

issued all orders and to take all steps necessary to give effect to this authorization and direction; and all personnel so dispatched or to be dispatched are respectively hereby required (in addition to all other obligations for training, service or duty) to perform while in the said localities of service such training, service or duty as may be ordered by any superior officer.

Further, all personnel so dispatched or who may at any time be dispatched are, pursuant to section 64 of the Militia Act, hereby placed on active service beyond Canada for the defence thereof (83).

527. Upon hearing this Mr. R.B. Hanson (former Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons) exclaimed "Surrender" (84). Mr. Gordon Graydon referred to the Government's "partial reversal" of policy from what had become an "untenable position" but intimated that the Conservative Party was still going to press for the immediate application of the full provisions of the National Resources Mobilization Act and move a motion of want of confidence in the Government (85). For, clearing away the verbiage, the Government had taken the minimum action—the despatch of up to 16,000 N.R.M.A. infantrymen to meet only the immediate shortage overseas.

528. General McNaughton was then permitted to address the Members on the subject of reinforcements. After giving a résumé of how the crisis had arisen he added the caution that his figures were only estimates, and definitely on the safe side (86). The particularly acute problem of French-speaking Infantry reinforcements was being given separate attention (see para 410). He admitted that there might be some delay in getting **initial** sailings away but pointed out that it would be possible to arrange accommodation for even larger drafts in December if the Army could get the additional men to the ships. Continuing, he said:

... quite definitely, that all anxiety would be removed if we were able to find in December a total, above the number now arranged, of 5,000 infantry fully trained or in an advanced stage of training, a similar number in January and a further 6,000 in the succeeding months.

Every possible economy in the employment of fit general service personnel in home establishments has now been made or is in process, and the men so made available are included in the figures of planned dispatches.

In consequence the only source from which this additional 16,000 can be secured is from the N.R.M.A.

If we are to dispatch any considerable body of these men in time to ease the anxieties in the situation, arrangements for shipping must be **initiated** forthwith (87).

529. Discussing the trend of forthcoming operations General McNaughton suggested that there might be a return to the "siege warfare" conditions of the First World War as the advancing Allied armies ran up against strongly defended positions constructed beforehand. If such turned out to be

the case then wastage might become more evenly spread among all the troops in forward areas. Fortunately there were adequate reserves for all corps other than Infantry. Such a situation, however, would necessitate increased production of munitions and the return of more workers to essential war industries.

530. General McNaughton went over the steps taken to ensure that N.R.M.A. soldiers would not be discharged until after the volunteers had been brought back from overseas: if not physically fit for service overseas they would be employed on work of national importance as members of Employment Companies. In conclusion he stressed that:

The lives of our men in the fighting lines must be guarded in every way that is dependent upon action which can be taken from here. The numbers required to make up the reserve that is necessary are larger than could be provided in time by the volunteer conversion of trained and fit personnel of our N.R.M.A. men to general service.

I have said that except for some 16,000 men we are able to meet all requirements from men who have come forward voluntarily. I have said that it is our purpose to maintain the voluntary system to the limit. I have stated that 5,000 additional trained infantry must be available early in December to safeguard the position at the end of January; that another 5,000 must be found in January, and some 6,000 in the succeeding months.

I have brought these facts before my colleagues in the cabinet. An order in council has been passed extending the service of this number of men to the European theatres of operations.

This power will be used only to the extent necessary to make up the numbers of reinforcements required (88).

531. General McNaughton had been given what Mr Ralston had sought in vain and the latter now could have made it very difficult for the Government if he had so desired. Since Canadian troops were going to receive sufficient reinforcements, however, he contented himself with cross-examining the new Minister of National Defence on matters of detail. He obtained an admission that apart from the designated 16,000 N.R.M.A. soldiers the only trained Infantry reinforcements were the 4500 G.S. personnel* rounded up during Mr Ralston's tenure of office (89). The question of how many N.R.M.A. soldiers actually would go overseas depended on how many would still sign a general service attestation form (M.F.M. 2) to avoid the stigma of "Zombie" and how many would prefer to retain their conscript

*Arrived at by accelerating despatch of 1500 infantrymen; sending overseas 1500 of other corps for remustering to Infantry; demoting 750 N.C.Os. to private but continuing their previous rates of pay for a period of six months; despatching 750 tradesmen as general duty infantrymen but continuing their trades pay for six months (see para 472). Both Mr Ralston and General McNaughton had refused to lower medical standards for general duty infantrymen in order to obtain additional reinforcements.

status to the bitter end (90). In an exchange with Mr. Howard Green (Conservative—Vancouver South) the Minister of National Defence agreed that compulsion would be used only to meet deficiency: if sufficient men volunteered there would be no need to send any N.R.M.A. soldiers overseas. (91).

532. The next problem raised by the Opposition was whether the conversion training being given to both G.S. and N.R.M.A. soldiers was sufficient to produce properly trained general duty infantrymen. General McNaughton argued that the six weeks' Infantry syllabus developed in the United Kingdom (where most of the conversion training had been carried on) was adequate, while the Opposition claimed, but without any actual evidence, that in practice there were many exceptions (92). General McNaughton admitted that there always would be instances of men who were not of the standards laid down—either of physique or infantry training—being sent forward; but the last possible check was made when the man went to the "left out of battle" component of an infantry battalion (Appendix "L"). Thereupon he read a copy of a letter General Simonds had sent (28 Oct) to all his commanders on the subject of absorbing reinforcements (see para 384). Himself a veteran of the First World War, Mr. Howard Green fastened on the circumstances where mere boys would have to be rushed into a battle at once should a battalion become decimated (93).

533. The Minister of National Defence further agreed that the call-up system would remain unchanged and men would continue to be enrolled as N.R.M.A. soldiers to the numbers requisitioned monthly from National Selective Service (94).

534. At the risk of belabouring the topic, it should be emphasized that Mr Ralston successfully made the point during the evening that the Government was "counting on N.R.M.A. personnel who volunteer as going in the regular monthly dispatches and not as part of the 16,000." (96). In fact, he pointed out, there was "not one word from start to finish" in General McNaughton's statement to indicate that "one of these men is going; it is all hypothetical" (97). The Government was only going to invoke the terms of its Order in Council whenever successive drafts could not be filled with the 5000 additional volunteers. General McNaughton did state, however, that N.R.M.A. soldiers would be included among the 5000 additional men to be despatched during December.

535. That same evening (23 Nov) a crowd of some 700 youths paraded through the streets of Quebec City carrying banners with the legend "Down With Conscription" but were dispersed by the police when they tried to enter a recruiting office (98). Abortive demonstrations were held elsewhere but only in Pacific Command were there real disorders. (See paras 551-6) In Ottawa itself 100 N.R.M.A. soldiers attempted to march up Bank Street toward Parliament Hill on Monday night, 27 Nov (99) but were dispersed by G.S. soldiers, sailors and

*Speaking in the House of Commons on 27 Nov to obtain a vote of confidence in his Government the Prime Minister was even more emphatic:

... The order in council authorizes the Minister of National Defence to dispatch overseas a maximum of 16,000 N.R.M.A. personnel. In calculating the number of N.R.M.A. personnel so dispatched as reinforcements men will be counted as N.R.M.A. personnel only if they have embarked on board ship without converting to general service. All N.R.M.A. personnel who convert to

(cont'd on next page)

airmen who started fist fights along the street* In Montreal that ~~same~~ night some 700 youths paraded the streets in protest (101). Later in the week an editorial in The Ottawa Citizen had this to say of the outbursts in Montreal:

... Mob violence at this time in Canada, when so many of the free-born youth are away on active service overseas, is obviously instigated by cunning instructors.

This country cannot afford to be indulgent with something like the Fascist brand of blackshirts or the Hitlerite youth. They are allowed to put on mob parades and demonstrations only because of the absence of Canada's true young manhood, on active service in the firing line against the forces of darkness overseas (102).

536. Four members from Quebec constituencies quit the ranks of the Liberal Party over this issue and Hon. C.G. Power resigned his portfolio as Minister of National Defence for Air. In his letter to the Prime Minister he wrote:

... I do not believe such a policy to be necessary at this time, nor will it save one single Canadian casualty.

I parted company with Colonel Ralston after the most mature consideration largely on the grounds that the number of troops which he reported as being required was comparatively so small, the means to remedy the situation without placing undue strain on the men at the front so readily available, and the end of the war so imminent that weighing everything in the balance we were not justified in provoking a national scission.

I cannot accept now from a new minister General McNaughton a recommendation which I reluctantly felt obliged to reject when made by an old comrade and tried associate Layton Ralston (103).

Fortunately, Hon. Louis St. Laurent and other Ministers representing Quebec constituencies had remained in the Cabinet (104).

(cont'd from page 257)

general service before embarkation will go overseas as volunteers. The additional numbers estimated to be required total 16,000, regard, less of their status on leaving Canada (95).

*On Saturday night, 2 Dec, there was a three hour free-for-all at Fort Frances, Ontario when servicemen home on leave and veterans of both World Wars tangled with about 100 French-speaking N.R.M.A. personnel who had been employed in that area on railroad maintenance (see Appendix "G"). During the fracas six persons were injured (100).

537. Mention should be made of the resignation of Brigadier James Mess (D.A.G. (C), and in charge of recruiting since 1941) who had not returned from a liaison visit overseas until 24 Nov. Upon being ordered to continue with his drive to obtain volunteers he tendered his resignation on 26 Nov, pointing out to the Adjutant-General that to do so

... would be to contravene the commitment I have repeatedly made to the public--the Press--my own associates--viz. that should the time ever come when recruiting on the voluntary basis was not equal to the demands of the Army, I would at once recommend to my superiors the abandonment of the voluntary system and a recourse to full and unconditional conscription. That time has now unmistakably come. The present crisis has been precipitated by the fact that the demands from overseas could not be met by the response which has been made or which might yet be expected from the voluntary system. My conviction stands that the only alternative is to resort to immediate and unlimited conscription (105).

There had been much to complain of the recruiting propaganda issued during 1944 and as late as 11 Nov General McNaughton had been advised by a Cabinet colleague (Hon. Brooke Claxton) that, although Brigadier Mess had lots of life and drive, he was "stupid and opinionated and that his work was badly directed." (106) After considerable behind-the-scenes consultation Brigadier Mess was retired (107).

538. When the House of Commons convened on Monday, 27 Nov, and Hon. C.G. Power had stated the reasons for his resignation from the Government, but not the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister moved that after the completion of its existing business the House should adjourn until 31 Jan 45. As moved by the Prime Minister this was a request for a vote of confidence: "That this house will aid the government in its policy of maintaining a vigorous war effort." (108) Mr King pointed out that Mr Power had resigned for reasons "diametrically opposed" to those of Mr Ralston and proceeded to trace the Government's stand from the pre-war pledge of "no conscription for overseas service" to the present limited measure. Although the Government had possessed the legal power to introduce any measure of conscription needed there had been a moral obligation. In his opinion, therefore, the 1942 Plebiscite and subsequent amendment of the National Resources Mobilization Act had merely released the Government from its pledge and given it a free hand. The Prime Minister denied the newspaper allegation that the conscription issue had been a personal King-Ralston conflict and argued that after conducting the War for five years under a voluntary system of enlistment for overseas service, the Cabinet had been justified in considering whether, on the eve of victory, it might not still be possible to continue under that system. The members of the Cabinet had been convinced of the need to send more men overseas: the only question had been the method. He went on to say that a partial measure of conscription for overseas service had been agreed upon only because of the realization that:

... unless this House of Commons can unite in reasonable measure to support an administration that can carry on at this stage of war we shall have to face the possibility of anarchy in Canada while our men are fighting overseas,

giving their lives that we may maintain our free institutions and that we may have peace and concord through the years to come....(109)

He claimed that the Government had successfully surmounted two crises which might have forced it to resign. The Canadian Army could not wait two or three months for its reinforcements while the country was in the throes of a general election. Members either could support the existing Government or force the formation of a new administration which would still have to enforce a measure of conscription (110).

539. Following him the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Gordon Graydon) emphasized that there was no guarantee that 16,000 N.R.M.A. soldiers would be sufficient and that there might not be another crisis later. He also spoke of the many men who would be spending their sixth Christmas away from home and wondered whether the long servicemen would be expected to volunteer for further fighting in the Pacific (111). Mr Graydon claimed that total war was needed and went on to quote from an editorial in that morning's Ottawa Journal:

If Mr. King and General McNaughton still don't believe in the compulsion principle, then are they the people to be carrying out this order in council? Here we have a minister of defence coming to parliament and saying to it in effect: "I am going to carry out this policy, but I don't believe in it-- am against its principle". We say as plainly as we can that General McNaughton would show more of integrity, certainly more of logic, if he said instead: "I don't believe in the principle of this policy; you had better get somebody to carry it out who does believe in it." And that goes for Mr. King (112).

540. Mr. M.J. Coldwell, leader of the C.C.F. Party, emphasized that the question before the House was reinforcements, not conscription, as there already was an N.R.M.A. army (113). Like Mr Graydon he moved an amendment to the motion made by the Prime Minister.

541. On Tuesday (28 Nov) the House of Commons met for six hours in secret session to hear General McNaughton further.

542. Mr Ralston's eagerly awaited speech, delivered on Wednesday evening (29 Nov) went over the old familiar ground and endeavoured to correct certain impressions as to what his stand had been. He stated that he was far from satisfied with the "piecemeal method that had been adopted or the halting attitude" it indicated, but he was supporting the Government's motion for a vote of confidence because the Canadian Army Overseas would thus get the necessary reinforcements (114). Personally he considered that the time had come to make all N.R.M.A. soldiers subject to overseas service but he would not support any motion which was an expression of lack of confidence in the Government. In short, although he did not think that General McNaughton's timetable for shipments would get the men there quickly enough, support of the Government was the only way to ensure that sufficient reinforcements were sent.

543. The debate was continued on Thursday and Friday and resumed on Monday (4 Dec) by which time a number of side issues had developed, such as the fact that remustered men

were being sent into action with insufficient training as infantrymen and casualties were being returned to their units before completely recovering from wounds. Letters were read and additional evidence cited by succeeding speakers. By 5 Dec five amendments to the Prime Minister's motion for confidence had been brought before the House of Commons. On that day Mr. J.G. Diefenbaker (Conservative) referred to the Government's policy as "rationed conscription" (115). During the exchange with the Prime Minister the latter refused to answer whether he would, if necessary, produce further orders in council to permit the despatch of more than 16,000 N.R.M.A. soldiers: Mr King merely said that he had "made no promise to anyone" (116).

544. Recognizing that the House of Commons was not going to take any action requiring its concurrence the Senate adjourned on 5 Dec. The debate in the House of Commons closed on 7 Dec, with the Prime Minister summing up. The 11 o'clock closing was waived and the motion was put to a vote at one o'clock in the morning (the various amendments having been defeated beforehand). The Government was sustained by a vote of 143 to 70. The House then adjourned until 31 Jan 45 (117).

545. The Cabinet War Committee and the Department of National Defence remained just as busy as ever. It was factors completely beyond their control, however, that permitted General McNaughton to inform his Cabinet colleagues on 22 Dec that by reason of revision in forecasts of activity for Canadian Forces in North-West Europe and Italy the statistical reinforcement position was some 4,400 more favourable than previously calculated. Provided there were no shipping delays the number of men despatched overseas by 10 Jan 45 should be 1500 more than the figure communicated to the House of Commons.

(iii) Sending N.R.M.A. Soldiers Overseas

546. During question time in the House of Commons on 24 Nov General McNaughton stated that the units supplying the 10,000 additional reinforcements to be despatched in December and January had been selected that morning and would shortly be moving to concentration areas in Eastern Canada. He further added that:

... The men who wish to volunteer will be given every opportunity to do so. The others, the whole units including those men, will be despatched on the dates which at the present time are being arranged (118).

These drafts would comprise 7500 fully trained infantrymen and 2500 who were well advanced with Infantry training (119). Since this movement had just been ordered Mr Ralston suggested that the plan had been prepared three weeks previously. General McNaughton admitted that this suggestion might be true (120).

547. Members of the Opposition parties questioned General McNaughton and Hon Ian Mackenzie (Minister of Veterans Affairs) as to whether commanding officers had been instructed to explain to N.R.M.A. soldiers of their units that they would not be entitled to rehabilitation benefits unless they volunteered for overseas service (121). After some heated discussion Mr Mackenzie explained that N.R.M.A. soldiers were not entitled to a war service gratuity if they remained in Canada but, if they proceeded overseas either voluntarily or

as a result of compulsion, they would receive the same benefits as anyone else (122). Later in the afternoon it also was explained that conversion training was getting under way for the remaining 26,000 N.R.M.A. soldiers considered suitable for remustering to Infantry (123).

548. On the following day (25 Nov) Pacific Command was informed that Infantry units of the 6th Division were to be relieved of operational duties in preparation for movement overseas and grouped under two existing brigade headquarters: Headquarters, 14th Infantry Brigade, with The Oxford Rifles, The Winnipeg Light Infantry, The Saint John Fusiliers, The Royal Rifles of Canada and Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, and the 15th Brigade of The Prince Edward Island Highlanders, The Midland Regiment, The Prince of Wales Rangers and Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent (124). Suitable personnel from Infantry battalions remaining on coast defence and other Corps would be posted to the above-mentioned units in order to increase their strength to 1100 other ranks each.

549. In a special effort to convert more French-speaking personnel into G.S. reinforcements orders were issued for the immediate return of the 20th Field Regiment, R.C.A., Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke and Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent to Quebec province (125). Instructions were subsequently issued for the 15th Field Company, R.C.E. and the 19th Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M.C. to follow. The detached companies of Le Régiment de Chateauguay, serving on aerodrome defence duties in Atlantic Command, Le Régiment de Joliette which had been harvesting and French-speaking personnel of disbanding anti-aircraft batteries also were returned to their native province (126).

550. Other English-speaking units slated for later despatch overseas were the 31st (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment (Pacific Command), the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) already at Debert but under strength, and The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles (Niagara-on-the-Lake). Existing personnel of The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles were to be used to complete to establishment units proceeding with the "first" and "second" flights and the unit rebuilt later (127).

551. On Friday evening, 24 Nov, however, trouble had broken out in Pacific Command where the largest number of N.R.M.A. soldiers were then stationed. According to the report later submitted by General Pearkes there had been a satisfactory acceptance of the first news that N.R.M.A. soldiers were going to be sent overseas, but the men began to express dissatisfaction as soon as it became apparent that only "partial conscription" was implied in the despatch of 16,000 infantrymen (128).

552. According to newspaper accounts 1000 N.R.M.A. soldiers marched through the streets of Vernon, B.C. shouting "Down with Conscription" and "Conscript Money as Well". General Pearkes' account mentioned only 200 men but both versions mention two officers who were knocked down when they attempted to stop the proceedings. The demonstration was of short duration and there was no damage to property. General Pearkes emphasized that:

Indiscreet handling of news releases by the Press had a decided contributory effect. The first news story of the Vernon demonstration stated that 1000 men took part, whereas less than 200 were actually involved. Such exaggeration was obvious encouragement to malcontents in other camps, who were led thereby to believe that the

movement was much stronger than reality. Arrangements were made later with Press agencies to refer questions of fact to this Headquarters for verification before publication (129).

553. At Terrace on the Saturday morning (25 Nov) personnel of Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent refused to go on parade and persuaded approximately two companies of The Prince Edward Island Highlanders and 30 members of The Prince Albert Volunteers to join them. The dissidents opened a unit magazine and armed everyone, issuing about 100 rounds per man. As all commanding officers had left for Vancouver to attend the investigation proceedings being conducted by General Sansom (see para 418), command of the troops at Terrace was assumed by Lt.-Col. W.B. Hendrie, Mountain Warfare and Jungle Fighting Wing of the Canadian School of Infantry (S-17). However, control already had been lost by the junior officers, so that the best he could do was order them to guard key buildings. General Pearkes later placed the blame largely on the temporary absence of senior officers, the lack of sufficient officers of middle seniority and earlier withdrawal of "active" N.C.Os. for service overseas*. In any event, the dissidents drew into their ranks practically all the N.R.M.A. strength of Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent, The Prince Edward Island Highlanders, The Prince Albert Volunteers and the 19th Field Ambulance. Only the first and last-named units, however, comprised French-speaking personnel.

554. The rioters mounted 6-pr anti-tank guns on the terrace overlooking the town and on the following day some 1600 armed men surrounded the camp of The Prince Albert Volunteers to prevent their scheduled move to Tofino. An advance party did get away on Monday (27 Nov), by which time senior officers had begun to return. These officers became convinced that about 75 per cent of the 1600 rioters were being intimidated by the remaining minority. Arrangements were made to have the local Liquor Store and Beer Parlours kept closed on 28 Nov and N.D.H.Q. was advised that conditions now could be described only as those of mutiny: Section 7 of the Army Act already had been read to the men. Conditions gradually reverted to normalcy, however, under the direction of the senior officers of the several units. Personnel of the 19th Field Ambulance and Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent returned to duty and began packing for their return to Quebec province. During the night 28/29 Nov a few men picketed the lines of The Prince Albert Volunteers but the action was half-hearted and this unit entrained the following noon.

555. At Prince George a parade of 200 demonstrators from the 20th Field Regiment had marched through the lines of The Saint John Fusiliers and anti-aircraft units on the Saturday night (25 Nov) and, after gathering a crowd of approximately 500, made a noisy progress through the town. At Courtenay a crowd of 150 men from The Winnipeg Light Infantry were dispersed after only one incident. At Chilliwack two provost personnel were injured while attempting to disperse a small parade of dissidents. On Sunday afternoon 150 N.R.M.A. members of The Oxford Rifles marched through the streets of Nanaimo but there was no violence and prompt disciplinary action was taken. Only a 15 minute parade was held at Alberni, staged by a group from Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke. A rumoured demonstration at Prince Rupert on the Monday was squelched

*A total of 375 sergeants, 87 corporals and 200 former N.C.Os. who had reverted to the status of private in order to become reinforcements.

before it had a chance to get under way.

556. General Pearkes deduced that the situation at Terrace had grown serious because the garrison of this isolated area was under the impression that similar large scale demonstrations were occurring all across Canada (130). As has already been indicated this was far from the case.

557. The disturbances in British Columbia had, however, had the effect of worrying many people and had resulted in some rather unusual correspondence on the subject of internal security. One anxious writer, worried by a report that a Reserve Army field battery at Quebec City had been ordered to return to Ordnance its ammunition, breechblocks and gunsights, pointed out in a letter to the Minister of National Defence that:

With the Home Army men being returned to this province en masse the only unit that could be depended upon in case of trouble is apparently being made powerless to deal with it (131).

Upon investigation, however, the Minister of National Defence learned (6 Dec) that this unit had a strength of only five officers and 24 other ranks: even if there should be an emergency it could not be employed in an artillery role (132).

558. Internal security was also stressed at N.D.H.Q. when the question of returning overseas men who should have completed their 30-day rotation leave in Canada was discussed. In a telegram of 17 Dec to C.M.H.Q. the Adjutant-General pointed out:

View held here shared by Minister that as many as possible of personnel dispatched on rotation leave be retained here for period of six months or longer and posted to HWES to release GS and NRMA personnel into rft stream. Will also have desirable effect of partially staffing Army in Canada with overseas personnel and be an ultimate aid in demobilization. Numbers retained will of course be governed by volume forward flow of reinforcements (133).

This was emphasized even more strongly in a telegram received at C.M.H.Q. on 9 Mar 45 which settled definitely* that personnel despatched to Canada on rotation leave normally would be retained there:

While our primary problem is release fit NRMA and GS for overseas service it is of vital importance that with operational troops now being reduced to barest necessities we should have in Canada as potential aid to civil power maximum possible number overseas personnel. Maintenance present rate of withdrawals for reinforcements will within a few months develop a situation where all future withdrawals must be met by equivalent replacements (134).

*Despite objections from C.M.H.Q. only 53 of the 1992 all ranks brought back to Canada on the first three leave quotas returned overseas after their leave was completed. On 27 Feb 45 a telegram was despatched to C.M.H.Q. to the effect that personnel returned to Canada on rotation leave normally would be retained there. A further telegram of 9 Mar informed C.M.H.Q. that all future returns of personnel to Canada would be under the headings of rotational duty for at least six months long service leave for men still physically fit to return overseas compassionate leave and men unfit for operational service (AHQ Report No. 2).

559. Meanwhile, since the excitement had quietened down, the first groups of French-speaking personnel left Pacific Command (1 and 3 Dec 44) without incident, with the men excited at the thought of returning home to the **Province** of Quebec. In all some 114 officers and 2801 other ranks moved east with these French-speaking units (135).

560. The case of the 20th Field Regiment, R.C.A., which was slated for disbandment following its arrival at Valcartier and its personnel for remustering to Infantry is of some interest. At Winnipeg the second of its two troop trains was boarded by a recruiting party, including two officers who had seen service in Normandy. Its report follows:

The men were very cheerful about being back in the Province of Quebec but bad feeling existed because of unwarranted criticisms of B.C. newspapers regarding their conduct and status.

These men are wary of being suddenly transformed into infantrymen without a chance of using their arty and special trg and also losing trades pay in certain cases. They were told that infantry had need of gun crews in A/Tk pls, etc.

They have always been treated on the same terms as the active members of their unit and this has been going on for so long that they take it for granted that they have done the smart thing in remaining N.R.M.A's.

They respond quite well to the argument that rfts are badly needed overseas but they find it hard to take the next step. They are used to being coaxed like children every three months or so and hope for this to go on forever.

They say that they have been promised all sorts of things that never materialized, and when their trip started they were sure they were on their way overseas until they were met on the train.

There are some ring leaders to be weeded out and also certain N.C.O's. all known to their superiors who, if thoroughly sold on becoming G.S. would bring many followers.

It is felt that men should be separated from their officers whose enthusiasm in most cases, has waned [sic] away.

Local newspapers could help a great deal in taking an optimistic view of **a very favourable response** in the recruiting. The clergy could do a great deal in the same direction (136).

Following the unit's arrival at Valcartier on 5 Dec a definite recruiting campaign was instituted to persuade men to enlist voluntarily for overseas service. On 12 Dec all the gunners physically fit to serve as general duty infantrymen were transferred to Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent while the N.C.Os. were sent to C.I.T.C. (A-13), for refresher and conversion training (137). On 20 Dec some of the low category gunners were transferred to the 26th ~~Anti-Aircraft~~ Regiment, R.C.A. in Newfoundland and on the last day of the year the unit ceased to exist (138).

561. Grounds for complaint arose over the reception accorded a draft of 505 remustered French-speaking N.R.M.A. soldiers despatched from Petawawa to rebuild Le Régiment de Chateauguay, which was reorganizing at Sorel. No transport had met this draft at 1800 hours on Saturday, 16 Dec and the men had had to march from the station, carrying their complete equipment, through snow drifts to the camp, where they were kept waiting around outside because no preparations had been made. After their return to Petawawa the conducting party complained that the officers of Le Régiment de Chateauguay had been thinking only of a coming mess party and had even refused them meals and accommodation until they could get a train back to Petawawa. Thereupon the Commander of Petawawa Military Camp despatched the following complaint to Ottawa:

Everything possible was done in this Camp to despatch the men in a contented state of mind. They appeared to sense the reason for their move, but there was not a single discordant note in the whole draft.

However, the reception which they received at Sorel... had a very disturbing influence among the men and undermined the good will that has been created in this Camp.

It is a regrettable incident when a Commanding Officer on receiving five hundred men, who are to make up a major part of his Battalion, fails to ensure their welcome. A personal contact with the men on arrival or as immediately following same by the C.O. or his Senior Officer at least was indicated under the circumstances, in order to let the men know that some interest was being taken in their welfare. Apparently the Commanding Officer considered that the dance, which was being held that evening, was more important than the interest and welfare of his men, which conduct is certainly reprehensible (139).

562. With little time to digest the 232 men received on 15 Dec, and 42 on the following day, Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent were given a further 376 gunners on 18 Dec (140). The men were given leave over Christmas but the unit war diary records on 27 Dec that only 107 other ranks had returned. During the next two days small groups drifted back but there still were approximately 800 absentees on 3 Jan (141). Similarly, Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke received large reinforcement drafts and were plagued by men overstaying their Christmas leave. A number tried the "sick at home" dodge but were instructed where to "report sick" by return telegram. The greater number of men did return, however, and plans were made to leave behind a major and 10 other ranks to collect the stragglers (142).

563. The seven English-speaking infantry battalions of the 14th and 15th Brigades had completed their reorganization in Pacific Command, receiving drafts of varying sizes from all arms and services, while those of their personnel unfit for overseas service as infantrymen were reposted to units remaining there in an "operational" role. For example, The Oxford Rifles received 300 gunners from the 28th Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 125 from the 22nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery and 48 men from 1st Field Ambulance: in return it sent 76 of its low category men to The Kent Regiment which was remaining (143).

564. In order to reduce administrative problems Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke had been replaced by The Prince of Wales Rangers in the "first flight" for overseas which left Pacific Command on 11, 12 and 13 Dec with the following strengths (144):

H.Q. 14th Infantry Brigade	58
The Winnipeg Light Infantry	1120
The Oxford Rifles	1113
The Royal Rifles of Canada	1108
The Prince of Wales Rangers	1113
The Saint John Fusiliers	<u>1112</u>

5624

Officers in Pacific Command estimated that roughly 50 per cent of the above were trained infantrymen and that a further 15-20 per cent had completed individual training.

565. The fact that very few of the original personnel remained in these units created a concentration problem after men had been given embarkation leave. Men dropped off at their home stations as the trains sped eastward across the continent, after receiving instructions where to report so that they would arrive in groups at Debert. For example, The Royal Rifles of Canada, mobilized in Quebec City, instructed personnel with homes west of Toronto to report to No. 2 District Depot; those resident as far east as Montreal were to report there and travel as another group; those living east of Montreal were to travel independently to Debert (145). The Oxford Rifles, mobilized in Western Ontario but subsequently replenished with personnel from all across the western half of the continent (M.D. Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 13), was to concentrate at London, Ontario.

566. Only about 50 per cent of The Oxford Rifles congregated at London, Ontario (146). On 30 Dec a draft of 300 other ranks arrived from The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles of Canada at Niagara-on-the-Lake, but more trouble developed just before the unit was scheduled to move to the east coast (147). According to stories later appearing the press (see para 581) some 100 N.R.M.A. soldiers clambered over a six foot fence surrounding the barracks and went "whooping" along the city's streets congregating in pool rooms, restaurants and theatre lobbies until rounded up by members of the Canadian Provost Corps (148). All-in-all, some 650 men became absentees and were transferred "on paper" to the District Depot (149). Describing the actual train journey to Halifax the unit diarist wrote:

It was a quiet New Year's Day aboard the two troops trains. The weather was murky with a stormy wind and a heavy rain. Orderly rooms were set up on both trains to enable the troops to go active but very few availed themselves of the opportunity (150).

567. Similarly, The Prince of Wales Rangers received a draft of 141 other ranks on 1 Jan 45 to make good wastage through absenteeism (151).

568. The story of N.R.M.A. soldiers throwing their rifles overboard and causing disturbances on shipboard resulted from the conduct of one man, who had thrown his rifle and two kitbags into Halifax harbour and then refused to land when the S.S. Nieuw Amsterdam reached the United Kingdom. According to the official announcement made on 4 Mar, in answer to

charges made by Progressive-Conservative politicians during the North Grey by-election campaign (of a month before), K574552 Pte William Harold Smith* of The Prince of Wales Rangers had stated during Court Martial proceedings:

On January 2, 1945, as I was crossing the gang-plank embarking on the ship for overseas, I deliberately threw my rifle and two kitbags overboard. I figured the military police would take me off the boat when I did this. I do not know the number of the rifle, as I had just received it the night before. The following day I received my kitbags on board ship (153).

The floating kitbags had been recovered but the rifle had sunk to the bottom. He does not appear to have been placed in confinement for he was able to hide before the ship reached port and only after considerable search was found and taken ashore.

569. Two other men had refused to go on board the Nieuw Amsterdam and seven sets of web equipments and rifles were discovered in trains arriving at Halifax, their owners obviously having jumped off (154).

570. In addition to this "first flight" of 4265 mixed personnel (A.T. 178) there were approximately 1600 all ranks in ordinary G.S. reinforcement drafts. Due to the number of absentees at the last moment and their replacement by other personnel it was impossible to obtain accurate information

*A perusal of this soldier's personal file discloses a situation far different from the one portrayed by opposition newspapers. William Harold Smith had been born in Prince Rupert on 10 Mar 19, had attended Chilliwack High School for one year and subsequently worked as a rodman for a civil engineer. On 22 Nov 40 he had been enrolled for 30 days' military training and was not recalled for continuous military service until 13 Jul 42 (Medical category A-1, 'M' Test score 162). He was posted to the 3rd battalion, Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) for training but went absent when he was posted to the 1st battalion of this unit before its departure for Jamaica in April 1943. After serving the 90 days detention awarded by a court martial for attempted desertion he was posted to The Prince of Wales Rangers (10 Aug 43). On 23 Dec 44, he went absent from this unit which had been selected for inclusion in the first overseas flight of N.R.M.A. personnel. On 31 Dec Pte. Smith was struck off strength to No. 6 District Depot as an absentee but must have been picked up as this entry was cancelled. On 2 Jan, while mounting the gangway of the S.S. Nieuw Amsterdam as already noted, he threw his rifle and kitbags overboard. He was tried by Court Martial, found guilty under two charges (A.A. 24 (1) and 40) and sentenced to 18 months detention. A summary of a psychiatric report dated 5 Mar 45 stated that:

This man is of a solitary, recessive, seclusive nature, who has utterly failed to adjust himself to army life. Has absorbed practically no trg, due to obstinate refusal to soldier, & not to lack of mental ability. Has resisted all attempts to induce him to serve usefully. He is an early case of split personality, who will probably progress. Is of no use to army in any capacity. Graded M-1, S-5.

Thus this man's behaviour might be attributed to the fact that he was a psychopathic personality. Unfortunately it was not possible for medical officers to spot and reject all such men during the course of a normal medical examination (152).

concerning their state of training (155).

571. No effort was made on shipboard to have N.M.R.A. soldiers attested for general service and in two cases the actual signing of documents (M.Fs.M. 2) was postponed: the total number of men volunteering since the units had left Pacific Command was 50 (156). In the case of the succeeding flight with mixed personnel (A.T. 182) men were encouraged to volunteer for general service until they actually disembarked in the United Kingdom. A circular letter of 13 Jan, issued while this flight was at sea, made it possible for N.R.M.A. soldiers to change their minds at any time and actually volunteer while overseas. The letter stressed, however, that:

It is of importance that as many conversions as possible are obtained before NRMA soldiers proceed overseas and efforts to that end must be energetic and continuous (157).

572. Considerable changes had been made in this "second flight", however, before the 15th Brigade was assembled in Nova Scotia early in January. Before leaving Pacific Command on 20 Dec 44 The Midland Regiment and The Prince Edward Island Highlanders had been reinforced to a strength of approximately 1100 all ranks each but, again, a large number of men failed to report after embarkation leave. On 5 Jan 45 the war diary of The Prince Edward Island Highlanders noted that only about 400 of its men had reported to the Transit Camp at Debert. Two days later the unit received a draft of 547 men who had been rounded up as replacements (158). The Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) had been at Debert since early November (see para 341) but was now brought up to strength.

573. The balance of the revised "second flight" comprised the four French-speaking Infantry battalions previously mentioned (see para 449) and separate drafts totalling 170 officers and 525 G.S. other ranks (159). The widespread absenteeism in Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent already has been mentioned (see para 462) and only 243 other ranks boarded the ship at Halifax on 11 Jan (160). Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke ran into difficulties just before their train was due to leave for Halifax on 8 Jan. The unit war diary records that 'C' company began a sit-down strike at 1100 hours and that by 1300 hours it had spread to all personnel, except those of battalion headquarters. The men listened to their commanding officer politely but refused to obey orders (161). During the afternoon Maj.-Gen. E.J. Renaud (D.O.C., M.D. No. 4) arrived and also harangued the men. Some 17 men of the support company capitulated first but it was not until 2330 hours that all of the 427 other ranks were aboard the train (a further 48 other ranks had gone ahead with the advance party). Without further serious incident the men boarded the S.S. Mauretania at Halifax on 10 Jan. That day 12 men volunteered for general service and while the ship was at sea a further 39 men, including three sergeants, became volunteers (162).

574. Le Régiment de Chateauguay neglected to submit a war diary for this period. A perusal of that kept by Le Régiment de Joliette suggests that very little trouble was experienced (despite the fact that only 257 other ranks were embarked), in spite of the following:

Our Padre made a very nice sermon this morning and scared everyone stiff. As usual he was quite a diplomat in his own way and just used the wrong time to say the things he said. Too bad that he felt he had to speak the way he did

for instead of trying to encourage the boys and to tell them that the crossing was nothing at all, that no troopship was ever lost, etc., he warned them of the dangers to come, that the coming trip was a very perilous one, etc. Too bad there is not a CARO to oblige the Padres to show their sermon to the Officer Commanding on certain occasions for we are quite sure that it would save a lot of trouble (163).

575. Although subject to slight correction later the embarkation strength of the 15th Brigade was given as (164):

	Officers	Other Ranks		Total
		G.S.	N.R.M.A.	
15 Bde HQ	13	5	30	35
PEI Highrs	34	145	883	1028
Fus de Sher	23	72	361	433
R. de Jol	24	108	149	257
Fus du St. L.	25	59	184	243
R. de Chat	25	228	271	499
Mid R.	41	140	635	775
Ir Fus	32	306	283	589
	217	1063	2796	3859

There also were 170 officers and 525 G.S. other ranks on other drafts, bringing the total sailing to approximately 4770 all ranks. During the voyage some 158 N.R.M.A. soldiers volunteered for general service. It was believed that more men would have volunteered but for the prevalence of a shipboard rumour that N.R.M.A. soldiers would remain in the United Kingdom on fatigue duties and only G.S. soldiers would be sent to fight (165).

576. Statistics on these two troop shipments (A.T. 178 and 182) indicated that slightly better than the publicized 10,000 men had been despatched. However, as the Adjutant-General had pointed out to the Minister of National Defence on 18 Jan, only slightly better than 8000 had been N.R.M.A. soldiers and fewer than the urgently required 7500 were trained infantrymen (166).

577. The "third flight" consisted of the 31st (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment, the 19th Field Ambulance* and normal

*In a telegram of 29 Nov the Adjutant-General suggested that the 15th Field Company, R.C.E. and 19th Field Ambulance, R.C.A.M.C. should be sent overseas and their personnel used to reinforce primarily French-speaking Engineer and Medical units (see para 442) instead of disbanding them in Canada. In his reply General Montague pointed out that such action would give these men preferential treatment over those voluntarily remustered and sent to the United Kingdom as unallocated infantry reinforcements. Consequent upon this rejection the 15th Field Company was disbanded and all potential infantrymen transferred to Le Régiment de Joliette. Plans to disband the 19th Field Ambulance were cancelled, however, as the Adjutant-General was still desirous of using its personnel to reinforce the five predominantly French-speaking medical units overseas. Since success did not follow the offer to despatch this unit overseas if 90 per cent of the men volunteered for general service disbandment was on and off again more than once before it was sent overseas in February and disbanded (167).

G.S. reinforcement drafts and totalled 286 officers and 4843 other ranks (including 1968 N.R.M.A. soldiers) (168). Before leaving Pacific Command the 31st (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment was increased in strength from 750 to 1787 other ranks (from 35 separate units) but only 1112 of the men reported at Debert following embarkation leave. Records were in a chaotic state and the confusion was heightened by attaching approximately 1100 stragglers from the previous sailings. The worst confusion attended the loading of these men into trains at Debert, especially the group that had been foisted on the unit the day before. A subsequent report stated in part:

At one stage of the loading the men were actually loaded and despatched to the Rly Station while a previous train was still being loaded which meant practically an hour's wait on the platform. These men were loaded and despatched to the Station without the slightest knowledge of the officers of the Regiment responsible for the loading of the unit. These personnel marshalled in the third drill hall were of course the worst of the entire draft. The men of one serial had knocked out the windows and took out the electric light bulbs from their hut the night before, men of another serial refused to parade in the morning and still others refused to get on the train but when left standing on the platform cold persuaded them otherwise. There was actually no discipline and no organization in this jumble of men. There was available to DEBERT a total of 25 additional officers representing 6 of the serials of previous flights, but lack of control and non-interest of most of their officers was evident even though they were handling their own men and spoke, in the case of the French Speaking serials, their own language. This, together with the fact that there were practically no NCOs in this group of 1100 (being AWL they had been reverted if there were any), placed an almost impossible task on the officers and NCOs of the Regiment. It was necessary to distribute throughout the 2276 other ranks the 38 Regimental Officers and some NCOs in order to maintain some semblance of order—a further hardship being caused by having to leave 8 Regimental officers at DEBERT to handle any stragglers (169).

578. The troops went aboard on 31 Jan. No attempt was subsequently made to induce N.R.M.A. soldiers to volunteer for general service. Apart from the conduct of the stragglers (a meeting had to be broken up by the ship's police) the discipline of the two formed units was satisfactory during the voyage (170). Following arrival the 31st (Alberta) Reconnaissance Regiment was split into three groups, the original C.A.C. personnel going to No. 1 C.A.C.R.U. (171).

579. The Dufferin and Haldimand Rifles were refilled during January and moved from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Camp Sussex, from where it was possible to utilize training facilities at C.I.T.C. (A-34), Utopia. Small drafts (some of surplus N.C.Os.) continued to arrive during February (172). On 15 Feb the unit diarist recorded that:

... A draft of 7 men from the Edmonton Fusiliers arrived today. These men are not much of an addition to us as they all suffer from Atlantic Fever. All have a stretch of detention to

complete, before absorbing any of the training we are doing at present....

Four days later a draft of 214 other ranks was received from Utopia, 68 of whom were either staff sergeants or sergeants from all arms of the service (173). On 26 Feb the unit moved to Halifax. In addition to its 45 officers and 1235 other ranks this "fourth flight" included stragglers from the previous flights and ordinary reinforcement drafts to a total of 258 officers, 3283 G.S. and 1554 N.R.M.A. other ranks (174). There were no incidents aboard ship and 21 N.R.M.A. soldiers were converted to general service.

580. In accordance with an earlier decision to reduce the garrison of Newfoundland further (see para 345). Le Régiment de Québec was withdrawn during March and concentrated at Valcartier for movement overseas as a formed unit (28 officers, 12 G.S. and 602 N.R.M.A. other ranks) any time after 1 May. The approaching end of the War in Europe resulted, however, in the cancellation of such a move (175).

581. Until 19 Jan any mention of widespread absenteeism had been kept out of the Press. On 2 Jan the Chief Censor confidentially had advised newspapers, news associations, special correspondents and radio stations that, although a "very substantial number of men [were] overdue from embarkation leave", there could be no news release until the troop convoys had arrived safely in the United Kingdom (176). Thus the staff of The London Free Press, which had the best story of all (see para 566), had worked for 24 hours over New Year's to complete a feature they could not publish (177).

582. On 16 Jan, however, the District Officer Commanding at London, Ontario, telegraphed the Chief of the General Staff that The Globe and Mail of Toronto suspected that censorship was being imposed for political reasons (until after the North Grey by-election of 5 Feb) and was therefore likely to publish the story of the disorders as a "scoop" but in such a way that North Atlantic troopship movements would not be endangered (178). The Adjutant-General advised the Minister of National Defence that some sort of statement would have to be issued about 20 Jan, when the "second flight" should have reached the United Kingdom (179). As the Adjutant-General suggested, however, more than 2000 men were still on embarkation leave and if they learned that 50 per cent of the N.R.M.A. personnel from previous drafts for overseas had gone A.W.L. (absent without leave) they would be encouraged to do likewise. Furthermore, such publicity would be disheartening to the troops overseas and most certainly would be played up by the Germans. On the instructions of the Cabinet an Order in Council forbidding any public reference to troop movements and statements prejudicial to recruiting was drawn up and held in readiness but never issued (180).

583. In its issue of 18 Jan, however, The Globe and Mail carried an editorial denying that there were security reasons for withholding from the Canadian people stories of disorders among N.R.M.A. troops (181). Therefore, as soon as word was received late on the evening of 19 Jan that convoy A.T. 182 had reached the United Kingdom safely the waiting press release (embodying points raised by the Adjutant-General on 16 Jan) was issued (182).

584. Once the ban had been removed stories of absenteeism materialized from centres all across Canada. Press reports from Pacific Command indicated that 20 per cent of the men given home leave in British Columbia still were absent.

The Calgary Herald estimated that 400 failed to report back to Military District No. 13. A rather surprising feature of the situation in Pacific Command was the announcement of 22 Jan that over 200 of the 482 absentees were G.S. soldiers (184): seemingly, however, these largely would be men who had volunteered as the result of social pressure.

585. In an editorial which had a lot to commend it, despite the political implications directed at the pending by-election in North Grey which General McNaughton was contesting, the Montreal Gazette of 22 Jan stated:

The statement issued by Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton, Minister of National Defence, discloses a situation among the Home Defence troops that is far worse even than what was suspected or feared. It is now a matter of official admission that of the 15,600 Home Defence troops advised that they were to be sent overseas, 7,800 or precisely one half, were at one time overdue or absent without leave. To the present time, only 1,500 of these have returned or have been returned by police action. There are still 6,300 or 40 per cent., whose whereabouts are unknown.

... the position of the men now fighting overseas is again placed in grave uncertainty. For these 15,600 Home Defence troops constitute the trained reinforcements which are essential for maintaining the overseas pools. Gen. McNaughton announces that "the special program arranged for use of N.R.M.A. personnel overseas is also progressing according to schedule". It is difficult to see how the program for the use of N.R.M.A. personnel overseas can be progressing according to schedule when 40 per cent of the trained men are not accounted for.

The conduct of the Home Defence troops has shown a flagrant disregard for the authority of the Government because the Government has failed to inspire in these troops a respect for its authority. An authority strong and determined is not violated in this manner. The men feel under a weak and wavering discipline because the will that directs it is so obviously hesitating. There is the conspicuous fact that the Government was driven into a conscription policy by the force of an irresistible public opinion, that it adopted this policy with an undignified haste; that it became a conscriptionist government under protest and with intricate compromise. When it now approaches the men and demands of them a prompt and unwavering response, its words fail to evoke respect and its orders fail to exact obedience.

To understand how deep lies this widespread disregard for the Government, it must be borne in mind that these Home Defence men are not raw recruits, unused to army life or ignorant of the necessary consequences of insubordination. Most of them have been long in the service, some of them as long as two or three years. Indeed, before they were granted their

leaves, they were solemnly warned of the consequences of not returning. So it is that these men know well what they do. When military discipline is broken by so large a number of men, so deliberately, and with such composure, it is the discipline rather than the men, that has lost moral vitality.

If the Government has shown any determination towards these men in recent years it has consisted mainly in trying to break their spirit. The very act of creating such an army involved the creation of an invidious distinction and an anti-social mentality. But these reactions were steadily consolidated. The general recruiting campaigns consisted in great measure of exhortations to men as yet out of army service not to become as these men were. Even such campaigns for overseas enlistment as were conducted among the Home Defence troops themselves consisted often of efforts to humiliate them into a higher view of their responsibilities.

Such treatment as this could have, and has had, only one result. Gradually the men hardened under this abuse, and developed their own esprit de corps. At first resenting these imputations, they came at length to take pride in them. Such was the reaction of the troops who had been so long under a government weak in resolution and strong in abuse. Now that the Government feels itself impelled by a will not its own timidly to play a more positive role, it finds that it is dealing with men whose disrespect it has itself earned.

In the present mounting crisis only one policy is open to the Government. It must quickly and with all the moral resources at its disposal, rehabilitate itself—not only in the eyes of the Home Defence troops, but in the eyes of the troops overseas, and of the nation at home. It must lay aside all its many evasions and compromises, and show some spirit by shouldering its responsibilities. As a first stage, it must show the courage to promptly abolish all distinctions within the Army, and to create one army for one purpose.

But the present amazing failure of discipline in the Home Defence troops cannot be considered as a difficulty in itself, as something that can be dealt with as a separate problem. It is inseparable from the moral quality which the Government itself has impressed upon the whole country. For there can be nothing more behind military discipline than the prestige of the Government which is its ultimate source and administrator. The defect with which we are now faced is not a failure of discipline in the Army but of moral fibre in the Government. The cure lies with the Government itself, and it is essentially a matter of self discipline.

Certain it is that the present collapse has

proved that ~~it~~ is no longer possible to follow the traditional policy of seeking political strength by displaying strategic weakness. The Government has been steadily lowering itself. Indeed, it is now extremely doubtful whether it retains a sufficient power for self-recovery. This is a question that the people of the country will soon have to decide.

586. The Toronto Evening Telegram agreed with the Prime Minister that there was nothing new about conscription, but insisted that the present mass evasion of duty was something entirely new (185). The Ottawa Citizen wondered "what deep moral issue" lay behind the decision of so many men to seek severe punishment rather than actually go forth to war (186). In its "Shocking Truth" editorial of 22 Jan The Globe and Mail already had pointed out that any idea the Government had entertained of persuading enough N.R.M.A. soldiers to volunteer for overseas had been fallacious: instead of a "just and equitable conscription" the Government had singled out 16,000 men to be the "victims of expediency".

587. General McNaughton's own statement, or what he was purported to have said in the midst of his election campaign, did not make matters any easier. For example he was reported to have stated during the course of a campaign speech:

It is all right...for 6,300 of those designated for overseas service to desert. 'It served to screen out the good from the bad'.

... I had a feeling that a proportion of them (the draftees) were all right, but a good high proportion were neither good to God nor to man (187).

His Conservative opponent, Air Vice Marshal A.E. Godfrey, already had declared that General McNaughton either should insist on a new policy or resign, while his C.C.F. adversary prophesied that, as a result of the way the Government was handling the problem, there would be no reinforcements available overseas when May came along (188). (Air Vice Marshal Godfrey won the election and General McNaughton subsequently announced that he would contest the constituency of Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, in the forthcoming federal election.)

588. All this created an unfavourable impression in the United States, reinforcing the earlier view that Canada was not doing her share to win the war. Just as the reduction in Canada's home defences in 1943 had been badly timed for American public opinion (see para 241), these news stories came right after Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had given his war review to Congress and had indicated the need to reclassify men previously placed in category 4-F in order to provide replacements against the heavy casualties sustained (189). The Philadelphia Inquirer headed its news story "7,800 Canadians Vanish to Avoid Duty Abroad" while The Kansas City Star carried the caption "Canadians Go A.W.O.L." (190). The Associated Press accounts did go on to explain that the trouble revolved around N.R.M.A. personnel but the average reader was prone to accept the first reports at face value. Other newspapers attempted to neutralize their effect by publicizing the A.W.O.L. and black market activities of American troops in Europe. A despatch of 26 Jan in The New York Times stated that between 12,000 and 13,000 American soldiers were absent without leave, as a daily

average, and that a large percentage drifted towards Paris which was the centre of nefarious activities.

589. The gravity of their position was gradually impressed upon a number of these N.R.M.A. soldiers and they began to give themselves up. Civilian as well as military police began checking leave passes (191). Montreal newspapers warned (24 Jan) that the R.C.M.P. would begin checking National Registration cards and citizens were asked to carry them at all times (192). Anonymous telephone calls and tips, mostly from women, enabled the police to round up others in British Columbia (193). A Government sponsored advertisement appearing in the daily press of 26 Jan warned relatives and friends that harbouring deserters was a civil offence: after 21 days absence any soldier would be classed as a deserter and subject, after apprehension, to trial by court-martial (194). No indication had been given to the press as late as 1 Feb, however, as to whether any of these absentees actually had been classed as deserters (195).

590. The procedure put into effect at No. 1 District Depot (London, Ont), which was entrusted with the recovery of the 650 men from The Oxford Rifles alone, was for absentees to be held under open arrest until a group of 20 had been formed (196). Then, such a party* was despatched under escort to No. 2 Transit Camp, Debart for inclusion in an overseas draft (198). Summary sentences, usually involving the forfeiture of 28 days pay (and the pay automatically lost during absence) were levied by the Officers Commanding District Depots before sending the men forward (199). Even though it had been possible to announce on 1 Feb that the number of so-called "absentees" had been reduced from 6300 to 4631 (200) the situation did not improve as rapidly as the politicians hoped, since fresh men disappeared each time a draft was being prepared for despatch overseas.

591. A Canadian Press story of 14 Feb told of absentees being sought in the "remote sections of Canada's snow-clad bushland" and how 12 such soldiers were caught in a shanty hideaway 12 miles from Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. One of these was a G.S. soldier named Edward Zaffini: the 11 N.R.M.A. soldiers were identified as Albert Sarlo, Hugo Sarlo, Guido Sarlo, Mario Albanese, Gino Gerardi, Frank Madonna, Etio Fasanello, Enzo Antonello, Achille Albanese, Frederick Digasparro and John Fasanelli (201).

592. Fireworks were really touched off at Drummondville in the Eastern Townships (of Quebec) on the Saturday night, 24 Feb, however, when a party of approximately 50 R.C.M.P. and the same number of Canadian Provost Corps personnel began raiding public places after eleven o'clock in search of absentees and draft dodgers. The police were attacked by a mob, their vehicles overturned and smashed. Fighting raged up and down the business section for three and a half hours. Scores of civilians suffered more or less severe cuts and bruises; two members of the R.C.M.P. required hospitalization while others, including personnel of the Canadian Provost Corps, required medical attention. The police managed to retain their prisoners, however, and get them back to Montreal without having to call on the nearby Sherbrooke Basic

*On 9 Jan 45 this Depot despatched a second such draft to Debart, five of the men leaving in handcuffs. On 26 Jan the Montreal Gazette reported that 20 or 30 draftees wearing handcuffs had been seen at the Windsor Station (187).

Training Centre for help (202). The Globe and Mail (Toronto) declared that "Mob Rule Must Stop" (203) while The Ottawa Journal's editorial tried to assess the blame as follows:

The blame? Let no one say it is solely with those young men themselves. Because it isn't. What took place at Drummondville was the consequence of years in this country when too many of our leaders preached isolationism, made an anti-conscription cry a political principle, declared over and over again that never must Canadians be again called upon to fight outside their own country. For more than twenty years the youth of Quebec were told that—were taught a doctrine of isolationism and cynicism which, looking back on it now, must make all of us feel ashamed that politics in this country could fall to such a level.

These young deserters and mobsters in Drummondville were never taught the implications of citizenship, nor the meaning of Canada's place in the world; were never told what is involved in the unity of this country and in the maintenance of freedom and democracy. They were told instead that isolationism was the thing, that our membership in the British Commonwealth and in the comity of free nations meant only privileges and entailed no duties—that if there was fighting to be done it could be done by others (204).

593. The more irresponsible elements in other parts of the country had their prejudices fanned by incidents and remarks such as the following chit-chat which appeared in The Windsor Star of 28 Feb:

One of the yellow-bellies picked up by military police in Quebec and escorted to headquarters complains piteously that he was "cold during the trip". That, as the boys fighting their way into Germany will say, is too blinkin' bad.

Sullen feeling in Quebec reminds oldtime reporters of the famous Easter Sunday frolicsomeness of 1918, when people woke up to find machine guns had been placed in front of post offices and all Federal buildings, and soldiers with fixed bayonets were patrolling the streets. The sooner we go back to 1918, it seems, the better*.

594. Raids continued in the Montreal area but workers took care to have their papers in order and no further serious incidents took place. Incidents continued to occur elsewhere, however, such as that at St. Philippe de Neri, about 100 miles east of Quebec City on the south shore of the St.

*An interesting account of these disturbances which culminated in rioting, shooting, the proclamation of martial law and the despatch of a battalion from Toronto to help restore order is given by Elizabeth Armstrong, The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-18, New York, 1937.

Lawrence. On Saturday, 24 Mar about 30 persons gathered in front of a hotel where five members of the Canadian Provost Corps were detaining a soldier who had failed to report back to his unit. When they refused to surrender their prisoner missiles were hurled at the hotel and windows broken. No one was injured but several revolver shots were fired before assistance arrived from nearby Rivière du Loup (205).

595. A meeting of the District Officers Commanding Military Districts, 3, 4 and 5 with Commissioner S.T. Wood of the R.C.M.P. in Ottawa on the previous day (23 Mar), had revealed the seriousness of the overall situation (206). Although General McNaughton had told the press on 12 Mar that the number of absentees had been reduced to 24 per cent of the N.R.M.A. strength, he had been referring only to those men who had absented themselves from overseas drafts. Actually there had been 18,843 absentees and deserters in Canada on 8 Mar, with 64 per cent hailing from Eastern Ontario and Quebec. These last were broken down as follows:

M.D. No. 3	-	602
M.D. No. 4	-	7800
M.D. No. 5	-	<u>3715</u>

12117

During the course of the meeting it was revealed that, whereas in Ontario the Provincial Police co-operated with the military in the search for deserters and draft dodgers, neither the provincial nor municipal police in Quebec were helpful and in many cases the use of civilian gaols was refused (Appendix "E"). Local policemen often warned offenders in advance and magistrates tried to avoid issuing warrants requested by members of the R.C.M.P. According to the minutes of this meeting:

It is dangerous for Mounted Police or Provost to go far from large centres unless they are in sufficiently numbers to defend themselves. Numerous instances prove this. On the other hand, if they go in sufficient large numbers to be able to defend themselves, riots are likely to ensue.

- (a) In larger centres where mass raids are made on restaurants, pool rooms, etc., the necessity of sorting out and identifying suspected deserters resulted in sufficient time elapsing to enable trouble to brew and riots and disorders often followed.
- (b) Some legal means authorizing the apprehension of those suspected without delay and later checking them in custody would avert trouble.

There is evidence that certain Municipal and Provincial authorities appear themselves to tolerate disorderly conduct, placing the blame on the Provost and the RCMP.

The presence of large bodies of Police and Provost in any community is immediately known and if there are any deserters in that community they very soon get warning and take to hiding so that the result of large raids is

not encouraging.

The problem is really one of policy. In the final analysis the Army can go into any community in sufficient numbers to impose its will on the civilian population. The question is, what degree of force should be used? Serious disorders can probably best be avoided by agreeing that force shall only be used in self defence (207).

This last both summed up the problem and provided the answer: The Government wished to maintain national unity, not hopelessly split the country into factions, and knew that the end of the war in Europe could not be long delayed.

(iv) N.R.M.A. Soldiers in the Canadian Army Overseas

597. In preparation for the arrival of the "first" and "second" flights containing N.R.M.A. soldiers the Infantry training organization of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom was further expanded. During the late autumn the training facilities of the 13th Brigade and Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Units had been amalgamated into a 13th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade of five regiments (each consisting of a depot and two training battalions) so that reinforcements could be given training under conditions more akin to those they would meet in the field (see paras 435-6). A 14th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade of four more training regiments was now formed (as G.S.D. 602 units). (C.M.H.Q. Report 133) With effect from 10 and 18-19 Jan 45, respectively, the Headquarters and units of the two brigades brought over from Canada were disbanded.

598. Information emanating from Ottawa made gloomy reading, however, with a telegram of 12 Jan 45 admitting that:

Due to incidence AWL unable to give close estimate of state of training these units but most gloomy overall picture (208).

Another N.D.H.Q. telegram of the same date asked whether, in view of the added training problems which would be created by the disordered state of the "first" and "second" flights containing N.R.M.A. soldiers, C.M.H.Q. would be prepared to accept a further draft in January with 3500 N.R.M.A. soldiers (209).

599. On 15 Jan General Montague (Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q.*) despatched a telegram of acceptance. Except for the shipping consideration, men could be more readily trained in Canada. Fog hampered training in the winter and it was difficult to provide accommodation and adequate training areas in southern England for the larger population which would remain longer within C.R.U. (210). Just how many potential

*General Stuart had ceased being Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q. on 11 Nov 44. It was not until 22 Nov however, that Major-General P.J. Montague officially became Chief of Staff and a lieutenant-general. Brigadier E.G. Weeks was brought back from Italy to become Major-General in Charge of Administration with the rank of major-general, with effect from 30 Nov 44.

reinforcements already in the United Kingdom would have to be retained as instructors would not be known until the state of training of the arrivals had been ascertained (211). Particularly to meet the needs of French-speaking personnel, a good number of whom had not even completed basic training, it was necessary to call on the operational theatres to provide instructors (212). A point which does not seem to have aroused much comment was the fact that there was an estimated wastage of roughly 10 per cent of Infantry reinforcements as a result of the refresher and conditioning training conducted in the United Kingdom (213).

600. Both G.S. and N.R.M.A. Infantry reinforcements* proceeded to units of the 14th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade where they were screened and, depending on the standard of their previous training, were given two or four weeks further instruction before being posted to a unit of the 13th Brigade. (During this time the 13th Brigade was continuing remustering and refresher training for other G.S. reinforcements and holding those trained until they were required) Until early March all drafts were held there for one or two weeks' further training before despatch to North-West Europe (215). After that, regiments of the 14th Canadian Infantry Training Brigade conducted the full three or six weeks refresher courses themselves, but it was April before the first such draft found its way to the continent (216).

601. It had been on 23 Feb, however, that a first group of 58 French-speaking and 186 English-speaking N.R.M.A. soldiers left the United Kingdom as part of a normal reinforcement draft for North-West Europe (217). Four days later seven N.R.M.A. soldiers were taken on the strength of The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada (218). A report circulated somewhat later around the press gallery in Ottawa to the effect that certain N.R.M.A. soldiers had refused to proceed to the front was investigated and denied by C.M.H.Q. (219). Pains had been taken to ensure that any reference to a man's N.R.M.A. status did not appear in his pay book and his regimental number was changed to conform with those of other men from the same Military District in Canada. Thus, although many soldiers may have guessed that certain of their new comrades were so-called "Zombies" there was no manner of knowing and unit war diaries generally did not mention their presence. The following extract from the war diary of The Loyal Edmonton Regiment is one of the few exceptions:

... During the month our Bn has TOS eight officers and 167 OR's among the latter are approx 40 NRMA personnel. These men have in no way been treated differently than any other rft, in fact the majority of the Bn is not

*On 26 Nov 44 General Crerar had written General Montague stressing the importance of mixing N.R.M.A. and G.S. personnel during refresher training in the United Kingdom in order to avoid any feeling of segregation and trouble after men went to field units as reinforcements. On 6 Jan 45, General Montague advised the Adjutant-General that N.R.M.A. soldiers would not be acceptable in the United Kingdom as N.C.Os. since trouble would result should they try to give orders to "active" personnel. The Adjutant-General agreed that such N.C.Os. should be reduced upon being posted to a training unit in the United Kingdom but that they would be required for administrative purposes while the units were at sea. Fortunately most of them possessed only acting rank (214).

even aware of their presence here, and in the few small actions they have engaged in so far they have generally shown up as well as all new rfts do....(220)

602. By this time other reinforcements were youngsters just old enough for overseas service or those who had been remustered from other corps and given a minimum of training as general duty infantrymen. For example, the war diary of The Algonquin Regiment speaks of recently arrived reinforcements as follows:

... By this time our newcomers are beginning to fit nicely into the family and from the interest they have shown to date they have erased any poor impression they may have given a few days ago and our ofrs and NCOs are now firmly convinced that we have the makings of a fighting team worthy of upholding the name Algonquin (221).

In an interview with war correspondent Frederick Griffin the officer commanding The Algonquin Regiment was reported to have stated that his N.R.M.A. soldiers

... were just as good as any reinforcements we have had. Actually nobody in the regiment knows who is a draftee and who is not, and after the boys have been in action, nobody cares (222).

On 15 Mar The Globe and Mail (Toronto) carried a despatch from its correspondent, Ralph Allen,* containing the following passage:

Overseas conscripts from Canada's Home Defense Army received a savage baptism of fire during the last month's fighting in the Rhine-Maas wedge and acquitted themselves well on all counts, according to the veterans who fought beside them. Only a tiny percentage of Defense Minister McNaughton's 16,000 draftee reinforcements have been in contact with the enemy, and frequently their draftee status hasn't been known to the battalions with which they went into action. But in the few cases where home defense soldiers have been introduced to combat at the side of the men who knew them to be home defense soldiers, they have been given high marks for courage, training and discipline both by their officers and by their comrades in the ranks.

603. The Government's continued campaign to induce N.R.M.A. soldiers to convert to "G.S. status" had resulted in the following conversions, a goodly proportion of whom must have been included in overseas drafts:

December	1878
January	1692
February	2164
March	2131

*Ralph Allen's subsequent novel, Home-Made Banners, Toronto, 1946, makes some rather interesting statements in this connection.

and made it unnecessary to seek authority to despatch more than the already authorized 16,000 N.R.M.A. soldiers. Actually, due to the larger sailings of G.S. personnel during February and March (to replace the N.R.M.A. personnel who were absentees) only 12,908 N.R.M.A. soldiers proceeded overseas (223). Of these, only 2,463 had been taken on strength of units of First Canadian Army up to and including 8 May 45, when hostilities ceased. Their disposition was as follows (224):

C.A.C.	1
R.C.A.	21
R.C.E.	14
R.C.A.S.C.	71
R.C.A.M.C.	38
R.C.O.C.	2
R.C.E.M.E.	33
C.F.C.	1
Infantry (Def)	3
Infantry (Rifle)	2139
Infantry (Motor)	132
Infantry (MG)	1
Miscellaneous	<u>7</u>
	2463

Of these, 69 were killed, 232 were wounded and 13 became prisoners of war (225). Surely a rather strange conclusion to the conscription episode, even though it must be conceded that the situation would have been far different if hostilities had continued into the summer months.

PART VI - THE FINAL STAGES

(1) Overseas Needs, 1945

604. With 2nd Canadian Corps engaged in the "watch on the Maas" from 9 Nov 44 onward and General Crerar's Army Headquarters planning future operations, Infantry units were given a breathing space in which they could absorb reinforcements and brush up training. Accordingly, anti-tank and light anti-aircraft artillery regiments took over quiet sectors of the front. The Battle of the Bulge caused considerable flurry and confusion during the latter half of December and delayed preparations for the coming offensive in which First Canadian Army was to participate. During this three month period, from 9 Nov 44 to the commencement of Operation "VERITABLE" on 8 Feb 45, Canadian battle casualties totalled only 573 killed and 1159 wounded.

605. In Italy the Eighth Army had launched an offensive on the morning of 2 Dec to reach the Santerno River. Canadians captured Ravenna on 4 Dec but opposition stiffened and despite continuous fighting for the next month it was possible only to reach the near bank of the Senio (5 Jan 45). Casualties totalled 2581 all ranks but these were considerably less than the 4511 casualties suffered during the battle for the Gothic Line. American failure to capture Bologna and the need to despatch troops to maintain order in liberated Greece also contributed to the decision to abandon the winter offensive. Fixed positions along a winter line were held by a minimum of troops, therefore, while the Eighth Army commenced preparations for a spring offensive, aimed once more at the River Po.

606. According to records maintained at C.M.H.Q. actual casualties during 1944 had been only 3606 officers and 46,159 other ranks* instead of the estimated 75,000 all ranks (1). Making allowance for "recoverable casualties" (Actually 8918 had returned to units during the year) it had been estimated that 37,500 all ranks would be required from Canada to maintain the reinforcement pool. It had been planned to despatch 48,000 from Canada (see para 274) but in actual fact a total of 5131 officers and 56,685 other ranks had joined the Canadian Army Overseas**. Due to the fact that, on a corps basis, casualties had not occurred in the percentages estimated, however, it had proved necessary to re-muster the following to Infantry, either in the United Kingdom or Italy (3):

*According to War Service Records, actual casualties were only 47,172 all ranks.

**Reinforcements received from Canada during 1944 (2):

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Other Ranks</u>
January	425	2118
February	582	2933
March	180	1152
April	426	5194
May	429	5896
June	780	5506
July	699	10099
August	243	2208
September	244	2393
October	311	5173
November	279	3358
December	<u>533</u>	<u>10655</u>
Total	5131	56685

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Other Ranks</u>
C.A.C.	46	3292
R.C.A.	231	4085
R.C.E.	39	1288
R.C.C.S.	nil	195
R.C.A.S.C.	7	1672
R.C.A.M.C.	nil	716
R.C.O.C.	nil	555
R.C.E.M.E.	nil	607
Misc	<u>nil</u>	<u>126</u>
Total	323	12536

607. Brigadier deLalanne, on another visit to C.M.H.Q. (3 Jan-12 Mar 45), considered that the situation might temporarily become worse since despatches of further reinforcements from Canada were falling behind (due to absenteeism) and the refresher training period in the United Kingdom had had to be extended (see para 600) to cope with the large numbers of men who had received little or no training in Canada as general duty infantrymen (4).

608. Brigadier deLalanne's visit to the Canadian Army Overseas had been authorized by the Minister of National Defence in an effort to clear up the following major questions (5):

- (a) Method of accounting for personnel overseas.
- (b) Confirmation of Wastage Rates now in effect, and basis of comparing actual experience with projections.
- (c) Rfts (number and type) which will be required from Canada during the year 1945.

609. Although the activity forecast supplied by the Army Commander as far back as late November 1944 had emphasized the fact that the sickness rate was higher during winter months, it had proved difficult for the "planners" to adjust their calculations (6). Early in January, 1945, therefore, the Army Commander sought a definite answer as to the average time sick and wounded men required for hospitalization and convalescence (7). Since Canadian experience was limited, the C.M.H.Q. reply was based on the British Army's global experiences. Although 50 per cent of casualties were recoverable, 15 per cent would be employable only in base and static units. Medical authorities advised that three per cent of a field force was in hospital "at all times" but that three-quarters of these were able to return to duty within 21 days (8). When telegraphing this view to the Adjutant-General on 25 Jan 45 Brigadier deLalanne added that he had held similar views since his overseas visits of autumn 1943 (see para 268) and spring 1944 (see para 309) and was convinced that N.D.H.Q. should continue to plan on having to replace 65 per cent of gross casualties with reinforcements from Canada (9). (Although the F.F.C. rates included losses from sickness and other normal wastage the Canadian rates adopted on 31 Aug 44 were an estimate of battle casualties only.) Even if such calculations should prove too conservative, Brigadier deLalanne pointed out that no harm would have been done -- reserves merely would be greater.

610. Based on the activity forecasts, made available by the War Office and the Commanders of First Canadian Army and 1st Canadian Corps, estimates of the number of casualties and available replacements during 1945 had been made both at C.M.H.Q. and N.D.H.Q. These forecasts had been as follows:

A.A.I.

December 1944

1 month intense