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Operation "GOLDFLAKE", the Move of 1 Cdn Corps from
Italy to North-West Europe, February-March 1945

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MAP

Operation "GOLDFLAKE"
1 Cdn Corps 13 Feb - 23 Mar 45

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Operation "GOLDFLAKE", the Move of
1 Cdn Corps from Italy to North-
West Europe, February-March 1945

1. This report is an account of Operation "GOLDFLAKE", the move carried out by 1 Cdn Corps from Italy to North-West Europe to come under command of First Cdn Army. It forms a sequel to Preliminary Report No. 143 dated 4 Aug 45 (revised November 1946) Canadian Operations in Italy, 4 Jun 44 - 23 Feb 45, and to other definitive operational reports now in course of preparation.

HOPES FOR UNIFICATION OF FIRST CANADIAN ARMY

2. It had long been the wish of personnel of the Canadian Army and the intention of the Government of Canada that all Canadian troops serving in operational theatres should be under a single Canadian command. The despatch in the summer of 1943 of 1 Cdn Inf Div to Sicily, followed by 1 Cdn Armd Bde and later 5 Cdn Armd Div to complete 1 Cdn Corps serving under command of the British Eighth Army was in certain respects a sad blow to the hopes of First Cdn Army, for it meant that when the long expected day should come for the invasion of North-West Europe, some of our best troops and units would be fighting in a different theatre under command of other forces. It was the original plan, however, when Canadians were first destined for the Mediterranean theatre, that as soon as possible they should return to command of First Cdn Army. On Lt-Gen H.D.G. Crerar's appointment as G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, the directive issued to him as Army Commander stated:

At the request of the Government of Canada certain formations of the First Canadian Army were despatched to the Mediterranean theatre with the objects at that time of increasing the effectiveness of the Canadian participation in the war and obtaining battle experience. Now that those objects have been gained the Government of Canada regards it as highly desirable that, as soon as military considerations permit, such formations now serving in the Mediterranean theatre as well as field formations and units elsewhere, should be grouped under unified Canadian command.

(H.Q.S. 8909, vol 3:
Murchie to Crerar, 19 May,
amended by Ralston to
Brigadier R.B. Gibson,
24 May 44)

3. Throughout the fighting in Sicily and Italy, not only the participating Canadian troops, but the Army Commander, C.M.H.Q. and N.D.H.Q., kept the thought in mind that eventually Canadian fighting units would be together, "as soon as military considerations permit". That these military considerations were vital was not to be denied - Canadian formations in Italy were an integral part of the Eighth Army and could not be spared while the important operations of the Italian campaign were in progress. Thus the Canadian Army had to bear, with patience, the enforced separation of its forces, but the waiting did not deter those in authority from reminding the War Office of the wishes of the Canadian Government in this respect.

4. Early in September 1944, while the formations of First Canadian Army were pursuing the Germans in a mad scramble across France and Belgium, the G.O.C.-in-C. cabled C.M.H.Q. suggesting:

With collapse of German Armies imminent if not actual...very early steps should be taken to reunite 1 Cdn Corps with First Cdn Army also that action to place such Cdn forces on basis of serving together rather than in combination with U.K. forces is required to establish appropriate degree Cdn autonomy under these conditions.

(C.M.H.Q. file 1/COS/6: Tel
C 80, Crerar to Stuart,
4 Sep 44)

This suggestion was passed on to N.D.H.Q. by the Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q., with the interpretation that such steps were desirable "as soon as possible after the collapse of German Armies". Adding that he had recently written the C.I.G.S. indicating the wishes of the Canadian Government in this matter, Lt-Gen Stuart said he would keep following up the matter. (Ibid: Tel COS 235, Stuart to Murchie, 6 Sep 44)

5. During the fall of 1944 and the following winter, the Allied Forces in Italy had delivered telling blows against the enemy. The Gothic Line had been broken and the Germans had been driven north of the River Senio along the line of which operations subsided into a temporary impasse. This was the position when the Combined Chiefs of Staff made the decision at the Malta Conference at the end of January to withdraw part of the Allied forces in the Italian theatre (Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945, p. 96).

THE DECISION TO LAUNCH OPERATION "GOLDFLAKE"

6. On 2 Feb 45, in a directive issued to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, the Combined Chiefs of Staff gave notice of their intention "to build up the maximum possible strength on the Western Front and to seek a decision in that theatre". In pursuance of this policy it had been decided:

To withdraw from your theatre to the Western Front up to 5 Divisions (of which not more than 2 should be armoured) as follows:

- (a) At the earliest possible date 3 Allied Divisions drawn from the Allied Armies in Italy.
- (b) Further complete formations as the forces now in Greece are released from that country.
- (c) It is intended to withdraw Canadian and British Divisions. The nomination of ground formations to be withdrawn and the arrangements for their transfer will be the subject of a separate instruction. The programme will be agreed between you and Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, and approved by Combined Chiefs of Staff before the move takes place.

(3/Gdfk/1, Tel FAN 501/FACS 151, Combined Chiefs of Staff to A.F.H.Q., 2 Feb 45)

7. In addition to these land troops it was the intention to move to France at once two fighter groups of the Twelfth Air Force with the greater part of that Force to follow in the near future. There would be no significant withdrawal of the amphibious assault force. Since these withdrawals were bound to affect the scope of operations in the Italian theatre, the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean was given revised aims:

- (a) Your first object should be to ensure that, subject to any minor adjustments you may find necessary, the front already reached in Italy is solidly held.
- (b) Within the limits of the forces remaining available to you after the withdrawal in Paragraph 4 above have been effected, you should do your utmost by means of such limited offensive action as may be possible and by the skilful use of cover and deception plans, to contain the German forces now in Italy and prevent their withdrawal to other fronts.
- (c) You should, in any case, remain prepared to take immediate advantage of any weakening or withdrawal of the German forces.

(Ibid)

PRELIMINARY ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING

8. A.F.H.Q. wasting no time, on 3 Feb drew up a planning programme for the movement, nominating the ground formations to be withdrawn and prescribing the following order of embarkation:

HQ 1 Cdn Corps and proportion of Corps troops
5 Cdn Armd Div
1 Cdn Armd Bde
5 British Inf Div
1 Cdn Inf Div
Balance of Corps troops phased over complete move.

Formations from Greece were the 46 (Brit) Inf Div
and 1 (Brit) Inf Div.

(3/Gdfk/1, Tel FX20725, A.F.H.Q.
to S.H.A.E.F., 3 Feb 45)

Included in the planning programme instruction was a suggestion that S.H.A.E.F. and A.F.H.Q. staffs arrange a meeting 6 Feb for discussion of the following subjects:

- (a) Order of Battle of formations.
- (b) Date of arrival acceptable from movement and staging points of view.
- (c) Priorities and programme of move.
- (d) Scales of equipment accompanying formations.
- (e) Administrative arrangements.

Marseilles was decided upon as the disembarkation port and D Day (the date of starting embarkation in Italy) would be 15 Feb, though this date might be varied by later decisions (Ibid).

9. As suggested by A.F.H.Q., a conference was held at S.H.A.E.F. (Main) in Paris on 6 and 7 Feb, attended by representatives of S.H.A.E.F., A.F.H.Q., 21 Army Group, the War Office and by S.D.(O), C.M.H.Q. (3/Gdfk/1, Letter D.C.G.S. to S.D.(O), 6 Feb 45). Full discussion of the planning programme issued by A.F.H.Q. took place. Naples and Leghorn were decided on as embarkation ports in Italy (Ibid, Minutes of Conference, 6 Feb 45). Administrative problems were examined from every angle, and from the resulting decisions S.H.A.E.F. issued an Administrative Order on 10 Feb 45 to establish the organization for the administration and movement of Operation "GOLDFLAKE" and to define the responsibilities of the headquarters concerned. These were set out as follows:

1. Supreme Headquarters

- (a) Will nominate the headquarters responsible for each phase of movement and administration after arrival at Marseilles.
- (b) Will issue the agreed priority of movement tables agreed between 21 Army Group and A.F.H.Q.
- (c) Will co-ordinate where necessary, all questions of policy affecting Com Zone Etouse*, 21 Army Group and A.F.H.Q.
- (d) Will effect overall co-ordination during the period of the move.

2. A.F.H.Q.

- (a) Are responsible for embarkation of the force in Italy, for control of sea passage in conjunction with C-in-C Mediterranean to Marseilles.

* Communications Zone, European Theatre of Operations United States Army.

- (b) Are placing 302 Sub-Area at the disposal of Com Zone Etousa in Marseilles as part of the British increment to be attached under command Com Zone Etousa for the period of movement of the force.
- (c) Are furnishing such liaison officers as are necessary to ensure the interexchange of all relevant information and requirements.
- (d) Are placing at the disposal of Com Zone Etousa such personnel and supplies as are specified in this Administrative Instruction.

3. Com Zone Etousa

- (a) Will be responsible for the control of the movement and administration of the force while in transit in the area under its command in accordance with the order of priority and directive issued by SHAEF.
- (b) Through its Base Section and British increments will command all troops in the US part of L of C whose duties concern the movement or administration of the force. This command will be exercised as far as all British troops engaged on the move within Com Zone Etousa are concerned through a Commander to be supplied by 21 Army Group. The British Commander will be responsible to the Com Zone Etousa on all administrative arrangements covering the move. He will be responsible to 21 Army Group for other matters including discipline.
- (c) Assisted as agreed by A.F.H.Q. and 21 Army Group resources will be responsible for providing minimum supplies, services and facilities required within the area under its command, and in particular it will be responsible for provision of water, petrol and fuel, medical care, signal communications required for control and notification of movement, and the execution of the minimum necessary works services and engineer construction at transit camps, road staging camps and rail halts.
- (d) Will provide transit accommodation for 10,000 personnel and 2,000 vehicles at Marseilles for the movement.
- (e) In order to maintain the necessary contacts between British staffs, U.S. and local civil organizations, Com Zone Etousa will provide the requisite personnel at transit camps, rail halts and staging areas. Details will be arranged between Com Zone Etousa and the British Commander.

4. 21 Army Group

- (a) Will be responsible for the control of the movement and administration of the force while in transit in the area under its command, in accordance with the order of priority and directives issued by S.H.A.E.F.

- (b) Will supply and place under command Com Zone Etousa, the necessary British increment to assist in the detailed planning movement and administration of the force.
- (c) Assisted by such resources as War Office and A.F.H.Q. can provide will supply Movement Control staffs at:
 - (i) The port of Marseilles to cover disembarkation of the force.
 - (ii) The Marseilles transit camp to cover reception and marshalling of the road and rail parties.
 - (iii) Road and rail staging camps and at stations where halts are planned.
- (d) Will provide staffs required for administration of troops at all transit road and rail staging camps and halts. Details will be arranged between Com Zone Etousa and the British Commander.
- (e) Will place up to 200 warflats at the disposal of Com Zone Etousa for the purpose of moving the tanks, and may be called on to provide additional locomotives.
- (f) Will place liaison officers (including Canadian personnel) at such headquarters as Com Zone Etousa may request before and during the move.
- (g) Will supply the necessary tentage required at road staging areas. Com Zone Etousa will notify requirements to 21 Army Group by 11 February.

(3/Gdfk/1, S.H.A.E.F. Admin
Order, 10 Feb 45)

10. The movement plan for the entire operation was given in outline as follows, D Day being defined as the day on which the first convoy would leave Italian ports:

- (i) D plus 3 - Vehicles of two Fighter Groups and one Service Group plus Army Adm units for duty on the L of C complete at Marseilles.
- (ii) D plus 10-HQ 1 Cdn Corps plus a portion of Corps troops complete at Marseilles.
- (iii) D plus 16 - 5 Cdn Armd Div, complete at Marseilles.
- (iv) D plus 21 - 1 Cdn Armd Bde, complete at Marseilles.
- (v) D plus 24 - 5 (Brit) Inf Div, complete at Marseilles.
- (vi) D plus 36 - 1 Cdn Inf Div, complete at Marseilles.

- (vii) The balance of Cdn Corps troops not lifted in (i) and (ii) will be phased throughout the remaining flights.

(Ibid, Appx "A", Outline Movement Plan)

11. Advance parties would consist of personnel from A.F.H.Q. to assist in reconnaissance and planning on the Ls. of C. who would be moved by air from Italy, and units and detachments from the force to assist on the Ls. of C. These were being despatched by A.F.H.Q. in early flights of L.S.T. They consisted of:

- (i) A Detail Issue Depot and Port Detachment R.A.S.C. (from A.F.H.Q. resources).
- (ii) 41 Cdn Gen Tpt Coy.
- (iii) HQ 1 Cdn L. of C. Provost Coy, 1, 2, 3 and 4 L. of C. Provost Sections and 35 Traffic Control Coy.
- (iv) 1 Cdn Motor Ambulance Coy less one platoon, plus 20 Cdn Medical Officers and Medical Orderlies.
- (v) 3 Cdn Lt Rec Sec.
- (vi) One Platoon 1 Cdn Motor Ambulance Coy.

(Ibid, Appx "B", Units to receive First Priority for Duty and L. of C.)

Sea movement of the main force was to be carried out by L.S.T., M.T. ships and personnel ships. The daily average rate of discharge was expected to reach 40 tanks, 700 other vehicles (650 wheeled, 50 carriers) and 3700 personnel.

12. The land route to be followed between Marseilles and the final dispersal point at Leuze in Belgium, covered a distance of approximately 660 miles - estimated at five days' march with four nights' staging. Com Zone Etousa was to arrange for a reconnaissance of the route in order to decide the location of the necessary bivouac areas, five in number. These would be from 100 to 130 miles apart. The Administrative Order listed the following proposed route for the road movement:

No.	538	from	Marseilles	to	Senas
*N No.	7	from	Senas	to	Lyon
N No.	6	from	Lyon	to	Chagny
N No.	74	from	Chagny	to	Dijon
N No.	5	from	Dijon	to	Melun
N No.	36	from	Melun	to	Meaux
N No.	330	from	Meaux	to	Senlis
N No.	32	from	Senlis	to	Ham
N No.	30	from	Ham	to	St Quentin
N No.	44	from	St Quentin	to	Cambrai
N No.	29	from	Cambrai	to	Valenciens
N No.	48	from	Valenciens	to	Leuze

(Ibid)

13. Tanks and tracked vehicles, and all personnel who could not be carried on wheels, were to move by rail along the route Lyon - Chagny - Dijon - Neufchateau - Bar le Duc - Reims - Laon - Hirson - Aulmoye - Mons - Ath. It was estimated that the journey would take three days. The rather sinister announcement was made that "Personnel trains will be composed of box wagons, in which straw will be provided at Marseilles". Full administrative arrangements were worked out for feeding en route, and provision was made for vehicle maintenance and recovery, for provost and traffic control, for medical care and for inter-communications along the route. (Ibid)

14. On 8 Feb a conference at A.F.H.Q. settled that Headquarters' responsibilities regarding the movement of the force in Italy as laid down by S.H.A.E.F. Arrangements were made covering the provision of rations for the road, sea and rail journey, the sort of equipment to be taken, the provision of staging accommodation in Italy, and the handling of casualties (AEF: 45/1 Cdn Corps/C/E, Vol II, Docket I, FX24673, A.F.H.Q. to 1 Cdn Corps, 10 Feb 45). An "Instruction to Canadian Units Preparing to Move on Operations Overseas" was issued by A.F.H.Q. on 13 Feb. It provided information regarding dress, security, the marking of vehicles, the handling of baggage, the disposal of special C.M.F. equipment, the preparation of vehicles for loading and the scale of "A" and "B" vehicles for movement. A plan was drawn up for the movement by road or rail of the tanks and tracked vehicles of 1 Cdn Corps from their present concentration points to the Italian seaboard. (Hist Sec file Italy: 1945/1 Cdn Corps/C/F Docket III: Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 4 (d) and (e))

15. These instructions for the movement of forces from Italy adequately provided most of the administrative arrangements necessary. Adding to the immensity of the task was the fact that the Canadian units and formations in Italy were widely scattered: 1 Cdn Corps Headquarters and some Corps troops were at Ravenna, 1 Cdn Inf Div was in the line along the R. Senio, north and west of Ravenna, 5 Cdn Armd Div was in reserve and resting along the coastal sector from Rimini to Cattolica, with troops of its 12 Cdn Inf Bde inland and south as far as Fabriano. (See Report No. 143). 1 Cdn Armd Bde, which had been fighting during the winter with the U.S. Fifth Army, was now located partly in Fifth Army's area north of Florence and partly with Eighth Army on the Adriatic coast (see Report No. 175); Canadian Reinforcement and Administrative Units were at Fano and Avellino. 1st Echelon was at Rome, and there were Canadian hospitals at Jesi, Cattolica, Rome, Perugia, Caserta and Avellino. Scattered throughout the three Military Administrative Districts of Italy were such small units as Field Punishment Camps, Leave Centres, Convalescent Depots, Town Majors and Graves Registration units.

16. The bulk of Canadian troops to be moved were in the Eastern sector, and thus all convoys by road and rail, whether bound for Naples or Leghorn would have to cut across the maintenance Ls. of C. of both Eighth and Fifth Armies. To accomplish this movement without upsetting the normal flow of maintenance traffic required careful planning and phasing. The original plan had been to embark 5 Cdn Armd Div and 1 Cdn Armd Bde from Leghorn, and 1 Cdn Corps Tps and 1 Cdn Inf Div from Naples, but before the Infantry Division was relieved in the line, it was decided that it should go from Leghorn (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 4(a)).

Cervia
Camerino

17. 1 Cdn Corps were put in the picture on 4 Feb for Operation "GOLDFLAKE" when the B.G.S. and D.A. & Q.M.G. were informed by the Chief of Staff, Eighth Army that it had been decided to despatch the Corps to North-West Europe (W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 4 Feb 45). On the same day the G.O.C. First Cdn Army, General Crerar, was advised by General Montgomery, to the former's "great satisfaction of Troopers' intention in respect to 1 Cdn Corps" (3/Gdfk/1, C 30, Weeks from Crerar, 5 Feb 44). On the following day, the Corps Commander, Lt-Gen C. Foulkes and the D.A. & Q.M.G. conferred at A.F.H.Q. and discussed full details concerning the move. A.F.H.Q. agreed that certain British units which had been attached to the Corps should be allowed to accompany it. The early move of the Corps necessitated quick action, and led to daily conferences in preparation for despatching an advance party to Brussels, turning over the Corps sector, and moving the Corps and the units under its command. The necessary administrative instructions were issued by Corps Headquarters on 9 Feb; orders for formation moves were given separately by Movements, Rear Eighth Army. (W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, February 1945: Appx 2, 1 Cdn Corps Adm Instr No. 1, 9 Feb 45). Administration Post was established in Ravenna under command of Eighth Army, to be responsible for the further movement of Corps troops and the collection and handling of stragglers, return leave personnel and hospital discharges. It would remain until the rear elements of 1 Cdn Inf Div had been cleared. 1 Cdn Corps Reception Camp was used for this purpose. (Ibid; W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 11 Feb 45)

THE MOVEMENT OF H.Q. 1 CDN CORPS (13 FEB - 3 MAR 45)

18. It did not take long for Headquarters 1 Cdn Corps to start moving on the long trek that they were to make in order to join First Cdn Army (see Map). On 13 Feb the first flight of wheels set out from Ravenna. To get a clear picture of the move, which is typical of all formations, it is necessary to follow this convoy from start to finish. From Ravenna the convoy followed Highway No. 16 south along the coast through Rimini, Pesaro and Ancona to Porto Recanati, the first staging camp on the journey. There was no indoor accommodation and the bivouac area being very muddy, personnel slept either in vehicles or in pup tents on the beach. Then the move went on along the coast through San Benedetto, Pescara, Ortona, San Vito, Rocca San Giovanni, (where Corps Headquarters first took command of operations more than a year before) to a staging camp on the flat and desolate feature near Mozzagrona (C3503). Nissen huts provided the accommodation here, but guards had to be strengthened to drive away the dozens of Italian civilians who infested the camp to beg or steal anything available. From here the route led to Termoli, and bending away from the coast, angled down to Foggia, passing on a short distance to Giardinetto (J1803), where the staging camp was situated in a group of buildings erected during the Fascist regime as a community farming centre, and until a short time before, used as a C.A.C. training school. This was the last staging camp on the route, which now struck westward to pass through Ariano di Puglia and Avellino into Naples and the tented accommodation of Lammie Camp. Vehicles went to Texas Camp in the Naples dock area, for personnel were to voyage to Marseilles separately by normal troop ship routine. (W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 11-16 Feb 45; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 11-16 Feb 45)

19. Security measures were rigidly observed during the passage through Italy. So effective were the precautions taken that, while it had been rumoured that 1 Cdn Corps was going to France, the move south along the Adriatic had to a certain extent dispelled these rumours among the rank and file. At Porto Recanati, the first staging camp en route, all unit and formation patches and service stripes had been ordered taken down, vehicle markings painted out and troops were warned not to converse with civilians and to burn all waste paper which might give away the fact that they were Canadians. As a result, when a security talk was given in the last staging camp before reaching Naples and the troops were informed that the true destination was France, the news was joyously received. (Ibid, both War Diaries)

20. Six days were spent in the Naples area, and during the entire period a rigid C.B. was observed. On 22 Feb, the troops embarked aboard H.M.T. "Esperance Bay", the boat sailing shortly after midnight. Accommodation was crowded, but there were few complaints. The weather remained fair and the ship reached Marseilles at noon on 24 Feb. Disembarkation commenced immediately and personnel were transported by lorries to a staging camp 18 miles north of Marseilles, near the village of Calas. The camp here was short of tents which necessitated personnel sleeping ten to a tent and meals were served by the British camp staff. All vehicles of the first flight had arrived by the afternoon of 25 Feb, and in the early hours of the next morning the convoy set off northward across France. After the squalor and filth of the Italian towns and cities, Southern France was a welcome change, as noted in 1 Cdn Corps' War Diary:

The drive to the camp took us through Marseilles. The contrast to an Italian city was very great. The streets were clean, the people clean and well dressed and the shops full. Except in the dock area, there was very little bomb damage. The people appear very friendly, every child and many adults waving to us as we rolled by.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn
Corps, 24 Feb 45)

21. From the staging camp the route followed the Rhone River up to St. Rambert, 163 miles from Calas, where the first night was spent in a tented camp on an abandoned airfield. Thence it ran through Lyon and Villefranche to the village of Hurigny, near Macon, a distance of 80 miles from the last camp, to a staging area which had no sleeping accommodation, and where personnel "bunked down" as best they could. On the third day the convoy covered 140 miles along a route which led through Chagny and Dijon to a camp at Touillons, near Les Laumes. This was also a bivouac area with no accommodation. It was 110 miles to the next staging camp, well tented, which was located south-east of Melun in the Bois d'Echou forest, about 30 miles from Paris. From here the convoy moved on through Meaux, Senlis, Ham and St. Quentin to the final staging area at Cambrai, 163 miles from Melun. On 3 Mar Headquarters 1 Cdn Corps crossed the Belgian border just north of St. Amand-les-Eaux and in the afternoon reached the Dispersal Point at Renaix (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 17 Feb - 3 Mar 45; W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 17 Feb - 3 Mar 45). The first flight was welcomed into the new area by the Corps advance party of 37 officers and 203 other ranks, who had left Ravenna on 13 Feb, travelling to Marseilles via Leghorn, and had arrived in Belgium several days before. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 5 (c))

Headquarters 1 Cdn Corps came under command of 21 Army Group on its arrival in Belgium on 3 Mar. (Ibid, Appx 13, Procedure for Comd and Adm of 1 Cdn Corps)

22. The road route through France was well marked with "GF" signs at all junctions and bends, and while accommodation arrangements were not all that could be desired in the early stages of "GOLDFLAKE", this situation was soon corrected. Each staging camp provided a hot meal for every convoy, and as morale was very high in view of the move there was no grouching. In addition, the Auxiliary Services were much in evidence at all camps, providing plenty of picture shows, chocolate bars and free cigarettes. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, February and March 1945)

THE MOVEMENT OF 5 CDN ARMD DIV (13-27 FEB 45)

23. Units of 5 Cdn Armd Div, commanded by Maj-Gen B.M. Hoffmeister, D.S.O., were in rest and reserve along the Adriatic coast near Riccione when they received on 6 Feb, instructions for Operation "GOLDFLAKE". This was short notice, as movement commenced on 10 Feb and involved approximately 19,723 (including attached) personnel, 5614 "B" vehicles, 455 tanks and 320 carriers. Heavy tanks were loaded at Rimini and carriers and light tanks at Riccione, while tracked vehicles of 12 Cdn Inf Bde were added to the tail of divisional trains at Jesi. From the first flight of tracks despatched on 10 Feb loading and shipment flowed evenly until the programme was completed on the 21st. The rail journey from Rimini to Leghorn took about 50 hours. At the seaport, tracks were loaded into L.S.Ts. for the sea journey to Marseilles, and there reloaded on to warflats to continue across France by rail to the off-loading point - Ath in Belgium. The three days' journey through France was accomplished without any undue happenings. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 5 (a) and (b); W.D., G.S., H.Q. 5 Cdn Army Div, February 1945; W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, February 1945)

24. The Divisional Starting Point for the wheeled flights was at Cattolica. The first flight left on 10 Feb, and heading southward along the Adriatic coast, took a circuitous route of 315 miles to Leghorn. Convoys left the coast road at Porto Civitanova, turning west to Foligno, the first staging point. From Foligno the route was in a north-westerly direction, through Perugia and Arezzo to Pontassieve, the second night's staging area. Changing direction towards the west, it was only 60 miles from Pontassieve, through Florence, Empoli and Pontadera into Harrod's Camp, five miles north of Leghorn. Harrod's was a tented camp and the staging area where final preparations were completed for the sea movement of personnel and vehicles from Leghorn to Marseilles. (Ibid)

25. 5 Cdn Armd Div Main and Rear Headquarters left Riccione on 15 Feb and, taking a shorter route, travelled north-west through Rimini and Forli, then south-west through Pontassieve and on to the staging camp near Leghorn. The journey was completed in one day. 12 Cdn Inf Bde, using Fabriano as a Starting Point, cut nearly straight west into Pontassieve for one night's staging on the route to Leghorn. (Ibid; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, 15 Feb 45)

26. Sea movement of the Division commenced on 15 Feb and was completed by 1 Mar. On arrival at Marseilles, after a few days' staging at Calas while vehicles were concentrated, the long convoys moved up the length of France, following the marked road route. First elements of the Division arrived in

their new location at Dixmude, Belgium, on 27 Feb, to be greeted by the advance party. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, 27 Feb - 1 Mar 45)

THE MOVEMENT OF 1 CDN ARMD BDE (26 FEB - 12 MAR 45)

27. As related in a preceding report (No. 175) the conclusion of the winter operations in Italy found 1 Cdn Armd Bde, commanded by Brigadier W.C. Murphy, D.S.O., E.D., fairly widely scattered. On 1 Feb 45, the Brigade with its Headquarters at Borgo S. Lorenzo, north of Florence, was under command of 13 Corps of Fifth Army, and was preparing to move to the Adriatic coast for operations under Eighth Army. 14 Cdn Armd Regt had already been transferred to the Cotignola area, where it was under command of 56 (London) Div. (Report No. 175, para 81). With the Brigade thus in both the Fifth and Eighth Army areas, administration, supply and inter-communication were very difficult. On 4 Feb, after 11 Cdn Armd Regt had been transported from Borgo S. Lorenzo to Porto S. Giorgio, on the Adriatic coast, the announcement of "GOLDFLAKE" cancelled the move for the remaining units of the Brigade. With some Brigade elements now nearly 250 miles away down the Adriatic, and others under command of different formations - one of which was in the line at the time - the arrival of the new movement instructions created a difficult administrative problem. In spite of the dispersed nature of the Brigade, however, its phase of Operation "GOLDFLAKE" proceeded smoothly and with despatch. The movement of tracked vehicles of 11 Cdn Armd Regt from Jesi began on 21 Feb; 14 Cdn Armd Regt loaded theirs at Forli on 24 Feb, while 12 Cdn Armd Regt tanks were sent by road transporters direct to Leghorn. Wheeled vehicles began to move to Harrod's Camp on 26 Feb. Embarkation of the whole Brigade started at Leghorn on 3 Mar and was completed in five days. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 5 (d))

28. The long road journey from Marseilles provided no unusual incident and the first wheeled convoy of Brigade Headquarters arrived at the new area in Lauwe, Belgium, on 12 Mar; tank trains of the Brigade had off-loaded two days previously at Menin. By 15 Mar all units had arrived complete and 1 Cdn Armd Bde was under command of First Cdn Army. The following note from the Brigade War Diary underlines the speed with which the change of theatres was accomplished:

11 C.A.R. having arrived in the Nijmegen sector late on the night 23/24 Mar began on this day to take over positions opposite Arnhem under command of the 49 (WR) Div (wef 23 Mar 45). It is interesting to note that the brigade was only actually fully relieved in Italy when 14 C.A.R. left the Faenza sector 21 Feb. Thus the Brigade had moved from Central Italy to Northern Belgium and was committed on the Western Front - all in a month.

(W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Armd
Bde, 24 Mar 45)

THE MOVEMENT OF 1 CDN INF DIV (25 FEB - 23 MAR 45)

29. The last elements of 1 Cdn Inf Div, which was commanded by Maj-Gen H.W. Foster, D.S.O., were relieved in the Senio line by 8 Ind Inf Div on 23 Feb. Main Divisional

Headquarters was located at this time at Borghetto, west of Ravenna. On 25 Feb movement commenced from this sector to temporary concentration areas at Fermo and Macerata, about 150 miles down the Adriatic coast. Fermo was a decided and welcome change from long service in the field for most of the Division, and Headquarters personnel were loud in their praise of the accommodation provided for them.

Villa Vinci is a splendid mess and after our first night here we praise its comfort and love its good looks! Here, for the first time in months, we know once more what running water is, we hear with strange glee the flushing of a toilet! Our sleeping quarters are furnished, our dining room is big and not bare and both C and E mess are housed therein. A mess has separate quarters in an adjacent wing; Senior officers however, continue to sleep in their very comfortable caravans.

The Villa is owned by Countess Julia Vinci, nee Valdeschi. The Count was a Capt in the Italian Artillery but now a prisoner of war - he was caught by the British in Sidi Barani during Gen Wavell's campaign - was at one time Italian Minister to Ethiopia then to Hungary and was to go to Buenos Aires as Italian Ambassador when war was declared.

Fermo which we take in on a sort of sight-seeing tour is a pleasant little place, which has not been touched by war. It is clean, tidy, well kept. There are many descents and ascents and seldom if ever does one find oneself on even ground. The town is very old, one of the oldest in Italy; it was founded in 738 B.C., now has a population of 15,000 and is the proud possessor of no less than 22 churches, a rather large proportion, but this is Italy, the country of churches.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn
Inf Div, 25 Feb 45)

30. From Fermo the Division moved to Leghorn on a road route through Foligno and Pontassieve with a night's staging in each place. Carriers, half-tracks and 17-pr guns were shipped from Rimini. With an estimated strength of 19,500 personnel, the rate of movement was set at approximately 300 wheeled vehicles per day, carrying 1200 troops but A.F.H.Q. gave authority to increase the size of each vehicle's load. The first flight of wheels consisting of 261 vehicles carrying 1652 personnel, left Fermo on 28 Feb; other flights of like size left on succeeding days with few interruptions, until 12 Mar when the thirteenth and final flight was despatched for Leghorn. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 5 (e))

31. While the concentration of 1 Cdn Inf Div at Harrod's Camp was proceeding, embarkation for Marseilles commenced on 7 Mar, and within two weeks the complete Division had left Italy. On arrival in France, the wheeled convoys were soon rolling northward to Belgium, where Divisional Headquarters were established for a short period in Itegem. On 4 Apr the Division moved into Germany, under command of 2 Cdn Corps for its first operation - "CANNONSHOT" - in North-West Europe. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Apr 45)

32. Considering the size of the force and the distance of the movement, Operation "GOLDFLAKE" had been carried through most efficiently from start to finish. The following schedule shows that the minimum amount of operational time had been lost:

Formation	Date first elements left areas in Italy	Arrived in new areas	Moved forward
1 Cdn Corps	13 Feb 45	3 Mar 45	13 Mar 45
5 Cdn Armd Div	15 Feb 45	27 Feb 45	30 Mar 45
1 Cdn Armd Bde*	26 Feb 45	12 Mar 45	9 Apr 45
1 Cdn Inf Div	25 Feb 45	23 Mar 45	4 Apr 45

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 13 Mar 45; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, 30 Mar 45; W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Armd Bde, 9 Apr 45; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Apr 45)

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS FOLLOW

33. In general, the movement of the Administrative units came late in the "GOLDFLAKE" schedule. 4 Bn 1 C.B.R.G. was phased in early, but the other three battalions moved at later dates; 1 and 2 Bns embarked at Naples on 14 Mar and 3 Bn on 18 Mar. Many of the L. of C. units were phased in with Corps Troops. C.W.A.C. personnel who had been employed as clerks and stenographers at Cdn Soc 1 Ech embarked for the United Kingdom early in April. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 5 (f)). Of the hospitals located in Italy, 14 and 15 Cdn Gen Hosps were disbanded, and personnel returned to England in April. 1, 3 and 5 Cdn Gen Hosps were despatched to North-West Europe by way of Naples; 3 Cdn Gen Hosp left Cattolica on 16 Feb, 1 Cdn Gen Hosp departed from Jesi on 28 Feb and 5 Cdn Gen Hosp from Rome on 7 Mar. Owing to there being no facilities for female personnel in staging camps, Nursing Sisters were staged in Rome at the Canadian Officers' Hotel - the "Chateau Laurier" - and were not called forward for embarkation until the last possible date. Where necessary, they were lodged for one night in Naples at the Nursing Sisters' Rest Home or at 194 Brit Gen Hosp. (Ibid, para 5 (g)). On arrival at Marseilles, Nursing Sisters were despatched by air from Martignano Airport to North-West Europe (Hist Sec file: AEF: 45/1 Cdn Mov Control/Q/H, Docket IV). 28 Cdn Gen Hosp, a 200-bed hospital at Avellino remained until 19 Apr when it was disbanded, and personnel despatched to the United Kingdom (3/Gdfk/1/3, A.Q. 529, Candex to Canmilitary, 2 May 45). Various small units, some of which had been formed especially for service in the Mediterranean, and others which would duplicate similar units already in North-West Europe, were disbanded and their personnel returned to the United Kingdom.

* It has been noted that one element of 1 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Cdn Armd Regt, was attached to 49 (W.R.) Div and moved forward on 23 Mar 45. (W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Armd Bde, 23 Mar 45)

34. As already noted, officers for special liaison duty, or those whose early presence at Headquarters 21 Army Group was necessary, travelled from Italy by plane, most of them departing from Naples. The first advance party of Canadian formations was despatched to Brussels from the Allied Air Terminal at Peratola Airfield outside Florence on 12 Feb. This party consisted of 18 personnel from Headquarters 1 Cdn Corps, 12 from Headquarters 5 Cdn Armd Div, four from 1 Cdn Armd Bde, one from Cdn Sec 1 Ech and one from Cdn Sec 2 Ech. Their task was to reconnoitre and take over the new areas in Belgium in preparation for the arrival of units and formations being transferred from Italy. (Ibid, para 5 (h))

SHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

35. The amount of shipping provided for the movement of the Canadian troops and their equipment from the Italian sea-ports to Marseilles was adjusted to conform with the flow of traffic. On D Day and the two following days, six L.S.T. left Leghorn daily, after which the rate of movement dropped to four per day. Every three days two M.T. ships sailed from Leghorn, and eight from Naples. A ship carrying personnel left Naples daily (3/Gdfk/1, S.H.A.E.F. Admin Order, 10 Feb 45, Appx "A"). This programme from Leghorn was modified on 11 Mar by instructions from A.F.H.Q.:

- (a) The programme from Leghorn is to continue at the present rate of 4 LSTs every day and 2 MT ships every three days until 31 Mar. The four last LSTs are to sail from Leghorn on 31 Mar, the last two MT ships on 29 Mar.
- (b) From 1 to 10 Apr approximately three LSTs will ferry every day from Leghorn - Marseilles - Bastia - Leghorn on a five day round trip.

(AEF: 45/1 Cdn Corps/C/E, Vol II,
Docket 1, FX48110, A.F.H.Q. to
S.H.A.E.F., 11 Mar 45)

The shipment of personnel and equipment of the operational units included in "GOLDFLAKE" was practically completed by the scheduled date - 22 Mar. Troops destined for movement to the United Kingdom embarked at Naples, as 2 Cdn N.E.T.D. located at Avellino nearby, handled all United Kingdom drafts. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 17). A large amount of supplies and some reserve vehicles were loaded at Bari, on the east coast* (Ibid, para 7).

* Ships used in addition to L.S.Ts. for transporting troops and equipment in Operation "GOLDFLAKE" were "Ignatius Donnelly", "James J. Hill", "W.P. Fessenden", "Caleb B. Strong", "Sam Spelga", "Cornelius Hartnett", "Joseph Pulitzer", "Edwin Moore", "Fort Sturgeon", "Samglory", "Samaffric", "Samwye", "Esperance Bay", "Thaddeus Kosciuskko", "Joseph Warren", "General I. Black", "John Blair", "Sam Truth", "Port Dauphin", "Sam Kanss", "Justin Morrell", "William Borah", "Melville Jacoby", "Henry Jocelyn", "Empire Pride", "Helen Hunt Jackson", "Ville d'Oran", "Frank Wiggins", "Sam Crest", "P.T. Barnum", "Frank A. Vanderlip", "Ezra Cornell", "Robert Harrison", "Samskern", "Rachael Jackson", "Highland Brigade", "Indrapoera", "Banfora", "Samuta", "Sam Brian", "Robert Hunter", "Ocean Gallant", "General Richardson", "Sam Colne", "H.S. Shamrock", "Fort Spokane", "Brighton", "Esek Hopkins", "Sylvester Gardiner", "George McGraw", "John Sutter". (Hist Sec file: AEF: 45/1 Cdn Move Control Unit/Q/H, Docket II)

THE RETURN OF STORES AND SUPPLIES

36. The "GOLDFLAKE" movement meant the shipment of large stocks of vehicles and other stores. Instructions were that units would leave the Italian theatre with complete 1098 equipment. 1 Cdn Inf Div had, however, never been on full scale since they landed in Sicily on light scale, and for many months they had been operating on a scale somewhere between the two. When "GOLDFLAKE" was initiated the vehicle replacement programme was just getting into full swing. By this programme a Canadian policy was being implemented so that 5 Cdn Armd Div would be completely re-equipped with Canadian built "B" vehicles, and all maintenance and reserve vehicles in 1 Cdn Corps would be Canadian. From September 1944 to March 1945 more than 9000 Canadian vehicles were received in Italy, but only a portion of this number had been issued. After "GOLDFLAKE" had commenced, the replacement programme was speeded up to such an extent that about 2000 vehicles were issued in one month, and by 15 Mar, 1 Cdn Corps had drawn in the neighbourhood of 4500 units and was up to full scale. This still left some 4500 for shipment to 21 Army Group as reserve maintenance. Unissued vehicles were withdrawn from the Forward Vehicle Parks to 15 Base Vehicle Park at Castelnuova near Naples; in 26 days 3400 poured into this park, ferried by Italian drivers attached to the Vehicle Assembly and Control Group and military personnel secured from reinforcement battalions. While most of the tracked vehicles were shipped via Naples or Leghorn some were despatched from Bari along with approximately 300 reserve "B" vehicles. Reinforcement battalions provided more than 1000 personnel as guards and drivers for the transporting of reserve "A" and "B" vehicles. Two ferrying parties were established to move vehicles from the B.V.P. at Naples, look after them on board ship, and ferry them to the V.P. at Marseilles; one party of one officer and 50 drivers was at Marseilles, the second party at Naples. (Ibid, paras 6 and 7). On arrival at Marseilles, "B" vehicles were convoyed to Wenhuyne, Belgium, by 1 Cdn Spec Veh Coy. This unit moved a total of 4500 vehicles, composed as follows: 3317 vehicles, 1099 trailers and 84 motorcycles. Over a total of 2,601,077 miles covered only 28 accidents occurred or one accident to 92,895 miles. (Cdn Sec 1 Ech, A.F.H.Q. (No reference number), Report of 1 C.S.V.C.).

37. As might be expected, there were large quantities of supplies to be returned to North-West Europe. Canadian clothing had been in short supply for several months in Italy, and it was ironical that just as the troops were moving out, a shipment was en route, consisting of 70,750 Battle Dress Blouses, 54,540 Battle Dress Trousers, 102,300 pairs of boots and 1,500,000 razor blades. These articles arrived too late for issue and had to be sent back to the United Kingdom. At the beginning of Exercise "GOLDFLAKE" there were 80 million cigarettes held by 1 Cdn Tob Depot; the Auxiliary Services held about 300 tons of canteen supplies; Educational Services had several tons of literature; there were 63 tons of printing and stationery and office machinery which would not be needed in North-West Europe; the Kit Storage Depot had large quantities of surplus kit. The bulk of these vast stores was shipped to the United Kingdom by freight. 596 tons in Base Ordnance Depot - mostly Canadian clothing - were forwarded on a special ship direct from Naples to Antwerp. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 8)

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS

38. The problem of dealing with mail during the move was carefully handled. Delivery of mail to troops in transit was made up to the date of embarkation by postal detachments at Lammie and Harrod's Camp. After that mail was flown to Marseilles, a large portion being delivered there or en route, or flown on through to 21 Army Group to await the arrival of the troops. Parcels were shipped by surface. For security reasons an artificial delay on the despatch of letter mail to Canada was created equal in time to one transmission by sea, i.e., about a 24-day delay. No letter mail from Canadian troops left Italy between 12 Feb and 8 Mar, on which date the Base Censor released letters posted between 12 and 19 Feb. (Ibid, para 9). Censorship duties became so heavy during this period that extra personnel were allocated to the different Censor Units to scrutinize outgoing mail. As later events proved, it was the released letters to Canada that first conveyed the news to those at home that Canadians had left the Mediterranean theatre. (3/Gafk/1/2, CGS 129, Montague from Murchie, 21 Mar 45)

PAY

39. The move of a complete force from one country to another creates a large problem for paymasters - it entails exchanging currency for all personnel. For Operation "Goldflake" arrangements were made for personnel to exchange their Allied Military Lire after disembarking at Marseilles - British Field Cashiers and Paymasters Canadian Troops, C.M.F. were in charge. Here the Italian currency was exchanged for French francs; on arrival in Belgium, unit paymasters made the exchange to Belgian francs and following that, depending on where each formation moved, the Belgian francs were changed to either Dutch guilders or Allied Military marks (for use in Germany). Other ranks were allowed to exchange only Italian currency drawn from their pay books; an officer might exchange £10 in currency and deposit to the credit of his account a further £15. To handle the closing out of advance accounts of Paymasters and Field Cashiers, two sub-offices of Paymaster Canadian Troops were established, one at Harrod's Camp and one at Lammie Camp. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "Goldflake", para 10)

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR "GOLDFLAKE"

40. As already indicated, the matter of security received careful attention. On the initiation of "Goldflake" an extensive plan known as "Penknife" was put into immediate effect. It provided for the following cover story to be used "with the greatest discretion" to explain away various movements to our own troops:

1 Cdn Corps is to come into 15 Army Group reserve. In order to effect this, 8 Ind Div is to be replaced in Fifth Army reserve by 5 Cdn Armd Div in the Lucca-Pisa area. 8 Ind Div will relieve 1 Cdn Inf Div. H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 1 Cdn Inf Div and 1 Cdn Armd Bde are to concentrate in the Macerata area for a period of rest and training. H.Q. 5 Corps are taking over command of the Cdn Corps sector.

(W.D., G (Plans) Eighth Army,
November 1944 - April 1945,
Appx XVIII, Eighth Army Operation Instruction No. 1451,
Plan "Penknife")

The plan required Canadian formation and unit signs, flashes and badges on dress and vehicles to be removed, and in particular that none be seen in the vicinity of any port or dock. "After the troops involved have left their present areas and it is no longer possible to make the cover story plausible to them", the instructions read, "reliance must be placed on the security mindedness of the troops themselves" (Ibid). It was also proposed to give wide publicity to a projected visit to Italy of the "Meet the Navy" show and certain distinguished visitors (3/Gdfk/1: Tel GS 497, Canmilitary to Defensor, 20 Feb 45).

41. To the troops who simulated the formations concerned A.F.H.Q. allotted the code word "Basra" to H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, "Haifa" to H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, "Poona" to H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, and "Simla" to H.Q. 1 Cdn Armd Bde. The Canadians involved therefore were formed into a unit called 1 Cdn Spec B/SRA Unit, whose authorized strength was 5 officers and 229 O.R. Its personnel were drawn from 2 and 4 Bns C.B.R.G., and attached were small units like 1 Cdn Salvage Unit and 1 Cdn Anti-Malarial Control Unit, not needed in North-West Europe. Also attached was a scattered group of wireless detachments R.C. Sigs. Using Macerata as a Headquarters, the men and transport of the unit went hither and yon, putting up signs and pulling them down. One of their early efforts was partly frustrated by the arrival of 1 Cdn Inf Div in an area which had been carefully and extensively covered with signs and patches of 5 Cdn Armd Div. (Preliminary Report on Operation "Goldflake", para 12). Sometimes our own troops were confused by the work of those responsible for carrying out the plan:

The convoy moved off at 0800 hrs this morning, on a route which, much to everyone's surprise, was well marked with 1 Cdn Corps signs. However, when we passed a large building plainly marked for Main HQ 1 Cdn Corps it was realized the route signs were part of the cover plan.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 14 Feb 45)

42. Thus was carried out the disguise that Canadians were regrouping in the rear areas. Many base installations, such as Hospitals and Base Signals, were maintained as long as possible to cover movement of the force from the theatre, and Signals probably played the most important role in the plan by continually sending dummy messages and maintaining the bulk of wireless traffic at a normal flow. The enemy's reactions were shown by his occasional attempts to "jam the air". (Preliminary Report on Exercise "Goldflake", para 12)

43. Co-ordination of security measures instituted by S.H.A.E.F. on 3 Feb became the responsibility of A.F.H.Q. until arrival of troops at the port of embarkation; it was then taken over by Communications Zone in consultation where necessary with S.H.A.E.F. and 21 Army Group until each element passed into 21 Army Group area, when the latter authority

assumed full control. An appendix to the S.H.A.E.F. administrative Order of 10 Feb ordered the following security measures:

- (a) All Insignia, vehicle markings and store markings in clear to be removed until arrival at destination when replacement will be decided by 21 Army Group.
- (b) Prior to disembarkation all personnel to be given strong security warning stressing absolute silence concerning all past, present and future service.
- (c) No contact with civilians during land transit and all possible measures to be taken to isolate troops.
- (d) Wireless silence, particularly as to travel control.
- (e) Responsibility for ensuring facilities for despatching mail to be as follows: prior to landing by A.F.H.Q. After landing by 21 Army Group. Above will make special censorship arrangements and impose any delay considered necessary. Any telegrams or cables 21 Army Group consider it advisable to authorize for compassionate reasons must be routed Par Fil.

(3/Gdfk/1, S-78815, 3 Feb 45)

44. Every effort was made to enforce security and at the same time mislead the enemy while the troops were moving from Italy. The greatest of secrecy prevailed at all conferences, which were attended only by officers of senior rank; the minimum of information was disclosed and security of the highest degree strongly impressed. Distribution Lists for information regarding "GOLDFLAKE" held the minimum number of names; C.M.H.Q. had 79 names on its list, with three at H.Q. C.R.U., 28 at 1 Ech 21 Army Gp and three at 2 Ech 21 Army Gp (C.M.H.Q./P/H, Docket 1, C.M.H.Q. Information Lists Nos. 1 and 2, "GOLDFLAKE"). C.M.H.Q. issued special Security Instructions to govern the actions of officers and other ranks whose duties gave them knowledge of the Operation (C.M.H.Q./L/1, "GOLDFLAKE", C.M.H.Q. Security Instructions - Operation "GOLDFLAKE", 12 Feb 45 and 12 Mar 45). In the field the results of the drive to preserve security are revealed in War Diaries of the formations concerned:

At a conference of heads of branches...it was announced today that 1 Cdn Corps is to leave this theatre of ops... The move will, of course, be "Top Secret".

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, 6 Feb 45)

Preliminary instrs for move issued - destination not given.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, 6 Feb 45)

The Brigadier, BM, Col Richardson, I.O. and staff Captain left Bde HQ on a mission of utmost secrecy. Their destination and expected return could not be divulged at this time and their departure was kept as quiet as possible.

(W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Feb 45)

The Bde Comd returned to his HQ on this day after having attended a conference in Rome. The other members of the HQ - BM, IO and S/C didn't return and their destination was unknown.

(Ibid, 15 Feb 45)

Advice is received to the effect that all leaves are cancelled... However, when at a meeting held by the GSO 1 we are told the reason why, nobody is surprised. The Div is moving to Southern Italy shortly, perhaps in less than a week...

(W.D., H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf
Div, 9 Feb 45)

45. It was not until troops were well on the move in Italy, generally at one of the last staging camps, that they were informed of their true destination. A security talk was then delivered to them, stressing all details they must watch so as not to disclose the fact that they were Canadians and that they were leaving Italy. All vehicle marking had been obliterated, patches and titles removed from uniforms, empty Canadian cigarette packets were to be burned; personnel were confined to camp in all staging areas and were not to converse with civilians. (C.M.H.Q./L/1, "GOLDFLAKE", S-78815, S.H.A.E.F. to W.O. (D.M.1.), 3 Feb 45; AEF: 45/1 Cdn Corps/C/E, Vol II, Docket I, FX 32979, A.F.H.Q. to 1 Cdn Inf Div, 24 Feb 45)

46. As part of the general security programme all existing Canadian clubs, hostels, hotel and leave centres were kept open as long as possible and when they closed, it was ostensibly for spring cleaning. The clubs and hotels in Riccione were closed early in February; the Hotel MacDonald in Florence was handed over to the British early in March; the other ranks leave centre in Rome came under British management about the middle of March; the Canada Club in Rome made a pretence of staying open, closing near the end of March, along with the "Chateau Laurier", both of which had very few Canadian customers during their last two months of operation. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 11)

47. One difficult problem from the security point of view was the disposal of the large number of civilians employed by Canadian units. Since the early days in Sicily there had always been Italians accompanying various infantry company kitchens in the capacity of dishwashers, potato peelers and handy-men. It was originally planned to send civilians employed by the units to a central collecting point for disposal (W.D., A./Q., H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, February 1945: Appx 2, 1 Cdn Corps Adm Instr No. 1, 9 Feb 45). One reason for this was to avoid inflicting undue hardship on these civilians by leaving them stranded in an alien sector of the country. The policy was later amended and they were paid off and released a few at a time. (Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 11)

48. Another measure adopted to deceive the enemy was to continue the publication of "The Maple Leaf" until the middle of March, with distribution being made to the few Canadians left in the theatre and to units which had replaced 1 Cdn Inf Div in the line. War Correspondents moving with the force were fully briefed on the necessity of strictest security. They could not file any stories outside the Mediterranean theatre, but must hand them to Public Relations officers for forwarding under seal to either C.M.H.Q. or N.D.H.Q. for later release (COS file, 3/Gdfk/1, R 57, Candex to Canmilitary, 5 Mar 45). A Public Relations detachment including still and motion picture

photographers moved with the troops to provide press and photo coverage for record use and future publicity (Ibid). The 1 Cdn Inf Div newspaper, "The Red Patch", ceased publication on 10 Feb 45. The announcement in its last issue that this was "the final copy", caused no little consternation in view of Operation "GOLDFLAKE", but it was later established that this was a mere coincidence, as plans had been under consideration for some time regarding ceasing publication. (3/Gdfk/1/2, GS 612, Murchie from Montague, 5 Mar 45). That the security measures adopted for transferring such a large force were efficiently carried out through the whole operation, is brought to light in facts disclosed later when the Canadian Government were pressing for authority to release the news that 1 Cdn Corps from Italy were fighting alongside the rest of the Canadians in North-West Europe.

THE COMPLETION OF THE "GOLDFLAKE" MOVEMENT

49. After the withdrawal of Headquarters 1 Cdn Corps command of all Canadian troops in Central Mediterranean Force was handed over to the O.I.C. Cdn Sec 1 Ech, A.F.H.Q., which continued to function until the completion of "GOLDFLAKE". Brigadier N.B. MacDonald, A.D.Q.M.G.(Q.), C.M.H.Q. had been appointed liaison officer early in February to work with all the senior Headquarters concerned in "GOLDFLAKE". He became ill in Italy and was replaced by Colonel E.B. Wilson, O.B.E., E.D., on 8 Mar. (3/Gdfk/1, Letter, Montague to War Office, 12 Feb 45; Preliminary Report on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE", para 18). The final Priority List No. 1, issued on 17 May 45, discloses the total Canadian strength in Italy at that date to be as follows:

11 Cdn Base Sig Sec	29 All Ranks
2 Cdn Fd Punish Camp	29
11 Cdn Base Postal Det	8
Det 18 Cdn Spec Emp Coy	180
Det 2 Cdn PR Gp	3
2 Cdn N.E.T.D.	91
12 Cdn Town Major	9
1 Cdn Graves Reg Unit	12
Cdn Sec 1 Ech A.F.H.Q.	135
"X" Lists (Residual C.M.F.)	
X-2 Soldiers under Sentence	311
X-3 Hospital Cases	118
X-5 Courses	5
X-7 Attachments to Brit	45
X-8 Holdings - 2 Cdn N.E.T.D.	192
X-9 Category	42
X-10 Attachments	23
TOTAL	1232

(3/Gdfk/1/3, 17 May 45)

The above personnel were despatched from Italy during the latter part of May, and with their departure the following message was sent to C.M.H.Q.:

GOLDFLAKE, 2 Cdn Field Punishment Camp 1 offr
18 ORs despatched NWE 29 May. 3 ORs despatched
28 May with transport will join main body port
of disembarkation balance ORs despatched MFK45
as guards of SUS. This terminates GOLDFLAKE.

(3/Gdfk/1/3, AQ 646, Candex
to Canmilitary, 30 May 45)

50. As noted in the X-2 List above, there were 311 Soldiers Under Sentence. This number was all that remained of approximately 1000 Canadian Soldiers Under Sentence in British Military Prisons as at 21 Mar. During the period of movement from Italy, each S.U.S. had been interviewed by a team of two psychiatrists inquiring into his physical welfare and mental condition with the object of classifying him for retention or for return to Canada. When 2 Cdn N.E.T.D. proceeded to the United Kingdom on 17 Jun 45, the last Canadian troops had left the Mediterranean Theatre. (3/Gdfk/1/3, AQ 740, Candex to Canmilitary, 16 Jun 45)

ADJUSTMENTS AND REORGANIZATION

51. While Canadian troops operated as part of the Allied Armies of Italy there were many instances where the scale of provision, organization and establishments all based upon standards adopted by the British Eighth Army in the Middle East, differed from those pertaining to Canadian troops in 21 Army Group. With the transfer of the Canadians from Italy it was necessary, in order to avoid considerable difficulty in North-West Europe, that certain units and formations on arrival should undergo conversion and reorganization. This meant a reduction in strength for some units arriving and an increase to some of those already operating in the theatre. The process of adjustment was particularly necessary in the case of G.H.Q., L. of C. and base installations which had had counterparts in both theatres. On amalgamation of the two Canadian forces it was necessary to disband these administrative units of A.F.H.Q. and to make an upward revision of the War Establishments of those in 21 Army Group so that they would be adequate to handle the much larger Canadian component. The most noteworthy change in the organization of fighting troops was the disbandment of Headquarters 12 Cdn Inf Bde, and the reorganization and redesignation of its component units. The brigade had been formed in Italy during the summer of 1944 in keeping with an A.F.H.Q. policy of providing each armoured division with an additional infantry brigade, because of the difficulty experienced by the armour when operating in the mountainous Italian terrain. An early estimate of the net saving in manpower on reorganization of 1 Cdn Corps was 79 officers and 1269 other ranks, while disbandment of temporary units formed in Italy would return 95 officers and 1232 other ranks to the reinforcement stream. (1/Org Gdfk/1, 76-1-7/SD, G.O.C.-in-C. Recommendation to C.M.H.Q., 22 Feb 45)

52. Changes in the War Establishment on arrival in North-West Europe of necessity meant a certain amount of re-equipping was thus carried out mainly in 1 Cdn Armd Bde, 5 Cdn Armd Div and the self-propelled artillery regiments. All S.P. regiments in Italy had been equipped with the Priest 105-mm; they were now issued 25-pr Sextons and 25-pr Rams, while armoured regiments received a new tank and weapon in the 17-pr Shermans. Reconnaissance regiments were furnished with 37-mm Stuarts with turrets; the old turretless type were used as combat supply vehicles. Personnel were re-equipped as soon as possible after arrival in North-West Europe with new uniforms, titles, patches, medal ribbons and service chevrons. They were then granted nine days' privilege leave to England. Units and formations were allowed to despatch ten percent at a time, so that the majority of personnel had a spell of leave before going into action again. Short leaves were also allowed to continental centres where hostels and hotels were operating.

RELEASING THE NEWS OF "GOLDFLAKE"

53. As soon as N.D.H.Q. learned that Canadian troops were being transferred from Italy to North-West Europe, they informed C.M.H.Q. that it was essential that the first public announcement of this fact should be made by the Prime Minister of Canada. This was on 13 Feb 45, and while N.D.H.Q. appreciated that some time would elapse before any announcement could be made, C.M.H.Q. were requested to make appropriate arrangements with S.H.A.E.F. and Censorship to ensure simultaneous release in Ottawa. (3/Gdfk/1, GS 66, Montague from Murchie, 13 Feb 45). Following this request from C.M.H.Q., S.H.A.E.F. proposed a procedure for the release of the Prime Minister's announcement and War Correspondents' stories. In an exchange of messages it was agreed that S.H.A.E.F. should set the release date in accordance with security requirements in the theatre of operations and would notify C.M.H.Q. at least forty-eight hours in advance stating what was to be passed or stopped by censorship. Security release was not expected to take place until some time in April (Ibid, GS 546, Canmilitary to Defensor, 23 Feb 45). By the middle of March, however, the press in Canada were making enquiries about the move, and it became necessary for Censorship in Ottawa to take steps to guard against any reference or comment in the press or on the radio. With the House of Commons commencing sessions on 19 Mar a change in plans was made; the hour of release was changed from 1000 to 1515, as it was now desired that the Prime Minister's announcement be made on the floor of the House. (3/Gdfk/1/2, CGS 124, Montague from Murchie, 19 Mar 45)

54. In the meantime there were being received in Canada letters from troops now in North-West Europe or on leave in England, making reference to their move from Italy. As a result, N.D.H.Q. was receiving an increasing number of enquiries daily from the public and press for further information, and rumours were circulating that Canadian troops had been despatched to Burma. In view of these increasing difficulties, C.M.H.Q. was requested to make the strongest possible representations for release of a statement concerning the move from Italy to North-West Europe. (Ibid, CGS 129, Montague from Murchie, 21 Mar 45). At the same time, Mr. King cabled Mr. Churchill expressing his hope of being able to make the announcement in the House of Commons within the next few days, stating that the matter was widely known in Canada, and pointing out that it was doubtful if security could be kept up much longer (Ibid, MS 17, Montague from McNaughton, 22 Mar 45). Mr. Churchill's reply to this was that he had consulted General Eisenhower, who earnestly requested that information should only be made public as each formation became identified by the enemy, and that the Combined Chiefs of Staff felt strongly the suggested announcement should on no account be made at this time (Ibid, GS 765, McNaughton from Montague, 23 Mar 45).

55. On the last day of March S.H.A.E.F. issued new instructions as to the procedure to be adopted for release of information regarding the transfer of Canadian forces from Italy:

- (a) In compliance with instructions of Combined Chiefs of Staff S.H.A.E.F. will consult Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to ensure release of information will not prejudice his deception plans.
- (b) As individual Canadian units become identified by enemy S.H.A.E.F. will clear their release with S.A.C.M. as above and inform the British

Chiefs of Staff London by cable when information can safely be released.

- (c) British Chiefs of Staff will relay information to Canadian Government through Dominions Office channels.
- (d) Meanwhile all concerned are being instructed to ensure no public reference is made to move of these units.
- (e) Canadian Government is requested to notify S.H.A.E.F. direct 24 hours in advance of time and date each announcement so that subsequent release this theatre can be co-ordinated.

(COS file, 3/Gafk/1, GS 839,
Murchie from Montague, 31 Mar 45)

56.
N.D.H.Q.:

On 4 Apr C.M.H.Q. received the following reply from

For your information message has been despatched on the highest level stating that in view of involved procedure which has been worked out in regard to release of information it is suggested by Cdn Govt that Eisenhower alone should make initial announcement.

(Ibid, CGS 157, Montague from
Murchie, 4 Apr 45)

As a result of this suggestion, S.H.A.E.F. rescinded its previous instructions on 9 Apr, stating that the "Canadian Government no longer desire to make first announcement in Canadian House of Commons", and procedure would now be as under:

- (a) Exfor will inform S.H.A.E.F. as soon as release of each individual formation Canadian and United Kingdom is considered safe.
- (b) S.H.A.E.F. will obtain clearance from A.F.H.Q.
- (c) On notification by G3 S.H.A.E.F. of A.F.H.Q. clearance, Exfor will, at least twenty four hours in advance, fix times of release and inform British Chiefs of Staff and Canmilitary accordingly.

(Ibid, FWD 98864, S.H.A.E.F. Main
for info Canmilitary, 9 Apr 45)

The announcement would be made in the form of press releases issued simultaneously by Exfor and Canadian Army. The texts of the releases would be notified all concerned by Exfor so that simultaneous releases would be accomplished within this theatre and by the Canadian Government if desired, and no prior release would be made by any agency in S.H.A.E.F. area. (Ibid)

57. The extent to which the whole situation had become complicated and involved was indicated in a message from the Prime Minister of Canada to General Eisenhower on 10 Apr, which is quoted in full:

You will recall that last month we concerted arrangements with your Headquarters through military channels regarding the announcement to be made at the appropriate time of the arrival of First Canadian Corps and attached

troops in the Northwest European Theatre where they were to join the First Canadian Army. I subsequently sought Mr. Churchill's good offices to obtain the necessary agreement to make the announcement in the Canadian House of Commons during the last week of March but as he replied that you wished the secret kept as long as possible I had no alternative but to accept delay.

On 3 April being apprehensive of the somewhat involved procedure that had been worked out regarding the announcement I suggested to Mr. Churchill that all things considered it would be preferable to have the announcement come from yourself and I again urged that it be made as soon as possible.

Since then the position in Canada has in this respect steadily become more difficult. War Correspondents have been allowed by the Censorship to send despatches from the theatre to the effect that the Canadian Army is again one. The fact is now common knowledge to our people and is the subject of open speculation and comment in the press. Moreover the point has several times been raised by Members in the House of Commons. In these circumstances the question of continued reserve has become quite unreal and as Parliament may rise before the end of this week I most earnestly ask that you release the news within the next day or so using as your own the thought expressed in the draft announcement worked out with your Headquarters or alternatively that you agree that I should do so as originally planned.

May I add that we all rejoice at the splendid success attending the Armies under your command.

(Ibid, MS 23, Montague from
McNaughton, 10 Apr 45)

In the meantime A.F.H.Q. had informed S.H.A.E.F. that they could not authorize release of move of 1 Cdn Corps until sure the enemy knew they had left Italy, and the Prime Minister's letter brought from S.H.A.E.F. the reply:

While we fully appreciate Canadian Prime Minister's desire for early announcement we consider Allied Force Headquarters operational needs must remain paramount. To avoid delay in release when cleared by Allied Force Headquarters we believe announcement best made here in accordance with arrangements of 9 Apr.

(Ibid, GS 947, Murchie from
Montague, 16 Apr 45)

58. Allied Force Headquarters finally cleared the release of all elements on 20 Apr, which allowed First Cdn Army to make the first official announcement at 1800 hours Double British Summer Time on 23 Apr 45. Text of the initial release was as follows:

The General Officer Commanding in Chief, First Cdn Army today announced that the First Cdn Corps and attached troops, which have been serving in the Italian theatre of operations

since 1943, have been transferred to the Western European theatre of operations, where they have joined First Cdn Army.

(Ibid, GS 1010, Murchie from Montague, 21 Apr 45)

59. There is no record to show that the German High Command in Italy was immediately aware of the withdrawal of 1 Cdn Corps, probably due to the effective way in which the deception and cover plans were carried out in that theatre. Nor is there any indication that any of the units or formations were identified by the enemy during 1 Cdn Corps' operations in North-West Europe up to the date of the official announcement being made. This apparent lapse on the part of German Intelligence may be attributed to the fact that operations had entered the last phase leading to the defeat of the German Armies in the west, and that their intelligence at this time was not functioning at its normal rate of efficiency.

CONCLUSION

60. While as we have noted, the transfer of 1 Cdn Corps was regarded by First Cdn Army as a most auspicious event, the felicity of which was expressed by General Crerar in his personal message to the troops (see Appendix "A"), there can be no denying the fact that their departure was keenly felt by Allied Force Headquarters in Italy, as the farewell message of Field-Marshal Alexander convincingly showed (see Appendix "B").

61. Perhaps no more fitting conclusion can be given to this report than to use the words of the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower, in describing the successful carrying out of Operation "GOLDFLAKE":

The complicated process of moving the units to France and northward across the lines of communication of the Southern and Central Groups of Armies (called Operation "GOLDFLAKE") was carried out efficiently and smoothly, and the security precautions taken were completely successful in concealing from the Germans what was afoot. By the time the 21st Army Group offensive across the Rhine came to be launched, these latest units to arrive were ready to play their part in it.

(Supreme Commander's Report, p. 117)

62.
R.C.A.P.C.

This report was prepared by Captain M.B. Huffman,

M.B. Huffman, Capt
for (C.P. Stacey) Colonel
Director Historical Section
Canadian Military Headquarters

PERSONAL MESSAGE

From the

ARMY COMMANDER

(To be read out to all Troops 1 Canadian Corps)

Very nearly a year ago, in my goodbye message to you when handing over command 1 Canadian Corps and leaving Italy to assume my present appointment, I made a prophecy. I said that we, Canadians, would all meet up again, somewhere in Europe, when the Armies of the United Nations converged, and the job we came over here to do was about to be accomplished. Well, the prophecy has come true - and no soldier in the First Canadian Army can be more elated at this situation than I, myself, am.

The 1 Canadian Corps returns to the Canadian Army, with a magnificent fighting record, first established in Sicily by the 1 Canadian Division and fully maintained by other formations of the Corps as all, later, fought their way through Italy. We are all very proud of what you have accomplished - and it is simply great to get together again.

And, now that we are all together, let us all speed to the victory in no uncertain manner.

(H.D.G. Crerar) General
GOC-in-C
1 First Canadian Army

March, 1945

PERSONAL MESSAGE

From the

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
MEDITERRANEAN

to

COMMANDER 1 CANADIAN CORPS

(To be read out to all Troops 1 Canadian Corps)

It is with great sorrow and regret that I see you and your famous Canadian Corps leaving my command.

You have played a distinguished part in our victories in Italy, where you leave behind a host of friends and admirers who will follow your future with the liveliest interest.

Good Luck and God speed to you all in your coming tasks in the west, and may victory crown your new efforts as it has done in the past.

H.R.L.G. ALEXANDER,
Field-Marshal,
Supreme Allied Commander,
Mediterranean,

ITALY
February, 1945

APPENDIX "C"

Files used in preparation of Report on Operation "GOLDFLAKE"

C.M.H.Q. FILES

1/COS/9, Chief of Staff's Personal File

1/Org Gdfk/1, Policy re Organization "GOLDFLAKE"

3/Gdfk/1, Exercise "GOLDFLAKE"

3/Gdfk/1/2, Exercise "GOLDFLAKE"

3/Gdfk/1/3, Exercise "GOLDFLAKE"

3/Gdfk/1, Chief of Staff's Personal File (Return of Cdn Troops
from Italy)

C.M.H.Q./P/H, Docket 1, "GOLDFLAKE"

C.M.H.Q./L/1, "GOLDFLAKE"

HIST SEC FILES

Italy: 1945/1 Cdn Corps/C/F, Docket III, Preliminary Report
on Exercise "GOLDFLAKE" by Capt J.T. Allen.

AEF: 45/1 Cdn Mov Control/Q/H, Dockets 11, 111 and 1V.

AEF: 45/1 Cdn Corps/C/E, Vol 11, Docket 1.

OPERATION "GOLDFLAKE"

I CDN CORPS

13 FEB - 23 MAR 45

