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REPORT NO. 8

HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

THE 7<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

1. This report deals with the organization of the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division. It continues the brief study of the Home Defence Divisions which was begun in [Report No. 7](#). This report is not in any way intended to be an exhaustive account of the role and activities of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division; it is intended only as a preliminary outline of a subject which will require more detailed treatment.

INITIAL DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE MOBILIZATION OF THE 7TH DIVISION

2. The first discussions regarding the possible mobilization of a seventh division for the Canadian Army appear to have taken place in October 1940. The Division was to be raised only “when and if it is decided to send 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division overseas” (HQS 20-2-6 vol. 1: “Planning, Canadian Army Programme, Project No. 15” 14 Oct 40). It was considered likely that if this division were actually required it would act in a Home Defence role throughout the war and that the cadre would consist mainly of personnel called up under the National Resources Mobilization Act (*Ibid*: Memo by A/D.C.G.S., 23 Oct 40). A General Staff memorandum of 13 Nov 40 outlined “present views” as to the probable employment of an additional division (*Ibid*: General Staff Memorandum, 13 Nov 40).

1. In the event that 4<sup>th</sup> Division proceeds overseas, present plans call for the employment of a 6<sup>th</sup> Division to undertake the tasks hitherto assumed by 5<sup>th</sup>

- Division,<sup>1</sup> - the latter formation being then required in the Maritimes.
2. Apart from finding one infantry brigade for the Pacific Coast no concentration of 6<sup>th</sup> Division will be required for operational purposes so long as 5<sup>th</sup> Division remains in Canada (and the employment of a 5<sup>th</sup> Division overseas is not visualized). Its role will therefore be a training one and the units may be concentrated by arms in suitable camps.
  3. This role is of course subject to modification in accordance with any change that may occur in the Forms and Scales of Attack visualized as possible on the Pacific Coast or because it may be necessary to accept some increased commitment under plans made by the joint Defence Board for the general defence of North America.
3. On 10 May 41 a table was submitted by Major (later Brigadier) B.M. Chesley to the Director of Staff Duties, showing tentative proposals for the composition of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division. The suggested infantry battalions were: (HQS 20-1-5, vol. 1: Chesley to D.S.D., 10 May 41).

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

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<sup>1</sup> In this extract for the 5th Division and 6th Division, it is necessary to read 6th Division and 7th Division respectively. This change in numeration was rendered necessary by the re-designation of the 1st Canadian Armoured Division, as the 5th Canadian (Armoured) Division by General Order 135, dated 10 Jul 41, with effect from 5 Jun 41. The division then being planned as the 5th Infantry Division was, therefore, renumbered the 6th Canadian Division; and what had been under discussion as the 6th Division became known as the 7th Canadian Division.

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

Machine-Gun Battalion

Le Regiment de Chateauguay (Mit.)

It might be noted that this table included a Western, a Central and an Eastern Brigade, thus securing a good “geographical distribution” and that the province of Quebec was well represented (Ibid).

4. The selection of other Arms and Services was deferred until the requirements of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and Corps Troops had been met. It was pointed out, however, that sufficient numbers of non-mobilized batteries of artillery were available “to provide nuclei around which Active Units” could be formed; and that Engineer, Signal, Reconnaissance, Army Service Corps, Medical and Ordnance units would be provided by enlistment or were already mobilized (Ibid).

#### MOBILIZATION OF THREE BRIGADE GROUPS OF 7TH DIVISION

5. Although plans were thus obviously in hand for the formation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division during 1941, little appears to have been done until the early months of 1942. On 27 Feb 42 a meeting of Directors at the Department of National Defence was held to discuss the “Army Programme for the Direct Defence of Canada” (HQS 20-1-6 vol. 1: “Minutes of a Meeting of Directors N.D.H.Q.” 27 Feb 42). At this time it was considered necessary to complete the Order of Battle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division to replace 4<sup>th</sup> Division at Debert and Sussex when the latter moved overseas; and to mobilize three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division for the purpose of relieving the 6<sup>th</sup> Division in Pacific Command. Since hutted accommodation for the units required for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions did not exist (except for the units of 6<sup>th</sup> Division already mobilized), these units would have to be accommodated under canvas until the move overseas of 4<sup>th</sup> Division took place. Cadres had to be raised and trained and it was estimated their training

would require two months, with an additional month for the preliminary organization of units. With these factors in mind, the following time table was suggested (Ibid):

Date of mobilization	- 9 Mar 42
Cadre training to commence	- 6 Apr 42
Concentration	- 1 Jun 42

6. The total strength required for the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was estimated to be 558 officers and 11,901 other ranks. Of these, 456 officers and 9,582 other ranks had yet to be raised; the balance of 102 officers and 2,319 other ranks was already provided by three Infantry (Rifle) Battalions the formation of which had already been authorized. The requirements of personnel were to be filled by enlistment, by selection from reinforcements, and by the posting of “R” recruits with due regard to their territorial affiliations (Ibid). The cost of organizing the three Infantry Brigade Groups (less the three infantry battalions) was estimated at \$863,148 for one-half month. (Ibid: S.D. 3 to S.D. 1, 5 Mar 42).

7. On 16 Mar 42 the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General K. Stuart, submitted a memorandum to the Minister of National Defence asking authority to mobilize three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division. The composition of these Brigade Groups was to be such as to enable them to “function operationally as complete formation” (Ibid: C.G.S. to Minister, 16 Mar 42). The proposed Order of Battle of each Brigade Group was as follows (Ibid: Appendix “A”):

#### 16TH BRIGADE GROUP

H.Q. 16<sup>th</sup> Inf. Bde.  
H.Q. 22<sup>nd</sup> Fd. Regt., RCA  
3<sup>rd</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
6<sup>th</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
80<sup>th</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
23<sup>rd</sup> Fd. Coy., RCE  
“E” Sec, No. 2 Coy., 7 Div Sigs.  
“J” Sec, No. 3 Coy., 7 Div Sigs.  
The Pictou Highlanders  
The New Brunswick Rangers  
Le Regiment de Joliette

16<sup>th</sup> Bde. Gp. Coy. (No. 21 Coy), RCASC  
No. 19 Field Ambulance RCANC  
No. 101 LAD (Type A), RCOC  
No. 104 LAD (Type B), RCOC

17<sup>TH</sup> BRIGADE GROUP

H.Q. 17<sup>th</sup> Inf. Bde.  
H.Q. 23<sup>rd</sup> Fd. Regt., RCA  
    31<sup>st</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
    36<sup>th</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
    83<sup>rd</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
24<sup>th</sup> Fd. Coy., RCE  
“F” Sec, No. 2 Coy., 7 Div Sigs.  
“K” Sec, No. 3 Coy., 7 Div Sigs.  
The Victoria Rifles of Canada  
The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles  
The Canadian Fusiliers  
17 Bde. Gp. Coy (No. 22 Coy.) RCASC  
No. 21 Field Ambulance, RCAMC  
No. 102 LAD (Type A), RCOC  
No. 105 LAD (Type B), RCOC

18<sup>TH</sup> BRIGADE GROUP

H.Q. 18<sup>th</sup> Inf. Bde.  
H.Q. 24<sup>th</sup> Fd. Regt., RCA  
    49<sup>TH</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
    84<sup>th</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
    85<sup>th</sup> Fd. Bty., RCA  
25<sup>th</sup> Fd. Coy., RCE  
“G” Sec., No. 2 Coy., 7 Div Sigs.  
“L” Sec., No. 3 Coy., 7 Div Sigs  
The Rocky Mountain Rangers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. Canadian Scottish Regt.  
The King’s Own Rifles of Canada  
18 Bde. Gp. Coy. (No. 23 Coy) RCASC

No. 103 LAD (Type A), RCOC  
No. 106 LAD (Type B), RCOC

8. With regard to the personnel required to fill the establishment of these units, the Chief of the General Staff stated (Ibid: C.G.S. to the Minister of National Defence, 16 Mar 42):

The adjutant-General's Branch...have informed me that there will be available early in June, sufficient personnel with which to commence the concentration of the units concerned; with strengths being completed progressively as additional classes of "R" recruits are graduated from Training Centres.

I anticipate some difficulty in securing adequate cadres of Officers and N.C.Os. who will form the nucleus of the units concerned, and I propose therefore that these cadres be augmented and completed where necessary be drawing upon personnel from overseas, from other mobilized units in Canada, from Reserve Units and H.W.Es., and where possible from reinforcement personnel.

As the training of cadres will take approximately two months in the Schools of Instruction at appropriate Advanced Training Centres. I propose that the formation of these cadres proceed immediately so that concentration of the new units may commence early in June when it will be possible to use canvas accommodation.

In cases where the organization includes the mobilization or Reserve Units, I propose that these Reserve Units be given the opportunity of enlisting active personnel for a period of one month from the date of mobilization.

9. The formation of the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was approved by the War Brigade Groups of the Cabinet on 18 Mar 42, (Ibid: Minute 3 by Minister of National Defence) and the Chief of the General Staff instructed the various Branches and Directorates to proceed with the necessary action. Six infantry units which were already mobilized and on Coast Defence duties were to be included in the Order of Battle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division Brigade Groups: six new Infantry (Rifle) Battalions were authorized to be mobilized in replacement (Ibid: C.G.S. to A.G., Q.M.G., M.G.O., 21 Mar 42). The District Officers Commanding were requested to submit their recommendations as to the selection of units, and on 23 Mar 42 an Adjutant-General's circular letter informed the District Officers Commanding concerned that authority had

been granted for the mobilization of (Ibid: A.G. circular letter, 23 Mar 42):

Le Regiment de Montmagny	M.D. 5
Le Regiment de Quebec	M.D. 5
Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke	M.D. 4
2 <sup>nd</sup> Bn. The Black Watch (R.H.R.) of Canada	M.D. 4
The Oxford Rifles	M.D. 1
The Brockville Rifles	M.D. 3
The Winnipeg Light Infantry	M.D. 10

10. On 24 mar 42 authority was issued for the mobilization of units comprising the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, and the District Officers Commanding began the task of organizing these units. Privy Council approval of the project was given on 21 Apr 42 and General Order 147/1942 was published, calling out the units of 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division with effect from 18 Mar 42. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Pacific Command, and the District Officer Commanding, Military District 11 were informed that the formation of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades Headquarters was “most urgent” (HQS 20-4-6, vol. 1: A.G. circular letters 17 May 42 and 25 May 42).

#### COMPLETION OF ORDER OF BATTLE OF 7TH DIVISION

11. The Chief of the General Staff had submitted a memorandum to the Minister of National Defence on 24 Mar 42 for the purpose of securing “authority for the mobilization of three Brigade Groups of the 8<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division and the completion of the Order of Battle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division” (HQS 20-1-6, vol 1, C.G.S. to Minister 24 Mar 42). The reason advances for the increase in the number of Home Defence units was “the possibility of a destructive raid on the West Coast of North America by a force of not more than two Brigade Groups” (Ibid). The Chief of the General Staff pointed out that if the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was to be concentrated in the Maritimes and the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division on the West Coast, “under such a disposition” there would be “no other active formations with which to back them up”. In order to provide adequate protection, it was proposed, to complete the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and to mobilize the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade Groups of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division. Two of these new Brigade Groups would be located in Pacific Command and one in Atlantic Command. It was not considered that there would be “sufficient men available from Training Centres to complete additional formations until about the 1<sup>st</sup> of August”, and therefore the Chief of



the General Staff estimated that the concentration of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division would take place by 1 Aug 42, and of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division by 1 Nov 42 (Ibid). These suggestions were approved by the Minister on 26 Mar, but “dispositions” were “to have further consideration” (Ibid: Minute by Col. Ralston).

12. A Director of Mobilization and Requirements memorandum of 4 May 42 gave an outline of the programme to be followed with regard to the Home Defence Divisions, stating that it was “anticipated that in early June” the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division would be “expanded to 7<sup>th</sup> Division complete” and would be located at Prince Rupert, Nanaimo and North Vancouver Island Areas respectively. It was also expected that early in June three Brigade Groups of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division would be formed, one to be located at Vernon, one at Prince Rupert and the third at Valcartier. (Ibid: M.R. 1 to D.M. & R. 4 May 42).

13. A memorandum to the Minister of National Defence written by the Chief of the General Staff on 9 May 42 stated the District Officers Commanding had been consulted concerning the selection of units required to complete the Order of Battle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and three Brigade Groups of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division. A proposed Order of Battle for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had been drawn up, and a list of units to be mobilized “consequent upon the decision to form three Brigade Groups of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division” was prepared. From this list and “from units previously authorized to mobilize for coast defence and garrison duties”, the actual Orders of Battle for the 8<sup>th</sup> Division Brigade Groups would be determined later. The following “major units”, of which three were French-speaking, were to be mobilized (Ibid: C.G.S. to Minister 9 May 42):

	<u>M.D.</u>
30 <sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion	1
Windsor	
(Essex Regiment)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Queen’s Own Rifles	2
Toronto	
2/10 Dragoons 2      Hamilton	
Princess of Wales’ Own Regiment (MG)	3
Kingston	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Fusiliers Mont-Royal	4
Montreal	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Le Regiment de Maisonneuve	4

Montreal			
	Le Regiment de Levis	5	Levis
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Winnipeg Rifles	10	
Winnipeg			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Irish Fusiliers	11	
Vancouver			
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Regina Rifles	12	Regina
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Edmonton Fusiliers	13	
Edmonton			

It was recommended that no new infantry battalions be taken from Military Districts 6 and 7, because these Districts were being called upon to furnish a considerable number of new anti-aircraft units. One light anti-aircraft battery from Military District 6 and one field battery R.C.A. from Military District 7 were, however, to be mobilized. The Chief of the General Staff proposed to advance the date of concentration from 1 Aug 42, the date previously suggested (see para 11), “as accommodation and sufficient trained cadres of these units were to be drawn from the following sources (Ibid):

- (a) From the Reserve Units being mobilized.
- (b) From Reserve Army resources within each District.
- (c) By withdrawing suitable personnel from Active Units already mobilized in Canada. This personnel where possible, to be withdrawn from Active Units of the same territorial Infantry Regiment or from the same Corps of other Arms and Services.
- (d) From the Canadian Army overseas.

The immediate action which the Chief of the General Staff suggested consisted of mobilizing at once, pending formal Privy Council approval, the Units required to complete the 7<sup>th</sup> Division as well as those units which would later form the Order of Battle of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division Brigade Groups.

14. On 13 May the Chief of the General Staff informed the Adjutant-General that the Minister had approved the above recommendations and added (Ibid: C.G.S. to A.G., 13 May 42):

It was originally intended that cadres for these units would be formed and placed in training about 1 Jun 42, and that the units would begin to concentrate about 1 Aug 42.

In view of the urgent necessity of providing operational units in Canada, prior to, or as soon as possible after, the departure of 4<sup>th</sup> (Armoured) which concentration is to commence will be advanced to about 1 Jul 42, at least in the case of Infantry and Recce. Battalions and if possible for the other Arms and Services as well.

The units that will be concentrated on 1 Jul will depend upon the availability of accommodation, which is now being surveyed...

In the meantime, however, it will be apparent that the early procurement of trained cadres for these units is of urgent importance and to ensure that the units have every advantage in the initial stages of their organization it is suggested that the appointment of Commanding Officers (or alternatively Seconds in Command in cases where the Commanding Officers comes from abroad) ought to be the first consideration.

It will further be noted that all units have been allotted to Districts. This has been felt to be desirable and necessary even in the case of units which have no official reserve counterpart. But I do not think we should place the whole responsibility for the formation of cadres upon the respective District Officers Commanding. Bearing in mind the heavy commitments which Districts have had to meet and the slimness of the resources of Reserve Units, it will be appreciated that assistance will have to be given both from units overseas and from operational and H.W.E. Units already formed in Canada. I suggest that the latter will be our most prolific source of trained personnel.

15. An Adjutant General's circular letter of 18 May 42 summarized the plan of mobilization of those units which were to complete the 7<sup>th</sup> Division as follows (Ibid: A.G. circular letter, 18 May 42):

- (a) Appointment of Commanding Officers or Seconds-in-Command.
- (b) Selection of cadres.

- (c) Preliminary training period prior to concentration.
- (d) Selection of place of concentration.
- (e) Concentration of cadres and enlisted Active personnel.

The cost of the units required to complete 7<sup>th</sup> Division for ten and a half months of 1942-43, was estimated at \$7,977,539.00 of which "\$1,726,577 is non-recurring" (HQS 20-4-6 vol 2: Minute of a Meeting of the Treasury Board, 22 Jul 42).

16. There appears to have been some difficulty in obtaining the required number of cadre and other personnel for all units except the battalions of infantry which were already mobilized. There was apparently little hope of obtaining overseas personnel for these appointments. On 23 May 42 General McNaughton had informed National Defence Headquarters by cable that the situation in England with regard to cadre personnel was not such as to allow assistance to be given for several months. In reply to a request from the Department of National Defence on 16 May 42 for "some 75 officers and 160 other ranks for 7 and 8 Divisions", General McNaughton pointed out that "during the past 4 months nearly 700 officers and over 3,000 other ranks" had been returned to Canada for instructional and organizational purposes and that there had been other demands for personnel in England. He added (HQS 20-4-6 vol 1: Tel. G.S. 1756 Canmilitary to Defensor (for A.G. from McNaughton) 23 May 42):

The resulting situation is that units formations and staffs have been seriously depleted and time is now required for the development of replacements. Moreover organization First Army HQ and 2 Corps involves further drain on units and Corps and will undoubtedly limit the rate of completion of those formations. Also we have assumed heavy additional responsibility in reinforcement units by acceptance of partially trained personnel as reinforcements which will create a further demand on units for instructors.

In consequence of the foregoing I do not feel that your request can properly be met at this time and I suggest that it be deferred until about 1 Aug 1942, by which time I hope to be in a position to help situation in Canada without undue compromise of efficiency here.

17. All Military Districts and a number of the Training Centres were circularized to

ascertain whether their Home War Establishments carried any surplus Other Ranks which might be made available as cadres for the Home Defence Divisions. There appears, however, to have been a dearth of suitable personnel in the Districts and cadres for these formations could not be supplied immediately (Ibid: Tel. Mob. 584, A.G. to D.Os.C., 27 May 42. See also ibid: Commandant, No. 131 C.A. (B)T.C. to National Defence Headquarters, 16 Jun 42; and ibid: O.C. No. 102 C.A. (B)T.C. to Department of National Defence, 15 Jun 42).

18. On 2 Jun 42 the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (A), Brigadier R.B. Gibson, requested information concerning the arrangements for concentration and completion to strength of the units of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division. He noted that instructions issued on 24 Mar 42 (see para 10) provided for the “completion of cadre training early in June and for the concentration of units at that time and their being brought up to W.E. by posting of members of H.D” and added (HQS 20-1-6 vol 1: D.C.G.S.(A) to D.S.D., 2 Jun 42):

The completion of these units is a matter of urgency in order that they may be trained and available for operational employment upon the departure of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

Director of Mobilization and Requirements replied to this request on 4 Jun 42, reporting that while they were not complete, all units except Signal units had been allotted some cadre personnel, but that no non-commissioned officers had been located for the cadres of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Field Batteries. With regard to plans for the completion to strength and concentration of 7<sup>th</sup> Division units. Director of Mobilization and Requirements reported further on 9 Jun 42 that “arrangements are being made to complete the War Establishments of these units by posting of “R” recruits as they become available” and that the units would concentrate during the latter half of June (Ibid: A.G. circular letter, 8 Jun 42, Appx. A and D.M. & R. minute to D.S.D., 9 Jun 42).

19. An Adjutant-General’s circular letter of 8 Jun 42 to the District Officers Commanding gave instructions for the concentration under canvas of units of the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division between 17 Jun and 30 Jun (Ibid: A.G. circular letter, 8 Jun 42). The principal points of concentration were Petawawa, Shilo and Camp Borden, while No. 19 Field Ambulance and No. 21 Field Ambulance concentrated at Valcartier and Aldershot respectively and No. 25 Field Company, R.C.E., at Chilliwack. The units were not, however, up to strength. A memorandum

from Director of Staff Duties to Director of Mobilization and Requirements noted that a number of the men allotted to these units were still in training and the war Establishments still remained to be completed by the posting of National Resources Mobilization Act personnel after concentration had taken place. It was pointed out that:

From the General Staff standpoint it is a matter of considerable urgency that the units concerned be completed quickly. The basic plan, as approved, called for these units to be concentrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June; i.e. they were to be completed to Establishment on that date; and it is essential that this plan be adhered to as much as possible.

In accordance with the plan covered by your memorandum, we will already be from 17 to 30 days late and will consequently be missing the advantage of summer camping weather (Ibid: D.S.D. to D.M. & R., 10 Jun 42).

The memorandum also recommended that “R” recruits be posted to complete the units as a date no later than that planned for the concentration of each unit.

20. On the same day that the concentration of the units of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was authorized, i.e. 8 Jun 42, the Adjutant-General wrote to the Chief of the General Staff referring to General McNaughton’s cable of 23 May 42 (see para 16) and stating, with regard to the situation in Training Centres, that:

It has become evident that mobilizing Units are finding it extremely difficult to obtain a working cadre of qualified officers and invariably are dependent upon officers of such Units being withdrawn from Instructional Staffs of Training Centres. This in turn aggravates the difficult situation in completing Training Centre establishments. (HQS 20-4-6 vol 1: A.G. to C.G.S. 8 Jun 42).

He suggested that the Army Commander might be asked to furnish further information early in August, and proposed to advise the District Officers Commanding that “every endeavour will require to be made to provide Slates of Officers for Units 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions”. (Ibid).

21. On 11 Jun 42, at a meeting held at National Defence Headquarters to discuss the completion of the units of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions, it was proposed to give high priority

to Field Regiments, Field Companies, Divisional R.C.A.S.C., Field Ambulances and Divisional Signals. It was agreed that the completion of units was in this case more important than the filling of Training Centres as far as the utilization of “R” recruits was concerned. It was decided also that the units of the Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division should be completed by the middle of July. 6,000 “R” recruits were to be allotted to 7<sup>th</sup> Division – 3,500 between 26 Jun and 17 Jul, and 2,500 more by 31 Jul. The total number of personnel still required for 7<sup>th</sup> Division, as estimated 30 May 42, was 7,809. The remainder, 1,809, was to be covered by cadres and tradesmen who were not included among the “R” recruits. The estimated increase in strength of 7<sup>th</sup> Division until the end of July, exclusive of new cadres and tradesmen, was to be as follows (HQS 20-1-6 vol 1: Minutes of a Meeting held at N.D.H.Q. 11 Jun 42):

Strength 30 May 42	8,166
12 Jun (from Training Centres)	<u>48</u>
Strength 16 Jun 42	8,214
26 Jun – 17 Jul (from Depots)	<u>3,500</u>
Strength 20 Jul	11,714
31 Jul (from Depots)	<u>2,500</u>
Total	14,214

#### APPOINTMENTS

22. On 4 Apr 42 Canadian Military Headquarters had been asked to submit nominations for the commander and staff of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division (HQS 20-5-6-2 Tel. G.S. 156, Defensor to Canmilitary 4 Apr 42), and “after careful consideration with Crerar and Montague” General McNaughton had nominated Brigadiers H.N. Ganong, A.E. Potts, E.D., and J.S. Stewart “for consideration for appointments as commanders 6 and 7 Divisions in Home Defence role”. Colonel R.E.G. Roome was considered for the appointment of Commander Royal Artillery 7<sup>th</sup> Division but he was “in command 1 Artillery Reinforcement Unit” – “an important post and Roome can ill be spared at present”. With regard to Brigade Commanders, further recommendations were to be made later. The telegram concluded:

Nominations for other appointments...will be submitted following next meeting Selection Board but I must point out we are running very short and it will only be possible to release a few. (*Ibid*: Tel. G.S. 1304 Canmilitary to Defensor (for Stuart from McNaughton) 16 Apr 42).

23. A second telegram from Canadian Military Headquarters on 20 Apr 42 nominated Captain J.B.T. Lewis for G.S.O. 2, Major G.K.R. Elliott for C.R.A.S.C., and Major H.D. Rice for O.C. Divisional Signals. (*Ibid*: Tel. A. 1075, Canmilitary to Defensor 20 Apr 42). Other sources were examined for suitable officers to fill the staff appointments of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and the following list shows the officers finally selected with the effective date of their appointments:

APPOINTMENT	NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE
G.O.C.	Maj-Gen. P.E. Leclerc M.M., E.D.	20 May 42
G.S.O. 1	Lt-Col. A.R. Roy	26 Jan 42
G.S.O. 2	Capt (A/Maj) J.B.T. Lewis	26 Jun 42
A.A.& Q.M.G.	Lt-Col. H.M. Wallis, D.S.O., M.C.V.D.	16 Jun 42
C.R.A.	Brig. R.E.C Roome V.D.	20 May 42
C.R.E.	Lt-Col. N.C. Sutherland	18 Jul 42
O.C. Div Sigs	Major (A/Lt-Col) H.D. Rice	27 Jun 42
C.R.A.S.C	Lt-Col. G.K.R. Elliott	29 Jun 42
A.D.M.S.	Lt-Col. H. Buck. M.C., V.D.	16 Jul 42
A.D.O.S.	Lt-Col. A.M. McCrimmon	16 Jul 42

#### ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS 7<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION

24. On 1 Jun Brigadier W.H.S. Macklin (D.A.G.) informed Director of Mobilization and Requirements and Director of Personal Services that “we must begin at one with the mobilization of the Headquarters of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division”. Since the concentration point had not yet been selected, he suggested that the initial organization should take place in “Eastern Canada” and named Connaught as a suitable site (HQS 20-4-6 vol 1: D.A.G. to D.M. & R. and D. Pers., 1 Jun 42). A circular letter issued 9 June 42 by the Adjutant-General authorized the organization of Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Division, at Connaught Ranges beginning 16 Jun 42 (*Ibid*: A.G. circular letter, 8 Jun 42). General Order 309/1942 was published covering the formation of 7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Headquarters and the units required to complete the order of Battle, with effect from 12



May 42.

25. On 15 Jun, Major-General P.E. Leclerc, M.M., E.D., General Officer Commanding 7<sup>th</sup> Division<sup>2</sup> and Lieutenant-Colonel H.M. Wallis, D.S.O., M.C., V.D., Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, arrived in Ottawa. On 15-16 Jun preliminary arrangements were made for quarters and rations, which were to be provided temporarily by the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish; and at Connaught Ranges step were taken to secure “suitable staff, equipment, stores” and to attend to other necessary matters (W.D. “A” 7 Cdn. Div., June 42). Some of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Divisional Headquarters Staff also arrived at Connaught Ranges 15 - 16 Jun 42 and organization of the two Headquarters proceeded together for the remainder of the month. The strength of Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Division, on 30 Jun was 15 all ranks, with 81 (all ranks) attached (Ibid).

26. The first part of July 1942 was taken up with “general organization duties” (Ibid July 1942). The following War Diary entry reveals clearly the progress which had been made by 9 Jul (Ibid July 1942):

While there still remained some shortages of M.T. and supplies – and some vacancies in officer and other rank personnel – the consensus of opinion was that organization has now reached the stage where this H.Q. could move and continue to function with a fair degree of efficiency on a few hours’ notice.

#### THE BRIGADE GROUPS OF THE 7TH DIVISION

27. As has been mentioned previously, only the three Brigade Groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were originally to be mobilized: these were the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Groups, authorized to mobilize 24 Mar 42 (see para 10). The 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group began organization at Prince George on 26 Jun 42 under the command of Brigadier O.M. Martin, V.D. Subsequently it became one of the Brigade Groups of 8<sup>th</sup> Division. The 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, with Brigadier C.B. Topp, D.S.O., M.C., as Commander, was to be formed at Vernon in British Columbia. Organization began there on 12 Jun 42 with about half the required staff. It was decided, however,

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<sup>2</sup> Major-General Leclerc had previously commanded the 15th Infantry Brigade

presumably in conjunction with the decision to move the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to Atlantic Command, that Headquarters 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group should organize at Connaught Ranges (HQS 20-4-6 vol 1: C.G.S. TO A.G., Q.M.C., M.G.O., 17 Jun 42). Accordingly 14 of the sub-staff of 21 men proceeded there on 27 Jun 42; the remainder stayed in Vernon to form part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group Headquarters which was then in the process of organization at that point (*Ibid*: A.G. circular letter, 26 Jun 42). The strength of 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group Headquarters at the end of June was one officer and sixteen other ranks, including one Home Defence conscript (W.D., H.Q. 17 Inf. Bde. June 1942).

28. The Headquarters of the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group was formed at Esquimalt, beginning 25 Jun 42. Brigadier H.W. Murdock, E.D., was appointed Commander. This Brigade Group became part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division and moved to Port Alberni on 18 Sep 42 (see [Report No. 7](#), Historical Section (G.S.) D.N.D., para 26). With the withdrawal of enemy forces from the North Pacific, it appeared no longer necessary to maintain large numbers of operational troops in the Pacific Command; consequently during the summer of 1943, it was decided to make a considerable reduction in the strength of the Home Defence forces (*Ibid*: para 34). The 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade Groups were both disbanded on 15 Oct 43 (G.O. 15, 8 Jan 44, w.e.f. 15 Oct 43).

29. The two Brigade Groups which replaced the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in the Order of Battle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group had been intended to form part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, and to this end had begun organization at Valcartier Camp on 20 Oct 41, under the command of Brigadier P.E. Leclerc, M.M., E.D. When Brigadier Leclerc was chosen to command the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, Brigadier J.A. Leclair was selected as his successor and took over the command of 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group on 15 May 42. A table of composition prepared by the Director of Staff Duties and approved by the Chief of the General Staff on 30 Aug 41 proposed as the Infantry component for 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, Les Voltigeurs de Quebec, The Halifax Rifles and Le Regiment de Hull (HQS 20-1-5, vol 1: D.S.D. to C.G.S. 30 Aug 41). This composition was not firm. According to a list of units under the command of 7<sup>th</sup> Division, prepared by the Directorate of Staff Duties and dated 23 Jun 42 the infantry battalions of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade included Le Regiment de Montmagny, Le Regiment de Quebec, and Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke. (HQS 20-2-5 vol 2: G.C.S. circular letter, 8 Jul 42, Appx. B).

30. Although the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade had been intended originally to form one of

the three Brigade Groups of the 8th Division, it came under the command of 7<sup>th</sup> Division almost immediately after its organization had been authorized at Niagara-on-the-Lake on 31 Aug 42. Brigadier P. Earnshaw, D.S.O., M.C., was appointed the Brigade Commander. The Infantry units allotted to this Brigade Group were the 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dragoons and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada which were then concentrated at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Winnipeg Rifles.

31. The reason for the shifting of the Brigade Groups from the Division in whose Order of Battle they had originally been included is not always clear from the files available at the Central Registry, the Department of National Defence. It may be assumed, however, that, when it was decided to locate 6<sup>th</sup> Division in Pacific Command, the logical step with regard to economy and the territorial affiliations of the "R" recruits was to place 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, concentrated at Valcartier, in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division which was to take up the defence role in Atlantic Command. It is stated in a Minute of a Treasury Board meeting on 9 Sep 42, that:

...the decision to have two Divisional Commands on the West Coast has resulted in a reallocation of Infantry Brigades generally, in order to obtain greater operational efficiency. (HQS 20-4-25-J: Minute of a Meeting of the Treasury Board, 9 Sep 42).

#### THE MOVE OF 7TH CANADIAN DIVISION TO ATLANTIC COMMAND

32. Canadian defence policy since 1940 had been to maintain a complete division in the Atlantic Command. This measure was based on the estimated scales of attack by an enemy on the east coast of Canada. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division began to move to Debert early in October 1940 (see Preliminary Narrative, History of the Canadian Military Forces in Canada and Adjacent Regions, Chap 9, paras 110 – 111). At this time the camp was still under construction and problems of accommodation had to be solved by the use of canvas. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division moved overseas in the summer of 1941, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Division moved to Debert and Sussex to take over the operational role of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was proposed to dispatch the 4<sup>th</sup> Division overseas during the late summer and autumn of 1942, and plans were therefore made for the 6<sup>th</sup> Division to move to Atlantic Command and for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to serve on the Pacific Coast. A change in plans, however, resulted in a decision to send the 6<sup>th</sup> Division to the Pacific Command. With regard to the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, Brigadier W.H.S Macklin, Deputy Adjutant-General, stated on 1 Jun 42.

This Divisional Headquarters will function, in the first instance, in British Columbia at a site which will shortly be decided. Later, after the departure of 4<sup>th</sup> Division, Headquarters 7<sup>th</sup> Division will move to Debert. (HQS 20-4-6 vol 1: D.A.G. to D.M. & R. and D. Pers., 1 Jun 42).

In spite of this statement and previous plans already mentioned, this Division moved from Connaught directly to Atlantic Command to take over the operational role of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, which began to move to England on 8 Aug 42.

33. The movement of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to the camps of Debert and Sussex could not be completed until sufficient accommodation had been made available by the dispatch overseas of all the units of 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> had been converted to an Armoured Division and the 7<sup>th</sup> was an Infantry Division, there were slight differences in the type of accommodation necessary. Provision had to be made for the light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, since these units formed part of an Infantry, but not of an Armoured Division (HQS 20-7-6, C.G.S. to G.O.C. –in-C. Atlantic Command, 26 May 42). The first flight of 4<sup>th</sup> Division was warned to be ready for dispatch overseas from 28 Jul 42 (HQS 20-2-6 vol 2: D.M.O. & P. to D.C.G.S.(A), 17 Jul 42). The advance party of Headquarters, 7<sup>th</sup> Division, left for Debert on 14 Jul 42 and the main body follow on 21 Jul, arriving there on the evening of the next day.

34. The main party of Headquarters 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group left Valcartier on 25 Aug 42, arriving at Debert on the following day. (W.D., H.Q. 15 Inf. Bde. 26 Aug 42). The first few days were spent in getting settled in the new quarters. On the 2 Sep 42 General Leclerc inspected all units in the Brigade. On this date also the first Operation Order was issued and training began immediately in order that the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group might be able to fulfil its responsibilities in the event of an enemy attack (Ibid: 2 Sep 42).

35. The 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group Headquarters moved to Sussex on 24 Jul 42. Its strength at this period of organization was 35 all ranks. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> Division units had not yet been dispatched overseas, personnel of the Brigade Headquarters were quartered with The Lanard and Renfrew Scottish Regiment and the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Support Group. (W.D., H.Q. 17 Inf. Bde., July 1942). On 1 Aug 42 the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group officially took over Sussex Camp Headquarters from the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Support Group and Brigadier Topp became Camp Commandant. (Ibid: 1 Aug 42). General

Leclerc inspected the units in camp at Sussex on 13 Aug. Training began almost immediately. On 3 Sep 42 the 23<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment proceeded to the Artillery Ranges at Tracadie to carry out firing practice, returning to Sussex on 9 Oct. (*Ibid*: 9 Oct 42).

36. Headquarters, 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, the 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dragoons and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, arrived at Debert on 30 Sep 42. Some units of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division were still in the lines which the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group units were to occupy, with consequent overcrowding for "two of three weeks" (W.D., H.Q. 20 Inf. Bde., 30 Sep 42). Brigadier Earnshaw was informed by Divisional Headquarters that the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group "would have three months available" for training before it adopted an operational role (*Ibid*). Accordingly, after the first few days spent in unloading, unpacking and making preliminary arrangements, unit syllabi were drawn up and training began. On 25 Dec 42, Brigadier J.B. Stevenson took over the command from Brigadier Earnshaw.

37. Several changes took place in the infantry component of the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade during the next few months. On 4 Jan 42 the 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Dragoons left Debert to take over a coast defence role at Sydney; this unit was replaced by Le Regiment de Joliette, which was, in turn, replaced by The Algonquin Regiment in the early spring of 1943. The latter regiment proceeded overseas in June 1943. On 16 Jun 43 the main body of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada moved from Debert to Dartmouth on Coast defence duties (*Ibid*, 16 Jun 43) and was succeeded at Debert by The Lanark and Renfrew Scottish. On 3 Jul 43 the Headquarters, 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, left Debert for Vernon, B.C. with Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent and No. 20 Defence Platoon. On 30 Jul it proceeded to Port Alberni, (Vancouver Island) where The Lanark and Renfrew Scottish had previously been sent on 2 Jul 43 to undertake a coast defence role in Pacific Command. (*Ibid*, July 1943). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Winnipeg Rifles remained in Atlantic Command in coast defence role at Shelburne and Mulgrave. (*Ibid*, 9 Jun 43).

38. Conditions at Debert and Sussex, during the first few months after the arrival of 7<sup>th</sup> Division, were not, apparently, satisfactory. At the very outset, as has been pointed out in paras 35 – 36, accommodation problems had presented themselves. According to the War Diary of the Assistant Director Medical Services sanitary conditions were unsatisfactory and the supply of water in the camp was limited (W.D., A.D.M.S. 7 Cdn. Div. August 1943); and the Commander, Royal Canadian Artillery complained of lack of sufficient office space (W.D., C.R.C.A. 7 Cdn. Div., October 1942). 7<sup>th</sup>

Division War Diaries refer on more than one occasion to the excessive rainfall during the autumn months; the Assistant Director Medical Services stated that heavy rains flooded the village of Debert, where one building was washed away and “many leaks showed up in roof of huts” (W.D., A.D.M.S. 7 Cdn. Div., September 1942). The wet weather hindered training to some extent, but a considerable amount was nevertheless accomplished. (see paras 46 – 48).

#### THE OPERATIONAL ROLE OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> CANADIAN DIVISION

39. The scales of enemy attack for which 7<sup>th</sup> Division had to be prepared were, briefly, bombardment by a capital ship, by one or two 8-inch cruisers or by an armed merchant raider mounting 6-inch guns; attack by submarine or small surface craft; small raiding parties; or bomb or gas attack on shipping, coastal and inland objectives. The Garrisons and Defended Ports within the 7<sup>th</sup> Division’s “area of responsibility” were Halifax Fortress and Defences at Sydney (including the Strait of Canso Defences), Shelburne, Saint John, Gaspé and Arvida. Each of these had been allotted fixed defences and garrisons. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division was required to hold in readiness, at Debert and Sussex, mobile reserves to:

- (a) Restore or stabilize the situation at any Fortress, Defended Port or Area;

or

- (b) Attack the enemy who is effecting or has effected a landing in an area outside the perimeter of Fortresses, Defended Ports or Areas;

or

- (c) Move to some strategic line for the purpose of defence against any further enemy progress.

40. The maximum strengths of mobile reserves to deal with these possible contingencies were one Brigade Group, less one special platoon, at Debert, and one Brigade Group, less one battalion, at Sussex. It was pointed out that it might be necessary to utilize the remainder of the Division in any of these three roles, or in an “Internal Security role” within the area of responsibility.

41. The 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group was to be responsible for carrying out any of the three

courses mentioned in para. 38 in Nova Scotia and the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group in New Brunswick and that portion of the Province of Quebec included in Atlantic Command. In addition, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was to be prepared to establish contact in an emergency with United States military forces at St. Stephen, N.B. by the dispatch of one Infantry company from the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade; and to send one special platoon from the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade to patrol the coast road from Bic to Cap Chat along the lower St. Lawrence.

42. Key officers were to visit all Fortresses and Defended Ports in Atlantic Command. Reconnaissances of the ground in the vicinity of and routes and approaches to Fortresses and Defended Ports were to be carried out. A reconnaissance was to be made also, in conjunction with the Strait of Canso Defences, of the operation which might be involved in an effort to cross the Strait. (This information is found in W.D., H.Q. R.C.A. 7 Cdn. Div., September 1942, Operation Order No. 3. Similar Operation Orders are to be found in other 7<sup>th</sup> Division War Diaries of September and October 1942, but the one to which reference is made was found to be most comprehensive).

#### THE STRENGTH OF THE 7TH CANADIAN DIVISION

43. The strength of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was subject to constant change, resulting from demands for overseas reinforcements and the constant shifting of units to take over coast defence roles. On 2 Jan 42, the total strength of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was 10,547; of these 680 were officers and 9,867 other ranks. Of the latter figure, 5,035 were Active soldiers and the remainder, 4,832, were National Resources Mobilization Act personnel (HQS 8899, vol. 3: "Canadian Army in Canada by Formations – Strength", 2 Jan 43).

44. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division was never fully organized. It was decided, for example, in September 1942 to send the 30<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion (Essex Regiment) overseas to be the Reconnaissance Regiment for 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps and to replace it with the 24<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion (Voltigeurs de Quebec) in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division. The 30<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion was to be brought up to strength by the direct enlistment of Active personnel. No action was to be taken to "post Members H.D. to the 24 Recce Bn pending a decision as to the ultimate employment" of this battalion. (HQS 20-1-6, vol 2; A.G. circular letter, 16 Sep 42). On 19 Feb 43 a memorandum by the Chief of the General Staff stated that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Field Company, R.C.E., then serving in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, was to be despatched overseas without replacement for service with 2<sup>nd</sup>

Corps Troops. (*Ibid*: C.G.S. to A.G., Q.M.G., M.G.O., 19 Feb 43). In addition, many units were never brought up to complete establishment. The establishment of the R.C.A.S.C. units in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was 1,620 all ranks and the total strength on 31 Jan 43 was 1,048 (W.D., C.R.A.S.C. 7 Cdn. Div., January 1943). The War Establishment for 7<sup>th</sup> Divisional Signals was 629 all ranks (W.D. H.Q. 7 Div. Sigs., August 1942, Appx. 3); at the end of January 1943 the actual strength was only 267. (*Ibid*, January 1943). Engineer units seem to have fared better. In August 1942 there was only a slight shortage of officers and non-commissioned officers, but this was not considered serious. At that time the number of sappers was 100 over strength and it was decided to make use of this fact to get rid of any “undesirable” men (W.D. H.Q. R.C.E. 7 Cdn. Div., August 1942, Appx. 1).

45. The Brigade Groups were also under strength. In March 1943 the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group including the Headquarters company, three infantry battalions, the Defence Platoon and the 20<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, was approximately 2,021. Le Regiment de Montmagny had 564 men on strength, Le Regiment de Quebec 546 men, and Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 663 men (W.D. A.D.M.S. 7 Cdn. Div., March 1943, Appx. “D”). The 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, including the 8<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Battery, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Field Company, Brigade Headquarters, two Infantry battalions, No. 17 Defence Platoon and the 21<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance, numbered 1,676 men. The strength of The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles was 386 and that of The Victoria Rifles of Canada, 539, (*Ibid*). The strength of the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group, including Brigade Headquarters No. 20 Defence Platoon, one Light Aid Detachment, one Field Park Company, one Ordnance Workshop, No. 9 Company, C.D.C., and two Infantry battalions was 1,447. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada had a strength of 460 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Winnipeg Rifles a strength of 420. (*Ibid*).

## TRAINING

46. During the first few months in which the units of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were organizing and endeavouring to reach some state of efficiency, no emphasis could be placed on large-scale training schemes. General Leclerc pointed out to the Officers Commanding the units that “for the time being” all attention should be given to individual training (W.D. “G” 7 Cdn. Div., July 1942 Appx. “A”). A Divisional Driving and Maintenance School was begun on 31 Aug 42 (*Ibid*, August 1942 Appx. “I”), and a Divisional Cookery School on 14 Sep. (*Ibid*, Appx. “H”).



47. Several training schemes were carried out during the autumn of 1942. On 16 Oct 42 one Infantry company and a carrier platoon from the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group conducted an exercise to “test the defences of the Halifax Fortress Area” by simulating a landing from a merchant vessel in Hackett Cove (W.D. H.Q. 15 Inf. Bde., October 1942). On 7 Nov the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade proceeded on Exercise “Beaver” to Mulgrave and Cape Breton “with the object of repelling an invasion of the Atlantic Coast by the enemy” (*Ibid*: 7 Nov 42). This exercise lasted for three days, and was considered to have been “a great success”. “One of the best lessons” resulted from the “opportunity given to practice administrative arrangements with regard to movement control and supplies”. “The troops also gained valuable experience in the co-operation of all arms, such as artillery, engineers and signals, with infantry”. (*Ibid*: Appx. “C”).

48. A scheme, embodying units in camp at Sussex, took place in the vicinity of St. Martin, N.B., on 14 Nov 42. It was considered that this “operation provided considerable valuable experience to all concerned”. (W.D. H.Q. 17 Inf. Bde., 14 Nov 42). No training exercises appear to have been conducted by the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group during 1942. A War Diary entry of 27 Oct 42).

49. On 7 Dec 42, Lieutenant-General K. Stuart, Chief of the General Staff, visited the units at Debert and Sussex. The Honourable Mr. J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence and Major-General W.H.P. Elkins, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Atlantic Command, inspected 7<sup>th</sup> Division units at Debert on 16 Dec. (W.D. “G” 7 Div., December 1942).

50. A number of training exercises were carried out under Brigade auspices during the spring and summer months of 1943. A conference of 7<sup>th</sup> Division staff officers, Brigade Staffs and the Officers Commanding units was held on 9 Jan 43 at which General Leclerc stated that he “contemplated that by 1 Apr 43” all personnel “would have completed basic training so that the Division would be ready to jump into Divisional exercises”. (W.D. A.D.M.S 7 Inf. Div. 9 Jan 43). There is, however, no clear evidence in the War Diaries that any Divisional exercises were ever carried out. Exercise “Oyster” was planned by 7<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters in September 1943 in order to practice units in tasks suitable to their operational roles and to assess the physical standards of the troops and the standard of collective training at a battalion level; but it does not appear from the sources consulted that this exercise was completed.

#### INCIDENT AT SUSSEX MILITARY CAMP – 6 MAY 43

51. At 2130 hours on 6 May 43, a small riot broke out in the camp at Sussex between some men of the Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles and some of the Voltigeurs de Quebec. Unfortunately, various and garbled reports reached the newspapers, in spite of attempts to maintain strict security. According to Brigadier Topp's report on the incident, the trouble began when a soldier of The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles threw the contents of a fire pail out of the hut door and "the water went over two Voltigeurs who were coming along at that moment" (W.D. H.Q., 17 Inf. Bde.; May 1943 Appx. 7). Shots were fired and bullets and bayonet wounds were received by several men. Two men were seriously injured and one of them, a private of The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles, died on 8 May 43 of gas gangrene. Brigadier Topp reported:

Cause of disturbance not at all clear but evident that no racial or religious friction between Units. Relationship cordial prior to disturbance. All personnel engaged appear to have been G.S. (Ibid).

Special patrols and picquets were arranged to prevent any further disturbance.

52. On 8 May men of both units lined the streets in the town of Sussex but further disturbance was avoided by all men of both units being recalled to camp and confined to barracks. On 14 May Les Voltigeurs de Quebec were moved to Aldershot, N.S. Military and civil inquiries were held. The matter also formed the subject of inquiry in the House of Commons. (W.D. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. D. & H. Rifles May 1943, Appx. 3).

#### THE 7TH DIVISION DISBANDED 15 OCT 43

53. During the summer of 1943 plans were made to reduce the strength of the Home Defence forces. With the withdrawal of the enemy from the North Pacific, it was no longer necessary to maintain large numbers of operational troops in Pacific Command. On 30 Aug 43, therefore, it was proposed to the Minister of National Defence by the Chief of the General Staff to disband the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions and to reduce the strength of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division. These recommendations were approved by the "War Committee of the Cabinet on the following day, 31 Aug 43. (HQS 20-1-5 vol 3: Murchie to the Minister of National Defence, 13 Jan 44). This decision was announced publicly on 13 Sep 43 by Mr. Relston, who pointed out that the Divisions would be replaced by three complete brigade groups, "each capable of operating independently

but administered and training under a modified divisional headquarters”. (W.D. H.Q. 17 Inf. Bde., September 1943, Appx. 19). The establishment for operational troops was to be reduced by “about 20,000 men”, who would be used to fill up remaining units and for potential reinforcements. (*Ibid*). “The general result” would be:

- (a) To provide a reduced but thoroughly efficient body of operational troops in Canada;
- (b) To introduce an additional phase of advanced training which will be given to reinforcements before they proceed overseas;
- (c) To release a considerable number of lower category personnel, who will thus be enabled to take up civilian occupations and supplement available manpower. (*Ibid*).

54. On 7 Oct 43 the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Group Headquarters moved from Debert to Prince Georges, B.C. 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Headquarters was disbanded on 15 Oct 43. (G.O. 15, 8 Jan 44, w.e.f. 15 Oct 43).

55. The following Appendices are attached to this Report:

Appendix “A” - Proposed Order of Battle, 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division

Appendix “B” - Units under command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, (upon concentration at DEBERT – SUSSEX).

Appendix “C” - Units under command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division 21 Jul 43 and their location.

56. This report was drafted by W-22809 Sergeant Buchanan, J.N., Canadian Woman's Army Corps, Historical Section, Department of National Defence.

(G.S),  
19 Oct 46.  
Defence.

(G.F.G. Stanley) Lt-Col.,  
for Colonel,  
Director of Historical Section

Department of National

APPENDIX "A"

The Order of Battle of 7<sup>th</sup> Division complete, as proposed to the Minister by the Chief of the General Staff on 9 May 42, was as follows (HQS 20-1-6, vol 1: C.G.S. to the Minister, 9 May 42):

Headquarters Units	7 Div. H.Q.
	7 Div. Int. Sec.
	7 F.S. Sec.
	7 Defence & Emp. Pl.
C.A.C.	30 Recce. Bn. (Essex R.)
Artillery	H.Q. 7 Div. Arty. RCA
	22 Fd. Regt. RCA
	H.Q. 22 Fd. Regt. RCA
	3 Fd. Bty. RCA
	6 Fd. Bty. RCA
	80 Fd. Bty RCA
	23 Fd. Regt. RCA
	H.Q. 23 Fd. Regt. RCA
	31 Fd. Bty. RCA
	36 Fd. Bty. RCA
	83 Fd. Bty. RCA
	24 Fd. Regt. RCA
	H.Q. 24 Fd. Regt. RCA
	49 Fd. Bty. RCA
	84 Fd. Bty. RCA
	85 Fd. Bty. RCA
	10 Lt. A.A. Regt. RCA
	H.Q. 10 Lt. A.A. Regt. RCA
	6 Lt. A.A. Bty. RCA
	7 Lt. A.A. Bty. RCA
	8 Lt. A.A. Bty. RCA
	9 Lt. A.A. Bty. RCA
	8 A. Tk. Regt. RCA
	H.Q. 8 A. Tk. Regt. RCA
	10 A. Tk. Bty. RCA
	11 A. Tk. Bty. RCA

Engineers	12 A. Tk. Bty. RCA
	13 A. Tk. Bty. RCA
	H.Q. 7 Div. Eng. RCE
	5 Fd. Pk. Coy. RCE
	23 Fd. Coy. RCE
	24 Fd. Coy. RCE
	25 FD. Coy. RCE
	7 Div. Sigs. RCCS
Signals	H.Q. 7 Div. Sigs. RCCS
	No. 1 Coy.
	H.Q. No. 1 Coy.
	“A” Sec.
	“B” Sec.
	“C” Sec.
	“D” Sec.
	“M” Sec.
	No. 2 Coy.
	H.Q. No. 2 Coy.
	“E” Sec.
	“F” Sec.
	“G” Sec.
	“H” Sec.
	No. 3 Coy.
H.Q. No. 3 Coy.	
“J” Sec.	
“K” Sec.	
“L” Sec.	
Infantry	H.Q. 16 Inf. Bde.
	16 Def. Pl.
	Pictou Highrs.
	N.B. Rang.
	R. de Jol.
	H.Q. 17 Inf. Bde.
	17 Def. Pl.
	V.R. of C.
	D. & H. Rif.
	Can. Fus.

	H.Q. 18 Inf. Bde.
	18 Def. Pl.
	R.M. Rang.
	2 C. Scot. R.
	K.O.R. of C.
Machine Gun	R. de Chat. (Mit)
Supply and Transport	Comd. 7 Div. RCASC
	7 Div. Amn. Coy. (No. 21 Coy.) RCASC
	7 Div. Amn. Coy. (No. 22 Coy.) RCASC
	7 Div. Amn. Coy. (No. 23 Coy.) RCASC
Medicals	19 Fd. Amb. RCAMC
	21 Fd. Amb. RCAMC
	25 Fd. Amb. RCAMC
	No. 4 Fd. Hyg. Sec. RCAMC
Ordnance	101 L.A.D. (Type A) RCOC
	102 L.A.D. (Type A) RCOC
	103 L.A.D. (Type A) RCOC
	107 L.A.D. (Type A) RCOC
	104 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	105 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	106 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	108 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	109 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	110 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	111 L.A.D. (Type B) RCOC
	32 Lt. AA Ord. W/S Sub-Sec RCOC
	33 Lt. AA Ord. W/S Sub-Sec RCOC
	34 Lt. AA Ord. W/S Sub-Sec RCOC
	35 Lt. AA Ord. W/S Sub-Sec RCOC
	7 Div. Ord. Wkshop. RCOC
	7 Div. Ord. Fd. Pk. RCOC
Others	11 Pro. Coy. C. Pro. C.
	7 Div. Postal Unit, C.P.C.

APPENDIX "B"

The following is a list of units which were to come under the command of the General Officer Commanding, the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division, upon concentration at the camps of Debert and Sussex. (HQS 20-1-5 vol 2; C.G.S. circular letter, 8 Jun 42, Appx. "B").

- HQ 7 Div
  - 7 Div Int Sec
  - 5 F S Sec
  - 7 Def & Emp Pl
- 30 Recce Bn (Essex R)
- HQ 7 Div Arty
- HQ 10 Lt AA Regt
  - 6 Lt AA Bty
  - 7 Lt AA Bty
  - 8 Lt AA Bty
  - 9 Lt AA Bty
- HQ 8 A Tk Bty
  - 10 A Tk Bty
  - 11 A Tk Bty
  - 12 A Tk Bty
  - 13 A Tk Bty
- HQ 7 Div Engrs
  - 5 Fd Pk Coy
- 7 Div Sigs (less E F G, J K L Secs)
- R de Chat (Mit)
- Comd RCASC 7 Div
  - 7 Div Amn Coy
  - 7 Div Pet Coy
  - 7 Div Sup Coy
- 4 Fd Hyg Sec
- 101 LAD (A)
- 103 LAD (A)
- 107 LAD (A)
- 104 LAD (B)
- 106 LAD (B)



108 LAD (B)  
109 LAD (B)  
110 LAD (B)  
111 LAD (B)  
32 Lt AA Ord Wkshop Sub-sec  
33 Lt AA Ord Wkshop Sub-sec  
34 Lt AA Ord Wkshop Sub-sec  
35 Lt AA Ord Wkshop Sub-sec  
7 Div Ord Fd Pk  
12 Pro Coy  
7 Div Postal Unit  
HQ 15 Inf Bde  
    15 Def Pl  
    R de Monty  
    R de Q  
    Fus de Sher  
HQ 20 Fd Regt  
    24 Fd Bty  
    72 Fd Bty  
    75 Fd Bty  
15 Fd Coy  
E Sec 7 Div Sigs  
L Sec 7 Div Sigs  
20 Fd Amb  
HQ 17 Inf Bde  
    17 Def Pl  
    D & H Rif  
    V R of C  
    2 R H C  
HQ 23 Fd Regt  
    31 Fd Bty  
    36 Fd Bty  
    83 Fd Bty  
23 Fd Coy  
F Sec 7 Div Sigs  
K Sec 7 Div Sigs  
21 Fd Amb

102 LAD (A)  
105 LAD (B)  
HQ 20 Inf Bde  
    3 Q O R  
    3 R Wpg Rif  
    2/10 D  
HQ 26 Fd Regt  
    117 Fd Bty  
    118 Fd Bty  
    119 Fd Bty  
27 Fd Coy  
G Sec 7 Div Sigs  
J Sec 7 Div Sigs  
27 Fd Amb

APPENDIX "C"

This "Location Statement" shows the units under the command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division as at 20 Jul 43 and their disposition (W.D. "G" 7 Cdn. Div., July 1943, Appx. 11).

UNIT	LOCATION	REMARKS
HQ 7 Cdn Div	Debert	
7 Div Int Sec	Debert	
5 Fd Security Sec	Debert	
7 Def & Emp Pl	Debert	
HQ 15 Cdn Inf Bde	Debert	
15 Def Pl	Debert	
R de Monty	Debert	
R de Quebec	Debert	
Fus de Sher	Debert	
HQ 17 Cdn Inf Bde	Sussex	
17 Def Pl	Sussex	
D & H Rifs	Sussex	
V R of C	Sussex	
2 R H C	Halifax	
3 Q O R	Dartmouth	
3 R Wpg Rif	Debert	One coy at Mulgrave
2/10 Dragoons	Sydney	
R de Chat	St. John	
HQ 7 Cdn Div Arty	Tracadie	
20 Cdn Fd Regt RCA	Debert	Tracadie: Aug & Sep One tp at Gaspé
26 Cdn Fd Regt RCA	Sussex	
10 Cdn L A A Regt RCA	Tracadie	One tp St John NB
HQ 7 Cdn Div Engrs	Debert	
5 Fd Pk Coy RCE	Debert	
15 Fd Coy RCE	Debert	
27 Fd Coy RCE	Sussex	
7 Cdn Div Sigs RCCS	Debert	J Sec at Sussex
HQ 7 Cdn Div RCASC	Debert	

7 Div Amn Coy RCASC	Debert	
7 Div let Coy RCASC	Sussex	
7 Div Sup Coy RCASC	Debert	
71 Gen Tpt Coy RCASC	Debert	
7 Div. Com Coy RCASC	Sussex	
20 Fd Amb RCAMC	Debert	Det at Tracadie
27 Fd Amb RCAMC	Debert	
29 Fd Amb RCAMC	Sussex	
4 Fd Hyg Sec RCAMC	Debert	
7 Div Ord Wkshop RCOC	Debert	Det at Tracadie
7 Div Ord Fd Pk RCOC	Debert	
101 LAD (Type A) RCOC	Debert	
102 LAD (Type A) RCOC	Tracadie	
103 LAD (Type A) RCOC	Vernon BC	
107 LAD (Type A) RCOC		On paper only
105 LAD (Type B) RCOC	Debert	
106 LAD (Type B) RCOC	Debert	
108 LAD (Type B) RCOC		On paper only
109 LAD (Type B) RCOC		On paper only
110 LAD (Type B) RCOC		On paper only
111 LAD (Type B) RCOC		On paper only
32 L A A Ord Wkshop Sec		On paper only
33 L A A Ord Wkshop Sec		On paper only
34 L A A Ord Wkshop Sec		On paper only
35 L A A Ord Wkshop Sec		On paper only
12 Cdn Pro Coy	Debert	
7 Cdn Div Postal	Debert	
7 Cdn Dental Coy	Debert	