prepared by Major A. K. Reid, General List, Historical Officer (Civil Affairs), Canadian Military Headquarters.

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R E P O R T N O. 149

HISTORICAL SECTION

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

JAN 18 1946

Canadian Participation in Civil Affairs/Military Government

Part III: France, General Historical Survey, July-October 1944.

INTRODUCTION

1. Previous reports on Canadian participation in Civil Affairs/Military Government have been:-

- (a) Report No. 140: Part I : Background and Beginnings
- (b) Report No. 148: Part II : Planning and Training

The present report gives a general survey of the activities of Civil Affairs under First Cdn Army in France during the period 23 Jul 44 to 2 Oct 44 and it is planned that subsequent reports will be:-

Part IV: Belgium and The Netherlands, General Historical Survey

Part V : Germany, General Historical Survey.

2. Once these reports have been completed, it is proposed to prepare a further series of reports which will deal with each of the several Civil Affairs "functions" (e.g. Refugees, Supplies, Legal, Public Safety, etc.) for the entire campaign.

3. In the preparation of these reports, the narrator has had, and will continue to have, access to the SHAEF G-5 Historical Records (which will eventually be held at the Offices of the Historical Section of the Cabinet Secretariat, 8 Barton Street, London, S.W.1) in addition to C.M.H.Q. files, War Diaries of the Staffs concerned and miscellaneous documents on file at Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.

4. The Civil Affairs staff at Headquarters First Cdn Army "commenced functioning at 1200 hours 23 Jul 44 when 1 British Corps came under command" (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3). At this time, 1 British Corps occupied a cramped position in the eastern end of the bridgehead in which four Civil Affairs detachments were deployed; military operations were static; Caen and its suburbs had been liberated by formations of Second British Army and the break out from the bridgehead was about to take place. Civil Affairs problems were few and of routine quality. As a result, the members of the staff, who arrived in Normandy in two shifts on 24 and 27 July, had an opportunity to consult their opposite numbers at Second British Army and to learn from them the extent to which the plans and policies which had been laid down for Civil

Affairs had been modified or extended to meet actual circumstances and conditions. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, 24 Jul 44 et seq.). *

RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH

5. The planning which had preceded the invasion had been complicated by the fact that there had been no agreement in existence between the Allies and General de Gaulle's French National Committee of Liberation such as had already been drawn up by the London Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands. It had therefore been necessary to prepare and plan for a complete breakdown in local administration and even for a refusal by the local authorities to co-operate with the Allied Military Commanders. Such drastic action was never necessary.

6. From D-day onwards it became increasingly clear that the French local administration was able and willing to carry out its normal functions with the minimum assistance from the Civil Affairs organisation. The absence of any formal agreement between the Allied Governments and the French National Committee of Liberation was remedied by the action of the Senior Civil Affairs Officer of Second British Army in treating General de Gaulle's representatives as the de facto civil authority for the Region of Rouen following his "coup d'etat" of 14 Jun 44. On that day, General de Gaulle landed in France, addressed a meeting in the market square at Bayeux, and left behind him for the Region of Rouen a Civil Commissioner, Monsieur Francois Coulet, ** and a Military Commander, Colonel P. de Chevigne.

7. Although "full and unreserved recognition of General de Gaulle's administration as the Provisional Government of the Republic of France" was not to be given by the Allied Governments for a further four months (The Times, 24 Oct 44), this limited and local recognition of it was fully justified by the events and the results which followed. Within a month of D-day the task of enforcing restrictions and controls on the civilian population had been made considerably lighter as a result of an instruction which Monsieur Coulet issued to the Maires of liberated communes and following his agreement to issue "Arretes" in

* 1 British Corps and 2 Cdn Corps, the two formations which were to come under command of First Cdn Army, had assumed operational roles on 6 Jun 44 and 11 Jul 44 respectively and were engaged in active Civil Affairs Operations from these dates (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 6 Jul 44 et seq.).

** M. Coulet had been a diplomat before the war and became a close collaborator with General de Gaulle in 1940. After the liberation of Corsica, he was appointed Secretary General of Police and later he became head of the organisation of the Provisional Government to take over administration in France.

accordance with the French law of "Etat de Siège". This instruction, issued on 6 Jul 44, laid down the general principles to be followed in the reception to be given by all local officials to Allied demands "It is the duty of the French to give the maximum assistance to the Allied Armies in their struggle against the common enemy and for the liberation of France. Therefore, without hesitation, you must submit to the demands made upon you by the commander...." (SHAEP Records, 21 Army Group file 21 Army Group CA/Mil Gov/50865, "Historical Survey, D-day to fall of Caen"). The "Arrêtés" issued in accordance with the French law of "Etat de Siège" were published in the "Bulletin Officiel" and repeated in notices over Monsieur Coulet's signature. Copies of both were issued to Civil Affairs detachments for distribution to Maires by whom the notices were posted throughout the communes. In this way the restrictions became effective French law and any infringement became actionable in the appropriate French courts. (SHAEP Records, Second Brit Army file. Hist Sec 17.19. "Report on Relations with the French" June 1944.)

8. Liaison officers.

Following the visit of General de Gaulle to Bayeux a total of 268 French liaison personnel comprising "members of the Mission Militaire de Liaison Administratif, legal officers, surgeons and nursing staffs" were attached to formations of the Allied Expeditionary Force. The liaison officers were of two classes:-

(a) those attached to the military forces under orders of the formation commanders, whose duties were to "assist the commander in his relations and problems with the civilian population". They were also available to give information and advice based on their knowledge of local topography and they could be used as tactical liaison officers but their principal duties were in connection with the civil population.

(b) those attached to the French civil authorities whose chief function was to assist the civil administration in its relations with the military. These were under control of the senior French officer with the head civil official in the liberated territory.

(SHAEP Records, 21 Army Gp file, 21 A Gp. CA/Mil Gov/50865, "Historical Survey, D-day to fall of Caen".)

Lt.Col. P. H. Pierrené, who reported for duty on 31 Jul 44, was the senior of those attached to First CA Army and, in addition, one officer was attached to each corps headquarters and one to each of the "spearhead" detachments. From the start the services of these officers were of inestimable assistance to Civil Affairs. The fact that they were French officers and wore French uniform ensured that they were received with enthusiasm by the civil population of the newly liberated areas and, since they spoke "with the voice of France" and possessed undisputed powers to replace "undesirable" fonctionnaires by more reputable characters, they were able to relay the instructions and orders of the military commanders to local authorities and to relieve the Civil Affairs officers of the necessity of meddling in French politics.

GENERAL SITUATION

9. This reduced scope of Civil Affairs, which had prompted Brigadier Wedd as early as 20 Jun 44 to decrease his staff (C.M.H.Q. file 9/Civ Affairs/5: Letter, S.C.A.O., First Cdn Army, to D.A. & Q.M.G., First Cdn Army, 20 Jun 44) was summarized by Colonel A. E. Hodgkin, M.C., Colonel Executive of the Civil Affairs Staff at Headquarters 21 Army Group, who wrote on 12 Jul 44:-

We have really reached the state of affairs envisaged in our original Civil Affairs Plan as Stage 2, in which the Civil Affairs organisation 'liaises' with a flourishing French Civil administration.

(SHAEF Records, 21 Army Group file 21 A Gp/15902/CA: D.O. from Col. A.E. Hodgkin, M.C., to Brig R.M.H. Lewis, M.C., Second Army (C.A.) 12 Jul 44).

10. The fortnightly reports prepared by the Civil Affairs staffs at both First Canadian Army and Second British Army and included as appendices in their respective War Diaries give a detailed review of the Civil Affairs activities during the various stages of the campaign. It is apparent in retrospect that few problems of major importance were encountered in France.

11. Refugees.

Refugees provided the main problem. In the early days they came in a steady trickle and not in the flood which had been anticipated in the pre D-day planning. With the liberation of Caen, there was some difficulty in finding suitable shelter for the evacuated civilians due to the destruction of many buildings by shelling and bombing and the restricted size of the bridgehead. But this problem at Caen was dealt with by Second British Army before First Cdn Army had assumed an operational role and thereafter - although the freeing of the Channel ports necessitated the movement and resettlement of large numbers of refugees - the problem never again became so acute or interfered with the military effort.

12. Supplies.

Although certain non-essential commodities were in short supply and there were occasions when lack of transport or the military situation made distribution difficult, food was on the whole plentiful. This was as well since the Supply and Resources Section of the Civil Affairs Staff at First Cdn Army was beset with difficulties throughout the campaign in France. The main trouble was that, for the first month, all supplies had to be drawn from 3 Civil Affairs Inland Depot which was under command of Second British Army. It was therefore necessary to ascertain from Second British Army the availability of any item demanded by Corps. This necessity complicated an already elaborate system and caused added delays and embarrassment. (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3 and 9.)

When 4 Civil Affairs Inland Depot was placed under command, the time lag between the demand for and the issue of Civil Affairs supplies was, if anything, greater than before due to shortage of transport and the great distances over which such supplies had to be hauled. After 12 Sep 44, when the depot went into "a state of suspended animation", hard rations drawn from Second British Army Inland Depot at Amiens were supplemented by "condensed milk, preserved meat, etc., allocated to Civil Affairs from captured enemy stocks... to relieve communes near the battle area, which accommodated evacuees and refugees who were cut off from normal sources of supply" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

13. Law and Order.

In France the state of law and order was generally satisfactory. The civil population was law-abiding and conformed readily with what must have been considered irksome military restrictions on their freedom. The police services "functioned normally", were "adequate and efficient" and "most willing to co-operate on any matter on which their assistance was asked". (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3 & 9). The most tedious restriction imposed upon the civilian population, and that most difficult to enforce without an absurdly large military and police control and in the absence of some natural barrier such as a river or canal, was against movement without a permit for a distance greater than six kilometres from the civilian's native commune. Infringements occurred throughout France, Belgium and Holland and subsequently in Germany. Inevitably thefts of military stores occurred and petrol was pilfered and put to uses other than had been intended. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.) These crimes were, however, minor and in no way impaired the efficiency of the Army.

14. Fire & Civil Defence.

The German rate of withdrawal prevented their taking fire-fighting equipment with them and as a result "the fire and Civil Defence arrangements in all liberated areas were sufficient to deal with normal risks". (*ibid.*)

15. Legal

There were no legal problems encountered by First Cdn Army in France and the Staff Officer (Legal) on the Civil Affairs staff divided his time between "advising within the headquarters on the legal aspect of routine Civil Affairs matters arising from day to day" and "maintaining liaison with higher and flanking formations and with corps under command to ensure uniformity of legal policy in these routine matters". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9.)

16. Financial.

The vacancies on the Civil Affairs staff at First Cdn Army for Staff Officers (Finance) were not filled during the campaign in France. Civil Affairs detachments who landed in the early days of the invasion had been provided with "Civil Affairs funds" which were to be issued to responsible authorities against signature or used by the detachment commanders themselves if the economic situation warranted. It had become

apparent by the time that First Cdn Army assumed an operational role that these funds would not be required and they were withdrawn from the detachments to which they had been issued. As there were no sub-accountants operating with detachments of First Cdn Army, all Civil Affairs accounting was done by the two financial officers at Corps Headquarters, who, after consulting Army Headquarters, reported direct to the Director of Finance at Headquarters 21 Army Group. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9.) As no pressing financial problems arose, these reports were routine by nature and innocuous in content since most bank officials were wary of the questions asked by these financial experts. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 24 Aug 44).

17. In order to ensure that the Armies and, if necessary, civilian authorities should be supplied with funds, a form of supplementary French currency had been printed prior to the invasion to be issued in France ("Emis en France"). This currency for France, unlike similar supplies for Belgium and the Netherlands, which had been prepared with the approval and co-operation of the London Governments, had not been sanctioned by the French National Committee of Liberation prior to D-day. Following the coup d'etat of General de Gaulle, this supplementary franc currency became the cause of a dispute between the Senior Civil Affairs Officer, Second British Army and the Regional Commissioner for the District of Rouen when the latter instructed tax collectors that it would not be accepted in payment of taxes. The Regional Commissioner was persuaded to suspend this instruction pending the decision of higher authority which had the effect of abrogating the instruction in its entirety. (S.H.A.E.F. Records, Second British Army file 17.19 "Report on Relations with the French", June 1944). Thereafter, since it was realised that this "Emis en France" currency was the only money that the troops had, it was accepted without question by the civilian population who, in certain areas, were "anxious to exchange money currently held" for it. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 24 Aug 44.)

18. It had been feared that the advent of the troops might have the effect of inflating the currency. This was not the case partly because a considerable inflation already existed and the rate of exchange made all prices seem exorbitant, and also because most of the purchases made by troops were by barter of cigarettes, chocolate and even Army equipment (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.)

19. Medical.

The medical situation was never good. There existed throughout the campaign a shortage of drugs and medical supplies. In the most severe and urgent cases this shortage was at least partially remedied from Civil Affairs and Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps stocks and, as they were uncovered, enemy supplies were frequently handed over to the civilian authorities. Lt.Col. H.A. Ansley, R.C.A.M.C., who was in charge of the Public Health Section of the Civil Affairs Staff, maintained liaison throughout the campaign with the French Public Health and Welfare authorities and was able from time to time to assist them with provision of medical supplies and drugs. The general health of the people was good throughout and few cases of infectious diseases were encountered.

20. Medical and surgical personnel were on the whole adequate and great assistance was given in handling and treating civilian casualties by members of the Volontaires Francaises of the Corps Feminin who had been trained in England and who, from the time that they landed in Normandy, worked tirelessly and unsparingly to improve the condition of their fellow countrymen. They worked either alone, assisted by Civil Affairs resources (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Aug 44), or they were attached to the Refugee Detachments. At Caen and elsewhere they were to be found working close to the front line and under constant shell and mortar fire.

21. Technical.

The Technical Section of the Civil Affairs staff, under the extremely mobile conditions which obtained in France, were only lightly burdened with problems since there was no opportunity to initiate any scheme of long-term rehabilitation and little chance to do anything but make reconnaissances with a view to first aid repairs. On two occasions, at the request of the Deputy Director of Supply and Transport, figures as to the availability of civilian transport were obtained but in neither case was any attempt made to obtain such transport for military purposes because of the "general bad state of road worthiness of the vehicles". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9 and September 1944, Appx 3.) Detachments in the larger centres were given "valuable assistance in restoring Public Utilities" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5) and, at the request of the Chief Engineer, a policy for division of responsibility for maintenance of roads as between the local engineer authorities and the R.C.E. units was put into effect. This policy provided that the "surfacing of all military routes would be a responsibility of the Army and drainage of these roads and complete maintenance of all other roads would be the responsibility of the Ponts et Chausees." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

CAEN

22. No account of Civil Affairs in France would be complete without some reference to Caen which, being the first town to present any serious problems, tested many theories and taught many lessons which were to influence and guide the conduct of Civil Affairs throughout the entire campaign.

23. It had been realized by the General Staff in the planning of the invasion that failure to capture Caen in the initial stages would necessitate a major effort later on. Caen was therefore one of the original objectives for D-day. It was not taken and the enemy, realizing its importance as the hinge on which his line was hung, concentrated a large number of his best divisions (a high proportion being either S.S. or Panzer or both) in the Eastern portion of the Normandy front. Towards the end of June a series of operations with limited objectives were carried out with the purpose of improving the tactical situation from which the assault on Caen on 9 Jul was one of general consolidation (See Hist Sec Report No 131, para 79 et seq). During this period the attention of the Civil Affairs staffs was focussed on Caen and on the problems likely to result from its liberation. Because of the frequent and heavy bombardments to

which the town had been subjected a refugee problem was inevitable and of paramount importance. It was essential that the civilian population should not be allowed to panic, to break out of the town and to scatter in all directions. Other problems which would have to be solved included the provision of food, of medical and hygiene supplies; the evacuation of civilian casualties; the restoration of water supply, of sanitation and other essential services; the removal of minefields and booby traps; the burial of civilian dead. These and other matters were the subject of discussion between the Civil Affairs Staff of Second British Army and the Regional authorities. Tentative arrangements and plans were made to deal with any emergency which was thought likely to arise.

24. British and Canadian troops entered Caen on the morning of 9 Jul 44. Shortly after 1400 hours of the same day a British major, commanding 201 Civil Affairs Detachment designated as the municipal detachment for Caen, entered the town. During his preliminary reconnaissance he ascertained that about 80 percent of the buildings were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that they were uninhabitable; that most of the streets were so badly cratered or blocked with debris that they were impassable; that shortage of water was acute and that it was suspected that available supplies were contaminated; that the sewage disposal system had failed; that there was neither electricity nor gas; that of a normal population of 65,000 the estimated number remaining was between 20,000 and 25,000, of whom 13,000 homeless were concentrated in three public buildings, the Lycée Malherbe, the Eglise St Etienne and the Hospice du Bon Sauveur. There were reports that further concentrations of refugees were located in caves in the western outskirts of the town, in shelters at Ste Therese, and yet another, which included a high proportion of sick, aged and infirm, in caves and quarries at Fleury-sur-Orne. There was still sniping in the town, which was to remain subject to intermittent shelling and mortaring for the next ten days. Estimates of civilian casualties were that 2,500 to 3,000 had been killed and 1,350 wounded. Some 600 corpses lay under the ruined buildings and, in those parts of the town which had been most severely hit, the stench was nauseating and demoralizing. One prison was destroyed and the prison staff had disappeared; the other prison was badly damaged; the courts were partially destroyed; the fire and civil defence services were without water and lacked fire-fighting equipment. (SHAEP Records, Civil Affairs Fortnightly Report No. 3, Second Army, 23 Jul 44 and W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.)

25. Words fail to describe the anguish of Caen. It had indeed paid a fearful price for its liberation. However, the civilian morale was high even though most inhabitants could not understand the reason for the severe Allied bombardment of the city. A skeleton civilian administration was available. The refugees were well organized and well cared for. Arrangements for the care of civilian casualties were good despite the customary shortage of medical supplies. Health was extremely good; 20 cases of typhoid and four cases of diphtheria were the only known cases of epidemic disease. Although bread was in short

supply and there were certain other deficiencies, food was adequate. (Ibid.)

26. By the evening of the 10th, Civil Affairs rations for 20,000 persons, supplies of soap, anti-louse powder, creosote and chloride of lime had reached the town. Water points had been provided for both military and civilian use. Civil labour had been directed to assist the bulldozers in clearing the principal streets so as to permit military traffic. It had been ascertained that damage to water mains was not severe and that if enough pumps were obtained from military sources the water supply could be restored. Arrangements were made to supply these pumps.

27. At 1200 hours on the 11th, 2 Cdn Corps, coming under command of Second British Army, assumed responsibility for Civil Affairs in the town. On the same day, two Pioneer companies arrived to help in clearing the streets, burying the dead and to demolish those buildings which were dangerous. Arrangements were made by which unauthorized movement of civilians was checked by the Provost who were reinforced with members of resistance groups and civil police. For the next five days, despite the fact that "the front line ran through the centre of the town" resulting in "very trying conditions for the men on the spot" (SHAEP Records, Second Army, C.A., Fortnightly Report No. 3, 23 Jul 44.), the restoration of comparatively normal conditions progressed.

28. On 12 Jul, in order to relieve the overcrowding of the three main refugee shelters which constituted a menace to health and to prepare for the reception of those refugees who were to be uncovered in the course of future operations, evacuation of refugees commenced. Within a week over 9,700 refugees had been evacuated including 800 wounded and many hundreds sick and infirm people. In addition many civilians had left the town under their own arrangements.

29. On 18 Jul, 2 Cdn Corps, consisting of 2 and 3 Canadian Infantry Divisions and 2 Canadian Armoured Brigade, cleared the East bank of the River Orne. (See Hist Sec Report No 131, para 97, et seq.) In the faubourg of Vaucelles there were about 1,000 persons with a well organized community of some 500 refugees living in shelters. When Fleury-sur-Orne was reached there were some 2,000 persons living in the caves and quarries. They included 400 bedridden old people and 100 orphaned children. At first a "Stay-put" policy was enforced but when, on 30 Jul, the 2 Cdn Corps General Staff ordered their evacuation, the total of refugees had shrunk to 822 who were evacuated by way of Caen to the area of Bayeux. (W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, July 1944, Appx 10. "Report on Evacuation of Refugees" 30 Jul 44.) Throughout this period invaluable experience in handling and controlling refugees was gained and as a result, Brigadier Wedd set up within his staff organization "a separate Refugee Section.... to co-ordinate the whole concentration and evacuation of civilians back through Army areas, including questions of supply, transport, accommodation, etc." (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.) This Refugee Section was to deal with all refugee problems throughout the campaign and eventually it was to be expanded to supervise and control Displaced Persons as well.

30. Policy.

From every point of view Caen was a definite landmark in the history of Civil Affairs. The planning for it had been based on practical experience gained in the bridgehead and not on pre-D-day hypotheses, and had been co-ordinated with French Regional authorities. That this planning was sound is borne out by the fact that the relief measures were quickly carried into effect. A number of errors were inevitable and some misfits among the personnel of detachments had to be weeded out. However, the experience gained by the detachments who had been deployed between D-day and the end of July had been sufficient to mould the heterogeneous collection of individuals forming them into a group of trained teams. From the first eight weeks of Civil Affairs in Europe two important decisions as to policy emerged. These concerned the deployment of detachments and the evacuation of refugees.

31. Deployment of Detachments.

After various alternatives had been tried out, it was decided to allot Civil Affairs detachments to Corps on the basis of one for each division under command. These "spearhead" detachments were moved forward in support of divisions and were responsible for any immediate tasks which required urgent action. They were relieved as soon as possible by static detachments called forward by arrangement between Corps and Army. These static detachments remained indefinitely in the area to which they were allotted and they passed under command of the formations successively responsible for their areas - from Corps to Army to Lines of Communication. By this means a measure of continuity was achieved. Each division got to know and to depend upon its own particular "spearhead" detachment. The members of the detachment understood and were able to deal with the problems and the personalities in their respective areas or divisions.

32. Evacuation of Refugees.

During this period the refugee organization took its final shape. The transit chain consisted of one Civil Affairs Refugee Detachment with each Corps and one with Army and though these detachments were not always deployed they remained under command or at the call of their respective formations throughout the campaign. There was considerable difficulty in providing adequate administrative and medical personnel. In the initial stages a Prisoner of War Cage element and some General Hospital medical personnel had been attached to these detachments. When these reverted to their normal employment, they were replaced by Friends Ambulance units, French enlisted personnel and members of the Corps Feminin (Volontaires Francaises).

THE BREAK-OUT

33. By the time that First Cdn Army assumed an operational role on 23 Jul, the military situation was changing. The fall of Caen was a serious reverse to the enemy, the United States forces to the south were about to commence their thrust towards Paris and the general tempo of the fighting was increasing.

34. Harvesting had become a problem. To ease the food situation for the coming winter it was essential that the crops be brought in. But there were many difficulties. There were shortages of labour, of horses, of equipment, of transport. By pooling all these commodities, the French authorities managed to a great extent to solve the problem. However, the fear of mines was constantly recurring and though known minefields were reported to the French, it was not possible to provide military personnel to clear them and there was no means of telling with any certainty where the German minefields were. As a result of the accidents which occurred the farmers showed an understandable reluctance to get on with the job. In the Bridgehead area, it was estimated that 50 percent of the harvest in the depopulated areas would be saved. In the larger areas, not in the immediate vicinity of military operations, the percentage of crops harvested was considerably higher since most of the work had already been done before the German retreat commenced. In addition, once the break-out occurred, the speed of advance was such that the damage done to crops was negligible. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 3.)

35. Handover to H.Q., L.of C.

At 1200 hours on 31 Jul, 2 Cdn Corps was placed under command of First Cdn Army. At the same time, anticipating a break-out from the bridgehead and a rapid advance over a considerable distance, it was decided to hand over to H.Q. Lines of Communication all Civil Affairs responsibilities as far as possible. (Ibid.) By the third week in August, when the Falaise Gap had been closed and the Army was preparing to move eastward, it was realized that the greatest strain was likely to be placed upon the Civil Affairs Staff at Headquarters, Lines of Communication and discussion of an increase in the war establishment took place. Brigadier Wedd, while not advocating any change in the War Establishment of his own staff since "the staff providedwas deemed necessary in the early study for the implementing of complete government in case the civil administration broke down" and it might "be necessary when we undertake such full control on entering Germany", suggested that the unfilled vacancies on his own staff might be put at the disposal of Lines of Communication to assist them until arrival in Belgium. (W.D., C.A., H.Q., First Cdn Army, August 1944, Appx 9). This offer was not acted upon and although as the advance gained impetus, the Civil Affairs staff at Headquarters, Lines of Communication was in certain cases not ready to take over responsibility for areas immediately on liberation (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 8, 20, 25 Sep 44), they seemed not to be embarrassed by the smallness of their staff. Towards the end of September arrangements were made by which all Civil Affairs responsibility in France passed to Lines of Communication (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5.) and at that time, the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer at Headquarters 21 Army Group wrote:

Satisfactory progress has been made under the Regional Administration towards more normal conditions of life. Co-operation with the military authorities leaves nothing to be desired and as a result it has been possible

to withdraw the majority of detachments in France for employment elsewhere. The policy is now being developed of leaving detachments at the regional level only.

(SHAEP Records, 21 Army Gp file, 21 A Gp
CA/Mil Gov/50865, Historical Survey,
D-day to fall of Caen.)

FALAISE

36. The first few days of August passed quietly and uneventfully but the advance to Falaise which commenced, after an unsuccessful attack launched on 25 Jul on the night of 7/8 August, was accompanied by much bitter fighting resulting in a great deal of damage to civilian property. The population had been largely evicted by the Germans and, as they were overtaken, they were made to stand still until the battle had moved on when their return to their homes would not interfere with military operations. In this as in other ways, the French Liaison officers proved of the greatest value. Between Caen and Falaise, many villages were razed to the ground and farm buildings - whose inhabitants had been driven out by the enemy - were in ruins. Livestock were left unattended and rounding them up placed an additional burden on the spearhead detachments who, in the depopulated areas, were sometimes forced to do this work themselves. Carcasses of horses and cattle littered the fields and the roadsides. They decomposed rapidly in the hot August weather and the buzzing of the flies provided a macabre undertone to the noise of battle.

37. Falaise fell on 17 Aug. It was a smoking shell of a town. St. Pierre-sur-Dives was already in our hands and Lisieux was to be liberated within the week. Static detachments to take over these towns had been called forward and were sent in at the earliest possible moment.

38. Meanwhile, communications suffered as a result of the rapidly changing situation and the distances that separated formations and detachments from each other. The only satisfactory method of passing orders or information was by means of staff officers on liaison duties. At first both Corps and eventually on 19 Aug, the Civil Affairs staff at Army as well inaugurated a "liaison run" by which an officer visited the lower levels "daily to pass and receive tactical and Civil Affairs picture, mail, etc." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army; 19 Aug 44.)

39. The deterioration in communications and the increasing distance from front to rear placed detachments who wished to provide the civil authorities with emergency Civil Affairs supplies in an impossible position. The method by which such stocks were indented for, authorized and released was cumbersome at the best of times, and, since the "stay put" policy for refugees was being rigidly enforced, it was obviously necessary that some arrangement be made whereby those civilians who were stranded could be speedily provided with sufficient food on which to subsist until the ban on movement was lifted or distribution of civilian stocks could be organized. The first

measure adopted by 2 Cdn Corps was a "friendly arrangement with S & T, whereby the Senior Civil Affairs Officer received permission to draw limited quantities of supplies at all levels when required for an emergency" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army August 1944, Appx 6.) After the fall of Falaise, and following the example of 30 British Corps, spearhead detachments were provided with a small number of Civil Affairs rations for issue piecemeal in similar emergencies. This improvisation worked satisfactorily for the rest of the campaign in France although, in the case of Rouen and the mass evacuations from the Channel ports, it became necessary to make special arrangements whereby captured enemy supplies were released and Civil Affairs supplies were brought forward in bulk. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, September 1944, Appx 6.)

THE PURSUIT THROUGH FRANCE

40. The 19th of August was a black day for the German Army. On that day the Trun-Chambois "Escape Gap" was closed. The battle of the Falaise Pocket, apart from mopping up, was over. Within a few days the liquidation of the pocket was complete; the chase was on and what remained of the enemy were being vigorously pursued across France. On the right flank Second British Army, having forced a crossing of the river Seine at Vernon during the night 25/26 Aug, was advancing towards Brussels. Beauvais was reached on 30 Aug, and Amiens the following day; on 1 Sep Arras was liberated followed by entry into Brussels two days later. Antwerp was reached on 4 Sep and the rout continued. Within six days a distance of some 200 miles had been covered and a wide expanse of French territory liberated. (SHAEP Records, Second Army CA Historical Report, Part I, File Ref 17.19).

CLEARING OF THE CHANNEL PORTS

41. Meanwhile, First Cdn Army was moving eastwards on the general axis Rouen-Abbeville-St Omer. The speed of their advance was not so great as that of Second Army due to the necessity for clearing the Channel ports, which were strongly garrisoned and in which many retreating Germans had sought refuge. The River Seine was crossed on 27-31 Aug and during the month of September Dieppe, Le Havre, Boulogne, Cape Gris Nez and Calais were in turn attacked and captured. (Sec 11. Sec Report No 146).

42. This was a period of "no outstanding Civil Affairs difficulties". The main concern was with refugee problems resulting from evacuation in the vicinity of the ports. These problems were "handled by the local administration, under guidance and with practical assistance of our staff and detachments." (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.) Arrangements for Civil Affairs in Rouen were made by 21 Army Group and responsibility in the town did not directly concern First Cdn Army.

43. Spearhead Detachments.

At this time the Army was passing through "a section of the country where food and accommodation are plentiful" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 3.) The roads were good, there was no risk of starvation or of breakdown of essential services. The spearhead detachments were hard pressed to keep up with their respective divisions and, at the same time, to accomplish even the minimum of day-to-day Civil Affairs work. Arriving in a town or area from which the enemy had only recently departed, they were greeted as heroes and were expected to take part in the liberation celebrations of which they were the focal point. In this atmosphere of almost hysterical jubilation it was sometimes difficult for the detachment officers to carry out their essential tasks; to contact the Maire and give him the necessary instructions and proclamations to post; where the town was situated on a direct military route, to ensure that the streets were kept free from demonstrations and celebrations; to discover the information required for inclusion in the "First Report" such as details of those holding civic office, the situation as to water, health, food, law and order, the state of the Passive Air Defence services and of other essential services, the existence and location of abandoned enemy stores, of mines and explosives, the presence of German agents and collaborators, and so on. In addition to obtaining and reporting this information, the spearhead detachments had to be prepared to assist the civilian population wherever possible, by issuing petrol to maires and doctors, by organizing food distribution and supplying urgent requirements from the small stocks which they now carried with them and in innumerable other ways.

44. The activities of 225 Civil Affairs Detachment, in support of 3 Cdn Div, are reflected in the reports made to the Senior Civil Affairs Officers at 2 Cdn Corps during this period, give a good picture of the hectic life that spearhead detachments led. This detachment consisted of four officers and six other ranks with transport consisting of a three-ton lorry, a fifteen hundredweight truck and a motorcycle in addition to one civilian car requisitioned by the attached French liaison officer. During a twelve-day period from 24 Aug 44 to 6 Sep 44, this detachment, covering the 200 odd miles between Falaise and the area surrounding Boulogne in eight moves, submitted a total of ten reports giving detailed information on twenty-two communes. At the same time the detachment dealt with such varied problems as distribution of wheat by military transport, ensuring - by obtaining and supplying petrol - that flour mills were reopened, expediting arrangements for the disposal of the carcasses of dead animals, supervising the resistance groups in implementing "control of movement" orders, instituting a system whereby German military horses were registered and loaned to local farmers, arranging for the transportation to Rouen from Neufchatel of considerable quantities of dairy produce and undertaking the temporary custody of German prisoners of war. (Hist Sec file, AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/O/F.)

45. Static Detachments.

The deployment of static detachments to relieve the hard-pressed spearhead detachments was no easy task. The numbers available for the area to be covered were seldom adequate and the bad state of communications resulted in delays so that, in many cases, it was not possible for the spearhead detachment to remain behind to "hand over" the town or area to the incoming static detachment.

46. The primary tasks of the static detachments were to ensure at their respective levels of responsibility the resuscitation of an active French civil administration, the maintenance of an adequate distribution system, and the enforcement of the various restrictions which had been imposed on the civil population at the request of the spearhead detachments. Civil administration had been dislocated by the removal of collaborators. There was interference with the distribution due to the necessity of bypassing pockets of enemy which continued to resist. Partisans of the various resistance groups were over-enthusiastic and in certain areas their enthusiasm outran their discretion.

47. Dieppe.

230 Detachment, in support of 2 Cdn Div, entered Dieppe on the day of liberation (1 Sep 44) and was relieved two days later by the static detachment. Although the enemy had demolished certain port facilities and blown a number of bridges prior to surrender, there was no shortage of food; no refugee problem and the Civil Affairs detachment had "no serious questions to contend with". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 4 and 6 Sep 44.)

48. Le Havre.

At Le Havre, over 100,000 of the normal population had been evacuated for some weeks and were billeted in the arrondissement. There was no distress among these evacuees, who were well provided with essential food from the countryside. A number of reception centres for refugees had been set up by the French in nearby chateaux, barracks, etc., and, though overcrowded, were efficiently and hygienically run. 1 British Corps opened a refugee camp at Goderville but only 153 refugees passed through it. These were dispersed locally, leaving the detachment personnel free to undertake "rescue work in devastated villages as soon as the troops moved forward into Le Havre". When on 12 Sep the Germans in Le Havre capitulated there were approximately 50,000 civilians in the town. Public services, food and accommodation were available for that number of people only and strenuous precautions were taken to prevent the evacuees from flooding back into the town. Police points were established on the main entrances to the town. Large numbers of "Stay Put" notices were distributed throughout the arrondissement, posted at all entrances to the town itself and published in the local press. In addition, the Amplifier Unit was used constantly for this purpose. As a result of this action, civilian movement was very limited and neither interfered with operational traffic before the town fell nor embarrassed the Civil Affairs personnel or the local authorities after liberation. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

49. Boulogne.

Boulogne was attacked on 17 Sep and was completely in our hands five days later. Some ten days previously 3 Cdn Div had ordered the evacuation of the area immediately surrounding the town. About 2,000 inhabitants and evacuees from Boulogne were evacuated and found refuge in a dispersal area which had been selected by the Civil Affairs staff of 2 Cdn Corps and where they were handed over to the civil authorities, who were "most helpful in finding accommodation, providing communal feeding, and arranging for medical care." The "spear-head" detachment in support of 3 Cdn Div, assisted by the detachment designated for Boulogne, "arranged all transport and co-ordinated civilian and military aspects of the problem. Control points were established, and refugees collected by divisional transport after security checking". Some rations, from Civil Affairs sources and from captured German stocks had to be provided. On 12 Sep, the Germans started to evacuate the remaining population of Boulogne and, in accordance with a plan which had been made to take care of such an eventuality, 7,000 people were handled from this source. (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8 and W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, September 1944, Appx 4, 5 and 6.).

50. When 219 Civil Affairs Detachment entered Boulogne in the wake of the forward troops, they found that "only 200-300 civilians remained, and most of these wisely stayed in their cellars, because of the continual shelling. No uproarious welcome awaited them...instead they were confronted by a grim scene of desolation and destruction...Progress into the town was slow because all the roads and even the farm tracks leading in had been heavily mined and booby trapped". (The Times, 21 Sep 44) In order to prevent civilians from returning to the town, some 200 members of the French Resistance were co-opted to assist military police and the Gendarmerie in enforcing the restrictions on movement which had been notified in much the same way as at Le Havre. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44.)

51. Resistance Groups.

This was the first time that Civil Affairs had utilized the services of members of a resistance group for such a purpose and the experiment was not entirely successful. About the same time a plan by which members of the same organization planned to "put in a night attack on a German strong point holding a canal bridge in front of Calais" was disclosed and squashed by the French Liaison officer attached to 2 Cdn Corps.

* Commandant Mengin, French Liaison officer, reported that "1200 inhabitants remained in Boulogne" (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44.) It is suggested that both these figures can be considered merely as rough estimates and apply only to a limited area of the town since final German resistance did not end until 22 Sep 44 when the last of the forts in the dock area surrendered. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 22 Sep 44.)

(W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 4 Sep 44.) These incidents and other "over-zealous activities of the resistance groups" caused a certain amount of transitory embarrassment to Civil Affairs staffs and detachments and, no doubt, resulted in the recommendation that the "central authorities take action to regulate matters". (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army #, September 1944, Appx. 8.) However, generally speaking and in retrospect, the resistance groups at this stage of the campaign rendered useful assistance both to the Army as a whole and to Civil Affairs. Not only did they undertake mopping up operations against small pockets of the enemy who had been by-passed by the forward troops but they were ready to assume auxiliary police duties, to act as guides, to guard German prisoners and in many cases they were responsible for the liberation of whole towns and villages. It is scarcely surprising that, in the ebullience of liberation after four years of enemy domination, their highly demonstrative behaviour caused misgivings in the minds of Civil Affairs officers whose sense of fair play was sometimes outraged by the shaving of the heads of those wantons who had "collaborated" with the enemy. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 26 Aug 44.)

52. Calais.

While the battle for Boulogne was being waged, plans were made for the capture of Calais where, though a certain amount of local dispersal had taken place, there was still a population of some 20,000. The static detachment destined for Calais was moved forward on 13 Sep and another detachment to assist in any large scale evacuation that the enemy might order joined it a week later. Plans for the reception and dispersal of refugees, based on the experience of Boulogne, were prepared. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 13, 17, 19, 20 Sep 44.) On 26 Sep a report was received by the Civil Affairs staff, 2 Cdn Corps, that the "German Commander was about ready to consider surrendering". Colonel Hurley passed this information to the G.O.C. 3 Cdn Div and, at his request, arranged a meeting with the German Commander for the following day. At this meeting although the German Commander expressed his intention to "resist until all hope was gone", a 24-hour truce was arranged "to enable total evacuation of civilians from Calais to be made" (Ibid; 28, 29 Sep 44.) During this period, approximately 12,000 refugees were received in First Canadian Army area and dispersed by local and sous-prefectural authorities in accordance with the pre-arranged plans. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5.)

* In his fortnightly report of the 26th September, which may be read as a final report on France since within a week all Civil Affairs responsibility had passed to Lines of Communication, Brigadier Wedd wrote:-

There is discipline and control of FFI (Force Francaise de l'Interieur) though isolated cases of improper arrest and hooliganism continue to be reported. Early incorporation of these forces in the French Army and the disbanding of those not required for military service, will correct these evils." (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, September 1944, Appx 8.)

53. Dunkirk.

Meanwhile similar plans had been made in the event of the evacuation of civilians from Dunkirk. (W.D., C.A., 2 Cdn Corps, 20 Sep 44, et seq.) This plan was put into effect on 3 Oct when a 60-hour truce began at 1800 hours to allow 20,000 civilians to leave the town. This mass evacuation was "carried out according to plan, and the civilian authorities were able to care for the dispersal of the 17,500 people evacuated, as well as the 5,000 estimated to have come out, prior to the operation of the scheme, under their own excellent arrangements". (W.D., C.A., First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 9.)

54. While 3 Cdn Div was mounting the attacks on Boulogne and Calais the other formations of 2 Cdn Corps had advanced into Belgium and 1 British Corps had crossed over to the right flank to assume responsibilities in the north-eastern sections of Belgium and thereby to relieve Second British Army for their advance into the Netherlands. During the latter part of September, a shifting of responsibility took place and, by 2 Oct 44, First Cdn Army had handed over to Lines of Communication all responsibility for Civil Affairs in France. (W.D., C.A., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1944, Appx 5 and 9.)

54. This report was prepared by Major A. K. Reid, General List, Historical Officer (Civil Affairs), Canadian Military Headquarters.

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