

NOTE

This is a preliminary narrative and should not be regarded as authoritative. It has not been checked for accuracy in all aspects, and its interpretations are not necessarily those of the Historical Section as a whole.

Ce texte est préliminaire et n'a aucun caractère officiel. On n'a pas vérifié son exactitude et les interprétations qu'il contient ne sont pas nécessairement celles du Service historique.

Directorate of History
National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

July 1986

CANCELLED

By: CDR Date: NOV 13 1944

29 Apr 42

REPORT No. 68

HISTORICAL OFFICER,
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

Visit of Their Majesties The King and
Queen to Fifth Canadian (Armoured)
Division, 24 Apr 42.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: DHD 3-3

by CDR Date: NOV 13 1944

Progress of Canadian Armoured Formations.

1. This Report deals with the visit paid by Their Majesties the King and Queen to 5 Cdn (Arm'd) Div in the ALDERSHOT area on 24 Apr 42. In addition, the opportunity is taken of compiling some notes on the present state of the Canadian Armoured Formations now in this country. These Formations are of course 5 Cdn (Arm'd) Div, which arrived in the United Kingdom in October and November, 1941, and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, which arrived at the end of June, 1941.

ROYAL VISIT TO FIFTH CANADIAN (ARMOURED) DIV

2. Their Majesties The King and Queen made their first visit to 5 Cdn (Arm'd) Div on 24 Apr 42. The writer was present with the P.R.O. party from C.M.H.Q., and saw most of the events of the programme.

3. The Royal Party was escorted from the Jolly Farmer Inn at PAGSHOT to Queen's Parade, FARNBOROUGH, by a travelling escort of 1 Cdn Arm'd Car Regt (R.C.D.) equipped with armoured cars and scout cars. At Queen's Parade, the King and Queen were met by Major-General SANSON, G.O.C. 5 Cdn (Arm'd) Div. Lieut.-General McNAUGHTON, G.O.C.-in-C. First Canadian Army, and Major-General MONTAGUE, Senior Officer, Canadian Military Headquarters, were also present.

4. On Queen's Parade the King and Queen inspected a Guard of Honour formed by 1 Cdn Arm'd Car Regt and thereafter passed through a long lane of Divisional troops drawn up with their vehicles behind them. At the far end of the parade Their Majesties inspected the Division's eight Armoured Command Vehicles. They did not, however, travel in one of these to the next appointment as provided in the programme.

5. The Inspecting Party now proceeded to Stanhope Parade, where, after passing through the CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDERS, the Division's Rifle Battalion, they were greeted by Brigadier MORTON, commanding the Support Group, and inspected 17 P'd Regt, R.C.A. This regiment made an extremely smart appearance on parade and subsequently marched past with great precision. Their Majesties then watched 4 Cdr A.Tk Regt practising gun drill at the east end of the same parade ground.

6. After coffee at the Officers' Club the Royal Party proceeded to BEAUMONT BARRACKS, and here and at

adjacent barracks they inspected 2 Cdn Armd Bde, now commanded by Brigadier C.R.S. STEIN. They saw in succession 9 Cdn Armd Regt (BRITISH COLUMBIA DRAGOONS), 3 Cdn Armd Regt (GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HORSE GUARDS, and 5 Cdn Armd Regt (8th PRINCESS LOUISE'S NEW BRUNSWICK HUSSARS). These units were disposed on their parade grounds with various activities in progress, including classes in a great variety of subjects. Their tanks were also to be seen, the types inspected including the Ram, the General Lee, the General Stuart and the M.2.A.4. Subsequently a visit was paid to the PERTH REGT, the Motor Bn attached to this brigade.

AFTERNOON INSPECTIONS

7. The Royal Party lunched at Divisional Headquarters (The Royal Pavilion, Aldershot). Thereafter they proceeded to PIERREPONT HOUSE, not far from FRENESHAM, where they saw 1 Armd Bde Coy, R.C.A.S.C., breaking bulk and issuing rations. They then proceeded to FRENESHAM COMMON.

8. Here the Royal Party left their cars on the summit of the hill on the north side of the Common. 1 Cdn Armd Bde (Brigadier T.J. RUTHERFORD) was drawn up below, and Their Majesties took the salute of the brigade from a stand on the brow of the hill. Thereafter they watched the brigade's tanks and carriers, which had been disposed in line along the summit of the ridge bordering the east side of the Common, descend the hill at speed. Their Majesties then walked down the hill and inspected the Brigade. 24 Lt Fd Amb, R.C.A.M.C., 2 Cdn Armd Regt (LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE (R.C.)), 6 Cdn Armd Regt (1st HUSSARS) and 10 Cdn Armd Regt (FORT GARRY HORSE), were successively inspected, engaged in a wide variety of activities, ranging from boxing, through instruction in map reading and gunnery, to cooking. Tanks of various types demonstrated their hill-climbing capacity. At the end of this visit Their Majesties had an opportunity of making a close inspection of a Ram tank.

9. The day's programme ended with a very successful series of demonstrations by the WESTMINSTER REGIMENT (Motor), the Motor Battalion of 1 Cdn Armd Bde, on the north end of FRENESHAM COMMON. Here the Queen remained behind while The King and the remainder of the Inspecting Party entered Bren Carriers and were taken on a rapid tour of the north end of the Common to see the demonstrations. These included a very realistic representation of the ambushing and destruction of an enemy tank patrol preceded by motor-cyclists; an attack by a platoon using practice grenades; and an effective demonstration of debussing and deployment by a motorized company whose platoons were brought to the front in trucks and came into action with Bren guns and 2-inch mortars with great rapidity. This unit's programme concluded with a concealment exercise in which a large number of soldiers, concealed on what appeared to be a bare hillside, revealed themselves at the blast of a bugle and rushed forward towards the Royal Party.

10. The weather was favourable, being bright though cool and breezy; and this inspection was in general a most successful occasion. As has been noted in earlier Reports (e.g., Nos. 19, 37, 48 and 50) visits paid by the Royal Family, and particularly by Her Majesty, are decidedly appreciated by the Canadian troops, and probably play a

material part in the maintenance of morale during the present static period.

11. The day's activities left the spectators with a lively sense of the healthy condition of 5 Cdn (Armd) Div, which presented the appearance of a keen and efficient formation likely to give a good account of itself in the field when given an opportunity. Still very far from complete in equipment, it now possesses enough to enable it to make a respectable showing on an occasion of this sort. The general spirit of the men appeared to be excellent, and in the matter of smartness on parade the writer recalls no Canadian unit superior to 17 Cdn Pz Regt.

PROGRESS OF FIFTH CANADIAN (ARMoured) DIVISION

12. This inspection affords a convenient opportunity for assessing the progress made by 5 Cdn (Armd) Div since its arrival in this country last autumn. The facts presented in the paragraphs which follow are extracted from the relevant C.M.H.Q. files.

13. So far as training is concerned a report made by General SANSON as of 31 Mar 42 (C.M.H.Q. file 2/5 ARMD DIV/1) noted the fact that 2 Cdn Armd Bde was considerably less advanced than 1 Cdn Armd Bde. This was attributed chiefly to the fact that the former was accommodated in quarters over relatively large areas (in the HUNGERFORD, and subsequently in the HINDHEAD, regions) while the latter was concentrated in ALDERSHOT and had better training facilities available. Effective 1 Apr 42, therefore, the two brigades were interchanged, and it is hoped that 2 Cdn Armd Bde can now make up its lost ground.

14. The state of the rifle battalion of the Support Group (CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDERS) was noted as unsatisfactory. There has now been a change of command in this unit.

15. At 31 Mar 42 the basic training period within the Division had been completed, and crew and troop training has been in progress in the Armoured Regiments and Armoured Car Regiment since 1 Apr. Further progress depends in great part on the availability of equipment; but General Sanson's report, mentioned above, concluded with the following summary :

Subject to the limitations of eqpt and the availability of instrs' courses, it is considered that by 15 Jun 42 the Div should be ready for collective trg on a Div basis.

16. EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS. Some notes on the progress made in equipping 5 Cdn (Armd) Div during its early months in this country will be found in Report No. 62 (22 Feb 42). Since that Report was written, the Canadian-made tank known as the Ram (really a combination of the British "Crusader" cruiser and the American M-3 Medium) has begun to arrive in this country, the first two being unloaded during the week ending 7 Mar 42 (see G.S.855, CANMILITARY to DEFENSOR, 8 Mar 42 - C.M.H.Q. Progress Report for the week). As of 31 Mar 42 (see Appendix to General Sanson's report already referred to), the Division possessed tanks as follows :

Ram I	11
General Lee	42
General Stuart	5
M2 A4	5
A.A. Lt Tank	4

17. The "Ram I" is the Canadian cruiser with 2-pounder gun. (The "Ram II", of which none have yet been received, will mount a 6-pounder.) The "General Lee" is the American M-3 Medium, mounting a 75-mm. gun on the off side and a 37-mm. gun in the turret. The "General Stuart" is the American M-3 Light, with 37-mm. gun. The "M2 A4" is a similar light American tank, out of which the "Stuart" was developed; it is a training vehicle only. The "A.A. Lt Tank" is the British Mk. VI Light tank fitted with four high-angle L.M.Gs.

18. The present situation in the Division with respect to holdings of armoured fighting vehicles is as follows (Division's Progress Report for week ending 25 Apr 42, C.M.H.Q. file 4/PROGRESS/1/4) :

Ram I	29
General Lee	45
General Stuart	6
M2 A4	7
A.A. Lt Tank	4
Armoured Cars	21

Seven Rams and three General Lees were received during the week in question.

19. In carriers the Division is almost complete, serious deficiencies existing only in the field of universal mortar carriers : here the establishment calls for 15, but it possesses none. It is complete in 25-pounders and 2-pounder A.Tk guns. It still possesses only 104 A. Tk rifles against an establishment of 440.

20. The question of when the Division can become an operational formation is thus mainly a matter of the provision of tanks. The Division is to be equipped with Rams and as the arrival of Rams from Canada involves not merely the usual difficulties attending an early stage of production, but also the added difficulty of finding shipping space (a problem which is particularly serious at this moment), it clearly cannot be completed for some time to come. It had been hoped that it might be able to join the Canadian operational Order of Battle by 15 Jun 42, but in March, during his visit to Canada, General McNAUGHTON reviewed the schedule for deliveries of the Ram II, and decided that it was necessary to put back the date to 1 Aug 42, except that 1 Cdn Armd Bde might "go in earlier" on the basis of temporary equipment with American tanks, if the War Office would make these available (Telegrams DEFENSOR to CANMILITHY, G.S.106 and 113, latter dated 12 Mar 42).

21. With respect to this matter and to the general state of the Division, it is of interest to note the concluding paragraph of a brief report on its state of training, made to H.Q. Royal Armoured Corps, by Major-General M.B. BURROWS, G.O.C. 2 Armoured Group, 9 Apr 42 (C.M.H.Q. file 2/5 ARMD DIV/1). It runs as follows :

7. From what I know of the officers and men of this Division, and their keenness to be

fully fit for war, I am sure that this state will be reached in a surprisingly short time after the receipt of their equipment.

PROGRESS OF FIRST CANADIAN ARMY TANK BRIGADE

22. It is convenient in this place to compile a few notes also on the state of 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, which was the first Canadian armoured formation to arrive in this country. It should be noted that its situation is at present quite different from that of 5 Cdn (Armd) Div. The Tank Brigade is a fully operational formation and is on the Order of Battle of 1 Cdn Corps, with an important role in the defence of SUSSEX. 5 Cdn (Armd) Div is still in process of mobilization and is under command of C.M.H.Q.

23. It follows that 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde is virtually fully equipped. (On this matter see Report No. 62.) This formation, however, is not without equipment problems, arising mainly out of the mechanical difficulties encountered with the Churchill tanks with which it is equipped. These tanks have developed serious defects in gear-boxes and clutches, with the consequence that a considerable proportion of the brigade's tanks are usually "off the road".

24. The General Report for Cdn Corps for week ending 28 Feb 42 makes the following remark :

1 Cdn Army Tk Bde now hold 163 Churchills and 4 Covenanters. One A.A. Tank received making two now held. New tanks are being put into running shape as quickly as possible. Spare parts urgently needed to make tanks battleworthy.

The General Report for week ending 21 Mar 42 makes the further remark about this formation :

Tank strength of Bde - 167 Churchills of which 43 out of action - 2 cruiser tanks - 2 A.A. Tanks Comd 1 Cdn Army Tank Bde visited LUTON regarding spare parts for Churchills, and as result of his visit feels spare parts can now be more readily obtained.

25. During the week ending 18 Apr 42, the brigade received one Churchill tank Mk III, mounting a 6-pounder gun. Two additional Covenanter cruisers were received during the week ending 25 Apr 42.

26. The Brigade's holdings in armoured fighting vehicles are given as follows in the War Office State of Equipment as at 21st April, 1942 R.A.C. Statements :

Churchills	174
Covenanters	4
A.A. Lt Tanks	2
Scout Cars	37

27. During Exercise "BEAVER III" the writer had an opportunity of visiting 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde and having conversations with a number of officers of Brigade Headquarters and 14 Cdn Army Tk Bn (CALGARY REGIMENT). From them he ascertained that the mechanical difficulties mentioned above are still being encountered with the Churchill tank. The brigade had slightly over 130

Churchills in action for this exercise. It is understood that the brigade put in an effective attack south of HORSHAM on the evening of 23 Apr 42 and was instrumental in forcing the withdrawal of the "enemy" force (represented by 1 Cdn Div and attached troops) to its bridgehead on the coast.

28. It seems to be a general opinion that 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde is an efficient formation and in a very healthy state. This was also the writer's own impression during his recent visit to the brigade.

29. The brigade is now commanded by Brigadier R.A. WYMAN, who formerly commanded the Support Group of 5 Cdn (Armd) Div. Brigadier Wyman succeeded Major-General F.F. WORTHINGTON when the latter was promoted and returned to Canada to assume command of 4 Cdn (Armd) Div.

C.P. Stacey

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer (S.D.2),
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.

NOTE. Illustrations of British tank types (including the Churchill, the Ram, the General Lee and the General Stuart) will be found in a recent G.S. publication, A.F.V. Field Pocket Book, 1942 (War Office, 22 Jan 42). Enemy types are also illustrated.