

NOTE

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9 Dec 41

Situation of the Canadian Forces
in the United Kingdom, Winter, 1941 : I

Recent Changes in Commands and Staffs

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1. A further report is submitted. This initiates a new series of surveys and may be regarded as a continuation of No. 36, of 7 Jul last, dealing with changes in senior commanders and staffs which had taken place since 31 Dec 40.
2. It is considerably more than the proposed three months since the last report was presented. This is due in part to the necessity of dealing with other topics, but in part also to the fact that as important developments both in command and in the role of the Canadian Corps were understood to be pending it seemed desirable to await these before again surveying these topics. Important changes have now taken place in both fields. Those in commands and staffs are briefly reviewed in the present report. Those affecting the strategic role of Cdn Corps will be dealt with subsequently.
3. The scope and form of this report are similar to those of No. 36, as outlined in paras. 3 and 4.

HIGHER COMMANDS

4. Important changes have taken place, for the first time, in the command of higher formations in the Canadian Army Overseas. On 7 Nov 41 it was announced that Major-General V.W. ODLUM, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D., G.O.C. 2 Cdn Div, had been appointed Canadian High Commissioner in Australia. Brigadier J.H. ROBERTS, M.C. (C.C.R.A., Cdn Corps) was detailed to command 2 Cdn Div as of the same date, in an acting capacity (C.A.R.O. (Overseas) 1237).
5. The desirability of having an experienced military officer in the Australian post at the present juncture, when war with Japan appears more than likely, ^{*}needs no underlining. It appears probable, moreover, that at a time when more and more emphasis is being laid upon the importance of youth in formation commanders, General Odium, who was born on 21 Oct 1880 and served in the South African War as well as the Great War, was regarded as somewhat too

* It has been (7 Dec 41) since the above paragraph was written.

old for an active command in the field.

6. Some notes on 2 Cdn Div during General Odum's period of command will be found in my previous reports Nos. 12, 13, 34, and 49.

7. On 24 Nov it was announced that the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General H.D.G. CRERAR, D.S.O., whose promotion to Lieutenant-General had been announced only a couple of days before, was reverting to the rank of Major-General with a view to assuming the command of 2 Cdn Div in this country. It is of interest to note that on his arrival here General Crerar will be the senior Canadian Major-General in the United Kingdom. He was granted the acting rank of Major General as of 15 Jan 40, while serving as Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q. (C.A.R.Q. (O/S) 18, dated 8 Mar 40).

8. In addition to this definite change of command in 2 Cdn Div, certain temporary changes were announced in the press on 12 Nov 41. It was stated that Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNAUGHTON, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., the G.O.C. Cdn Corps, was "laid up temporarily with a low grade infection of the lungs following an ordinary cold"; that complete recovery was expected in a few weeks but that meanwhile the General was confined to his quarters. During his absence Major-General G.R. PEARKES, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., G.O.C. 1 Cdn Div, would act for him in command of Cdn Corps, and Brigadier A.E. POTTS, E.D., would be acting Commander of 1 Cdn Div.

9. In a Secret and Personal letter to Lt.-Gen. B.C.T. PAGET dated 6 Nov 41 (C.M.H.Q. file 3/CAOS - HF/2), General McNaughton stated that he would be away from duty "for about 2 months", and that the medical authorities assured him that he would then "again be fully fit and able to resume command Cdn Corps". Officers who have seen General McNaughton since his enforced retirement to bed say that he already appears much fitter; and I understand that the doctors proposed to allow him to leave his bed and dress on 29 Nov. His temporary respite from the duties of Corps Commander has not affected his status as Senior Combatant Officer of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom, and he has transacted considerable business in his sickroom.

BRITISH COMMAND CHANGES

10. It may assist the Official Historian if we note in passing the changes in the higher commands of the British Army which were made public on 19 Nov. These included the replacement of General Sir John DILL as Chief of the Imperial General Staff by General Sir Alan BROOKE, who in turn is replaced as Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, by Lt.-Gen. PAGET, who has been G.O.C.-in-C., South-Eastern Command. In this last-named Command General Paget is succeeded by Lt.-Gen. B.L. MONTGOMERY, C.B., D.S.O. In consequence of Cdn Corps relieving 4 Corps in SUSSEX, Cdn Corps is now under General Montgomery's command.

11. Lt.-Gen. Sir Henry POWNALL, formerly V.C.I.G.S., has been moved to a special appointment not yet announced, and has been succeeded by Maj.-Gen. A.E. NYE, formerly Director of Staff Duties, War Office.

12. Various references to these officers will be found in my earlier reports, notably Nos. 33, 34, 46, and 49.

HEADQUARTERS, CANADIAN CORPS

13. A number of changes have taken place in senior appointments at H.Q. Cdn Corps. Brigadier BURNS (cf. Report No. 36, para. 7) unexpectedly vacated that of Brigadier, General Staff, on 6 Aug and returned to Canada (899). He was replaced by Lt.-Col. G.G. SIMONDS, who had been G.S.O.1 at H.Q. 2 Cdn Div. He served for a time as Acting B.G.S. in his old rank (899 : 7 Aug) but C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1077, dated 9 Oct 41, gave him the acting rank of Brigadier as from 7 Aug 41, and the rank was confirmed by C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1277 (dated 21 Nov 41) as of 7 Nov 41. Brigadier Simonds must be one of the youngest brigadiers in the British service, having been born on 24 Apr 03. On his activities before taking his present appointment, cf. my earlier reports Nos. 14, 22, and 41.

14. Brigadier MURISON has continued as D.A. & Q.M.G. as a result of Brigadier TURNER's temporary absence in Canada for conferences at N.D.H.Q. Brig. Turner was struck off strength of the Cdn Army Overseas on 31 Jul 41 (927) and has only very recently returned to this country. It is presumed that he will now relieve Brig. Murison, and that the latter officer will return to service with the British Army.*

15. Poor health obliged Brigadier J.C. STEWART, D.S.O., to relinquish the appointment of C.C.R.A., Cdn Corps, as of 15 Jul 41; and he was replaced by Brigadier J.H. ROBERTS, M.C., as of 16 Jul (868). Brig. Roberts, it will be recalled, had been serving in command of 1 Cdn Inf Bde (Report No. 36, para. 13). When Brig. Roberts was appointed to command 2 Cdn Div temporarily (above, para. 4), he was replaced as C.C.R.A. by Brigadier H.O.N. BROWNFIELD, M.C., C.R.A. 3 Cdn Div. (1237).

16. Other senior appointments at H.Q. Cdn Corps remain in the same hands. One additional Brigadier is now on strength: Brig. R.J. LEACH, M.C., whose promotion from Colonel and appointment as Commander, Corps Medium Artillery, were notified in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 989, as of 15 Sep 41. He had formerly commanded "C" Group, Holding Units. The C.C.M.A. is at present in command of the Corps units left behind in SURREY on the movement of Cdn Corps to the coast, and is under command of Canadian Military Headquarters.

17. Another Brigadier who will ultimately be on the strength of H.Q. Cdn Corps is Brigadier G.A. McCARTER, whose promotion from Lt.-Col. and appointment to command 1 Cdn A.A. Bde was notified in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1052, as of 1 Oct 41. Brig. McCarter was formerly in command of Cdn A.A. & A.Tk Group at COLCHESTER, and H.Q. Cdn A.A. Bde remains at COLCHESTER, under command of C.M.H.Q., for the present.

FIRST CANADIAN DIVISION

18. In 1 Cdn Div, Brig. Roberts was succeeded as commander of 1 Cdn Inf Bde by Brigadier R.F.L. KELLER, formerly commanding the P.P.C.L.I. (cf. Report No. 36, para. 15), whose appointment and promotion from Lt.-Col. were notified in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 916, as of 31 Jul 41. This followed a fortnight during which Lt.-Col. W.W. SOUTHAM, E.D., 48 HIGHERS, commanded the brigade in an acting capacity.

19. The temporary vacancy in the command of 2 Cdn Inf Bde, caused by Brig. POTTS taking command of the Division in the absence

* On 4 Dec 41 C.M.H.Q. informed the War Office that Brig. MURISON was available from 15 Dec, or earlier if desired. (Copy of letter on 9 / Cdn Corps / 1).

of General Pearkes (para. 8, above) has been filled by the acting appointment of the same officer, Lt.-Col. Southam (as of 15 Nov 41) (1277). Since 7 Oct (1237) Lt.-Col. Southam had been Acting G.S.O.1, 1 Cdn Div, replacing Lt.-Col. C. VOKES, who was acting in command of the P.P.C.L.I. but returned to the appointment of G.S.O.1 on 14 Nov (1277).

20. Major A.C. GOSTLING, WINNIPEG GRENADIERS, was appointed A.A. & Q.M.G., 1 Cdn Div (819, 9 Jun 41) and was granted the acting rank of Lt.-Col. while so employed (848, 9 Jun 41). (Cf. Report No. 36, para. 15.)

SECOND CANADIAN DIVISION

21. Apart from the change in divisional command, mentioned above (para. 4), there have been other changes in 2 Cdn Div. Brigadier D.R. SARGENT, E.D., was forced by ill-health to relinquish the command of 6 Cdn Inf Bde - a great misfortune for one of the youngest brigadiers in the Canadian Army - and was succeeded by an Engineer officer, Col. J.P. MacKENZIE, D.S.O., formerly commanding the Works Organization under C.M.H.Q. (23-24 Aug 41 : C.A.R.O. (O/S) 959).

22. Lt.-Col. Simonds, on leaving H.Q. 2 Cdn Div for H.Q. Cdn Corps (above, para. 15) was succeeded by Lt.-Col. H.A. YOUNG, R.C.C.S., G.S.O.1 (S.D.) at C.M.H.Q., who was detailed to perform the duties of G.S.O.1, 2 Cdn Div, in an acting capacity. Lt.-Col. Young ceased to perform these duties as of 5 Oct 41 (1126) and on the following day Lt.-Col. E.G. WEEKS, M.C., E.M., R.C.C.S., who until then had been A.A. & Q.M.G. of the division, became G.S.O.1. (1077). As of 15 Oct 41, however, Lt.-Col. Weeks was promoted to Colonel and became D.M.T. at N.D.H.Q. (vice Brigadier J.K. LAWSON, who was proceeding to HONG KONG in command of the Canadian force ordered thither from Canada); and as of the same date Major S. LETT, M.C., E.D., IRISH FUSILIERS (VANCOUVER REGT), was temporarily appointed G.S.O.1 and granted acting rank of Lt.-Col. while so employed (1237).

23. Major R.D. KING, PRINCESS LOUISE FUSILIERS (M.G.) was appointed A.A. & Q.M.G., 2 Cdn Div, as of 11 Oct 41 (1126).

24. It is interesting to note that officers not of the Permanent Force are beginning to appear in first-grade appointments (cf. Report No. 36, para. 9).

THIRD CANADIAN DIVISION

25. There has been no change in brigade commands or first-grade staff appointments in 3 Cdn Div since its arrival in this country last summer. The brigadiers mentioned in Report No. 48 as commanding the infantry brigades retain the same appointments, and Lt.-Col. C. FOULKES continues as G.S.O.1 and Lt.-Col. H.V.D. LAING as A.A. & Q.M.G.

26. The temporary vacancy caused by the withdrawal of Brig. BROWNFIELD (para. 15, above) was filled by the appointment of Lt.-Col. P.C. TEES, M.M., E.D., from 2 Cdn Div, to perform the duties of C.R.A., 3 Cdn Div, in an acting capacity (1237, 7 Nov 41).

FIFTH CANADIAN (ARMoured) DIVISION

27. On the arrival of 5 Cdn (Armd) Div in the United Kingdom (see Report No. 54) the arrangement forecast in Report No. 36 (para. 23) was carried out : i.e., the British officers temporarily employed in first-grade appointments relinquished these,* and Lt.-Cols. STEIN and YOUNG took up the appointments of A.A. & Q.L.G. and C.S.O.1 respectively. The appointment of the former was notified in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1237, as of 18 Oct 41; Lt.-Col. YOUNG's appointment has not yet been gazetted.

28. Of the three brigadiers in the division, one was appointed from the Canadian Army Overseas - the commander of the Support Group, Brig. R.A. WYMAN, who went to this appointment from the command of 3 Cdn Fd Regt, which he relinquished 14 May 41 (908). None of the three brigadiers (see Report No. 54) was an officer of the Permanent Force.

FIRST CANADIAN ARMY TANK BRIGADE

29. Brigadier F.W. WORTHINGTON remains in command of 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde.

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS AND UNITS
UNDER ITS COMMAND

30. Major-General P.J. MONTAGUE continues as Senior Officer, Canadian Military Headquarters. He has recently, however, paid an extended visit to Canada, travelling by air, for consultations at R.D.H.Q. He left LONDON with the Minister of National Defence and the C.G.S. on 26 Oct 41 (see Report No. 52) and returned to the United Kingdom on 29 Nov 41. In his absence Brigadier J.C. MURCHIE, B.G.S., acted as Senior Officer.

31. In "G" Branch, C.M.H.Q., Lt.-Col. Young has been succeeded, as G.S.O.1 (S.D.), by Major W.J. MEGILL, R.C.C.S., whose appointment, in an acting capacity, is dated 14 Oct 41 (1109).

32. In "A" Branch, the appointment of Deputy Adjutant-General vacated by Brigadier F.R. PHELAN (below) was filled by the appointment of Col. A.W. BEAMENT, V.D. (appointment and promotion to Brigadier, 974, 9 Sep 41). Lt.-Col. W.B. WEDD, D.S.O., M.C., formerly D.A.A.G., succeeded Lt.-Col. STEIN (para. 27, above) as A.A.G. (Org) (1237, 18 Oct 41; promotion to Lt.-Col., 974, 9 Sep 41). Lt.-Col. C.S. BOOTH, E.D., has held the appointment of A.A.G. (Pers.) since 12 May 41 (746).

33. In "Q" Branch, Lt.-Col. N.B. MacDONALD has vacated the appointment of A.Q.M.G. (S.T.) in order to take command of the R.C.A.S.C. Reinforcement Unit, and has been replaced, in an acting capacity, by Lt.-Col. P.M. ABEL, formerly A.D.Q.M. This arrangement, which may be temporary, has not been gazetted as yet.

REINFORCEMENT UNITS.

34. After his promotion to Major-General (Report No. 36, para. 20 and Postscript) General PAGE was detailed temporarily to command Canadian Base Units until 27 Jul 41 (862). He was struck off strength of the Canadian Army Overseas as of 1 Aug 41 (927). As from 28 Jul, Brig. F.R. PHELAN, D.S.O., M.C., V.D., was detailed temporarily to command C.B.U., and Col. BEAMENT to perform the duties of D.A.G., C.M.H.Q., in an acting capacity (862 : cf. para. 32, above). Brig. Phelan was definitely appointed to the command as of 9 Sep 41 (974).

X These officers were Lt.-Col. E.L. FANSHAW, R.A.C. (G.S.O.1) and Col. J.R. FARRINGTON, R.T.R. (A.A. & Q.M.G.).

35. Colonel HAMILTON GAULT has remained in command of "A" Group, Holding Units. Lt.-Col. J.R.S. LOUGH, D.S.O., M.C., V.D., took over the command of "B" Group in an acting capacity on the departure of Col. Beament (862 : 28 Jul 41). On 29 Sep 41, Brigadier H. LEFEBVRE, M.C., V.D., who had lately arrived from Canada, was detailed temporarily to command "B" Group (1077). This arrangement endured until 24-25 Nov, when Brigadier A.E. NASH, lately D.A.G. at N.D.H.Q., was appointed to command the Group. On the latter date Brigadier LEFEBVRE took command of the newly organized "D" Group, Reinforcement Units (1335).

36. On his restoration to health, Brigadier J.C. STEWART (above, para. 15) did not return to Cdn Corps, but was appointed to command "C" Group, Holding Units (the Artillery group) as of 25 Sep 41 (1052).

37. It will be noted that the projected reorganization of the Holding Units is now in progress (cf. Report No. 38) and that the name "Reinforcement Unit" is beginning to replace the older designation. Three of the Groups are now commanded by officers of the rank of Brigadier, but the elevation of C.B.U. (now referred to, e.g. in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1325, as "H.Q. Cdn Reinforcement Units") to a Major-General's command, mentioned as a possible development in Report No. 36, has not as yet taken place.

STAFF TRAINING, ETC.

38. A definite attempt is at present being made in Cdn Corps to ensure that junior staff officers do not lose touch with regimental conditions. A number of officers have lately been returned for tours of regimental duty: e.g., Major D.K. ROBERTSON (recently G.S.O.2 (I) at H.Q. Cdn Corps) and Major C.R. ARCHIBALD (recently G.S.O.2 (Ops) at the same H.Q.). This policy is referred to in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1300 (25 Nov 41), as follows :

2. It is desirable that there should be a free interchange of officers between regimental duty and the Staff. It will, therefore, from time to time be found desirable to send officers holding Staff appointments back for a tour of regimental duty, to the end that they will be better qualified for further advancement on the Staff ...

39. Policy relating to "the progressive training of officers for employment on the Staffs of H.Q. and formations of the Canadian Army (Overseas)" is outlined in C.A.R.O. (O/S) 1325 (2 Dec 41). This provides that the first step in the training of a Staff Officer will be posting to the H.Q. of a division or a brigade, to H.Q. Cdn Reinforcement Units, or to H.Q. of a group of reinforcement units, as Motor Contact Officer or Staff Learner. An officer who serves three months in one of these capacities and is recommended by the Commander at whose H.Q. he has served will have his name placed on the Staff Course Recommended List, on which are based the recommendations of the Selection Committee (C.A.R.O. (O/S) 979) for attendance at staff courses and for grade 3 staff appointments when suitable officers with staff course training are not available. The Order in question should be consulted for fuller details.

40. A proportion of vacancies continues to be allotted to the Canadian forces for the War Staff Courses conducted by the British authorities. As these vacancies are far from adequate to Canadian needs, the chief source of trained staff officers will continue to be the Canadian Junior War Staff Courses, now being conducted at R.M.C., KINGSTON; ONEARIO. (Cf. Reports Nos. 14 and 22.)

FRENCH-CANADIAN OFFICERS

41. The policy noted in Report No. 36 (paras. 25-6) with respect to French-Canadian officers continues in force. Every effort is being made to discover and where necessary train suitable French-speaking officers for commands and staff appointments. A programme for establishing and maintaining a proper balance in this matter has been drawn up at N.D.H.Q. The details are available in C.M.H.Q. file 9/EMPLOY/1.

42. With reference to Report No. 36, para. 25, it will be noted that there are now two French-Canadian Brigadiers on the strength of the Canadian Army Overseas - Brigadiers ARCHAMBAULT (8 Cdn Inf Bde) and LEBREVE ("D" Group Reinforcement Units - para. 35, above).

AGE LIMITS FOR FIELD APPOINTMENTS

43. There has of late been considerable official discussion of the desirability of fixing definite and relatively low limits of age for Canadian officers holding appointments in field formations and units. It was stated on 18 Jul 41 (Memo of Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., for V.C.G.S. - file 9/CDN CORPS/1) that

The present average age of Major-Generals in the British Army in command of active formations is approximately 49, which is down from 51, the average age of six months ago.

At the present time the only actual age limits established in the British Army are those set up by the Royal Warrant for the Pay, Appointment, Promotion and Non-Effective Pay of the Army, 1940 (art. 556) which fixes retiring ages as follows: Major-Generals, 57; Brigadiers and Colonels, 55; Lieutenant-Colonels, 50. The only Canadian provision is the peacetime limits in M.R. (Can.) 1939, art. 253. It had been expected that the War Office would shortly establish a drastic schedule of retirement ages affecting lower ranks as well; but this plan has lately been abandoned, and this unexpected development has upset Canadian plans for producing a complete Canadian schedule in the form of an Overseas Routine Order. Such an order had been tentatively drafted fixing retiring ages (for field formations and units) as follows: Major-Generals, 57; Brigadiers and Colonels, 54; Lieutenant-Colonels, 51. Further developments may presumably be expected.

44. It was stated in October, 1941 (9/CDN CORPS/1) that there was then no Major-General over the age of 57 commanding an active British formation. With reference to the case of General CDLUM (above, paras. 4-5) it is thus apparent that he was, at the time of his retirement, by a considerable margin the oldest active divisional commander in the United Kingdom.

45. The age-limit question generally may be studied in C.M.H.Q. file 9/CDN CORPS/1.

C.B.S.

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Postscript. Since para. 35, above, was written, Lt.-Col. MacDONALD's new appointment (in an acting capacity) has appeared in Orders (1335 : 25 Nov 41).