

## **REPORT ON. 7**

### **HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

##### **THE 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION**

### INTRODUCTION

1. This report deals with the formation, organization, training and operational role of the first of the three Home Defence Divisions of the Canadian army, i.e. the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Division. The source material from which the following account is drawn includes the "G" and "A" War Diaries of the Divisional Headquarters, the War Diaries of the component brigades and the Headquarters files in Central Registry, Department of National Defence. Of these latter, the pertinent files in the "20" block were found to be most useful.

### FIRST PROPOSALS TO MOBILITE THE 6<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> DIVISIONS

2. At the same time that the units comprising the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Divisions were being called out for active service on 1 Sep 39, "details" of other previously specified units were also called out for home defence and general security duties. These, and other Non-Permanent Active Militia units, which were from time to time placed on an active service basis under Section 64 of the Militia Act, formed a pool from which subsequent overseas and Home Defence Divisions were formed. In May 1940 the mobilization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division was

announced; and in June the raising of a fourth division was determined upon.

3. In October 1940, preliminary discussions were held by the Directorates concerned, regarding the mobilization of two more infantry divisions. The raising of these divisions, not including those battalions already called out for home defence purposes, had not, at this date, been authorized. It was decided, therefore, merely to prepare a tentative selection of units which might comprise these divisions, taking into account the necessity of maintaining a certain number of Coast Defence battalions and also infantry battalions in Newfoundland and the West Indies. The selection of component units was to be based upon the manpower capacity of the various Military Districts (HQS 20-2-5, vol 1: "Planning Canadian Army Programme, Project No. 13": see also Memo by A/D.C.G.S., 23 Oct 40).

4. No further steps appear to have been taken for several months, and on 7 May 41, the Acting Chief of the General Staff, Brigadier Maurice Pope, asked the Director of Staff Duties to prepare a suggested table of composition for a 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division (H.Q.S. 20-1-5, vol. 1: Pope to D.S.D., 7 May 41). In reply Major (later Brigadier) I.M. Chesley (E.D. (A)) prepared tables showing a draft composition for the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Divisions (Ibid: E.D. (A) to D.S.D., 10 May 41). These tables included the mobilized Home Defence battalions, those in Newfoundland and Jamaica, and three Coast Defence battalions. The principle of territorial representation was duly observed, and Western Canada. Quebec was represented by three regiments. With regard to other arms and services, any selection would have to be deferred

until the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and Corps requirements were known, but Major Chesley pointed out that there were a sufficient number of non-mobilized batteries in Military Districts 1, 2, 4, 4, 7, 10, 12, and 13 to provide the necessary artillery components for the two divisions. As a matter of interest, the suggested infantry components of the two divisions might be noted in this report:

#### Composition, 5<sup>th</sup> Division

##### 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

The Edmonton Fusiliers

Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment)

The Winnipeg Grenadiers

##### 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

The Kent Regiment

The Algonquin Regiment

The Midland Regiment

##### 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

The Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment

The Victoria Rifles of Canada

The Royal Rifles of Canada

M.G. Battalion

The Saint John Fusiliers (M.G.)

Composition, 6<sup>th</sup> Division

16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

The Rocky Mountain Rangers

The Prince Albert and Battleford Volunteers

The Winnipeg Light Infantry

17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment

The Sault Ste.Marie and Sudbury Regiment

Le Regiment de Hull

18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade

Les Voltigeurs de Quebec

The Prince Edward Island Highlanders

The New Brunswick Rangers

## M. G. Battalion

### Le Regiment de Chateauguay (Mit.)

5. Early in July, 1941, a change of nomenclature took place which affected the Division which forms the subject of this report. The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Armoured Division, which had been authorized by General Order 88, 5 Jun 41, was redesignated the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian (Armoured) Division; accordingly, the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian (Armoured) Division, which we have been discussing above, was renumbered the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division; while the previous 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division became the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division.
6. On 2 Jul 41, tentative proposals for the Order of Battle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division were re-examined, and a revised table of composition submitted to the Chief of the General Staff. This draft was prepared by Colonel (later Brigadier) W.H.S. Macklin, Director of Staff Duties. Colonel Macklin pointed out in his memorandum the necessity of improving the position respecting French-speaking representation in the Active Army. Although a fair measure of representation in the Active Army. Although a fair measure of representation had been achieved in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions, “in the somewhat hasty mobilization which was carried out in June, 1940, at the time of the collapse of France, this important matter was forgotten or pushed aside” (Ibid, vol. 1: Macklin to A/C. G. S., 2 Jul 41). No French-speaking units had been included in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and, except for the Sherbrooke Fusilier Regiment, which was a bilingual amalgamation of two Non-Permanent Active Militia units, not one of the unallotted

infantry battalions raised at that time was French-Canadian. With regard to the Armoured Division, it has been considered inadvisable to complicate the problem of inter-communication by introducing French-speaking units. Another factor was the necessity for speed, which had precluded the raising of new units ad initio. French Canada therefore obtained scarcely any representation in the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division. Accordingly, in planning the Order of Battle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, “a determined effort” was made “to correct the existing situation respecting French-Canadian units” (Ibid).

7. In his proposed Order of Battle for the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division the Director of Staff Duties accepted the previous recommendation for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades, but suggested the following composition for the 15<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade:

Le Regiment de Hull (to be mobilized) Les Voltigeurs de Quebec, and a Coast Defence Infantry Battalion from M.D. 6.

He also suggested that certain French-speaking units of arms other than infantry should be incorporated into the divisional Order of Battle, including the 58<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Battery (Levis), 15<sup>th</sup> Field Company (Thetford Mines), 19<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance (Quebec) and 6<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ordonance Field Park (Quebec). With regard to 6<sup>th</sup> Divisional Signals, it was appreciated that the Militia units, insofar as trained personnel were concerned, were largely exhausted and that it would be necessary to fill the signal sections by quotas of men from all Districts, strengthened

by a few from overseas.

8. Two days later, on 4 Jul 41, the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General (later General) H.D.G. Crerar, sent a request to the Minister of National Defence urging the partial mobilization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division (Ibid: Crerar to the Minister, 4 Jul 41). He wrote, in part, as follows:

1. The question of the Order of Battle of a prospective 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division (of which the majority of the infantry battalions are already available) has been under examination for some time.
2. The proposed Order of Battle now submitted by D.S.D., the basis of which is argued in his memorandum of 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1941..... is concurred in by me.
3. It will be noted that a good deal of thought has been given to the problem of giving more adequate representation in the Active Army to French Canada.
4. I would ask for your very early approval of this Order of Battle, and especially as regards the proposed composition of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades.
5. I also recommend that approval be now given for the progressive mobilization of the

- new units required to enable these three Brigades to function as Infantry Brigade Groups, this mobilization to begin as soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division has departed overseas.
6. Approval of the infantry composition of this prospective 6<sup>th</sup> Division is an urgent matter. These units will, for at least several months, and perhaps for over a year, be employed in a home defence role. It will be to them that a considerable proportion of those infantry trainees who have not volunteered to serve overseas, and who leave the Advanced Training Centres on 19<sup>th</sup> July, will need to be posted.
  7. As indicated above, I propose that the mobilization of 6 Canadian Division should initially be partial. The first stage will be to complete the three Brigade Groups which it is intended to locate : - (a) at Nanaimo (b) on the Welland Canal (c) at Valcartier. There they will be relieved by the Brigade or battalion now doing duty in those areas, and the Brigades of the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division will concentrate at Debert and Sussex in replacement of 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division.
  8. As soon as the foregoing policy has been approved a detailed schedule of partial and progressive mobilization will be drawn up for 6 Canadian Division.
  9. On 7 July the Minister of National Defence replied as follows:



To approve your memorandum of July 4<sup>th</sup> would be to authorize the 6<sup>th</sup> Division in advance of the War Committee of Cabinet having passed on it. As you know, the matter of the authority for mobilization of a 6<sup>th</sup> Division is now before the Committee. Before the Prime Minister went away, I asked you if it was urgent, and you told me that no decision was needed before the Prime Minister returned.

I understood from you verbally that all you wanted for the present was approval of a list of units to which those doing compulsory training at the Infantry Training Centres could be posted as they finished their monthly training. If you will submit the list which you suggest, I shall deal with it at once.

I note Colonel Macklin's memorandum of July 2<sup>nd</sup>, particularly regarding the paucity of French-Canadian units (Ibid: Ralston to C.G.S., 7 Jul 41).

#### THE MOBILIZATION OF THREE BRIGADE GROUPS OF 6<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION

10. In a subsequent memorandum to the Minister of National Defence, the Chief of the General Staff pointed out that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division was then under orders to embark for overseas, and that plans were under way for the despatch of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division in September and October. Under these circumstances, the organized forces available for mobile operations in Canada would be reduced to one division (the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian). Steps

had already been taken to concentrate this division at Sussex and Debert in the Maritime Provinces as soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division should sail. In the light of this situation, the Chief of the General Staff again urged that authority be obtained to commence the mobilization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division “which, until further authority is sought, will be organized on a basis of three Brigade Groups, instead of a complete Division” (Ibid: Crerar to Minister of National Defence, 15 Jul 41). These Brigade Groups were designed to be operationally self-supporting. Each was to consist of the following troops:

Brigade Headquarters

One Infantry Brigade of three battallions

One Field Regiment R.C.A.

One Field Company R.C.E.

Signal Sections for each Infantry Brigade and Field Regiment.

Detachments of Ammunition and Petrol Companies and a Supply Column, R.C.A.S.C.

One Field Ambulance

Two Light Aid Detachments R.C.O.C.

It was intended that the Brigade Groups should be located at Nanaimo, B.C., Niagara Peninsula (Welland Canal), and Valcartier. Owing to the selection of the Cape Breton Highlanders for the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division, and the reinforcement of “W” Force by the Prince Edward Island Highlanders, the Chief of the General Staff also requested authority to

mobilize two additional infantry battalions.

11. The implementation of this programme necessitated the mobilization of two Infantry Brigade Headquarters: two infantry battalions, three field regiments R.C.A., three field companies, R.C.E., five signal sections (one already formed for the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade), detachments for each company divisional R.C.A.S.C., three field ambulances, and six light aid detachments. The total strength of the proposed Brigade Groups was 12,223 all ranks, of which 6,337 were already mobilized. 5,886 were therefore required to bring the Brigade Groups up to strength. As it was contemplated that these units would be employed “for a considerable period” in a Home Defence role it was planned to utilize them to absorb them a proportion of “R” recruits who had not volunteered to serve overseas, and who had not been posted to Coast Defence units with a fixed role (Ibid). These recommendations were approved by the War Committee of the Cabinet on 29 Jul 41. (Ibid: Notation on General Crerar’s memorandum).

12. Following the approval of the Minister covering the formation of three Brigade Groups the details of the proposed organization of these Groups were the subject of a meeting of Directors at the Department of National Defence on 6 Aug 41. (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 1: Minutes

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‘ One Brigade (the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade) had been authorized to mobilize 21 Jul 40. (see para 20).

of a Meeting of Directors held at N.D.H.Q., 1100 hrs 6 Aug 41). The Directors agreed that the mobilization of the component units should be progressive. Initially, cadres of officers and non-commissioned officers down to and including corporals were to be raised and trained. It was estimated that this cadre training would last from six to twelve months, depending on the arm, and that it would be November or December before mobilization proper would begin. The authority to mobilize provided that the units concerned should absorb a proportion of “R” recruits. This was particularly the case with Le Regiment de Hull owing to the fact that few units existed to which French-speaking “R” recruits could be satisfactorily posted. At the same time every encouragement was to be given to soldiers serving in the Reserve Army (formerly Non-Permanent Active Militia) to enlist (Ibid). The estimated costs of the three Brigade Groups with a strength of 545 officers and 11,497 other ranks for a period of two and one-half months in Cadre form (614 officers and non-commissioned officers), and three and one-half months full establishment amounted to \$12,782,569 (Ibid: Crerar to the Minister of National Defence, 6 Aug 41).

13. Although mobilization instructions (copies of these Mobilization Instructions will be found in HQS 20-1-5 , vol. 1) were sent to the District Officers Commanding as early as 18 Aug 41, regarding the mobilization of the units of the three Brigade Groups which were to compose the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, the General Order naming these units as Corps of the Active Militia and placing them on Active Service as active units of the Canadian Army under Section 64 of the Militia Act was not issued until 24 Feb 42. This order, General Order

63/1942, was, however, made effective as of 29 Jul 41.

14. On 16 September, as a result of representation made by the Minister, (Ibid: Memorandum, 6 Sep 41) amendments were issued to the original instructions of 18 August stating that personnel might be obtained from general enlistment, as well as from the Reserve units and “R” recruits. The period for this general enlistment was to end on 20 Oct 41 “at which time such recruiting will cease, and each District Officer Commanding concerned will submit a report to National Defence Headquarters, showing what progress has been made in the mobilization of 6<sup>th</sup> Division units being raised in his District”. On receipt of this report arrangements were to be made to fill vacancies with “R” recruits or other personnel at training centres (Ibid: A.G. circular letter to D.Os.C. 16 Sep 41). On 20 September further instructions were issued qualifying the phrase “will cease”. (Ibid: A. Gs. Circular letter to D.Os.C.,

20 Sep 41) The Adjutant General’s circular letter read in part as follows:

The intention is that recruiting shall cease only for the units referred to but that applicants presenting themselves for enlistment after the date mentioned should be diverted to other units then mobilizing or enlisted as reinforcements to training centres.

15. It may be of interest to note briefly the procedure laid down in connection with the training of the newly mobilized units. All recruited personnel, whether coming from the Reserve

force units or from any other source, were required to complete their training at the Basic and Advanced Training Centres. The non-commissioned officers were to take a four-weeks course at the Junior Leaders School and subsequently another four-weeks course at an Advanced Training Centre. The officers were to attend Officers Training Centres and Advanced Training Centres. Under this plan it was possible for all privates to be trained basically in the common and special-to-arms subjects when the unit concentrated and for all non-commissioned officers to receive a thorough refresher course in their duties. The period during which the other ranks were proceeding through the Basic and Advanced Training Centres was to be used to qualify unqualified officers and to give qualified officers refresher courses. (Ibid: Memorandum by D.M.T. to D. of M. & R., 13 Nov 41).

16. Although the units selected to compose the Brigade Groups had received the approval of the Minister, allocation of units other than infantry, within the respective Brigade Groups, had not yet been approved. Accordingly, on 29 Aug 41, the Director of Staff Duties submitted a table of composition to the Chief of the General Staff, pointing out that although the newly mobilized units would not concentrate with their Brigade Groups until would not concentrate with their Brigade Groups until about 1 December it would be desirable from an administrative point of view to settle the composition of the Brigades as soon as possible. The table of composition which appears below received the approval of the Chief of the General Staff on 30 Aug 41. (Ibid: D.S.D. to C.G.S., 29 Aug 41).

<u>Arm</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>M.D.</u>	<u>Station</u>
Headquarters	H.Q. 13 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade,		
Artillery	H.Q. 21 <sup>st</sup> Field Regiment, R.C.A.		
	59 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery R.C.A.	10	Brandon
		12	Yorkton
	39 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery R.C.A.	13	Lethbridge
Engineers	20 <sup>th</sup> Field Company R.C.E.	10	M.D. No. 10
Signals	“E” Sec. No. 2 Coy 6 Div Sigs)	all	
	“J” Sec. No. 3 Coy 6 Div Sigs)		
Infantry	The Winnipeg Grenadiers	10	Winnipeg
Infantry	The Irish Fusiliers (Van. Regt.)	11	Vancouver
	The Edmonton Fusiliers	13	Edmonton
R.C.A.S.C.	Det. Amn Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	2	Hamilton
	Det. Petrol Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	13	Calgary
	Det. Supply Coln, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.		
R.C.A.M.C.	17 <sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance R.C.A.M.C	13	Ponoka Alta
	No. 78 Light Aid Detachment (Type	10	M.D. 10
	A)		
	No. 83 Light Aid Detachment (Type		

## 14<sup>th</sup> BRIGADE GROUP

Headquarters	H.Q. 14 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade		
	H.Q. 19 <sup>th</sup> Field Regiment R.C.A.		
	55 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery R.C.A.	1	London
	63 <sup>rd</sup> Field Battery R.C.A.	1	Guelph
Engineers	5 <sup>th</sup> Field Company R.C.E.	3	Kingston
Signals	“F” Sec. No. 2 Coy 6 Div Sigs)		all
	“K” Sec No. 3 Coy 6 Div Sigs)		
Infantry	The Kent Regiment	1	Chatham
	The Algonquin Regiment	2	North Bay
	The Midland Regiment (Northumberland	3	Cobourg
R.C.A.S.C.	Det. Amn Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	2	Hamilton
	Det. Petrol Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	13	Calgary
R.C.A.M.C.	6 <sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M.C.	4	Montreal
Ordnance	No. 79 Light Aid Detachment (Type A)	10	M.D. 10
	No. 81 Light Aid Detachment (Type B)		



15<sup>th</sup> BRIGADE GROUP

Headquarters	H.Q. 15 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade		
Artillery	H.Q. 20 <sup>th</sup> Field Regiment R.C.A.		
	58 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery, R.C.A.	5	Levis
	72 <sup>nd</sup> Field Battery, R.C.A.	4	Coaticook
	79 <sup>th</sup> Field Battery,		
Engineers	15 <sup>th</sup> Field Company, R.C.E.	5	Thetford Mines
Signals	“G” Sec. No. 2 Coy 6 Div Sigs)	all	
	“L” Sec. No. 3 Coy 6 Div Sigs)		
Infantry	Les Voltigeurs de Quebec	5	Quebec
	The Halifax Rifles	6	Halifax
R.C.A.S.C.	Det. Amn Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	2	Hamilton
	Det. Petrol Coy, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	13	Calgary
	Det. Supply Coln, 6 Div R.C.A.S.C.	7	Saint John
R.C.A.M.C.	20 <sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M.C.(with one Coy from 19 Rd Amb)	4	Montreal
	(with one Coy from 19 Fd Amb)	5	Quebec
Ordnance	No. 80 Light Aid Detachment (Type A)	10	M.D. 10
	No. 82 Light Aid Detachment (Type B)		

MOBILIZATION OF HEADQUARTERS 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION

17. It was not, however, until 16 Mar 42, that the chief of the General Staff (Lieutenant-General K. Stuart) forwarded a submission to the Minister of National Defence requesting authority for the mobilization of those units required to complete the Order of Battle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division. He pointed out that the 4<sup>th</sup> Division at Debert was now being converted to an armoured division, and that it was anticipated that it would move overseas in the late summer or early autumn of that year. It was therefore advisable that the 6<sup>th</sup> Division should be brought up to full strength and concentrated at Debert, when the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division should vacate that area (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 2: C.G.S. memorandum to the Minister, 16 Mar 42). This authority was granted (Ibid: Memorandum by Col. Chesley, D.S.D. to D.M. & R., 19 Mar 42), and on 23 March the Adjutant-General advised the General Officers Commanding Atlantic and Pacific Commands and the District Officers Commanding that the units necessary to complete the 6<sup>th</sup> Division were to be mobilized and upon the completion of cadre training were to be concentrated and brought up to strength by posting of “R” recruits, “with due regard to their territorial affiliations” (Ibid: A.G. circular letter dated 23 Mar 42). On 28 Apr 42 General Order 147/1942 authorized the placing on active service of those units required to complete the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division. The Order also authorized the formation of a Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division.

18. Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, began organization at Connaught Ranges, Ottawa, on 16 Jun 42. The concentration period in Ottawa was spent in obtaining personnel for headquarters staff, arranging for the supply of mobilization equipment, office equipment,

administrative and training pamphlets, and in discussing various mobilization problems with the officers of the Department of National Defence (W.D., "G", H.Q. 6 Div, June 1942).

19. On 4 Apr 42 General McNaughton, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief First Canadian Army, had been requested to nominate officers to commands and senior staff appointments in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Divisions (HQS 20-5-5-2: Tel G.S. 156 Defensor to Canmiltry, 4 Apr 42). On 16 April he sent a telegram to the Chief of the General Staff recommending Brigadier A.E. Potts, E.D. and Brigadier H.N. Ganong to command the divisions and Lieutenant-Colonel R.A. Fraser as a Commander Royal Artillery (Ibid: G.S. 1304 Canmiltry to Defensor, Stuart from McNaughton, 16 Apr 42). In a subsequent telegram the names of Lieutenant-Colonel L.T. Lowther as General Staff Officer I, Major L.P.P. Payan as Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, Major J.L. Black as General Staff Officer II and Lieutenant-Colonel E.H. Dean as Commander Royal Army Service Corps were put forward (Ibid A1075: Canmiltry to Defensor, 20 Apr 42). The telegram concluded:

Selection Committee gave full consideration your requests and officers nominated are best we can spare. All are recommended for their experience and drive and consider all should make useful contribution to organization 6 and 7 Divs.

20. Final appointments to the Divisional Staff were as follow:

Comd                                      Major General A.E. Potts, E.D.

G.S.O. I	Lt. Col. L.T. Lowther
G.S.O. II	Major J. L. Black
A.A. & Q. M. G.	Lt. Col. L.P.P. Payan
C.R.A	Brigadier R.A. Fraser
C.R.E.	Lt. Col. P.L. Debney
A.D.M.S.	Lt. Col. H.M. Cameron
A.D.O.S.	Lt. Col. G. R. Gale

21. As noted above, the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was to include three Infantry Brigade Groups (para 9). The first of these Brigades, the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade, had been authorized to mobilize as early as July 1940, under the command of Colonel O.M. Martin, E.D. It had never been intended at this time to mobilize the entire Brigade Staff but only such personnel as were required to administer the units comprising the Brigade. These units included three Ontario battalions. The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's), and The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles of Canada. Headquarters of the Brigade were set up at Niagara Camp, and recruiting for the component battalions began at once. According to the War Diary of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, the strength of the Brigade on 31 Dec 40 was as follows:

Brigade Headquarters	3 Officers	1 O. R.
Lincoln and Welland Regt.	40 Officers	846 O.Rs.

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders      34 Officers      894 O.Rs.

Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles   37 Officers      819 O.Rs.

22.      The 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade remained at Niagara until May, 1941, when the Headquarters and the three battalions were sent to Nanaimo, B.C., as part of the general policy of strengthening the west coast defences with infantry units from all parts of Canada (HQC 5393-5-3: "The Employment of Infantry in the Pacific Coast Defences", para 40). The composition of the Brigade did not remain long unchanged. In August and September, The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were sent to Newfoundland and Jamaica respectively to relieve the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers which subsequently proceeded to Hong Kong. On 24 Sep 41 Brigadier W.G. Colquhoun, M. C., took over command of the Brigade from Brigadier O.M. Martin who proceeded to Niagara in order to assume command of the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. Subsequently Brigadier D.R. Sargent was appointed to command with effect 3 Jun 42.

23.      According to the Brigade War Diary, the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade began organization on 24 Sep 41 at Chippewa Barracks, Niagara Falls. The Brigade included The Midland Regiment and The Algonquin Regiment. The South Alberta Regiment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was, for the time being, under the command of Headquarters 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. The Brigade was assigned the task of protecting various industrial installations in the Niagara area. Brigadier Martin assumed command of the troops employed on guard duty in the Niagara area on

20 Nov 41. Subsequently, on 4 Dec 41. The South Alberta Regiment proceeded to Debert, while The Kent Regiment, the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the Brigade, arrived in Niagara Falls from Halifax on the same day (W.D., H.Q. 14 Inf. Bde. 4 Dec 41). Brigadier V. Hodson became Brigade Commander on 21 May 42 and on 27 Aug 42, Brigadier J.P. Girvan, D.S.O., M.C., V.D. took over the Brigade.

24. With the arrival of Brigadier P.E. Leclerc, M.M., E.D., at Valcartier Camp on 20 Oct 41, the Headquarters 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, began its organization (W.D., H.Q. 15 Inf. Bde., 20 Oct 41). Les Voltigeurs de Quebec was the only regiment of the Brigade which had already been mobilized. On 19 Dec 41, Le Regiment de Hull, consisting of 11 officers and 33 other ranks, arrived at Valcartier (Ibid: 19 Dec 41). The third unit of the Brigade, The Halifax Rifles, did not join the Brigade at Valcartier. The unit remained on coast defence duties until February 1942 when it was converted into an armoured unit. The War Diary of the Brigade for 28 Feb 42 noted that four units previously allotted to the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group were no longer part of that formation, namely the 50<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Field Batteries, The Halifax Rifles, and Les Voltigeurs de Quebec: On 21 May 42 Brigadier J.A. Leclaire took over command of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

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· Les Voltigeurs de Quebec proceeded to Camp Borden on 27 Feb 42 to be trained as an armoured unit.

## HEADQUARTERS 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION MOVES TO PACIFIC COMMAND

25. Although the original intention appears to have been to concentrate the 6<sup>th</sup> Division in Eastern Canada and the 7<sup>th</sup> in Pacific Command (see paras, 9 and 16) a change in policy occurred in May or June and arrangements were made for the Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Division to proceed to the Pacific Coast and the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to go the Debert and Sussex. The reason for this change of plan appears somewhat obscure (HQS 5393-5-3: The Employment of Infantry in the Pacific Coast Defences para. 57).

26. The movement of the Divisional Headquarters to the Pacific Coast began early in July. On 2 July the advance party left Ottawa for British Columbia and four days later arrived in Victoria. On 10 July the main body of the Divisional Headquarters entrained at Ottawa, arrived at Victoria on 15 July. In the allotment of areas of responsibility for subordinate formations in Pacific Command the General Officer Commanding 6<sup>th</sup> Division was given the Command of the whole of Vancouver Island. This disposition placed the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Brigades then at Nanaimo and Alberni – Tofino within the 6<sup>th</sup> Division (HQS 5393-5-3: The Employment of Infantry in the Pacific Coast Defences, para. 66). On 1 Sep 42 Headquarters 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division took over operational command of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group and the Victoria and Esquimalt Fortresses (W.D. “G” H.Q. 6 Div: 1 Sep 42).

## STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION MARCH 1943

27. On 2 Jan 43, the weekly strength return of the Division showed a strength of 582 officers and 10,990 other ranks (W.D., "A & Q" H.Q 6 Div January 1943, Appx 5). Of the latter, 4,911 were volunteers and 6,079 Home Defence personnel. The 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group showed a strength of 152 officers and 2,815 other ranks (1,111 volunteers and 1,704 "H.D."). The Group included at this time 21<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment, R.C.A., 22<sup>nd</sup> Field Company, R.C.E., "G" Section Signals, R.C.C.S., "J" Section Signals, R.C.C.S., 13<sup>th</sup> Defence Platoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance R.C.A.M.C., No. 81 Light Aid Detachment, R.C.O.C., and the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment), The Brockville Rifles and the Rocky Mountain Ranger. The 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, with a strength of 101 officers and 1,941 other ranks (513 volunteers and 1,428 "H.D."), included 23<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battery R.C.A., 33<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battery, R.C.A., 37<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Section, R.C.A., 25<sup>th</sup> Field Company, R.C.E., No. 3 Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M., 79 Light Aid Detachment, R.C.O.C., 18 Defence and Employment Platoon, No. 10 Aero Defence Platoon, and two infantry battalions – 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Canadian Scottish and the Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury Regiment. Esquimalt Fortress, with a strength of 247 officers and 5,479 other ranks (2,805 volunteers and 2,674 "H.D."), included 27<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Regiment R.C.A., 5<sup>th</sup> (B.C.) Coast Regiment R.C.A., 11 Area Signals R.C.C.S., No. 14 Aero Defence Platoon, No. 36 Company, Veterans Guard of Canada, 31<sup>st</sup> (Alta) Reconnaissance Regiment, and three infantry battalions – 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Regina Rifles, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Edmonton Fusiliers and Le Regiment de Hull. Divisional Headquarters showed a strength of 82 officers and 755 other ranks (482 volunteers and 273 "H.D.") (Ibid). The strength and composition as of 27 Mar 43 was 16,037, of which 9,536



were “H.D.” personnel (W.D., A & Q. 6 Div March 1943: Appx 5).

28. Despite the usual complaints about the weather and the food, which may be regarded as characteristic of all armies at all times, the morale of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division during the winter of 1942-43 appears to have been high, and little antagonism between the Active Service personnel and the Home Defence personnel is noted in the morale reports attached to War Diary of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division for February 1943.

#### TRAINING 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION 1943

29. Training was carried out during the winter, and various exercises, such as that held by the 6<sup>th</sup> Division under the auspices of the Pacific Command in January 1943 taught many useful lessons (W.D., “G”, 6Cdn Div, January 1943: Appx 4). In May 1943 Exercise “Talky” was conducted by the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade for the purpose of practising the move and setting up of a Brigade Headquarters in the field and practising R/T procedure between Brigade Headquarters and the Headquarters of units with a line connection to Divisions. Exercise “Chatter” was held by Divisional Headquarters to practice the functioning of the Divisional Operations Room under battle conditions (Ibid: May 1943, Appx).

30. On 2 Jun 43 Major-General Potts held a conference of all formation and unit commanders of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division at which he expressed his satisfaction “with the general

improvement of discipline within his command” but stressed the need for “a much greater improvement in this direction”. (Ibid: June 1943: Appx 1). With respect to training the General Officer Commanding outlined the arrangements which had been made to carry out Brigade training during the summer at Wainwright, Alberta. Brigade Commanders were therefore directed that the units under their command should endeavour “to cover up to collective training by the end of June” with particular attention to be paid to the training of anti-tank personnel. A school on the 6-pr anti-tank gun was to be held from 21-26 June. Commanding Officers were also directed to held field exercises with particular attention being paid “to the set-up and organization of battalion headquarters in the field”. Over-night schemes and drills were to be carried out as often as possible (Ibid).

31. On 26 Jun 43 a Divisional Training Instruction was issued pointing out that the months of July and August were to be devoted to intensive collective battalion training. The object of the training was to determine the status of basic and advanced training in the various units, to familiarize all ranks with tactical and administrative problems, to practise battalions in co-operation with other arms and to prepare units for Brigade Group training. Offensive action was to be emphasized throughout battalion collective training. Route marches, advance to contact using advance guard, etc., deployment, attack, consolidation based on all-round defence, mopping-up and defeating enemy infiltration tactics on a battalion level were to be practised. The instructions recognized that certain factors would militate against the divisional training scheme – such, for instance, as the “present low standard of training in units”, the shortage of

non-commissioned officers, the shortage of equipment and the dispersal of units in isolated areas – but emphasized the importance of initiative and imagination on the part of all officers and non-commissioned officers (Ibid, Appx 4).

#### REORGANIZATION OF 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION, AUTUMN 1943

32. During the month of June the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was withdrawn from under command 6<sup>th</sup> Division for special training in connection with the proposed operation in conjunction with the Americans against Kiska. This necessitated heavy drafts of trained personnel and equipment from the other units of the Division, and at a Divisional conference on 29 Jun 43 General Potts expressed his thanks to all Commanding Officers “for their co-operation in supplying the men for these drafts” and stated that personnel drawn from the units would be replaced. The replacements he pointed out, would be mainly “Home Defence” personnel and some personnel rejected from the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade because their training was not far enough advanced (W.D., “G” H.Q. 6 Div June 1943, Appx).

33. In addition to the drafts for the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade there had also been successive withdrawals of General Service personnel from the operational infantry units in Pacific Command. During the month of April a draft of 600 had left the Command, bringing to more than 2,000 the total of withdrawals for service overseas. In May instructions were received from the Department of National Defence at Ottawa that all remaining General Service personnel were to be released

from infantry units with the exception of a cadre of 80 key men per battalion (HQC 5393-5-3: “The Employment of Infantry in the Pacific Coast Defences, para 112).

34. During the summer of 1943 plans were made for a very considerable reduction in the strength of the Home Army. The withdrawal of the enemy from the North Pacific made it unnecessary for the General Staff to retain large numbers of operational troops on the Pacific Coast, and on 30 Aug 43 the Chief of the General Staff proposed to the Minister of National Defence that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions should be disbanded. The recommendations were approved by the War Committee of the Cabinet on 31 Aug 43. (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3: Murchie to the Minister of National Defence 13 Jan 44). It was considered advisable, however, to retain the 6<sup>th</sup> Division on a reduced establishment as a “strategic reserve in Pacific Command for the following purposes (Ibid):

- (a) As a trained force for future offensive commitments in the Pacific theatre of operations.
- (b) As a potential force of reinforcements for the Canadian Army Overseas.
- (c) To meet any unexpected deterioration in the situation.

35. The 6<sup>th</sup> Division was to be reorganized on the basis of three tactical Brigade Groups based on the American model which has been adopted in the case of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group at Kiska. Each Group was to consist of four instead of three infantry battalions with ancillary

troops.

36. It was proposed that the Headquarters of the reorganized Division would be located at Prince George and on 15 October the Headquarters of the Division closed at Esquimalt, opening at Prince George on the following day. The General Staff of the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division was detailed for temporary duty with the reconstituted 6<sup>th</sup>, pending approval of a new slate of officers (W.D., "G" H.Q. 6 Cdn Div, 16 Oct 43).

37. On 10 Oct 43 Pacific Command Operation Instruction No. 84 (See HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3: D.M.O. & P. to D.C.G.S. (A), 13 Oct 43) stated:

The following Infantry Brigade Groups and units will be training for an operational role:-

13 Cdn Inf Bde Gp

HQ 13 Cdn Inf Bde  
13 Def Pl  
Cdn Fus  
Wpg Gren  
R M Rang  
R de Hull  
"C" Coy St John Fus  
24 Fd Regt  
46 LAA Bty  
24 Fd Coy

14 Cdn Inf Bde Gp

HQ 14 Cdn Inf Bde  
14 Def Pl  
Oxf Rif  
P of W Rang  
Fus de Sher  
W L I  
"A" Coy St John Fus  
25 Rd Regt  
48 LAA Bty  
26 Fd Coy

15 Cdn Inf Bde Gp

HQ 15 Cdn Inf Bde  
15 Def Pl  
R R C  
P E I Highrs  
Fus de St L  
P A Vol  
"B" Coy St John Fus  
20 Fd Regt  
25 LAA Bty  
15 Fd Coy

25 Fd Amb  
Dets A.S.C., Ord, etc.

1 Fd Amb  
Dets A.S.C., Ord,

etc.

19 Fd Amb  
Dets A.S.C., Ord,

Etc.

HQ 6 Cdn Div

6 Cdn Div Sigs

31 (Alta) Recce Regt

25 Rd Coy

28 Fd Amb

The role of the reconstituted HQ 6 Cdn Div will be to co-ordinate the training and administration of the three Inf Bde Gps and units listed...above.

These formations and units will be directly under command HQ Pacific Command but will deal direct with HQ 6 Cdn Div on matters of training and local adm.

38. As a result of this Operation Instruction the Chief of the General Staff wrote to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Pacific Command (Major-General G.R. Pearkes, V.C.) on 15 Oct 43, as follows:

It would appear that the necessarily wide dispersion of the formations and units of 6 Div, and the somewhat isolated location of HQ 6 Div at Prince George, has

necessitated placing these formations and units under direct command of HQ Pacific Command, HQ 6 Div being responsible for matters of training and local administration.

If this is correct, it follows that the prime function of HQ 6 Div is that of training and the responsibilities for administration will be comparatively light. It is therefore considered that this HQ will not require its full complement of Administrative Staff and Services Advisers.

I am to request, therefore, that you review the requirements of HQ 6 Div in order to determine and appropriate establishment for this HQ in the light of its reduced responsibilities (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3: C.G.S. to G.O.C.-in-C., Pac Comd, 15 Oct 43).

39. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief replied on 22 October that the primary function of Headquarters 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division would be training and that “it will be practicable to restrict the Establishment to a considerable degree on the Administrative side” (Ibid: G.O.C.—in-C., Pac Comd, to Secretary, D.N.D., 22 Oct 43). He stated further:

On the executive side the Service function will be comparatively light and the role of Service heads will, in the main, be limited to supervision of Service training in the Bde. Gps. And to the constant furnishing of Service information and technical advice.

He recommended that no new War Establishment should be authorized for the Divisional Headquarters but proposed that the authorized War Establishment be restricted by Chief of the General Staff instructions to effect a saving in personnel of some 119 all ranks. On 10 Nov 43 the Chief of the General Staff replied expressing concurrence with these proposals, stating:

It is considered...that until the future employment of this formation is clarified, the restricted establishments proposed by you, subject to adjustment... are satisfactory as an interim measure. These restricted establishments will, however, be subject to review and possible further reduction when the future of 6<sup>th</sup> Div is clarified (Ibid: C.G.S. to G.O.C.-in-C., Pac Comd, 10 Nov 43).

40. This was followed on 2 Dec 43 by a circular letter from the Adjutant-General to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, authorizing reductions in strength and vehicle establishment and asking that slates of officers based on the restricted establishments should be submitted to the Department of National Defence. The other ranks, surplus as a result of these restrictions, were to be disposed of as follows. General Service personnel were to be released to the reinforcement stream, reposted or transferred to operational units, posted or transferred to Home War Establishments, or transferred to District



Depots. N.R.M.A. personnel were to be posted or transferred to the units of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Groups, or posted or transferred to other operational units, posted or transferred to Home War Establishments, or transferred to District Depots. N.R.M.A. personnel going “active” were to be released to the reinforcement stream (Ibid: A.G. circular letter, 2 Dec 43).

41. On 3 Jan 44 the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, submitted a slate of officers for Headquarters 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, based on the new restricted establishments (Ibid: G.O.C.-in-C., Pac Comd, to Secretary, D.N.D., 3 Jan 44). Among the recommendations were the following:

<u>Appointment</u>	<u>Name</u>
G.O.C.	Major-Gen. H.N. Ganong
G.S.O.I.	Lieut-Col. A.H. Fraser
A.A. & Q.M.G.	Lieut-Col. H.A.P. Francis
A.D.O.S.	Lieut-Col. C.F. Curtis
C.R.A	Brig. G.H. Musgrave
C.R.A.S.C.	Lieut-Col. W.C. Kearns

42. Early in January 1944 further proposals were put forward for the reorganization of the Brigade Groups of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division. On 13 January the Chief of the General Staff informed the Minister of National Defence that “in order that the G.O.C.-in-C. may discharge adequately the

responsibility placed on him of training the Brigade Groups for the roles laid down” it was necessary that “they should be organized upon suitable establishments and at sufficient strength to enable them to train effectively in readiness for such tasks as may be required of them” (Ibid: C.G.S. to Minister of National Defence 13 Jan 44). Appended to the memorandum of the Chief of the General Staff was a submission affecting the operational units only, which provided for the reorganization of the Brigade Headquarters, the infantry battalions and the Divisional support battalions in accordance with the latest Canadian establishments.

43. At the request of the Minister, the recommendations noted above were re-examined by the Chief of the General Staff “from the standpoint of ensuring that the changes in organization suggested are not only necessary from the standpoint of preparing a force which would be available for any possible future offensive commitments in the Pacific theatre, but also that they are appropriate should the Force be used as a reinforcement for the Army Overseas or to meet any unexpected deterioration in the situation” (Ibid: C.G.S. to the Minister, 4 Sep 44). On 4 Sep 44 the Chief of the General Staff replied, in part, as follows:

I am of the opinion that the arrangements now proposed will prove a more realistic and adequate organization for the proper training of the Brigade Group and would be essential if the Brigade Group and would be essential if the Brigade Group were employed operationally due to some unexpected deterioration in the situation.

Further, it will permit the personnel of the Brigade to be adequately trained along tactical lines and in the handling of appropriate modern weapons which will be necessary in the event that this personnel should be required as a reinforcement for the Army Overseas.

The Brigade, as presently formed, lack certain vital elements of tactical organization and weapons which are necessary for adequate support fire.

44. The Chief of the General Staff stressed in particular the necessity of converting the Machine Gun battalions to Brigade Support Groups; a conversion which, he wrote, "is essential if the Brigades are ever to engage in operation and will be most valuable should the units of the Brigade or the personnel be used for reinforcements overseas where these weapons and organization are now in effect" (Ibid). The Chief of the General Staff continued:

As the Brigade formations are trained as Brigade Groups it is necessary to revise the Brigade Headquarters organization along the lines of that provided by British establishments for Brigade Groups Headquarters which is slightly larger than for the normal Infantry Brigade. The proposed organization closely parallels that of the British provision.

The influence upon the organization of the Brigade Groups of 6 Div of the

possibility of future operations on islands in the Pacific theatre has, in fact, been to reduce the Divisional commitment by the exclusion of a considerable proportion of the normal Divisional Ordnance and Supply Services. There are retained certain Divisional facilities (such as Div Sigs) against the possibility that the Division might be employed as a whole, but so far such Divisional facilities have been restricted to units which it would be impossible (mainly due to the number of technical personnel involved) to organize rapidly from our remaining resources in Canada (Ibid).

45. On 18 Feb 44 the Governor-General-in-Council approved these recommendations (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3), and on 2 Mar 44 an Adjutant-General's circular letter addressed to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, PacificCommand, authorized the reorganization of the Infantry battalions of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades and of the Headquarters of the three Brigade Groups with effect 1 Dec 43 (Ibid).

#### TRAINING 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION 1944

46. The units of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division continued to carry out training during the winter of 1943-44. On 11 Nov 43 the reconstituted Divisional Headquarters issued its first Training Directive setting forth the policy for training for the period from 15 Nov 43 to 15 Jan 44. (W.D., "G" 6 Cdn Inf Div, November 1943 Appx. E). This Directive stated that the "6 Cdn Div will train for an Op. in hard, uninviting terrain against a tough, well-trained enemy". It

pointed out that the majority of the troops in the Division had been employed “in a passive def. role for the past two years” and slated that “a new spirit of offence must now be inculcated”.

The Directive went on to say:

This Div will NOT be called upon to discharge any Op. duties in the def. the Pac Coast unless imminent danger of invasion threatens or aid to the civil power is required. Comds. may, therefore, direct their entire attention to the trg. of their units and make future plans with reasonable prospect of fulfilment (Ibid).

In brief, the units of the Division were to spend the period between 15 November and 15 December on individual training including weapon training, range practices, field craft, night work, gas, close order drill, hardening training, specialist training, officer and non-commissioned officer training. The second period from 15 December to 15 January was to be a period of collective training up to platoon or equivalent level, including section and platoon or equivalent level, including section and platoon or equivalent level, including section and platoon tactical training and battle drill. Superimposed on this programme was to be a series of courses and schools, such as the Forest, Bush and Jungle Warfare School, the Mountain Warfare School (Terrace), the Intelligence School, the Combined Operations School (Courtney), the Canadian School of Infantry (Vernon) and the Canadian Small Arms School (Western Canada) at Nanaimo.

47. On 4 Mar 44 a 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Training Directive forecast future training periods as follows: continuation of sub-unit and unit collective training up to 31 May with Divisional Engineers concentration at Chilliwack, continuation of combined operations training, and Brigade Headquarters and Division Headquarters training; between 1 June and 31 August, unit and Brigade Group collective training was to be carried out with the Brigade Groups rotating for training at Wainwright. Between 1 September and 15 October a Divisional concentration was planned at Williams Lake where Brigade Group and Divisional exercises were to be carried out (W.D., "G" 6 Cdn Div, March 1944, Appx. A).

48. On 19 Jun 44, Advanced Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, opened at Wainwright, Alberta, where it remained throughout the summer supervising Brigade collective training at Buffalo Park (W.D., "G" HQ 6 Cdn Inf Div, 19 Jun 44). During the months of July and August, units of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, including The Oxford Rifles, Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, the Winnipeg Light Infantry, The 31<sup>st</sup> (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment, "A" Company, the Saint John Fusilliers, 26<sup>th</sup> Field Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance, 25<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, 48<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery underwent training. On 24 Aug 44 advance parties of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group arrived at Wainwright. During September, the units of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, including The Prince Edward Island Highlanders, Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent, The Prince Albert and Battleford Volunteers, "B" Company. The Saint John Fusiliers, 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, including The Prince Edward Island Highlanders, Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent, The Prince Albert and Battleford Volunteers, "B" Company, The Saint John fusiliers, 15<sup>th</sup> Field Company, 24<sup>th</sup> Field

Company, 19<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, 24<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, 46<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, “A”squadron, 31<sup>st</sup> (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment, carried out training.

49. On 19 Oct 44 Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Division issued a Training Directive covering the period to the end of 1944. This Directive emphasized the lessons which had been learned during the training at Wainwright, and stressed that during the current period individual training would be emphasized, and all ranks would be brought up to the standard required by 31 Dec 44. At the same time arrangements were concluded for units of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade to train at the Mountain Warfare and Jungle Fighting School at Terrace during November. Units of the 14<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade were to undergo training at the Combined Operations School at Courtney as follows: October – Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, November – The Winnipeg Light Infantry, December – The Oxford Rifles (W.D., “G” H.Q. 6 Cdn Div, October 1944: Appx. A)

#### REORGANIZATION 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION SUMMER 1944

50. Meanwhile, drastic changes in the organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division had been determined upon. The units of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade returned to British Columbia in January 1944 and by late February were ready to resume training for whatever role might be allotted to the brigade (HQS 5393-5-4: The Canadian Participation in the Kiska Operation, para 233). This role involved the despatch of the Brigade overseas to reinforce the overseas Army. On 26

May 44 the Brigade Headquarters, under the command of Brigadier W.H.S. Macklin, and the following units: The Winnipeg Grenadiers, Le Regiment de Hull, and The Rocky Mountain Rangers left Halifax for England where personnel were released into the general reinforcement stream.

51. In view of the proposed despatch of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade to England the Adjutant-General informed the Chief of the General Staff on 31 Mar 44 that the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command had recommended that another Brigade Group should be formed “forthwith”. He suggested that this might be achieved without straining the available manpower resources by converting the brigades into three battalion instead of four-battalion brigades, and by withdrawing one battalion employed on Coast Defence duties. This letter could, if necessary, be replaced by battalions from some other part of Canada. His reasons for advocating this policy were:

- (a) To prevent feeling of let-down in whole Command.
- (b) To prevent any provincial criticism that defences are being weakened.
- (c) To prepare for either further withdrawals for overseas in Pacific role. (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3: Tel. P.C.O. 7192, Murchie from Letson, 31 Mar 44).

On 1 Apr 44 the Chief of the General Staff replied expressing agreement in principle with this proposal (Ibid: G.S. 211, C.G.S. to G.O.C.-in-C. Pac Comd 1 Apr 44).



52. On 3 April General Pearkes forwarded a recommendation to the Department of National Defence suggesting the formation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade to consist of The Prince of Wales Rangers from the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent from the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, and the Kent Regiment from its present role of Coast Defence. (Ibid: G.O.C.-in-C. Pac Comd to Secretary D.N.D., 3 Apr 44). No immediate action was taken to implement these recommendations owing to the fact that the whole question of reinforcing the Canadian Army Overseas was at that time under active consideration. On 16 Apr 44 the Chief of the General Staff informed General Pearkes that, for the present, “it will be necessary to postpone decision on the question of reorganizing another Inf Bde I n 6 Div” (Ibid: C.G.S. to G.O.C. –in-C., Pac Comd, 16 Apr 44). On 20 Jul 44 the question of organizing an Infantry Brigade to replace the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was again taken up and the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command was requested to resubmit his recommendations for the composition of an Infantry Brigade to replace the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, setting out in detail the reasons why such action was desirable and recommending the infantry battalions to be included (Ibid: memorandum by D.C.G.S. (A), 20 Jul 44).

53. These recommendations were forthcoming on 20 July. In a memorandum of that date the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, recommended that the new Brigade be made up of The Royal Rifles of Canada, The Prince of Wales Rangers and The Midland Regiment. Officers to complete the Brigade Staff could be found from Divisional resources as the reduction in the size of the Brigade from four battalions to three would permit

the reversion of Brigade Headquarters to standard organizations (Ibid: Pearkes to the Secretary, Department of National Defence, 20 Jul 44).

54. On 9 Aug 44 the Chief of the General Staff informed the Military Members that the 6<sup>th</sup> Division would be reorganized to comprise three Infantry Brigades, each of three infantry battalions, effective 20 Aug 44. The place of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was to be taken by a reconstituted 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, made up of The Royal Rifles of Canada, transferred from the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, The place of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was to be taken by a reconstituted 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, made up of The Royal Rifles of Canada, transferred from the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, The Prince of Wales Rangers from the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, and The Midland Regiment from Coast Defence Duty in the Pacific Command (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 3: G.G.S. to A.G. to G.O.C. –in-C., Pac Comd, 11 Aug 44). Hence, on 1 Sep 44, General Order 405/1944 authorized the formation of Headquarters, 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade and No. 16 Ground Defence Platoon C.I.C. The undermentioned units, formerly allocated to the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, were allocated to the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group in the 6<sup>th</sup> Division:

46<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA

Light Anti-Aircraft Troops, 20 M.M. (Mobile) (RCA)

24<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, RCA

24<sup>th</sup> Field Company, RCE

25<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, RCAMG

No. 13 Beach Defence, RCOOC

96<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) RCEME

103<sup>rd</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) RCEME

113<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) RCEME

No. 19 Field Cash Office RCAPC (Ibid: CGS to AG, QMG, MGO, 19 Sep 44).

#### THE DISBANDMENT OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION

55. The reconstituted 6<sup>th</sup> Division did not, however, remain long in existence. On 8 Nov 44 the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, was informed that the Department of National Defence was examining the possibility of disbanding the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, retaining the three Brigade Groups, plus the Reconnaissance, and the Machine Gun battalions and essential services directly under Pacific Command (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 4: Tel. G.S. 673, Defensor to G.O.C. –in-C. Pac Comd, 8 Nov 44). A week later, on 16 Nov 44, the Chief of the General Staff put the following proposals before the Minister of National Defence.

1. War Committee of the Cabinet, 31 Aug 43, approved... the retention of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division:-

- (a) As a trained Force for future offensive commitments in the Pacific Theatre of Operations.
- (b) As a potential force of reinforcements for the Canadian Army Overseas.
- (c) To meet any unexpected deterioration in the situation.

2. In the light of the urgent need to free fit men for overseas, I have reviewed the organization and role of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division. I feel that the necessity of exercising every possible economy in operational troops in Canada must take priority over an indefinite future possibility of employing this formation in the Far East and, in consequence, I propose a reorganization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division as follows: -

- (a) To retain one Infantry Brigade Group and two Infantry Brigades.
- (b) To retain the 31 (Alta) Recce Regt. The Saint John Fusiliers (MG) and their LADs.
- (c) To ensure that personnel retained in the remaining units are fit for field employment in their respective Arms and Services.
- (d) To disband remaining units of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division and to make the personnel of these units available to the Adjutant-General for remustering in accordance with present policy.

3. The Infantry Brigade Group and the two Infantry Brigades which I propose to retain will be available: -

(a) As a potential source of reinforcements for the Canadian Army Overseas.

(b) To meet any unexpected deterioration in the situation.

4. If the foregoing is approved, there will be retained from the 6<sup>th</sup> Division the following:-

(a) One Inf Bde Gp

(b) Two Inf Bdes (each)

HQ Inf Bde

HQ Inf Bde

Def Pl

Def Pl

Inf Bde Sig Sec

Inf Bde Sig Sec

3 Inf Bns

3 Inf Bns

Fd Regt & Sig Sec

LAD (A)

LAA Bty

Fd Coy

( c ) 31 (Alta) Recce Regt

Fd Amb

Saint John Fus (MG)

LAD (A)

LAD(A)

LAD (B)

LAD (B)

Pro Sec

The units to be disbanded will be as listed in Appendix “A”.

5. I will consult with General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, to secure his recommendations: nominating the Infantry Brigade to be organized as a Brigade Group; nominating the units to be retained, and, as to the necessity for retention or, alternatively, the disbandment of the following units presently serving 6<sup>th</sup> Division:-

28 Coy RCASC

45 Coy CDC

6, 8 and 19 Fd Cash Offices

10 Provost Coy (less one Sec)

Following consultation with General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, I propose, if you approve, then to designate the units to be retained and those to be disbanded, and to appropriately notify the Adjutant-General so that necessary executive action may proceed without delay, with formal Privy Council approval of the disbandment involved to follow later.

6. It is considered that the ultimate date of disbandment of units concerned should be determined by the Adjutant-General, having in mind the time involved in withdrawing, remustering and re-posting personnel of these units.

7. It will be necessary to ensure that the units and detachments engaged in the cold weather exercises "Eskimo" and "Polar Bear" are not disturbed by remustering or disbandment during the continuation of these exercises. Where possible, these units and detachments will be retained as portions of the continuing units.

8. All personnel from Arms and Services other than Infantry, and who are fit for operational employment as Infantry will be remustered to and trained as Infantry. Units of the remaining Arms and Services will contain only personnel who are suitable for operational employment in those Arms and Services, and the remaining personnel made available by this reorganization will be posted to other units and Home War Establishments as required to replace fit soldiers or to bring them up to strength.

9. I recommend the foregoing plan for your approval, and propose that it be put into effect forthwith. (Ibid: C.G.S. to Minister, National Defence, 16 Nov 44)

56. These recommendations were concurred in by the Minister of National Defence and were forwarded to the War Committee of the Cabinet for their approval in November 1944 (Ibid: Minute II by General McNaughton, 21 Nov 44).

57. Having obtained approval in principle for the disbandment of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division the Chief of the General Staff prepared a list of the units to be retained and those to be disbanded. Among the former were: The 31<sup>st</sup> (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment, Headquarters Section 3 Company and M Q E J K L & R Sections, Royal Canadian Signals, The Saint John Fusiliers (Machine Gun), 79<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., Headquarters, 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, No. 14 Ground Defence Platoon, 26<sup>th</sup> Field Company, The Oxford Rifles, The Winnipeg Light Infantry, Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 78<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., 112<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., Headquarters, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, No. 15 Ground Defence Platoon, Prince Albert Volunteers, Prince Edward Island Highlanders, Fusiliers du St. Laurent, 102<sup>nd</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., Headquarters 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, No. 16 Ground Defence Platoon, Royal Rifles of Canada, The Prince of Wales Rangers, The Midland Regiment, 193<sup>rd</sup> Light Aid Detachment, (A) R.C.E.M.E., Headquarters, 24<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment including 49<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 84<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 85<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 46<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. The units to be disbanded included Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, 6<sup>th</sup> Field Security Section, 6<sup>th</sup> Defence Employment Platoon, Headquarters, Royal Canadian Artillery 6<sup>th</sup> Division, 22<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery (Mobile), Headquarters, Royal Canadian Engineers, 6<sup>th</sup> Division, 25<sup>th</sup> Field Company, 6<sup>th</sup>



Divisional Signals (less Headquarters Section 3 Company and M Q E J K L & R Sections), Headquarters, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps 6<sup>th</sup> Division, 29<sup>th</sup> Company, RC.A.S.C., 14<sup>th</sup> Field Dressing Station, R.C.A.M.C., 15<sup>th</sup> Field Dressing Station, R.C.A.M.C, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Hygiene Section, 80<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., Headquarters 25<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment including 114<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 115<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 116<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 48<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance R.C.A.M.C., Headquarters, 20<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, including 24<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 72<sup>nd</sup> Field Battery, 75<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, 25<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, 15<sup>th</sup> Field Company, 19<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, 106<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E., 24<sup>th</sup> Field Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Beach Detachment, 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Workshop, 113<sup>th</sup> Light Aid Detachment (A) R.C.E.M.E. The detachments from the units to be disbanded which were at that time engaged in Exercises “Eskimo” and “Polar Bear” were to be permitted to continue such employment until the conclusion of the Exercises (Ibid: C.G.S. to A.G., Q.M.G., and M.G.O., 24 Nov 44).

58. With respect to the personnel of the disbanded units, all, who by age and Pulhems Profile, were suitable for infantry, were to be remustered to and trained as such. The continuing units other than infantry were to be brought up to strength with personnel who were suitable for employment overseas in Arms and Services other than infantry. The infantry battalions were to be brought up to strength with trained soldiers suitable for overseas as they became available. The remaining personnel who by reason of age and medical category were not suitable for operational employment were to replace fit soldiers withdrawn from other units in Home War

Establishments and to be posted to Home War Establishments be low strength (Ibid).

59. On 2 Dec 44 the following entry appeared in the "G" War Diary of Headquarters 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division:

As H.Q. 6 Cdn Div has been relieved of all executive control on training, and units now come directly under Pac Comd, the General Staff Branch of this H.Q. ceases to function as from today. (W.D., "G" HQ 6 Cdn Div, 2 Dec 44).

60. This report was drafted by Lieutenant-Colonel G.F.G. Stanley, Historical Section, Department of National Defence.

(G.F.G. Stanley) Lt-Col.,

for Colonel,

Director of Historical Section (G.S.),

Department of National Defence.

25 Sep 46.