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**A Home Away from Home :
Citizenship and National Identity in the Canadian Army Overseas, 1939-1943**

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**A Home Away From Home: Citizenship and National Identity in the Canadian Army
Overseas, 1939-1943**

John Maker

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

Department of History
Faculty of Arts
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Canada

Abstract

This work examines morale in the Canadian Army overseas from 1939 to 1943. Canadian soldiers began arriving in the United Kingdom in December 1939 and were not committed to battle, with the exception of the one-day raid on Dieppe, until July 1943. Throughout most of their time in the British Isles, Canadian soldiers were kept out of combat, which presented difficult and unprecedented problems of morale and discipline. Their long-term presence in Britain, separated from their loved ones and peaceful civilian lives in Canada, exacerbated these problems.

Around 500,000 Canadian soldiers spent time in Britain during the war, which represented approximately 4% of the overall Canadian population in 1939. Therefore, the experience of this large microcosm of Canada's population also serves as an indicator of the mentality of Canadians generally on the eve of the war and during the early war years. Nevertheless, historians have paid little attention to this representative cross-section of the Canadian population.

The present work examines the manner in which the army tried to ameliorate morale problems, and finds that a highly developed sense of Canadian identity in the soldiers overseas necessitated the provision of specifically Canadian measures to maintain their morale. The maintenance of strong institutional and familial ties with Canada also facilitated improved morale overseas.

This study examines various themes related to Canadian nationalism, identity, and citizenship in a demographically small portion of the population. It draws conclusions based on their experiences that have national pertinence and therefore provides new insight into the overall Canadian experience of the Second World War.

Résumé

Cet ouvrage examine le moral dans l'armée canadienne outre-mer de 1939 à 1943. Les premiers soldats canadiens sont arrivés au Royaume-Uni en décembre, 1939, et n'ont pas été engagés qu'en juillet, 1943, à l'exception du raid de Dieppe, qui ne dura qu'un jour. Durant la plupart de leur temps passé dans les îles Britanniques, les soldats canadiens n'ont pas été appelés à se combattre, ce qui a entraîné des problèmes de moral et de discipline difficiles et sans précédent. Leur présence à long terme en Grande-Bretagne, loin de leurs proches et de leurs vies paisibles en tant que civils, n'a fait qu'aggraver ces problèmes.

Environ 500 000 soldats Canadiens représentant 4% de la population totale du Canada en 1939 se sont trouvés en Grande-Bretagne pendant la guerre. Pour cette raison, les expériences de cet important microcosme de la population canadienne agit également en tant qu'indicateur de la mentalité générale des Canadiens sur le point de la guerre et durant les premières années de la guerre. Quoiqu'il en soit, peu d'attention a été portée de la part des historiens au sujet de cet échantillon représentatif de la population canadienne.

Le présent ouvrage examine la façon dont l'armée a tenté de résoudre les problèmes de moral, et conclut qu'un sens d'identité canadien très développé a nécessité la disposition de mesures particulièrement canadiennes afin de maintenir le moral. Le maintien de liens familiaux et institutionnels avec le Canada a également servi à améliorer le moral outre-mer. Cette étude examine de différents thèmes liés au nationalisme, à l'identité et à la citoyenneté canadienne au sein d'une petite tranche de la population. Ses conclusions sont fondées sur leurs expériences pertinentes sur le plan national. Pour cette raison, elle permet l'acquisition de nouvelles connaissances sur l'ensemble de l'expérience canadienne de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

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John Maker
Ottawa, Ontario
January 2010

List of Abbreviations

ABCA	Army Bureau of Current Affairs
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Service
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BGS	Brigadier General Staff
CARU	Canadian Artillery Reinforcement Unit
CASCRU	Canadian Army Service Corps Reinforcement Unit
CASF	Canadian Active Service Force
CASU	Canadian Auxiliary Services Unit
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CERU	Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Unit
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CIHU	Canadian Infantry Holding Unit
CIRU	Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit
CLES	Canadian Legion Educational Services
CLWS	Canadian Legion War Services
CMHQ	Canadian Military Headquarters, London
CRLU	Canadian Radio Location Unit
CRU	Canadian Reinforcement Unit
CTS	Canadian Training School
CWAC	Canadian Women's Army Corps
DA&QMG	Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General

GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOC-in-C	General Officer Commanding in Chief
IODE	Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
L of C	Lines of Communication
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa
NPAM	Non-Permanent Active Militia
NRMA	National Resources Mobilization Act
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit
OMFC	Overseas Military Forces of Canada
PAM	Permanent Active Militia
PF	Permanent Force
RCA	Royal Canadian Artillery
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCAMC	Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps
RCASC	Royal Canadian Army Service Corps
RCE	Royal Canadian Engineers
RCOC	Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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Introduction

Armies wage war. When an army is mobilized and transported to a theatre of war its members can reasonably expect early action. If that army is denied action, morale problems are sure to follow. The Canadian army overseas faced this situation for more than half of the Second World War. Despite the size of Canada's army overseas, which throughout the war put approximately 4% of Canada's population (8% of its male population) in the United Kingdom, historians have paid surprisingly little attention to its activities over the 42 months from the arrival of the first flight in December 1939 to its commitment to battle in Sicily in July 1943.

The present work is about that Canadian army stationed in England from 1939 to 1943. It is not, however, a work of strict Canadian military history. Rather, it is a social and cultural history of the Canadian army – an example of the “new” military history increasingly practiced in the past decade or more. Throughout most of their time in the British Isles, Canadian soldiers were kept *hors de combat*, a difficult and unprecedented predicament for members of an organization whose *raison d'être* was to wage war and who had volunteered with that express purpose in mind. Their long-term presence in Britain, a land once considered familiar to most English Canadians but which, as the soldiers' experience indicated, was increasingly experienced as foreign by 1939, exacerbated these problems. The present work examines the manner in which the army tried to ameliorate such morale problems, and finds that an increasing sense of Canadian identity in the soldiers overseas necessitated the provision of specifically Canadian measures to maintain their morale. Additionally, the maintenance of strong institutional and familial ties with

Canada facilitated improved morale overseas and, by extension, suggests that a stronger sense of Canadian nationalism was developing among Canadians in general in 1939.

As a volunteer institution, the Canadian army overseas represented a large cross-section of the nation's population. Still, those who fought were a sub-set of the Canadian population; they were generally young men, aged 20-35, and mostly English Canadian. Still, they represented a worldview that, to some extent, represented that of their families and social groups. Most who enlisted had in common a volunteer spirit and a desire to serve the nation and its interests. They also shared an increasing sense of Canadian identity and a collective connection to Canada that was set in stark relief by the problems of morale that arose from their comparative idleness and separation from their homes, families, and normally peaceful lives in Canada. The "half-million"¹ Canadians who spent time in England represented a transplanted microcosm of Canadian society that proved remarkably cohesive and fiercely attached to its distant homeland and civilian connections.

The experience of this microcosm of Canada's population also serves as an indicator of the mentality of Canadians generally on the eve of the war and during the early war years. While most English Canadians in 1939 had little trouble reconciling a dual allegiance to both the British Empire – of which they saw Canada as an integral part – and Canada itself, it is clear that most of them harboured a clearer sense of national self-identification than had existed in 1914 or 1918.² By 1939, there was little doubt among

¹ This term refers to the title of one of the only books to cover Canadian soldiers in Britain during the war: C.P. Stacey and Barbara M. Wilson, *The Half-Million: The Canadians in Britain, 1939-1946* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

² Emerging literature on the "British world" explores the evolution of distinct national identities among the former "white colonies", beginning especially with Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders. It is asserted that these countries evolved from "Imperialism" to "Dominionism" to "Nationalism" of the broadly accepted sort. Arguably, English-Canadian opinion during the First World War was closer to Dominionism but, by the Second World War, this had progressed towards nationalism. Exactly how far down the continuum

English Canadians that Canada would fight with Britain against Nazi aggression because this was, as Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King wrote in 1938, a “self-evident national duty.”³ Their motivations for this decision are, however, less clear than in 1914 and historians continue to debate, as John Herd Thompson suggests, whether, “English-speaking Canada went to war for Imperial solidarity or to fight fascism.”⁴ The soldiers of Canada’s overseas army, separated from Canada and immersed in British society, increasingly showed between 1939 and 1943 that, while they were sympathetic to Britain, their national self-identification was, more than ever before, centred on Canada itself.

The attitudes and beliefs of Canadian soldiers overseas reveal much about the kind of place that Canada was in these years partly because they illuminated what these Canadian citizens missed about their homeland and how they lived their lives abroad. Moreover, the soldiers’ commonality with each other, and their separateness from the British society that surrounded them, highlighted their sense of Canadianism. This suggests that for this group of Canadians, a sense of national identity – more than “Dominionism” – was developing by 1939; it was largely divergent from the type of intensely pro-British imperial sentiment that accompanied the outbreak of war in 1914. Furthermore, the obvious

English Canadians had moved by 1939 remains debatable. It is clear, however, that the experiences of Canadian troops in Britain and Europe from 1939 to 1945 stirred feelings of strong nationalism in them. See: Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); and Phillip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008); John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder, *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa First Assert their Nationalities, 1880 – 1914* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988); and Philip Wigley, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British – Canadian Relations, 1917 – 1926* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Also see: C.P. Champion, “Nova Britannia Revisited: Canadianism, Anglo-Canadian identities and the crisis of Britishness, 1964-1968” (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2009). This work discusses a “crisis of Britishness” from 1964 to 1968, during which the British character of Canada was redefined and Britishness portrayed as something foreign or “other.” Many of the changes catalyzed by the wartime experiences of Canadian soldiers likely had an effect on English-Canadian opinion that culminated in this “crisis.”

³ J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, “‘A Self-Evident National Duty’: Canadian Foreign Policy, 1935-1939,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 3 (1975), 222.

⁴ John Herd Thompson, “Canada and the ‘Third British Empire’,” in Phillip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008), 105.

differentiation between British and Canadian societies by the outbreak of war was illustrated time and again through the experiences of Canadian soldiers in England.

It was precisely among those Canadians who volunteered to fight “for England” that one would expect to find the most sympathy for, and identification with, the mother country and its people. In the event, the contrary was often true. Before long, the soldiers’ most commonly expressed national motivation was that they were fighting for Canada and they repeatedly expressed frustration and annoyance concerning relations with the English. Their preference for Canadian ways, goods, and services persisted throughout the static period. While many Canadian soldiers had family ties in Britain, a surprising number generally experienced Britain as foreign. In a letter typical of Canadian soldiers’ sentiments regarding their encounters with British civilians, a corporal with the No. 1 Canadian Infantry Holding Unit wrote in 1942,

These foreigners here can’t even speak English. They don’t seem to appreciate the colonial troops coming to their aid if we are needed or not as several times I and others have been asked what we came over here for and why didn’t we wait until we were sent for. It is getting quite a few of the lads down and causing a number of scraps amongst the Limey troops and the Colonials.⁵

The reference to British people as “foreigners” is striking. But this letter highlights the commonly expressed feeling among Canadian troops that they never felt more Canadian than when they were among the English. The question was: what did this sequestered segment of Canada’s population need to stay happy? The answer was simply that they needed those things that would have been available to them in Canada had they not left. British substitutes did not suffice. The troops’ experiences, and the comprehensiveness of the system of specifically Canadian services that developed overseas, tells much about the

⁵ “Intercepted Mail,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4, Microfilm Reel T-17920, 1065.

nature of English-Canadian identity. This three-and-a-half-year period thus presents a unique opportunity in Canadian history to study Canadian values and self-perception precisely because this group was out of the country.

A number of themes run through this work, principle among these are: nationalism, morale, identity, and alienation. At times, one theme will come to the fore while others recede, but these factors were common in much of the Canadian experience in England from 1939 to 1943. As Canadians in Britain, many men expressed feelings of unfamiliarity and cultural difference, they became *dépaycé*: out-of-place and emotionally exiled. While these themes are the principle investigations of this work, they also lead down some more specific investigative avenues. The work necessarily examines the army as a non-combat institution, a role for which it had little experience, desire, or suitability in 1939. Canadian soldiers had been systematically trained to kill the enemy, but for a variety of reasons were kept from doing so. Their occasional tendency toward indiscipline and rowdy behaviour is partially explained thereby. Measures meant to alleviate such frustration therefore took on an increased importance.

Nevertheless, many regimental commanding officers were loath to accept that the army had any role to play beyond the training, equipping, and fielding of soldiers. However, those responsible for maintaining morale, among them the army's highest commanders, Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton⁶ and Lieutenant-General H.D.G.

⁶ Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton began the war as commander of 1st Canadian Division, the largest overseas Canadian formation at that time. McNaughton was promoted to Lieutenant-General on 10 July 1940 and appointed to command the [British] VII Corps on 19 July 1940. He was appointed General Officer Commanding-in-Chief First Canadian Army on 6 April 1942. He held this post until 26 December 1943. There essential biography of Andrew McNaughton is: John Swettenham, *McNaughton*, 3 volumes, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968-1969). Also see: John Rickard, *The Politics of Command: Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton and the Canadian Army, 1939-1943* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

Crerar,⁷ pressed constantly for services that would benefit the soldier as a warrior *and* as a Canadian citizen. The former, a strong advocate of soldier education, was especially vigilant in this regard. This required a significant retooling of the army away from a combat institution to one that would keep these men happy while they were “out of trim”. Army officials – including senior officers, officials with the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, and members of the Canadian Chaplain Service – found that fostering a sense of national identity at the men’s level, and the maintenance of linkages to home, were an essential ingredient to maintaining soldier morale while they were *hors de combat*.

These measures alleviated the significant sense of foreignness that many soldiers expressed while overseas. Such structural and institutional linkages with, for example, Canadian educational institutions, had the effect of linking the man’s wartime experience in Britain to his post-war life in Canada. Men like McNaughton and Crerar – and increasingly their subordinate officers – understood that Canada’s was a civilian army that could not be divorced from its peacetime connections without adverse effects. This resulted in the provision of goods and services that were designed to create a better soldier, a better citizen, and a better Canadian at war’s end. As such, the provision of almost solely Canadian goods and services, as well as the deep and complex structural linkages that existed with the homeland, gave rise to a microcosm of Canadian society transplanted in southern England. In many ways, government and army officials used the war to instill a

⁷ Major-General H.D.G. Crerar was appointed Senior Combatant Officer at Canadian Military Headquarters in London on 17 October 1939. He returned to Canada and, on 6 July 1940, briefly assumed the post of Vice Chief of the General Staff. He was promoted to Lieutenant-General and appointed Chief of the General Staff in Ottawa from 22 July 1940 to 23 December 1941. He nominally commanded 2nd Canadian Infantry Division from 23 December 1941 to 5 April 42, but on the same day on which he was appointed to this post he was detailed temporarily to command the Canadian Corps as McNaughton had become ill. From 6 April 1942, Crerar served as General Officer Commanding I Canadian Corps, and finally rose to the post of G.O.C.-in-C. First Canadian Army on 20 March 1944.

greater sense of national identity with the very goal of enhancing Canadians' sense of citizenship and society both at home, through the activities of the Bureau of Public Information and the Wartime Information Board, and overseas, through the Directorate of Auxiliary Services and the Canadian Chaplain Service. Specific attempts to instill a sense of Canadianism were most obvious in the army's educational program, but officers and civilians charged with maintaining morale also came, by degrees, to promote Canadian linkages, memories, and behavioural patterns among the men they served. This was Canada's war too and Canadians crafted a greater sense of national identity from it.

Canada's army overseas contained a surprising portion of the country's wartime population. Canadian historians cannot ignore, for example, the war experience of the millions of people who lived in Canada's cities, or the effects of the war on Canadian labour. Nevertheless, there are remarkably few histories that examine the Canadian army overseas prior to its commitment to battle, which is all the more surprising given that more Canadians passed through Britain as lived in Vancouver, and quadruple the amount residing in Halifax, during the war.⁸ Take, for example, histories of labour in wartime. Many of these concern themselves with an arguably narrower cross section of the population, but justifiably claim broad significance in Canada's wartime experience and overall historical development.⁹ Other studies of social history focusing on, or

⁸ The 1941 Census placed Halifax's population at 122,656 and that of Vancouver at 449,376. See: Canada. Eighth Census of Canada, 1941, Series A2-14.

⁹ Michael D. Stevenson, for instance, claims to add a "significant new chapter" to Canadian history by examining National Selective Service in: *Canada's Greatest Wartime Muddle: National Selective Service and the Mobilization of Human Resources during World War II* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 16. Peter S. McNinnis argues that wartime labour confrontation affected the postwar settlement as well as the adoption of welfare services in Canada, in: *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). Also see: Desmond Morton, *Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement, 4th Edition* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1998), a comprehensive history of labour in Canada, which contains a short chapter on the Second World War. Finally,

encompassing, the war years, in the case of both wars, tend to gloss over the experience of soldiers. Such issues highlight a more widespread problem of Canadian historiography which tends to ignore the experience of soldiers (who were almost overwhelmingly civilians in peacetime and who in the case of both wars represented a meaningful portion of the population) because “the war” seems to pose a research and analytical barrier. For example, in her examination of English-Canadian transatlantic tourism, Cecilia Morgan acknowledges that soldiers stationed overseas acted as tourists, but she “made a very considered decision not to examine wartime discourses and practices.” Morgan concludes that, “the magnitude of such a project... not to mention the specificities of the war, places it outside the realm of this study’s possibilities.”¹⁰ The inclusion of soldiers’ wartime experiences may well have presented an unmanageable scope to Morgan’s project, but the persistent exclusion of such material in general has tended toward the academic diminishment of soldier experiences as a legitimate subject of social history in Canada.¹¹

The most devoted chronicler of the soldiers’ non-combat experiences in England is the Canadian army’s official historian, C.P. Stacey. In *Six Years of War*, Stacey devotes an entire section to the Canadian army in Britain, some 247 pages of this volume’s total 629,

see: James Struthers, *No Fault of the Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Cecilia Morgan, *'A Happy Holiday': English Canadians and Transatlantic Tourism, 1870-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 21-22.

¹¹ Such a tendency also holds true for British social histories of the war years, despite the presence in England of hundreds of thousands of Canadians who, at the time, were often the subject of some very negative attention from the British press. John Costello’s *Love, Sex and War: Changing Values 1939-45* (London: Collins, 1985), contains but a single reference to Canadians in its index. Angus Calder likewise only mentioned the Canadians in his index, in relation to the Dieppe raid, in his seminal work, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-45* (London: Pimlico, 1969). More recently, Sonya O. Rose’s influential work on citizenship and national identity in Britain during the war years also largely excludes the Canadian presence. In her chapter on “Race, Empire and Nation,” Rose mentions Canadians only in connection with their banking institutions’ refusal to hire imperial subjects from the West Indies on what the author implies are racist grounds. See: Sonya O. Rose, *Which People’s War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 268-269.

which, judged purely on page count, could offer a comprehensive review.¹² But the official history is a work primarily of *military* history and as such it conforms to specific avenues of research and entirely ignores others more germane to the historian interested in the social or cultural aspects of the soldiers' experiences. Stacey covers almost exclusively the army's training, organization, "Alarums and Excursions," and "Tasks and Operations". The raid on Dieppe consumes 87 of these 247 pages. Only 21 pages are devoted to what are termed "Some Special Problems of the Canadian Army Overseas" which encompass *some* of the non-military aspects of the soldiers' lives in Britain.¹³

In *The Half-Million: The Canadians in Britain, 1939-1946*, Stacey and Wilson examine the lives of Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen in Britain.¹⁴ At the time of its publication in 1987, *The Half-Million* partially filled the historiographical void by giving an outline of numerous areas of the Canadian experience, accompanied by dozens of photographs. This work's broad temporal scope, which includes issues of demobilization, and the decision to examine all three services, provides a useful narrative that, unfortunately, only scratches the surface. Stacey and Wilson's aim is mainly to "recall and record" this "Anglo-Canadian experience".¹⁵ They state that this period constituted, "an extraordinary episode in the social history of the Commonwealth."¹⁶ The authors examine the Canadian military role throughout the war, Canadian soldiers' relations with British civilians and soldiers, efforts to keep them happy, relations between Canadian soldiers and British women, and Canadian criminality in Britain. They conclude that the relationship

¹² C.P. Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War: Volume I: Six Years of War: the Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966). Hereafter, *Six Years of War*.

¹³ These 21 pages are: C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 413-434.

¹⁴ Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

between English people and Canadian servicemen came, “in the end to be remarkably warm and successful.”¹⁷ The present work does not dispute that, in the main, over the entire length of the war, Canadians lived amicably with the English and eventually got along well with them. A tiny minority even seemed to prefer England and remained there at war’s end. In this regard, by contrast, the present work contends that while many got along well with the English, they were nevertheless emotionally and psychologically separate from the Britons amongst whom they lived.

Nevertheless, histories that focus on the Canadian war effort in the Second World War generally, and those that examine its combat history more specifically, which often purport to focus on “the sharp end” or “the soldier’s experience”, rarely offer more than a footnote to the Canadian experience of life in England. Most of these are content to mention the soldiers’ combat training and their tragic one-day battle at Dieppe. John A. English spends much of his book, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command*, examining the Canadian army in England.¹⁸ However, despite locating his subject in England, his analytical focus is on training and command. The social and cultural context of that training experience is omitted from his work. English argues that the creation of the First Canadian Army was not an “entirely national accomplishment,” citing the organizational and administrative assistance required from the British.¹⁹ A closer examination of the thoughts and words of members of that army reveals that whatever help the army administration required, it *was* a Canadian institution, a Canadian accomplishment. English, however, does hint at the reason for General

¹⁷ Ibid., x.

¹⁸ John A. English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command* (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1991).

¹⁹ Ibid., 63.

McNaughton's devotion to the soldiers' post-war civilian life when he describes him as the epitome of the "citizen-soldier".²⁰ Other surveys of Canada's overall wartime experience likewise pay little or no attention to the experience of Canada's soldiers in England.²¹ The disinclination of social, labour, and even military historians to account for the non-military lives of Canadian soldiers during wartime thus represents a large historiographical vacuum. Such studies themselves are of great use to operational military historians because to ignore the morale needs of the army neglects an important element in understanding its battle-worthiness. Training, after all, is not the only important factor in preparing soldiers physically *and* psychologically for combat.

This dearth of relevant historiography can be partly explained by the fact that, until recently, few Canadian historians have taken an interest in armies as social, cultural, and non-combat institutions.²² This has started to change in recent years. Such a change is long-overdue considering the important role that the army played as a cultural and social force in the lives of over one million Canadians, most especially in the First and Second World Wars, but after 1945 as well. A recent exhibition at the Canadian War Museum, "Trench

²⁰ Ibid., 41.

²¹ For examples of this tendency in Canadian historiography of the Second World War, see: David J. Bercuson, *The Maple Leaf Against the Axis* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995); J.L. Granatstein and Peter Neary, eds., *The Good Fight: Canadians and World War II* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1995), which does include some quotations from individual Canadians in Canada and overseas; W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977); and J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *A Nation Forged in Fire* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989). A noteworthy book that accounts for the personal experience of Canadians at home and overseas is: Barry Broadfoot, *Six War Years: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1974).

²² This type of historiography is somewhat better developed in other national contexts. The British historian Jay Winter approached this type of "socio-military" history in his seminal work, *The Great War and the British People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) examining of the impact of the First World War on the men who fought and on the communities they defended. Denis Winter, in *Death's Men* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1979), while focusing on combat, presented British soldiers' personal experiences in France and Belgium during the First World War. David Reynolds examines the American "occupation" of Britain from 1942-1945 in *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (New York: Random House, 1995). His work explores the wide variety of relationships among what are described as pushy, homesick GIs, overworked British women, and bored Allied soldiers.

Life: A Survival Guide,” highlighted soldier culture in Canadian front line trenches of the First World War. The exhibit’s online description provocatively begins with a reminder that, “First World War soldiers didn’t just fight and die. They lived.”²³ It also reminds us that, “Canadian soldiers created and relied upon a distinct culture to make sense of their wartime experiences.”²⁴ The First World War experience of life in the front line is far removed from the Canadian soldier’s life in southern England between 1939 and 1943, but the exhibition’s focus on army life as a cultural and social phenomenon is a relatively recent development in Canada. It also suggests that scholars are increasingly seeking to explain wartime and battle experience proper with an eye to understanding how the participants’ cultural proclivities affected their experience of war. Studies such as the present one are necessary to better appreciate the training, command, doctrinal, and combat histories of the overseas army, not least because such works better contextualize the soldiers’ mental and indeed physical preparation for combat.

Canadian First World War historiography is also beginning to examine the army as a non-combat institution. Andrew Iarocci examines the 1st Canadian Division’s journey from its assembly at Valcartier, Quebec, through to its commitment to combat in the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. Iarocci recounts many of the well-worn stories of equipment and man-management problems that plagued the Canadians in their first English winter. However, in so doing, he shows that these men did not simply sit and suffer. As many of their sons would twenty-five years later, these men spent their first winter in England awaiting transport to the continent; they drank, they got into trouble, and they

²³ Canadian War Museum, “Trench Life: A Survival Guide,”
 <<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/trench-life/trenchlife-e.shtml>> Accessed 2 January 2010. This exhibition ran from 27 June 2008 to 13 April 2009.

²⁴ Ibid.

missed their homes and families.²⁵ Similarly, Sarah Cozzi's recent MA thesis examines the First World War Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in England.²⁶ She does not focus on the army as an engine of war, but rather seeks to determine what Canadian soldiers did in England when they were not training for fighting between 1914-1918.

Recent Canadian work on the Second World War has begun to display a similar academic interest in examining the army as a non-combat institution. In his examination of the seamier side of Canadian life during the Second World War, Jeffrey Keshen briefly examines the Canadian soldiers' experiences of life in England.²⁷ He highlights the Canadian soldiers' hunger for news from Canada and their increasing restlessness after months and years passed without action. Keshen also notes a growing estrangement between the homefront and soldiers in England largely owing to personal and marital problems with those left behind. This tendency is examined in Chapter 2 of the present work, which discusses a letter-writing campaign in October 1942 to improve the quantity and quality of letters from loved ones in Canada. Serge Durflinger also examines connections between the soldiers in England and their families and communities at home. His analysis, for example, of the Mayor's Cigarette Fund in Verdun, Quebec, displays the lengths to which local communities in Canada went to provide popular comforts for the men from their own communities.²⁸ These works, and the present one, approach the soldiers' non-combat experience as an essential element of the soldiers', and thus the

²⁵ Andrew Iarocci, *Shoestring Soldiers: The First Canadian Division at War, 1914-1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 42-55. This is not the prime purpose of Iarocci's overall work nor of the chapter in which it is found, but his approach does signal academic interest in the soldiers' lives and pastimes.

²⁶ Sarah Cozzi, "Killing Time: The Experiences of Canadian Expeditionary Force Soldiers on Leave in Britain, 1914-1919" (M.A. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 2009).

²⁷ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 228-234.

²⁸ Serge Marc Durflinger, *Fighting From Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 59-66.

nation's, experience of war. Again, such works highlight the fact that operations can be better understood and contextualized if we better understand the soldiers themselves.

The present work, therefore, examines an aspect of the Second World War Canadian soldiers' wartime experience that has been under-examined. It also attempts to contribute to the burgeoning, but increasingly important, literature that treats armies as institutions with social and cultural aspects. These traits, as will be shown, affected the soldiers in heretofore unexplored ways. The Canadian army's role in promoting and fostering a sense of Canadian identity in the soldiers had an important effect on their world views and coloured their perceptions of the nation to which they returned. There exists no Canadian literature that focuses solely on the army as a social institution, which in the case of the Second World War, had enduring consequences for Canada. So many of these soldiers, whose sense of citizenship and experience of Canadian nationalism was shaped by their experience in England and in combat, returned to Canada after their demobilization in an activist frame of mind. To properly understand postwar Canada, one must understand this large body of Canadian men who came back to mould and shape it. The problems of morale they encountered in the early war years, and the solutions achieved through the provision of largely Canadian solutions, affected the way the soldiers viewed Canada and their connection to it. Even before they sailed for Sicily and Normandy, Canadian soldiers clearly revealed their deep attachment to the Canadian nation and responded most positively to those measures that brought them emotionally, socially, and culturally home while living in a foreign land.

While sailors of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and airmen of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) spent much time in the United Kingdom during the war, the present work exclusively examines the experience of soldiers in the Canadian army. There

are a number of reasons for this. First, it is specious to automatically lump the experiences of the three services into a single cohesive whole. The experiences of sailors, soldiers, and airmen were very different in many respects, not least owing to the sometimes itinerate nature of the RCAF and RCN service experiences. Second, the nature of RCAF and RCN training and location was also at variance with army experience. It would have been more difficult to employ the “local” history approach considering the frequent dispersal of Canada’s air and, especially, naval forces throughout the period under study here. Third, the RCAF and RCN embarked on active operations for the duration of the army’s “static” period and, thus, their problems of morale frequently arose from quite different concerns. This is not to say that those servicemen did not also value links with Canada or miss their loved ones, but that active service, for them, often provided an emotional outlet normally denied to Canadian soldiers. The massive outpouring of emotion from soldiers upon hearing of the Dieppe raid, discussed in Chapter 2, testifies to the importance of action to the maintenance of morale. Fourth, in the case of the RCN, a similar study would require a detailed examination of life aboard ship and the services provided to ameliorate morale problems in that context. In short, the focus on the army facilitated the author’s desire to approach the question of morale and national identity from a cohesive, confined, and manageable position. Admittedly, one of the same reasons some historians avoid incorporating military history in general into their overall narratives of wartime Canada, namely unmanageable scope, affected the decision to focus on the army. The level of detail and analysis used in the research and writing of the present work precluded incorporation of all three services, given the limitations of the present project.

Similar factors affected the decision to fix a chronological end point to this project, specifically 10 July 1943, when Canadian, British, and American soldiers landed in Sicily.

A longer time-line would have compromised the ability to delve deeply into the multifarious issues presented herein. More importantly, however, issues related to Canadian soldier morale changed permanently after the dispatch of 1st Canadian Infantry Division to Italy. Not only was a good portion of the overseas army detached to the Mediterranean theatre of war, but those troops remaining in England could more confidently anticipate action of their own. It was at this time also that intensive training increased for soldiers in England with the expectation of a cross-channel invasion in the near future.

This work adopts a simultaneously national and sectoral approach to the Canadian experience of the Second World War. On the one hand it examines the sense of national identity existing among the overseas army and, partially through the experiences of its men, the national sentiment existing in Canada. On the other hand, it examines the army in England as a subject worthy of examination in its own right. In some ways, this work approaches the army's experience in a manner similar to local history. It examines a group representative of a larger national whole, whose members are given to a similar set of largely cohesive beliefs, and who were contained in a confined geographical space. It examines the army from the bottom up, taking a grassroots approach, but at the same time examining the importance of the overall national, administrative, and historical framework that shaped and informed the experience of the individual. Most germane to this local history allusion is the fact that this work analyzes a demographically small portion of the population and draws conclusions based on their "local" experience that have national pertinence. As such, numerous sources have been used to reconstruct the soldiers' experience. These include previously underutilized censorship reports that provide the inner-most thoughts of the Canadian soldier, Auxiliary Services reports, British and Canadian press releases and newspaper articles, army administration reports, and

correspondence between private citizens in Canada and Britain, as well as that between senior officers, the public, and their subordinates.

A great many of these sources have sat unread since their filing. This work thus brings to a wider audience a veritable cornucopia of information on the thoughts and inner desires of wartime Canadians in and out of uniform. Unfortunately, the usual limitation affecting Canadian historians of the Second World War overseas affects this work also, because the sources tell us more about English-Canadian nationalism and less about French-Canadian concepts of “Canadianism”. Sources that originated overseas in this period specifically relevant to the French-Canadian experience, some of which are in French and others in English, are scarce. Thus, the present work incorporates as many of those sources as possible in an attempt to meaningfully account for their experiences along with those of English-Canadian soldiers. Likewise scarce was evidence on the experiences of soldiers drawn from other ethnic backgrounds. The experiences of the various “new Canadians” beg further exploration in this, and other, contexts as historians seeks to stream their unique histories into that of the national whole.

Given these limitations, the present work attempts to employ a widely representative *and* comprehensive source base, coupled with a multi-layered analytical framework. For example, soldier correspondence, Auxiliary Services reports, educational materials in English and French, and newspaper articles are all used to support the thesis that some forms of education had multiple purposes and outcomes. These included the avoidance of boredom and the maintenance of morale, both of which were simultaneously predicated upon maintaining intellectual and practical links with Canada to create a more intelligent citizen, a better warrior, and a contributing, skilled wage-earner at war’s end.

This work is organized into six chapters. Each of them variously highlights the four major themes of morale, nationalism, identity, and alienation. Chapter 1 examines the army administration and the nationalistic atmosphere that surrounded the individual soldier. It establishes that a nationalist philosophical framework existed at the highest levels of the Canadian government and the army administration that shaped decision-making about the functioning and provisioning of the overseas army. Chapter 2 examines the problem of morale in the Canadian army overseas, largely at the level of the individual soldier, and finds that one of the prime causes of this problem was separation from the homeland and things Canadian. This chapter also examines Canadian relations with the English people and finds that the differences between the two created a sense of alienation among the Canadian troops that has been largely ignored or understated. Chapter 3 focuses on the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, which was the government's prime response to the problems of morale facing the inactive Canadian army prior to its commitment to battle. This chapter outlines the products and services provided by four national voluntary organizations – the Canadian YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Canadian Legion, and the Knights of Columbus – which operated under the administrative umbrella of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services. These four *civilian* organizations maintained the soldiers' links with Canada consciously and unconsciously through the provision of products and services designed to ameliorate problems of morale and discipline.

The final three chapters serve almost as case studies. Each chapter focuses on a single program designed to alleviate problems of morale. It is argued that in each case, good morale was again best maintained when systemic, psychological, and cultural links were maintained with Canada. Chapter 4 examines how education for Canadian soldiers in England during the Second World War went beyond the exigencies of military service and

served to buoy morale. It is argued that by employing a Canadian voluntary organization, the Canadian Legion War Services, to provide much of this education, the government added to the sense of cohesion between soldier and Canada. Chapter 5 focusses on sports in the army and suggests that sports helped to link the soldier to his memories and allegiances at home by fostering the play (and spectatorship) of popular Canadian sports. Conversely, the rejection of popular English sports further indicated that, at least in this area, Canadians had long since abandoned the Imperial connection. Chapter 6 examines the Canadian Chaplain Service. Chaplains maintained morale in numerous ways, many of which relied on continued strong links with Canada. Not least among these connections was the fact that chaplains felt themselves representatives of their respective churches' hierarchies and congregations in Canada. Thus, their work often linked the man to the values prevalent in his home congregation. Chaplains also served as essential points of liaison and mediation between the soldier and his family in Canada. The Canadian army that sailed for England between 1939 and 1943 was strongly Canadian and most happy when those connections were fostered and nourished.

These pages cannot be considered the last word on this subject as numerous avenues of future research have become apparent. Research into the recreational and "auxiliary" lives that the soldiers lived "behind the lines" in Italy and Northwest Europe would provide further insight into the morale function of the services described in the present work with the added factor of combat. While their morale in England was sapped by inaction, it would be interesting to determine how morale, sapped through the stress and fatigue of combat, was maintained (or not) through the provision of like services. Sports officers, auxiliary services supervisors, and chaplains – all of whom played an essential role in maintaining morale in England – accompanied the troops into the combat zone; many of

the recreations the men enjoyed in England were provided on the continent also. Future research may also examine how the soldiers' experiences in Britain affected their reintegration into Canadian society. Returned soldiers had a strong role in shaping postwar Canada and in assuming leadership roles in business, community, politics, and other areas of the nation's life. The field of sports and physical education gained in academic integrity in the postwar years; further research could examine the returned soldiers' influence on these developments. Their largely positive experience of sports, along with the creation – for the first time in Canadian history – of a system of sports promotion and education, targeted at Canadians from all provinces and administered by the federal government, may have had an effect on the acceptance and codification of sports and physical education in postwar Canada.

While the long-term effects of the soldiers' experiences in England have been discussed, they were also affected in the short term. This army did not change overnight as it sailed for Sicily and Normandy. Those men who took Canadian Legion Educational Services classes, or who attended Sunday evenings "Padre hours" where the latest news from Canada was read, or who competed in the Canadian army hockey championships, were the same men who stormed the beaches and grappled with the enemy. Those seeking to understand the soldiers fighting in Ortona, at Juno Beach, or in the Scheldt estuary, and who wish to understand this large body of the population in postwar Canada, would do well to examine the Canadian soldiers in England from 1939 to 1943. It was these men who fought Canada's battles of the Second World War and who helped to transform Canada into the place it has become.

Chapter 1: The Canadian Nationalist Milieu in the Overseas Army (1939-43)

Nationalism was an important consideration for most Canadians in September 1939.¹ In that year, Germany began conquering Europe in a nationalist frenzy that saw millions of people killed, wounded, and left homeless across Europe and the world. Like the First World War before it, the Second World War caused hundreds of thousands of Canadians to leave their homes, loved ones, and usually peaceful lives to sail across the Atlantic Ocean and fight the Germans once again. The Canadian declaration of war on 10 September 1939 fell chronologically and legislatively in the midst of a rash of nationalist policy making that had seen Canada slowly pull away from Great Britain, a process largely sparked by events in the First World War, and accelerated under the ministries of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King from 1921-1930 and again since 1935.

A nationalist philosophical framework existed at the highest levels of the Canadian government that shaped decision-making about the functioning and provisioning of the overseas army. This context largely shaped the administrative context for the soldiers' experiences overseas. This chapter will briefly recount the nationalist policies of Mackenzie King's government from 1939 to 1943, and will focus on the Canadian framework and milieu that developed in the army overseas. This development facilitated the emulation of Canadian behaviour and service patterns overseas.

¹ For the purposes of the present work, "nationalist" is taken to mean those policies, measures, beliefs, and ideologies which were intended to create a stronger sense of Canadian identity and collective, as well as individual, attachment to the Canadian state and to promote Canadian interests above those of other countries, most notably Great Britain and the United States. It is a term inclusive of all Canadian regions and provinces and exclusive of all other countries. The term is distinct from "French-Canadian nationalism" which, for the purposes of the present work, is generally defined as relating to numerous indications of the shared desire of much of Canada's French-speaking population to live as a distinct cultural and/or national community. Where the latter is intended, it will be defined as such in the present work. Some French-Canadian nationalists were also Canadian nationalists.

Mackenzie King's government attempted to ease problems of morale at home and overseas partially by cementing a stronger sense of Canadian identity.² As will be seen in subsequent chapters, morale in the army was linked to ideas of citizenship and national identity and, consequently, government policy knowingly encouraged that trend. This environment deeply affected administration of the army overseas, which, a CMHQ report later stated, was organized "as a forward extension of National Defence Headquarters, Canada."³ The government's adherence to a nationalist policy position was the result of multifarious historical and political factors and was adopted to alleviate the pressures associated with those factors. These factors included, but were not limited to, the evident need to gain more control of Canada's foreign policy apparatus partly as a result of experience in the First World War. The national war effort was promoted as Canada's own largely as a reaction to the traumatic and centrifugal forces unleashed in the earlier war over the conscription issue, which threatened to tear the country apart.⁴ More recent and pressing political pressures also contributed to this desire, including continued French-Canadian nationalist pressure and the King government's need to ensure that it held its massive 59 seat majority in the province of Quebec, upon which much of its electoral

² The best work on Canadian policy making during the war is C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970). For a detailed overview of Ottawa's direction of the war effort, see: J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975).

³ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 2, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12193, File: 1/Cdn Army/1.

⁴ Prime Minister Mackenzie King's desire to differentiate the Canadian war effort from that of Britain had its root in domestic political considerations, not the least of which was the impulse to avoid the kind of divisions that arose during the First World War over conscription. At that time, many believed conscription was made necessary by increasingly extravagant manpower promises to fuel what Prime Minister Robert Borden came to see as a war waged by Britain, using Canadian lives, without proper consultation with Ottawa on the part of Imperial administrators in London. For a comprehensive study of Canada's external policies in the First World War, see: C.P. Stacey, *Canada in the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies*. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977). On the divisions engendered by the conscription crises of both World Wars, see: J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977).

strength rested. Less directly, such policies, including soldier rehabilitation measures aimed to help demobilized men find work, homes, and even educational opportunities, tended to more closely associate the overseas soldier with Canada. Accordingly, conditions at home either ameliorated or aggravated problems of morale. This nationalist paradigm affected the individual soldier overseas and laid the foundation for an expatriate Canadian soldier society in Britain.

Despite the issuance of its own declaration of war on 10 September, there had been little doubt in the days leading up to war that, if hostilities broke out, Canada would join Britain. Historian J.L. Granatstein argues that, “Canada had gone to war in September 1939 because Britain had gone to war and for no other reason.”⁵ While this is undoubtedly true, many English Canadians supported the war effort for reasons other than a blind and nostalgic link to Britain.⁶ Historian Phillip Buckner further nuances Granatstein’s remark, commenting that, “[Canadians] fought for Britain. But this answer does not explain the commitment that English Canadians made to the war effort.”⁷ It is difficult to definitively prove that Canadians in 1939 were strong Canadian nationalists in the modern sense, but their sense of national identity was undoubtedly stronger than in 1914 or 1918. For many in 1939, their sense of place in the world revolved around, on the one hand, membership in

⁵ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War*, 420. Also see: J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, “‘A Self-Evident National Duty’: Canadian Foreign Policy, 1935-1939,” *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, 1975 3(2): 212-233.

⁶ Numerous factors played a role in strengthening public opinion for war. These included abhorrence of Nazi Germany and anger over Hitler’s 1939 seizure of Czechoslovakia in contravention to the 1938 Munich agreement. See Terry Copp, “Ontario 1939: The Decision for War,” *Ontario History* 1994 86(3): 269-278. Primary evidence also suggests that Canada’s soldiers saw the war as a fight to safeguard Canada from Nazism. See the Censor’s reports at: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318-12319, File Group: 4/Censor/4.

⁷ Phillip Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire, 1939-1982,” in Phillip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008), 107. Buckner also argues that, in fact, Canadians in 1939 did not fully grasp “the evil that they were confronting in Nazi Germany.” *Ibid.*, 108.

the British Empire and, on the other hand, an increasing and clear self-identification as distinctly “Canadian”.

Older English Canadians, as Patrick Brennan points out in reference to First World War Brigadier-General William Griesbach, “had no difficulty reconciling what on the surface might appear to be two allegiances.”⁸ Brennan also suggests that this dual allegiance following the First World War transformed into a stronger sense of Canadian identity as the Second World War approached. He writes: “The fact that the senior officers of the Canadian Corps [whom Brennan argues were overwhelmingly pro-Empire in their beliefs] would only play a minor role in the postwar intellectual and political life of their country may reveal something about the direction English Canada subsequently took in the ongoing battle over the coexistence of imperialism and nationalism in Canada’s identity.”⁹ Again, Buckner points out that, despite strong English-Canadian opinion that the British Empire and way of life was worth defending, “English Canadians in 1939 had a distinct sense of their own identity.”¹⁰ But Canadians were proud to be part of the British Empire, which they saw as a “progressive institution embodying liberal values and extending the benefits of British civilization around the world.”¹¹ Despite all this, the belief that Canada was not a colony of Britain, but an “independent partner nation” in a “cooperative commonwealth” helped contextualize the belief in many English-Canadian soldiers that while the defence of England was important, it was secondary to the defence of Canada.¹²

⁸ Patrick H. Brennan, “The Other Battle: Imperialist Versus Nationalist Sympathies Within the Officer Corps of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919,” in Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 251.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 261-262.

¹⁰ Phillip Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire, 1939-1982,” 107.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 108.

Most Canadian soldiers of the Second World War believed that the defence of Britain equalled the defence of Canada, which was their prime motivation during the period of static defence in England. Highlighting this belief, a soldier wrote home from England that, "I would sooner die from bombs in England than to have Hitler come and take over Government in Canada."¹³ In this sense, Canadian soldiers legitimized Mackenzie King's attempts to rationalize the war as Canada's effort.

The prime minister's repeated public statements regarding the independent and sovereign nature of Canada's war effort, after Britain became a belligerent, began during the special session of Parliament that opened on 7 September 1939. On the following day, in announcing the government's policy of entering the war alongside Britain, King stated,

...such action as this government is taking to-day it is taking in the name of Canada as a nation possessing in its own right all the powers and authority of a nation in the fullest sense. The action we are taking to-day, and such further action as this Parliament may authorize, are being and will be taken by this country voluntarily, not because of any colonial or inferior status vis-à-vis Great Britain, but because of an equality of status. We are a nation in the fullest sense, a member of the British commonwealth of nations, sharing like freedom with Britain herself, a freedom which we believe we must all combine to save.¹⁴

Such statements were repeated many times throughout the war, which were motivated largely by King's desire to show his French-Canadian supporters that they could support this war because it was Canada's war. In his diary, King also stated that, "Canada's war effort had to be made better known."¹⁵ In an effort to bolster public knowledge of the government's proactive role in the war, the Prime Minister also directed the Bureau of Public Information to publicize "all Canadian war activities overseas."¹⁶ Historian Michel

¹³ Field Censor (Home) Report, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/2.

¹⁴ The Rt. Hon. W.L.M. King, "European War," In Canada, Houses of Parliament, *Legislative Debates (Hansard)*, 18th Parl., Special Session (8 September 1939), 30.

¹⁵ King Diaries, 8 December 1939, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

¹⁶ "Cabinet Memorandum," 21 May 1941, LAC, RG2, Privy Council, Vol. 5, File: D-27-1.

Lévesque argues that Canadian nationalists and the Liberal Party of Canada systematically attempted to create a new sense of “Canadianism” during the war. He writes:

...au plan politique, la stratégie consiste à discréditer l'autonomie des provinces au profit de l'intérêt national et à développer un nouveau nationalisme typiquement *canadian* en dotant le Canada de tous les attributs et de tous les symboles d'un pays souverain. Enfin, au plan culturel, la création d'une culture *canadian* s'avère essentielle si l'on veut fondre les différents éléments disparates qui composent le Canada en vue de créer une véritable nation *canadian* et développer un nouveau sentiment d'appartenance.¹⁷

Canadian soldiers in England, however, rarely doubted their Canadian nationality. For example, when Canada itself seemed to come under direct threat, most Canadian soldiers expressed their willingness to abandon the defence of England. On learning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, an anonymous soldier wrote, “If Japan did attempt anything on Canada I’m convinced every one of us would say ‘Nuts to England!’ and get back home to protect our loved ones,” adding that, “A great deal of the fellows don’t give two hoots in hades about this ruddy island. All we are fighting for is to keep the enemy from our own beloved land...”¹⁸ Such commentary was typical of the soldiers’ reactions to the Japanese entry into the war, which exposed the Canadian west coast to invasion, however unlikely. Such reactions exposed as much about the soldier’s worry over the safety of his loved ones as about his attachment to Canada, but these familial ties were another factor linking the soldier to his distant homeland.

In 1942, another soldier expressed his general disappointment with the British, reinforcing his attachment to Canada alone: “I used to feel very patriotic for England, but

¹⁷ Michel Lévesque, “Le principal impact de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale: le développement d’une stratégie en vue d’établir un nouveau nationalisme « canadien »,” in Serge Bernier ed., *L’impact de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale sur les sociétés canadienne et québécoise* (Ottawa: Défense nationale, 1998), 29.

¹⁸ Field Censor (Home) Special Report of the First Reactions of Canadian Troops towards the Entry Into the War of Japan and U.S.A, mail examined during the period 8th -14th December 1941,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/4.

it's all gone now, they all seem to be ignorant and selfish as Hell – anything I do in this war is definitely for Canada and nowhere else.”¹⁹ As the war progressed, Canadian soldiers overseas, if not their countrymen at home, evinced a belief that theirs was a fight to protect the home front. Their anger and despair over, for example, Japanese entry into the war reveals their desire to defend loved ones and, through that desire, to defend Canada first and foremost. In this sense, the connection to Canada was often motivated by concern for the soldier's local community.²⁰ That the defence of Britain satisfied both those vestiges of devotion to empire *and* especially the defence of Canada itself help explain the continued desire of Canadian soldiers to tolerate the long period of waiting that they endured.

At home, those whose support for Canada's war effort was sometimes considered questionable – French-Canadian nationalists, workers, farmers, socialists, and people of German, Italian or, especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese descent – became, at best, the targets of consensus-building propaganda campaigns or, at worst, were marginalized or interned.²¹ Historian Jeffrey Keshen notes that, “the federal government tried to ensure that information obtained through all communication media would, as far as possible, reflect and reinforce feelings of patriotism, duty, and the resolve to endure for

¹⁹ “Field Censors (Home) Special Report: Relations between Canadians and British (civilians and troops),” January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

²⁰ Serge Durflinger makes a compelling case that shared experiences and class similarities shaped responses based first and foremost on a sense of local identity. Soldiers overseas, when separated from home and placed in a different national community, often sought closer connection with their home communities. In turn, this often translated into a longing for the man's own “national community”. In this sense, Canada served as a concrete and administratively fostered surrogate symbol to which the soldier could aim his discontent and longing. See: Serge Durflinger, *Fighting From Home*.

²¹ For an examination of ethnicity in Canada during the war, see: Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, and Lubomir Luciuk, eds., *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity and the Canadian State, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, Ministry of Supplies and Services, 1988). The struggles of Canada's religious minorities and conscientious objectors to carve out their place in the body politic – to remain loyal when engaging in what the majority considered disloyal behaviour – is outlined in: Thomas Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

victory.”²² The proclamation of the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) on 3 September 1939 facilitated such measures.²³ The DOCR measures included the waiving of habeas corpus and the right to trial, internment, bans on political and religious groups, restrictions of free speech including the banning of certain publications, and the confiscation of property. These measures – intended to empower the government to remove sources of division and emphasize consensus and the adherence to a single, national purpose – were explicitly linked to the success of the Canadian army since they banned all activities, “interfer[ing] with the success of His Majesty’s forces.”²⁴

Many of the changes taking place in Canada – the increasing nationalism of the federal government, the loyalty of minority groups, attempts to ensure the population was pulling together in this national emergency – affected the administration of the overseas army and, therefore, the soldiers. The degree to which King was willing to co-operate with Britain and allow the armed forces of Canada to fall under British operational control did not unfailingly follow his prewar diplomatic course of seeking greater autonomy. Nevertheless, despite the operational subordination of the Canadian army to the British army, the Canadian government sought to retain control of the disposition and use of its overseas military forces. This affected the lives of Canada’s soldiers in England both in terms of their use in combat operations and in terms of the way they lived their lives as Canadians in a foreign land. In effect, Canada fielded a “national” army that it *willingly* placed at the disposal of the Imperial General Staff.

²² Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 14-15.

²³ The DOCR are available at Library and Archives Canada. See: *Defence of Canada Regulations 1939* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1939).

²⁴ *Defence of Canada Regulations 1939* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1939).

Still, King's peacetime foreign policy, of seeking increasing autonomy from British decision-making, was not strictly followed during the war.²⁵ The Canadian Active Service Force (CASF) in England, the lead elements of which began arriving in December 1939, was caught in the middle of numerous jurisdictional, constitutional, and financial disagreements between Britain and Canada. While on the one hand, King assumed control of foreign policy decision-making, including the final say over the use of Canadian soldiers,²⁶ on the other, he did not want to hamstring British planning if and when the army was placed under British operational command. In fact, the prime minister distanced himself from the higher direction of the war.²⁷ Additionally, the longer Canadian soldiers remained in England, the more the Canadian government realized that the force's inactivity threatened morale domestically and overseas.²⁸ The government therefore had to deal with the competing pressures of sustaining morale while maintaining control over an army whose operational role was defined largely by the British government. These competing

²⁵ A number of works examine Canada's march toward autonomy under W.L.M. King. Please see: Robert MacGregor Dawson and H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958); C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume 2: 1921-48* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). A more recent work is J.L. Granatstein and Normal Hillmer, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World into the Twenty First Century*, 2nd Edition (Toronto: Nelson, 2007).

²⁶ In the House of Commons, the Minister of National Defence repeatedly reinforced Canada's primacy in this regard. For example, he stated, "...concerning the employment of Canadian forces on the continent of Europe or elsewhere...the decision would rest with the Canadian government." He added, "The appropriate Canadian Service Authority cannot authorize the embarkation of Canadian forces from the United Kingdom without the authority of the Minister of National Defence." The Hon. J.L. Ralston, "The Canadian Active Service Force," In Canada, Houses of Parliament, *Legislative Debates (Hansard)*, 19th Parl., 2nd Sess. (1 April 1941), p. 2048-49.

²⁷ Adrian W. Preston, "Canada and the Higher Direction of the Second World War," in B.D. Hunt and R.G. Haycock (eds.), *Canada's Defence: Perspectives on Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 98-118.

²⁸ Most soldier letters complained bitterly of the army's inactivity and the force suffered lowered morale due to the resultant boredom. Please see the hundreds of such complaints in the Field Censor (Home) reports. LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318-12319, File 4/Censor/4/1 - 4/Censor/4/12. These reports were issued until the end of the war, but expressions of boredom dropped drastically after 1st Canadian Division was sent to fight in Italy. Also see Chapter 2 of the current work.

priorities resulted in the gradual Canadianization of the army, which had a profound effect on the lives of service people abroad.

King's manpower policy of the Second World War was informed by his negative interpretation of Canada's manpower policy of the last war, which he saw as misguided and dangerous.²⁹ He was aware of the potential effects of British callousness to political issues in Canada, as well as the potentially calamitous effects of introducing conscription. One way to mitigate such outcomes was to maintain as much Canadian control of the overseas force as possible.³⁰ Again, political motivations entered into the equation since the reporting of casualties was seen as potentially disastrous to the maintenance of the current government. In January 1940, he wrote that, "If we had not an election now, we would be dragged along to a time when an offensive began and men were being slaughtered at the front, casualties reported, and it might seem unpatriotic to have an election. That would mean we would then be dragged on toward National Government."³¹ King also noted in his diary of a meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet, "I held strongly for making the Air Force our biggest contribution, and Navy next."³² Canadians well remembered their sizable land forces being slaughtered in the First World War, and it was widely believed that a greater air and naval contribution required a smaller long-term manpower

²⁹ Nevertheless, King expressed sympathy with the plight of Canada's First World War prime minister, Sir Robert Borden. King commented in his diaries, "It exasperates me to have despatches from England indicate that British statements have been the result of consultations with the Dominions when they are nothing of the sort... Borden's government did not get for three months any information but that which came in the press." King Diaries, 12 October 1939, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13. Similarly, although more negatively, "I have no doubt Borden was sincere in believing conscription was necessary, etc., and in taking the course he did..." King Diaries, February 22, 1940, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

³⁰ King also drew a link between Canada's army commander, the avoidance of conscription, and national unity. "Canada will never know what she will owe to the confidence that has existed between McNaughton and to my battle to avoid conscription for overseas service and the maintenance thereby of greater unity." King Diaries, 4 March 1943, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

³¹ King Diaries, 23 January 1940, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

³² King Diaries, 11 December 1941, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

commitment, or at least fewer casualties. Domestic political considerations were never far from King's mind, who did not forget the 59 Liberal seats his party held in Quebec; evidently his careful steps early in the war paid off in Quebec as he won 62 out of 65 seats in the next election, held on 26 March 1940. Only four days after Canada's declaration of war on Germany, the Prime Minister stated his preference for a general election rather than seeking to extend parliament, an issue raised often in the 1940 election campaign. His worries about massive casualties and conscription were clearly a factor in this decision.

[Lapointe] at first questioned [the idea of perpetuating Parliament] but now he saw quite clearly that if an election came within the year it would come before opposition had mounted too strongly against any country that would be carrying on the war and before any disasters would begin to come to Canadians themselves in the war. I said nothing of conscription, but felt that, while not becoming an issue, it would be in the minds of those who wish to see the present government out of office.³³

If Ottawa retained the last word on deployment of the army it could at least deliberate on the proposed campaign and veto any ventures that appeared too costly.

Despite King's determination to avoid conscription, his position on the European situation became more interventionist after 1937.³⁴ On 7 September 1939, King expressed his willingness to introduce conscription for home service. The Minutes of the War Committee of the Cabinet for 3 December 1941 record the prime minister's view, "Mr. King said that he was strongly in favour of introducing compulsory selective service in all

³³ King Diaries, 14 September 1939, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

³⁴ Numerous secondary works have shown that King was determined to avoid a break in national unity along linguistic lines. Although increasingly, as war approached, he made clear that Canada would support Britain militarily. See for example, Jack Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*; C.P. Stacey, *Mackenzie King and the Atlantic Triangle* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976); R. MacGregor Dawson and H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography*. John MacFarlane, "Mr. Lapointe, Mr. King, Quebec & Conscription", *Beaver*, April/May 1995, 75(2): 26-31.

departments of the war effort, except overseas service in the Armed Forces.”³⁵ However, the Cabinet consistently rejected War Office attempts to pre-empt or anticipate additional Canadian commitments. Although likely an attempt at proactive planning on the part of the War Office, King was obviously rankled at such requests as possibly eroding Ottawa’s control over the army. He repeatedly announced his intention to deal with such commitments on a government-to-government basis, further ensuring Ottawa’s primacy in the handling of Canadian forces. To the Canadian High Commissioner, Vincent Massey, he wrote, “Your discussions with the War Office should proceed only on basis of offers and commitments actually and expressly made by Canadian Government... Discussions regarding any further commitments involve major matters of policy and ought to be initiated by Governments.”³⁶ King bristled at the War Office’s “urgent” and repeated requests (which began on 6 September 1939, but which took on more urgency in further requests of 9 January and 15 February 1940) that Canada, “as Australia has already done,” furnish upwards of 120 railway troops to serve under British command.

On 22 February the Prime Minister clarified his position. He argued that, unlike in 1914-1915, Canada was “giving financial assistance” to Britain. King implied that, since Canada was funding the British war effort, it would suffer no demands that anticipated Canada’s manpower or expenditure commitments.³⁷ He concluded,

³⁵ “Minutes of the War Committee of the Cabinet, December 3rd, 1941,” LAC, RG2, Privy Council, Vol. 5667. King also commented, two years previously, that “It may conceivably come to conscription for our own defence; nothing has been said against that... there would be no conscription (for overseas service) under the present Government, which means I would send the resignation of my colleagues and myself before allowing the measure of conscription of men for overseas service.” King Diaries, 7 September 1939, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13.

³⁶ “Secretary of State for External Affairs to Massey, 14 February 1940,” LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J1, Vol. 292.

³⁷ “Secretary of State for External Affairs to Massey, 22 February 1940,” LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J1, Vol. 292.

The Canadian Government must cut its cost according to its cloth and the figures given above will indicate what a full-out national effort is being put forward even at this early stage to make Canada's participation the most effective possible...the Government has assumed [an enormous responsibility] on behalf of the Canadian people...³⁸

This correspondence, which took place in the context of the 1940 federal election, exemplified the government's eagerness to display its commitments, and to reinforce the point that Canada would make its *own* commitments independently of British pressure and innuendo.

The government laid out its policy on the secondment of Canadian units to British forces as early as September 1939. A number of conditions were applied but the first was that such units were to "remain intact as Canadian Units".³⁹ Much ink was spilled over jurisdictional squabbles into the spring of 1940. A rancorous debate between the two governments for months argued the status of Canadian ancillary and non-divisional troops that had been loaned to the British. This was a question of finance and jurisdiction, but it also reflected the Canadian government's desire to maintain the Canadian identity of its forces overseas. The War Office maintained that since they paid for the maintenance of such troops, they fell under British command. Vincent Massey wrote King, pointing out that British financial responsibility for such troops "enforces a relaxation of our control."⁴⁰ This resulted, two weeks later, in a meeting at the War Office between General A.G.L. McNaughton and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Edmund Ironside. For his part, McNaughton repeatedly emphasized his force's autonomy and unity. He

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "From the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, 29 September 1939," RG24, National Defence, C17, Vol. 13721, "HQ 1st Canadian Division, Appendices to Consolidated War Diary for the Period 8th – 31st October 1939, Appendix X-2(a). Microfilm Reel T1872, 958.

⁴⁰ Telegram #265, "Vincent Massey to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada," 3 March 1940, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26J1, Vol. 292, Microfilm Reel C4571, 246840.

emphasized that control of the Canadian forces was vested in the Minister of National Defence through himself as senior Canadian officer in the United Kingdom. He added that, in accordance with Order-in-Council PC 3391, which amended the Visiting Forces Act, 1933, he was not permitted to place Canadian forces at the disposal of the United Kingdom military authorities. McNaughton went on to outline the role of the Senior Officer, CMHQ (the highest administrative official of the Canadian Active Service Force) and suggested that that officer would be a better channel of communication to Ottawa, which would have to be consulted. McNaughton,

... again drew attention to the fact that communications to the Canadian Forces, even though they are issued through CMHQ, should be in the form of a request rather than an order so long as they are in the United Kingdom, as otherwise he cannot legally comply with them under the Visiting Forces Act.⁴¹

While stationed in the United Kingdom, it had been agreed that Canadian forces fell entirely under Canadian administrative command.

General McNaughton explained further that if the 1st Canadian Infantry Division was to be sent to France, it should be detached from 4th British Corps (to which the Division was attached for training purposes) and formed into its own corps, even if it was only comprised of one division and ancillary units. Besides, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division shortly would be on its way, at which time a Canadian corps would be formed. General Ironside concluded, "...in view of the circumstances outlined by the G.O.C., 1 Cdn. Div., etc. would be replaced in 4 Corps by a U.K. Div. and 1 Cdn. Div. and Ancillary

⁴¹ This refers to the Act as amended at Canadian insistence by PC 3391. To access the entire memorandum from which this episode is drawn, please see: LAC, RG24, C17, National Defence, Vol. 13722, War Diary, General Staff, 1st Canadian Division - Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st March 40, Appendix XLIII, Microfilm Reel T1872, 1935-37.

Units would be considered an independent formation.”⁴² Because of Canadian representations, “whereas the original assumption had been that these [ancillary] units might serve apart from other Canadian troops, a definite link had now been established between them and the 1st Canadian Division.”⁴³ Such squabbling was the result of mainly financial and logistical concerns on the British side, while they were the result of financial and nationalistic concerns on the Canadian. The result for the individual soldier was an administrative and operational framework that appeared to be almost wholly Canadian. Lending further weight to this sense, on Christmas Day 1940 the recently arrived 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, along with all Canadian troops theretofore stationed in the United Kingdom, came under the command of a new (unnumbered) Canadian Corps.

Canadian commanders admitted that once it embarked for the continent the army would fall under British operational command, but even then, Canadian officials pointed out that the army would remain administratively under Canadian control and that any disputes would always be referred to Ottawa for approval.⁴⁴ Although the Canadian government repeatedly claimed in public that it was willing to have the Canadians serve wherever and whenever necessary, such disputes could not have made the use of the Canadian force an especially welcome course of action to British planners. Little wonder the Canadians spent so much time training in and defending the British Isles.

Partially as a reflection of the government and army command’s attempts to enforce administrative control over the army, the government created the Canadian Military

⁴² General Ironside to General A.G.L. McNaughton, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722, Microfilm Reel T1872, 1935-37.

⁴³ Stacey, *Six years of War*, 67.

⁴⁴ See McNaughton’s order “releasing” Canadian troops to act “in combination” with United Kingdom forces for the proposed Norway expedition on 17 April 1940. LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722. War Diary, General Staff, 1st Canadian Division - Ser. No. 2, 1st – 30th April 40, Appendix XXXVII. Reel T1872. P. 2062.

Headquarters (CMHQ) in London.⁴⁵ For much of the First World War, the front line soldier saw as his corps commander a British general staff officer who reported directly to London until the summer of 1917, at which point Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie was appointed Corps Commander. The Canadian Corps was subordinated to a British Army for the duration of the First World War. The creation of CMHQ ensured that Canadian staff officers administered the army throughout the war. Operationally, a Canadian combatant officer up to the army level commanded the nation's soldiers. By contrast, in the earlier war, Canada established a Headquarters, Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC) at Argyll House to which was appointed a Minister of the Crown who was authorized to make "decisions of consequence in the name of the government and people of Canada."⁴⁶ An overseas council was set up to advise and assist the minister regarding military problems. As a result, only the most important matters were referred to Canada.

In the Second World War, the advisability of creating a Canadian higher command structure was understood very early on, not just for the individual soldier, but for larger political and operational reasons. In a telegram of 1 November 1939, Vincent Massey, pointedly rejected the First World War precedent, stating, "Anything resembling Argyle House organization in the last war should be wholly avoided."⁴⁷ The new organization stipulated that all matters of policy would be directed through Ottawa. A "Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters" of 13 July 1942 listed as

⁴⁵ The decision to create an overseas Canadian Military Headquarters was taken before the outbreak of war. See C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 31 and 194. Stacey also notes that, "The advance party of C.M.H.Q., consisting of Colonel Montague, eight other officers and 14 other ranks, sailed from Montreal in the *Antonia* on 4 November 1939. On 16 November they reported for duty at Canada House." *Ibid.*, 196.

⁴⁶ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 3, RG24, Vol. 12193, File 1/Cdn Army/1.

⁴⁷ Telegram from Vincent Massey to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada. 1 November 1939, MG26 J1, Vol. 274, Reel 3747, p. 232367.

two of its three guiding principles: (1) "Preservation of Canadian autonomy in all matters of command, organization and administration of the Cdn Army Overseas." And (2) "Maintenance of freedom of action in the case of Operational Commands and Headquarters."⁴⁸ The report continues,

Experience in the last war showed the necessity for retaining control of our administration. It is unnecessary to argue this principle, which is based on inherent characteristics strong in the minds of all Canadians... Fundamentally this is a basic reason for the provision of machinery required effectively to conduct our own military business.⁴⁹

The army administration mirrored the type of administrative and national autonomy that Canada had gained politically since 1919. Under the Second World War model, the Senior Combatant Officer had to refer to Canada on almost all matters of high policy "and much of lesser detail".⁵⁰ The report also stated that CMHQ "functions both as a forward extension of National Defence Headquarters, Canada, and as a Clearing House for the Canadian Army in England."⁵¹ By this definition, the government of Canada was symbolically and administratively brought to England with the troops themselves, who were also administered directly by the very same "extension" of the nation. This decision was consistent with King's "ideas of cabinet government"⁵² and his desire to retain control of the army in Ottawa, not Westminster. The government's "forward extension" into England facilitated the provision of services and ensured administrative closeness between the army and Ottawa, contributing to a strongly Canadian atmosphere in the overseas army.

⁴⁸ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 1, RG24, Vol. 12193 file 1/Cdn Army/1

⁴⁹ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 2, RG24, Vol. 12193 file 1/Cdn Army/1. This is also quoted in C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 194.

⁵⁰ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 1, RG24, Vol. 12193 file 1/Cdn Army/1

⁵¹ Report on Functions and Organization of Canadian Military Headquarters, 13 Jul 42, Para 2, RG24, Vol. 12193 file 1/Cdn Army/1

⁵² C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 195.

The existence of CMHQ was necessary also because in the Second War, Canada went on to form First Canadian Army. Here too was an expression of the increased size of Canada's commitment, a development that was also felt at the individual soldier's level. Such men often commented on the strength of Canada's army. "This Canadian Army is really something – tough as nails,"⁵³ wrote one. Others saw the defence of the British Isles as the army's proper role for the defence of Canada itself. A soldier of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division wrote, "If we don't win this war in Europe we'll fight it in England and Canada. How would you like to billet three German soldiers this week my dear?... We should fight this war on their ground not ours."⁵⁴ Such sentiments were felt at the highest levels of the army command. Upon the inception of First Canadian Army, McNaughton stated, "the first and most important task for the Canadian Army continued to be the defence of the United Kingdom."⁵⁵ This task required that the army continue in its static defensive role, which continued to be the soldiers' most serious grievance.

The man most responsible for advocating the Canadian military role was the army commander, Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton. He also wished to retain greater control of the Canadian army. However, the Canadian General Staff's reasons for wanting such control were motivated less by fears of conscription, or the need to maintain control over manpower policy.⁵⁶ Of first importance was the fact that McNaughton was initially

⁵³ "Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 May 1942," RG24, National Defence, Vol. 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6

⁵⁴ "Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941," RG24, National Defence, Vol. 12319, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁵⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 98.

⁵⁶ Nevertheless, according to King, McNaughton essentially agreed with his desire to maintain voluntary enlistment as the sole source of manpower. "He himself was not saying anything pro and con – these were not the words used but expressed his attitude as he felt that issue was a political one. He did say, however, that he agreed with me that national unity was more important than anything else." King Diaries, 28 August 1941, LAC, W.L.M. King Papers, MG26-J13. Additionally, in his 1944 role as Minister of National Defence, McNaughton spearheaded one final national campaign to bolster voluntary recruitment before National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) conscripts were finally sent overseas.

made the army's highest representative in England and, as such, was to carry out Ottawa's policies as best he could. The army commander also held treasured memories of the Canadian Expeditionary Force of the First World War and mirrored Arthur Currie's approach to maintaining his force as a national unit.⁵⁷ His well-publicized comments attest to his feelings. On his arrival in England, McNaughton commented, "We carry an obligation of honour to live up to the proud traditions established by the Canadian Corps. It is for us to prove ourselves worthy of this inheritance."⁵⁸ McNaughton was a fierce Canadian nationalist, a point he did not hesitate to hammer home to British newspapermen who flocked to interview him upon his arrival with the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in December 1939.

(McNaughton's) belief is that a modern army unit ... can be built in short time from civilians if the civilians are technical experts already, and particularly if they are Canadian... 'That is where we score as a pioneer country.' He told me, 'We are accustomed to fighting the rigours of nature. We don't need to create technical experience. We have a wealth of it which merely requires adaptation.'⁵⁹

Such comments, accessible to the troops through local papers, certainly gave the impression that Canadian troops were a special and unique breed. The general repeatedly stressed that this is a *Canadian* army, given its task by the Canadian people. "The people of Canada have reposed in us their trust to defend the cause of justice and of liberty against

⁵⁷ McNaughton was a well-respected artillery commander in the First World War. His nationalist tendencies as army commander in the Second World War were somewhat tempered by his desire to make, "the best contribution possible to winning the war". Quoted in C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 101.

⁵⁸ "Canadian G.O.C's Historic Order 'We are Here to Defend Liberty'," *The Evening News* – December 19, 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Jan. 40, Appendix I-1. Reel T-1872, page 1267.

⁵⁹ "G.O.C. the Canadians Won't Waste His Soldiers," *Daily Express*, December 20, 1939. LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Jan. 40, Appendix I-1. Reel T-1872, page 1264.

oppression and aggression.”⁶⁰ Through the local newspapers he reminded his soldiers to be proud of their Canadian heritage, both while in England and at the front:

Each one of us is a representative of Canada, from whose conduct our kinsmen of the Empire and of France will form their opinion of Canada and Canadian soldiers... In consequence, each man wearing a Canadian uniform has a great responsibility – to uphold by his actions during training and on leave, no less than by his skill at arms, the good name of Canada and the reputation of his regiment. I ask that each individual member of the Force accept, as his own, this great trust.⁶¹

While McNaughton probably wished to save himself the headache of dealing with undisciplined soldiers in the British streets and pubs, his words also suggested to the men that theirs was a sacred responsibility to uphold Canada’s good name.

Despite these public announcements about the army’s nationality, the British and French high commands did not consider it to be a national army *per se*. Supreme operational command of the Canadian army on the European continent was to be vested in the British commander; the Canadian commander would not have direct access to the Allied commander-in-chief. Despite Mackenzie King’s desire to avoid consultation on purely military matters, since additional military responsibilities might flow therefrom,⁶² Canada’s representative in Paris, Georges Vanier, advocated strongly for the “sovereign” status of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in early 1940. Under the assumption that Canada would send sizable forces to France, a meeting was held at the Paris legation attended by Vanier, McNaughton, and other senior Canadian officers. Vanier argued,

It is of prime importance that when the division arrives it should be looked upon as a representative of a sovereign state rather than merely another British Division and,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Canadian G.O.C’s Historic Order ‘We are Here to Defend Liberty’,” *The Evening News* – December 19, 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Jan. 40, Appendix I-1. Reel T-1872, p. 1267.

⁶² Preston, “Canada and the Higher Direction of the Second World War,” in B.D. Hunt and R.G. Haycock (eds.), *Canada’s Defence: Perspectives on Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 98-118.

in consequence, General McNaughton should be personally known to the French government beforehand... as a matter of principle, General McNaughton should have direct access to General Gamelin... General instructions in this regard should come from the Canadian government.⁶³

Although such an unequivocal stance was not made in the end, the Canadian government did make it clear, through telegrams and Orders-in-Council, that the Canadian government maintained the final say in the disposition of the Canadian Army. In England this was made public in a joint press release made by Lord Gort, Commander-in-Chief of the BEF in France and General McNaughton in the context of the despatch of 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade to France as part of the Second BEF.⁶⁴ In part, the two stated, "... we agreed that on all administrative matters there should be a clear channel of authority straight back to the Canadian Government."⁶⁵ This was especially important at that time given that the Allied front in France was quickly crumbling in the face of the German blitzkrieg.

In a memorandum to General Crerar regarding Canada's ancillary units, McNaughton expressed his nationalist tendencies even more strongly,

If the War Office are paying for (these) units, British officers... will constantly encroach on Canadian autonomy... We have constantly to explain our position and persuade British authorities to withdraw orders which would be quite unacceptable as such to the Canadian government and people.⁶⁶

He goes on,

It seems to me the correct position was clearly stated by the Honourable Mr. Lapointe, in the House of Commons, Ottawa, 9th September 1939... 'Canadians will

⁶³ "Memorandum of a Meeting Held at the Canadian Legation, Paris, 0945 HRS, 10 January 1940". LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Jan. 40, Appendix I-9, Reel T-1872, p. 1309.

⁶⁴ The 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade began arriving in France on 12 June 1940 with the arrival of its vehicles and some of its equipment. See: Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 279.

⁶⁵ "Memorandum of a Conference held at G.H.Q., France, 11 Jun 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Mar. 40, Appendix LII, Reel T1872, p. 1597.

⁶⁶ "Memorandum - To Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q.," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Mar. 40, Appendix IV, Reel T1872, p. 1801.

never be mercenaries paid by any country – not even by Britain. If Canadians go to the Front Line of the battle they will go voluntarily as Canadians, under the control of Canada, commanded by Canadians, and maintained by the Dominion of Canada.’⁶⁷

The general could scarcely have chosen a more apt quotation to sum up both his own and the government’s position. In a telegram to Minister of Defence Norman Rogers, McNaughton further insisted that a purely Canadian force was desirable for military reasons. As an example, he noted:

My principle anxiety... was to ensure adequate artillery support in battle... I attached great importance to this nucleus being Canadian and normally always with the division so that close liaison and devotion to (the) assaulting troops may develop. In this I can claim to speak from a wider experience than any other officer now serving.⁶⁸

In concluding this telegram, McNaughton referred back to Lapointe’s statement, “I am convinced of (the) wisdom of Mr. Lapointe’s statement of principle... I would appreciate (a) copy (of) this message being given to (Mr. King) personally.”⁶⁹

After the fall of France in June 1940, Canada did not demand a larger share of strategic control, nor did British Prime Minister Winston Churchill encourage the creation of formal machinery governing Dominion participation in the conduct of the war. This lack of input affected the way in which Ottawa would seek to control the Canadian army. First, Canadian commanders had less influence when advocating for Canadian inclusion in the few available military operations between 1940 and 1943 and, second, the Canadian government and military commanders therefore became reluctant to sanction *any* use of the Canadian Army for fear of a recurrence of the First World War situation when Britain

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “From: CANMILITARY (CMHQ), To: DEFENSOR (NDHQ), D. 3 March 1940,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722, War Diary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff, Ser. No. 2, 1st – 31st Mar. 40, Appendix IV, Reel T1872, p. 1806.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1807.

shared little to no information with Ottawa. However, Stacey writes, that King emphasized, “Canadian forces continued ‘to hold Canadian identity’ and were governed by Canadian law”.⁷⁰

Officers other than McNaughton also attempted to administer and interpret Canadian nationalist policies overseas. Major-General H.D.G. Crerar arrived in England at the end of October 1939 and took up his post as Brigadier General Staff (BGS), the senior officer at CMHQ. His administration of policy regarding the admissibility of Canadians resident in the United Kingdom to enlist in the Canadian forces also displayed the nationalist tendencies of government officials and army commanders. There was the practical consideration that Canadian soldiers were paid more than British ones, meaning that enlistment in the CASF would be preferable to the soldier on monetary grounds. Ottawa sought control of this area of enlistment, claiming “Canadian officers resident in United Kingdom (should) not to be offered appointments without prior reference to Ottawa. Policy is to employ officers who have been active in NPAM in recent years.”⁷¹ CMHQ was given authority to enlist a limited number of other ranks in England, as long as urgency and local knowledge was a factor and that NDHQ was advised of the particulars of such personnel. General Crerar understood the difficulties associated with appointing personnel living in England to CMHQ staff.

⁷⁰ C.P. Stacey. *Arms, Men and Governments*, 140.

⁷¹ “Defensor to Canmilitary, 27 Nov 39” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12451, File: 6/C.M.H.Q./1. NPAM refers to the Non-Permanent Active Militia, which was Canada’s part-time volunteer military force from the time of Confederation to 1940. The full-time professional force was officially known as the Permanent Active Militia, although it was more colloquially known as the Permanent Force. During the Second World War, the Permanent Active Militia was renamed the Canadian Army (Active); it later became known as the Canadian Army Active Force, and then the Canadian Army (Regular). In 1940, the Canadian Army (Reserve) replaced the NPAM. Overseas, the army was known first as the Canadian Army Service Force, then by degrees gained the designation of First Canadian Army on 6 April 1942.

The question of appointments, to Canadian Military Headquarters, of Canadians in this country, or of Englishmen who desire to serve with the Canadian force, is a difficult one. It can never be forgotten that there are thousands of Canadians in Canada, many highly qualified and all very eager, who, with some considerable reason, hold the view that all prospective vacancies over here should be filled from amongst their number. And should this Headquarters show indications of becoming noticeably "Anglicised", there will be political, as well as service, objections from Canada.⁷²

The political imperatives were clear, as was the result: the force would be officered by men recently arrived from Canada. "Anglicised" Canadians would not be allowed command responsibility except in exceptional circumstances. Crerar, in an attempt to clarify the policy, laid down a number of rules designed to exclude United Kingdom residents except in exceptional circumstances.

1st. Unless special knowledge of British and Continental conditions or extreme urgency, are decisive factors, all appointments should be offered to Canadians in Canada. Action to be taken through Department of National Defence - giving qualifications required.

2nd. Should special knowledge of local conditions, or urgency be predominant factors, preference should be given to Canadian applicants living in England who possess such qualifications and who are otherwise eligible.

3rd. On rare occasions, it may prove desirable to accept an applicant with no previous Canadian affiliation, on account of the very special nature of the work.⁷³

The final decision about manpower policy resided with Ottawa, which offered a counter proposal. On 29 January 1940, Major-General H.H. Matthews, Adjutant-General, in a telegram to CMHQ stated that, while the appointment and enlistment of individuals residing in the United Kingdom had a precedent in the First World War, conditions in 1914 were different from those of 1940. A sizable number of NPAM units in Canada had not yet been included in the CASE, voluntary enlistment still outpaced available vacancies, and better training facilities now existed in Canada. Matthews concluded, "as a matter of

⁷²"Memorandum to A.A.&Q.M.G. on Policy Re Appointments Under Control of Canadian Military Headquarters, 19 Nov 39," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9867, File: 1/HEADQUARTERS/6.

⁷³ "Crerar to Matthews, 14 Jan 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

policy, it is not considered desirable at present to offer appointments or to enlist reinforcements from outside Canada.”⁷⁴ Before receipt of Matthews’s cable, Crerar – evidently after somewhat reconsidering his own earlier policy – cabled Ottawa suggesting that its policy was somewhat too rigid. His opinion was that each applicant should be evaluated on his individual merits.⁷⁵ He requested “discretionary power and authority be delegated to superior Canadian military authority in England, or on the continent”⁷⁶ to carry out attestations for the CASF.

Matthews’s reply reiterated his earlier policy statement. “It would be undesirable to offer appointments or enlistment to any applicants outside Canada at present.”⁷⁷

Meanwhile, these discussions had taken on an increased urgency as offers of service were being received at CMHQ and at the Canadian legation in Paris by the hundreds.⁷⁸ On 10 May 1940, Ottawa cabled CMHQ with its policy decisions:

- (a) Re Non-Canadian Residents in Great Britain: Not to be accepted.
- (b) Canadians Temporarily Resident in Great Britain Who Would in Normal Course of Events Have Returned to Canada: Applications to be forwarded to National Defence Headquarters where they will be given the same consideration as if they were actually living in Canada.
- (c) Canadians Who Are Permanently Residents of Great Britain: Not eligible

⁷⁴ “Matthews to C.M.H.Q., 29 Jan 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1. Canadian residency was apparently also an important factor since US citizens resident in Canada were allowed enlistment in the CASF. “U.S. citizens could enlist in the Canadian forces in the spring of 1940 without loss of citizenship if they did not take the oath of allegiance; rather they took an oath of obedience.” Please see: Fred Gaffen, *Cross-Border Warriors: Canadians in American Forces, Americans in Canadian Forces: From the Civil War to the Gulf War* (Toronto: Dundurn Press Ltd., 1995), 44.

⁷⁵ “Crerar to the Secretary, N.D.H.Q., 23 Jan 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9350, File: 8/TRANS/3.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “Matthews to CMHQ, 6 Mar 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9350, File: 8/TRANS/3.

⁷⁸ “Montague, Memorandum as to Policy Regarding the Enlistment of Personnel for C.A.S.F. in the United Kingdom, 1 May 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

- (d) Canadians in Great Britain Who Have Had Service or Training in Pre-War Canadian Units: To be dealt with under (b) or (c) depending on category within which they come.
- (e) Canadians in Great Britain in Canadian Government Employ: To be given the same consideration as those coming under (b) above except permanent residents who are excluded.⁷⁹

Considering that this telegram was sent on the same day that the German Army began its campaign in the west, CMHQ soon felt that changes were urgently necessary. Several weeks later, General Montague recommended that, "Every man who can be accommodated should be put into a unit."⁸⁰ Ottawa responded to these requests and the demanding situation by slackening its policy, but only slightly. On June 29, CMHQ received word that the,

...following policy [is] approved

- (a) Canadian officers resident in the United Kingdom and who are otherwise eligible may be appointed to C.A.S.F. after reference to DEFENSOR [the Department of National Defence].
- (b) Canadian Nationals resident in the United Kingdom may be enlisted in C.A.S.F. provided they fulfill recruiting standards laid down for overseas service.
- (c) Technical soldier personnel who cannot be supplied from Canadians may be enlisted subject to War Office approval.⁸¹

This policy was somewhat broader than that promulgated on 10 May 1940, but it was fundamentally unchanged. The recruitment of Canadians in Britain, therefore, was a slow and difficult process. The practical result was that the vast majority of men serving in the army were Canadian residents. This policy reflected the government and army's broader

⁷⁹ "Telegram #515, External to Dominion, 10 May 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

⁸⁰ "Montague to Crerar, Memorandum Enlistment of Canadians, 6 June 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

⁸¹ "Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada to CMHQ, 29 June 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

attempts to maintain the administrative, financial, and in some cases, operational control of the overseas army. The result was an organization that was highly nationalized and largely divorced from previous imperial attachments.

It was within this higher national and administrative framework that the individual soldier lived his life. The highest levels of the Canadian government and army were concerned with maintaining the CASF's Canadian identity. This created an atmosphere of Canadianism in the force overseas and informed the administration and the personal experiences of the Canadian soldier. While this did not *necessarily* result in the provision of wholly Canadian welfare services for the soldiers overseas, it dovetailed with the provision of such services, which was facilitated by federal policies to encourage Canadianism at home (to ensure maximum effort and consensus) and abroad (to maintain the morale of soldiers so far from Canada). The Canadian war effort domestically aimed at maintaining unity and building consensus, a policy imperative largely driven by fears of the centrifugal forces unleashed in Canada during the First World War. It was in this context that the federal government embarked upon a campaign to Canadianize the nation's war effort to appeal to as many people as possible – and incidentally to help bolster faith in the troops that Canada's war effort was worth their sacrifice. This context also helps to explain why Canada provided its own welfare services, rather than relying on British ones; why Canadian chaplains found themselves assuaging soldier concerns by mending bridges with loved ones in Canada; why the YMCA provided hockey sticks and baseballs in ever increasing amounts; and why the Canadian Legion provided the troops with a uniquely

Canadian education in order improve “the individual’s usefulness as a citizen and wage-earner in a post-war and peaceful world.”⁸²

⁸² H.D.G. Crerar to his “Personal Adviser on Educational Matters” J.B. Bickersteth. RG24. Vol. 9895. File: 2/Educ Trng/1

Chapter 2 – The Three “M” Factors: Money, Mail, and Meals: Canadian Nationality and Morale

Any examination of the steps taken to alleviate problems of morale must first establish what issues negatively affected this key ingredient of military efficiency. Many separate, but often interwoven, factors had the potential to erode the morale of Canadian soldiers stationed overseas. Boredom, inactivity, unaccustomed surroundings, adverse living conditions, and the subjection of men recently in civilian clothes to the deprivations of military life all factored into the morale condition of the Canadian army. To combat these problems, the army employed largely traditional means: the provision of sports, entertainment, training activities, and pay, among others. Less traditional was the *Canadian* basis of these services, and the nationalistic manner in which they were provided.¹ Soon after the arrival of 1st Canadian Infantry Division in England it became clear that many problems of morale were related not just to the typical issues, but were more specifically related to the soldier's separation from his homeland. This resulted in the provision of soldier welfare and “auxiliary services” that brought certain facets of Canadian life to the men overseas. Those services that acted as a link to Canada and loved ones at home, it was found, were an effective means of combating lowered morale. This chapter examines the problem of morale in the Canadian army overseas and finds that one of its prime causes was separation from the homeland and things Canadian. This realization puts the subsequent provision of Canadian products and services into its proper context.

* * *

Military morale is a notoriously elusive subject to document. Given its undoubtedly enormous effect on military efficiency there are surprisingly few comprehensive studies of

¹ Subsequent chapters outline the specifically Canadian measures taken to alleviate lowered morale.

the subject. Nevertheless, it does form an important part of the historiography of combat motivation. Two theories dominate that debate: the “primary group” and “legitimate demand” theories. “Primary group” dynamics have less relevance for the static Canadian army since that theory highlights the importance of small group cohesion to the staging of effective combat performance. The army’s experience of morale between 1939-1943 is related more to the “legitimate demand” theory. J.G. Fuller explains in his examination of British and Dominion armies’ morale in the First World War, that individuals will be motivated if “they believe in the worth of the socio-political system to which they belong.”² This paradigm suggests that feelings of connectedness to one’s own society facilitate improved morale.

Despite this assertion, although the Canadian army began to realize a morale problem was likely to develop due to inaction, many in the command structure clung to First World War notions of morale that highlighted combat motivation. This is natural in the war’s early months, given that many expected a military repetition of the pattern experienced in 1914-1918. These traditional military interpretations associated morale with training, discipline, and the supply of provisions. In 1940, the noted Canadian military psychiatrist, G.B. Chisholm, was appointed Director of Personnel Selection for the army and later Director General of Medical Services. Chisholm had pioneered new psychiatric and psychological methods in Canada, being one of the first to incorporate Freudian methods into his practice.³ Still, even in the depths of the static period, Chisholm – so important to the development of psychiatric methods to help improve morale – published a

² J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 21.

³ Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), 30-31.

manual heavily tailored to combat motivation; this would have been important to an army on the march, but proved less so for the static Canadian army at the time of publication. This booklet, *Morale: A Platoon Commander's Responsibility for the Morale of His Men*, acknowledged that good morale was a "state of mind or emotional state," and stipulated that without good morale, soldiers "are useless."⁴ While the work stressed the importance of training and discipline, Chisholm did add that the supply of provisions included "good food, adequate rest, mail, proper medical care, efficient equipment, and good welfare services."⁵ While these recommendations were intended for the army in battle, some of the ideas had to be adapted for use in the Canadian army prior to its commitment to combat because it had become unexpectedly inactive. Such plans had already been set in motion in the first month of the war with the establishment of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services.⁶ Auxiliary Service Supervisors, Chaplains, Unit Entertainment Officers, and commanders sensitive to the real needs of their men were left to sort out what constituted "good welfare services."

Other works on the topic, notably Lord Moran's *The Anatomy of Courage*⁷ and John Baynes's *Morale: a Study of Men and Courage: The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 1915*,⁸ likewise focus on the importance of morale to combat motivation, rather than on military life in general. In his book, *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War*, Paul Fussell argues that patriotism "as a motive

⁴ Colonel G. Brock Chisholm, *Morale: A Platoon Commander's Responsibility for the Morale of His Men* (Toronto: The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1941), 2.

⁵ Chisholm, *Morale*, 2.

⁶ See Chapter 3 for an examination of the role of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services.

⁷ Baron Charles McMoran Wilson Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Constable, 1945).

⁸ John Christopher Malcolm Baynes, *Morale: a Study of Men and Courage: the Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, 1915* (London: Cassell, 1967).

for self-immolation” was obsolete in the Second World War.⁹ He quotes a Canadian who said, “Who the hell dies for King and Country any more? That crap went out in the first world war. [sic]”¹⁰ As a means of combat motivation, this may be true. However, the motives for enlistment and the types of services necessary to sustain the soldier in combat were different from those meant to sustain the soldier denied combat, forced to sit idly and wait. Linkages with Canada – if not outright patriotism – definitely eased morale problems. Fussell also points out that British troops kept boredom at bay in the tense weeks of the 1940 invasion scare by passing rumours of German fifth columnists parachuted into England.¹¹ This too was a prime motivator for the creation of the Home Guard and also affected Canadian soldiers, who relieved some of their anxiety and boredom through the transmission of such rumours. Fussell highlights another reason why soldiers of the Second World War might have longed for home: their youth. Many Second World War soldiers had little experience wider than their own childhood towns. Though Fussell offers some insight into non-combat factors affecting soldiers, his work focuses on combat and has little to say about the American, let alone Canadian, experience in England. The dearth of historiography relevant to the Canadian experience of morale between 1939 and 1943 is all the more perplexing given the very uniqueness of the circumstances, which might have stimulated greater interest.

Those circumstances were presaged even before the troops arrived in England. In an address that officers read aloud on board ship, Prime Minister King attempted to inculcate

⁹ Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989), 131.

¹⁰ Fussell, *Wartime*, 131.

¹¹ Fussell, *Wartime*, 41.

pride for Canada in the soldiers and to remind them that they were fighting for Canada first and foremost.

... We desire you also to know the hearts of the people of Canada are with you, and until your return... You go (so) that Canada may take her place at the side of Britain and France... We will follow you with our sympathy, our gratitude and our prayers... The land you leave, the joy of home, peace and freedom of mind, heart and soul are all a part of the sacred heritage you seek to preserve.¹²

Fresh with such assurances from Canada, the average soldier embarking for England during the war was headed for a different and foreign land. Britain was certainly a more familiar station than Iceland or Hong Kong were to be, but it was not Canada.

Generally speaking the morale of the Canadian troops during the first winter months 1939-1940 was not wholly satisfactory. Upon its arrival, the 1st Canadian Infantry Division was stationed in barracks at Aldershot, a permanent British Army garrison since the Crimean War. This fact made the people of the town less inclined to treat the Canadian soldiers with much fanfare, disappointing those expecting a warm welcome. Moreover, these men were only recently out of civilian life and unaccustomed to military discipline. On top of this, the English press welcomed them with stories about the Canadians' strange and foreign ways. The constant reporting of national, cultural, and even physical differences likely added to the sense of otherness that Canadian soldiers felt in England, thereby setting an early standard that encouraged national identification and group cohesiveness. A slew of newspaper columns appeared across Britain with the arrival of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in December 1939 and January 1940. London headlines proclaimed: "Two-Language Army From Canada: 'Mounties Without Horses',"¹³

¹² War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain, January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹³ *The Star*, 19 December 1939. LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

“Canadian G.O.C’s Historic Order: ‘We are Here to Defend Liberty’,”¹⁴ and “Red Indian Snipers For The Front.”¹⁵

The London *Daily Herald* pointed out how even little differences separated many Canadian soldiers from the British.

The man from Calgary was amused in his first walk around the town to hear a “bunch of school-kids” lustily singing “I’m An Old Cow Hand.” They had quickly spotted the “Canada” shoulder badge. “I asked them what grade they were in at school but they did not seem to understand.”¹⁶

This article pointed out both the soldier’s foreign perspective and dialect. Newspapers reported how strange the Canadians seemed to English eyes, commenting on their regional, urban, and racial diversity.

The [Canadian] contingent as a whole has been selected in proportion from every Canadian district: lumbermen from up-country, fishermen and farmers from the Maritime Provinces, artificers and drivers from the cities, large numbers of French-Canadians from Quebec. A negro sergeant led the band. There were fair heads, black heads, brown heads, red heads – and Red Indians too; one of them from Aklavik in the Arctic Circle.¹⁷

While many welcomed them cheerily, reports such as these, while not mean-spirited, tended to separate the Canadian experience from the British. While this sense of “otherness” created cohesiveness, it simultaneously stimulated feelings of isolation and homesickness in many men. Later, better weather and acclimatization to military life, coupled with operational moves placing the Canadians on the south coast amongst civilians more apt to treat them with at least a modicum of interest, led to improved morale.

Although Canadians were used to harsh winter conditions, they clearly disliked the damp cold of their first English winter, mostly owing to the lack of central heating and

¹⁴ *The Evening News*, 19 December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

¹⁵ *The Star*, 19 December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

¹⁶ Clipping, *Daily Herald*, 20 December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

¹⁷ “Report on a Press Clipping,” December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

adequate fuel for fires in their huts.¹⁸ A CMHQ report pointed out, “This winter brought to England ‘The coldest conditions since 1894’, with attendant discomfort to men living in Barracks certainly not designed for such conditions.”¹⁹ A *Daily Herald* headline, poking fun at the Canadian accent, proclaimed, “Canadians Find “Frozen South” Is Durned Cold.”²⁰ Two winters hence was little better. Even in London, life was often plagued by the damp English cold. The 3rd Canadian Infantry Division’s Senior Chaplain made a visit to the capital in January 1942 and complained of his hotel: “Service poor, quarters poorer. Spent the night and my money feeding shillings to a voracious electric heater.”²¹ That same winter, Canadian troops revealed how much they dreaded that time of year: “There are... many gloomy comments on the approaching trial of the English winter.”²² Nevertheless, most physical causes for dismay were temporary or at least in the case of the cold, subject to the changing seasons.

Since the British field censor’s fortnightly reports on Canadian morale were only filed at CMHQ beginning in August 1941, only fragmentary evidence is available to reconstruct a picture of Canadian morale in the period from December 1939 to July 1941. However, a number of letters were opened in early 1940 “for the purposes of currency control”²³ and on the basis of these, a report was sent to CMHQ in London on the state of Canadian morale in the first months of the war. Early complaints were related to the

¹⁸ CMHQ Report No. 51, “Censorship of Mail, Canadian Army Overseas. Field Censors’ Notes as Material for History,” Paragraph 19, 31 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6917.

¹⁹ CMHQ Report No. 110, “Canadian Relations With the People of the United Kingdom, and General Problems of Morale, 1939 – 44,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6918.

²⁰ Clipping, *Daily Herald*, 20 December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

²¹ Report of the Senior Chaplain (RC), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), January 1942, Appendix 4, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

²² Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/3. An examination of the importance of the Field Censor’s fortnightly reports, from which this and many other quotations are drawn, can be found later in this chapter.

²³ CMHQ Report No. 51.

soldiers feeling out of place, “Boredom, homesickness and a feeling of not being really needed appear to be the main reasons why these Canadian soldiers grumble. The majority of the writers warn their friends and family not to join the army.” The report adds, “They miss feminine society, and are disappointed at not being able to have the ‘good time’ they expected.”²⁴

This state of affairs underwent a rapid amelioration with the coming of spring and the prospect of action. Following the Wehrmacht’s Blitzkrieg into France, Britain’s main ally surrendered in June 1940. In the wake of the Dunkirk evacuation earlier that month, Canadians of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade were dispatched to France as part of the “Second BEF”.²⁵ British commanders soon decided to return that force to Britain, fearing a repeat of Dunkirk, or worse. This occasioned disappointment for those men who had been chomping at the bit over the long winter months.²⁶ As a result, complaints of inaction were frequently heard, many of which referenced anger at doing nothing in England when they could be doing nothing closer to home. A soldier posted in No. 1 Holding Unit, RCE, later complained, “There is very few Canadians over here that are satisfied... if they would go ahead and get this darned war finished so as we could go home and enjoy life again it would give us some faith in our mission.”²⁷

Beginning in June 1940, the Canadian army was tasked with the defence of Britain against what British military planners feared to be an imminent German invasion, a role

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 275.

²⁶ CMHQ Report No. 51.

²⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/3.

that – if realized – again promised early action for the Canadians.²⁸ At the time of the British evacuation from Dunkirk, General McNaughton stressed the importance of building the formation into “a highly mobile, quick acting, hard hitting reserve.”²⁹ British GHQ’s earmarking of the Canadians for such a role could have been met with little but satisfaction amongst the Canadian commanders. The Canadians were tasked with a prominent role in case of invasion, and this gave the men a feeling of usefulness not again matched until the summer of 1943. For much of the period following the invasion scare, however, Canadian inaction and feelings of uselessness increased the morale problem, the solving of which required innovative solutions.

One exception to the army’s defensive role came on 19 August 1942 with the Dieppe raid. This action displayed the positive morale effects the army could expect of even disastrous military operations. The enthusiastic and nationalistic outpouring of emotion that accompanied the Dieppe raid among the men in England testified to their need for action, and their desire to “prove” that Canadians were the best soldiers in the Allied armies. The censor commented that morale after the Dieppe raid was,

...considerably enhanced. There is a feeling of pride in themselves, and that the sense of frustration has been dispersed. Confidence in their own capabilities is freely expressed, and that the great feat which was accomplished has completely vindicated the Canadians as first-class fighting men in the eyes of the British and the world in general.³⁰

²⁸ Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Paget, Chief of the General Staff at GHQ Home Forces, decided to reorganize the defence of the United Kingdom, and a new VII Corps was created with McNaughton as its commanding officer. This altered role necessitated movement of the 1st Canadian Division to the south coast in Surrey, south of London, an area thereafter associated with the Canadian army “occupation”. See: C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 285-293.

²⁹ McNaughton to Dewing, 28 May 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12300, File: 3/1 DIV/1.

³⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 August – 3 September 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

Similar comments abounded. A member of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry HQ Company stated, "They have given the enemy a real taste of what Canadian troops are capable of handing out."³¹ A member of the 1st Canadian Dental Company agreed, "Do you feel any prouder of the Canadian army now? Our chests are stuck out since the raid on Dieppe."³² Another soldier commented, "The reaction and general conduct of the troops to their first actual engagement with the enemy left nothing to be desired... they were level-headed, well disciplined and fully trained and... the fighting ability of Canadian troops has been thoroughly proved."³³ The censor, in a special report on mail concerning the raid, concluded, "A tremendous tonic was given to the morale of the Canadian forces."³⁴ Despite the raid's actual catastrophic outcome, which only became known gradually over subsequent weeks, the Dieppe raid showed the morale value of action, or the promise of action. Nevertheless, in the wake of German success in France, the problem of morale and discipline adopted a different character, which was only hardened by the passing of the invasion scare in September 1940. It was at that time that *Canada's* "Phoney War" really began and the men's thoughts, with little else to occupy them, turned homeward.

C.P. Stacey and Barbara Wilson address – albeit fleetingly – the notion that home and family was essentially important to the morale of the static army.³⁵ Their work, while not strictly one of morale, touches on many of the measures taken to combat flagging morale in the Canadian Army overseas. The documentary record, on the other hand, is explicit in revealing that morale, especially in the static period, was buoyed by

³¹ Field Censor (Home) Special Report, "Comments and Reactions of Canadian Forces on the Dieppe Raid of August 19th," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 50-52 and 119-120.

memorializing and adhering to a set of ideals that defined the soldier's home, both in the private and public spheres. These unwritten rules were self-enforced, enforced by the army, and enforced through the public scorn heaped on those who transgressed the rules of Canadian etiquette practiced by the British and Canadian publics alike. For example, a member of the British public derided the Canadian army for engaging in unmilitary-like behaviour in England. The complainant wrote to the Senior Combatant Officer at CMHQ, Major-General P. J. Montague, that,

In Chelsea where I live, a Canadian soldier has been singling in a cabaret in a cinema for the past week. As a veteran of the last war, I should like to ask you if it is for this sort of thing that the Canadian Army has come to England?³⁶

Another writer – a Canadian expatriate living in Chichester – reflected the belief that Canadian soldiers were supposed to uphold ideals of fidelity and conduct reflective of their homeland's values. This writer's comments were described as "typical,"

I am more than ashamed of the behaviour of the Canadians when they are off duty. No sense of decency amongst officers or men. Filthy language, filthy habits, drunkenness, and a woman's life is hell if she happens to be out after dark. Our local paper is full of their crimes...in my opinion we have stationed locally the "scum" of Canada.³⁷

In a similar vein, another "former Canadian" – Mr. Elkington – complained,

I must confess from first hand experience that either there has been mental or moral deterioration in Canadian manhood since my time, or there is something lacking in the discipline of the troops. It hurts me to hear the local population talking of Canadians as if they were only slightly less objectionable than Jerry.³⁸

Canadian soldier transgressions of the "rules" of fidelity and honour were often seen as reflecting badly on the nation as a whole.

³⁶ Letter to P.J. Montague, 25 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

³⁷ A. Turner, Chichester, Sussex, to the Senior Officer, CMHQ, 16 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

³⁸ Mr. Elkington, esq. to CMHQ, 2 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

Letters of complaint to Canadian commanders usually made reference to the soldier's nationality and often linked individual behaviour to a collective national disgrace. One letter outlining an incident in Wembley Park, Middlesex, complained of a soldier who had taken up residence in a block of flats. The writer wrote that the other tenants, "live in absolute terror of his drunken truculence."³⁹ While the Provost Corps concluded that these allegations were "greatly exaggerated," the writer also mentioned that the soldier "is a disgrace to his country."⁴⁰ Perhaps the writer simply wanted to identify the "offender" as Canadian or maybe he wanted to appeal to the nationalism of his commanding officers. Either way, such complaints usually highlighted the troops' Canadian nationality, and tacitly equated this with the transgression. Such issues naturally contributed to feelings of alienation and to ill feeling between Canadian troops and some among the British population.

By 1942 Canadian military authorities had grown protective of their troops who had been frequently derided largely on the basis of their nationality. Such "beliefs among the local population have a definite effect upon the feelings of the men,"⁴¹ and General Montague's responses to such complaints speak to his growing frustration. Montague received the majority of complaint letters at CMHQ but he refuted the suggestion that Canadian soldiers were more riotous than British ones. In a number of instances, his anger at repeated allegations of Canadian impropriety was clear. Responding to Elkington's allegation of a "moral deterioration," the Canadian general wrote:

I cannot accept all the statements you make in your letter. Whether it is your opinion or not is immaterial, but I say to you that there has not been any

³⁹ "Several Undersigned Tenants to CMHQ," 2 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, File 20/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ P.J. Montague to H.D.G. Crerar, 17 June 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

deterioration in Canadian manhood since your time, whatever time that was, nor is there anything seriously lacking in the discipline of the Canadian troops in this country. There always will be, in every force – and that includes those of His Majesty raised in the United Kingdom – a proportion of men who will misbehave and let down their comrades, units and their own country.⁴²

Even more striking, in 1942 Montague responded angrily to British Vice-Admiral Sir W.J. Whitworth, Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty & Second Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Personnel, who wrote CMHQ complaining of the behaviour of certain Canadians outside the Beaver Club in London. Whitworth complained that three Canadian soldiers paid him too little respect. In response, Montague acknowledged that they were in the wrong, but hastened to add, acidly, that

...the Beaver Club is a recognized meeting place for Canadians in London and... something over 6,000 men pass through its doors daily. In view of this, I am afraid it is impossible to achieve a state of perfection... While it had not occurred to me to raise the point before, I now have to add, as one who has been stationed in London since the end of 1939, that from my personal experience there is not a uniformed class which pays less respect to a general officer than the majority of Naval Officers below the rank of Rear Admiral.⁴³

Such examples are the more striking given the normal restraint shown in contemporary correspondence. But Montague's reply suggests an attachment to the Canadian nation, as well as inter-service rivalry, at the level of the private soldier right up to the highest staff officer. While pride in Canada often raised morale (as with the attack on Dieppe), attacks on the nation's morality or resolve often drew the ire of Canadian troops, again reinforcing their separateness from their British surroundings. The common belief that they were unable to prove their resolve because they had been held back from the fight to "[act] as Home Guards to the Limeys, and playing at soldiers while Russia burns," further

⁴² Montague to Mr. Elkington, esq., 11 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

⁴³ General Montague to Rear Admiral Sir W.J. Whitworth, 3 August 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 12711, File: 2/COMPLAINTS/2/2.

aggravated such feelings.⁴⁴ This in turn produced often bad-tempered comments: “Since my arrival in Britain, I have become Anti-British.”⁴⁵

Only after the invasion scare of the summer of 1940 can the Canadian army’s role be described as “static”. Movement into positions along the coast began in September of that year. Few of them suspected that this was the beginning of a defensive operation which was to keep them on guard in Britain for the next three years. The constant raising and lowering of expectations of action, which had been a prime feature of the previous year, stressed the nerves. The Canadians spent much of the winter of 1940-41 in Surrey with tours of duty all along the south coast. Once again they began to look forward to the possibility of action. As one soldier put it, “the old bayonet is real sharp and getting itchie for some German ribs, and we hope it will be soon. We expected all sorts of hardships... but we did not count on dying of boredom.”⁴⁶ The need for organized entertainment and welfare services became even more apparent.

In August 1941, one and a half years after being sent to England, complaints of homesickness were common. A soldier of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders, which arrived with the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division in late July 1941 complained of “feeling rather homesick.”⁴⁷ While newly arrived troops clearly missed home, in September, the censor reported homesickness “amongst those who have been over

⁴⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

⁴⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 January – 1 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁴⁶ “Report on Intercepted Mail,” 15 March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4.

⁴⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 25 – 31 August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

here a long time.”⁴⁸ A member of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment complained of increased “homesickness after two years service in the U.K.”⁴⁹ French-Canadian troops, no matter how lengthy their stay, were reportedly also “feeling rather homesick.”⁵⁰ Another complaint from a soldier of the Royal Canadian Engineers, attached to 3rd Brigade, makes plain the struggles of some French-speaking soldiers, “I have been in London for three days and I have not spoken a word of French. I do not know whether I shall ever be able to speak English but I am very unhappy... You can see how homesick I am this evening I am alone in my room and I have been crying like a child.”⁵¹ Two months later, the situation was little changed: “The French Canadians do not appear to get on as well with the British Civilians as do the English Canadians, though several write of the hospitality received from families...”⁵²

Such sentiments militate against the idea that the length of stay facilitated greater integration into United Kingdom society. As shall be seen in later chapters, morale likely improved as the years progressed because of improved processes to ameliorate such problems, and the recognition that the provision of services that replicated patterns of life in Canada, or that reminded the soldier of home life, led to the large-scale incorporation of such services into the welfare scheme. The field censor frequently noted the soldier’s

⁴⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 1 – 14 September 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 25 – 31 August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3. French-Canadian troops were reportedly more likely to have “pen friends” in Canada since they seemed to suffer from a good deal of homesickness. This is entirely understandable given the problems of integration evident even amongst English-Canadian troops. See: Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁵¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 18 July 1942, LAC, National Defence, RG24, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7. The censor translated this excerpt. This can also be found in Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 50-52.

⁵² Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8, Appendix “A”, 4th Canadian Medium Regt, RCA.

tendency to “exceptionalize” himself because of his Canadian identity and in so doing highlighted how separation from Canada adversely affected morale. On the other hand, pride in the army and in Canada itself were positive agents of morale. One soldier’s comments, according to the censor, “exemplify the stages of a Canadian soldier’s reaction to being here,”

Here you are a Canadian in England... a different meaning in different parts of the country, in the South East... a bunch of partly civilized savages who get drunk on pay night and raise Hell.... In most other parts... you’re a hero who came when you don’t have to come to help win this war... The stages a fellow goes through when he gets here... all mental. First of all there are interesting things about the country... the first two weeks you are enthralled... after... you get homesick... then rumours start... moving everywhere from Newfoundland to Australia to Libya... everyone restless... Boys realize [the] country [is a] hell of a hole. Meals – unbearable... little things we took for granted in Canada become big important nuisances... All of a sudden our Unit was in a Novice Canadian Boxing elimination tournament... divisional finals... and it may seem strange the morale has come way up again... Just waiting to get a crack at the enemy. The Canadians will be the best soldiers in the Allied Army.⁵³

In addition to problems of inaction ran an undercurrent of discontent related to the soldiers’ distance from home and disconnectedness from Canadian society in general. For this reason, the Directorate of Auxiliary Services and Canadian chaplains found the greatest success when providing services that brought memories and products of Canada to England. But what exactly did the soldiers miss? What was it about their absence from Canada specifically that required the massive effort to bring them a “little bit of home”?

An Army Headquarters report of 1953 on Second World War morale noted, “Three ‘M’ factors in Morale – ‘money’, ‘mail’ and ‘meals’ – have an immediate effect on morale.”⁵⁴ This was true of the Canadian Army overseas but oversimplifies the morale problem given other frustrations regarding military inaction and feelings of homesickness.

⁵³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 May – 2 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

⁵⁴ Army Headquarters, Historical Section (G.S.), Report No. 59, “Food Complaints and Cook’s Training Canadian Army Overseas, 1939-1945,” DHH, Army Headquarters (AHQ) Reports (1948-1959), 3-4.

However, these three factors were important in the morale picture of the Canadian army overseas and, like most other factors, their interplay with the soldiers' links to Canada was paramount. The first "M" factor, mail, had a multifarious effect on the morale situation in England. It served as a method for gauging morale (through censorship) and as a means both to depress and enliven Canadian troops. Wartime correspondence between loved ones was one of the most important tools for maintaining morale on the battlefield and the home front.⁵⁵ Most men overseas worried daily about their families, lives, and communities in Canada. Thus, mail, and its related benefits and problems, fostered a constant emotional and tactile link to Canada.

Mail was especially important to Canadian troops since their morale was frequently predicated on the receipt of timely and positive news from home. Mail served to remind the soldier of his distance from home, while paradoxically bringing him closer to distant loved ones. Soldiers expressed anger at the lack of official news received from home despite there being "general interest in conditions at home".⁵⁶ While many men expressed an interest in the political climate, the most "consistent and pervasive object of Canadian interest of the majority of personnel while overseas was their families."⁵⁷ Soldiers received information

⁵⁵ For an examination of the importance of such correspondence in the context of US soldiers stationed overseas, see: Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, "'I Wish That I Could Hide Inside This Letter': World War II Correspondence." *Prologue* 1992 24(2): 103-114. Also see: Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, "'Will He Get My Letter?' Popular Portrayals of Mail and Morale During World War II," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 23:4 (1990: Spring), 21-43. While there is little scholarship on the specific role of mail from Canada, the field is better developed in the United States. However, the similarities between the experience of Canadian and US soldiers in the Second World War, in that they were separated from loved ones by the Atlantic Ocean, provides some clues as to the importance of mail on Canadian morale. The troop letters, mail from home, and administrative preoccupation with issues of mail delivery and content presented in this chapter largely substantiate American scholarship on this topic stressing that mail served as an umbilical cord to loved ones and memories of the homeland.

⁵⁶ Special Report No. 161, "Attitudes of Army Personnel Recently Returned From Overseas," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 5, File 8917-3-7, "Morale Reports - Special Reports to Branches of National Defence Headquarters," 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

about home mainly through “letters from home and enclosed press clippings.” Accordingly, such letters, “were the only medium of information eagerly desired and appreciated.”⁵⁸ Another soldier added, “When we are far from home we want to get news from our people.”⁵⁹ While some links with Canada naturally weakened the longer the soldiers were overseas, their reaction was not to adopt a British “lifestyle”. Rather, many expressed apathy and annoyance that they were not given enough Canadian linkages. “We felt pretty lost and after a while the only thing we cared about was our mail.”⁶⁰ Reinforcements were also a source of information; one returned soldier commented, “The best news we got from Canada came from the drafts coming to England... They always have some boys from our home town or district and they give us the latest news.”⁶¹ A lieutenant commented that news from Canada came in the form of “Letters from home and news brought in by reinforcements.” General Turner wrote to the Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General (DA&QMG), I Canadian Corps, Brigadier A.E. Walford, in December 1942, stating that the “Lack of Canadian Newspapers increases the demand for a more ‘newsy’ type of letter from home.”⁶² Mail was a vital emotional link to the soldier’s family and home; it emotionally rooted the soldier in Canada.

The chief complaint for much of the period from mid-1940 through mid-1941 was not, as formerly, food, weather, or feelings of alienation, but the delays which accompanied the delivery of mail to the troops. After this period – right up to the dispatch of troops to the continent – mail continued to be a source of concern, but mainly due to the disturbing

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁶¹ Ibid., 8.

⁶² “Letters from Canada - Morale of Troops,” Correspondence from General Turner to Brigadier A.E. Walford, 15 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

nature of the news received from Canada. Such news included reports of spousal infidelity, financial problems, and tension between spouses and their in-laws, not to mention heart-rending “Dear John” letters. This was mixed with continuing delays in receiving the mail.

A report of December 1942 reveals that delays continued to lower morale:

...mail and morale are vitally linked... Any reasonable steps which could be taken to improve the former will result in a well worth while improvement in the latter... Erratic deliveries of mail and mail that has taken a long time in transit does produce uneasiness and leaves the soldier in a less contented frame of mind as lack of regular and quick news from home invariably produces some background of anxiety concerning personal affairs in Canada.⁶³

For the earlier period, in many instances, these delays were due to the numerous operational moves of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division during the summer of 1940 and to the intensification of the German submarine blockade; but these facts did not reconcile the troops to the many delays which passed without news from home. One soldier writing to his parents in Canada said, “I know there’s a war on and I don’t expect service like it is at home but we all feel that there is something very much wrong somewhere... we could put up with a lot more terrible things and more of them if we could get and have our mail safely.”⁶⁴ Complaints about the “lack of mail from home,” or at least the constant desire for more voluminous and frequent mail from Canada, were ubiquitous.⁶⁵ Another soldier noted the negative effects of slow or non-existent mail, “I will truly say dear, that if our mail is not better the boys cannot last much longer. Walked through the camp today and 90 per

⁶³ “Morale Report – 1 Canadian Div,” 9 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁶⁴ This letter was intercepted as part of normal British sample censorship activities examining mails leaving the United Kingdom; this soldier dropped this particular letter in a British post box. “Ministry of Information (War Office) Postal Censorship Terminal Mails, 17 October 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/4, “Intercepted mail received from censorship.”

⁶⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

cent were complaining of no mail. It is surprising the moral effect it has on them.”⁶⁶ The censor cited as typical one soldier’s complaint, “oh! It’s hell, and I think regular mail would do more to keep up the soldiers’ morale than anything else.”⁶⁷ A soldier of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, in a letter “representative of a dozen similar comments” decried any suggestion that the morale life line thrown from Canada be cut off in favour of war supplies:

There’s an article in a magazine of Canadian make here where it states that the Canadian soldiers in Britain will understand why it may soon be necessary to stop all shipments of parcels to Canadian soldiers in England, as the space is needed for war materials. I’d better not tell you what the fellows think of that statement over here, as it’s not very nice... we’re 3000 miles from home and all we have to look forward to is mail from home. I wonder what they’ll think of next?... What a world!⁶⁸

In October 1942, the censor noted “There continues to be an increasing amount of complaint regarding the slowness and lack of mail...”⁶⁹ In this month, the crescendo of complaints over mail was finally heard in Ottawa, via the good offices of the Canadian Chaplain Service. Thereafter, Canadian army officials became so concerned about the adverse effect of mail problems on the soldiers overseas that they began a campaign to increase the number of “worthwhile” letters from home.

Spearheaded by the Adjutant-General, Personnel and the Principal Chaplain, Protestant – whom the army command had asked to do everything possible to enlist the help of churches – the campaign was not “merely to increase the number of letters, but, to

⁶⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁶⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 24 November – 7 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁶⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 15 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

⁶⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

encourage the writing of letters that will be definitely helpful in sustaining morale.”⁷⁰ This campaign was rolled out to the senior chaplains overseas, to district chaplains in Canada, and to the heads of Canada’s various churches to keep “the Service man in close touch with all that is worthwhile in his home country.”⁷¹

Troubles at home and gossip were considered to be a part of Canada best left there, but family troubles often cropped up in letters from home. Instructions in the October 1942 letter campaign literature stipulated that, “no Service man should be overlooked”.⁷² Member of Parliament and Assistant Deputy Adjutant General (ADAG) at CMHQ in London, C.S. Booth, echoed this sentiment in a speech in the House of Commons.⁷³

(Morale) is a matter of letters from home. Not only do we want more letters but we want better letters. It is a sad thing to hear of a Canadian soldier who has been in England for two and a half years and who has not received a single letter or a single parcel. It is hard to imagine the feelings of that man as he sees week after week his comrades receiving letters and parcels. It is one of the most damaging things so far as morale is concerned.... The boys over there are hungry for news. They want to know what is happening in the home town, what is happening to the family and to the neighbours across the street, or in the town hall or the community hall or whatever it may be, and it is only in letters from home that they can get that information. They are looking for cheerful letters. They like to feel that the people at home, while missing them, are not unhappy.⁷⁴

The letter writing campaign urged Canadians to “bring Canada home to the boys” by having “persons previously associated with (the soldier) in the shop, on the farm, in school, in sport circles” write to them,

⁷⁰ “Letter to Senior Chaplains, Navy; and District and Senior Chaplains, Army,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “Letters to Men in the Forces,” October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁷³ Lt.-Col. C.S. Booth was appointed Assistant Deputy Adjutant General in “A” Branch at CMHQ on 3 February 1942.

⁷⁴ C.S. Booth “Soldier Morale,” Canada. Houses of Parliament. *Legislative Debates (Hansard)*. 2 Feb 1943, 84.

...giving news of those various forms of activity which were his in civilian life. The neighbours next door, the head of the Service Club, the captain of his football team, the teacher in his former school, the young people he chummed around with, and (his) minister... all have a part to play in contributing to the morale of the absent Service Man.⁷⁵

This was an attempt to bring every aspect of the man's home life to him overseas. The instructions add that letters should be "newsy" and "cheerful" and only one quarter of a letter should deal with "difficulties at home". Children would make good correspondents because, "Children do not know how to be depressing or despondent... They can send pressed flowers, talk about their school and personal interests, and take the Service Man out of his immediate environment." The report adds that, "Every Canadian... will do well to include newsy items about Canada's war effort at home."⁷⁶ Depressing letters were discouraged. Wives "stricken with loneliness" were advised to "seek other people in greater distress than themselves and help them. That will cure their depression."⁷⁷ News on the financial successes of civilians was also discouraged. Instead, "He should be made to feel that everything is being done to provide for his return to a successful civilian career when his period of service is finished."⁷⁸

In fact, the situation in each man's home in Canada – including fears of infidelity, spousal despondency, and financial concerns – seems to have been one of the chief sources of morale erosion and was a growing concern for the army command. Brigadier A.E. Walford, outlined the problem,

It has become increasingly evident lately that the most serious threat to continued high morale of Canadian Troops Overseas lies in the receipt of disturbing letters from Canada. In many such letters gossip or scandal is passed on, while in others

⁷⁵ "Letters to Men in the Forces," October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

the wife or other member of the soldier's family adopts a despondent, complaining and discouraging attitude, leaving him with the impression that conditions in his home are decidedly unsatisfactory.⁷⁹

Walford quoted a chaplain's report, suggesting "mother-in-law troubles, lonely wives telling their woes, over-concerned neighbours or pseudo-friends undermine confidence and peace of mind."⁸⁰ The report continued, "The effects appear to be cumulative as the time away from home increases."⁸¹ The problem became serious enough that Major-General G.R. Turner suggested, "the more personnel that can be sent back to Canada for courses or instructional duty without seriously hampering the formations in the U.K. the better."⁸²

In December 1942, C.S. Booth, ADAG in London, requested that all suggestions for improving soldier morale be rendered into a document he could present to NDHQ. The resultant document speaks of a force whose morale was largely dependent on substantive links to Canada. Suggestions included having senior officers returning to Canada give interviews in which "they would emphasize the good behaviour of the Canadian troops in the U.K. and the esteem in which they are generally held by the civilian population."⁸³ The intention was to reduce worry in Canada about the supposed bad behaviour of husbands and sons overseas, thus rendering unnecessary letters such as one from a wife who wrote, "One of the boys who came back said all the Canadians were running around. Well, don't think I'm going to sit at home; from now on I am passing up nothing that comes my way."⁸⁴ It was also suggested that an appeal be made to the churches of Canada to take their

⁷⁹ "Morale of Troops," 12 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Morale of Troops," Correspondence from General Turner to General A.E. Walford, 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁸³ "Memorandum: Morale of Canadian Army," 24 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

⁸⁴ "Morale of Troops," 12 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

part in dealing with the problem. The policy of sending an increasing number of personnel to Canada for training purposes was also adopted on a modest scale. Public relations activities were increased using the press and radio, Principal Chaplains in Ottawa petitioned churches across the country, and the educational advisor at NDHQ requested the help of schools through liaison with the provincial ministries of education.⁸⁵ From schools the government hoped to have children write encouraging letters to soldiers who received little mail.

The army sought to improve the volume of mail, the speed of mail, and the character of letters received. Further, if any intercepted letters showed that a man was discontented, the letter itself was to be forwarded to the soldier's unit so he could be interviewed by the chaplain or one of the regimental officers, "and an endeavour made to find a solution to his problems."⁸⁶ Such solutions, when they required recourse to Canada, were often slow in coming.

A large number of men within this formation have family problems constantly on their minds, whether they be problems of finance, sickness, problems as to the fidelity of their wives and the care and custody of their children. The chief complaint with the present arrangements... is that there is too great a delay in securing the investigation in Canada and the report thereon reaching the man concerned.⁸⁷

Such investigations, often initiated by overseas officers or chaplains asking their colleagues in Canada to visit the soldier's home, suggest that the army acted as "morality police" to alleviate its morale problem. In a further effort to raise awareness and understanding, Major-General Montague invited an eminent psychologist, Dr. W.E. Blatz of the University

⁸⁵ "Memorandum: Morale of Canadian Army," 24 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1. The Roman Catholic and Protestant Principal Chaplains headed their respective branches of the Canadian Chaplain Service and were stationed at NDHQ in Ottawa.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Memorandum: Conditions Affecting Families," 19 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

of Toronto, to deliver lectures to officers of the Canadian army. The general had Blatz's lecture published and distributed to all officers. In a foreword, Montague explained, "In many cases, psycho-neurotic conditions develop in a soldier by reason of worry over real or fancied difficulties regarding his family, business, or interests in Canada."⁸⁸ The talk offered some advice on how best to assuage men's fears and disconsolation, including the importance of simply listening to the man. It also highlighted the need for informal talks, "not lecturing," to small groupings.⁸⁹ These were to highlight:

Canada's Contribution to the War: In the light of the circumstances of Canadians remaining in England... A good many of the men feel that Canadians may have lost prestige by their inaction.

England: To a great many of the young men who are visiting England for the first time this country is experienced as "foreign". We Canadians are *nouveau arrive* in more senses than one. We are, because of the newness of our country and the age-long culture of England, inclined to be superior. We criticize the accents, the service, the telephones, the meals; this is all very well if accompanied by humour... You must interpret England to your men historically, geographically and economically, especially the latter.⁹⁰

News from home was again emphasized as essential to good morale. The lecture further stipulated that officers should find out if the men are receiving little or no mail. They should be encouraged to request mail from loved ones in Canada. Officers were asked to write the parents or wives of men who received little mail to encourage more letters. If there was a sickness in the soldier's family, the officer should "make use of the arrangements provided for rapid inter-communication."⁹¹ While some men still did not receive many letters throughout the war, the censor did note a marked decrease in

⁸⁸ General P.J. Montague, Foreword, "Morale," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁸⁹ "Morale, Procedures," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

⁹⁰ "Morale, Tasks," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

⁹¹ "Morale, Mail," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

complaints regarding mail. The most commonly reported problem after 1942 related to the slowness of mail delivery, rather than the inadequacy or dearth of letters from Canada.

Censoring the mail of officers and men stationed in England had both positive and negative effects.⁹² For this reason, the issue was hotly debated at the highest levels of the army leadership. The issue of censorship attracted attention soon after the arrival of the first Canadians in the United Kingdom in December 1939. The discussions then undertaken with British authorities did not result in the implementation of a field censorship system except for a small number of letters opened by the British censors for the purposes of currency control.⁹³ In the summer of 1941, the army allowed the wholesale censoring of Canadian “free” mail sent out of the United Kingdom.⁹⁴ While opening, reading, and censoring such mail caused delays and thus had a deleterious effect on morale, at the same time, after August 1941, the army command was provided with useful reports based on the information gleaned from such letters. This information was used to modify and fine-tune the program of welfare to better suit the soldiers’ needs in England. These systemic changes to the postal system both positively and negatively affected morale to varying degrees.

Given the situation that existed in 1939-40, the attention directed to the issue of censoring the letters written by Canadian soldiers is understandable. The German naval

⁹²Claude Beaugard, in his examination of Canadian censorship during the war, points out that, in Canada, censorship was more invasive and extensive than previously believed. He notes, “... le gouvernement canadien, pressé par les événements, impose une réglementation sur les communications qui est tout à faire remarquable par sa sévérité.” He also notes that the government gained access to censorship information acquired within Canada and, “les utilise à des fins politiques,” but notes that, “...les politiciens n’ont jamais eu accès à ces documents; ils étaient réservés strictement aux forces armées.” Claude Beaugard, *Guerre et censure au Canada, 1939-1945* (Sillery, QC: Septentrion, 1998), 12 and 119.

⁹³ CMHQ Report No. 51.

⁹⁴ This refers to the *gratis* postal concession granted to Canadian soldiers in the summer of 1940, further discussed below.

campaign in the north Atlantic made the shipping of letters – not to mention war *matériel* – hazardous. Not only did such activity slow the postal delivery, it was also possible that letters might fall into enemy hands. Starting in early 1940, Canadian and British authorities discussed the possibility of instituting a system of censorship to safeguard any militarily sensitive information that might be inadvertently betrayed in this manner.⁹⁵ These discussions continued for two years without lasting results.

In Canada, mail issues were problematic because of the country's long and porous border with the neutral United States. The problem was summed up in the minutes of a 9 January 1940 conference at the War Office in London: "Canadian personnel indiscreet – Information passed [from] Canada to USA – thence [to the] enemy. Suggested Canadian officers be attached to Postal Censorship Department for short period to learn policy and procedure (good results obtained same method as in last war)."⁹⁶ By May 1940 it was deemed necessary to more systematically monitor the troops' mails and a selective censorship system commenced briefly upon 1st Canadian Infantry Division's move from Aldershot to Northampton until the move was cancelled on 12 July 1940.⁹⁷ General McNaughton was uneasy applying to Canadians a measure not applied to British forces

⁹⁵ This debate was carried on through a series of meetings and correspondence between Canadian and British military and War Office officials. These can be found variously in files on censorship such as: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1, "Postal and cable censorship questions - 1939/12-1942/01"; and in subsequent files covering later periods, see files: 4/CENSOR/2, 4/CENSOR/3, 4/CENSOR/4, and 4/CENSOR/5. Additional documents can be found in LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12352, File: 4/MAIL/1, "Security postal arrangements and procedure - 1939/11-1940/09." Substantial information on the institution of a free postage system, as well as on policy regarding censorship of such free mail, can be found in: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6677, File: C.P.C. 4-11-0, "Censorship Generally."

⁹⁶ "Minutes of a Meeting," 9 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

⁹⁷ CMHQ Report No. 51. Also see: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1, "Postal and cable censorship questions - 1939/12-1942/01".

raised and subsequently stationed in Britain.⁹⁸ British troop mail that remained in the United Kingdom was not subjected to postal censorship. The issue was complicated in the summer of 1940 by the institution of a free postage concession for Canadian troops. This permitted Canadian soldiers in England to send letters to Canada without payment of postage.⁹⁹ At this time, free mail was not subjected to censorship. Only postage-paid Canadian mail that was sent through the British civil post offices was “exposed to the possibility of being opened by the British ‘sample’ censorship.”¹⁰⁰

In early 1941, Major John Page, an Intelligence Officer at CMHQ, noted that paradoxically those most in possession of sensitive information (the soldiers) were not subjected to official censorship of their “free” mail.¹⁰¹ In summer 1941, the War Office again pressed CMHQ to institute systematic censorship. “It was agreed that [the lack of free mail censorship] was definitely a loophole in British censorship arrangements.”¹⁰² The War Office wanted *all* Canadian soldier mail leaving the United Kingdom examined.¹⁰³ Brigadier General Staff (BGS) at CMHQ, Major General J.C. Murchie, informed the British that this task was both too large and not in keeping with Canadian policy, but accepted an earlier British proposal to censor 15% of Canadian mail on the condition that British censorship staff be placed on loan for the purpose. Murchie informed the Undersecretary of State for War that the “daily average number of letters handled by the

⁹⁸ “Memorandum,” 15 July 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

⁹⁹ “Memorandum to all troops on Free Postage,” 31 July 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6677, File C.P.C. 4-11-0, Censorship Generally.

¹⁰⁰ CMHQ Report No. 51.

¹⁰¹ Correspondence, Major John Page to Brigadier, General Staff (B.G.S.) Brigadier J.C. Murchie, 17 June 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Correspondence: General J.C. Murchie, CMHQ to War Office, 7 July 1941, LAC RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

Canadian Postal Corps is 17,000.”¹⁰⁴ Given this volume, any level of censorship was bound to cause postal delays, resulting in soldier annoyance.

In a letter to McNaughton, Lieutenant General Sir H.R. Pownall, Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff, commented that, “this lack of censorship has continued long enough for it to become generally known that such letters are uncensored, and this channel might therefore be used by subversive persons to send information to the United States via Canada.”¹⁰⁵ In his reply, McNaughton reiterated his aversion to base censorship – censorship of all mail by officers posted with each unit – because he was, “most anxious that no measures should be made applicable to Canadian troops which are not also applicable to those of the United Kingdom.”¹⁰⁶ During these deliberations, the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department requested permission to carry out postal censorship activities and, in so doing, enunciated a winning justification: “Will ensure no hold up of mails. If nothing of interest found will desist. Might, however, obtain useful information [regarding] morale and happiness of troops in [their] surroundings. This could be passed to Canadian HQ if desired.”¹⁰⁷ Despite McNaughton’s misgivings, on 28 July 1941, CMHQ informed the War Office that they formally accepted a system of selective censorship by which British censorship personnel would take possession of three bags of mail destined for Canada each day and return them censored two days later. The censors would embody their findings in fortnightly “field censor” reports to CMHQ. These reports present a unique

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. C.P. Stacey more conservatively placed this number at 70,000 letters per week. See: CMHQ Report No. 51.

¹⁰⁵ Pownall to McNaughton, 18 July 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

¹⁰⁶ McNaughton to Pownall, 22 July 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

¹⁰⁷ Postal and Telegraph Censorship to H.D.G. Crerar, 27 July 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/CENSOR/1.

insight into the minds of Canadian soldiers and give substantial information as to the factors affecting their morale. Each report is lengthy, often exceeding 20 pages. The field censor, who compiled the reports, usually pointed out “typical” and/or “exceptional” comments. Few other sources offer such an intimate picture of the Canadian soldier’s inner thoughts.¹⁰⁸ After August 1941, these reports formed a major source of information for gauging the morale of Canadian troops.

Canadian soldiers in England sent hundreds of thousands of letters to Canada; they received as many in return. The long debate, policy vacillation, and settlement on the least obstructive course all testify to the fact that timely mail was considered essential to good morale. The reprimanding of COs who committed “unwarranted interference” with mails suggests that the army understood the situation and, to ensure the maintenance of morale, looked askance at army actions involving the denial of mail to the men.¹⁰⁹ Soldier morale largely rested on this tangible link to Canada, without which they complained bitterly and loudly; the army responded by holding this emotional link to Canada as sacrosanct. Most men’s most basic emotional needs rested with loved ones in Canada and, for this reason, the soldier in Britain remained emotionally rooted in Canada largely through the mail.

While the question of adequate pay caused fewer problems than mail for the men

¹⁰⁸ Care must be taken when using these as a source since the truth of any statement in soldier letters cannot always be taken at face value. Some troops tended to over- or under-state their experiences, although such exaggeration can itself be an indicator of morale. Neither can one confidently assume that these reports represent an entirely accurate cross-section of the whole, considering that the English nationality of the report writers meant that they were not necessarily in a position to pass judgment on Canada and its culture. Throughout the current work care is taken to divulge whether the comments quoted were considered to be representative of larger opinion or the beliefs of a single correspondent.

¹⁰⁹ An instance of tampering in 1942 resulted in the issuance of a policy directive stating, “The Commanding Officer of a Canadian unit has no authority to examine incoming post letters prior to delivery.” See: “Memorandum, Censorship, Mail for Canadian Armed Forces,” 30 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6677, File: C.P.C. 4-11-0, Censorship Generally.

themselves, money troubles in Canada – the second “M” factor – tended to sap soldier morale. Chaplains and auxiliary service supervisors spent many hours helping soldiers with their financial problems in Canada. A report of 1942 claimed that among the legion of problems associated with the soldier’s home life, “problems of finance” were a constant worry.¹¹⁰ Angry that his wife was not receiving an “adequate allowance,” a soldier of No. 1 Canadian Ordnance Maintenance Unit, RCOC, wrote, ““Come on boy’s join the army. England needs young men. Don’t worry about your wife and kid’s or your mother we will support them for you, sure, sure, sure.””¹¹¹ Therefore, on the one hand, soldiers worried about their families having too little money in Canada. On the other, the men sometimes had enough money in England to cause disturbances. Some Britons thought they had too much money.

British civilians living near Canadian stations especially dreaded pay-day for the Canadian army. “It must have been pay-day for the Canadians as so many were drunk and one man was trying to break the telephone as he said, ‘There is no reply from Canada!’”¹¹² The higher pay of Canadian troops also created conditions antagonistic to their integration with British Army units and soldiers, who received less pay. Stacey and Wilson note that in 1939 Canadians were paid \$1.30 per day while British troops received \$0.50.¹¹³ A soldier

¹¹⁰ “Conditions Affecting Families,” 19 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File: 1/MORALE/1.

¹¹¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹¹² Supplementary Report: Isle of Wight Force, 6 – 21 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

¹¹³ Stacey and Wilson devote a chapter to the relationship between Canadian and British troops. They suggest that relations between Canadian and British troops were very bad in the early months and only gradually improved to the point that in the Summer of 1943, the censor reported, “Good relations are maintained between British and Canadian troops.” It is noteworthy that Stacey and Wilson suggest that the British needed this time to grow “accustomed to the presence of Canadians and to their un-English behaviour”. See: Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 74-79. While their chapter outlines the problems between members of the two armies, it remains to point out how nationality factored into the equation.

of No. 2 Base Depot of Medical Stores noted, “I often feel terribly guilty when I see the things the Canadians receive, whilst the British troops get so little.”¹¹⁴ British troops also noticed such pay inequalities. Noted one, “I think they are too well looked after, what with 250 free cigarettes a week and decent money...”¹¹⁵

The issue of pay was very important to morale, but “M”oney questions also included notions of wealth and closely related concepts of social hierarchies in Britain, which many soldiers perceived with keen interest. Such issues kept the Canadian soldier from fully integrating into the English experience, partially because Canada’s civilian soldiers experienced fewer manifestations of strict social stratification in their lives back home. Many Canadian officers were promoted from the ranks and even some Britons remarked on the “more egalitarian” nature of the Canadian army.¹¹⁶ A civilian on the Isle of Wight noted, “... the thing I like most is the good way in which [Canadian officers] behave towards the privates... really it is grand to watch them talking to their men... the remarkable thing is that the Canadian privates treat their officers with the utmost respect.”¹¹⁷ The propensity to treat Canadian officers with respect was far from universal, but this citizen’s comments reflect national preconceptions around class differentiation.

Soldier comments on class inequality were not uncommon. A sapper writing from No. 1 Neurological Hospital spoke of his trying to poach pheasants: “they all have a ‘Don’t Touch’ sign on them. They are reserved for the ‘Upper Class’. Well our boys are not good

¹¹⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹¹⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

¹¹⁶ Supplementary Report: Isle of Wight Force, 6 – 21 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

at recognizing signs like that.”¹¹⁸ Many Canadian soldiers expressed disdain at the upper classes. One soldier angrily commented, “As far as England as a whole is concerned Canadians are like the unwanted orphan. All we get is abuse and run down by the ordinary Englishman. The working class like us... (The rest) take Canada too much for granted.” A soldier stationed at 9th Brigade Headquarters concluded that the Canadian social and political order is simply superior:

I can see a lot of ills among the People of this Country and in doing so I am sure proud of our own democracy... I think that Canada if governed right will have the greatest era in its history and I believe Canada as well as the good old U.S.A. will have a lot to say in forming a more democratic world. For one thing, I believe class distinction will be obliterated as you can notice signs over here to that effect and people won't feel so smug.¹¹⁹

North American kinship, rather than the pull of tradition or ethnicity, is also notable in this quotation. Another soldier noted the sense of frivolity borne of the class system, ridiculing British upper-class pastimes:

You'd think these Limeys were going to best that Nazi b- by sitting on their fannies talking about it... They seem to think they're watching a 'Jolly owld cricket match By Jove.' There isn't the same 'pull' that we'd have at home in a case of a National Emergency.¹²⁰

Noting the vast difference between the upper and lower classes, the writer commented on the “dirty” children he had seen playing in the railroad tracks. The soldier wrote, “Even the animals at home have fresh clean air to breathe. These poor little urchins may never see any green grass in their lives without a sign on it, ‘Keep Off’ or ‘Trespassers will be

¹¹⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹¹⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 15 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

¹²⁰ “‘M’ to Mrs. M.H. Silliphant,” Telegram PO/86961/41, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

prosecuted’.”¹²¹

Canadian and British differences went beyond the bounds of class to encompass national differentiation. A civilian writing in Arundel, Sussex commented, “Talk about a rough time the people are getting with the Canadians.”¹²² Another in the same town complained, “...it is like being in hell over here for we cant move in Arundel for French Canadians... they seem to get in every dark corner... you can tell how awful they are and they have only been here a week.”¹²³ A third writer wrote of Canadians firing revolvers in the street, calling it, “Wild West Stuff”.¹²⁴ A gradual tolerance for the Canadians, however, is also evident. According to a censor’s report:

Many Canadians appear to start off with a prejudice owing to the absence of enthusiastic demonstrations etc. upon their arrival, and consequently they tend to put this down as being unwanted. Many of them realize they have to live down a bad reputation caused by ill-behaviour of some of the earlier comers. The ill-timed and unfortunate and tactless remarks of some sections of the British public, such as “why have you come here to eat our rations”, have not tended to make matters any better for the Canadians, and they often puzzle the good type of Canadian soldier, who did not anticipate such remarks, and which cause him to become either unhappy or angry, generally the latter, and give him a totally wrong impression of the British. The ill-behaviour of individual “bad-egg” types of Canadian soldier, and brawls caused by small parties of drunken men, and the actions of the “small-town” youngsters, who wish to create the impression of being men of the world, and in addition the more serious cases of crime and brutality – by a comparative few, but giving a bad name to many – these appear to be the real causes of the hostility of civilians, who thus have some good reason for their unfriendliness. It is, however, unfair to classify all Canadians alike, and many more men are now finding friendliness and kindness.”¹²⁵

Nevertheless, many people in Britain did not hold as compassionate a view as the censor and, no matter how unfair it was, many did “classify all Canadians alike”. Inevitably, such references were couched in terms such that the offending soldier was identified by his

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Field Censor (Home) Report, 24 November – 7 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 January 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

nationality, further fanning the flames of “Canadianism” overseas, in this sense based negatively on anti-British feeling. One soldier vented his anger in this regard, “We hate the English because of their small ways, for instance if a couple of fellows get in a scrap amongst themselves, the newspapers make a three column affair of it, but when six Canadians get drowned they only used three lines.”¹²⁶ Finally, a French-Canadian officer in a light anti-aircraft regiment summarized the major Canadian complaint about their reception in England, “they are only trying to look down on the Canadians. There are, fortunately, Canadians here in large numbers... Canada is heaven compared to England. They are very cold and consider us Colonials, coming from an uncivilized country.”¹²⁷ This officer’s thankfulness that there were large numbers of Canadian troops in England reflects the fact that Canadians overseas consistently craved reminders of Canada, be it entertainment, sports, or Canadians themselves.

The London paper, *News of the World*, noted the troubling trend of British papers and civilians attacking Canadians based on their nationality and published an op-ed piece in defence of the Canucks entitled, “Fair Play for Canada’s Fighting Men.”¹²⁸ The article notes that,

Theirs has been a thankless, unspectacular job. Transported thousands of miles from family and home, these splendid representatives of the young manhood of the British Empire have been forced by circumstances beyond their control to remain in comparative idleness...¹²⁹

However supportive such comments may have been, some Canadian soldiers had little patience for such commentary on the strength of the Empire’s manhood. Some noted that

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 8 – 21 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹²⁸ *News of the World*, 25 January 1942.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

while Canadians were upset about their inaction, other members of the Commonwealth had their own causes for annoyance at Britain. One noted, "I can see the break up of the British Empire, as [Australians] seem to be real mad for the way they are being used... they will sure break away, and Canada will be doing the same I hope".¹³⁰

Be that as it may, noting the Canadians' important defensive role and the "galling" situation in which they find themselves, the *News of the World* article continued, "Is it so very surprising... that under these trying and tantalizing conditions some cases of indiscipline and offences against persons and property by Canadian soldiers should come before our courts of justice?"¹³¹ The article notes, "Comments like 'What, the Canadians again?' and 'A discredit to the Canadian Army' have become almost stock phrases..." The editor notes that, like the British army, the Canadian army was a cross section of the nation. He noted that overall crime in England remained as before the war but that Canadians were blamed for more than their fair share.¹³² The article points out that British soldiers are not singled out because of their nationality,

...no magistrate is sufficiently tactless [when a British soldier appears before him] to remark "What the British Army again?"...The fact that a soldier... transgresses the law surely does not imply "discredit on the particular Service to which he belongs." Why, therefore, single out the Canadians for the pillory?¹³³

Given such evidence, it seems that full integration into British society was neither desired nor achieved.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 January – 1 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4. These were the words of a soldier at No. 1 General Hospital, RCAMC.

¹³¹ *News of the World*, 25 January 1942.

¹³² For an examination of crime in wartime Britain see: Donald Thomas, *The Enemy Within: Hucksters, Racketeers, Deserters, & Civilians During the Second World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); and Edward Smithies, *Crime in Wartime: A Social History of Crime in World War II* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982).

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ British historiography has been likewise unkind. Either the Canadian presence has been ignored or has been cast in an ugly light. Thomas introduces Canadian misdeeds, pointing out that they "rampaged through

As the *News of the World* noted, the Canadians were in England to fight a war and as such they had much exposure to the British Army, to whom the Canadian Army would be operationally subordinated when outside the United Kingdom. Despite this fact, the army maintained a remarkable degree of independence. This was just as well considering the negative opinion that Canadian soldiers harboured for their British counterparts. In addition to the question of Canadian pay, Stacey and Wilson also note that “sexual competition” was a major factor damaging relations.¹³⁵ British troops certainly had cause for worry and consequent annoyance because, while the Eighth Army was fighting *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel’s Panzer Army Africa, Canadian soldiers were living amongst their wives and, in some cases, sleeping with them. This posed morale problems for the British army. Efforts to link Canadian soldiers with families and girlfriends in Canada, therefore, can also be seen as a way to facilitate the overall Allied war effort. Nevertheless, as with civilian relations, ties with British troops underwent only a slow amelioration over time.

Canadian dealings with British troops likewise featured nationalist sentiment. A number of troops expressed disappointment that their image of the Imperial Army was shattered when confronted with real English soldiers. A Canadian of No. 1, Canadian Army Service Corps Reinforcement Unit reflected, “I’ve always imagined the English army to be all military and neat but they’re really the sloppiest slovenliest bunch I’ve ever seen... The slouchiest Canadian is really tops compared to some of them.”¹³⁶ Another soldier in the

Brighton,” “smashed windows,” “fought police,” were hauled up on “assault, rape, and murder cases,” committed “armed robbery,” and “hijacked an ammunition lorry.” Despite this litany of crimes, Thomas points out that Canadian military police were very helpful and that Canadians were usually “amiable” in their “misdemeanours.” See: Thomas, *The Enemy Within*, 97-99.

¹³⁵ Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 76.

¹³⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 8 – 21 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File

Signal Corps complained of unwanted British attempts to “anglicize” the soldiers: “They are trying to make Imperial soldiers out of us and that just won’t do... I don’t think it’s right myself we never joined the British Army and we are not conscripts which they don’t think of we are here to help them do the job and we want things run the same as they do in Canada.”¹³⁷ When Canadian troops were placed under direct British command, complaints were often heard, such as this sarcastic statement from a soldier in the Lake Superior Regiment, “We have a Limey Colonel with us now, and you can imagine how we feel.”¹³⁸

Stacey and Wilson maintain that relations were harmonious by the summer of 1943.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, at the time, the censor noted, “Relations are, on the whole, quite friendly, though the men have little in common.”¹⁴⁰ Relations did slowly improve as the years passed and as training brought the two groups into more frequent contact. A soldier from an unknown unit maintained, “...I enjoyed [training with the English] very much, they treated me swell, only that the discipline is much stricter than in the Canadian Army.” However, even in such instances soldiers often commented on the differences between the two armies. Even in training schemes soldiers expressed a preference for training with their compatriots. A member of the 9th Canadian Non-Divisional Ordnance Workshop, RCOC wrote in a letter home, “Believe me Bud if it were not for the humiliation of not passing I would do something to get back to a Canadian unit.”¹⁴¹ Another soldier, one month later, remonstrated, “I thought I did pretty good Sat. but these Goddamned Limeys hate like Hell

4/Censor/4/4.

¹³⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 24 November – 7 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹³⁸ “Special Report – The Lake Superior Regiment (Motors),” October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹³⁹ Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 74-79.

¹⁴⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 July – 3 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

¹⁴¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

to see a Canuck get thro' these courses. The more Canucks they fail and the more of their own they pass the better the things appear for their crowd."¹⁴²

In pubs, nationalist arguments seem to have been common. A member of the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps reported,

One night in a pub... one of those Limey soldiers was saying "we don' need you b _____ Canadians over here why don't you go back to Canada," so I walked over to him and let him have a hay-maker on the chin, and I asked his pal if he felt the same way about Canadians but he didn't, so I got drunk! It seems these English soldiers resent our being over here well they have nothing on us for we resent being over here..."¹⁴³

The censor's reports are full of comments on fights between "Canucks and Limeys".

Unsurprisingly, Canadians usually emphasized their fighting prowess, as with the soldier of No. 1 Canadian Base Transit Depot, "Canadians give a good account of themselves in the numerous battles".¹⁴⁴

Given the numerous reports of public disturbance and other crime, the reports of the Canadian Provost Companies disclose much about Canadian morale in this period.

Canadians committed crimes, some very serious, to be sure. C.P. Stacey noted that, "the Canadian forces accepted the jurisdiction of British civil courts even in cases of capital offences."¹⁴⁵ While a good number of soldiers became known to the law, the vast majority of Canadians in Britain steered clear of legal trouble, while many other incidents went unreported. Nevertheless, there is much evidence of public indiscipline. In the towns they inhabited, Canadians were known to drink; sing, shout, and brawl in the streets; crash their

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Field Censors (Home) Special Report: Relations between Canadians and British (civilians and troops)," January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁴⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁴⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 426. Six Canadians were convicted of murder and executed under British civil jurisdiction during the war.

vehicles; sleep with local women; and various other “transgressions” of British (and Canadian) public morality.¹⁴⁶

Civilian courts dealt with a good number of Canadian cases, but to help combat the majority of discipline problems the army employed provosts or military police.¹⁴⁷ Canadian provosts were recruited largely from the RCMP. A small number of these iconic Canadian figures were transported to Britain in late 1939 with the first flight. Strome Galloway, a former officer of the Royal Canadian Regiment, noted, “The Royal Canadian Mounted Police hold a special place in Canadian hearts. It is fitting that the part they played during World War 2, thinly disguised as No. 1 Provost Company, should be publicly revealed.”¹⁴⁸ The decision to allow police officers to accompany the troops was unpopular amongst the police officers themselves.¹⁴⁹ Once in England, however, they came to embrace their role and accepted that if discipline were fairly and impartially dispensed, it could serve an essential role in maintaining morale. The provosts were also proud that a large part of their role included helping “any soldier who was lost or in trouble,” partly they got a chance to help out their countrymen who had volunteered for military service.¹⁵⁰

Contemporaneous correspondence frequently noted the presence of “bad apples” that created an unfavourable impression of Canadians. On the whole, C.P. Stacey was correct in stating that by the end, one could not have hoped for a much better situation. Nevertheless, the complaints of Canadian soldiers, the worst of which were called “bad

¹⁴⁶ References to such activities can be found in abundance in the file group titled: “Complaints re action of Cdn [Canadian] troops.” See: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12711, Files 20/COMPLAINTS/2/1 - 20/COMPLAINTS/2/6.

¹⁴⁷ For an examination of the role of No. 1 Provost Company during the war, see: L.H. Nicholson, *Battle-dress Patrol: No. 1 Provost Company (R.C.M.P.), 1939-1945* (Ottawa: R.C.M.P. Quarterly, 1946).

¹⁴⁸ See the foreword to: Nicholson. *Battle-dress Patrol*, vii.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

hats”, reveal that when they were taken into custody or involved in a disturbance, soldiers were usually singled out precisely because of their nationality. When, on 14 February 1941, a Canadian soldier was detained in London, the guard complained, “I went into the cell to search the man, which is customary in the case of *Canadian* ‘Drunks’. He again commenced to scream and shout, ‘I’m not stopping in this fucking place’.”¹⁵¹ Sometimes, when a Canadian provost was called to the scene of an English disturbance, he too was condemned for his nationality. One provost recalled being called, “a good for nothing Canadian. It was very hard for me to keep my temper.”¹⁵²

Those Canadian soldiers who found their way into detention barracks, which were British run in the first years of the war, reportedly experienced sustained reprobation based on their nationality. Private G.D. Strachan of the Toronto Scottish Regiment reported, “Such language as ‘Canadian Bastards’ is used by the guards frequently. They are also known to have said ‘We can’t blame you chaps so much when your officers don’t know nothing.’”¹⁵³ A detained soldier at the military detention barracks at Aldershot, complained of prisoners being beaten and, in one case, killed by “so called” staff sergeants. The writer continued, highlighting the unique sacrifice of all Canadian soldiers, “if necessary we can quote and prove various instances of this treatment being accorded Canadians who have left our homes and families possibly never to be reunited feel we are entitled to better treatment.”¹⁵⁴ He complains that the British, “allow the men who were the first to rally to

¹⁵¹ “Report to The Deputy Provost Marshal, London District,” 15 February 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵² Account of Pte S.G. Lisick, 12th Fld Coy, RCASC, 22 February 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵³ Statement of Pte. G.D. Strachan, Toronto Scottish Regt., LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous letter to GOC, VII Corps, 28 January 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

your cause to be abused and treated like dogs or scum.”¹⁵⁵ A CMHQ investigation subsequently determined that the “food is undoubtedly bad, also sanitation; and that there is a use of abusive and insulting language against Canadians.”¹⁵⁶

Canadian prisoners testified that British guards routinely abused Canadians based on their nationality. A prisoner from the Carleton & York Regiment complained, “The prison staff continually use insulting language towards Canadian soldiers such as you ‘lazy Canadian bastard liar’. Coming from an Englishman this was very hard to take... It makes a man very bitter and encourages hate against everything English.”¹⁵⁷ Private C.G. Gallop of the West Nova Scotia Regiment reported, “I found that the English soldiers were handled and treated very differently from the Canadians. The Prison Staff are in the habit of using every form of abusive language toward Canadians and insulting Canada generally.”¹⁵⁸ Another complained, “Prison staff continually used abusive language towards Canadians, such as ‘Canadian Bastards’.”¹⁵⁹ Lastly, Private D.C. Coaddock alleged, “Canadians were more severely handled than English troops without provocation.”¹⁶⁰ It is possible that their British guards may have discriminated against them based simply on their nationality. Alternatively, these guards might simply have chosen to insult the soldiers on an aspect of their personality they knew to be sensitive. It is also possible that the soldiers embellished such statements to garner sympathy in the Canadian interviewer,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “Investigation Report sent to DAQMG Brigadier Murison at CMHQ,” 21 February 1941, LAC, RG24, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵⁷ Statement of Pte. MacDonald, C.A., Carleton & York Regiment, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵⁸ Statement of Pte. Gallop, C.G., West Nova Scotia Regiment, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁵⁹ Statement of Pte. Rankin, H.G., Carleton & York Regiment, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁶⁰ Statement of Pte. Coaddock, D.C., Toronto Scottish Regiment, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

although most statements were given after the soldiers' release. Even if they were embellished, the fact that soldiers believed such complaints carried weight speaks to the deep-seated sense of nationalism existing in the army. Either way, the soldier's Canadian identity was an important factor in his treatment.

The Deputy Provost Marshal (DPM) made a second investigation in March 1941, but found little to substantiate the more serious claims of physical abuse to the point of unconsciousness or death. Verbal abuse, however, caused considerable concern among Canadian commanders right up to General McNaughton. Notably, the prison's Sergeant Major admitted Canadians, "took a little longer than the British soldiers to get used to strict discipline."¹⁶¹ This is likely euphemistic suggesting that the indiscipline of Canadian detainees resulted in at least some form of special attention. As a result of his inquiries, the DPM recommended, "Canadian Soldiers undergoing detention (be) confined in a Canadian Detention Camp under Canadian Officers and N.C.O.s". McNaughton admitted that the investigation, "discloses sufficient evidence to cause anxiety" as to the treatment specifically meted out to Canadian prisoners; he requested that an officer from CMHQ visit the prison every two weeks.¹⁶² CMHQ believed, "It is a matter... of putting our men to be detained under the best conditions which can be arranged by the British authorities or not putting them there at all."¹⁶³ A decision to "Canadianize" the system of detention soon followed, which removed this source of friction between the two armies.¹⁶⁴ As might be

¹⁶¹ "Military Prison Aldershot: Treatment of Canadians," 22 March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁶² "Treatment of Prisoners in Detention Barracks," 22 March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁶³ General P.J. Montague to General A.G.L. McNaughton, Treatment of Prisoners in Detention Barracks," 2 April 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁶⁴ According to prisoner accounts, life in Canadian detention was little better. One prisoner complained, "The general opinion of non coms and men is that Staff Provost Sergeant Helliwell, the man in charge [of

expected, complaints surfaced about the state of these barracks too, although none of them dealt with unfair treatment based on nationality. In general, Canadian troops spent their time at rest without too much commotion, but when issues did arise, the soldier's nationality was often implicated in his conduct. According to many Britons, the offender's Canadianism explained his bad behaviour.

Despite Canadian grouching over the British and life in England, two things especially impressed Canadian troops about British behaviour. First was their resilience in the face of adversity. Canadian troops were especially impressed by British civilian resolve in the face of German bombing. Soldiers touring London bomb sites remarked, "nowhere else [other than London] in the British Empire can you feel as plainly, the pride and the greatness of this race of people." The censor added, "[there is] a greater realization of what they have come over to fight for."¹⁶⁵ Second, many troops benefitted from the hospitality of British families. An Auxiliary Services program run primarily through the Knights of Columbus, the system of hospitality saw many Canadian troops on leave staying with English families. One soldier commented,

There isn't anything better you can do to make these lads feel good than to have them in for meals and an evening in a soft chair with pleasant company. I can tell you it is just like a breath from Heaven to go into someone's home and have that sensation of being in a place where people "live" I think it is one of the greatest aids there is to the war effort, because it has such a stimulating effect on the morale of the men.¹⁶⁶

Detention Barracks at No 3 CIHU Whitley Camp], is a brutal sadistic homicidal maniac." Other testimony has Helliwell shooting prisoners through cell doors and twirling his service revolver claiming that orders not to shoot prisoners trying to escape do not "apply to me". See: Letter from "A CANADIAN SOLDIER" to General McNaughton, no date, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.
¹⁶⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁶⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October - 9 November 41, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

Such expressions of gratitude likely reflected the soldier's happiness at experiencing something akin to the domesticity now missing from his life that he had enjoyed at home in Canada. It was because of one such relationship that an English civilian felt he had come to understand what would best improve Canadian morale: services and comforts from Canada. Henry D. Myer, who regularly hosted Canadian troops in his home, boiled down their complaints to four specific desires:

- (a) That they have not had a full enough share of the fighting;
- (b) The absence of Canadian newspapers in barracks and camp canteens and recreation rooms;
- (c) The NAAFI do not sell the goods which a Canadian as distinct from a British soldier wants, and
- (d) The arrangements for the supply of cigarettes from Canada entail a long wait when a soldier first arrives in England.¹⁶⁷

General Montague agreed with Myer that there are supplies "of special value to Canadians" that are difficult to acquire. He concluded, "The Directorate of Auxiliary Services works diligently to bring the products of Canada to its soldiers overseas."¹⁶⁸ In mid-1942, another group of soldiers arrived who demanded North American amenities. At this time, Canadian troops experienced what it meant to have a group of foreign soldiers move in to "their" territory. The complaints of British soldiers and civilians must have seemed more understandable after the arrival of American troops, some of whom arrived as early as January 1942.

Canadian troops brought with them definite beliefs about US troops and the United

¹⁶⁷ "Letter from Henry D. Myer, Esq. to The High Commissioner for Canada," 22 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, 20/COMPLAINTS/3. NAAFI refers to the British Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes, which sold refreshments and other supplies to British, and sometimes Canadian, troops.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from P.J. Montague to Henry D. Myer, Esq., 29 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

States in general.¹⁶⁹ Many of their comments summarized emotional and popular beliefs about Canada's historic relationship with the US and suggest that this facet of the Canadian experience was alive and well in England. Shortly after their arrival, the censor noted, "Opinion about American Troops is rather divided. Some welcome them with open arms and see eye to eye with them about most things; others are very irritated by their boastfulness. There is a good deal of envy of their better pay and jealousy of the uniform..."¹⁷⁰ The shoe now seemed to be on the other foot. Canadian resentment at the better pay and uniforms was partly aggravated by the Canadian government's policy of retaining a portion of the soldier's pay until the end of his service. One Canadian commented, "They are trying to show off with their big wages on pay days. They get their full pay which we don't. If we were to get all ours we could out the dash better than they could."¹⁷¹

British treatment of the Americans, who were given a warm welcome, annoyed some Canadian soldiers and further damaged their view of the British. A soldier of the 1st Radio Location Unit complained, "The American Troops are here and the way they are getting treated sure shows up. The fact that we too are thousands of miles from home doesn't matter – oh never mind them they're only Colonials – sure makes you mad."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ David Reynolds examines the American "occupation" of Britain from 1942-1945. A broad theme of this work is the "Americanization" of Britain (specifically discussed in pages 431-445). Canadians too were known to "Canadianize" their surroundings, but their numbers did not effect the same kinds of change that the American GIs brought with them to England. Reynolds notes that 2,914,843 US troops passed through Britain (Reynolds, 432). Many Canadian feathers were ruffled with the American arrival and not a few fights ensued. Accordingly, Reynolds briefly examines the relationship between Canadian and US troops (Reynolds, 338-342) See: David Reynolds, *Rich Relations* (New York: Random House, 1995).

¹⁷⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 August – 3 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷² Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 August – 3 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

Such complaints highlight the barriers to Canadian integration in British society and help explain why Canadians tended to prefer the maintenance of a connection with Canada.

Another Canadian soldier commented,

As things go now it seems to be all U.S. – by that I mean that everybody and anybody does just what they (the U.S.) ask. We hear more of their doings and going to do's on the air, and at times one would be inclined to think they were the only ones with soldiers. Radio programmes and sports broadcasts every day entirely for their own consumption – the best the Canadians can get is two ¼ hour talks a week. Oh well, I guess it's a sign of the times, and an effort to keep on the good side of our wealthy partner. Tho' it makes chaps who have been here 3 years get annoyed to hear all this daily fuss about the new arrival... We might as well just pack it up and let them get on with it.¹⁷³

Despite such complaints, imperial solidarity, sometimes won out when dealing with GIs, as when a soldier of the 7th Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars) noted, "...several times the Canucks have helped the English boys throw a large number of Yanks out of a pub."¹⁷⁴ When it came to national competition, sometimes, North American rivalries won the day.

While North American experience had taught many Canadians to be wary of the American influence, much took place overseas to foster anger. Only months after the American arrival, one Canadian noted bitterly, "The Yanks are disliked because they jeer at the Canadians and call them the 'Home Guard'."¹⁷⁵ Another expressed how much resentment surrounded the idea that Americans were going to supplant Canadians in their favourite hangouts. One commented, "...you know [American Troops] undertook throwing the Canadians out of a bar up London about a month ago and the Canucks tore

¹⁷³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

half the place down with them, instead of the Canucks being on the outside the Yanks were.”¹⁷⁶

However most Canadian scorn was reserved for those Americans who claimed they were in England to win the war for Canada and Britain. Such attacks on the masculinity and martial qualities of Canada were considered out of bounds. One Canadian remarked,

There is a lot of Yankees stationed about 12 miles from us but they don't seem to mix very well with the Canadians as all they can say is we will soon win the war now since they are over here. Please don't take offence at this but it really does get under the skin – like they said they won the last war.¹⁷⁷

Canadians were unwilling to accept that Americans had “saved” them in the First World War, nor that they would do so in the current one. Similarly, a soldier of 2nd Battery, 4th Field Regiment, RCA admitted, “Not that the Canadians did such a helluvalot before Dieppe, but we didn't go around shouting that we were going to win this war all by ourselves.”¹⁷⁸ While Canadian soldiers may not have claimed they would win the war by themselves, they *did* crow proudly following the Dieppe raid, despite the failure of the operation.

In the face of American boastfulness, fewer things heightened Canadian pride than besting them in training schemes. After a joint exercise, a soldier of the 5th Anti-Tank Regiment, RCA proudly announced, “We beat the pants off them and it makes me feel damn good.”¹⁷⁹ Many other Canadian soldiers displayed a deep understanding of both US soldier actions and English sensitivities. A Canadian artilleryman noted, “[US soldiers]

¹⁷⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 August – 3 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹⁷⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

seem to forget that they are in England among English people, and there is no need to try and tell them what is wrong with their country and 'how we do it in America'. The Englishman won't stand for it. If you leave him alone he will tell you all the faults himself, but if anyone tries to tell him, he will jump right down their throats."¹⁸⁰ While the Canadian acted as interpreter between the two nationalities, he amply fulfilled his dual historic and national roles of resenting Imperial aloofness on the one hand, while remaining wary and suspicious of American encroachments on the other.

Issues around mail and money clearly highlighted questions of national inequality, sensitiveness, and pride in Canadian soldiers; but the final "M" factor was meals. The Army HQ report cited above noted, "Among Canadian troops in the United Kingdom in 1939-43, one of the factors which tended to lower morale was found in the widespread and growing number of complaints regarding food."¹⁸¹ As with so many issues detrimental to Canadian morale, these complaints stemmed from nostalgia for Canadian food on the one hand and early attempts to feed Canadian troops the same rations as British troops on the other. The report notes, "This meant a considerable change in the quality, quantity and type of diet, a change from abundant Canadian food to a strictly rationed and unfamiliar British army diet."¹⁸²

Attention began to be focused on food complaints through the Field Censor reports. The Canadian propensity to prefer their "own" food, that is Canadian dishes and product,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Army Headquarters, Historical Section (G.S.), Report No. 59, "Food Complaints and Cook's Training Canadian Army Overseas, 1939-1945," DHH, Army Headquarters (AHQ) Reports (1948-1959), 4. Hereafter: AHQ Report No. 59.

¹⁸² Ibid. Also, such a desire is mentioned in a 1939 memorandum. See: S.S. & T.O. to D.A.Q.M.G., "C" Div, 9 December 1939, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10092, File: 14/RAT/1, "Army Service Corps services - Rations, generally."

was marked. One soldier commented in only the second Field Censor report, “How I sure could do with a Canadian meal.”¹⁸³ Soldiers training in British camps frequently vented their annoyance. A training camp in Cornwall was referred to as “the worst place for food.”¹⁸⁴ After being transferred to a British camp, another soldier commented, “The last camp was a Canadian camp with Canadian food but this place, honest sweet we are all starving.”¹⁸⁵ Another stated angrily, “The meals are much better in the Canadian Camps than in the English ones. I guess it is because the Canadian people think more of their soldiers than the English people do.”¹⁸⁶

Soldiers also longed both for more typically Canadian food as well as a home cooked meal. “If ever I get to Canada the first thing I get is a T Bone steak. As there is nothing like that here, the closest thing the army can come up with is boiled liver.”¹⁸⁷ Steak was sorely missed: “I just wish I was home with you eating a big stake.”¹⁸⁸ Food insufficiency and quality also drove some soldiers to steal from local farmers, yet another cause for anger directed at Canadians. “The English soldiers lived on hard tack, but that wouldn’t do for Canadians, especially when the farmers go to bed so early and cannot take their orchards and chickens with them... so I and my mates lived like kings.”¹⁸⁹ Later in the season, the censor again noted, “Several writers are missing Canadian food.”¹⁹⁰ A member of the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, RCASC, summed up all of his frustrations with

¹⁸³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 1 – 14 September 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁸⁴ AHQ Report No. 59, 12.

¹⁸⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 15 – 28 September, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁹⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

England in one letter home, “You cant buy a good meal over here, and the Limey’s say we come over here to eat their rations, they can keep their rations and their lousy country. It’s not worth fighting for. I’ll bet if there’s another war after this one no Canadian will come over here again. I wont anyhow.”¹⁹¹

It was eventually found necessary, owing to such mounting and insistent complaints, to provide Canadian-style food cooked by specialists trained at the Canadian Cookery School, which was established at No. 1 Canadian Army Service Corps Reinforcement Unit in the August 1942.¹⁹² It was decided further that, “instruction in cooking would be carried out under Canadian arrangements, as experience showed that British schools did not observe Canadian standards of cooking and hygiene.” Like in other areas, such measures resulted in a slow improvement over time such that, by the end of 1943, food ranked low on the list of complaints.¹⁹³ Again, as with other areas, men who had spent a long time in England eventually grew accustomed to the diet, but those recently arrived from Canada vehemently disliked the food. In recognition of the recently-established cookery school, the censor noted, “Many appreciative comments on food.”¹⁹⁴ He also noted that complaints over food had lost much of their bite. “Criticism of food is, as usual, one of insufficiency rather than quality,” which differed from previous experience.¹⁹⁵ Those recently arrived from Canada often noted that the amount of food in England was far below that available in Canada due to strict rationing. Despite the improvements made over the years, nothing could entirely alleviate problems associated

¹⁹¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 22 December 1941 – 4 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁹² AHQ Report No. 59, 7-8.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

with missing food from home, a sentiment summarized in a letter written well after the establishment of the cookery school. "We have almost forgotten what corn looks and tastes like over here, all they feed us is potatoes, mutton stew, oatmeal that is worse than Uncle Byron feeds his pigs..."¹⁹⁶ Food rationing, coupled with the absence of specifically Canadian foodstuffs and meal types, contributed to lowered morale and served as another reminder that the Canadians were living in a foreign land. The provision of Canadian cooks and meals, accordingly helped alleviate some of the worst problems in this regard.

While the foregoing narrative has highlighted areas of contention and conflict between Canadian soldiers on the one hand and, variously, British troops, civilians, and society generally on the other, a good deal of the soldier's life in England, especially after 1942, was spent pleasantly. However, those factors that *did* threaten their morale sprung most often from factors related to their Canadian nationality. At first, civilians treated Canadians as odd and different, then many people levelled public scorn at the Canadians for the bad behaviour of a minority. For their part, Canadians clearly missed a number of things about their homeland which made it impossible for them, as a group, to fully integrate or settle down in English society. Nevertheless, the efforts of many British civilians also contributed to feelings of happiness and goodwill. However, as will be shown, the task of caring for the soldiers' morale fell, in the main, to the Directorate of Auxiliary Services and the Canadian Chaplain Service. These two agencies of morale, having learned many of the lessons discussed in the present chapter, and based on their own experience, found that the worst problems of soldier morale, be it feeling out of place in

¹⁹⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

England or homesick for Canada, were best addressed through the provision of Canadian entertainment and products. In the face of uniquely Canadian morale and discipline problems, the most effective solutions turned out to be of Canadian design. Those issues that tended to make Canadian troops feel closely attached to one another – a shared sense of identity – were those seized on to help assuage the worst problems of morale which it was found were largely related to being a Canadian living in a foreign land.

Chapter 3: The Directorate of Auxiliary Services: “The Four-Team Soldier-Service League”

In the circumstances obtaining in England, morale became a chief concern of the Department of National Defence and the army high command, especially until 1st Canadian Infantry Division embarked on sustained combat operations in July 1943. In September 1939, DND officials recognized – drawing upon First World War experience – the need to coordinate efforts to combat morale and discipline problems. By contrast, at the outset of the First World War there existed no central agency or organization that would provide for the troops’ welfare outside of military considerations. The long inactive period Canadian soldiers were forced to endure from 1939 to 1943 had no precedent and, consequently, no one foresaw the problems of morale that would follow. C.P. Stacey writes, “Canadian thinking was largely dominated by the experience of 1914-1918...”¹ That experience included the need to maintain morale, and a number of voluntary organizations took separate and independent action to assuage the troops’ worst problems in the First World War. Again, Stacey notes that the Second World War experience of maintaining the morale of “volunteer soldiers who were denied action for three and a half years during which they were separated from their homes and families,” was a unique and unprecedented problem.² The Directorate of Auxiliary Services was organized as the government of Canada’s primary response to this problem.

When war was declared in 1939, numerous public-spirited citizens, businesses, communal societies, and voluntary organizations offered their services for the benefit of the

¹ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 254.

² *Ibid.*, 413.

men in the field.³ In these offers laid the basis of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, which coordinated the soldier welfare activities of four national voluntary organizations: the Canadian YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Canadian Legion, and the Knights of Columbus. While these formed the four official auxiliary services, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) and the Canadian Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) also operated in Canada and overseas and their work fell under the Directorate's umbrella, albeit on a smaller scale. In Canada, all six organizations raised funds independently for soldier welfare services and joined together to make a joint appeal in March 1941, prior to the complete standardization and public funding of the auxiliary service organizations later that year.⁴ The activities of the four large voluntary organizations were the focus of Directorate of Auxiliary Services activities in Canada and overseas and will form the focus of this chapter.

Such organizations helped forge a systemic link between the overseas soldiers and the civilian population of Canada. First, the Directorate employed civilian "supervisors" to provide services overseas and, second, the activities of the organizations were funded –

³ Evidence of these offers can be found in the war diaries of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, which in fact contain much more than the war diaries themselves. Each month's entry includes a monthly report from the overseas Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services (ADAS) at Canadian Military Headquarters in London to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. Also usually included are monthly reports from each of the overseas directors of the four national voluntary organizations that comprised the Auxiliary Services. Together these items provide a comprehensive outline of the activities of the Directorate, its overseas administrators, and each of the four national voluntary organizations, in short, a large portion of the evidentiary basis of the Auxiliary Services' overseas activities. The offers of assistance proffered to the government in 1939 are also noted in significant histories of each of the Auxiliary Services, as are their First World War activities. See: Clifford H. Bowering, *Service: The Story of the Canadian Legion, 1925-1960* (Ottawa: Dominion Command, Canadian Legion, Legion House, 1960); Alan M. Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II* (Toronto: National War Services Committee of the National Council of Y.M.C.A., 1949?); Knights of Columbus (Canada), *War Services of Canadian Knights of Columbus, 1939-1947: A History of the Work of the Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts* (Montreal: Gazette Printing Co., 1948); R.G. Moyles, *The Blood and Fire in Canada: A History of the Salvation Army in the Dominion 1882-1976* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1977); Scott Young, *The Red Shield in Action: A Record of Canadian Salvation Army War Services in the Second Great War* (Toronto: F. F. Clarke, 1949).

⁴ Clipping, "6 Charity Groups Formed Into One For Joint Appeal," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 1, 1941, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

until 1941 – entirely by the charitable donations of Canadian citizens.⁵ Moreover, the manner in which the organizations provided service, coupled with soldier demands for Canadian content, further strengthened the link to home. It was soon realized that Canadian products and services were the most effective material for bolstering morale. The overseas extension of “service” rivalries between the voluntary organizations also reflected expressions of pride evidenced in Canada at war’s outbreak. Each organization claimed that it was the first to offer help to the government and Canadian people. On the other hand, in some important areas, the organizations were unable to seamlessly cooperate. The Knights of Columbus, for example, insisted on providing a monthly allotment of free cigarettes to the troops, much to the chagrin of the other three services who feared the Knights might nose ahead in terms of soldier appreciation of their services.⁶ Such disputes indicate at least some level of self-interest in helping the troops. This resulted, in March 1941, in the appointment of the Hon. R.J. Manion, leader of the federal Conservative party from 1938 to 1940 and a decorated officer of the First World War, to investigate. On his recommendation, the government suspended the organizations’ separate funding drives across Canada and began to fund their activities from the public treasury. This step toward fiscal consolidation reduced rivalries between the organizations, improved service provision, and was an overt recognition that the government viewed soldier welfare services as an important factor in the success of the overseas army.

An examination of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services shows that whatever rivalries or service inadequacies existed, Canadian troops generally preferred to consume

⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 422.

⁶See: “Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts - Report for the Month of October 31st, 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IV, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

products of Canadian industry, entertainment, and imagination. The previous chapter outlined the “national” factors that affected morale, while the present one outlines the products and services that the Directorate of Auxiliary Services came to provide to ameliorate problems of morale and discipline.⁷

The overseas structure of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services had its immediate beginnings in organizational work begun in Canada at the outbreak of war. In late September 1939, the District Officer Commanding Military District No. 2 (Headquartered in Toronto) began to organize a “Committee of Influential Citizens” whose work included the coordination of sports, recreational facilities, entertainments, and establishing family contacts with British relatives for the men in uniform.⁸ This represented one of the earliest coordinated efforts after the outbreak of war to provide “welfare” services within the army hierarchy. With the expectation that a Canadian army would proceed overseas, the Department of National Defence felt it necessary to coordinate such efforts. DND therefore accepted the offers of help pouring in from across Canada but sought to reduce duplication and waste. Thus, Minister of National Defence Norman Rogers established an organization within his department for the purpose of accepting and coordinating the offers of assistance.⁹ The Directorate of Auxiliary Services war diary states, “The experience of the

⁷ Two of the Directorate’s most extensive programs – sports and education – were so important in terms of their national focus, that they are covered in separate chapters.

⁸ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, Sept – Dec 1939. The Directorate of Auxiliary Services’ first war diary includes the four months September – December 1939. This is because the Directorate did not exist until October, and was beset with feverish activity in the weeks after its official establishment. The diaries for these months were therefore written together at the end of this four-month period. Entries for September described important events leading up to the Directorate’s establishment.

⁹ Report of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1939, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, September - December 1939. Rogers served as Minister of Defence from 19 September 1939 until his death in an airplane crash on 10 June 1940. J.L.

last war also indicated the necessity for an organization which could provide coordinated effort with a view to efficiency and economy.”¹⁰ The President of the Canadian Legion, Brigadier W.W. Foster, wrote the army’s Adjutant-General (AG), Major-General H.H. Mathews, in late September enclosing a memorandum entitled “Organization of Auxiliary Services”, which outlined the precedents of the First World War and the consequent desirability of establishing a similar but improved organization than that which functioned in 1914-1918.¹¹ Foster was soon confirmed as the first Director of Auxiliary Services. He served in this post until 14 October 1940, when Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar A. Deacon, who served as Director until war’s end, replaced him. In Britain, Major J.M. Humphrey, Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services (ADAS), headed the Directorate’s United Kingdom activities. On 8 June 1942, Major P.J. Philpott succeeded Humphrey as ADAS.¹²

Based on Foster’s memorandum, on 3 October 1939 the AG submitted a recommendation stating,

... it would be in the interest of the three services [Army, Navy, and Air Force] to control and coordinate, through this department, the efforts of the various welfare and similar organizations which are offering their services to promote the physical, mental, and moral welfare of the Defence Forces...¹³

Two days later, the Minister approved this recommendation and the Directorate of Auxiliary Services was established as part of the AG’s branch. The Auxiliary Services war

Ralston served as Minister from 5 July 1940 until 2 November 1944. General Andrew McNaughton took up the post from 2 November 1944 to 21 August 1945.

¹⁰ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹¹ Ibid. In the period under study, three officers held the post of Adjutant-General: Maj.-Gen. H. H. Matthews, 15 August 1938 - 8 April 1940; Maj.-Gen. B. W. Browne, 6 July 1940 - 1 February 1942; and Maj.-Gen. H. F. G. Letson, 2 February 1942 - 30 September 1944. Please see C.P. Stacey, “Persons Holding Principal Appointments, Canadian Army, 1939-1945,” Appendix A, *Six Years of War*, 332.

¹² The documentary record alternatively refers to the ADAS as the Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services (SOAS). Major Percy John Philpott was “much decorated” in the First World War and was the highest ranking officer to come out of Verdun, Quebec. See Serge Durflinger, *Fighting From Home*, 214.

¹³ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

diary states that the establishment of the Directorate, “has resulted in Canada in the provision of services from the time of enlistment to be followed through the entire period of service and has given an opportunity for all who wish to participate in the work, to do so.”¹⁴ Thus the new Directorate provided services for the enlisted servicemen and a means to contribute for those civilians who wished to serve the soldiers’ interests through the Department of National Defence, the voluntary organizations, or simply by donating to the cause. In a national radio address, Brigadier Foster explained the Directorate’s function and established its role as linking the servicemen to the life and amenities they enjoyed in Canada:

These services [were] set up... to ensure that all efforts intended to benefit the citizens of Canada who volunteer for service in its armed forces are directed into the right channel. The intention being to utilise these and all other available resources [to provide the soldier with] the full benefit of those cultural, recreational, and spiritual amenities that are available to our citizens generally.¹⁵

From its beginning, the Directorate linked the soldier and his civilian life in Canada. Not only were the Directorate’s overseas service providers to be civilians, and the efforts of the four voluntary organizations were made possible through the donations of individual Canadians, but it was also intended to provide the citizen-soldier with as many *Canadian* peacetime amenities as “humanly possible”.¹⁶

The Directorate itself was not in the business of service provision. Although several organizations offered their services to the government in the late summer of 1939 – the IODE, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Navy League of Canada, among others – it was decided to invest responsibility primarily in four well-established and recognizable national

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Address by Brigadier W.W. Foster,” 22 January 1940, LAC, RG24 , National Defence, Volume 10125, File: “Auxiliary services - Copies - Pub [Publications], speeches, radio addresses.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

voluntary organizations, each of which created a special branch within its organizational structure to execute its wartime duties. These special branches were the Canadian Legion War Services, the Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts, the Salvation Army Canadian War Services, and the Canadian Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Overseas.¹⁷ In concentrating on specific services and activities, the groups were able to muster the most effective and representative effort possible. The reach of the national organizations was such as to garner widespread and lucrative support. In establishing these organizations as the primary service providers, the government tacitly recognized the importance of such welfare services and made a policy decision to provide those services through civilian organizations, rather than by employing service personnel for the task.¹⁸ It was believed that this expedient would save money and heighten efficiency by harnessing the organizations' pre-existing knowledge and organization in these fields of expertise. Civilian representatives of the four national voluntary organizations served in the field with units of the Canadian military and wore standard-issue uniforms with appropriate insignia; they did not at first hold rank in the armed forces and were referred to as "supervisors", though they eventually came to enjoy officers' privileges and were paid the same salary as an army captain.¹⁹

The organizations' attachment to the Directorate provided them with administrative and logistical support. Similar organizations operating in the First World War enjoyed no such official support. At that time, the burden of raising funds to provide for the men's

¹⁷ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹⁸ Hurst, *The Canadian YMCA in World War II*, 35. The exception to this general rule is covered in Chapter 6, covering the Canadian Chaplain Service.

¹⁹ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

welfare while on leave and at rest was borne almost solely by the voluntary organizations themselves, which in turn relied heavily on private donations and little higher direction. Canadian voluntary organizations providing for the troops in the earlier war did so largely by supporting the British Headquarters of their respective organizations, rather than through direct service provision to Canadian troops. As R.G. Moyles explains in the case of the Salvation Army,

...the First World War, for most Canadian Salvationists, was a remote affair: their contribution... consisted chiefly in supporting their British colleagues with donations of money and ambulances and in collecting food and clothing for the Canadian soldiers overseas.²⁰

By contrast, in the Second World War the Canadian army, wherever possible, used Canadian services. This reflected an improved organizational and financial ability to undertake such tasks, as well as a growing acceptance that morale services for Canadians overseas worked best when they were based specifically on accepted Canadian practices and normative social behaviour, and not merely those in existence in Britain. Such beliefs also reflected a greater level of organizational autonomy from the British Army and its attached civilian organizations during the Second World War since Canadians were generally farther removed from British military institutions than in the earlier war.

On 26 October 1939, the Director of Auxiliary Services informed the AG's office that a Memorandum of Agreement had been reached and signed with the four national voluntary organizations.²¹ The Memorandum of Agreement codified the systemic link between the people of Canada and the welfare of their soldiers overseas. It begins,

²⁰ R.G. Moyles, *The Blood and Fire in Canada*, 193.

²¹ "Memorandum of Agreement," DHH 159.1045 (D1) Agreements - the Department of National Defence & War Services Org - 1940.

Whereas it is recognized that it is desirable and necessary in time of war that the civilian population of Canada should be afforded an opportunity of making a contribution to the comfort and welfare of members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces of Canada on Active Service in the present war...by enabling provision to be made, through the agency of certain organizations...for such Welfare Projects and Services as sports, recreation, lectures, schools, reading rooms, entertainments, canteens, shelters, refreshments and other facilities of a like nature.²²

From its inception, the Directorate was envisioned as a way for Canadian civilians to provide comfort and succour to the men overseas. Accordingly, for the first two years of the war, civilian contributions to the four organizations went directly to the service of the men.

Immediately upon signing the Memorandum of Agreement, the Director began submitting reports to the AG's office explaining the progress made in Canada to date.²³ The tasks of the four organizations bore close similarities in Canada and the United Kingdom in that they were to establish themselves in army camp and barracks areas, organize and supervise recreational activities, and provide comforts and refreshments for Canadian soldiers. However, the technical and logistical problems of serving tens, then hundreds, of thousands of men separated from the distribution and administrative hub in Canada were not easily met. In fact, auxiliary services were not running efficiently overseas until two years into the war. Many of these difficulties persisted in the longer term, especially in isolated areas.

This is not to say that the Directorate did not try its utmost to provide fulsome service overseas. Brigadier Foster proceeded overseas in late 1939 to coordinate the initial activities of the Directorate and the voluntary organizations, though it was "some time,"

²² Ibid.

²³ A bi-weekly report of 30 November 1939 reported, "the Knights of Columbus Hut in Montreal had been put into operation" and "the Department of Education, Manitoba, had placed their facilities at the disposal of MD 10." See: RG24 Vol. 13319 War Diary, Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939.

according to the official army history, before "adequate Canadian services could be provided for the troops."²⁴ All four voluntary organizations set up their overseas headquarters on Cockspur Street in London adjacent to CMHQ, which also housed the office of the Director who coordinated their work. Their first field establishments outside of London were in Aldershot and the surrounding area where the 1st Canadian Infantry Division was initially stationed. At the London office, in addition to general coordination, the headquarters undertook duties such as the allocation of sports equipment, literature, books, and other materials; arrangements with the British Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) and Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) organizations; leave arrangements, clubs, inquiry bureaus, accommodation and conducted tours; cooperation with British welfare organizations; arrangements for private hospitality; liaison with the Red Cross; and the direction of education.²⁵ However, in these early months, service provision was fragmentary.

Thus, with increasing reluctance, Canadian soldiers used British services such as NAAFI canteens throughout much of 1940 and 1941. Soldier complaints over having to use NAAFI reflected a general desire by most Canadian troops and administrators to deal exclusively with Canadian personnel and suppliers. For example, a Canadian Legion official, whose temporary managerial posting was to be supplanted by someone else, complained that the potential candidate, "is not a Canadian nor has he Canadian ways."²⁶

²⁴ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 421.

²⁵ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

²⁶ "From D.E. MacNicol to Col. D.E. MacIntyre [a Legion official]," RG24, Vol. 12318, File 4/Censor/4/2. Such beliefs went high up the chain of command. MacIntyre, for instance, served as Canadian Legion War Services (CLWS) General Manager and, in late 1940, took up a temporary position as special representative to the Adjutant General in Ottawa.

The soldiers, for their part, constantly expressed dissatisfaction with English service and many products, including, “them limey smokes”.²⁷

However, determining how to satisfy the soldiers’ desires was an important problem. The Directorate’s early answer was to cast a wide net of service. In October 1939, the Directorate decreed that the facilities provided were to be classified as: educational, reading and writing, sports activities, personal services, family welfare, field comforts, hostels and recreational clubs, canteens, hostess houses, private hospitality, libraries, entertainment, cinema and concert parties, buildings and huts, and camp publications.²⁸ This was an ambitious list, but over subsequent years the Directorate, mainly through the hard work of the Directorate’s administrators, supervisors, citizens, citizen groups, and chaplains, made great strides toward achieving this goal. Each of the four organizations had a role in delivering all these services but, in August 1941, for reasons discussed below, they decided to specialize in specific areas of service provision.

To merely list the supervisor’s day-to-day activities would be to oversimplify their extensive work. However, one of the most popular and pervasive routine services was the running of mobile canteens, also known as tea vans. A report of October 1940 stated, “A number of [tea vans] are constantly moving among the units serving hot tea or coffee with biscuits. This service is given free and is most welcome during the damp, chilly fall and winter months.”²⁹ The devotion of the Auxiliary Services supervisors operating the mobile canteens drew the soldiers’ admiration. They sometimes also produced favouritism among

²⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: 4/Censor/4/8.

²⁸ War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

²⁹ “Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940.” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, Appendix XXIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 7.

the soldiers for one service over another. Several Royal Canadian Engineers, commented, "that the 'Knights of Columbus' is the best of Mobile Canteens."³⁰ Their preference, however, is likely due to the fact that their particular station was most frequented by a Knights of Columbus canteen operator. Originally very limited in number, mobile canteens served large areas. In October 1940, the Legion operated one mobile canteen and its overseas director proudly proclaimed, "Our only Mobile Canteen, which is controlled by Supervisor W.T.H. Cripps, continues with its good work...Canon Cripps has been servicing an area nearly 100 square miles. This has necessitated him starting out very early and often finishing well after mid-night."³¹ Elsewhere in the country, soldiers expressed appreciation for one or another of the organizations. Members of No. 1 Canadian Survey Regiment, RCA, for instance, noted their, "Appreciation of the Y.M.C.A. with their mobile canteens, and recreational arrangements."³² The sight of a Canadian supervisor while out on manoeuvres, often in the wet and cold English climate, was undoubtedly welcome, "Appreciation of Y.M.C.A. Mobile Canteens, providing hot tea etc. on night fatigues."³³ For soldiers in isolated stations, mobile canteens and cinema vans – another valuable service – were perhaps the most appreciated service. A member of No. 24 Canadian Light Field Ambulance, RCAMC, noted, "The Sally Ann is still bringing picture shows out to us twice a week."³⁴

³⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

³¹ "Canadian Legion War Services, Inc., Report for the Month Ending October 31st, 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, Appendix XXIII/I, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

³² Field Censor (Home) Report, 18 April – 2 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6, Appendix A: "Conditions in Units".

³³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3. This soldier was a member of No.1 Canadian Artillery, Holding Unit.

³⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 17 March 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

Stationary canteens were likewise a major undertaking and usually operated where Canadian troops were stationed.³⁵ Some soldiers evidently grew tired of the ubiquitous English tea ration, one commenting of the Canadian-run Dominion Club: "Get nice things to eat...very reasonable and for England pretty fair coffee."³⁶ The censor commented, "Several praise meals at the Y.M.C.A. [canteen]."³⁷ As late as February 1943, after Auxiliary Services had done much to improve service provision, stationary canteens struggled to keep up with demand. One harried senior YMCA Supervisor noted:

On Tuesday, 23rd February, a "B" class canteen was opened in a large recreation hall to replace the three little headaches that have been carrying-on for the past three months. Short-handed, with canteen not completely finished, and umpteen other matters to look after, we managed to handle 3270 orders in six nights. We quite sincerely believe we could do a lot better than this if we did not have to close the canteen half the time to look after movies and other matters.³⁸

Such movie showings were very popular, especially in camps away from towns. A 1942 report from the 1st Canadian Infantry Division reported that all units acknowledged,

... the efficiency of the Aux Services in the provision of movies... these [and other] entertainments [help maintain] contentment throughout the division. This is particularly the case where a unit is stationed some distance from a town and the distance and the restricted use of recreational [transport] makes it difficult for personnel to obtain similar recreational facilities elsewhere.³⁹

Many troops preferred American or Canadian films, some of which included, "Guardians of the North", "Northern Outpost", and "Canada at War" as well as popular Hollywood

³⁵ Except where a permanent NAAFI establishment existed. See below for an examination of NAAFI's role.

³⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

³⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

³⁸ "Programme High-Lights," Canadian Y.M.C.A., 28 Feb 1943, 23/Sports/1/8, vol. 10169, "Sports Activities – Generally"

³⁹ "Morale Report – 1 Canadian Div," 9 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

productions.⁴⁰ This desire became evident in 1940 as numerous requests were made for “Special 16mm Cinema Films from Canada,” which included both Canadian and American films and newsreels.⁴¹ The early availability of British films was appreciated, but supervisors also understood the need for “new world” entertainment. “For [the] most part, the films have been English Comedy, but I am hopeful that in the near future American and Canadian films will be available.”⁴² Another soldier, displaying the value of having a dedicated supervisor, added, “We have a Knights of Columbus man stationed with us all the time, and have at least one movie a week in camp, and sometimes two.”⁴³ A general need for modern forms of entertainment was evident, as not only were films desired but, so too, were Canadian radio broadcasts, “As these provide so much interest and contact with Canada on the part of the men.”⁴⁴

In general, throughout the war the troops praised the work of the four voluntary organizations. Soldiers’ comments in letters home give an indication of the type of services provided and their reception. A soldier in a holding unit pointed out that, “The Salvation Army here have a lovely writing room and library with 500 books, radio, free paper and envelopes, a theatre where they have free shows twice a week and a sing-song on Sunday night. It sure helps a lot.”⁴⁵ The censor pointed out the widespread appreciation soldiers had

⁴⁰ “Correspondence re: Movies,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10140, File: 23/CONC/2 - Auxiliary Services - Entertainments, concerts etc. Troops were also given “pep” songs throughout the war, one of which was entitled, “We’re the Canucks.”

⁴¹ “Report of J.M. Humphrey Senior Officer Aux Services (SOAS),” 20 September 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/Reports/1.

⁴² “Canadian Legion War Services, Inc., Report for the Month Ending 31st August 1940.” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix 1, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁴³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 May – 2 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

⁴⁴ “Report of J.M. Humphrey Senior Officer Aux Services (SOAS),” 20 September 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/Reports/1.

⁴⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 8 – 21 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

for Canadian broadcasts, the facilities for which were established at most static canteens and even in some mobile ones.⁴⁶ “There is a continuance of appreciation for the services of various Welfare organizations... The Y.M.C.A and other canteens (particularly the Salvation Army mobile Canteen Service of tea and cakes to men on manoeuvres), are appreciated. The men look forward to the Canadian News broadcasts.”⁴⁷ Some soldiers were pleased that the voluntary organizations provided them with other forms of entertainment, one commenting that “the ‘Knights of Columbus’... furnished the Unit with enough instruments to form an orchestra.”⁴⁸ The censor also noted that “There are many appreciations of Women’s Auxiliaries [foremost among these was the IODE] who meet the troops at stations when on journeys, and give them tea, etc.”⁴⁹

Each of the voluntary organizations strove to bring a little bit of Canada to the men. An official YMCA leaflet highlights such efforts, “In England he [Arthur Jones, an imaginary Canadian everyman] always found a touch of Canada and Home at the ‘Y’ Hut or recreation centre . . . played hockey on rinks rented and operated by the Canadian ‘Y’... spent happy days on leave at one of the ‘Y’ hostels.”⁵⁰ Although there were some instances of dissatisfaction, most often owing to the soldiers’ preference for one service over another or the need to pay for certain items, most soldiers were pleased with the Canadian services

⁴⁶ To facilitate broadcast of Canadian programming, the government partnered with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) to establish in England, “one of the world’s most powerful shortwave broadcasting installations.” See: “Report of the Officer in Charge of Entertainment,” No Date [Likely Fall 1943], DHH, 159.1042 (D11) AUX SERVICES, Policy, Entertainment Units. Also, for a good overview of Canadian broadcasting activities overseas, see: A.E. Powley, *Broadcast from the Front: Canadian Radio Overseas in the Second World War* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1975).

⁴⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 July – 3 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

⁴⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁴⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁵⁰ National Council of YMCAs of Canada, *With Arthur Jones Through 5 Years of War: A Report of Canadian Y.M.C.A. War Services* (Canada: Y.M.C.A., 1945?).

(and dissatisfied with British ones as will be discussed below).

The period from April 1940 to April 1941 witnessed a considerable increase in the number of Canadian troops in England and the number of Auxiliary Services personnel accompanying them. On 31 March 1940 there were 15 supervisors serving 23,228 men (one per 1549 men).⁵¹ Twelve months later, these numbers had increased to 65 and 64,504, respectively (one supervisor for every 992 men).⁵² Even with the latter ratio obtaining, one supervisor was at pains to attend to anything below the level of a few large organized events every week. As alluded to above, care for the men's everyday needs largely fell to the padres, whose "auxiliary" work for many months equalled their spiritual duties. Despite the limited amount of work that the supervisors could accomplish, owing to equipment and supply issues and understaffing, they did claim some success in providing for the troops in their first year in England. An Auxiliary Services report noted, "the mobile canteens are very popular," adding, "Stationary canteens are easily within reach of all Corps Troops"⁵³

The Auxiliary Services' first practical work overseas began with the arrival of the soldiers of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division starting in late 1939. In early 1940, brick and mortar facilities were provided for sports and physical recreation of all kinds.⁵⁴ By June, entertainment by means of concert parties, film screenings, and various other forms of indoor recreation, the distribution of comforts, and private hospitality were set up so that

⁵¹ Report No. 6, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 30th March 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/REPORTS/1.

⁵² Report No. 18, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 21st March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/REPORTS/1/2. C.P. Stacey notes these numbers also in *Six Years of War*, 422.

⁵³ "Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁵⁴ For an examination of the role of sports and recreation in England during the war, see Chapter 5.

men going on leave would know in advance what had been arranged.⁵⁵ Twelve regimental institutes containing canteens, reading, writing and lecture rooms, with provision for indoor games, became operational by mid-1940. Auxiliary services also operated ten tea vans in the winter of 1939-40. As a preliminary number, 500 radio sets were provided for the camps. In these early days, improvement was naturally hampered by the existence of competing military priorities. For example, as a CMHQ report noted in January 1941, “it [was] hard to get delivery of a mobile canteen at a time when motor vehicles for combatant purposes [were] urgently required.”⁵⁶ Still, even at this point, after the first flight had been in England for one year, Auxiliary Services was not at full operating capacity.

Despite organizational and logistical shortcomings, supervisors did their best to provide for troops on the move in the hectic days of 1940. During the Dunkirk evacuation of May-June 1940, when most of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was evacuated from the French coast minus its equipment, McNaughton recommended, as Stacey notes, “that his division should be organized in mobile groups and moved to a central area whence it could counter-attack an enemy landing anywhere in southern England.”⁵⁷ Accordingly, on 29 May 1940, 1st Canadian Infantry Division and Canadian ancillary troops briefly moved to Northampton. Supervisors preceded the troops to this location and arranged use of a swimming pool, with upwards of 20,000 men using it over six days.⁵⁸ On 15 June 1940, the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade and 1st Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery returned from Brest, from whence they had recently withdrawn after an aborted

⁵⁵ Report No. 9, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 30 June 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/Reports/1, Exhibit II, Special Report “B”.

⁵⁶ CMHQ Report No. 9, 31 January 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6917.

⁵⁷ Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 7.

⁵⁸ Report No. 9, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 30 June 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/Reports/1, Exhibit II, Special Report “C”.

attempt to hold the Breton peninsula against the advancing German army. On their return to England, supervisors teamed up with the Canteen Committee of the Lord Mayor of Plymouth to supply Canadian troops with refreshments at the docks and railway stations. On 18 June, supervisors proceeded to Falmouth to meet troops returning there. The difficulties inherent in arranging such tasks and the problems encountered in delivering fulsome service were felt constantly. By 30 September 1940, the Salvation Army reported that its canteens had so far served a staggering 618,768 men, 183,450 of them that month alone.⁵⁹ The YMCA complained in October 1940 that it had to serve too many with too little. In addition to its 38 centres in England, its work included,

...a wide-spread Tea Van and Mobile Cinema service over a spread-out area of approximately 2500 square miles: while these numbers are extensive, both in the areas covered and in their number, they could much more nearly meet the needs of the troops if quicker action could be secured in the granting of assistance to our Supervisors in the form of either, or both, Other Ranks from the Army or Civilian Helpers from Canada.⁶⁰

When supplies ordered from Canada were slow coming, soldiers were given another reminder of the problems associated with a reliance on a Canadian distribution hub. The soldiers often went without, or were provided with piecemeal service because either equipment or personnel were detained in Canada or were simply not forthcoming. Despite such problems, partially owing to the growing understanding of the soldier's preference not to patronize the NAAFI, which will be discussed below, Auxiliary Service officials refused occasional British offers of help, "...any future requirements for Mobile Canteens will be met from Canadian Voluntary Organizations. Offer from United Kingdom Organization of

⁵⁹ Salvation Army Canadian War Services Report, 30 September 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI/II, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁶⁰ "Canadian Y.M.C.A. - Report for the Month Ending October 31st, 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, Appendix XXIII/I, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

assistance in this field was consequently declined with appreciation.”⁶¹ Such problems were exacerbated by the inability of the individual supervisor to cope with the plethora of duties, increasing daily, coupled with the army’s refusal to detail military or civilian helpers. The SOAS reported, “National Voluntary Organizations still report being unable to obtain suitable civilian helpers in the United Kingdom and submitted request that permission be granted to bring such personnel over from Canada.”⁶² Officially, the idea of allowing lower category CASF personnel to assist was unsolved at this point, but COs often detailed men to carry out this task, so “that the interests of the welfare of their men would not suffer.”⁶³ This problem continued throughout the fall of 1940,⁶⁴ coming to a head in January 1941, when it was decreed that, “Unless helpers are secured it will be impossible to provide an efficient service to the troops.”⁶⁵ The need to employ Canadians even in auxiliary roles, had an effect on service provision.⁶⁶

The debate over providing civilian helpers also had political roots in Ottawa. Had the government settled the question of pensions for Auxiliary Services personnel, greater numbers of supervisors and helpers would have gone overseas earlier, facilitating service provision. An inspection report of January 1944 complains:

⁶¹ “Organization and Duties – Auxiliary Services (Temporary Outline), War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁶² “Auxiliary Services Report: Aux/2 by Major J.M. Humphrey Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Sept – Dec 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “Organization and Duties – Auxiliary Services (Temporary Outline),” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁶⁵ “Memorandum for Canadian Military Headquarters re Canadian Auxiliary Services,” 11 January 1941, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁶⁶ See the debate on enlistment of Canadian residents in Chapter 1. In particular, see: “Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada to CMHQ, 29 June 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12547, File: 8/ENLIST/1.

The status of supervisors continues to be a source of irritation with them and they feel, with some justification, that as they are serving with troops, and under identical conditions, that they should receive the same consideration respecting pensions and income tax exemption. This, however, is in no way effecting the work they are doing and nowhere was heard anything but praise for their efforts.⁶⁷

Despite their best efforts, without assistance, certain auxiliary services, such as education, suffered partially because of Canadian political imperatives. For example, Lt.-Col. D.E. MacIntyre, acting as special representative of the Adjutant General, wrote, "At present the educational services of the Canadian Legion are suffering because selected Educational Advisors are being held in Canada pending settlement of the pension question."⁶⁸ Helpers were withheld for the same reason.

A number of overlapping factors affected service provision. The troops' desire to patronize Canadian institutes, increasing numbers of Canadians overseas, the lengthening static period, the growth of services provided (including education and sports), and the inability to hire civilian helpers (partially as a result of the government's desire to maintain the Canadian composition of the army) all resulted in unexpectedly high demands on service. The resultant workload became almost unbearable and inevitably resulted in uneven service. The existence of service rivalries and unevenly applied policy (each of which were determined and applied separately at each of the four voluntary organizations)

⁶⁷ "Overseas Inspection Report," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1944, Appendix 14, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324. This report was based on a trip by Lt. Col A. Cairns, Assistant to the Director of Auxiliary Services, between 1 September and 13 November 1943.

⁶⁸ "Memorandum for Canadian Military Headquarters re Canadian Auxiliary Services, 11 Jan 1941," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Appendix III, February 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. Pensions were finally granted to supervisors with the passage of P.C. 44/1555 on 8 March 1944. This order stated that, "Supervisors serving with active units and formations of the Canadian Army shall be deemed to be members of the military forces of Canada on Active Service for all purposes except engaging in combat with the enemy and be subject to military law in all respects as though they were officers holding the rank of Captain, and shall be entitled to the pay and allowances, pensions and all other benefits (except income tax benefits) applicable or pertaining to such a rank..." See: P.C. 44/1555, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1944, Appendix 10, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324.

only exacerbated the problem. It is little wonder that for the first years of the war, Canadian chaplains found themselves inundated with the need to fulfill their titular duties, as well as many auxiliary services.⁶⁹ Eventually, it was decreed that helpers would be drawn from Other Ranks, but would be paid and supported by the Directorate of Auxiliary Services.⁷⁰

Supply problems were a frequent source of frustration; distance from the distribution and production centres of Canada was the primary reason. Necessary equipment was often delayed and enemy naval action took its toll as well. The Red Cross, which operated independently of the four voluntary organizations, but received much of its supply through the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, reported that

Some essential equipment ordered in Canada last February [it was September at time of writing] has not arrived and some has gone to the bottom. Though the supplying of such equipment is obviously a function of the Government just as is the supplying of transport, it is not... the desire of the Canadian people to have their relatives go into hospitals which would be unable to give them the best treatment because of lack of necessary equipment.⁷¹

In addition to medical supplies, delays of recreational equipment, cigarettes and, as we have seen, mails, affected soldier morale and served as an acute reminder of his reliance on supply from Canada. Such delays were one of the few points of contention between soldiers

⁶⁹ The burden placed on the Canadian Chaplains is examined in Chapter 6.

⁷⁰ The use of Other Ranks as helpers was approved on 11 January 1941. Eventually it was decided to set up a dedicated reinforcement stream for the Auxiliary Services to provide helpers as and when necessary. This system paralleled the army's system of Holding Units, which were later renamed Reinforcement Units. A CMHQ Memorandum states: "The Canadian Auxiliary Services Unit (C.A.S.U.) (is) to be a new Unit consisting of a number of detachments and one Holding Unit. The men to be drawn from the enlisted personnel of the Canadian Active Service Force and transferred to the CASU from their present Corps or in some cases directly into it, suitability to the service being a pre-requisite factor." See: "Memorandum for Canadian Military Headquarters re Canadian Auxiliary Services," 11 Jan 1941, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁷¹ "Canadian Red Cross Report – 30th September 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI/VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. Also of note, C.P. Stacey explained why the Red Cross remained separate: "The Canadian Red Cross Society, unlike the auxiliary service organizations, had to remain on a voluntary basis in order to maintain an international character and observe the obligations inherent in the Geneva Convention." See C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 423.

and Auxiliary Services supervisors.⁷² Noted one soldier of the 1st Canadian Base Ordnance Workshop, “There will be some hell raised here when they start holding them (cigarettes) back.”⁷³

While the civilian nature of the organizations and their overseas representatives facilitated the maintenance of links with Canada, it also caused tension with the Department of National Defence almost from the outset. Supervisors repeatedly asked for officer status early in the war, but McNaughton and his advisors believed, with some justification, that, “If supervisors were given military rank, they could not serve two masters and would have to be under military control for all purposes. Their situation would be quite inelastic and undesirable from the point of view of all concerned.”⁷⁴ In the same meeting, it was agreed, “... that the question of military status for supervisors should be dropped.”⁷⁵ But the issue did not end there. McNaughton later commented that, “the Organizations can do their work better as civilians and that they could maintain closer and more friendly relations with the men than if they were graded commission rank.”⁷⁶ In direct opposition, however, “the overseas Head of the Organizations felt that the granting of commissioned rank to their Supervisors would be of considerable assistance to them in the carrying out of their duties.”⁷⁷ In due course, supervisors were granted honorary military status for much the same reason that members of the British Home Guard were afforded

⁷² Soldiers generally understood that, as they put it, “there is a war on.” Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁷³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

⁷⁴ “Notes of a Conference at Canadian Corps Headquarters, 15 January 1940” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “Memorandum on Matters Affecting the four Auxiliary Services Organizations,” 9 December 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

such status. It was felt that since they did serve with combatant troops, were exposed to some danger, and were at risk of becoming POWs, as civilians, should they be captured, they would be in a difficult situation. It was recommended that supervisors, "be duly gazetted as Welfare Services Officers, and being so gazetted, they be then formally attached to their formations as non-combatants, serving in the Forces, but having status as members of the Forces."⁷⁸ The final settlement was that, "they will continue to act as the head of the Auxiliary Services within the formation, in the same manner as Senior Ordnance or other similar Service Officer functions."⁷⁹

Throughout these discussions was the implication that the supervisors' civilian status would facilitate their work. As civilians, it was believed that supervisors could better maintain their organizational links to Canada and also form more meaningful relationships with the men. As such, it was expected that an important part of maintaining troop morale was maintaining a civilian link to Canada. This reflected the structural arrangement in place until late 1941, whereby the auxiliary services were supplied solely by Canadian civilian organizations and funded through Canadian private donations. If ever the welfare services needed supply or funding, the home population was their first and often only recourse. This was inevitably less true after the voluntary organizations' activities became funded out of the public treasury, and they adopted military status, but their links to civil society and their important morale function never entirely disappeared.

The morale benefits of maintaining the voluntary organizations' civilian links were frequently in evidence. Canadian newspapers overseas – whose articles were salient enough

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ "Notes of a Conference at Canadian Corps Headquarters, 15 January 1940" War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

for Auxiliary Services supervisors to clip them out and include them with their monthly war diaries – made clear that soldier welfare was largely dependent on the people of Canada.⁸⁰ A headline of early 1941 declared, “Extra Comforts for Troops Dependent on Appeal to Public.” The article stated,

Civilian Canada will be asked to subscribe \$5,500,000 to the Canadian War Services Fund... It will be a joint appeal carried on for the Canadian Legion, Knights of Columbus, Salvation Army, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and the I.O.D.E. to finance the auxiliary war services... Extra comforts for men in the armed forces can be provided only through public support of this appeal for funds by the organizations which have been giving such services since the outbreak of war.⁸¹

This article also noted the organizations’ early attempts at coordination. Each of the organizations,

... ordinarily solicits the public separately or conducts individual national drives... The government found it necessary to merge these appeals in one... The co-ordinated appeal of these organizations is symbolic of the unity of the Canadian people in their war effort and their desire to stand firmly behind the brave young Canadians who offer their lives to safeguard the freedom of the Dominion.⁸²

Through these services, the government offered a way for Canadian citizens to provide comfort for their overseas soldiers.

Such comforts were especially welcome at Christmas-time and the Directorate worked hard to provide enjoyable holidays. The men always appreciated gifts from Canada: “many Christmas parcels have arrived, and the men express appreciation of gifts from the Canadian Red Cross Organization.”⁸³ For others, the desire to receive parcels from home

⁸⁰ Such clippings can be found in some supervisors’ monthly reports which are appended to the war diaries of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services. Unfortunately, the specific newspapers from which such articles are clipped are not usually divulged.

⁸¹ The clipping from an unidentified newspaper was included as an appendix to an Auxiliary Services reports as an example of the types of reports available in England. See: “Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940.” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 24 November – 7 December 1941, LAC, RG24, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

was evident, although their trust in the delivery system was suspect. Commented one, "If you want to send an Xmas box mail it way before Xmas and make the parcels small and they won't look so tempting to those English thieves who steal our mail."⁸⁴ Supervisors also facilitated and organized Christmas activities, which helped restore a sense of domesticity for soldiers starved for the love of family at Christmas-time. In 1941, one Canadian soldier expressed hope that his unit could throw a party for local English children, "These little kiddies all attend a junior school not far from here and we thought it would make us feel 'more homey' if we could do something like that."⁸⁵ Many of these soldiers seem to have felt as forlorn as the children they were trying to please, but the chance to revive old feelings of holiday cheer obviously warmed many hearts. A soldier of "C" Company, the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, similarly noted,

Some of the kiddies here didn't have very much. We gave in our little boxes that the Y.M.C.A. gave us, and they used them to stage a little Christmas party for the refugee London children here in Bognor. To see the kiddies going home with their "sweets" was a sight for sore eyes. You'd have thought each box contained a million bucks...⁸⁶

References to such activities are numerous every December in war diaries and memoranda working out the details of such parties. At Christmas 1942, men of the 10th Canadian Non-Divisional Ordnance Workshop, RCOC, entertained 200 children in conjunction with the Auxiliary Services; they decorated the hall, showed movies, and gave out candy.⁸⁷ The 45th Canadian General Transport Company, RCASC, entertained 65 children where, "Cartoon films [were] shown in one of the... messes and the children were provided with presents

⁸⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 15 – 28 September 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁸⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 8 – 21 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁸⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁸⁷ "Christmas Parties for Local Children" LAC, MG30 E133, Series 111, Vol. 190, AGL McNaughton Fonds. File PA 5-8-4.

donated by the men from parcels received from Canada. Chocolate bars and lemonade provided refreshments.”⁸⁸ Soldiers dressed up as Santa Claus and others entertained the kids with stage shows, magic, carol singing, movies, and other such fun. I Canadian Corps troops entertained around 6,000 children during Christmas 1942.

In most cases entertainment took the form of moving pictures, sing-song, with a Santa Claus to present each child with a small gift. Refreshments consisted of sandwiches, cocoa, soft drinks, and candy. A great deal of the food and candy was donated by troops from Canadian parcels. Toys were either made by the men or purchased by donations contributed voluntarily... In many cases parents were present.⁸⁹

Soldiers spent many hours making presents for children, donating their pay to fund the purchase of toys, or surrendering valued packages from home all to prepare gifts for English children. For many men, these acts also seem to have brought memories of home and, of course, the sight of smiling children warmed many hearts. Christmas provided another way to recreate Canadian patterns overseas. Such events also did much to reverse the early image of Canadians as thugs and drunks among the British population, who frequently expressed their thanks for the soldiers’ efforts.

The Directorate of Auxiliary Services also took an active interest in the men’s reintegration to Canadian life after discharge. Men honourably discharged in the first three years of the war, mostly because they were deemed medically unfit, required reintegration. The General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation included Brigadier Foster, V.C. Phelan, J.W. McKee and Robert England, all of whom were important Auxiliary Service administrators, the latter heading the Canadian Legion Educational

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Services overseas. Here again was an administrative and personal link for the man overseas. In 1940, it was acknowledged that since,

...the Unemployment Insurance Commission will take some time to set up the Dominion Employment Service...for the time being it seemed essential that the Committees set up by the Auxiliary Services officers of the Department of National Defence and the Committees of the Veterans' Assistance Commission should deal with the special problem in co-operation with the Employment Services.⁹⁰

While the army frowned on providing too much information on rehabilitation – they wanted to avoid a shift toward “peacemindedness”⁹¹ – the Directorate helped to provide information about the soldier’s reintegration to Canadian life once it was known he was returning. Once his time became short, the soldier was officially re-introduced to the realities of Canadian life, such as finding work and navigating the growing benefits administration, rather than being provided educational lectures on the benefits of Canadian citizenship and democracy as had theretofore been the case.⁹² An army report stated that once a man was ear-marked for return he received a cavalcade of information about life in Canada.⁹³ However, even though talk of reintegration was discouraged in general, men recalled hearing such news from their supervisors, who took a prominent role in providing this link to Canadian policy. A soldier from Fort William, Ontario stated, “Our Auxiliary man tells us something about jobs when we get out. I think were [sic] in for some tough

⁹⁰ Minutes of Joint Meeting of Special Sub-Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation and Sub-Committee on Employment Service” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, September 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁹¹ Peacemindedness here refers to the idea that the information on rehabilitation and demobilization provided to the soldier should be minimized until it was known that the man was being sent back to Canada. A good deal of contemporaneous information, including the soldiers’ frustration at having this information withheld, is contained in: “Special Report No. 161 – Attitudes of Army Personnel Recently Returned From Overseas,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 5, File 8917-3-7, “Morale Reports - Special Reports to Branches of National Defence Headquarters.” Hereafter: Special Report No. 161.

⁹² Ibid. Additionally, educational lectures and lessons on citizenship are discussed in Chapter 4.

⁹³ Ibid.

times, but he's full of encouraging words..."⁹⁴ An education "officer" explained, "the men have not yet the necessary information on rehabilitation and other government plans while they are overseas,"⁹⁵ while a corporal under his command commented about this officer, "We had no information on rehabilitation except what the Education [sergeant] in the Unit explained."⁹⁶ A senior YMCA supervisor expressed his belief that Auxiliary Services should take an even greater role in the men's long-term rehabilitation and post-war prospects in Canada. He wrote:

I cannot lose sight of the long term results. Always feel that we should be doing more in the way of program that will make for lasting impression, and benefit the men long after the war is over... I feel sincerely that we have a great opportunity to ensure that our men will win the peace for themselves after they have won the war... we, in my estimation have few games. Most of them are parades. Wreck-creating, not recreating... I'm sure we're doing too much entertaining and not nearly enough of providing opportunities for men to learn to use their own leisure time for enjoyment and advancement.⁹⁷

While supervisors were restricted in the information they could provide, what news the men did receive about their futures in Canada usually came through a Directorate representative of one kind or another. Their knowledge of conditions in Canada facilitated the flow – albeit halting – of such information.

The responsibility of providing all kinds of news from Canada – not just the largely restricted information about rehabilitation – fell largely on supervisors. Where they had no such responsibility, many men approached them as the most likely agents to supply such news. On a visit to an RCAMC Hospital in Taplow, Major P.J. Philpott noted, "Current

⁹⁴ "Pte. Jeffreys to Marion W. Jeffreys, Fort William, Ontario," October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/2.

⁹⁵ Special Report No. 161. Report of a Unit Educational Officer at D.D.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 January – 1 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

Canadian magazines were requested.”⁹⁸ On 4 January 1941, “The first broadcast took place in the series arranged by the Canadian Legion, of Canadian news for Canadian troops in England.”⁹⁹ In 1943, the four voluntary organizations increased their budgets to include the weekly purchase of newspapers and periodicals from Canada, by that time a constant demand. It was,

...unanimously agreed that the four Organizations should submit a Supplementary Budget covering the purchase of every issue of the following publications in Canada:-

1,000 Montreal Standard
1,000 Toronto Star
1,000 New World
1,000 Macleans
1,000 Library [books]¹⁰⁰

In July 1943, General Price Montague, at that time Senior Combatant Officer at CMHQ, noted, “The Directorate of Auxiliary Services works diligently to bring the products of Canada to its soldiers overseas.”¹⁰¹ Supervisors, for example, arranged to have copies of a book of French-Canadian folksongs sent over for use in sing-songs.¹⁰² The inside cover of the book delineates its Canadian pedigree,

⁹⁸ “Memorandum of Visit of Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services, to No. 5 Dominion General Hospital, Taplow, on the 28th August 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. The hospital seems to have been misnamed in the report. This is likely a reference to No. 5 Canadian General Hospital, Taplow, RCAMC, which was opened in the summer of 1940. See: W.R. Feasby, ed., *Official History of the Canadian Medical Services, 1939-1945: Volume 1: Organization and Campaigns* (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1953), 78.

⁹⁹ “Canadian Legion War Services, Inc. Monthly Report,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, Appendix VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹⁰⁰ “Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Representatives Committee,” 6 August 1943, DHH 159.1012 (D1) Aux Services, 9 Sep 42 – 17 Nov 43. This works out to a ratio of about one Canadian publication for every 50-60 men in England.

¹⁰¹ Letter from P.J. Montague to Henry D. Myer, Esq., 29 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12712, File: 20/COMPLAINTS/3.

¹⁰² Supervisors organized evening sing-songs, which were especially popular in the winter when there was “increased risk of boredom”. General H.D.G. Crerar actively supported these as commander I Canadian Corps. Asking commanders to encourage and help organize events and supervisors to provide song sheets, slides, instruments, and other necessary items. See: “Recreational Activities,” 4 Oct 42, LAC, MG30 E133, Series 111, Vol. 190, AGL McNaughton Fonds. File PA 5-8-4

Ce petit recueil est tiré surtout des chansons canadiennes dont le musée national garde la collection; quelques-unes de ses pièces proviennent des *Chansons populaires du Canada* d'Ernest Gagnon, publiées à Québec en 1865. Toutes ces chansons, sauf deux, sont de source française mais elles furent mieux conservées chez nous que dans leur pays d'origine; et la plupart ne sont guère connues en France.¹⁰³

The book's author goes on to draw a clear link between the uniquely Quebecois historical uses of such songs, and their utility for French-Canadian soldiers overseas.

Les canotiers, les voyageurs, les bûcherons, et les habitants ont jadis beaucoup chanté, et avant qu'ils se soient tus, on a recueilli, pour les conservés, des milliers de leurs chansons. Les quelques pièces de leur merveilleux répertoire, présentées ici, pourront servir une fois de plus pour égayer, cette fois, les soldats dans les camps, en marche, ou au front, et pour contribuer ainsi à l'œuvre commune de la victoire.¹⁰⁴

The implication here was that happy soldiers win wars, and these soldiers would be made happy by singing the songs of their ancestors. Auxiliary service supervisors often arranged sing-songs in which such texts were used. The Salvation Army alone reported that by 31 October 1940, some 39,610 French- and English-speaking men had participated in sing-songs.¹⁰⁵

In December 1940, CMHQ gave its approval of the Directorate's policy of "allowing the Organizations to assist in the adjustment of the men's personal, family, or business problems."¹⁰⁶ While undoubtedly supervisors helped many men through personal interviews and in acting as liaison with their families back home, Canadian army chaplains did the lion's share of this work. The various problems facing the auxiliary services in the

¹⁰³ Marius Barbeau, *Le Soldat Canadien Chante* (Ottawa: Service de guerre de la Légion canadienne, 1940). This booklet is preserved in the Directorate of Auxiliary Services war diary for November 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, November 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "Salvation Army Canadian War Services Report – 31st October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix XXIII/III/Exhibit A, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹⁰⁶ "Memorandum on Matters Affecting the four Auxiliary Services Organizations," 9 December 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-28 February 1941, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

first two years – having too few supervisors and no helpers, working at cross purposes with the other voluntary organizations, funding worries because of the need to rely on public donation, supply problems through NAAFI and from Canada – all contributed to impaired service provision. This was a problem about which chaplains frequently complained.

Reliance on the padre was natural given that he was always *in situ* and usually willing to undertake this work. Because of this, the chaplain was often viewed as the bearer of gifts and support from Canada. Supervisors sometimes sought the chaplains' advice on personnel matters. The 3rd Division's Senior Chaplain (RC) reported that the Knights of Columbus were having trouble with one of their supervisors. The chaplain, "advised them to present [him], *sine mora*, with the good old order of the boot, or a pair of boots if they considered them more effective."¹⁰⁷

Many chaplains were also responsible for providing entertainments normally reserved for auxiliary supervisors, especially at remote locations and in hospitals where services were more thinly spread. A chaplain's report from a convalescent depot, discussing the amount of "auxiliary" hours on the job, explains that,

35 hours have been used arranging the hall, assisting wherever necessary, looking after details. In the case of talkies, the necessary arrangements for films, their reception and dispatch as well as the choosing of desirable films has taken considerable time...¹⁰⁸

Because such duties were so often thrust upon the chaplains, they frequently became *de facto* recreation officers, especially in the first two years. One such padre at the Canadian Base Units reported that he had made arrangements with the "Metro Goldwyn Mayer people to send moving pictures for the entertainment of the men once a week throughout

¹⁰⁷ 3rd Div Senior Chaplain's Report, 14 October 1941, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), October 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹⁰⁸ Monthly Report (May), War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (Protestant), May 1941, Appendix J, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

the winter.”¹⁰⁹ This was quite a coup for an individual chaplain, considering the troops’ expressed desire for North American films that the Auxiliary Services had been unable to fulfil eight months earlier:

On the question of Canadian and American 16 mm films from Canada... Lt. Col. Macintyre [acting Senior representative of the Canadian Legion]... had not been able to succeed in purchasing films outright for export to Great Britain due to difficulties within the film industry as to rights for showing in the respective countries. This was a matter of disappointment in the interest of the troops.¹¹⁰

Despite these difficulties, chaplains generally recognized the supervisors’ difficult situation and did their best to fulfil important auxiliary roles.¹¹¹ The almost symbiotic service relationship is seen in a War Diary entry of 14 October 1941. The Senior Chaplain, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, reported that the Knights of Columbus, rather than having their supervisors seek out every smoker in the area, issued 2,500 cigarettes to each chaplain every month for distribution.¹¹²

Thanks in large part to the Auxiliary Services, with substantial help from the Canadian public, soldiers rarely went without their smokes. Cigarette supply was an important consideration, especially for the soldier going without, and provided small but ubiquitous reminders of Canada. Disagreements over cigarette distribution also aggravated internecine rivalry among the voluntary organizations. Like most morale and comforts questions there was no “cigarette policy” at war’s outbreak. In late 1939, the Over-Seas League of Canada published a flyer for Canadian distribution showing cigarette-smoking soldiers. The accompanying caption read, “Send us Plenty of Smokes! It’s what we need

¹⁰⁹ Monthly Report (August), War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (Protestant), August 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

¹¹⁰ Report No. 15, Auxiliary Services Overseas, December 31st 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13320, File: 23/Reports/1/2.

¹¹¹ For an examination of the chaplains’ auxiliary role, see Chapter 6.

¹¹² 3rd Div Senior Chaplain’s Report, 14 October 1941, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), October 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

most!!” Beneath it, “Smokes [are a] relief to nerve-strain in their hours off duty – and in those tedious periods of watching and waiting. A solace to weary men. A big help to the enduring of discomforts, pain and agony.” One of the illustrations shows a young boy hugging his soldier father goodbye, underneath the image, a caption: “Doesn’t Daddy Deserve Cigarettes?” The poster concludes, “Will you help to give them what they ask for? (Canadian tobacco for Canadian troops) by contributing to the Over-Seas League (Canada) Tobacco and Hamper Fund.”¹¹³ Brigadier F. Logie Armstrong, Deputy Adjutant General (DAG), informed Brigadier Foster that various Canadian tobacco makers adopted a procedure by which any individual might send 300 smokes – one carton contained 12 packages with 25 cigarettes each – for \$1.00. He informed the Overseas League of this and, shortly thereafter, all tobacco makers in Canada adopted the policy. Logie Armstrong noted, however, that,

... there will be no organization which will arrange for the coordination of the efforts of the people in Canada so as to ensure that a continuous supply of cigarettes and tobacco will be forwarded throughout the war.¹¹⁴

He concluded that a system still needed to be hashed out. On 8 March 1940, McNaughton received orders from Ottawa stipulating:

1. Arrangements have been made for the shipment of cigarettes from Canada to the United Kingdom free of duty if they are intended as gifts for the troops and are addressed to Commanding Officers of Units. 2. Commanding Officers receiving such parcels are... acting in trust... the contents of the parcels are intended for distribution to all ranks under their command.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ “Send us Plenty of Smokes!” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10140, File: 23/COMFORTS/5 - Cigarettes and tobacco for troops.

¹¹⁴ F. Logie Armstrong to Brigadier W.W. Foster, 9 February 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10140, File: 23/COMFORTS/5 - Cigarettes and tobacco for troops.

¹¹⁵ To GOC 1st Canadian Div, 8 March 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10140, File: 23/COMFORTS/5 - Cigarettes and tobacco for troops.

The correspondence stipulates that Canadian-made cigarettes were most desirable, and that efforts had to be made to supply them from home. Use of the bonded warehouse in the basement of the Beaver Club to import large stocks of cigarettes ensured the close involvement of the Auxiliary Services, which had a large hand in the Club's administration.

Most smokes came directly from Canada. For example, "A large consignment of cigarettes (148,000) has been received from Canada and has been distributed throughout the [1st Canadian] Division at the rate of one package of 10 cigarettes to every man."¹¹⁶ Despite attempts to rationalize cigarette distribution, smokes were imported to Britain using a number of avenues. The aforementioned system of shipping them to COs was one method. Family members and friends in Canada sending cigarettes in parcels for the soldiers was another. Third was the Beaver Club's warehouse. Each of the voluntary organizations distributed smokes according to the individual organization's policy. However, the Knights of Columbus was the only one of the four to routinely distribute free cigarettes, handing out 95,000 in the month of October 1940 alone.¹¹⁷ The other voluntary organizations, each focusing on areas of welfare services that itself felt best addressed soldier needs, spent their funds elsewhere. Still, the other organizations feared that the free cigarette allotment might psychologically elevate the Knights of Columbus services by comparison.

Smaller consignments of smokes were also sent from time to time from local communities and provincial associations in Canada for distribution among troops from their locality: "Another lot of 32,000 cigarettes has been received from Provincial Chapter,

¹¹⁶ "Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940." War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 2.

¹¹⁷ "Knights of Columbus Canadian Army Huts - Report for the Month of October 31st, 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IV, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

I.O.D.E., Edmonton, Alberta, and distributed amongst the Alberta troops as requested.”¹¹⁸

On the whole, soldiers viewed this particular link with Canada positively because such gifts reminded them of their home communities. Each package sent to soldiers in the first consignment sent overseas as part of the Mayor’s Cigarette Fund in Verdun, Quebec, in March 1941, contained a note: “This gesture reflects the admiration and gratitude we feel towards you.”¹¹⁹ One writer, referring to Canada as the “Land of milk and honey,” expressed his gratitude that some of the men have “a few friends in Canada to send us smokes at least.”¹²⁰ Another soldier from Verdun wrote, “Not only are the cigarettes welcome because of the high cost of tobacco in this country, and (strictly between ourselves) the superiority of Canadian ‘smokes,’ but also because they are a great reminder that those back home are thinking of us as we are of them.”¹²¹ The number of cigarettes sent overseas eventually reached massive proportions. At Christmas 1943 alone, Lt.-Col. Deacon reported, “20,966,715 cigarettes were sent overseas for free distribution to Canadian Service personnel during the holiday season.”¹²² Because of such measures, Canadian soldiers rarely purchased English cigarettes, which they believed to be greatly inferior.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Information on the Canadian policy regarding cigarettes can also be found in a file on the purchase of American cigarettes, which were needed to fill the Canadians’ apparently insatiable demand – often for du Maurier brand cigarettes. While the government did purchase a small amount of cigarettes from the United States when civilian and military demand outstripped Canadian production, soldiers expressed a clear preference for their favourite Canadian brands. See: “Purchase of American Cigarettes, Correspondence,” January – October 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10173, File: 23/US CIGS/1.

¹¹⁹ This is recorded in Serge Durlinger, *Fighting From Home*, 61.

¹²⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 15 – 28 September 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/3.

¹²¹ Serge Durlinger, *Fighting From Home*, 64. This was from a letter to the Mayor’s Cigarette Fund by Signalman W.E. Payne, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, written on 13 September 1942.

¹²² “Auxiliary Services, Weekly Progress Report,” 1 January 1943 [sic, should read “1944”], War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1944, Appendix 1, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324.

The rivalries exposed between the voluntary organizations over the question of cigarette supply were evident elsewhere and from early on. With the number of Canadian troops in England growing weekly, it slowly became apparent that greater service coordination was necessary. In early 1941, Major Humphrey had begun to express annoyance that “not one of the services will submit budgets... the Salvation Army stating they will do so only once [they] receive confirmation that YMCA has done so too.”¹²³ Reports from voluntary organizations’ HQs in Canada reveal the rush to be the first to offer service in September 1939, and if they did not succeed, to mention that their services are so important and well known that they were inundated even before such service could be proffered.

We need only recall that with the declaration of war came the offer to the Government of the experience of the Canadian YMCA and the services of its trained personnel. Before the Government could acknowledge its grateful acceptance of the offer, the YMCAs across the Dominions had swung open their buildings for services to men in uniform.¹²⁴

The official histories of two of these voluntary organizations each claim that their organization was the first to approach the government to offer its services even before the outbreak of hostilities. Each organization took great pride in its being proactively concerned with the soldiers’ welfare, although such claims implicitly deride the contribution of the other organizations.¹²⁵ The other two services, although not claiming to be first, proudly proclaimed that their services were offered on “the first day of the war.”¹²⁶

Incidence of such rivalries overseas followed. On the quality of *its* paper, a Legion

¹²³ “Memorandum: Major Humphrey to Col. R.J. Manion,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10173, File 23/Visits/2 - Visit of Col. R.J. Manion.

¹²⁴ “National Council of YMCAs of Canada, War Services Committee Report for February 1940.” DHH 159.1013 (D19), YMCA War Services Repts, Jan/Jul 40 (Mr. JW Beaton).

¹²⁵ Young, *The Red Shield in Action*, 3; Bowering, *Service*, 104.

¹²⁶ Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II*; Knights of Columbus (Canada), *War Services of Canadian Knights of Columbus*.

report stated, "...there is a great demand for the Canadian Legion Writing paper and envelopes owing to its superior quality."¹²⁷ The Knights of Columbus, referring to supposedly shared sports equipment, mentioned, "We try to keep the equipment, as far as possible, under our control."¹²⁸ Unevenness over cigarette supply has already been noted. Complaints from the men about uneven service provision followed.

There is some trouble brewing among the various Auxiliary Services here. They are all peeved at the K of C for the reason that the K of C have nothing for sale, everything is given away free. The others who do not sell all their stuff, sell at least the best part of it. Some sell all. Some sell part and give away part. Do you recall a campaign last year which gained around \$5,000,000 to be spent on the boys here? Some of us do and have little or no intention of spending our money at the YMCA and other such outfits when this stuff has already been paid for a couple of times at home. It really stinks.¹²⁹

An officer of the 30th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA, commented similarly,

If you ever get asked about the Canadian Legion, I wish you would give them a boost from me. Here they provide all sorts of recreational equipment for us – radios, footballs, dart boards, dominoes, cards, crib boards and lots of other little things. As far as I can see they are much better than the Y.M.C.A., K of C, etc. The Salvation Army is quite good in its way too.¹³⁰

This soldier had likely felt the effects of initial steps toward service standardization, hence his comment that the Salvation Army was good "in its way," suggesting it had an area of expertise. Another commented, "Don't you give that Red Cross or YMCA anything when they come around – They don't give nothing away here."¹³¹ The censor noted, "Usually one

¹²⁷ "Canadian Legion War Services, Monthly Report for Month Ending October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹²⁸ "Knights of Columbus, Canadian Army Huts – Monthly Report, October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix IV, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹²⁹ Telegram #PO/88838/41 from "JIM" to W.H. Savor Esq., Nov 11, 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3. These comments were heard just as reforms recommended in Colonel Manion's report were about to be implemented.

¹³⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹³¹ Ibid.

service is preferred to another, according to the particular unit served.”¹³² Comments on the Canadian nature of the service were also typical. One soldier, preferring the YMCA to the other services gushed, “I can honestly say that without a doubt the Y.M.C.A. is the finest social organization for soldiers in this country, of course its Canadian for Canadians only... its like a paradise.”¹³³ Evidently, even after “standard service” was achieved, the soldiers still harboured certain preferences.

Thus, at the beginning of 1941 certain modifications and changes were made in the organization of the auxiliary services to eliminate the causes of rivalry. Since each of the four voluntary organizations had originally prepared its own program, it was possible to realize uniformity of service only incrementally, and even by war’s end it was impossible to fully realize such an ideal. It was found that each supervisor serving with the troops in the field required one mobile motion picture projector, one mobile canteen, one set of sports equipment sufficient to serve 1,000 men, and supplies of radio sets, indoor games, magazines, and stationery. This was not always feasible. The result was that the Directorate’s military staff was required to spend much time “to blend and harmonize” the work of the voluntary organizations in order “to avoid overlapping, discrimination and in some cases a waste of effort and material.”¹³⁴

At the request of the Canadian government, Robert J. Manion visited the army overseas during the spring and summer of 1941 and wrote a report on his findings.¹³⁵ Manion arrived in England on 13 April 1941 and toured all over the British Isles where

¹³² Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 18 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Report of Col. R.J. Manion to the Minister of National Defence on Auxiliary Services Overseas,” August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10173, File: 23/Visits/2, “Visit of Col. R.J. Manion.”

¹³⁵ Ibid. Manion was granted the honorific rank of Colonel for the purposes of this inspection tour.

Canadian troops could be found and witnessed the breadth of services providing a little slice of home. He visited hospitals, sat through educational lectures and classes of the Canadian Legion Educational Services, and held discussions with the heads of the voluntary organizations and the heads of the arms and services and senior formation commanders of the Canadian Corps. On his tour, Manion heard complaints of “unevenness”, “inequality”, duplication of effort,” and “competition or rivalry,” partially because of the rivalries outlined above, and because the four organizations were not equally equipped to give assistance to their supervisors.¹³⁶

The results of Manion’s work were submitted to the Canadian government in August 1941. He had high praise for the work so far accomplished, but added a number of recommendations. Some were:

- That supervisors be given pensions to the same extent as the soldiers they served, which would raise their morale.
- That the four organizations pool supplies, such as the highly problematic and in demand sports equipment, to avoid competition, duplication and rivalry.
- That the four organizations form a board of trustees overseas.
- That a system of cooperative purchase of supplies be implemented for the benefit of all supervisors.
- That the relationship between the voluntary organization, the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, and CMHQ be clearly defined.¹³⁷

Boiled down, Manion had recommended that the government force the voluntary organizations to cooperate with each other from top to bottom. Change was already underway, but, as a result of Colonel Manion’s report, it was possible to go farther in reorganization, both overseas and in Canada, than the four voluntary organizations would have been able to achieve themselves.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Originally, the four voluntary organizations had endeavoured to finance their war work by separate appeals for money in Canada, but in March 1941 they united in a common joint appeal for \$5,500,000.¹³⁸ In fact, \$7,000,000 was raised and held by the Canadian War Services Fund, to be drawn on by each organization as required.¹³⁹ For 1942, the Canadian government decided, however, that different measures would have to be adopted. Thereafter the government decided to finance, "from the public treasury," the requirements of the auxiliary services organizations.¹⁴⁰ Henceforth, control over the budgets and expenditures of the auxiliary service organizations was vested in the National War Charities Fund's Advisory Board which thereafter recommended the release of funds to the Minister of National War Services on request. This was the administrative and financial background to service rationalization overseas, which R.J. Manion had recommended to eliminate waste and inter-service rivalry.

In fact, Major Humphrey, ADAS, had begun pressuring the organizations to provide uniform service in early 1941. Up until then the services provided were rather uneven. In an attempt to comply with Humphrey's request, the Canadian Legion and the Knights of Columbus had each agreed to endeavour to supply canteen facilities and make motion picture projectors available for the units their supervisors served.¹⁴¹ On 24 March 1941 the senior representatives of the four auxiliary service organizations agreed to pool their requirements for 16-mm film; and a film library was set up under the management of the

¹³⁸ "6 Charity Groups Formed Into One For Joint Appeal," *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 March 1941. This joint appeal coincided with the formation of the Canadian War Services Fund, which was formed to "combine the financial appeals of the Canadian auxiliary services organizations." This appeal included the four national voluntary organizations along with the YWCA and the IODE.

¹³⁹ "Press Release by Hon. J.T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services, 28 Feb 1942," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10162, File: 23/POLICY/1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Memorandum – Auxiliary Services, Re: Organization Affecting Co-ordination," 9 June 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10162, File: 23/Policy/1.

Salvation Army at Horsham.¹⁴² On 7 July it was agreed that the four organizations should jointly bear the costs of entertainment by professional concert parties, which to that point the Canadian Legion had solely borne. During the spring the Canadian Legion and the Knights of Columbus had obtained a number of mobile canteens and motion picture projectors, which facilitated the delivery of “standard service” for all units.

Such a step had been virtually achieved by the end of August, at which time it was agreed by the four senior representatives that in order to permit “initiative without overlapping” each organization should still provide special leadership in one particular activity.¹⁴³ By this agreement, sports and recreation became the responsibility of the YMCA, concerts and entertainment that of the Canadian Legion, canteens and cinemas of the Salvation Army, and hospitality and special functions of the Knights of Columbus.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it was still necessary for every supervisor to cater to all the immediate needs of the men he served; but, within every formation, each organization appointed a supervisor to lead in its own particular specialities. The ADAS, Major Humphrey, still coordinated all activities through the senior representatives of the four organizations. By the following summer, some positive results were noted, “All round satisfaction is being obtained by the amalgamation of all service clubs.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid. By late 1943, “the cinema depot at Horsham housed four hundred and fifty projectors running to maintain nine hundred picture shows every week put on by the supervisors of the four Auxiliary Service Organizations. This depot is said to be the largest film service in the United Kingdom. A million and half feet of film is inspected every week and new film is made available for showing to Canadian personnel as soon as it is turned out in London.” See: Overseas Inspection Report,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1944, Appendix 14, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324. This report was based on a trip by Lt. Col A. Cairns, Assistant to the Director of Auxiliary Services, between September 1 and November 13, 1943.

¹⁴³ Report No. 23, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 31st August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/REPORTS/1/2.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 June – 3 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

Major Humphrey's workload was lessened on 1 October 1941, with the arrival overseas of Flight-Lieutenant J.J. Hogan, an Auxiliary Services Officer sent to establish a Department of Auxiliary Services exclusively for the RCAF.¹⁴⁶ Following the formation of First Canadian Army on 6 April 1942, a Deputy Assistant Director, Auxiliary Service (DADAS) was appointed to its HQ. Auxiliary Services officers had already been allocated to divisions, corps and army troops, and CRU to coordinate the work of the civilian supervisors. Thus, in certain respects, efficiency required a measure of military control. Nevertheless, the independence of the national voluntary organizations was held as sacrosanct, largely in recognition of the importance of the civilian nature of the service on morale. For example, Overseas Routine Order No. 975 stated in part, "It is desirable that the Auxiliary Service Organizations shall maintain their independence in regard to their general policies and methods of carrying out their work."¹⁴⁷

The supply of supervisors tended to lag behind as the Canadian Army Overseas grew in units and numbers and, from time to time, suitable older men were taken from the ranks and made supervisors, to augment the numbers being sent over from Canada. By the end of February 1943, the number of supervisors had increased to 187 and by the end of that year still further to 269. Of these, 84 supervisors were serving with Canadian troops of the Central Mediterranean Force in Italy.¹⁴⁸

Thus, the overseas "welfare" situation enjoyed greater standardization and improved operation by 1942-1943. For their part, chaplains reported more cooperation with

¹⁴⁶ "History – Auxiliary Services Overseas," 1st November 1944, DHH 181.003 (D566), Auxiliary Services Overseas 1940/44.

¹⁴⁷ Overseas Routine Order No. 925, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6640, "Canadian Army Overseas orders."

¹⁴⁸ "Report on the First Combined Conference by the four National Voluntary Organizations Serving Canadian Forces Overseas, London, January, 1944," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, February 1944, LAC, RG24, Volume 13324.

supervisors as the latter's resources and ability to cope improved after standardization and the provision of suitable numbers of personnel in the form of supervisors and military helpers. The experience of the soldiers themselves, in working with and receiving auxiliary services, helped smooth many of the earlier problems. Evidence of closer cooperation can be seen in a meeting of United Kingdom supervisors of all four organizations. At the meeting, held on 17 January 1943, Supervisor Simester of the Salvation Army, gave a keynote address noting that in sport, if not elsewhere, the four Auxiliary Services – “the four-team soldier-service league” – must cooperate because “no aspect is more indissociable with the maintenance of morale in an army.”¹⁴⁹ While complaints remained right up to the end of the war, by the end of 1941, less organizational confusion seems apparent, which in turn smoothed the soldier's transition to life overseas. Beginning at this time, censors frequently remarked on newer arrivals' more favourable impressions of life in England. A recently arrived soldier of the 1st Canadian Armoured Car Regiment commented, “Have seen signs of very good organization over here – a welcome change.”¹⁵⁰ Another commented, “don't worry – I'm just as safe as I was in Canada and a hell of a lot better taken care of. They really have a system in the army over here.”¹⁵¹

The troops' preference for Canadian products and services was clear in many areas. They were especially vocal about canteens and entertainment services. In the initial absence of coordinated services overseas, the troops patronized NAAFI services. Stacey and Wilson's claim that these, “never managed to achieve much popularity with

¹⁴⁹ “Supervisors and His Relationship to Sport,” 17 January 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 2/Sports/1/8, “Sports Activities – Generally.

¹⁵⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Canadians,” is an understatement.¹⁵² The conclusion of the Manion report, stating that where NAAFI served alone it was universally approved of, is also optimistic.¹⁵³ By and large, Canadian soldiers despised the NAAFI canteens. A soldier of the 1st Army Tank Brigade Ordnance, RCOC, commented, “The NAAFI will be the cause of a Major riot, they charge the highest prices for the lowest quality, and their help is rude to you, also they will only give the worst service. None of them would last 10 minutes in any canteen run by efficient Canadians.”¹⁵⁴ Comparisons with superior Canadian service are ubiquitous in soldier references to NAAFI.

Canadian troops also heaped scorn on the NAAFI’s perceived monopoly in camp areas. A soldier stationed at the 2nd Canadian Artillery Holding Unit explained, “They have a stranglehold on the trade, the [Salvation Army] and [Y.M.C.A.] can’t get anything because the NAAFI have a monopoly. They sell things dearer than in town, but because they’re handy, they get the trade.”¹⁵⁵ Another soldier of the 4th Battalion, RCE complained, “When we were at one camp here the [Knights of Columbus] tea wagon used to come around twice a week. The fellows at the NAAFI stopped that. They gave us a terrible licking at that camp. They were making a lot of money for themselves...”¹⁵⁶ Soldiers often commented on the fact that Canadian citizens had paid for what the voluntary organizations provided for them, which they felt distinguished Canadian services from NAAFI. A soldier of 3rd Division Headquarters commented that the Canadian Legion, “are by far the best of

¹⁵² C.P. Stacey and Barbara Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 94.

¹⁵³ Report of Col. R.J. Manion to the Minister of National Defence on Auxiliary Services Overseas,” August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10173, File: 23/Visits/2.

¹⁵⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁵⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 18 April – 2 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

¹⁵⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 8 – 21 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

the organizations and they seem to be the only ones that aren't out for profit."¹⁵⁷ This comment also reflects the unevenness of service provided by the Canadian auxiliary services since one is singled out for praise. Another, reflecting contemporaneous myths and prejudices, added of the NAAFI, "... they are worse than the Nazi themselves nothing but a Bunch of Bloody Jews".¹⁵⁸ Summing up soldier attitudes to the British-run canteens, the field censor noted,

All welfare organizations are repeatedly praised with the exception of the NAAFI, which is referred to as "a scandalous racket" and "a swindle" where exorbitant prices are charged for inferior goods. The Maple Leaf, the Eagle and the Beaver Clubs all rank high in esteem, the Knights of Columbus is possibly the favourite service, but all come in for their share of praise.¹⁵⁹

Such problems became so intense that before the end of 1940 the Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services arranged a series of meetings with NAAFI executives to establish service standards.

According to these discussions, the supposed "monopoly" was part myth and part reality but was real enough to cause official concern. The British pressed their interests strongly, which had a real and detrimental effect on Canadian service provision. As a result of NAAFI remonstrations, the Directorate agreed to limit its services and maintain pricing similar to that in British-run canteens where direct competition existed.¹⁶⁰ This gave soldiers the perception that NAAFI was forcing out the Canadian services and monopolizing sales and profits, a not entirely unjustified concern. The fact that NAAFI

¹⁵⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 18 April – 2 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. This soldier did not provide his unit.

¹⁵⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Vol. 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁶⁰ The concerns of NAAFI executives regarding Canadian auxiliary services are summed up in the minutes of a meeting of those executives with Major J.M. Humphrey, ADAS, in October 1940. Please see "Minutes of a Meeting between Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services and Executives of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes on 17 October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IX, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

executives perceived the Canadian auxiliary services as competition in base areas contributed to higher prices and resentment among the enlisted men. Evidence of such resentment pervades the documentary record. For example, a soldier of the 1st Canadian Ordnance Holding Unit, RCOC, complained, “the NAAFI have a concession on all the camps and how they do lay it on – who ever is at the head of it must make a pile of money.”¹⁶¹ A member of the 48th Highlanders of Canada opined, “There is a NAAFI in the camp and boy, is it dirty and they are trying to clip us for everything we buy. We want either the Sally Ann or the Y.M.C.A. but the latter can’t operate while the NAAFI is in the camp.”¹⁶² Another soldier of the 1st Canadian Base Ordnance Workshop complained, “I blame it on the NAAFI. The Canadians are not buying enough of them limey smokes off of them.... We are getting nothing out of them at all. They even forced the S. Ann and the Y. from giving us free tea...”¹⁶³

Increasing soldier complaints necessitated some kind of understanding. In a 17 October 1940 meeting in Surrey, Major Humphrey agreed to certain operating terms with the NAAFI executives. While NAAFI agreed to treat some Canadian concerns and desires sympathetically, they still insisted on their own terms. For example, NAAFI raised no objection, “to Canadian Voluntary Organizations opening up Dry Canteens cum Recreation Centres, in localities where Canadian troops were billeted, provided such localities were not permanent barrack locations such as Aldershot, Bordon, etc.”¹⁶⁴ It was further stipulated that in such circumstances, Canadian canteens could not be set up within three

¹⁶¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ “Minutes of a Meeting between Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services and Executives of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes on 17 October 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IX, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

miles of a centre served by NAAFI. This was an onerous condition considering that a large number of Canadian troops were attached to the Canadian Holding Units (later the Canadian Reinforcement Units), which were stationed at Aldershot and surrounding areas.¹⁶⁵ The policy also ensured that in areas without permanent barracks, Auxiliary Services could only provide services as they wished and at their own pricing as long as NAAFI services were unavailable. Where the British were operating, Canadians had to charge NAAFI prices. This had the effect of creating an impression of unfair competition, further fuelling Canadian anger at British insensitivity. A soldier of the Royal Canadian Regiment voiced his anger over such perceptions in no uncertain terms: "We lost our Y.M.C.A. as there is a NAAFI here and they won't let anyone set up place nearer than three miles. They should run it out of the country as it is nothing but a Jew outfit and the boys don't patronize it very good so maybe it will fold up."¹⁶⁶ Regulations inhibiting the free functioning of Canadian services fuelled intense anger, speculation, and rumour.

At the 13 October 1940 meeting it was settled that the "National Voluntary Organizations (Canada) agreed to maintain their prices on similar articles for sale, at [rates] level with NAAFI"¹⁶⁷ Similarly, this stipulation fuelled speculation that NAAFI made a habit of meddling in Canadian business. Soldiers bitterly and frequently complained that were it not for NAAFI collusion, they would pay lower, Canadian, prices. It was officially stipulated that, "any net profits made by Canadian Voluntary Organizations would be

¹⁶⁵ As the army grew, most new recruits from Canada were put into the reinforcement stream on arrival in England and so for many their first station was at Aldershot and Bordon, where they were immediately exposed to the NAAFI monopoly.

¹⁶⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁶⁷ "Minutes of a Meeting between Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services and Executives of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes on 17 October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IX, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

returned in additional free services to the Canadian troops (unless otherwise determined in agreement with Canadian Military Headquarters).”¹⁶⁸ The NAAFI would pay rebates of 6% monthly to units that used NAAFI services; this was compared to the Canadian voluntary services policy of returning “any profits” to the units. Such conditions likely fuelled further perceptions among the soldiers that the NAAFI was bilking not only Canadian soldiers, but the Canadian people and government too. Because of the perception that the British sought to place their interests above the Canadians’, many Canadians expressed anger and resentment, which in turn nurtured feelings of solidarity with Canadians and distance from the British. The field censor noted the soldiers’ view that the Canadian public had paid for what the voluntary organizations provided, which they viewed as a “national” benefit. This also distinguished Canadian soldiers from their British counterparts.¹⁶⁹ An officer of No. 6 Canadian Provost Corps complained of political inaction on the point.

What we want here is a few men over there who can run Canada as Canadians not sell it to England when it comes to the point when a Canadian Regiment can’t have its own canteen just because a group of English Plutocrats [sic] run an organization called NAAFI and put canteens all over the country and is known as the biggest swindling racket on earth.¹⁷⁰

Another soldier writing from London complained that the NAAFI was effectively stealing Canadian public and private funds. He wrote:

We are supposed to be separated from the English and supplied in all our needs by our own government. But all our materials come to us through the NAAFI people and all the stuff is sent from Canada and sold to them. They turn around and sell it to the Canadian Army and make a profit which the Canadian people have to pay. It’s just the same old political graft.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ To view the censor’s commentary in this regard, see: Field Censor (Home) Report, 18 April – 2 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

¹⁷⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹⁷¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

While the NAAFI operators had the right to a profit, or at least to charge a handling fee, Canadian soldiers nevertheless expressed their dissatisfaction and sense of injustice in clearly nationalistic terms. They repeatedly reinforced their self-image of being fair-dealing Canadians while lambasting the British as swindlers, profiteers, and plutocrats, however unfair that characterization may have been. Such factors clearly reinforced in the men that they were members of a distinct national community, to which they were proud to belong.

After agreeing in principle to the NAAFI's various conditions, Major Humphrey inserted some Canadian requirements:

- (A) That some effort be made to provide adequate supplies of soft drinks such as Coca Cola.
- (B) That hot dogs, griddle cakes and syrup be provided on the menu, if possible.
- (C) That Institute Waiters be urged to give "Service with a Smile".

This last was in response to frequently aired soldier complaints that NAAFI staff was rude compared to Canadian staff members.¹⁷² The Canadian soldiers' desire for Canadian foodstuffs and luxury items was clear. One soldier wrote that, "the Y.M.C.A. Mobile Canteen comes out to us every couple of days and we can buy Canadian chocolate bars and gum."¹⁷³ Soldiers frequently expressed appreciation that Auxiliary Services canteens provided Canadian-made sweets, which were consistently favoured over English products. Despite the agreement reached between Humphrey and the NAAFI executives, Canadian impressions of NAAFI canteens did not improve.

Over two years later, the censor viewed anger at the British service and praise for the Canadian ones as customary. "Appreciation of the Canteen Services of the various

¹⁷² "Minutes of a Meeting between Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services and Executives of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes on 17 October 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/IX, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹⁷³ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 17 March 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

Auxiliary Services, especially the Y.M.C.A. and S.A. is frequently noted... NAAFI Services are again criticized.”¹⁷⁴ Other comments, commonly found in soldier letters, convey the same point, “Annoyance that they can impose a monopoly and keep the Y.M.C.A. and Salvation Army out of a camp.”¹⁷⁵ As 1943 drew near, “Y.M.C.A., S.A. and Beaver Club get their usual appreciation, and NAAFI... their customary disapprobation.”¹⁷⁶

Canadian soldiers criticized more than British service institutes; they largely eschewed their army entertainment troupes as well. The British Army employed the Entertainment National Services Association (ENSA) to give stage shows and musical entertainment to their troops. As with NAAFI services, Canadian troops were provided almost exclusively with ENSA services when they first arrived, again due to the barriers to services facing the Directorate of Auxiliary Services in the early years. W. Ray Stephens summed up Canadian views toward ENSA shows thus:

To the newly arriving Canadians in 1939 and 1940, whose only association with entertainment had been the local Bijou on Saturday night... or listening to... The Happy Gang over the C.B.C. radio, ENSA was a new way of life and a raw experience of sexual frankness akin to prostitution of the arts. Also, considering the various accents and dialects, much of the show went astray in the translation and interpretation. General “Andy” McNaughton made mention at the time that “he was not satisfied with the type of show ENSA was giving and from his own experience had found them to be extremely rude and vulgar.”¹⁷⁷

From the beginning of the war, the Legion had played a leading role in organizing entertainment, although as in all areas, each of the voluntary organizations undertook this

¹⁷⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹⁷⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹⁷⁷ W. Ray Stephens, *The Canadian Entertainers of World War II* (Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press, 1993), 65.

task to some degree. By the agreement of August 1941, concerts and entertainment had become the special responsibility to the CLWS.

The first army entertainment units operating during the Second World War were staff bands, which were a natural first step given the tradition of musical accompaniment in the military. Stephens notes that, "by the end of 1940, the Canadian Army command [had created] 10 military staff bands consisting of 27 musicians and 1 English bandmaster."¹⁷⁸ While these bands played many concerts and were called upon to play at all kinds of events, the traditional, military, and formal nature of this entertainment did not appeal to the broader, civilian nature of the army as a whole. These bands were not greatly influenced by the latest trends, and featured no singers, dancers, or comedians. Their uni-dimensional nature soon outgrew the soldiers' desires.

In Canada, the influence of new types of American music created certain demand overseas. As Laurel Halladay notes in her examination of Canadian forces' entertainment during the war:

The rise in popularity of the big band sound in the US had changed the ear of Canadian audiences in general, who soon grew to appreciate the greater musical layering of bands that included string instruments and singers and allowed listeners to express themselves through the latest dance fads... Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force entertainment units had the task of satisfying these modern tastes while increasing morale.¹⁷⁹

A soldier of the 10th Canadian Field Ambulance, RCAMC, paid testament to these desires, stating, "The English programmes are lousy so most of the time it is tuned in on Germany, where they play records of American bands. Every Sunday there is one half hour of popular swing by an American band... Everybody crowds around the radio when this programme

¹⁷⁸ W. Ray Stephens, *The Canadian Entertainers of World War II*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ Laurel Halladay, "'It Made Them Forget About the War For a Minute' Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force Entertainment Units During the Second World War," *Canadian Military History*, 11(4), Autumn 2002: 20-35.

comes on...¹⁸⁰ German propaganda stations based in Calais and Bremen seemed to understand Canadian desires better than BBC programmers. Noted a private in the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, "When the English people are on the air it is mostly plays and damn dry. Their jokes are dryer and what they see to laugh at is beyond me."¹⁸¹ The censor also noted that the BBC comes in for "customary disapprobation."¹⁸²

One of the Directorate's solutions was to encourage the creation of Canadian Soldier Concert Parties, which were formed beginning in September 1941. The Legion appointed Supervisor E.W. Hartley as Canadian Legion Entertainments Supervisor who was responsible generally for the provision of entertainments to the Canadian forces. Supervisor F.C. Anders was made Technical Director of Canadian Soldier Concert Parties.¹⁸³ These parties allowed for a greater variety of entertainment for Canadian soldiers than the comparatively conservative staff bands. It was also felt that the use of talented soldiers from the ranks would create a closer connection between the audience and the show, given that the performers were familiar with service conditions and social trends in the army. These troupes also incorporated dance, vaudeville acts, and comedy into their concerts, which increased their value as "variety" shows rather than simply band concerts. The first of these was the "Tin Hat Revue", which was shortly followed by the "Fun Fatigues". In October 1941, these two shows had been so well received that authorization

¹⁸⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 16 February – 1 March 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹⁸³ "TO: Auxiliary Services" May 1942, DHH 159.1042 (D10), Aux Services, Policy Concert Pers Establishment (Correspondence)]

was given to establish more.¹⁸⁴ A soldier of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, voiced his, "Appreciation of good entertainment by the 'Tin Hats'."¹⁸⁵ As the number of Canadians troops swelled to a quarter million in the United Kingdom, three more troupes were created, "The Kit Bags," "The Bandoliers" and "The Forage Caps," all of which struggled to keep up with demand.¹⁸⁶

Soldiers immediately took a shine to the new Canadian groups, which toured all over the country. Their praise for the soldier concert parties was often mixed with opprobrium for the British variety. A soldier of the 47th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA, wrote home,

I had the pleasure of seeing the "Tin Hats Revue" you may have read about them in the papers. They are a group of talented Canadians who in September of last year were chosen from the Canadian Army Overseas for the entertainment of the Canadian troops over here. It was two solid hours of music, laughter comedy and singing and was without the use of prophane language as is the case in English shows.¹⁸⁷

While the Canadians were not known for their prudishness, many of them nevertheless expressed offence at British profanity, suggesting that even their senses of humour were largely divergent. In general, it had become clear that British taste in entertainment was quite at odds with Canadian desires. Canadians largely viewed British radio shows as boring or unintelligible, but they saved their most heated scorn for the British ENSA

¹⁸⁴ DHH 159.1042 (D9), Aux Services, Concert Personnel, Establishment (Correspondence 7 Nov 40/28 Mar 42).

¹⁸⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁸⁶ War Diary of No. 1 Canadian Concert Party – "The Tin Hats," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 16674. This volume likewise contains war diaries of other Canadian Army Services Entertainment Unit (CASEU) units, including No. 3 Canadian Concert Party – "The Fun Fatigues". Volume 16673 contains war diaries of "The Kit Bags," and "The Forage Caps." These largely relate only the whereabouts and success of shows, but also reference the busy and difficult touring schedule.

¹⁸⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 May – 2 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6. Some Canadians' objection to profanity did not necessarily preclude their engaging in otherwise "rowdy" or "objectionable" behaviour as noted in Chapter 2.

shows.¹⁸⁸ A soldier of the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada wrote that “Some of the English concert parties really smell.” Another man from this battalion reported he had been to, “another dud concert...”¹⁸⁹ The censor, reading thousands of letters, summarized Canadian preferences, “Canadian entertainments and camp shows are invariably appreciated. The “TIN HATS” appear to have earned approbation, and are very popular.”¹⁹⁰ Six months later, an anonymous soldier commented he was especially appreciative for an “all-Canadian show”, the Tin Hats. “We had quite a concert up here last week. The revue was from the CANADIAN UNITS in ENGLAND. It was one of the best ever to come up here and it was a good clean concert not like the NAAFI concerts.”¹⁹¹

In a report of January 1943, Major P.J. Philpott (ADAS) put the matter bluntly, “It is of immense ‘morale’ value to have purely Canadian entertainment taken to the Camps, the type of English ‘Variety’ available to our men is not of the best, and we do have a clean stage in Canada.”¹⁹² Philpott, elaborating on the frustrations of Canadian troops, further argued that the troops should be exposed to the types of entertainment they enjoyed in Canada, adding

... troops should enjoy recreational amenities accustomed to in civil life ... stage and screen entertainment is an important activity... shows undoubtedly raise men’s morale higher than any other activity... he forgets for a period that he is virtually a prisoner in the Camp. A tour through Surrey and Sussex towns in the early evening shows long queues of Cdn soldiers at each movie theatre, hundreds cannot gain admittance... It is absolutely necessary to take entertainment to the troops in Camps.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁹¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 May – 2 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

¹⁹² “Auxiliary Services, Cdn Soldier Concert Parties,” Major P.J. Philpott (ADAS, CMHQ), 11 Jan 43, DHH 159.1042 (D10), Aux Services, Policy Concert Pers Establishment (Correspondence).

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Philpott stated desires to ensure that “purely Canadian entertainment” was brought to the camps reflected the demands of the troops who had clearly expressed their preference for Canadian entertainment and abhorrence at British stage shows. The dispersal of the army along England’s south coast hampered Philpott’s ability to deliver purely Canadian variety shows; when this proved impossible, English entertainment was provided only if it was devoid of cultural reference, such as the music-only shows. Philpott’s report concluded,

We have trained 4 Cdn Soldier Parties and commenced to form the fifth; there are 104 Privates engaged, plus one Supervisor Director and one Sergeant Assistant. During the last month recorded, these four parties showed in 98 different locations to 47,261 men, an average of 480 men in each audience.¹⁹⁴

Despite their unpopularity, the Legion found it necessary to continue contracting ENSA shows through NAAFI because the popular Canadian soldier parties simply could not meet demand. However, the CLWS Overseas Directors, F.M. Bastin, arranged to eliminate ENSA “Variety” shows, focussing instead on their “Concert Party Section,” which were, “much more suited to the Canadian taste” as they presented only music and no objectionable cultural references.¹⁹⁵ On the “nature” of these shows, the soldiers were not shy to comment. A soldier of the 9th Armoured Regiment (The British Columbia Dragoons) complained, “The shows that they put on here are the raukest (sic) and crudest that I have ever seen. Everyone is based on the old theme of sex and after a while you get so that you feel like you want to have a good wash. Not that I am a prude, far from it, but it does get a little too much even for me.”¹⁹⁶ An officer at 4th Brigade HQ remarked, “They couldn’t

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ “Memorandum, Re: Entertainment, from F.M. Bastin, 17th Dec 1941.” DHH 159.1042 (D9), Aux Services, Concert Personnel, Establishment (Correspondence 7 Nov 40/28 Mar 42)

¹⁹⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

even tell a good joke. Most of these Concerts think that as long as a joke is filthy the Army will like it.”¹⁹⁷

By mid-1943, the concert and stage entertainment program, and the soldiers’ preferences, was well established. A report of January 1944 on the Auxiliary Services in England noted that,

The soldier parties are good and are always well received though they are not quite as good as commercially sponsored groups touring camps in Canada. The E.N.S.A. parties are composed of smaller numbers of personnel and the show is usually grouped around a single outstanding performer. They are not as good as nor are they as well received as the soldier parties.¹⁹⁸

The mixture of sustained disapproval of ENSA shows, the consistent popularity of the Canadian shows, and positive feedback led Auxiliary Services officers to the conclusion that Canadian entertainment was of the utmost importance for maintaining morale.

Supervisor E.W. Hartley commented, “Shows fresh from home for soldiers overseas – this was one of the most general soldier reactions to Army Show Units ‘Gee, its good to see something straight from home.’”¹⁹⁹ This was in reaction to the “Army Show” which was so popular in Canada that it was sent on tour among Canadian units in England.²⁰⁰ The value

¹⁹⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

¹⁹⁸ Overseas Inspection Report,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1944, Appendix 14, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324. This report was based on a trip by Lt. Col A. Cairns, Assistant to the Director of Auxiliary Services, between September 1 and November 13, 1943.

¹⁹⁹ “Report of the Officer in Charge of Entertainment,” No Date [Likely Fall 1943], DHH, 159.1042 (D11) AUX SERVICES, Policy, Entertainment Units

²⁰⁰ There was much debate over sending this show. Auxiliary Services administrators argued against it, saying that it was “just” a concert show, adding that, for the men, music was secondary to the stage entertainment. They added that soldier-run concert parties were very popular and that their small size was more easily accommodated in southern England. In addition, administrators feared it would be difficult to adequately billet female members of the “Army Show”. In the end, NDHQ’s strong desire to send the show won out, partly because it wanted to show that the Canadian government was “as alive to the entertainment and recreational needs of the Army, as are the sister services and the U.S. Authorities.” See: Cable to [Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Kenneth] Stuart from [Adjutant General, Major General H. F. G.] Letson, [Oct 1943 DHH 159.1042 (D10), Aux Services, Policy Concert Pers Establishment (Correspondence)]

of providing good *Canadian* content was accepted to such a degree that in making its invasion preparations, in late 1943, the army requested the help of the CBC.

Acting on behalf of the Canadian Government the C.B.C. will soon have for operation one of the world's most powerful shortwave broadcasting installations. Its function is to inform the world of Canada and Canadian activities, but the highest priority will be given to troop entertainment.²⁰¹

In the end, F.M. Bastin, the man ultimately responsible for the development of the entertainment program perhaps best summed up the reason Canadian soldiers favoured their own entertainment. "Since the root of morale is identity or pride, well produced concert parties composed of men who enlisted and trained to fight and who provide high class typically Canadian entertainment are an excellent means of building up that pride in one's own comrades and in one's country which forms an important part of morale."²⁰² Canadian troops much preferred their own entertainment and largely partook of British entertainment because their own performers had difficulty making the rounds. By 1943, the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, had developed an overseas policy and program that ensured the delivery of Canadian entertainment to Canadian troops.

A similar pattern can be seen with Canadian hostels and leave centres. Before the fall of France, a Canadian leave centre, together with hostel accommodation, was set up in Paris on the expectation that the pattern experienced in 1914-1918 would be repeated. These centres were closed in June 1940 due to the imminent French surrender. Such centres in London, however, enjoyed a lasting permanence, sometimes disrupted by German air raids. The national voluntary organizations set up most of these hostels, specifically for

²⁰¹ "Report of the Officer in Charge of Entertainment," No Date [Likely Fall 1943], DHH, 159.1042 (D11) AUX SERVICES, Policy, Entertainment Units

²⁰² Memorandum From F.M. Bastin, Overseas Manager, Canadian Legion War Services to ADAS, Major F.J. Philpott, "Entertainment," 1st Feb 1943, DHH 159.1042 (D10), Aux Services, Policy Concert Pers Establishment (Correspondence)

Canadian troops on leave, but also welcomed service people from other Allied nations. These included the Canadian Legion Club, the Maple Leaf Club, the Union Jack Club, and the King George and Queen Elizabeth Victoria League Club. Not all centres were open to personnel from Allied armies. On 28 May 1940, the Red Shield West Central Hotel, run by the Salvation Army, was opened for business. It provided accommodation for 188 men²⁰³ and was for the exclusive use of Canadian troops.²⁰⁴ The operating of such hostels and clubs made it possible for Canadians on leave, especially in London, to associate almost entirely with Canadian-owned and -operated establishments. As Scott Young noted in his history of the Salvation Army War Services, at the West Central Hotel, "Canadian Servicemen got a combination of home, a good hotel, and Red Shield centre."²⁰⁵ For their part, the soldiers often expressed appreciation of such services in their letters home. "[The] Canadian Legion Club [is] appreciated: 'Very nice. Good sheets and lots of hot water.'"²⁰⁶ Another soldier of the 5th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, RCA, commented that, "...the usual Salvation Army, Y.M.C.A. and K. of C. clubs are doing a swell job for the boys in the way of billets overnight. They are not very expensive and a man gets bed and breakfast... They are clean and comfortable, usually set up in old mansions and disused

²⁰³ "Memorandum re Canadian Hostels in London," 4 December 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix V, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. This report commented on conditions at the West Central: "The bedroom accommodation is excellent and spotlessly clean, with hot and cold water in each bed room. The charges are extremely moderate... Each man (has) a separate bed with sheets, attractive comforter, etc. The day's luncheon consisted of tomato soup, cold-plate salad, devilled eggs, tomatoes, lettuce, etc., - dessert, tea, bread and butter... They further informed me that since they had opened you could count the cases of drunkenness on one hand, and to date, they have not had one sign of rowdiness." Also, Scott Young maintains that the hotel accommodated 200 soldiers, *The Red Shield in Action*, 50.

²⁰⁴ "Report No. 11, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 31st August 1940, Appx. 5, Nasmith to Humphrey, 12 Sep 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/Reports/1.

²⁰⁵ Scott Young, *The Red Shield in Action*, 50.

²⁰⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

office buildings about the city.”²⁰⁷

Young also relates a humorous anecdote, revealing how Canadians at the West Central Hotel tried to deal with the English cold,

A Red Shield supervisor who found the man in this deep bath was mildly disturbed. “You’ve gone beyond the five-inch limit, boy,” he reproved. The soldier, just in on leave from months of living in rooms and huts heated in a fashion that no North American considered worthy of the name, lowered his chin farther into the hot water and replied plaintively, “Don’t be too hard on me, sir. This is the first time I’ve been warm since I came to this country.”²⁰⁸

Between autumn 1940 and spring 1941, several of these buildings were damaged in German air raids. The most serious was on the evening of 16/17 April 1941 when the Victoria League Club, located on Malet Street, received a direct hit. Three female employees were killed together with nine Canadian soldiers plus 24 wounded.²⁰⁹ The club housed 400 beds and its loss was a blow to leave arrangements in London. The Directorate of Auxiliary Services recommended for some time that the number of Canadians allowed leave in London be restricted. This request reveals that a great number of Canadians chose to patronize the Canadian hostels and leave centres established under the Directorate’s authority for, without them, officials believed Canadians could have a hard time finding accommodation.

The Canadian High Commissioner, Vincent Massey, and his wife were very involved in establishing and running the most popular Canadian leave centre in England. The “Beaver Club” was located just off Trafalgar Square in the heart of London and was a

²⁰⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

²⁰⁸ Scott Young, *The Red Shield in Action*, 53.

²⁰⁹ Report No. 19, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 30 April 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/REPORTS/1/2. Also see: CMHQ Report No. 106, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6918.

well-known spot for Canadian and British soldiers, as well as for CWACs and civilian British women. A report of December 1940 stated:

The Beaver Club is a very large establishment and is located about a block and a half away from Trafalgar Square... The average number served per week is between six and seven thousand, the peak being 2800 in one day. Of this number approximately two to one are Canadians. Soldiers [once registered] are always members in good standing. Showers are provided and adjacent thereto is a very good barber's shop... After the men are cleaned up, they can go to a very efficient [Canadian run] information bureau and there obtain details of places of interest and all sorts of general information. There are several very splendid lounge rooms with numerous easy chairs, good lighting facilities and the latest magazines... I spoke to a number of the men and several of them informed me that every time they came to London they made this Club their headquarters, which was an indication that they were being extremely well taken care of.²¹⁰

Another report highlighted the club's cooking facilities: "patronage by Canadians continues to be high owing to [the] 'Quebec Kitchen', where over 600 meals are served daily."²¹¹

The Beaver Club also served an important logistic purpose in helping maintain morale. In the basement of the club, a Directorate of Auxiliary Services bonded warehouse was set up filled with goods shipped from Canada since the United Kingdom government had issued only one import license to cover all supplies shipped to Britain for Canadian troops. This warehouse was used thereafter to issue free consignments of cigarettes, tobacco, playing cards, and other such items.²¹² In this way, Auxiliary Services was able to reduce its reliance on NAAFI for the purchase of such goods.²¹³ The warehouse proved

²¹⁰ "Memorandum re Canadian Hostels in London," 4 December 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix V, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

²¹¹ "Canadian Y.M.C.A. - Report for the Month Ending October 31st, 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1941, Appendix XXIII/II, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

²¹² Report No. 8, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 31st May 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10165, File: 23/REPORTS/1.

²¹³ The reduction of such reliance was doubly important since such items came under greater restrictions in the United Kingdom as time passed and NAAFI authorities naturally tended to use a greater preponderance of such supplies to stock their own canteens. Thankfully, by early 1941, "Canadian supplies [were] coming in fairly satisfactory quantities whereas the bulk of supplies usually purchased in the United Kingdom are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain." To: Senior Officer, CMHQ, 23/Reports/1/2. Aux Serv Report #15

“extremely useful and saved no end of delays.”²¹⁴ The Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services was instrumental in establishing a second bonded postal warehouse at No. 6 Dilke Street in late 1940 which, “provided facilities for entering duty free parcels containing dutiable articles such as cigarettes, to Canadian personnel.”²¹⁵

Brigadier Foster began laying the groundwork for the club in December 1939. He set up a committee to discuss the opening of a Canadian leave centre on which sat the High Commissioner’s wife (who was also in charge of kitchen arrangements and colour scheme). The leave centre, “to be known as the Beaver Club,” would be operated by a committee under the chairmanship of Vincent Massey, whilst “other hostels will be run by the YMCA and the Salvation Army.”²¹⁶ These arrangements proceeded quickly but were also hamstrung by the continually thorny issue of service rivalry.

These difficulties were presaged in the negotiations for setting up the Beaver Club in December 1939 and January 1940. Those setting up the centre, including Vincent Massey and the senior YMCA official overseas, used the old Beaver Hut that the Canadian YMCA had operated in the Strand in the First World War as their inspiration and model. At that time, they were also largely ignorant of the need for inter-auxiliary service sensitivity; however, they seem to have believed that the precedent set in the earlier war afforded the YMCA a leading (if not sole) role in setting up a new “Beaver Hut” in the current war. But

Dec 31st 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, RG24, National Defence, Vol. 13320.

²¹⁴ “Report No. 15, Auxiliary Services Overseas, December 31st 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, Appendix 10, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13320.

²¹⁵ “Report No. 15, Auxiliary Services Overseas, December 31st 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, Appendix 10, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13320.

²¹⁶ Beaver Club Correspondence, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10179, File: 26/BEAVER/1, Beaver Club (1939/12-1946/02).

the Memorandum of Agreement, and existing rivalries, ensured that no such sole proprietorship would exist.

On first hearing of this issue, Foster wrote Massey to highlight the problem of having the Directorate pay for the transport and upkeep of some YMCA employees who were to work in the Beaver Club. He also noted the problem with accepting YMCA services to the exclusion of the other voluntary organizations.²¹⁷ Foster reminded Massey that all YMCA men proceeding overseas are under his control, an important proviso going forward if Foster was to direct the effort and head off disputes effectively in any such future incidents.²¹⁸ He suggested that the Beaver Club *should* be under the directorship of an independent committee, but added, “if one organization is to be featured, then I am either faced with the suggestion of breach of faith, or else the other organizations will ask the privilege of setting up similar report centres.”²¹⁹ As Director, Foster was required to treat all four organizations on a par and he clearly affirmed that he was in control of these organizations and would discourage favouritism.

Animosity over the matter was communicated on the same day in a letter from Major Alfred L. Steele, Director of the Canadian Salvation Army War Services Department, to Vincent Massey. Massey had obviously not yet been able to implement Foster’s request for equal representation. However, the High Commissioner’s desire to do so is questionable and he seems to have harboured an ongoing preference for YMCA service. Steele’s letter to Massey thanked him for inviting the Legion, YMCA, and

²¹⁷ Correspondence: Foster to Massey, 22 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10179, File: 26/BEAVER/1, Beaver Club (1939/12-1946/02).

²¹⁸ Foster’s former connection to the Canadian Legion as its president may also have been a factor in this issue, but this is not clear in the documentary record.

²¹⁹ Correspondence: Foster to Massey, 22 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10179, File: 26/BEAVER/1, Beaver Club (1939/12-1946/02).

Salvation Army to jointly participate in service within the Beaver Club. But then he got to the crux of the matter,

It is... with some degree of surprise and disappointment that I have learned that it is proposed that in the Canadian Leave Centre, London, it has been arranged for the Canadian YMCA to assume certain responsibilities for service within this building to the exclusion of the Canadian Legion and the Salvation Army. Inasmuch as I regard this understanding as being of a general character in which all bodies ought to co-operate, and, as much as possible to them, give service therein, I cannot but express my regret at the arrangement which has been made with the Canadian YMCA in this matter. I regard it as being distinctly out of harmony with the general policy outlined by the Director of Auxiliary Services and desired by the Canadian Government.²²⁰

The army high command also waded into the argument. General H.D.G Crerar commented,

...the Beaver Club committee rather let themselves in for [this] situation by first of all inviting Foster's participation (which must be a "parity of voluntary organization" basis) and then making arrangements of [this type] with [the] Y.M.C.A. The Beaver Club is, however, not a government supported organization and it had best function in technical independence of DND."²²¹

In other words, the independent committee, rather than the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, operated the Beaver Club. Still, Foster could not allow one service to receive any kind of favourable treatment, especially this early on as service boundaries were still being established and the real work of service provision had yet to begin.

In the event, the YMCA was still afforded pride of place in the Beaver Club, perhaps quite rightly, while the other services were invited to join the good work being done there. The club opened on 23 February 1940 in a ceremony attended by the King and Queen and numerous Canadian dignitaries. Soldiers on leave were invited to attend and, to

²²⁰ Alfred Steele to Vincent Massey, 22 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10179, File: 26/BEAVER/1, Beaver Club (1939/12-1946/02). Interestingly, Steele himself entirely omits the Knights of Columbus, which was a fully recognized Auxiliary organization at the time of writing.

²²¹ H.D.G. Crerar [hand-written note], 27 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Series C-2, Volume 10179m File: 26/BEAVER/1.

allow as many of them as possible to see the Royal couple, special arrangements were made for transport to London. The King's speech at the opening read, in part,

In a new setting the Beaver Club at Spring Gardens near Trafalgar Square – aptly named “a little bit of Canada” – is carrying on the tradition of service for Canadian non-commissioned officers and men that was laid down in the old Beaver Hut on the Strand and operated by the Canadian YMCA in the Great War. Night and day it will serve the last war's second generation.²²²

The Beaver Club was a great success throughout the war, but its establishment highlights both the great wealth of positive feeling for the Canadian servicemen early in the war, while also illuminating the professional jealousies and internecine rivalries imported from Canada at the highest administrative levels. Such rivalries affected the soldiers' experience of the Auxiliary Services in a mainly tangential way once it was seen fit to divide their authority, but also, service provision was made somewhat more difficult by the existence of such home-grown quarrels.

Despite these problems, the Beaver Club represented a kind of mini-Canada, at which all Canadians were welcomed. This was a place where one could go while on leave in London to be with Canadians. An Auxiliary Services report stated, “The Beaver Club (Y.M.C.A.) continues its extremely valuable service as a centre for the great majority of Canadians coming to London on leave. In one week over 12,000 men passed through its doors. In a single day over 2,000 men were served with meals.”²²³ Soldiers also expressed, “Appreciation of the Beaver Club.”²²⁴ This was the case for most Canadian clubs in London, as another soldier reported of the Maple Leaf Club, “They treat us first rate.

²²² “Speech of HM King George VI at the Beaver Club, London,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10179, File: 26/BEAVER/1, Beaver Club (1939/12-1946/02).

²²³ “Report No. 11, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 31st October 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

²²⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

Arranged a tour of the Houses of Parliament. Free tickets for shows, and it's one of the few places you can be sure your personal equipment won't be stolen."²²⁵

While the club was expressly open to all allied servicemen, many Canadians viewed it as their own. The misbehaviour of another nation's soldiers was rarely tolerated and neither were those foreign soldiers who treated the club with too much familiarity. A soldier of No. 1 Canadian Artillery Holding Unit, RCA, reported,

...Saturday night there was a dance being held at the Beaver Club and six Yanks walked in and made themselves at home. One of our Sergeants who is a real fighting Irishman gets up and goes over to them said that he would give them sixty seconds to leave the premises... You would have seen a lot of birdies go flying through the door only it was the Yanks instead of the birdies. Within ten minutes, every Canadian club had the Canadian military police at their doors so that no more riots would break out...²²⁶

Such anger was often the result of resentment that many US service clubs permitted only American soldiers, while the Canadians opened their doors to all. In fact, the openness of Canadian clubs sometimes led to bilious anger at any efforts to restrict Canadian access to other clubs. For example, an officers' club was opened in Tunbridge Wells in early 1943 to officers of the [British] XII Corps. A small number of Canadians were admitted as members but once a 300-person limit was reached, only XII Corps officers could thenceforth become members. This apparently so rankled a Canadian officer that he wrote to the mayor of Tunbridge in objection. He argued that, after years of life in England, Canadians were being discriminated against because of their nationality. His letter revealed numerous sources of annoyance for Canadians in England, many of which transcended the club situation.

²²⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

²²⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 19 June – 3 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/7.

I and every other officer and other rank in the Canadian Army volunteered to join the army and came overseas. This is not our country and the army doesn't supply us with our families and homes. We therefore haven't the opportunity which every English officer has of going home every three months... I claim that denying membership to Canadians in this club is insulting, shows a lack of taste and is most unfair... our own numbers [in southern England] are as great as the English. Thus if any club is to be formed anywhere in this area it should be taken for granted and seen to that Canadians are most welcome.

This anonymous officer continued sarcastically that it seemed a great deal of trouble had been taken to separate these "horrible creatures" [Canadians] from the rest. He added, "any Canadian clubs in this country are supported financially by Canadians and are open to all services in any Allied Force" implying that the Canadian public is supporting their own and British troops,

If you were a Canadian officer... a member of the finest army in the allied nations, as proud as punch of its men and traditions, how would you feel about this racket. [Unlike the Americans] our army has been over here since the beginning of the war... [But our misdeeds] are always sensationally published in the press – though nothing about Americans along this line is allowed to be published and the English Tommy is referred to as 'a soldier')... [Canadians] are better dressed than either your own men or the Americans. Their uniforms are pressed and they salute etc. much more than yours ever have done... They go to pubs and spend the evening – where in hell else can they go... If the high and mighty potentate of the English officers doesn't like the noise of Canadian fun, let he and his older staff evacuate - they have lived a good part of their life – we are all young and would like to enjoy our short while in this world...²²⁷

Such comments reveal the enormous importance of morale at this time, especially for those who clearly anticipated that they might soon die on active service. The XII Corps Commander who had established the club, Lieutenant General Sir Montagu G.N. Stopford apologized to McNaughton adding, "I should hate to do anything to spoil the good relations which have always existed between the Canadian Army and 12 Corps and I am extremely

²²⁷ This officer apologized for not signing his name because, "our army frowns on any thing which might offend the English," adding that he is an officer writing on behalf of 15 officers from four different regiments. See: "The Mayor, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Somewhere in England, Canadian Army, England," [no date, early 1943], LAC, MG30 E133, Series 111, Vol. 190, AGL McNaughton Fonds. File PA 5-8-4

sorry if a wrong impression should have been created over this episode.”²²⁸ McNaughton, displaying his man-management acumen, replied that, “it is unwise to set up officer’s clubs or similar facilities anywhere which are restricted to particular formations as if you do distinctions are created which are likely as in this case to be regarded as invidious.” While he stopped short of supporting the anonymous letter writer, McNaughton clearly understood and agreed with his frustrations, “I have made it a point in the Canadian Army in the interest of good relations with the British Army, to provide that any similar institutions which we promote will be open on like terms to all.”²²⁹ While most British troops were fighting overseas at this time, those that were stationed in Britain were the target of Canadian resentment for being able to live in their home country, close to loved ones. One writer expressed the desire to receive, “Some appreciation for us fools that leave our families and our home to come over here to help them win this war. And what do we get but a lot of insults.”²³⁰ From this perspective, the emphasis that Auxiliary Services laid on providing Canadian goods and services is easily understandable.

By the time 1st Canadian Infantry Division set sail for Sicily in July 1943, it had been stationed in England under unprecedented static conditions for 42 months. By that time, it is clear that the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, despite having to slowly and haltingly find its stride, had grown into an indispensable welfare engine. It provided the lion’s share of services and activities that sustained Canadian soldiers’ morale under these extraordinary conditions. Even from very early on the troops understood that most of these services came straight from Canada. Major Humphrey expressed, “the gratitude felt on

²²⁸ Stopford to McNaughton, 25 May 1943, LAC, MG30 E133, Series 111, Volume 190, AGL McNaughton Fonds. File PA 5-8-4.

²²⁹ Ibid. 3 June 1943

²³⁰ “Field Censors (Home) Special Report: Relations between Canadians and British (civilians and troops),” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

behalf of the troops for all that has been so cheerfully provided by the people of Canada through the magnificent work of the National Voluntary Organizations Overseas.”²³¹ The numbers served were staggering: the Directorate serviced 143,420 troops in December 1940 alone. These numbers grew concomitantly with the size of the army and improved service performance. Statistics for the month of August 1943 tell the tale of ubiquitous service provision. “Indication of the extent of Auxiliary Services activities in the U.K. is afforded by the following figures for the month of August [1943]:-

Film Showings 4,516 with an attendance of 909,117
Entertainments [Shows] 1,085 Performers 4,362 Attendance 312,369
Sports events 46,797 Participants 334,077 Spectators 374,445
Organized Indoor Games 29,216 tournament with 183,017 participants
Auxiliary Services Canteens and Centres 561 with an average daily attendance of 322.
Notepaper sheets 2,857,205
Envelopes 1,311,036
Personal Interviews on domestic, financial, & other matters 4,388
Libraries in operation 392²³²

The Directorate of Auxiliary Services, through the civilian nature of its services, the public funding of its activities through the first years, and the provision of specifically Canadian food, entertainment, contacts, hospitality, and service (not to mention sports and education, which are the subject of their own chapters), facilitated and consciously fostered a continued close connection between the soldiers and Canada. The persistent rejection of many English or American comforts in favour of Canadian ones shows that in this war, Canada’s soldiers were linked, psychologically, emotionally, and systemically to their

²³¹ “Report No. 15, Auxiliary Services Overseas, December 31st 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, Appendix 10, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13320.

²³² “Semi-Annual Report – July to December 1943, Branch of the Adjutant-General, Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 31 December 1943,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, January 1944, Appendix 5, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13324.

distant homeland, the connection with which facilitated their sustained morale and therefore significantly contributed to their military effectiveness.

Chapter 4: Educational Activities, National Identification, and Canada's Soldiers Overseas

Military service has long been a catalyst for the adult education movement. In its most basic form, military training in Britain and Canada was an exercise in adult education. This chapter examines how education for Canadian soldiers in England during the Second World War went beyond the exigencies of military service. At first the men were trained in all respects to become soldiers; with time courses were adopted with the intention of occupying their minds and better equipping them to reintegrate into Canadian society at war's end. A major function of education was to combat flagging morale, partially by instilling a stronger sense of Canadian identity in the soldier. To this end, much energy was spent training the soldiers in Canadian citizenship. By emphasizing such goals, the government, the army, the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, and beginning in January 1943, the Directorate of Army Education contributed to the creation of solidarity between the soldiers in England and the much-altered Canadian homeland to which they would return. Furthermore, by employing a Canadian voluntary organization, the Canadian Legion War Services, to provide much of this education, the government added to the cohesion between soldier and Canada because the curricula and materials used were drawn from Canadian public sources, highlighted Canadian themes, and often harboured Canadian prejudices.

* * *

Even before the dispatch of troops overseas, the Canadian Legion Educational Services (CLES), a branch of the Canadian Legion War Services, initiated army educational services. This organization, in partnership with the Canadian Association for

Adult Education and the provincial ministries of education, provided correspondence courses and other services to military personnel. The program was administered by regional committees which appointed field secretaries and counsellors to promote education among personnel in Canada. In September 1939, the CLES, under the chairmanship of Wilfrid Bovey, announced its intention to develop "an active interest in citizenship" among the troops.¹ This work was continued in England in late 1939 with the appointment of Robert England as the Overseas Director of the CLES, in accordance with an agreement between the directors of the Canadian Legion and the Minister of National Defence.²

Had it so wished, the Canadian army could have adopted material from the British curricula but the political climate in Canada and the increasing demands of Canada's soldiers for products of Canadian culture and intellect, required the creation of a uniquely Canadian educational service. Of course, the practical consideration of ensuring the soldier had adequate education to perform his military tasks was never impaired thereby. The *Sherbrooke Telegram* reported in January 1940, that army courses in Canada and overseas would include "vocational, technical, 'morals' building, and professional training."³ "Morals building" included courses designed to improve the soldier's sense of citizenship and nationality, which were directly aimed at increasing the soldier's attachment to Canada.⁴ These courses included history, civics, and "economic geography". These were the focus of directed reading, correspondence, and lecture courses, which were

¹ This was a goal of the Canadian Legion War Services Special Committee on Education as quoted in George Bowering, *Service: The Story of the Canadian Legion, 1925-1960* (Ottawa: Dominion Command, Canadian Legion, Legion House, 1960), 139.

² Although signed in 1939, the agreement can be found in: Directorate of Army Education War Diary, 1 Jan – 28 Feb 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

³ F.H. Wooding, "Legion Education Services Will Help Our Fighting Men Resume Life as Civilians," *Sherbrooke Telegram*, 25 January 1940, 6.

⁴ See: Canada. Dept. of National Defence. Geographical Section, *The Battle of Brains: Lectures* (Ottawa: Geographical Section, Dept. of National Defence, 1941). This booklet is discussed below.

administered from London. The soldier's work was submitted for grading to CLES-qualified field workers in London and, sometimes, Ottawa. At first, officers and men in the units who were teachers in peacetime delivered lecture courses. This system became more formalized and complex as the years passed and special speakers, movies, and teachers were sent from Canada purely for educational purposes. In 1942, a CLES official told the *Ottawa Citizen* that the program was "thoroughly integrated with the school systems of Canada and the certificates issued by the Canadian Legion Educational Services, upon successful completion of the courses are recognized by the Department of Education in each province..."⁵ The technical and vocational training was intended to increase the soldier's fighting effectiveness, but as General H.D.G. Crerar noted, was also intended "to care for the post-war future of the present soldier and when he is again a civilian."⁶ Such goals tended to link the program with the soldier's life in Canada. In fact, education was one point of continuity between the soldier's army experience and his life upon discharge. Discharged men could continue courses that were unfinished in the army and were allowed "15 months in which to complete commercial or technical courses or the matriculation requirements."⁷ While such programs consciously aimed to align the soldier with his post-war life, much education, including that delivered by the Canadian Legion Educational Services, contained elements and "lessons" that also *unconsciously* fostered a sense of Canadian identity.

⁵ Winston Mills, "Education Services for the Men in the Services," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 November 1942, Section F, 6.

⁶ "H.D.G. Crerar to J.B. Bickersteth," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

⁷ Winston Mills, "Education Services for the Men in the Services," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 November 1942, Section F, 6.

Educational services were very popular. In their first full winter of operation, 1940-1941, some 7,500 men were enrolled in Legion correspondence and lecture courses.⁸ An Auxiliary Services report of 31 December 1940 stated,

The important part played in the lives of the troops by the facilities provided under the Educational plan cannot be under estimated... The Educational scheme is now a hive of busy industry and much is being learned and appreciated. Much needed extra reading material has been provided by Educational Services, Cdn. Legion.⁹

The program continued to grow. Minutes of a meeting at CMHQ on 8 July 1942, examining the "current educational situation" and the need for re-organization,

...mentioned the 15,000 registrations for correspondence courses; the 500 men who were taking University courses; The Canadian Legion Library Service; the directed reading courses [which had normally 2500 registrants at any one time], the Summer School for [Canadian] Officers and Other Ranks who would spend their leave at study... the trade courses for clerks, mechanics, etc... The course in basic education commencing next week to teach some 200 illiterates, which will be enlarged later...¹⁰

The program's growth to the end of the war further testifies to its popularity. In March 1945 alone, 84,917 text-booklets were supplied for all the courses being held in Britain and Europe.¹¹ Two fundamental reasons accounted for the popularity of educational services, not only for soldiers, but also for administrators, senior officers, and politicians. First, the

⁸ At this time, 57,000 Canadians were in Britain; 13% of them were enrolled in education courses. The service was unable to accommodate more students than this so, in future, administrators needed to enlist the help of Canadian universities and greatly expanded the lecture and correspondence program. They also began offering courses at British universities, notably Oxford and London. See: "Memorandum of a Conference at HQ Canadian Corps, 11 Mar 41, by Brig. Turner, 14 Mar 41," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/Educ/1/3. Also: Allen H. Bill, "Thousands of Canadian Soldiers in Britain 'Going Back To School'," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 January 1941, 14.

⁹ Auxiliary Services Report No. 15, 31 December 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13320, File 23/Reports/1/2.

¹⁰ "Memorandum of a Conference at Headquarters First Canadian Army on 8 July 1942 on Educational Services," DHH 159.1032 (D2) AUX SERVICES – Education Gen Correspondence, 4 Feb 42/9 Apr 43.

¹¹ While this number, being from 1945, also reflects the increasing army emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration to Canadian life, as well as the beneficial psychological effects of education, it also suggests that the army's experience of education over the preceding years had proven its intrinsic value for maintaining morale and links with Canada. See: "Monthly Report – Education - Canadian Legion Educational Services," 5 April 1945, UNIVERSITY LEAVE COURSES, DHH 159.1032 (D1) AUX SERVICES – EDUC SERVICES, 25 Feb 43/12 Feb 46.

government and army wanted to enhance the soldier's ability to re-engage with Canadian society at war's end; policymakers wanted to avoid the problems of reintegration experienced in 1919-21. This desire led to a greater emphasis on peacetime reintegration, which in turn led educators to highlight in their overseas curricula peacetime values in a post-war Canadian society. Courses that promised to increase the soldier's civilian employment prospects included, mechanics, wood working, electrical engineering, stenography, typewriting, bookkeeping, and secretarial work.¹² Students were also able to study Canadian farming techniques and handicrafts. The second reason for the educational program's popularity was that the army realized that education – specifically that which highlighted Canadian themes and would help soldier-scholars enter or re-enter Canadian universities and workplaces – was good for morale. Thus, the program included academic and arts courses for students interested in university matriculation, in partnership with several Canadian universities. For example, one such approved course was, "Senior Matriculation Mathematics."¹³

In 1939, the use of education to inculcate nationalist ideals was not new. Ken Montgomery, in his examination of representations of racism in history textbooks, reminds us that, "Schools have always had an explicit role to play in solidifying the symbolic boundaries of nation."¹⁴ Montgomery asserts that school texts have traditionally instilled "a

¹² "Survey of Educational Needs and educational services in the Canadian Army Overseas," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1.

¹³ The text-booklets for this course can be found at Library and Archives Canada: Canadian Legion Educational Services, *Senior Matriculation Mathematics: text-booklet no. 1-4* (Ottawa : Canadian Legion Educational Services, c1944).

¹⁴ Ken Montgomery, "'A Better Place to Live': School History Textbooks, Nationalist Fantasies, and the Incarcerating Banality of White Supremacy," in J. Satterthwaite, M. Watts, and H. Piper, eds., *Talking Truth, Confronting Power: Discourse Power, Resistance, Volume 6*, (Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Trentham Press, 2008), 85.

sense of unity, pride, and patriotism toward the nation.”¹⁵ Marshall Conley agrees, stating that Canadian textbooks, from the time of Confederation, focused on nationalism. He states, “There grew up a long tradition in textbook writing in Canada that nation-building is the most important theme to expound...”¹⁶ Mark Howard Moss ties education to nationalism in even more strident terms. He holds the education system responsible for imparting many of the values that led young Canadians in 1914 to “live out the cherished fantasies” of their national superiority as learned in the Ontario school system.¹⁷ Moss takes for granted that, throughout this period, “the purpose of education was to ensure the future of the state.”¹⁸ Many of the administrators in Ontario’s Ministry of Education, along with their colleagues from across English Canada, carried such curricular beliefs with them following the First World War and these values found their way into the curricula taught to Canada’s overseas soldiers.

Such factors and mindsets affected the types of lessons delivered to soldiers overseas. These curricular theories, mixed with political and military needs related to morale, resulted in an educational program that emphasized Canadian themes and nationality. Subtle and overt references to Canadian unity, national identity, and political life were common in the materials sent overseas. This is not surprising considering that they were written by many of the same people in the various ministries of education or members of patriotic associations who taught theories of national greatness to the First World War generation. The *Ottawa Citizen* reported in 1941 that CLES officials, at a

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Marshall W. Conley, “Theories and Attitudes Towards Political Education,” in Keith A. MacLeod, ed., *Canada and Citizenship Education* (Toronto: Canadian Education Association, 1989), 144.

¹⁷ Mark Howard Moss, *Manliness And Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106.

¹⁸ Ibid.

conference in Kingston, Ontario, examined correspondence courses and curricula submitted from the provincial ministries of education, the Canadian Association for Adult Education, and other organizations. Legion officials then “reshaped [the lessons] into uniformity and reprinted them into booklets of uniform size and format.”¹⁹

Despite often jealously guarded provincial jurisdiction over education, in the Canadian army education policy, the various ministries of education cooperated fully to deliver a federally administered educational program of impressive scope and breadth. This development came on the heels of failed parliamentary attempts to create a national bureau of education in the 1920s. Proponents of this plan argued the merits of nationalism, patriotism, and progress as factors vital to a vigorous, *national* agency responsible for education. Opponents predictably cited cultural and regional differences and the fact that education was made a provincial responsibility under Section 93 of the British North America Act.²⁰ Educational tensions had loomed large during the struggle for provincial autonomy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although regional differences remained evident in the army overseas, and in its educational program, they did not prevent the successful development of a highly effective program, popular with soldiers from all regions. While philosophical and historical imperatives in curricular design represented one structural aspect of the educational program, the practical needs of the army and government were of paramount importance.

Many factors combined from late 1939 to 1941 to give rise to a massive system of Canadian adult education in England. In September 1939, the Canadian Legion War

¹⁹ Allen H. Bill, “Thousands of Canadian Soldiers in Britain ‘Going Back To School’,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 January 1941, 14.

²⁰ For an excellent analysis of this period, please see Lorna R. McLean, “Education, Identity, and Citizenship in Early Modern Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 2007 41(1): 5-30.

Services offered to provide educational services for the members of Canada's naval, army, and air forces. The bickering and "duplication of effort" often attendant to Auxiliary Services activities until 1942 was removed from the educational program by way of an "exclusive Educational agreement,"²¹ between the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Legion War Services. The agreement placed educational services for the Canadian Army in the hands of the Legion in terms of management and administration and it defined the respective financial responsibilities of each party.

The Legion was invested with educational responsibility because, prior to the outbreak of war, the organization had decided to assist soldiers' return to civilian life through financial compensation, clothing allowances, pensions, medical treatment, training and land settlements. The Director of Auxiliary Services, Brigadier W.W. Foster, who had served as President of the Canadian Legion before the war, explained how education prepared the soldier for his eventual re-integration to civilian life.

...the plan for cultural education... will enable the youth of our country who volunteer for service to continue their training and character-building. Such a plan not only makes them better fitted for the stern task in hand, but also provides the necessary preparation for that happier day when war has ceased and the volunteer from Canada can re-enter the normal life of his country.²²

The Legion had forged "rehabilitation" partnerships with, for example, the Canadian Association for Adult Education, which helped develop curricula and materials. Again, Brigadier Foster explained:

All of you familiar with the last Great War can recall with me that one of its greatest tragedies lies in the fact that the finest of the Nation's youth was sacrificed not only on the battlefield, but of those who came back, all too many, having lost through serving their country overseas the opportunity that would otherwise have been theirs

²¹ Telegram A 1333, Canmilitary to Defensor, 11 October 40, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/EDUC/1/2. The agreement was signed 9 October 1940.

²² Address by Brigadier W.W. Foster," 22 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10125, File: Auxiliary services - Copies - Pub [Publications], speeches, radio addresses.

to obtain education and training; upon demobilization were unable to obtain their rightful position in the race of life. *That* is a situation the plan for education to be conducted under the auspices of the Canadian Legion is intended to avoid. The supervisory staff is in the field; through the medium of the National Council for Adult Education, the co-operation of our Canadian Universities and other organizations devoted to education has been obtained, whilst over here the most generous offers of assistance have already been received from similar institutions.²³

Because of the Legion's institutional concern for the post-war welfare of veterans, it was a natural choice to operate the army education program.

The Legion, and later the army, believed that there would be a demand for a service to continue the education that had been interrupted so that a man would return to his civilian job better fitted than when he joined the army.²⁴ In their letters home years later, soldiers confirmed their appreciation for such services. In 1942, the Censor reported, "Several writers mention their appreciation of facilities provided for a continuation of studies."²⁵ A report on the reasons for which men liked or disliked the army stated that, along with a "desire to do one's patriotic duty," the third most prolific response was that it "affords training and educational opportunities."²⁶ Clearly there was a desire in the men for education, but what role should it or could it take in the lives of the soldiers?

Legion policy dictated that men were studying not only to make them better soldiers in the present, but also to make them better citizens and Canadians. As Legion historian George Bowering noted:

Thousands of young Canadians enlisted for service in the Great War, helped to ensure victory for the Allies, then returned to their homeland completely unable to cope with the transition from war to peace, unable to take their places in a

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Summary of Surveys," Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix "E", LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

²⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

²⁶ "General Attitude of O.R.'s Toward the Army," in "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Reel C-5290, File: 8917-3-6.

progressive society which, ironically but all too obviously, refused to give them much credit for the “lost four years” in terms of background experience for civilian jobs.²⁷

Through the CLES, it was hoped that returned soldiers of the Second World War would not be placed at a disadvantage compared to those who had stayed in Canada as civilians and developed their educations, thereby enhancing their job prospects. Again, it was hoped that the provision of such a competitive edge would help the men to more smoothly re-enter Canadian life.

The Legion and its various partners in Canada – the Canadian Council for Adult Education, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, the Department of National Defence, the provincial Departments of Education, and various Canadian universities (including the Universities of Ottawa, Toronto, Laval, Alberta, and British Columbia), among others – all assumed responsibility for the development and provision of educational services, administered by the CLES, for all Canadian troops overseas.²⁸ The earliest courses were developed in Canada and included “arts” courses such as social studies and literature, as well as technical courses in areas such as carpentry and farming.²⁹

A start to the overseas education program had already been made by the spring of 1940 – only months after the arrival of 1st Canadian Infantry Division – but little real progress had been achieved owing to the overriding demands of military training. The conditions under which the Canadians were stationed prevented the CLES from providing fulsome service. Moves from Northampton to Brest, Oxford to Surrey, and the constant activity and states of readiness required to meet the possibility of German invasion dashed

²⁷ Bowering, *Service*, 153.

²⁸ “Summary of Surveys,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix “E”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

²⁹ “Minutes of a Meeting Held at NDHQ, Ottawa, 15 January 1940,” Canadian Legion Educational Services, 1939-1947, LAC, MG30-C181, Robert England Fonds.

many well-laid plans. The situation was greatly changed after 22 June 1940, when the French surrender came into effect and the promise of early action evaporated. As the static period lengthened, means were slowly devised to combat the growing feelings of boredom associated with such relative inactivity.

General A.G.L. McNaughton staunchly supported the use of educational activities to maintain morale and to prepare the men for their return to life in Canada. In an interview given to a Toronto *Globe and Mail* correspondent in December 1940, McNaughton claimed that the CLES were “of such importance both for military and civil qualifications of the men that I ask every formation commander to give every encouragement and help... [the work] is intended to assist our men in their military work as well as to aid them on their return to civil life when the war is over.”³⁰ McNaughton understood the numerous benefits that education would provide the men in terms of morale and rehabilitation, adding that abundant courses of study, “all recognized by Canadian universities,”³¹ would be supplied.

McNaughton was a respected scientific scholar in peacetime, a former head of the National Research Council, and so his belief that education could help combat flagging morale was perhaps to be expected. In October 1940, he told the Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services, that he,

...would not only afford every facility for such educational training but would arrange for groups in special Technical Studies to be relieved of regimental duties in order that attendance at organized schools could be effected... every effort would be supported in affording suitable educational instruction to the troops during the Autumn and Winter months when possible. Boredom could so easily effect [sic] adversely the morale of the troops.³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Directorate of Auxiliary Services War Diary, October 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

³² “Auxiliary Services Overseas, Report No. 11,” Directorate of Auxiliary Services War Diary, Oct 1940, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

The willingness of the Canadian army's senior officers overseas to relieve troops of normal duties to attend classes displayed their fervent support for education both for technical and psychological reasons.

In July 1940 McNaughton met with Robert England, the Legion's Director of Educational Services, to develop an educational program for the coming months. The general pointed out that "the provision of educational facilities may become a military necessity in the month of November."³³ By this McNaughton meant that morale, by that month, might be so sapped that education would play a vital role of keeping the men's minds fresh and active. In the winter of 1940-1941 there would be no intense period of training as the troops were by then considered, optimistically, to be "highly trained". McNaughton claimed "that too intense a syllabus of further training during the winter might only make them stale."³⁴ McNaughton also saw the value of education for creating better Canadian citizens at war's end. Education would "afford training to young Canadians that will be of benefit to them on conclusion of hostilities" and also to "provide a means of occupying the minds and activities of all ranks during the winter months." He continued that "not only is there a very active demand for this educational training but it is a matter of military expediency to provide it." To that end, he wanted to "release men from their ordinary duties for stated periods in order that they may form study groups."³⁵

In London on leave in September 1940, J.B. Bickersteth, Warden of Hart House, University of Toronto, wrote to McNaughton offering his services. By 23 September, McNaughton requested that Bickersteth survey the general educational needs of Canadian

³³ "Minutes of a conversation between Lt.-Gen A.G.L. McNaughton and Mr. Robert England, 20 July 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/EDUC/1/2.

³⁴ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years at War*, 420.

³⁵ "Memorandum by Brig. Turner on Discussions between Lt.-Gen. McNaughton and Major-General Montague, 3 Sep 40," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/EDUC/1/2

troops. McNaughton hoped, “that a programme could be worked out to keep the men interested during the winter months, this making them better soldiers and also improving their prospects when demobilizing.”³⁶ Within two weeks, Bickersteth had completed his report and found “considerable skepticism” as to the need for an educational scheme among unit commanders. However, he added that the men of the 1st and 2nd Divisions “are already finding the long evenings in country billets tedious,” adding that, “the need for some mental stimulus is there even if it is not consciously felt. Encouraged from above, this need will quickly uncover itself. Discouraged from above, it will remain hidden and inarticulate.”³⁷ The army and Legion thus set about systematically erecting a system of soldier education modelled on the one already underway among army units stationed in Canada. By the summer of 1942, after the program was well-developed, unit commanders had largely accepted the need for such services, as there was “every evidence of general support on the part of Formation officers”.³⁸

In his 1940 report, Bickersteth identified some specific needs and submitted a series of suggestions for the organization and development of an education program for the Canadian forces. The men wanted some education about the history, industry, and geography of the area in which they were billeted. According to Bickersteth, soldiers were also interested in a range of more general, popular topics including, “the study of the stars, literature, movie developments, the role of the battleship or the Air Force, agriculture,

³⁶ “Letter from Mr. Bickersteth to Comptroller of Hart House, 11 Oct 40,” CMHQ Report No. 53, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6917.

³⁷ “Memorandum on Educational Needs of Canadian Troops by J.B. Bickersteth, 11 Oct 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File: 23/EDUC/1/2.

³⁸ “Survey of Educational Needs and Educational Services in the Canadian Army Overseas,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1.

scientific subjects, the history of Germany, and humorous topics.”³⁹ Bickersteth advised that units could immediately organize informal talks drawing from their own ranks and officers to lecture on hobbies and professions of interest. From these came the *Battle of Brains* series of lectures on Canadian citizenship which will be discussed below.

Bickersteth also argued that the educational service should make more formalized and standardized matriculation courses available to help students enter Canadian universities upon their return home. This, he proposed, should be done once “common requirements for junior matriculation by the Canadian Universities” were established and after “a large number of specially written textbooks have been prepared.”⁴⁰ Matriculation courses were to be based on core Canadian subjects including math, literature, and social studies; the CLES determined the admission prerequisites in cooperation with universities from across Canada. There was also much vocational training and general interest courses. Bickersteth referenced the textbooks published by the CLES, which came to provide the lion’s share of education to the troops. These, he argued, would have to be “judiciously” distributed among the students. He suggested that the correspondence courses Robert England had set up be expanded to incorporate soldiers who had been university students when they enrolled.

McNaughton and Bickersteth insisted that these courses be made strictly voluntary, and that students who signed up should be encouraged to stay on for the whole course and not to drop out once their initial enthusiasm had waned. Although Bickersteth hastened to add that “this difficulty would obviously be far less if classes were not confined to leisure

³⁹ “Memorandum on Educational Needs of Canadian Troops by J.B. Bickersteth, 11 Oct 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File: 23/EDUC/1/2

⁴⁰ Ibid.

time but were allowed for instance in the afternoons.”⁴¹ He reported that, “a huge selection of text-booklets have been prepared, courses unified and a general simplification of the complicated educational system[s] of Canada achieved.”⁴² The soldiers overseas were thus offered a condensed version of the Canadian educational system, made portable and shipped to England. The system was designed to prepare the men for integration into Canada’s workforce or entrance into Canadian universities.

Robert England returned to Canada on 1 August 1940, where he took up a post on the federal government’s General Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation and Demobilization. In November 1940, Dr. Arthur E. Chatwin was appointed as the Legion’s Overseas Director of Education.⁴³ Chatwin set about determining the army’s needs, which included the provision of learning materials (text-booklets, writing materials, and similar supplies), and curricula for those providing education, which included officers and enlisted men who had been teachers in civilian life, as well as Legion officials specially selected for such work.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, educational services were not fully functioning over the winter of 1940-1941 since the necessary personnel, materials, curricula, and facilities were not yet in place, given the start late in the season. Regardless, the troops remained in England for the subsequent two winters when educational services were needed the most and so these well-laid plans eventually were put to good use.

In the early months of 1941, the system began to take shape. Before the year was out,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “Summary of Surveys,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix “E”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁴⁴ Chatwin outlined some of the essential requirements in an interview published in the *Ottawa Citizen*. This article notes that 60,000 books were donated from across Canada. See: “Outline Legion Education Plans for Canadian Army,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 September 1940, 21. Also see: “A.E. Chatwin to J.B. Bickersteth,” 19 November 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

the CLES was providing correspondence courses, university courses, summer school courses, first aid courses, technical and clerical courses, lectures, directed reading courses (in subjects such as math, English, social studies, conversational French and English, geography, science, and others), and library services.⁴⁵ Summer courses were arranged at Oxford and London Universities for men on leave.⁴⁶ Civilian educational officers in the units organized much of this work, but the unit chaplains also did “excellent work” in promoting educational services.⁴⁷ Lectures by outside speakers proved popular and a class in agriculture was developed due to demands on the part of soldiers from rural areas of Canada.⁴⁸ This is in addition to the technical and practical training that necessarily accompanied some types of military service.

The decision to provide educational services was not particularly difficult because such services offered a number of beneficial effects and served a variety of purposes. They obviously filled an oft-repeated need for education. A soldier of the 2nd Field Regiment, RCA, commented, “When I think that I together with thousands more was only out of school two years before joining up and that these very years when we should be training for a career are being spent in the Army, I wonder what is to become of us.”⁴⁹ A soldier of No. 2 Group, RCOC, added, “I never got the chance to go to high school in Canada but I figure I have a better education over here than anyone could get ... in Canada... equal to 4 years

⁴⁵ “Survey of Educational Needs and educational services in the Canadian Army Overseas,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1.

⁴⁶ “Summary of Surveys,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix “E”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁴⁷ “Survey of Educational Needs and educational services in the Canadian Army Overseas,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1.

⁴⁸ “Statistical Report Educational Services, C.A.S.F., 31 Jan 41,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/EDUC/1/2.

⁴⁹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 4 – 19 August 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

College education in 6 months.”⁵⁰ While these courses were hardly the equal of a full-time Canadian university education, the perception of many troops that they received top-notch courses indicates the complexity and quality of courses offered.

While McNaughton had decided that education was necessary, it was sometimes difficult to obtain the cooperation of regimental commanding officers because education directed and administered by civilians was often regarded as an “auxiliary” service.⁵¹ Nazis were not beaten with textbooks. For it to gain acceptance in command circles, education had to prepare the man for his work as a soldier. Much army education was therefore of a highly technical nature, well suited to preparing the man for his military vocation but also of applicability for a post-war technical career. This was especially true for men in technical arms of the service: transport, signals, engineers, even the artillery. It was for such purposes that the army created the Canadian Training School which was the driving force behind all kinds of specialist training schemes. Such training differed from CLES courses, the latter often specifically designed for the purposes of morale (although technical training, as a means of filling idle time, was also good for morale).⁵²

By 1942, many educational problems were arising that were referred to army headquarters but there was no educational officer or army rank there to deal with them. Such questions included whether the CLES – a civilian organization – could provide technical military training. The need for a military establishment existed to direct certain educational activities within the army, such as technical training, and to coordinate the

⁵⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 10 – 23 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁵¹ “Summary of Surveys,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix “E”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁵² The Canadian Training School, for example, ran an obstacle course, as well as courses in unarmed combat, tank harbour stalking, and identifying, clearing, and setting booby traps. See: CMHQ Report No. 125, “Battle Drill Training,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6677, 5.

work being provided by the Canadian Legion. In addition, some of the army educational officers felt that the army could increase official support among reluctant regimental commanders if the former administered some aspects of the program. This problem persisted until early 1943 when some aspects of training were taken under the authority of a new Directorate of Army Education. This office, too, fostered close links between Canada and its soldiers.

After the CLES got off the ground and began providing its multitude of courses, the necessity of differentiating the CLES from the Directorate of Army Education slowly became clear. It was gradually discovered that while some men were interested in educational advancement for the future, and many were interested in profitably spending their time, many others needed some educational upgrading for the military job. The CLES counsellors began to discover that there was an “in-service” educational job as well as an “auxiliary” educational job.⁵³ After the 20 January 1943 creation of the Directorate of Army Education, the CLES assumed wholesale the work of providing “auxiliary” education and Army Education adopted the “in-service” role.⁵⁴ While there was friction over the removal of some Legion responsibility, this was eased by the decision to emphasize the CLES's educational role as best suited to the soldier's rehabilitation, while giving the new directorate jurisdiction over purely “military” education.

Legion educational officials differed from Educational Officers who held rank and were responsible to the COs of their units. The latter's job was to organize and promote study among the men and to cooperate with the CLES officials. It was decided that current

⁵³ “Directorate of Army Education, Conference of District Education Officers, 26-28 July 1943,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, July 1943, Appendix “8”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

affairs instruction should be an army responsibility rather than a responsibility of a civilian organization because the ongoing study of morale revealed the men needed more information about Canada and Canadian affairs.⁵⁵ It was thought that this was an educational problem and that the army Educational Officers, if appointed, could give considerable help in keeping the men in touch with Canadian news and culture, a factor of some importance in the decision to form the Directorate of Army Education. Many men expressed a desire for such news, and strong appreciation when they received it. One junior officer commented, “there would be advantage in a systematic method of advising the men on [numerous Canadian] subjects,”⁵⁶ but army policy stifled the provision of much news in this regard. A number of men (mainly officers) expressed a desire for all kinds of news from home. One officer wrote, “Politics, economy and post war plans were the main subjects of interest for me,”⁵⁷ although the writer adds that little news of this sort was available.

For example, officers and men often mentioned their desire to read Canadian newspapers and magazines. Those that were sent in abundance were filled with *Canadians*. *Canada's Weekly* was a prime example.⁵⁸ It was published throughout the war in London, distributed to units, and kept on file at each of the Canadian service and leave centres across Britain. This and other publications, such as *Canadian Affairs*, reported on wide-ranging aspects of Canadian life – politics, culture, economics, the war effort, sports, labour

⁵⁵ “Summary of Surveys,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, January 1943, Appendix “E”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁵⁶ “Special Report No. 161. Written by a captain in the 1st Canadian Infantry Division.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Written by a lieutenant of the Royal Canadian Artillery, serving with the 1st Canadian Infantry Division.

⁵⁸ The issues of *Canada's Weekly*, which are available at Library and Archives Canada, have been collected and bound into a series of volumes. Each reference herein will point to those collections. Percy Hurd (ed.), *Canada's Weekly* (London; New York; Montreal, 1934-1950). These contained a wealth of information on Canada, the Canadian war effort, the army, and the war in general.

developments, provincial matters, among hundreds of other topics – and also reported the activities of the army and soldiers in England and elsewhere. *Canada's Weekly* also referenced educational developments. In a February 1941 interview with the Canadian Press, General McNaughton stressed that education would only be provided if the men wanted it, attesting to its perceived value as an instrument of morale. “We insist that it must be a natural desire, for we do not want to press anything like this on the troops. The aim will be to help the men advance their education and also to tie in with their military studies, as well as to meet requests for general cultural information.”⁵⁹ *Canada's Weekly* further attested to the popularity of the CLES courses. In an article of 14 February 1941, the magazine reported that in England, one could easily find Canadian soldiers examining pamphlets listing course offerings. The article continued:

Canada's Overseas Army has gone 'collegiate,' ... 'Courses for Service Men,' lends material evidence to the widespread interest and enthusiasm in the Canadian Legion's educational plan... As a result of its institution, members of the Canadian Army serving in the United Kingdom have yet another proof of their leader's [General A.G.L. McNaughton] ever-vigilant attention to details concerning their welfare.⁶⁰

The troops attested to the popularity of these courses week after week in their letters home. The censor noted, “The educational courses, sponsored by the Canadian Legion, are much appreciated.”⁶¹ A soldier of the 1st Canadian Tank Brigade Ordnance Corps commented, “We cannot thank the Cdn. Legion enough for what they have done for us. They have an educational adviser with us at all times, and they have given us many educational

⁵⁹ Percy Hurd (ed.), *Canada's Weekly*, Vol. CXVI, Oct. 1940 – Mar. 1941, 61.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 379.

⁶¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 16 February – 1 March 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/5.

advantages, sending us to Brighton Technical College, and giving us many different correspondence courses. They have also supplied many men with books.”⁶²

Canadian Affairs focused more on political and current affairs in Canada. This too was popular with the men. A report examining morale in the army over the previous year noted, “At least 50% of the officers read [*Canadian Affairs*]. Many O.R.’s reported to have read it too. Officers find much in *Canadian Affairs* to interest themselves and much that is of value for discussion groups.” This report added that the aspects most often praised were articles on rehabilitation and on actual military operations.⁶³ This report also noted that officers used this magazine to gather information about Canada for discussion in their informal lectures. In these examples, the Canadian soldiers’ interest in reading about Canada and Canadian affairs is evident; many wanted reminders of home, others wanted to know about the changes taking place, most wanted both.

An added benefit of the Directorate of Army Education was that it allowed both the army and the CLES to specialize in their respective areas. Overlapping responsibilities had proved problematic for army education; such confusion, for example, did little to commend education to skeptical regimental officers. The type of technical training offered to specialist soldiers was not available to the majority of the men in the infantry and it was for those men that Legion education was provided as a means first to prepare them for post-war life and second to give them something meaningful to occupy their time while in England. In short, education equipped the soldier to be a better warrior (one ripe for promotion), it raised his morale, and it would ease his reintegration into Canadian society. Theoretically,

⁶² Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 Jan. 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁶³ “Trends in the Thinking of Army Units,” Vol. III, Number VI, June 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6. “Morale Reports – Monthly Summary,” 5.

the man, the army, the government, and society in general all benefitted. By mid-1943, the beneficial psychological effects of the educational program were accepted as indispensable. Colonel G.G.D. Kilpatrick, Director of Army Education, stated, "Our problem is to help the boys in the period of waiting, which will probably be about two years. Education could play a saving part in the morale of the troops..."⁶⁴

Nevertheless, up until early 1943, officials at the highest level of the Canadian army debated the usefulness of education to the soldier once he returned home. The experience of reintegration following the First World War led such officials to focus on reintegration into Canadian life.⁶⁵ General H.D.G. Crerar, at this time GOC, I Canadian Corps, in considering whether the army should use Legion services to help train soldiers in areas that could have a military use (such as driving, mechanics, or clerical work), described in a series of letters to J.B. Bickersteth and others, the purpose of the army's education policy and laid out the army's relationship to the CLES. The exchange between them lays bare the role of both civilian and army education in fostering links between the soldier and Canada. Crerar wrote:

It is my view that the educational courses provided by the Canadian Legion War Services Inc. should, generally speaking, begin and carry on from where the limits of necessary military education are reached. In other words the Legion educational services should be planned to care for the post-war future of the present soldier and when he is again a civilian. The welcome fact that the individual is made a better soldier as a result of such Legion education is incidental to the primary purpose. On the other hand it is the responsibility of Canadian Army Headquarters, as the agent of the Canadian government, to give the individual all the military training required to fit him for his duties in war. In this case it is again incidental, though of marked

⁶⁴ "Directorate of Army Education, Conference of District Education Officers, 26-28 July 1943." Directorate of Army Education War Diary, July 1943, Appendix "8", LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁶⁵ For a good examination of post-First World War re-integration problems, see Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). Much of the official debate in England during the Second World war can be traced in correspondence between General Crerar and various officials: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

importance, that such military training results generally in an improvement in the individual's usefulness as a citizen and wage-earner in a post-war and peaceful world.⁶⁶

Crerar wanted to ensure that the Legion's services would not be exploited to provide training for which the government itself should pay and provide. Bickersteth, who continued as educational advisor after McNaughton's dismissal in December 1943, remarked that *any* training would be of post-war benefit to the soldier. He added that training was given by the government's good graces and, as such, the men were in no position to gripe over the potential usefulness of such training. He explained:

Much of what the soldier learns in the course of his day-to-day training in the army is *sui generis* but there is also much, especially in the more technical branches, which is [of] a sort [to] help him reestablish himself in civil life. The man, who for instance learns a trade while a soldier, has clearly acquired expert knowledge (incidentally at the expense of the government who also pays him extra for having acquired it) which will immeasurably improve his post-war prospects.⁶⁷

Bickersteth stated that the COs would "never" accept training that was solely for the men's post-war rehabilitation. Crerar disagreed and was in a position to force such acceptance on his COs. He argued:

A considerable number of soldiers are not so fortunate as to receive a training whilst in the Army which has a useful application in civil life. An example would be found in the high proportion of the Infantry who mainly require to be proficient in the technical and tactical use of their weapons. The technical educational training provided by the Legion for these men, and in their spare time, is of particular value. It is of value, also, to the Commanding Officers of these men, both from the point of view of raising their educational standard and of improving their morale.⁶⁸

Education's importance in maintaining morale is manifest in Crerar's argument and, as such, it formed part of the army's overall plan to maintain morale. His contention that

⁶⁶ "H.D.G. Crerar to J.B. Bickersteth," 31 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

⁶⁷ "J.B. Bickersteth to H.D.G. Crerar," 5 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

⁶⁸ "H.D.G. Crerar to J.B. Bickersteth," 6 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

education in any capacity would benefit both the soldier and the army was borne out in a report suggesting that “the better educated a man is, the more likely he is to favour the role of soldier, men with education beyond grade school are more apt to choose combat duty, and soldiers with little education go A.W.L. more frequently than others.”⁶⁹ According to this report, the Canadian who volunteered for overseas services was, on average, better disposed toward education. It follows that the better educated he was, the better soldier he made. This conclusion suggests that McNaughton and Crerar were correct to insist that even non-technical educational services were an important measure both to enhance morale and to increase military efficiency.⁷⁰

Crerar was motivated also by what he saw as the army’s moral duty to provide military training while protecting civil education because the people of Canada had freely donated their money precisely for such education. He noted:

If the Canadian Corps is inadequately provided in respect to the numbers or training of Drivers M.T. [Motorized Transport] or Military Clerks then it is clearly the G.O.C.s responsibility either to obtain authority to establish the necessary military schools for this purpose within the Canadian Corps or under C.M.H.Q or under other arrangements made by the Department of National Defence in Ottawa. He has no right to call on the Legion, or any other body supported by voluntary subscription, to undertake responsibilities which should be fulfilled by government agencies.⁷¹

Here he refers to the types of training that the Legion could conceivably provide, such as clerical or driving instruction, but argues that even this must be government-funded. Crerar likely also wanted to maintain some level of army control over forms of education that were considered to be strictly military in nature. Nevertheless, civil education was to be

⁶⁹ “The Relationship of Certain Factors to Soldiers Liking or Disliking the Army.” Special Report #192, 1 June 1945, “Morale Reports - Special Reports to Branches of National Defence Headquarters,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 5, File 8917-3-7, 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “H.D.G. Crerar to J.B. Bickersteth,” 6 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

protected even if it increased government cost. Crerar's position that education should provide a useful civil training *and* contribute to high morale seems to have yielded positive results. The field censor noted, "The post-war value of present training and technical courses is realized, and appreciated by some writers."⁷²

Once the CLES knew it was to provide solely civilian education, it was able to streamline its services. The Legion stated, "In general courses should be of an informative or educational nature rather than trade training"⁷³ The memorandum added "it is recognized that there is also need for courses of a purely cultural or educational value."⁷⁴ The Legion understood that their prescribed role was to provide an education for use in Canada, not overseas on which the army and the Directorate would focus, and as such, Legion education was based mainly on Canadian themes. The Legion stipulated that the education they provided should "be beneficial to the students both as citizens and workers."⁷⁵

Crerar's insistence on a division between military and civil education reinforced the domination of Canadian themes for soldiers in England. Because a Canadian national voluntary organization provided the civil side of army education, specifically to aid in the soldiers' re-establishment into post-war Canadian society, Canadian themes dominated that educational programme. Bickersteth hit on the essential point: that the most useful and popular training had a practical use for the soldier in postwar Canada. He wrote Crerar that:

Recently, the commander of a formation has requested Legion Educational Services to arrange instruction for a number of his men in track vehicles. Incidentally a class

⁷² Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

⁷³ "Memorandum for the CLES Committee on Rehabilitation," Directorate of Army Education War Diary, March 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

of this kind would be fulfilling in a very definite way the dual purpose of military training and rehabilitation, as farm tractors are so widely used in Canada.⁷⁶

In the end, it was decided that education designed to continue the man's pre-war education, courses designed for general interest and reasons of morale, and courses meant to better prepare the man for re-integration in the workforce would be provided by the CLES only so long as such education was not at all related to preparing the man for his job as a soldier. Crerar's adamancy – and McNaughton's before him – ensured that the army would provide such "military" education solely at the government's expense. If such education also qualified the soldier for better employment opportunities after the war, it was considered a side bonus. This decision allayed any lingering scepticism over the ability of the CLES to deliver meaningful military education. It also made the Legion's "civilian" education even more effective as a means to combat morale and prepare the man for life in post-war Canada because the Legion could thereafter focus solely on that endeavour.

A major part of the program's appeal and success as a morale booster, to officers and other ranks alike, was that it appealed to both groups' national identity. These included language courses highlighting themes relevant to their respective cultures, as well as courses designed specifically to reinforce their sense of Canadian nationalism, both of which will be discussed below. Given the political climate in Canada, the government also welcomed such a focus. General McNaughton was pleased with the results of the educational program in terms of its ability to combat morale almost from the outset. In the spring of 1940 he wrote,

...the educational programme of the past Winter, though obviously not fully developed, had been a great help in maintaining morale: it had directed attention as a real constructive effort and had been of undoubted service to the men both in

⁷⁶ "J.B. Bickersteth to H.D.G. Crerar," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9895, File 2/Educ Trng/1.

keeping up the habit of education and preparing them for the period of reconstruction after the war.⁷⁷

McNaughton stressed that the education program was about keeping an eye to Canada and returning soldiers to civilian life and Canadian society as better-educated and more civic-minded individuals. On 13 June 1942, at McNaughton's request, Major O.E. Ault sailed to England to make a "survey of educational needs and facilities for education in Canadian formations overseas."⁷⁸ Ault submitted his report to McNaughton on 4 July 1942, stipulating that instruction in Canadian citizenship needed to be an integral part of the program. Ault began by stressing that overseas education anchored some men to their pre-war studies and others to their post-war lives in Canada. Of civilian education he stated, "The Legion education program was designed to provide (1) for continuation of interrupted education and (2) for possible post-war occupations."⁷⁹ However, pre-war educational deficiencies and the needs of the war also meant that educational officers were asked to meet more immediate educational needs. "They assisted with the training of tradesmen. They gave First Aid courses. They provided educational courses for officer candidates. They supplied books on all sorts of military and technical subjects."⁸⁰

Ault's report, submitted to the army high command long after the implementation and general acceptance of the educational program, highlighted the scheme's importance in

⁷⁷ "Memorandum of a Conference at HQ Canadian Corps, 11 Mar 41, by Brig. Turner, 14 Mar 41," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10145, File 23/Educ/1/3.

⁷⁸ *Directorate of Army Education War Diary*, 1-31 January 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318. Before the war, Dr. O.E. Ault was a leading educational researcher and practitioner and member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. After the war, he sat on a committee of the Canadian Council for Reconstruction through UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization], on which also sat the Legion's wartime Director of Overseas Education, Dr. A.E. Chatwin. A leading proponent of education as a force for good, Ault also sat on UNESCO's committee that sought to gather scientific equipment for war-devastated universities.

⁷⁹ "Survey of Educational Needs and educational services in the Canadian Army Overseas," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1, 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

terms of citizenship. The report stated, "There are specific needs since men should have educational requirements for military occupations as they must have for civilian occupations...and there is a general need for education for citizenship."⁸¹ The report continued:

It is suggested that there is a further and general need that should be met in training efficient soldiers and that is the development in each man of a consciousness of a cause that is just and an appreciation of Canada and its way of life... the spirit of their fathers [members of the First World War CEF] is not lacking but in many cases latent and can be developed by an educational programme of talks, movies, directed reading and discussions.⁸²

Ault added that:

It is not sufficient that men should hear from an A.B.C.A. [Army Bureau of Current Affairs] lecturer where battles are being won at the moment or who is winning them or that they should be encouraged to invent strategies or rationalizations of their own. These provide in turn an informational background for future battles and an emotional release.... A flow of information on Canadian problems and Canada's part in the war should (be issued) to the men and they should be constantly aware of their Canadian citizenship and be stimulated to clearly think about it.⁸³

Recognizing this, it was recommended that, "A program for Canadian citizenship should be developed and Canadian information should be supplied." Certain "outstanding Canadians" should be invited to speak to the troops, "arrangements should be made for showing Canadian documentary films and Canadian news films... Canadian magazines and newspapers should be circulated as widely as possible to officers and men..."⁸⁴ Concurring, McNaughton received agreement from the government and, on 20 January 1943; the war establishment of the educational services overseas was redefined along the lines detailed in

⁸¹ Ibid., 2.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 3.

this report and the Directorate of Army Education was created.⁸⁵ On the day of its creation, Col. G.G.D. Kilpatrick, Director of Army Education, submitted a report to Minister of National Defence J.L. Ralston outlining the role of the new directorate. Its objectives were as follows:

- (1) Primarily to provide education which will increase a man's efficiency as a soldier.
- (2) To utilize the organization and staff provided for the above purpose for assistance to soldiers in improving their educational standards generally, so as to prepare them for return to civilian life.⁸⁶

The Director of Army Education Overseas would closely liaise with the Legion's Director of Overseas Education Services, who continued to be a civilian.

While the Legion's coordinated educational effort focused on civil education, government-provided army education nevertheless tended to encourage the soldiers' links to Canada. Military education naturally received much attention and tended to be of a technical nature. Canadian Junior War Staff courses were conducted to ensure a supply of staff officers trained in accordance with the latest military experience. The Canadian Training School was established whose different wings gave specialized instruction in the various army branches. One of those wings was the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), which trained candidates for commissions chosen from among the ranks, by 1941 the only method in the United Kingdom for obtaining officers for the Canadian Army.⁸⁷ This, along with the enlistment policy outlined in Chapter 1, ensured that all officers in the army were Canadian nationals.

The army also encouraged officers to arrange and provide talks and lectures to the

⁸⁵ "War Establishment – Educational Services Overseas – 4 Feb 1943," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1.

⁸⁶ Directorate of Army Education War Diary, 1-31 January 1943, Appendix II, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

⁸⁷ Canadian Training School (Officer Cadet Training Unit) War Diary, 1 – 31 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 16853, File 808.

men, especially during the winter months, to combat flagging morale. Many of these took the form of general knowledge and current affairs lectures. Officers found that these topics were useful, but that the thirst for knowledge or news from Canada outpaced the information provided in current affairs pamphlets. An officer of the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars, tasked with providing such lectures, commented, "One thing all the boys miss is the Canadian newspapers... They are trying to help us by sending us once a week a little pamphlet which contains information which we can use to brief the men on current affairs, it is excellent, but it isn't as good as newspapers."⁸⁸

Pamphlets outlining the national war effort were also used in such informal lectures. One such publication, *Canada at War: A Summary of Canada's Part in the War*, went through two editions in 1941 and 1942.⁸⁹ The booklet featured parliamentary speeches and statements related to the many aspects of the national war effort. Its focus was national and highlighted the following: Canada's financial and military aid to Britain, Canada's armed forces, steps taken to equip the forces, the war and the economy, voluntary civilian contributions, and general information about Canada's and the United States' war efforts. In its general summary, the booklet informed readers, "Canada has built up a war machine...which possesses very considerable potential strength."⁹⁰ Such publications made clear that on the one hand, the western Canadian wheat fields, central Canadian factories, Atlantic mineral resources, and the toil of Canadian workers all sustained the soldier. On the other hand, the soldier was the sharp end of the entire nation's effort; they were all pulling on the same rope.

⁸⁸ Field Censor (Home) Report, 5 – 19 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁸⁹ See Canada. Bureau of Public Information, *Canada At War: A Summary of Canada's Part in the War* (Ottawa: Director of Public Information, 1941).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

Many soldiers much enjoyed the abundant educational lectures provided in their units. Commented one; “Just been to a lecture, darn good.”⁹¹ Another added: “This educational scheme... is sure a good idea... we attend school Tuesdays and Fridays for two hours at night... They take up lots of subjects too... It’s a great thing to pass the time away...”⁹² One of the more popular sourcebooks for such lectures – published through three editions during the war – was *The Battle of Brains: Lectures*.⁹³ These lectures were developed in 1940 by a committee in Winnipeg under the convenorship of Mrs. W.J. Lindal, in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship. Referred to at that time as “The Lindal Lectures” they were presented to the Department of National Defence with the suggestion that they might be published for use in training purposes in conjunction with a film program. They were intended as a “course in Democracy” to “present the common facts of our history, our ideals and objectives.” Their popularity as training material led to their subsequent adoption by several provincial boards of education. Editions were published in 1941, 1943, and 1945.⁹⁴

In the introduction, it was explained that these lectures were, “not meant to be given by ‘gifted speakers’ at large parades. They are intended to be given by ordinary junior leaders in an ordinary way to ordinary men. The more informal the circumstances of the talks, the greater will be their usefulness.”⁹⁵ Such instructions speak to the government’s desire to inculcate ideas of Canadian citizenship and identity in an organic and natural way

⁹¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

⁹² Ibid. This quote was from an artilleryman of the 21st Canadian Field Battery.

⁹³ Canada. Dept. of National Defence. Geographical Section, *The Battle of Brains: Lectures* (Ottawa: Geographical Section, Dept. of National Defence, 1941). Hereafter: *The Battle of Brains*.

⁹⁴ Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship, *Annual Report, 1941* (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship, 1941).

⁹⁵ *The Battle of Brains*, 2.

– as if they formed the stuff of everyday life – into the minds of the troops. Such education seems to have contributed to an improvement in the “citizenship” of Canadian troops; a 1944 report revealed that 40% of returning soldiers reported that life in the army “increased (their) knowledge of Canada.”⁹⁶ This statistic does not preclude the fact that many more men received such education, but did not consider that it “increased their knowledge” of Canada.

The *Battle of Brains* lectures aimed to “clothe and feed” the minds of Canadian soldiers. The introduction adds, “we shall not overcome (the enemy) unless we can also defeat them in the Battle of Brains.”⁹⁷ This series of lectures aimed to reinforce the soldiers’ Canadian nationality and sense of citizenship at every turn of the page, although no Canadians yet possessed such citizenship formally. Soldiers were told that “from whatever walk of life, from whatever part of Canada you have come, that groove in which you move and have your being is dependent upon your Canadian citizenship.”⁹⁸ Reinforcing the notion popular among soldiers that Canada’s main defence lay in the defence of Britain, the book added: “You are here as a group of Canadians; you have come here because your country is in danger, and for the purpose of learning how to defend her most effectively.”⁹⁹ The booklet constantly reminded the soldier that he was there to defend “Canadian life,” which included the nation, its people and – most importantly – its way of life.¹⁰⁰ This fulfilled a real need since soldiers’ letters to Canada sometimes expressed feelings of alienation in England and, more frequently, a desire to be among Canadians. A

⁹⁶ “Morale Reports - Special Reports to Branches of National Defence Headquarters,” August 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Vol. 5, File: 8917-3-8.

⁹⁷ *The Battle of Brains*, 1.

⁹⁸ *The Battle of Brains*, 5.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

typical comment is found in a letter from a soldier of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division who wrote, “I think we all feel much the same, this isn’t home and never will be.”¹⁰¹ A Royal Canadian Engineer, complaining of the lack of Canadian news, added, “Here it’s really worse than Canada, in Canada we used to get papers hear a radio but here there isn’t any.”¹⁰² These lectures reinforced the soldiers’ sense of solidarity with the national effort and provided copious information on Canada itself.

A common feature of the government’s nationalizing propaganda is also present in this lecture series: that the war affected all regions of Canada, indeed all Canadians, equally. The lectures suggested that “our individual lives are made happy or unhappy, successful or otherwise by circumstances that affect all of Canada.”¹⁰³ Once the nationalizing process is complete, it is added, Canadians would be able to assert that they were, “One voice, one people, one in heart and soul and feeling and desire.”¹⁰⁴ One of the lectures, “Canada at War”, juxtaposes Canada’s automatic belligerency in 1914 and emphasizes that, “In 1939 the representatives of Canada had to decide whether their nation, Canada, should go to war.”¹⁰⁵ A series of questions and answers are then posed, each from the view of a different Canadian region. In answer to the question, “Why should we worry?” the booklet answers:

...Canada has everything that Hitler needs – stretches of land capable of feeding millions – no other country contains such wealth as lies buried here. Canada is the Dictator’s No. 1 prize among the nations of the world...A Germany beaten to her knees, stripped of her arms, rose from that in 10 years to become a menace to the world. What would hold back a triumphant Germany with the resources of her

¹⁰¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁰² Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁰³ *The Battle of Brains*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

victims at her feet? She would be an immediate menace to us.¹⁰⁶

Herein again can be found the idea, repeatedly stressed to Canadian soldiers, that they were stationed in the United Kingdom first and foremost to defend Canada against Nazi aggression. A Lance Corporal of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, explaining that he was overseas not to defend England, but to beat the Nazis, added, “There is a deep hatred in our hearts over here for everything the Nazi represents...”¹⁰⁷

French Canadians were also linked to the war effort in these lectures. A question is posed from the purported French-Canadian viewpoint; “Admitting that we do not care such a lot about England or even France, that Canada is our country – why should French Canada get involved?” The answer:

1. Because she values the continued free exercise of her language and religion.
2. To save Canada from being a future battle ground.

- - -

Do not forget that Germany is the enemy of religion, of freedom, and of every race but her own. Is it safe, even if it were decent, not to be concerned with what is happening in Europe.¹⁰⁸

Such attitudes reflected the contemporaneous English-Canadian belief that the French Canadian’s most treasured values were religion, language, and security within Canada. At the end of every chapter in the booklet is a series of “Questions for Discussion” that the officer would pose to his men. Following the discussion above, officers were directed to ask, “What is meant by saying that Canada’s front line of defence is in Europe?”¹⁰⁹ A soldier of the 3rd Anti-Tank Regiment might have answered as he did in a letter home: “The Limeys can fight for England, I’m here to fight Hitler because he menaces our homes. If he

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁰⁸ *The Battle of Brains*, 71.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 75.

wins it here, darling you can sure bet they'll swim the Atlantic and then where will we be."¹¹⁰ There could scarcely be a better summation of the attitudes of most of Canada's fighting men overseas.

In line with the growing continental embrace between Canada and the US hastened by the onset of war, the soldier was also reminded that, in Canada, his external connections were increasingly towards the United States, rather than Britain. In its lecture explaining Canada's relationship with the United States, *The Battle of Brains* explains that Canada is both British and American by heritage. The lynchpin theory, or the so-called North Atlantic Triangle,¹¹¹ is succinctly described: "...we occupy a unique position in the relationship [between the United Kingdom and the United States] – we are the representatives of the British Commonwealth on the North American continent."¹¹² The booklet explains that the Canadian way of life includes the almost wholesale consumption of the products of U.S. culture. The lecture continues:

Some of the connections are so obvious that we rarely notice them. Most of the magazines we read are American; we listen to American radio programmes almost as much as our own; we get just as excited as they do about the standing of the Yankees, the White Sox and the Dodgers; and most of the films we see are made in Hollywood. We live very much as the Americans live.¹¹³

This purported "Canadian way of life" – of patronizing American popular culture – was in evidence in England. Witness, for example, the Canadian soldiers' preference for listening to German propaganda radio stations. The censors so often reported this behaviour that it can be considered widespread and generalized throughout Canadian units. *The Battle of*

¹¹⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 27 October – 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹¹¹ The latter term was first defined as such in: John Bartlett Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle: the Interplay of Canada, the United States and Great Britain* (New-Haven; Toronto: Ryerson Press; Yale University Press, 1945).

¹¹² *The Battle of Brains*, 78.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 81.

Brains lectures recommended that soldiers be read a quote from a recent (but unnamed) book about Canada and the United States designed to show how much more like an American is the average Canadian, even in the most mundane aspects of life.

Take the important matter of pants. An Englishman calls them trousers, has them cut half-way up his back, and supports them with what he calls braces. The Canadian, like the American, calls them pants and, as often as not, belts them tightly just above his hips. He drinks more rye than scotch, more hard liquor than wine, likes two crusts on his pie and dislikes brussel-sprouts and boiled puddings. If you prick him he will not only bleed like an American, he will swear like one. He prefers baseball to cricket, likes football rough, and shoots golf at par instead of bogey.¹¹⁴

English golfing prowess aside, there is little doubt that these preferences, American or not, were alive among Canadians even if they were somewhat overstated. The authors, however, temper their pro-Americanism by adding that Canadians are historically *both* British and American, adding that “Love of Freedom is the Bond”¹¹⁵ that unites them all. These intellectual arguments do not account, however, for the hostility many Canadians displayed towards US troops, itself a negative expression of Canadian nationalism.¹¹⁶

Another of the lectures recognizes the problems that Canada’s large geography and diverse demographics present, pointing out the five “obvious [geographic and demographic] divisions” which it contends makes Canada a “commonwealth of five countries”. It goes on to further instill the idea that despite these differences, a single unified nation has emerged to which every soldier belongs, “...in Canada there is a growing unifying spirit which no differences, racial, geographic or economic can dissolve.”¹¹⁷ Of Quebec, the manual concludes that it is “the oldest country” in Canada and, “in many ways

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁶ Incidence of tension and violence between United States and Canadian troops are discussed in Chapter 2.

¹¹⁷ *The Battle of Brains*, 89.

the most truly Canadian one.”¹¹⁸ The lecture aims to turn the historic differences that have fostered this most serious division in Canadian society into agents of unity. It continues, in a reductionist vein typical of such documents: “[French Canadian] patriotism is so strongly Canadian that it has not allowed them to remain wholly isolated. The narrow outlook of the past has been widening.” The comparison continues, “In the last war they fought beside their English speaking comrades for a common cause; in the present war they, no less than other Canadians, have with one voice dedicated themselves to the cause of freedom.”¹¹⁹ Cultural differences between Ontario and Quebec are minimized through the contention that their “economic unity” serves the rest of Canada. Together, the publication contends,

...they are one economic unit...both... look inwardly for markets...both favour protection as a national policy...but both have never made an effort to unite the middle against the rest of Canada...They depend upon the rest of Canada just as much as the rest depends upon them.¹²⁰

Such passages aimed to address the sense of western alienation which had developed in the interwar period, along with the Maritime annoyance at the dominance of central Canada.

This section concludes that,

Canada is one nation. The diverse elements have been brought together. The differences have never been allowed to overshadow the unity. The contrasts have been a source of strength rather than of weakness. There is a strong unifying element; it is our love of freedom. Over two score years ago Sir Wilfrid Laurier said: “Canada is free and Freedom is its nationality.”¹²¹

The success of such attempts to foster harmony between soldiers representing the various parts of Canada in England is questionable. Most soldier testimony suggests that Canadian troops got along well with each other for the most part. Their main conflicts seemed to come from interactions with British and American soldiers. However, there is evidence that

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 92.

relations between English and French Canadians were often tense. A soldier of the Essex Scottish Regiment of Windsor, Ontario reported that, “the Frogs [French Canadians] went around in small mobs hunting for a lone Essex to beat up.”¹²² Another, from the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, commented that “the French Canadians have given us fellows a bad name in any part of England they go... so... we have to... show them we are not like the French and never hope to be.”¹²³ There was also some resentment between other Canadian units from nearby regions of Canada, “Apparently there is some jealousy between this regiment [North Nova Scotia Highlanders] and the North Shore New Brunswick Regiment.”¹²⁴ While the government and army might not have been able to paper over all the regional and provincial cracks in Canadian unity overseas with the educational program, the importation of these prejudices and fears speaks loudly of the reproduction of normative Canadian social patterns in England.

The historian should hesitate before relying too heavily on a source such as *Battle of Brains*, but neither should its relevance be understated. This instruction manual was an undoubtedly popular resource considering its publication run and, most importantly, considering that many soldiers reiterated the lessons and themes imparted in the lectures again and again in their letters home. It worked less as a guide to belief and more a reflection of it. To a large degree, judging by the weight of evidence in soldier correspondence, officers using this material were preaching to the converted.

Other myths and realities of the Canadian experiences were addressed in these lectures. They reiterate that Canada’s diversity – and its resultant potential for disunity – is

¹²² Field Censor (Home) Report, 13 – 26 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 29 September – 12 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

in fact its greatest strength. In topics covering Canadians' "Spiritual bond" of nationhood, their propensity for "bridge building" makes Canadians uniquely familiar with geographical and political adversity. In the words of the authors, Canada was,

...a Miniature World...out of a diversity of racial groups scattered over half a continent the 'Fathers of Canada' have built a nation. Her people have sacrificed nobly and freely... That nation, young and strong, will play its part 'in freedom's crowning hour'. The greater Canada will emerge. It may provide the pattern for the world order of tomorrow.¹²⁵

The *Battle of Brains* was a clear outcome of the army's desire to inculcate ideas of citizenship on the men overseas. Such desires permeated much of the curriculum development at the highest levels, first of the Department of National Defence, then of the CLES, and finally at the Directorate of Army Education. As we have seen, junior officers and the men they taught were also eager to receive such information.

To bolster education for citizenship at home and overseas, the federal government entered into negotiations in 1941 with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), itself a partner in the development of overseas curricula. The Secretary-Treasurer of the CTF, in a letter to Prime Minister King, maintained that "united effort is so necessary to build up a truly Canadian consciousness." The CTF "endeavoured for years to develop that broader outlook on democracy," and it therefore established the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship in "probably the most critical time in the history of our country." They proposed to

...impress on the minds of our children, and our young people, the underlying principles of our system of government, of our social and economic life, and thereby make them truly conscious of the part they should play in our present

¹²⁵ Ibid.

crisis... (we) believe that a central council of education can be of inestimable assistance in our task of creating an enthusiastic love of (Canadian) institutions.”¹²⁶

Considering the CTF’s central role in curriculum development, it is little wonder that such nationalist messages permeated curricular memoranda circulating within the CLES and at the Directorate of Army Education after 1943.

After its creation, the Directorate of Army Education recommended the adoption of such course content to the Legion. A memorandum of early 1943 stipulated that the aim of courses on Social Studies – a Legion-provided course – should be to “make the student soldier conscious of his responsibilities and privileges in a democracy.”¹²⁷ This memorandum cites, as its first topic, “Canadian Citizenship”. These instructions eventually informed the Legion Social Studies courses and were a reflection of the popularity of the *Battle of Brains*. Students in such courses were taught about every level of the political process in Canada. The memorandum’s list of topics to be covered in lessons on Canadian Democracy was lengthy, but instructive. It covered, “How we are governed – by the democratic system – with equal franchise as citizens.” Topics included: the local community, church, schools, municipal government, boards of education, provincial government, departments of public health, departments of education, and the federal government. Topics to be covered under “the Development of a Democratic Form of Government in Canada,” included Canada under French rule, Canada under British rule, and the story of Confederation.¹²⁸ These detailed lessons on the internal functioning of

¹²⁶ “Letter from C.N. Crutchfield, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 23 Jan 1941,” LAC, RG2, Privy Council Office, Volume 18, 5, File D-27, 1941. The above-mentioned Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship eventually took the lead role in the development of such curricula for soldiers overseas.

¹²⁷ “Memorandum,” Directorate of Army Education War Diary, May 1943, Appendix “4”, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

government in Canada and each individual's relationship to government were specifically designed to inculcate a stronger sense of civic pride and understanding in Canadian soldiers. While such lessons were perhaps more detailed than what citizens would receive at home, it was also felt that the soldiers needed to know why they were fighting.

The existence of such lessons speaks to the official desire to use the educational program to impart values of Canadian citizenship and identity. General Crerar clearly stated that army education should be about more than learning how to fire a rifle or calculate declination; the soldier should be provided with an education that would make him a better Canadian at war's end. The fact that these lessons were delivered can have done little but at least maintain a sense of Canadian identity. Finally, the popularity and currency of such ideas among a large segment of the overseas army was verified in their own words by their nationalistic expressions of attachment to Canada and a rejection of things British. The above courses were largely the product of the Department of National Defence and the army itself.

The courses that the CLES developed also highlighted Canadian themes. This was proven to raise soldiers' spirits, while also enhancing their knowledge of Canada.¹²⁹ Telling is the inscription inside the front cover of all Canadian Legion War Services Inc. text booklets.

Preparedness has always been a watchword in wartime. We have come to appreciate its value more than ever before. The men serving in our forces have learned that in their present tasks as in civilian life educational qualifications have a high value.

Ultimately this gigantic struggle in which we and our sister Dominions in the British Empire are engaged will be ended – and it can only be ended with the triumph of true democratic ideals. When that time comes we shall be faced with the

¹²⁹ "Morale Reports - Special Reports to Branches of National Defence Headquarters," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Vol. 5, File: 8917-3-8.

task of establishing in Canada a better way of life for all – a task for which even now we must be preparing as individuals and as a nation.

The Canadian Legion War Services, with the help and sanction of all the Provincial Departments of Education in Canada, offer these courses as one means whereby members of the forces may have a chance to improve their educational standing and so become the better prepared for advancement in their respective services and also for re-entry into civilian life.¹³⁰

Even in this very first and seemingly innocuous statement that the soldiers would have read when opening their books can be found some reminders of Canadian life. There can be little doubt that for those soldiers who took these courses, Canadian themes dominated much of their intellectual effort, if only for the simple reason that all of their materials were based on curricula developed in Canada that was normally used in Canadian schools.

The study of language also expressed Canadian themes. While French troops were offered some Legion courses in their own language, including “L'horticulture domestique,” “Géographie canadienne,” as well as the matriculation courses, French-language instruction was comparatively limited. Major Ault’s 1942 report identified mother tongue as an educational problem. The report outlined the overall linguistic problem of the army and suggested that the problem was one of teaching English to French-Canadian troops, rather than achieving bilingualism, a term and policy not then given legislative support. Ault asserted that while, “providing French-speaking instructions...(is) only one part of the problem... There is still the problem of learning English.”¹³¹ He added, “Where all men of the unit are French speaking and all commands and orders are in French, this does not apply.” The report concludes: “It is suggested that all men in the language categories referred to above [i.e., French-speaking and men of “minority foreign groups”] have need

¹³⁰ See, for example, Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education. *Social Studies B: Grade X: Britain and the Empire. Volume I*. Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1940.

¹³¹ “Survey of Educational Needs and Educational Services in the Canadian Army Overseas,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 9934, File 5/EDUC/1. 2.

for and have a right to such language instruction as army duties may require that uniform provision should be made for such instruction to all.”¹³² The report makes no mention of requiring French instruction for English-speaking troops. Given the army’s “no-nonsense” approach in 1940, and contemporaneous belief, it seemed sensible and correct to provide English-language training to French-Canadian troops as a matter of fairness and right. The assumption was that since this was largely an English-language army, it was proper to teach everyone English outside of unilingual French units. It is perhaps little wonder that many French Canadians reported feelings of loneliness and alienation in England.

Nevertheless, French classes for English-speaking troops began early in 1940. A memorandum circulated at HQ 1st Canadian Infantry Division stated, “Instruction in conversational French on voluntary basis commenced under auspices Director of Educational Services, Canadian Legion War Services.”¹³³ Some obvious benefits were to be found in the study of French for English-Canadian soldiers, especially since in the early months of 1940 it was believed that the troops would likely see action in France, and also because of the importance of French in Canada. The reverse is also true since English classes would help French Canadians overseas better live their lives in England and would certainly help their post-war prospects in Canada, should they seek employment in English-dominated industries. English still predominated throughout Canada – even parts of Quebec – as the language of business and politics.¹³⁴ Language training might also provide more opportunities for French Canadians seeking promotion in the army, as comparatively few

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “Memorandum on Educational Services,” 1st Canadian Infantry Division General Staff War Diary, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13721.

¹³⁴ Herbert F. Quinn, *The Union Nationale: A Study in Quebec Nationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965). Quinn argues that English remained an important language of business in Quebec after 1939. As such, it was a subject of importance to the French-Canadian soldier interested in entering the business world or in advancement in English-dominated industry.

opportunities were available for unilingual French-Canadian soldiers.¹³⁵ The government's lackadaisical approach to providing training manuals in French exacerbated such problems. At the late date of 5 August 1941, the Minister of National Defence finally agreed to a plan that included, "publishing military manuals, training pamphlets, textbooks, etc., in French as well as English."¹³⁶ In practice, this meant that such manuals were not available until 1942, three years into the war. This problem meant that promotion even in French-speaking battalions required that the candidate speak, or at least read, English, otherwise such officers would be unable to read the training and other manuals required for the fulfillment of their duties.

The early provision of French courses and text booklets set the Legion apart from the government. While there were more English- than French-language texts, their early provision – some of which were produced simultaneously with English texts – speaks to the Legion's desire to provide service for *all* soldiers. Examples of such books included *Moteurs automobiles*¹³⁷ as well as a course in French, for French-speaking soldiers entitled, *Français, degré élémentaire: cours pour le personnel des Forces armées*.¹³⁸ The introduction to the Legion's English course for French Canadians, *Conversation anglaise*, stressed how the course would better equip the learners as soldiers, people, and Canadians,

¹³⁵ Officers were primarily English speaking. Jean-Yves Gravel points out, however, that the army compared favourably with the RCAF and RCN since, at the very least, "...seule l'armée a organisé de véritables unités dont la langue de travail était le français." Actually equipping those units with French manuals and providing opportunities for promotion within those units, however, was an altogether different story. Jean-Yves Gravel, ed., *Le Québec et la guerre* (Montreal: Boreal, 1974), 16. Gravel's section on Quebec and the Second World War also provides a useful overview of French-Canadian participation, generally, and in the three service arms specifically. See Gravel, 77-108.

¹³⁶ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 421.

¹³⁷ Légion canadienne. Services éducatifs, *Moteurs automobiles* (Ottawa: Services éducatifs de la Légion canadienne, 1941).

¹³⁸ Légion canadienne. Services éducatifs, *Français, degré élémentaire: cours pour le personnel des Forces armées* (Ottawa: Services éducatifs de la Légion canadienne, 1941).

suggesting that they would get on better in life, and as Canadian citizens, with knowledge of conversational English.

Les jeunes Canadiens français de mon pays, actuellement sous les drapeaux, seront sans doute reconnaissants à un compatriote, désireux de SERVIR, de leur avoir aplani les difficultés d'accès à une langue qu'ils ambitionnent d'apprendre, par simple souci de devenir des hommes mieux outillés pour les luttes de l'existence, et des citoyens plus compétents.¹³⁹

Predictably, this language text booklet further reminded the learner of his nationality through the examples provided. In the text booklet for French Canadians, Quebec place names were prevalent. In *Conversation anglaise*, when learning about the word "below" students were told, "On the map, Montreal is below Quebec,"¹⁴⁰ and were asked to translate sentences such as, "Nous retournerons à Montréal."¹⁴¹ The more advanced the course, the more detailed were the Canadian examples used. In volume three of this course, students were told, "Les corvettes canadiennes sont d'une grande utilité contre les sous-marins."¹⁴² Another translation exercise read, "Malheureusement le plupart des fruits que nous aimons le mieux ne poussent au Canada, parce que notre climat est trop froid en hiver."¹⁴³

Such examples are found, too, in text booklets for English-speaking soldiers learning French, but their geographical touchstones centred on English Canada. Students were told to translate, "You must go to Ottawa at once."¹⁴⁴ In teaching soldiers how to better write letters, *Introductory English* explained, "In *come Toronto* the word omitted is

¹³⁹ Services de guerre de la Légion Canadienne, *Conversation Anglaise (Degré élémentaire)*, Livret No. 1 (Ottawa: Comité De L'Enseignement, 1940), 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁴² Services de guerre de la Légion Canadienne, *Conversation Anglaise (Degré élémentaire)*, Livret No. 3, (Ottawa: Comité De L'Enseignement, 1940), 17.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁴⁴ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *French A: Text Booklet No. 3*. (Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1941), 25.

evidently *to*. In expanding *lives Winnipeg*, one would assume ‘*he lives in Winnipeg*’.”¹⁴⁵ In another booklet teaching French, the *Vocabulaire* list under *Conversation* focuses almost exclusively on hockey terms, without otherwise labelling it as a hockey or even sporting section. Such vocabulary terms included: *le hockey, la patinoire, la ligne bleu, le pénitencier, la rondelle, commettre un hors jeu*, etc.¹⁴⁶ The section went on to highlight various terms used in card games, board games, and generally speaking the words used in the types of games in which Canadians typically engaged. Linguistic concerns and issues, so important to the cultural and political life in Canada, were plainly evident overseas too.

While Social Studies and Language courses placed importance on things Canadian, the more technical courses and those teaching manual handicrafts displayed an even more prominent bias towards Canada. One such booklet, published jointly by the Canadian Legion and the Canadian Y.M.C.A., was entitled, “Whittling and Wood Carving”.¹⁴⁷ This booklet, in the “Make Your Own” series, points out “some woods are of course more suited to whittling than others. Well dried, straight grained soft pine, Canadian and American basswood are especially suitable.” Here even the choice of wood suggests that the soldier who takes up woodcarving would be picking up his hobby back in Canada. Although this was probably not a deliberate attempt to ensure an eye to Canada – such works for the sake of expedience were reprinted from existing sources or used sources at hand in Canada – but it would likely have made such an impression on the reader. However, this particular book was not a simple reprint from an extant source, since references to the CLES and the YMCA War Services throughout suggest that it was specifically adapted for the army

¹⁴⁵ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *Introductory English: Text Booklet No. 1* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1940), 103.

¹⁴⁶ Canadian Legion War Services, *French A: Text Booklet No. 2*, 133-134.

¹⁴⁷ Canadian Legion Educational Services and the Canadian Y.M.C.A. War Services, *Handicrafts for Service Personnel: Whittling and Wood Carving* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion Educational Services, 1940).

course.¹⁴⁸ This indicates that any references to Canada or Canadian themes were likely included deliberately, not as part of an indoctrination scheme but because it represented the author's expertise. All of the other woods mentioned as suitable for carving traced a North American lineage.¹⁴⁹ The soldier-scholar was inundated by such Canadian (or at least North American) references. Some of the images used as examples are also drawn from Canadian sources. One such image of a fish reflects the tradition of west coast Haida art.¹⁵⁰ Even today, few other Western cultures are as familiar with such art forms as Canadians, especially residents of the west coast.

Native Canadian art forms figure prominently in another booklet in the "Handicrafts for Active Service Personnel" series, *Knitting and Needlepoint*.¹⁵¹ This booklet provides culturally-specific instructions on how the soldier-craftsman can create embroidery using uniquely Canadian motifs. These include Blackfoot and Sioux motifs and specific items with which the Canadian soldier would at least be more conversant than his English brethren. Such items include instructions on how to create images of "tipis", arrow heads, herds of buffalo, "the spirit", the prairie, the "Indian and cowboy".¹⁵² This booklet also contains some very sensible instructions on how to knit service socks and, in true Canadian form, toques, sweaters, mittens, and gloves (including the fingerless variety to facilitate use of a weapon).¹⁵³

The booklets on handicrafts provide some obvious links to Canada, while providing also more general instruction on each craft. The courses intended to impart a vocational

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵¹ Canadian Legion Educational Services and the Canadian Y.M.C.A. War Services, *Handicrafts for Service Personnel: Knitting and Needlepoint* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion Educational Services, 1943).

¹⁵² Ibid., 25-27.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 4-11.

trade perhaps naturally focus on how to implement such knowledge back in Canada. The Legion course booklet on Livestock and Dairy Farming makes no attempt to generalize the material, except where such knowledge is epistemologically universal or cross-cultural.¹⁵⁴ In response to the question: “Why is the livestock industry important to the national economy?” the author responds in part, “Milk and meat, particularly the former, are of such importance in human nutrition that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to keep the nation virile and healthy without adequate supplies of them.”¹⁵⁵ In British textbooks, one does not find references to how livestock farming, “aids in solving the *national* problem of land settlement and land use.”¹⁵⁶ This was a Canadian problem. There was an anticipated soldier settlement scheme, so it was naturally important to teach the men about farming in Canadian conditions; such necessities again reminded the soldier scholar of his distant home and future Canadian life. The booklet is filled with statistics and tables from each provincial jurisdiction charting issues such as land use and animal product consumption across Canada. It explains the unique properties of prairie farming and how Native Canadians used to deal with prairie land before the coming of the “white man”.¹⁵⁷

The livestock course pointedly assumes that the learner will return and raise animals in Canada. Exercise questions include: “What percentage is the number of each of the five classes of livestock in your home Province (or in the Province where you may one day farm) of the total number of each in Canada?” The text provides direction on which types of livestock are best suited for raising in Canada and their 1943 distribution throughout the

¹⁵⁴ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *Livestock and Dairy Farming (Vocational Agriculture) Textbooklet No. 1* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1942).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Emphasis added. *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

country. Also provided are livestock markets and stockyards throughout the country.¹⁵⁸

Another book in the Vocational Agriculture series on horticulture contains similar national predilections. The book's advice accounts for plants that will grow in the specific regions of Canada and takes account of Canadian seasons regarding sowing, planting, and harvesting.¹⁵⁹ Clearly, much of the education the CLES provided of a technical nature reinforced Canadian themes to the near-exclusion of all others. Such books provide nationalizing material since these courses were necessarily developed in Canada with the aid of Canadian specialists. In this context, the writer's patriotism is secondary to his knowledge of farming. That his vocational experience is Canadian, however, meant that soldiers taking this course received constant reminders of their Canadian identity and citizenship.

Later in war, as the government began thinking of soldier re-integration, part of the education was intended specifically to invite the soldier (in group discussion) to reflect on and plan his reintegration into Canadian society. The Legion booklet on the topic, with obvious government sponsorship, proudly proclaims, "Governments are planning (and Canada is ahead of most of them)... and folks like me and you are busy talking about what we would wish in the days of peace that lie ahead."¹⁶⁰ Canada's national needs come to the fore in such post-war planning, ahead of the soldier's individual needs. The soldier is encouraged to consider a number of occupations rather than the "right one" because many "undesirable" jobs would be unavailable at war's end. One illustration in the book suggests

¹⁵⁸ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *Livestock and Dairy Farming (Vocational Agriculture) Textbooklet No. 1*. 23-112 and 146.

¹⁵⁹ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *Horticulture (Vocational Agriculture) Textbooklet No. 4* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1943).

¹⁶⁰ Canadian Legion War Services, Committee on Education, *How to Choose your Post-War Job* (Ottawa: Canadian Legion War Services, 1944).

that, "The right job is a dream. You can probably succeed in any one of several occupations." The text adds that just as most "men and women could live happily with any one of many prospective mates. Much the same is true of occupations."¹⁶¹ The text-booklet goes on to list eight pages of "Canadian" occupations, many of which would be transmissible internationally, but which are here listed as "Canadian" in an attempt to focus the reader on his or her return specifically to Canada.¹⁶²

As we have seen, the CLES courses underway by early 1943 highlighted Canadian themes. This fact did not stop the new Directorate of Army Education from requesting more such courses. In a March 1943 memorandum, the Directorate advised the Legion to "develop new courses."¹⁶³ These were to cover, for example, "the exploitation and development of Canada's natural resources – mining, fishing, lumbering, fur farming, etc." Another was to examine agriculture in all its branches, but emphasis was to be laid on the provisions of the Canadian Veterans' Land Act, a clear linkage to the post-war period.¹⁶⁴ As Canadian fighting formations began entering into sustained combat beginning in 1943, the presence of fewer soldiers in England reduced the most severe morale problems and, consequently, the urgent need for educational services. Soldiers in the reinforcement units and in Canadian hospitals continued to use such services and they were also provided to men in the field. Nevertheless, the undisputed importance of the program ensured its continuance through to the end of the war and beyond. Later courses focused naturally on soldier rehabilitation and the job hunt in Canada. Its utility as an agent of rehabilitation and

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶² Ibid., 15-23. Of special interest for the postwar years is the last listed occupation: "Homemaker". It is also interesting to note that in almost all of the accompanying illustrations in this book, women and men are depicted working side-by-side.

¹⁶³ "Memorandum for the CLES Committee on Rehabilitation," Directorate of Army Education War Diary, March 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13318.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

its persistence past the point at which Canadians entered combat attests to the faith that both McNaughton and Crerar placed in educational services.

Perhaps more than any other program, army education made profitable use of potentially wasted time. For those soldiers who availed themselves of the opportunity, the education they gained in England saw that they spent much of their "*Sitzkrieg*" at desks and at study thus ensuring that by 1945 they had not fallen too far behind their countrymen in Canada who had continued their education or in their professions without proceeding overseas. Education fulfilled a number of complementary needs. It better fitted the man for his job as a soldier, it provided mental stimulus to combat boredom, and it worked to provide much requested information on Canada, which simultaneously combated the government's fears regarding veteran reintegration by instilling a stronger sense of nationality in the soldier.

Chapter 5: Baseball Bats and Hockey Sticks: Tools of Canadian Nationalism Overseas

When Canadian soldiers went overseas in 1939, they took with them a set of cherished national pastimes in the form of their sporting and games traditions. As much as any other morale-related activity overseas, sports occupied important cultural terrain as it formed an integral part of social memory.¹ Sports were all the more important because of their role in building a sense of community among the men; where links with home were strained, sports cemented them emotionally and culturally. Colin D. Howell comments, “the history of sport in twentieth-century Canada is a story of... nation building in the broadest sense.”² During the war, an ocean separated the soldiers from those communal institutions and sports helped to link the soldier to his memories and allegiances of home.

In sports, conceptions of national prowess, solidarity, skill, and masculinity were evident overseas. Unlike education or propaganda, which administrators or politicians constructed and delivered with a distinct outcome in mind, sports were unscripted interactions and events, at least partially driven and given shape by the soldiers themselves. That most soldiers had previously participated in the sports that they watched and played in England facilitated an emotional and nostalgic bond with such contests. The promotion and popularity of largely *Canadian* sports is indicative of a desired proximity to those distant

¹ In this context, social memory is defined as: “The means by which information is transmitted among individuals and groups and from one generation to another. Not necessarily aware that they are doing so, individuals pass on their behaviors and attitudes to others in various contexts but especially through emotional and practical ties and in relationships among generations...” Carole M. Crumley, “Exploring Venues of Social Memory,” in M. G. Cattell and J. J. Climo, eds., *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002), 39.

² Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 5.

social institutions and relationships that were represented, codified, and memorialized in sport.

In Canada, sports positively reflected the nation's cultural desires and pastimes; conversely, the sports that Canadian culture rejected negatively defined the nation's cultural preferences. These patterns were reflected overseas. The exclusion of cricket, for instance, says as much about Canadian sporting desires as the adoption of baseball.³ By 1939, Canada had developed a unique sporting culture that embraced sports played little outside North America, such as hockey and baseball. This chapter will first examine the way in which certain sports spread and were played in Canada, leading to an understanding of the "national" character of those sports, and then examine the tangible effects of such diffusion patterns in the army overseas. In the army, some sports were differentiated according to English- and French-Canadian cultural preferences.⁴ For example, English-Canadian soldiers liked recreational rifle shooting, while French-Canadian troops preferred skiing. But overall, 85% of English-speaking and 75% of French-speaking troops professed an interest in sports and of those, there was agreement on the most popular sports.⁵ Troops representing both language groups professed a keen interest in hockey, softball, and skating.⁶ These sports occupied a space of cultural consensus between English- and French-speaking Canadians overseas and differentiated them both from the British. The fact that,

³ A recent work on the history of cricket in the British Empire is instructive purely because it fails to make any mention Canada. Its section, "Cricket and the former dominions," specifically, is bereft of Canadian content. See: Stephen Wagg, ed., *Cricket and National Identity in the Postcolonial Age: Following On* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁴ "Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Sports Within the Army," August 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Vol. III, No. VIII, File: 8917-3-6. "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary."

⁵ "Sports within the Army" Special Report #142, 25 August 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary."

⁶ *Ibid.*

with extra organization, it was possible for all Canadian troops to enjoy these sports in England, contributed to their popularity.

Another enduring link that sports provided was the soldiers' continuing desire to follow the fortunes of their favourite teams, especially hockey teams, back home. Canadian publications overseas, especially *Canada's Weekly*, satiated this desire by publishing the results of all professional Canadian hockey games, both National Hockey League (NHL) and local leagues. The BBC obliged, too, by occasionally broadcasting NHL games from Toronto or Montreal. The soldiers' joint devotion to these "Canadian" sports – coupled with a general rejection of English sports such as rugby and cricket – displayed a theretofore under-appreciated level of shared Canadian nationalism in the overseas army. To some extent, the men recognized "their" sports as cementing their sense of national identity, especially when they were overseas.

This chapter will examine the types of sports that Canadian soldiers liked and disliked, why this was so, and the effects of playing such sports on their morale. Sports popular in Canada (while perhaps not being "Canadian") were much more popular overseas and were promoted as a matter of policy over local, more easily accessible sports. Soccer – a game with wide international appeal and requiring little specialized equipment or grounds – is something of an exception to this general trend and will be examined as well.

The popularity and morale-building qualities of Canadian games overseas trumped even the primary reason for encouraging sports: the physical benefits. Hockey was so popular that it was played *despite* army assertions that it was not the best sport to promote physical training and despite the fact that its special logistical requirements augured against large-scale participation. The army's acquiescence in, and eventual support for, hockey and softball leagues and championships therefore reflected its acknowledgement that these

sports served an important morale function. Enthusiastic participation and spectator appeal replicated normative patterns of social life extant in Canada, which thereby eased problems of discipline and morale in the Canadian army during the long static period.

Ice hockey is as Canadian as... well, ice hockey; fewer more fitting comparisons can be made. While sports historians debate where the first game of hockey was ever played – Kingston, Montreal, or Windsor, Nova Scotia – few debate the Canadianism of the game's origin. Most likely, hockey derived from a combination of early hockey-like games played by aboriginal peoples in eastern Canada and hockey-like games imported by early Scots, Irish, and English immigrants.⁷ The use of ice as a playing surface further cemented hockey's Canadian lineage, which was unquestioned by 1939: "Ice Hockey is said to be a take-off of the Indian shinny and originated in Canada," stated a 1939 American publication.⁸

Hockey's usefulness as a tool of nationalism and consensus building in Canada has been noted in numerous works. Canadian newspapers in the interwar years predictably linked hockey to national identity. One writer, in a piece examining national identity, bemoaned the loss of Canadian NHL players and teams, previously the sole preserve of "Canada's real national game," to American cities.⁹ Historians have also noted this link. In their pioneering work on the place of sport in the Canadian cultural and social fabric, Richard Gruneau and David Whitson argue that cultural consensus on the central place of

⁷ For an interesting debate on the origins of hockey see: Donald Guay, "Les origines du hockey," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 1989 20(1): 32-46. For a response to this article, which highlights the influence of imported British games and aboriginal *patinage*, see: Michel Vigneault, "Tentative de réponse sur les origines du hockey moderne," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 1989 20(2): 15-26.

⁸ Louis Trimble, *Sports of the World* (LA: Golden Syndicate Publishing Company, 1939), 238.

⁹ Robert T. Bowman, "Youth of Canada Impressed By Magnitude of Neighbour Without Loss of Identity," *Ottawa Citizen*, 27 July 1934, 21.

hockey in Canadian life has helped close the divide between Canadians from different regions.¹⁰ Before this, Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane wrote that,

...hockey captures the essence of the Canadian experience in the New World. In a land so inescapably and so inhospitably cold, hockey is the dance of life, an affirmation that despite the deathly chill of winter we are alive.¹¹

In the Second World War, the army high command's acceptance of hockey and organized sport in general likely also harkens back to 19th-century sporting ideals. Michael Robidoux argues that as early as the 18th Century, British social commentators realized that sport was "...an excellent means of social control and conditioning... a means of 'correcting' the rougher more vulgar vernacular pastimes."¹² He also argues that early proponents of hockey in Canada, themselves cultural nationalists, worked to eliminate foreign influences in sport and to consciously construct a national mythology. Nationalist sports promoters such as George Beers, who proselytized the value of lacrosse and hockey as alternative sports to imperialist ones, such as soccer and cricket, helped cement these sports in the Canadian psyche. As Robidoux maintains, Canadian males accepted these sports over imported British ones because of the "emphasis on physical aggression, volatility, and danger," all conceptions at odds with 19th and early 20th century British conceptions of sporting masculinity, which highlighted the pre-eminence of decorum.¹³ Importantly, Robidoux points out that in the immediate post-Confederation period, Canadians actively sought symbols of identity, maintaining that "Hockey's violent and aggressive style

¹⁰ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 214. It is also argued that not only has hockey served as a link between linguistic groups, but it has also tended to unite people traditionally separated east from west, rich from poor, etc.

¹¹ Bruce Kidd and John Macfarlane, *The Death of Hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), 4. Quoted in Don Morrow, "Timelessness and Historicity of the Game in Ken Dryden's Book *The Game*," *Sport History Review* 2006 37(1): 55.

¹² Michael A. Robidoux, "Imagining a Canadian Identity Through Sport: a Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey," *Journal of American Folklore* 2002 115(456), 211.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 216.

separated itself from other bourgeois (European) pastimes.”¹⁴ Its image as a rough sport allowed Canadians to “display their proficiency in the clearly demarcated context of a sporting event, making hockey a valuable vehicle for expressing national identity.”¹⁵ The game’s importance extended also to Canada’s cultural tug of war with the United States. Robidoux points out that, whereas Canadians may have felt overpowered by their southern neighbour in other areas, “Canadians could exude superiority over Americans” in hockey.¹⁶ This suggests that the connection between hockey and national and cultural identity was strong.

Other works suggest that the attempts by Canadian elites to define hockey in accordance with “accepted” race-, gender-, and language-based norms have largely failed, demonstrating the cross-cultural and wide social appeal of the sport in Canada. Conversely, when minority groups were successful in the sport, their achievements were incorporated into the collective “national experience”. Focussing on the interwar period, Ryan Eyford examines the Winnipeg Falcons, a hockey team composed almost entirely of the sons of Icelandic immigrants which won the Olympic gold medal in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1920.¹⁷ The Falcons demonstrated Canada’s international greatness in hockey, but their Icelandic heritage prompted Canada’s sporting press to publish stories hyping the integration of “new Canadians” into the cultural fabric, allowing “their” achievements to become “ours”. Eyford writes,

For members of the Canadian sporting press, the Falcons’ victory served to reinforce prevailing assumptions about the potential of various white “races” as Canadian citizens, and the power of both sport and war to mould immigrants of “the

¹⁴ Ibid., 219.

¹⁵ Ibid., 220.

¹⁶ Ibid., 221.

¹⁷ Ryan Eyford, “From Prairie Goolies to Canadian Cyclones: The Transformation of the 1920 Winnipeg Falcons,” *Sport History Review*, 2006 37(1): 5-18.

right stock” into paragons of Canadian manliness.¹⁸

In this example, hockey’s importance to the Canadian sensibility trumped even the desire to have “home grown” boys excel at the sport; hockey’s national importance partially transcended questions of ethnicity.¹⁹ By 1939, hockey had been ingrained into the Canadian social and cultural fabric and served as a national point of consensus, a cultural touchstone that people from various areas and cultures of Canada could call “their own”. This devotion to hockey accompanied the troops. Canadian soldiers and administrators in England established hockey leagues, championships, skating days, and “pick-up” games to a degree that rivalled community and, indeed, professional organization back home. Where soldiers could not play hockey, for lack of space, they skated for pleasure.

Baseball, and especially its cousin, softball, though less celebrated or recognized as Canadian sports and certainly less influential as a node of Canadian nationalism, were immensely popular among a majority of Canadian troops overseas. The differences between the two sports were minimal and Canadian troops’ love of baseball fuelled their widespread play of softball, a game suited more to the casual player than the expert athlete. Army rules stipulated that games needed to appeal to as many troops as possible and, so, in consideration of the popularity of baseball, softball was heavily promoted in the army. As such, the same points can be made with either or both games’ development in Canada and, especially, regarding their play in the army overseas. In most correspondence, “baseball” and “softball” seem to be used interchangeably. When soldiers expressed happiness that the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ryan Eyford, “From Prairie Goolies to Canadian Cyclones,” 10.

“ball season” was underway, they undoubtedly referred to the large softball leagues.²⁰ The British field censor likely misunderstood the finer points that differentiated “ball”, softball”, and “baseball” and so his use of one term over another is understandable. In most instances, all three terms refer to softball.

Academic and popular writing routinely describe baseball’s development and lineage as an “American” sport.²¹ Baseball and softball grew immensely in spectator appeal for Canadians in the interwar period. John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager note that, “Every Canadian community had an amateur baseball team, and many cities and larger towns had franchises in minor professional leagues.”²² By the 1920s, the World Series had become Canada’s greatest “national” sporting event.²³ It is not generally recognized that baseball and softball developed almost concurrently in the United States and Canada.²⁴ In his examination of American soldiers playing baseball in England during the Second World War, Daniel Bloyce dismisses the Canadian contribution to “America’s pastime” in Britain, stating, “Before the American involvement in the war, Canadian troops [overseas] had played ‘exhibition’ matches of baseball, but these were sporadic and rarely covered by the

²⁰ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: File 4/Censor/4/8.

²¹ There are only a few exceptions to this trend in the Canadian context. William Humber, *Diamonds of the North: A Concise History of Baseball in Canada* (Toronto: 1995) is one of the only full volumes examining the prevalence of baseball in Canada, especially at the community level, though this work is as much popular history as academic.

²² John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, “The Conundrum of Culture: Sport,” in Morris Mott, ed., *Sports in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989), 265-270.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Humber points out that a “game of primitive baseball was played in the small community of Beachville, Ontario in 1838,” (Humber, 1), one year before the date claimed for the game’s invention in Cooperstown, New York. He concludes that baseball’s development in Canada was mostly independent of its early growth in the United States. Colin D. Howell discusses baseball’s popularity and cricket’s limited attraction in the Maritimes. See: Colin D. Howell, “Baseball, Class and Community in the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1910,” *Histoire Sociale: Social History*, 1989, 22(44): 265-286. Also see: Colin D. Howell, “Baseball and Borders: The Diffusion of Baseball Into Mexican and Canadian-American Borderland Regions, 1885-1911,” *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History & Culture*, 2003, 11(2): 16-26.

press.”²⁵ In fact, by 1939, baseball and softball had become widely popular summer sports in Canada. After the soldiers’ arrival in England, softball became the most popular summer sport in the army there too. In winter, Canadian soldiers *wanted* to play hockey, although many were unable owing to the lack of rinks and equipment; in the summer, most played baseball or softball. From June 1942 to July 1943, 34,656 softball events were held in the Canadian Army, accounting for the participation of 617,152 soldiers, drawing 866,457 spectators, Canadian, English, and American.²⁶ These numbers suggest that Bloyce’s characterization of Canadian public play as “sporadic” is specious at best. The large-scale participation of Canadian soldiers in softball also suggests that this sport was much more important to Canadian culture in this period than heretofore believed. For an army whose entire strength in England in the summer of 1943 was close to 250,000 men, these numbers were extraordinarily high.

Almost equally compelling as the soldiers’ love of softball, was their almost complete rejection of the somewhat similar English game of cricket. Canadians had adopted baseball in favour of cricket long before the war despite British attempts to popularize the latter in Canada.²⁷ David Cooper points out that Cricket was relatively popular throughout Ontario and the Maritime provinces in the early 19th century, which reflected the cultural and ethnic heritage of the population in those regions, as well as the

²⁵ Daniel Bloyce, “Glorious Rounders: The American Baseball Invasion of England in Two World Wars - Unappealing American Exceptionalism,” *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25 (4): 387-405.

²⁶ “Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File 23/sports/1/9, “Sports Activities – Generally. Policy.” These numbers obviously account for the propensity of individual soldiers to participate in sports on more than one occasion per season. The number of events, however, can be considered fairly representative.

²⁷ For a discussion of the importance of British attempts at sports diffusion, and Canadian rejection of the same, see Michael A. Robidoux, “Imagining a Canadian Identity Through Sport: a Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey,” *Journal of American Folklore* 2002 115(456): 209-225.

presence of British military elites.²⁸ However, the slowly hardening sense of Canadian national identity, many Canadians' rejection of the "elitism" often then associated with cricket, and the presence of alternative games and sports all contributed to the slow demise of cricket in Canada.²⁹ The rapid growth of baseball after 1860, hastened by proximity to the United States, also precipitated a decline in cricket.³⁰ Cooper notes other Canadian peculiarities, such as the seasonal climate, which meant that all summer sports had to compete for adherents owing to the lack of indoor play space. Cricket, rugby, soccer, and baseball all vied for Canadian affection and had only a few months each year to do so. Hockey and skating, both complementary activities and naturally suited to the seasonal play structure, had relatively little competition. The popularity of baseball in Canada did not represent a form of US cultural domination, but reflected Canadian preferences for a game less elite, faster paced, more "Canadian," and more amenable to spectator participation than the British game.

Canadian soldiers overseas played many sports during the First World War also, but none so often as baseball and softball.³¹ By 1915, baseball's supremacy as *the* summer sport in Canada was established.³² In this crucial period in the growth of modern sport, the choice of sport said a great deal about local preferences and requirements, and ultimately, helped form a greater sense of national self-identification. In Canada, the rejection of

²⁸ David Cooper, "Canadians Declare 'It Isn't Cricket': A Century of Rejection of the Imperial Game, 1860-1960," *Journal of Sport History*, 26 (1), 1999: 51-81.

²⁹ For an examination of the elitism of cricket in Canada prior to the rise of baseball, see Nancy B. Bouchier, "Aristocrats and Their Noble Sport: Woodstock Officers and Cricket During the Rebellion Era," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, May 1989: 20 (1): 16-31. In this case study of retired British officers in Woodstock, Ontario, Bouchier argues that these officers used their cricket club as a means to promote loyalty to Britain and to bind together Canadian elites throughout Upper Canada.

³⁰ Humber, *Diamonds of the North*, 130-4, and David Cooper, "Canadians Declare 'It Isn't Cricket'," 51-81.

³¹ Andrew Horrall, "'Keep-a-fighting! Play the Game!' Baseball and the Canadian Forces During the First World War." *Canadian Military History* 2001 10(2): 27-40.

³² David Cooper, "Canadians Declare 'It Isn't Cricket'," 74.

cricket, rugby, and soccer was the result partly of seasonal requirements and social preferences, and contributed to the growth of a cultural milieu slowly diverging from that of the British.

In England during the Second World War, the Canadian soldiers' rejection of cricket was virtually complete throughout the static period. A proposal to create a "Dominion Services Cricket Team" was put forth by the Australian cricket team who were "very anxious that Canadians should form part of the team."³³ For their part, the Canadians were able to provide but three names of soldiers who had "played against the Australian cricket team in Canada before the war," but otherwise offered little. Underneath the typed text of the Dominion Cricket team report, the Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services, Major P.J. Philpott, wrote in red wax pencil: "Do not attempt large scale organization of Canadian team – it's very doubtful [that] we'll succeed."³⁴ When asked to find cricket players in the Canadian army to play at Lords, Auxiliary Services sports officers were under no illusions: "The odds are 100 to 1 that there is one cricketer in the whole of the Canadian Army capable of 'holding a wicket' at Lords to play for instance against the pick of the British Army or even against the Colts [young, amateur cricketers]".³⁵ The Canadian soldiers' choice of sport overseas reflected not just love for "their" games, but was a reflection of an earlier, cultural rejection of similar British ones. On 28 October 1940, Major General George Pearkes presented a softball trophy, donated by Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner, to the divisional winning teams at the prestigious Oxted Cricket

³³ "Report on Proposed Dominion Services Cricket Team," 13 April 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Cricket," 10 April 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

Grounds, where the army's championship softball game had been played.³⁶ Few other events can more symbolically illustrate the victory of softball over cricket for Canadians and their soldiers. As the war progressed, and opportunities to play came more frequently, cricket became slightly more popular. Some games were played, usually against local teams at the unit level, but these often displayed the Canadians' marked incompetence at this foreign game. In September 1943, a ladies cricket team beat members of the Essex Scottish Regiment. The battalion's outstanding player was Lt. Hodges, "who with the combined tactics of stopping several balls with his shins and his eye-closed batting, put on a stellar performance."³⁷ The CMHQ cricket team, however, was somewhat more proficient, hoping to play at Lords, but encountered difficulty recruiting enough players from Canadian ranks.³⁸

The YMCA and YWCA also had a hand in sports development in Canada. Their promotion of the new sports of volleyball and basketball encouraged male and female participation across Canada. J.B. Jackson argues that the advent of basketball, volleyball, and competitive swimming (also popular with the men overseas), derived from a perception among 19th-century reformers in North America that young men working in large cities required respectable gathering places for social contact.³⁹ YMCAs and YWCAs were ideal institutions for this purpose. Volleyball, playable outside with little equipment, in particular took hold among Canadian troops overseas, while basketball was moderately popular. The YMCA's role in promoting these sports from their infancy also helps to explain their

³⁶ "Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940." Appendix XXIII, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 2.

³⁷ War Diary of the Essex Scottish Regiment, 15 September 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15060.

³⁸ "CMHQ Cricket Team," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12541, File: 6/SPORTS CMHQ/2.

³⁹ J.B. Jackson, "The Places We Play," *Wilson Quarterly* 1997 21(3): 72-89.

popularity overseas, since Auxiliary Services supervisors, through their YMCA contacts, had access to a good deal of equipment for such games.⁴⁰

While sports continued growing in Canada between the wars, the culture of physical fitness became widespread among Western governments at this time, partially as a result of the rise of Nazi Germany, which offered healthy, youthful images as representative of national health and vigour.⁴¹ Commonwealth countries were not immune to Social Darwinist theory and in 1937 Britain launched a "National Fitness Campaign" that, like in Germany, linked individual fitness to national strength.⁴² At this time, Dr. Arthur Stanley Lamb, the director of physical education at McGill University and the father of physical education in Canada, founded the Canadian Physical Education Association.⁴³ The Canadian government was not insulated from these developments, and the national importance of sports had certainly been considered as the country went to war.

Canadian soldiers' desires for sporting events were well known. On 27 September 1939, shortly after the outbreak of war, a number of sports associations met at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto to establish an organization to organize the provision of equipment for the soldiers. Nominally, the Sports Service League was organized to accommodate the desires of troops at Camp Debert in Nova Scotia, on one of Canada's warships, and to the

⁴⁰ "Sports Activities – Report," September 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

⁴¹ For example, G.A. Carr discusses how principles of race, national unity, and obedience to Hitler were entwined into Nazi sports programs to help build strong young athletes as members of the "perfect" race who would help build Germany into a super power. See: G.A. Carr, "Sport and Party Ideology in the Third Reich," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, May 1974, 5 (1): 2-11.

⁴² See: Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2006, 41(4): 595-610.

⁴³ For an overall history of this association, which later became the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, then, more recently, Physical and Health Education Canada, see: Helen Gurney, *The CAHPER Story, 1933-1983: Fifty Years of Progress* (Ottawa: Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1983).

troops overseas.⁴⁴ In practice, however, this early attempt to centralize military sports activities was overtaken by the massive and government-supported organization provided by the Directorate of Auxiliary Services. Ultimately, the League focused on the promotion of sports to troops in Canada, especially at Camps Borden and Debert, and to civilians.⁴⁵ The government's wartime attempts to promote health, fitness, and readiness among Canadians also tended to increase interest and participation in sports.⁴⁶ Recognizing its benefits in terms of morale and fitness, Margaret Ann Hall notes that Ottawa encouraged the "expansion of sport and recreation programs for industries, churches, athletic clubs, and leisure time agencies like the YMCA and the YWCA."⁴⁷ These national efforts to promote sports, partly driven by the realization that volunteers for general military service were often unfit, were given legislative backing when Parliament passed the National Fitness Act of 1943. The army, too, understood the benefits of sports and physical training, not just in military terms, but as preparation for civilian life and as a way to improve the health of the nation. After noting that European countries valued sport as preparation for "defensive and offensive warfare," a proposal regarding the Canadian army sports program stated,

Today in Canada we might go further. Military training and all that precedes it is a great moral [sic], educational force of equal value in civil life as in military life. The "civic soldier" in today's Canadian Army will rate high as a civilian as long as the army provides him with opportunities for learning...[in this regard] Physical training, Sports and Games is the most important [factor]. The physical fitness, the discipline and esprit de corps attained through participation in an Army Sports Program will be invaluable as a "carry-over" into civilian life. Physical education in Canada is only in its infancy, but the Canadian Army by implementing this Sports program could stimulate its growth tremendously and be instrumental in

⁴⁴ Jean Harasym, "What Canada is Doing in Sports for Her Soldiers," *All-American Athlete* (New York: All-American Athletic Association, 1941), 12-13.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Margaret Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game: A History of Women's Sport in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 102.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Also see: Helen Gurney, *The CAHPER Story*, 3.

maintaining and improving the health of the Nation.⁴⁸

Sports, like education, were believed to link the soldier with his pre-war and post-war pursuits. Similarly, an official sports program was expected to benefit the nation as a whole.

These domestic developments were closely related to the sporting attitudes and activities that Canada's youth fighting overseas held dear. Auxiliary Services supervisors overseas also reminded the soldiers of the important link between sport and a strong nation. In 1943, Supervisor A.P. Simester of the Salvation Army reminded his colleagues of the importance of sport in the army, nostalgically conjuring up some old Canadian pastimes: "All of us no doubt, had some schoolyard or sand-lot education in the realm of Sport; quarterbacking the high-school football team, playing centre-ice for the 'Rink-Rats', or short stop with the 'Rinky Dinks,' all with the enthusiasm of the simon-pure amateur."⁴⁹ His reference to amateurism reflected the then-growing debate in Canada over the value of amateur versus professional sport, the former reflecting a "purer" form of physical conditioning done for its inherent social and personal benefit.⁵⁰ His Canadian allusions continued, "...there were those amongst us who occasionally imbibed of the fresh air at the Varsity football, or Fleet Street baseball stadiums, and [some] gentlemen [enjoyed] the rather frostier atmospheres of the Maple Leaf Gardens."⁵¹ Of sports, Simester argues that

⁴⁸ "Proposed Canadian Army Sports, Games & Physical Recreation Program," [no date, likely July, 1943], LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 2147, File: HQ-54-27-29-113-19.

⁴⁹ "Supervisors and his Relationship to Sport," 17 Jan 43, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally," 1.

⁵⁰ For an explanation of the role of amateur sport, see: Michael A. Robidoux, "Imagining a Canadian Identity Through Sport: a Historical Interpretation of Lacrosse and Hockey," *Journal of American Folklore* 2002 115(456): 209-225.

⁵¹ "Supervisors and his Relationship to Sport," 17 Jan 43, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally," 1.

“no aspect is more indissociable with the maintenance of morale in an army.”⁵² On the international importance placed in this period on physical fitness, and the need for Canadians to stay fit, he added,

We do learn from our enemies. We have learned that years before the war Japan, Germany and Italy concentrated on their man-power from the time that man-power was able to toddle, and one of their specialties in that concentrated effort was physical fitness and training. In the wake of that programme of physical preparation we woke up to read of the Germans sweeping across France, and of the rather under-estimated little yellow men swimming from Kowloon, on the main Chinese shore, to Hong Kong, with fighting equipment slung on their backs.

He also expressed his hope that sports overseas would help raise the national standard of fitness in Canada, concluding,

In the Canada which we knew, always there have been in every town and village, public-spirited men, and some organized groups, who were interested in the athletic endurance and physical fitness of the youth of their communities but who, all too often in the past, were left not too well supported, to say the least. Is it too much to hope in the Canada which is to be, that the most powerful people and interests in every community will come to see it as a duty to lend a hand in this all important sphere?

Nor surprisingly, he concludes with the hope that the post-war Salvation Army could have a “consciousness and place for the physical and social needs of the boys and girls, youths and maidens, of our country...”⁵³

Simester could have also pointed to the Canadian YMCA’s efforts in sports promotion. Official government support for the work of the YMCA and YWCA in Canada, along with those organizations’ historical investments in sports development and infrastructure, made the YMCA a natural frontrunner to administer sports overseas. This was also facilitated by the specialized training of most of the YMCA’s overseas supervisors in recreational activities. When, in 1941, the four national voluntary organizations agreed to

⁵² Ibid, 2.

⁵³ Ibid.

specialize in particular areas, the YMCA naturally took over responsibility for sports and recreation.⁵⁴ Although all four Auxiliary Services provided sports services up until this time, the YMCA's expertise in this area became apparent very early on. For example, the experience of YMCA supervisors in running Canadian sports facilities led the overseas YMCA to obtain control over the ice skating rink at Purley from its civilian operators and arranged for its funding in October 1940.⁵⁵

As soon as they congregated together in their camps in Canada, the men started playing games in their off-duty time. Sports in the army stationed in Canada, which included General Service recruits bound for overseas, became so important and widespread that an Army Sports Council was established to advise the Directorate of Auxiliary Services in matters relating to army sports policy.⁵⁶ The Canadian sports policy structure was replicated overseas, where a Canadian Army Sports Committee was established late in 1940 to draw up schedules and arrange the seasonal sports programs.⁵⁷ The Council designed its sports program to improve "a soldier's physical fitness, courage, discipline, esprit de corps and morale, leisure time activities and recreation during convalescence."⁵⁸ It also stipulated that under this program competitions would be staged, "between units and sub-units... and army championships [would be promoted] in games of National

⁵⁴ "Report No. 23, Auxiliary Services Overseas," 31 August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 23/Reports/1/2.

⁵⁵ "Report of Meeting of Auxiliary Supervisors Held at Majestic Theatre, Reigate, Oct. 22, 1940," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File 23/Sports/1.

⁵⁶ "To: The Honourable, The Treasury Board, 1st February 1944," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 2147, File: HQ-54-27-29-113-19, Vol. 1.

⁵⁷ "Report No. 30, Auxiliary Services Overseas, 31 March 1942," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, March 1942, Appendix III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13321.

⁵⁸ Ibid. The Council also recommended an enhanced sports program to control the spread of venereal disease. See: "The Canadian Army Sports Council Minutes, 11 Jan 1944," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 2147, File: HQ-54-27-29-113-19, Vol. 1.

importance and interest.”⁵⁹ Increasingly, army sports were viewed positively for their “national importance”, as a means to provide general leisure activities, and to link the soldier to his life in Canada. Many of these lessons were learned in the army overseas, whose commanders understood the benefits of such programs as soon as the army landed in England.

From such homefront beginnings, a massive, organized Canadian sports program, rivalling professional leagues in North America, grew up in England. This program drew dozens of soldier teams, organized leagues, army-wide championships,⁶⁰ and, beginning in the 1942 to 1943 season, over 100,000 spectators watching hockey alone.⁶¹ The pattern established in the first year from December 1939 to December 1940, presaged the types of sports that Canadian soldiers would play and the frequency with which they would play them. The development of overseas sports policy throughout 1940 also set the stage for the large sporting program which was to follow. Its beginnings were inauspicious, but rapidly accelerated. In February 1940, barely one month after the arrival of the balance of 1st Canadian Infantry Division, Capt. Victor Maclean, YMCA Auxiliary Services officer, wrote Brigadier W.W. Foster noting that the improved weather conditions would “result in demands for sports equipment.”⁶² Although the wide variety of sporting equipment he requested at that time would not prove particularly popular (including lacrosse sticks, discs, poles, and ropes), he *did* request a lot of softball equipment. Efforts were also made at this time to organize hockey teams among different units. Arrangements were made with ice

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Memorandum: Outline of Sports Activities – Canadian Army” 17 Sept 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7.

⁶¹ “Review of Winter Sports Activities, Canadian Army Sports Committee,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/8.

⁶² Capt. Victor Maclean, Aux Services officer to Brigadier W.W. Foster, 24 Feb 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File 23/Sports/1.

rinks in London for practices and games and a small number of inter-unit competitions were held.⁶³ Similarly, toward the end of February, soccer, football, and softball teams were organized along unit lines.⁶⁴

Shortly thereafter, at a conference at Divisional Headquarters, Major-General Andrew McNaughton stressed “the need to prevent boredom among the troops.”⁶⁵ A related memorandum noted, “...it is the intention of the G.O.C. that Wednesday afternoons shall be devoted to organized sports and games in which officers participate with their men. These afternoons will not be treated as ordinary half-holidays and soldiers will not be permitted to visit adjacent towns and villages during parade hours.”⁶⁶ Within two months of the soldiers’ arrival, after their first difficult winter, the need for sports had become apparent and these had therefore been made compulsory. But the problems of supply and organization were not immediately solved, and the need for equipment became pressing. A particularly salient report noted,

One of the most, if not the most important activity of the men in off-duty hours is the playing of games, which eliminates to a large extent the cause of trouble in towns and villages, and contributes in large degree to an improvement in their state of mind and physical fitness. The lack of sufficient sports equipment... has been the subject of a report to these Headquarters. This deficiency was discussed with Brigadier W.W. Foster... and with the London representatives of the Voluntary Organizations serving with the 1st Canadian Division. It is thought that a far greater portion of the funds subscribed by the people of Canada to the Voluntary Organizations should be expended by these organizations on the purchase of more and more sports equipment.⁶⁷

⁶³ War Diary of the Toronto Scottish Regiment, 10 and 17 Feb 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15275.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 Feb 1940.

⁶⁵ “Minutes of Staff Conference No. 4,” War Diary of the General Staff, HQ 1st Cdn Div, March 1940, Appendix 31, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722.

⁶⁶ “1 Cdn Div. Order No. 702, dated 11 Mar., 40,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13722, File 2/GS, Microfilm Reel T-1872, 1603.

⁶⁷ “Bordon Area – Auxiliary Services, Aldershot,” 20 April 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

The importance of sports was rising in the hierarchy of morale. Sports equipment deficiencies were more easily rectified because, unlike the non-mandatory education program, sporting programs enjoyed the early approval (if not wholehearted support) of commanding officers. The Army Sports Program's motto helped secure the COs' approval: "A Fighting Soldier Fighting Fit."⁶⁸ Letters of thanks from COs to Auxiliary Services supervisors further evidenced this support, "Many thanks for the very fine response to our request for Sports Equipment... we previously had to turn down many offers for matches due to our lack of equipment. You will consequently understand how greatly the... equipment is appreciated."⁶⁹ That sports were made mandatory, however, did not mean that the men resented them as a military intrusion. Rather, enlisted men and officers enjoyed sports and commanding officers often saw the benefits to physical conditioning and *esprit de corps*.

By September 1940, Auxiliary Services supervisors were reporting that, "considerable headway appears to have been made within the Units in organizing sports activities."⁷⁰ In October, the Auxiliary Services officer at 7th Corps headquarters, of which General McNaughton was then temporarily in command, directed COs that "it is expected that every unit has already, or will shortly set up its own entertainment and Sports Committee."⁷¹ Auxiliary Services supervisors, whose resources were spread too thin, expressed much appreciation that these activities received army support. Official insistence

⁶⁸ "Submission for a Sports Establishment under Auxiliary Services," 5 October 1943," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 2147, File: HQ-54-27-29-113-19, Vol. 1.

⁶⁹ Letter from Harold M. Bailey, VD, Lieut-Colonel O.C. No 1 Ordnance Field Park, RCOC, Appendix 2, "Report of Trip by Capt. E.D. Otter, Senior Officer Canadian YMCA. Overseas to Canadian Units Located at Various Points in England, August 3-14, 1940." War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, Oct 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁷⁰ "Auxiliary Services Report: Aux/2," 30 September 1940, Appendix VI, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 3.

⁷¹ "Auxiliary Services 7 Corps (Canadian), October 30, 1940." War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII/VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

meant that sports activities would be staged even if stretching regimental resources and personnel, which naturally lightened the supervisors' burden. Reported one of the latter in September 1940,

The O.C.s commanding both "A" and "B" Groups [Holding Units] are insisting on sports being indulged in and this is of great material assistance... but so far as the Supervisors are concerned, they are not being asked to assume any responsibilities for initiating and developing sports within Units, this being the function of the Unit Sports Officers.⁷²

These "Unit Sports Officers" were seldom assigned sports as their only duty. Frequently, commanding officers assigned unit chaplains as sports officers. While most chaplains were only too happy to oblige, such appointments took liberty with the idea that unit personnel would be assigned such duty since some "religiously insensitive" COs saw chaplains essentially as "auxiliary" personnel. While it is clear that COs considered sports as a valuable activity, they often tried to invest auxiliary personnel or chaplains with this responsibility. As late as the summer of 1942, CMHQ issued commanding officers with instructions that,

Sports are an essential part of training and as such must receive the personal attention of all officers. Great importance is attached to the value of the opportunities which sports activities afford to Officers to get to know their men... The function of Auxiliary Services in relation to sports is essentially "auxiliary" and under no circumstances is it to be permitted by C.O.'s to relieve Officers of their full responsibility.⁷³

Despite such reminders, unit commanders and their men considered sports valuable enough to self-organize and this was well under way within months of their arrival in England.

Still, the British field censor saw his fair share of "grousing" over sports, with most such complaints in the form of disappointment at the *lack* of sports, especially hockey. The

⁷² "Auxiliary Services Report: Aux/2," 30 September 1940, Appendix VI, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 3.

⁷³ "Memorandum – Canadian Army Sports," 14 April 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1/6. That officers got to know their men in this way had useful battlefield applications.

soldiers' comments on sports were, in the main, very positive. For instance, the censor noted, "Of those who commented on sports, 90-95% of writers had a favourable experience of sports in England."⁷⁴ A year later, he noted, "Interest in sport... remains just as keen as before".⁷⁵ The COs' early support was also later justified in an NDHQ report which found that soldiers most likely to have an affinity for army life, also liked sports. The report stated: "The enthusiastic soldier is more likely to be an English-speaking youth of 19 to 21 of overseas medical category, who has some schooling beyond the elementary grades and who is fond of sports."⁷⁶

That sports were made mandatory in the spring of 1940 reflected their acceptance as vital training tools, but for the men they were also vital in the fight against boredom. The choice of sports further revealed the soldiers' preference for the products of their own culture. However, official support and innate interest soon led to increased demand and then to the realization that the army was woefully under-equipped to provide for sports. Distance from Canada was a major source of this problem since British manufacturers did not produce the equipment necessary for the most popular Canadian games. This resulted at first in the playing of English games and use of English equipment. Supervisors continually tried to increase delivery of equipment from the stores housed at the various depots of the national voluntary organizations in Canada. In August 1940, supervisors noted that,

⁷⁴ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 15 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, RG24 Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

⁷⁵ Field Censor (Home) Report, 16 Feb – 1 Mar 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, RG24 Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

⁷⁶ "The Relationship of Certain Factors to Soldiers Liking or Disliking the Army," Special Report No. 192, 1 June 1945, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," 2. Of course, there is no *causal* link between the soldier's pre-existing fondness for sports and his interest in army life and good morale. Rather, this is a correlative factor.

“Athletic equipment has been in constant demand by the Units... 2,144 pieces were loaned in August, aggregating to 10,518 pieces to date.”⁷⁷

Partially owing to such early problems, fail-safes were built into the system to ensure that in the event that regimental funds or organization was lacking, sports could continue. The Directorate of Auxiliary Services issued each supervisor, from all four voluntary organizations, with enough sports equipment to meet the recreational needs of 1,000 men. But the supervisor was nominally responsible only for providing equipment, whereas the unit sports officer organized regimental sports. Where regimental funds were not available to purchase uniforms and equipment for teams participating in inter-unit competitions, the Auxiliary Services organizations filled the need with loans. Once the Auxiliary Services fundraising efforts were unified and brought under the direction of the Department of National War Services, the funding of such purchases became a regular military supply issue. Equipment and facility shortages were one of the main reasons why soccer became popular. Soccer was much more easily organized. One Legion supervisor noted in 1940,

Sporting equipment has been in great demand and further large stocks have been acquired from British firms and distributed among the Units served by the Canadian Legion. Although enquiries have been made from various sources in this country, I learn that it is not possible to obtain any further Baseball equipment, soft ball or hard ball, and application has, therefore, been made to the Legion H.Q. in Ottawa for further supplies to be dispatched from Canada.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ “Canadian YMCA., C.A.S.F.” August 31, 1940, Appendix II, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. This reflects only YMCA-provided equipment and does not reflect the efforts of the other three Auxiliary Services. Also, this report does not state the type of equipment in demand. Supervisors ordered much equipment from Canada at this time, including lacrosse and softball gear. Generally speaking, once it became clear that the army was to remain in Britain for an extended period, soldier demands for Canadian sports equipment increased.

⁷⁸ “Canadian Legion War Services, Inc., Report for the Month Ending 31st August 1940.” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix I, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

The Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services relied on local purchases, through NAAFI, of British-produced equipment, or on consignments from Canada. The latter were subject to shipping space and were sometimes lost at sea, causing considerable consternation overseas. In a September 1942 meeting, the senior YMCA officer bemoaned the loss of equipment to enemy action and its potential for postponing the hockey season. This resulted in a request to send hockey equipment over immediately on the next bomber; valuable space indeed.⁷⁹ On a smaller scale, British civilian groups donated equipment and some was sent privately from Canada.

A Salvation Army list of all services rendered overseas until the end of August 1940 revealed increasing consignments of Canadian sports equipment. These items included [Canadian] Footballs: 132, Football Laces: 242, Football shirts: 87, Soft Ball Bats: 946 [compared with 11 cricket bats secured locally], and Soft Balls: 734. Soccer balls did not make the list, likely because of their availability in England from British manufacturers and local donations.⁸⁰

The troops' desires to play and watch certain sports were evident early on and the Canadian high command recognized the importance of playing Canadian games. The army unsurprisingly believed that "participation in sports is important in conditioning men for training and in building both esprit de corps and health."⁸¹ More novel was the army's recognition that to enjoy popularity and official promotion overseas, a sport had to be of inherent interest to the man. This need for pre-existing popularity sustained and increased

⁷⁹ "Minutes of a Meeting Held at CMHQ on Hockey," Friday, 25 September 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

⁸⁰ "The Salvation Army Canadian War Services, Statistical Statement of Activities," Appendix II, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

⁸¹ "Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Sports Within the Army," August 1944, Vol. III, Number VIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," Reel C-5290.

the popularity of well-known Canadian sports overseas. On the other hand, experience showed that, “competitions in a sport that lacks popular appeal and that require standards of fitness and endurance higher than the ordinary run of soldier” tended to be unpopular.⁸² The army therefore de-emphasized sports such as cross-country running.

A CMHQ briefing note for senior commanders and government officials in September 1942, outlined how the civilian administration of sports – through the Directorate of Auxiliary Services – resulted in the playing of games popular in Canada.⁸³ It admits that few sports were organized by the army’s training branch (G Branch), recognizing that instead sports featured by the Auxiliary Services Organizations comprised the majority of such training. The army later acknowledged the soundness of this approach, stipulating that a sport’s success in the army was first and foremost predicated on the men’s “initial enthusiasm in the sport.”⁸⁴ The memorandum continues,

Sports featured by the Auxiliary Service Organizations are, in the greater part, the national sports of Canada i.e. Ice Hockey, Softball, Baseball, Volleyball, Lacrosse, Horseshoes etc. As Canada is affected by seasonal conditions our Sports are confined to seasons. In the winter Ice Hockey is the national sport together with skiing, tobogganning etc. and summer baseball is featured.⁸⁵

According to the memo, the ebb and flow of the Canadian sporting seasons overseas was largely reflective of the patterns established because of Canadian climactic conditions. The report adds,

Softball, baseball and tennis [popular among French Canadian troops] are the chief summer activities. These too are arranged by Auxiliary Service Organizations for

⁸² “Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Army Sports,” June 1944, Vol. III, Number VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, “Morale Reports – Monthly Summary,” Reel C-5290.

⁸³ “Memorandum: Outline of Sports Activities – Canadian Army” 17 Sept 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7.

⁸⁴ “Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Sports Within the Army” August 1944, Vol. III, No. VIII, Reel C-5290, File: 8917-3-6, “Morale Reports – Monthly Summary”- P. 1

⁸⁵ “Memorandum: Outline of Sports Activities – Canadian Army” 17 Sept 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7.

the Canadian forces, and all equipment is brought from Canada in order that they may participate. Softball and baseball are something similar to rounders in England, and nine men play in each team. This sport is very active and creates a great deal of enthusiasm throughout the Canadian Forces.⁸⁶

Almost as an afterthought, the writer adds, "Other commonly known sports such as Boxing, Track and Field, Cross Country, and Soccer etc. all play their part within the Canadian Forces, and a goodly number of men take part."⁸⁷ The memorandum concludes by outlining how sports are integrated into the soldiers' daily lives, originating on a platoon and company basis and gradually working up to, "Regiments, Brigades and Divisions and, if the exigencies of the service permit, a Forces Championship is run off in all events. In this way a far greater number of Personnel participate in each and every sport, which keeps morale exceedingly high as well as their physical condition."⁸⁸ In fact, sports fell into three main categories: unit sports activities, official (internal) competitive events, and official (external) competitive events, the latter usually taking the form of inter-allied exhibition matches.⁸⁹

The adoption of popular Canadian sports flew in the face of rules adopted at the War Office, whose manual on physical training – even in its Canadian edition – omitted important Canadian sports and paid little attention to the morale and spectator aspects of the army sports program. This manual served as the CASF's official physical training (PT) guide during the Second World War, but evidently it became obsolescent as Canadian

⁸⁶ Ibid. Rounders is a "batting and fielding" game that originated in Medieval England. It is similar to baseball and softball, which likely share the same historical origins as rounders, but has slightly different rules. It has long been popular with English children but, unlike baseball, never became a serious competitive sport.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ "Memorandum – Canadian Army Sports," 14 April 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1/6.

desires pushed practice increasingly further from this “ideal”.⁹⁰ In discussing the psychological aspects of physical and recreation training, the manual naturally focused on fitness for battle. It suggested that by receiving such training, the soldier’s “will-power enables him to accept the immediate risk, to undertake hard tasks for the sake of high ideals and, in general, to develop himself not only for enjoyment but for action.”⁹¹ The manual further dictates that sports must inculcate, “courage, dash, vigour, strength, endurance, resource, control, alertness, confidence, initiative, decision, and the fighting and team spirit... Without these qualities, technical skill is of little value.”⁹² Canadian COs naturally recognized the importance of physical fitness. The officers and men of the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, for example, took very seriously the idea that sports were to be entered into by all troops, not just “enthusiastic athletes”. They also linked fitness and sport with military efficiency, running “Field” days “designed to permit all ranks to take part”.⁹³ This formation’s CO insisted on the use of “military themed” sports, including events such as:

- Casualty Vehicle Recovery by Man-Power: Teams form up in front of vehicle...team [will] push vehicle 100 yards. At finishing line team will fall-in in front of vehicle.
- Bren Gun Relay Race: At a signal all contestants will don respirators. No. 1 Section will immediately assemble a stripped Bren gun... No. 2 Section... will completely dis-assemble gun... the teams will switch roles.
- V.C. Race: “A” will be standing by “B” who will be lying on the ground. “A” will carry “B” 50 yards where “B” will take over and return with “A” to start point.
- Officers’ Grand National: Officers, carrying a partner, must negotiate obstacles like tables and benches.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ War Office, Great Britain, *Physical and Recreation Training, 1941: Reprinted in Canada (with Amendment No. 1) July 1942* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1942), DHH, File: 91/225. Importantly, softball was included in this version of the manual, reflecting its intended use for Canadian troops, but hockey and volleyball were omitted.

⁹¹ Ibid., 3.

⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁹³ “2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, Field Day, 3 October 1942,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7, “SPORTS ACTIVITIES – GENERALLY”.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

As with the recognition that sports helped to form bonds between officers and men, with battlefield application, such field days reminded men that there was a war on. Sometimes, even fun and games had a deadly purpose.

Naturally, physical fitness and battle readiness were important for soldiers, but in 1940, other factors rose in prominence because of the Canadian army's static role. While Canadian commanders recognized the War Office's emphasis on fitness, the prime PT focus on sports in the Canadian army centred on maintaining morale and allowing as much participation as possible.⁹⁵ One report noted, "Programmes for sports have... been partially designed to enable as many individuals as possible to take part and not to cater exclusively to the expert athlete."⁹⁶ The Canadian definition of "participation", however, grew to include spectators, a recognition of the important morale function of army sports. A 1944 report reveals the changed emphasis in that it stressed the importance of securing transport both for participants *and* spectators. "To develop general interest in sport, units ask for Sports Officers and instructors, equipment and facilities, and time off from military training. They require assistance in arranging schedules of inter-unit sports and ask that facilities be provided for transport of players and spectators."⁹⁷

That the Canadian army modified many of the War Office suggestions to downplay the martial importance of sport reflected, first, the unusual circumstances in which the army found itself. Second, these changes reflected the realization that physical training would be most effective if the soldiers were offered activities that were popular in Canada and which

⁹⁵ "Proposed Canadian Army Sports, Games & Physical Recreation Program," [no date, likely July, 1943], LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 2147, File: HQ-54-27-29-113-19, Vol. 1.

⁹⁶ "Morale Report – 1 Canadian Div," 9 December 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12243, File 1/MORALE/1.

⁹⁷ "Army Sports," Special Report No. 128, 30 May 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary."

therefore held the potential for mass participation. Third, the popularity of sanctioned sports in Canada, it was recognized, would facilitate higher spectator attendance, which would enhance the morale function of such sports.⁹⁸ In the event, sports were only really popular if spectators could share their enjoyment as this created an attachment to team, a sporting tradition well established in the soldiers' civilian lives.

The army accounted for the men's desires and chose to promote only those sports that garnered enough innate desire to suggest it could be taken up overseas on a large scale. A number of sports, for example, enjoyed less than 10% support from both French and English Canadians and were therefore not promoted. These included English rugby, water polo, badminton, fencing, weight lifting, hand ball, wrestling, lacrosse, and curling.⁹⁹ Lacrosse is an interesting case because it is known as Canada's official summer sport. However, its popularity even in Canada was far below that of most other Canadian sports and so its exclusion overseas is not surprising. Accordingly, there are very few references to lacrosse, or any other unpopular sports, in the surviving documentary record of the overseas army.

Experience in 1940 led administrators to accept the premise that a sport needed to be more than just popular or promising. Only those sports that met a number of conditions were considered for promotion and official sanction, including the sport's spectator appeal, its efficiency in terms of physical training, and its amenability to mass participation. Boxing, for example, was of interest to both linguistic groups, required little equipment,

⁹⁸ "Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Army Sports," June 1944, Vol. III, Number VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," Reel C-5290.

⁹⁹ "Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Sports Within the Army," August 1944, Vol. III, Number VIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," Reel C-5290. These reports surveyed troops recently returned from England as well as troops about to embark.

enjoyed an extensive infrastructure in Britain, was widely popular in terms of spectatorship, and training for boxing could involve thousands of soldiers. A 1944 report stated,

...boxing is popular among the men for three reasons, and these can be transferred to the popularity of any sport among the men: (a) Boxing is of interest to both spectators and participants, (b) boxing is a well known popular sport in Canada, (c) soldiers of varying physical conditions can enter the sport and don't need to be elite athletes as is perceived to be the case with cross country running.

Again, the sport's popularity in Canada was of prime importance. The result was that boxing enjoyed official promotion and was a consistently popular sport among Canadian soldiers. Volleyball, a sport promoted in YMCAs across Canada as a co-educational game played with minimal equipment, was very popular overseas, especially "amongst the older men."¹⁰⁰ Swimming, likewise supported through YMCA programs and facilities in Canada, was very popular in England. The relative ease with which the men could find swimming facilities, mixed with their previous enthusiasm for the sport, largely accounts for its popularity overseas.

When the army chose to heavily promote sports that were unpopular, simply because of their physical training value, such as cross-country running, such sports were usually rejected.¹⁰¹ In his memoir of a Canadian soldier's life in England, Howard Clegg recalls a special sports day in which the unpopularity of running was made plain. He describes how most soldiers rushed to start playing their favoured games – any games – lest they be forced into unpopular ones. "It paid to be an adherent of one of these [popular] games, for anyone found at a loose end was likely to be conscripted for a cross-country run, or for one of the many nefarious schemes which Corporal Cathey, the P.T. instructor,

¹⁰⁰ "Report of visit to Canadian forestry corps, 29 May 1943," D.E. Strain, Secretary, Canadian Army Sports Committee, AC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/9, "Sports Activities – Generally. Policy."

¹⁰¹ Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/9, "Sports Activities – Generally. Policy".

devised for the improvement of our physical condition.”¹⁰² Running routinely attracted the fewest number of spectators, and among the lowest number of total events every season despite its promotion. Nevertheless, its popularity among some commanders and PT instructors as a training tool is made evident by the fact that even with a low number of events, many men participated overall. This testifies to the fact that cross-country running met the single criteria of affording mass participation. The evidence suggests that, by and large, soldier participation in cross-country running was apathetic and spectator appeal wanting. In this activity in 1943, 2,135 events were held, involving 76,749 participants, with a paltry 39,741 spectators (as against 256,238 people who turned out to watch Volleyball matches in the same period).¹⁰³

Given these multiple factors, sports that enjoyed popularity in Canada were predominant in England. The Canadian YMCA overseas provided numerous sports reports. For the month 28 July – 24 August 1940, reporting on services rendered to 1st Canadian Infantry Division, the YMCA, too, discerned a predilection for sports popular in Canada. Like those above, these statistics reflect summer activities so ice hockey does not feature. Canadian troop participation in a number of sports is listed from 1 January - 24 August 1940:

Volleyball: 11,117
Softball: 22,320
Boxing Tournaments: 11,532
Swimming: 23,829¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Howard Clegg, *A Canuck In England* (London: George A. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1942), 112.

¹⁰³ Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/9, “Sports Activities – Generally. Policy”.

¹⁰⁴ “Canadian YMCA Overseas 1st Division C.A.S.F.” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, October 1940, Appendix II, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. At then end of 1940, 57,000 Canadian troops were stationed in England.

When one compares these numbers with attendance at popular English sports which, given their popularity among the local population – and relatively easier organization – would have been easier to run, a clear preference is evident.

Soccer: 6,318

Rugby: 150¹⁰⁵

The number playing soccer matches is surprisingly low given the pervasiveness of the sport in England, the inexpensive nature of the equipment, and the ubiquity of formal playing fields and open green spaces in general. It is clear that “Sports fields [were] available,” but at this early stage were underused for English sport¹⁰⁶ However, despite its humble beginnings, soccer was to become a much more widespread game among Canadian troops.

Accurately determining the popularity of Canadians playing soccer in England is somewhat problematic. First, it must be admitted that soccer does not fit the general mould of popular Canadian sports continuing their popularity overseas. Soccer was not widely popular in Canada but, by 1943, many troops played it in England.¹⁰⁷ Second, the documentary record is not always clear when mentioning football; sometimes Canadian-rules football is clearly referenced, while elsewhere soccer is intended.

Even considering this, however, it is clear that soccer was widely played. Nevertheless, the playing of soccer did not represent an “abandonment” of Canadian sport or even the adoption of a British one. Canadians played soccer in England because it was widely available, was easily understood, could be enjoyed by troops of many skill levels,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Soccer was, admittedly, considered a winter sport, but is easily playable also in the summer.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Appendix #7.

¹⁰⁷ In Canada a rival code of soccer, with explicitly local roots, overshadowed association football, the most popular national sport of the United Kingdom. This process took hold too in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa. The founding of the Hamilton Football Club in 1869, which played a version of Canadian Football, helped make that sport the dominant football code in Canada by 1900. See: David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Soccer* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 88-89.

followed the same general rules and play-space model as hockey, and was one of the only team sports played in winter that could draw a massive spectator following and thus energize soldiers to support “their” team.¹⁰⁸ However, as the first full English soccer season approached, there was little discernable interest in large-scale soccer activities. A Legion report of September 1940 indicated that “Supervisors have been asking for full Equipment for the following winter games and it is considered that this matter should be dealt with by an advisory board including representatives of the four Organizations: Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, and Canadian Rugby.”¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the most important factor driving Canadians to take up soccer after 1940 was the realization that, owing to inadequate rink facilities in England and equipment supply problems, only a comparative few could participate in hockey during the winter, although the sport still drew tens of thousands of spectators. Still, the desire to play soccer seems to have developed in the troops *after* they left for England, since among troops stationed in Canada, “Interest [in soccer] is not great and is limited almost entirely to English speaking troops (12% as contrasted with 2% among French Canadians)”.¹¹⁰ Despite its eventually being played in large numbers,¹¹¹ there is very little mention of

¹⁰⁸ Hockey was the other obvious example, but, compared to soccer, play space and spectator space was very limited.

¹⁰⁹ “Canadian Legion War Services, Inc. Report for the Month Ending 30th September 1940,” War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI/I, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319. It should be noted, however, that this supervisor’s request for lacrosse and field hockey equipment does not suggest he yet understood what sports would be most popular. This may also reflect the fact that Canadian troops, too, did not really know which sports would be available to play. Given the well-known dearth of ice rinks, this supervisor’s order of “other” Canadian sports gear seems especially prudent.

¹¹⁰ “Sports within the Army” Special Report #142, 25 August 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, “Morale Reports – Monthly Summary.” This suggests that soccer’s availability and local promotion in Britain accounted for much of its popularity.

¹¹¹ Through mid-1943, some 246,133 troops (many counted more than once) had played soccer in inter- and intra-unit matches. “Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/9, “Sports Activities – Generally. Policy”.

soccer, besides statistical results, in the documentary record.¹¹² When military needs imposed a slowdown of the sporting season, there were no interruptions to the hockey season, but the Canadian Army Sport Committee noted that, "Owing to Army work the Soccer season had to be postponed..."¹¹³

A number of structural factors facilitated the playing of soccer. Firstly, it was immensely popular with the local population. This meant that Canadians could count on local support in terms of equipment supply, officials, and, most importantly, grounds. Whenever the Canadian army slashed sports funding, soccer was among the first sports to lose support.¹¹⁴ In such cases, local English soccer groups were quick to fill the void by promoting their national sport among the Canadians. The famed Football Association, for instance, noted a dearth of Canadian soccer equipment in late 1940 and had "in recent months been able to help Canadian Units by presenting football kit for their use."¹¹⁵ Perhaps even more important was official War Office support for soccer. Through its Army Sport Control Board, the War Office strongly encouraged inter- and intra-unit soccer competition. The War Office encouraged soccer as official PT and as a morale instrument for British and "Dominion" forces. This policy extended benefits to the Canadian army, too, which certainly resulted in increased soccer play. Official British support made grounds, equipment, officials, competition, and spectators easily accessible and helps to

¹¹² In Library and Archives Canada, for instance, there is but a single file covering policy on the three sports soccer, football, and "Canadian rugby". See: LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10170, File: 23/SPORTS/10, "Sports activities - Football, all types." By contrast, there are eight entire volumes dealing with hockey overseas in the same period.

¹¹³ "Review of Winter Sports Activities, April 5, 1943," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

¹¹⁴ Reductions to sporting budgets brought cuts first to less popular sports. For example, soccer funding was cut in April 1943 such that it eliminated "any possibility of equalized soccer play within the Units." "Sports Budget", 29 April 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

¹¹⁵ Letter to AGL MacNaughton from S.F. Rous, Secretary to the Football Association, 4 November 1940, LAC, McNaughton Fonds, MG30 E133, Series 111, Volume 189, File P.A. 5-8-2.

explain the high number of Canadians playing soccer in the United Kingdom when the documentary record of the Canadian army makes comparatively scarce mention of the sport at all. According to the Army Sports Control Board, the Football Association's secretary, S.F. Rous, "had already done so much in helping the movement by selecting well-known footballers to be trained as P.T. Staff Instructors, and assisting in the provision of grounds for units and recreational equipment."¹¹⁶ The board added,

Matches should be arranged between representative Army sides whenever possible, as it would strengthen the cordial relations already existing with the Foreign Armies, which is a great asset, and it would have good entertainment and propaganda value. The B.B.C. had said that they would gladly broadcast any such events.¹¹⁷

Such inter-army matches were always popular with Canadian troops and commanders in any sport as they were keen to pit their best players against other national teams, and they encouraged amity between Allied armies. These competitions also served to differentiate the Canadians from other formations, including the British Army against whom they sometimes played. In soccer the army found a sport in which it could easily find inter-Allied opponents, wherein each nation could flex its patriotic muscle. The same was less true of hockey and softball, at least prior to the arrival of American forces. By 1943, soldiers were expressing their national pride in the army's sporting accomplishments against other national teams. In a letter to the Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services, Capt. W.A. Ross, gave voice to the soldiers' desires:

It has been suggested that some recognition should be accorded to those individuals of the Canadian Army who have represented the Canadian Army in officially authorized sports events... this recognition should take the form of permission to

¹¹⁶ "Army Sport Control Board, Proceedings of a Conference, 18th Sept., 1940." LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Evidently, "Foreign Armies" referred to all armies resident in the United Kingdom that were not raised in that country.

wear an authorized emblem such as a Canadian Maple Leaf or small Canadian flag on their athletic jersey or singlet when taking part in sport events...¹¹⁸

Whatever importance such symbols held for their sense of national pride, the maple leaf did not help Canadians excel in soccer. The Norwegians – of whom so many fewer were in England during the war¹¹⁹ – were a thorn in the Canadian side, knocking them out of the inter-Allied competition in 1942 and 1943,¹²⁰ while the Canadians fell to the British National Fire Service team in January 1944.¹²¹ Proceeds from ticket sales at these matches went to benefit service charities. In terms of inter-Allied play, the British Field Censor noted of Canadian attitudes, “Sporting events, Rugger matches, etc. between Canadian and British troops, are greatly appreciated and considered to be a good way of getting better acquainted with each other.”¹²² At a time when relations between British and Canadian soldiers were strained – by mutual competitiveness, Canadian soldiers fraternizing with British women, and British “insults” at the Canadian sense of honour, for example – such matches played an important role in reducing national antagonisms. Such sporting competition, however, could cut the other way and lead to even more tension. Partially for this reason, there were far fewer inter-Allied events than internal leagues and championships.

¹¹⁸ “Recognition of personnel representing the Canadian Army in Sporting Events,” 2 April 1943, 23/sports/1/8, vol. 10169, “Sports Activities – Generally”

¹¹⁹ Although specific numbers are not provided, Conway and Gotovitch point out that many Norwegian soldiers were stationed on Norway’s island possessions in the Arctic and a contingent was based in Iceland. The authors note that “The Norwegians also formed No. 5 Troop of No. 10 (Inter Allied) Commando,” in the United Kingdom, which took part in the assault on Walcheren Island on 1 November 1944. See: Martin Conway and José Gotovitch, *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain, 1940-1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 163.

¹²⁰ “The Football Association, Minutes of Meeting,” 8 Sept 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 10170, File: 23/Sports/10.

¹²¹ “Inter-Allied Services Cup Competition 1944,” 24 January 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10170, File: 23/Sports/10.

¹²² Field Censors (Home) Report, 15 – 28 Sept 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

That Canadians eschewed other English sports that did not enjoy the same level of promotion, further indicates the positive effect of such official British support. There were virtually no Canadian cricketers and in rugby, the ADAS reported, "There is little chance of any organized effort in this branch of sport."¹²³ As such, multiple structural factors drove Canadians toward soccer, not the least of which was the *relative* inability to play their own national sport.

To compare the popularity of hockey and soccer, however, is like comparing apples and oranges. A fairer comparison can be made in terms of "national sports" between softball and soccer. Softball did not suffer the same equipment and playing ground limitations as hockey and so shared with soccer widespread availability. Equipment was relatively cheap and easily shipped and softball could be played almost anywhere. In this sport, a striking preference over soccer is evident. In the period to 30 June 1943, 12,317 soccer events, with 246,133 participants, were held in the Canadian army. In the same period, 34,656 softball events with 617,152 participants were held.¹²⁴ The number of games, participants, and spectators at softball games outpaced soccer 3:1. Considering the tendency of locals to take in soccer matches over softball games, the proportion of Canadian soldiers watching softball games over soccer matches is likewise remarkable. Given the popularity of soccer in Britain, the structural hurdles to staging Canadian sports, and the official British support for their national game, it is perhaps more surprising that soccer did not take a larger place in the Canadian sporting picture.

Overseas, soldiers participated in games of softball more than any other sport.

¹²³ "Minutes of meeting of 'A' and 'B' Groups Sports Officers," 21st September 1940", LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168,, File: 23/Sports/1.

¹²⁴ "Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/9, "Sports Activities – Generally. Policy".

Softball was preferred over baseball because it invited the men's casual participation, rather than just athletes. In their letters home, the men repeated their desire to play softball and indicated its beneficial effects in terms of morale over and over again. One soldier of the 12th Field Regiment, RCA, happily wrote, "Most of the fellows are in good spirits mainly because the ball season is underway."¹²⁵ Another of the 2nd Canadian Armoured Regiment (Lord Strathcona's Horse), commented that, "Evenings [are] passed playing ball games."¹²⁶ The field censor himself, having read many thousands of letters, noted, "Sport enjoyed, especially baseball."¹²⁷ Indeed, a 1944 report maintained, "Softball: Among all men this is the most popular game for off-duty hours... English and French are in agreement."¹²⁸

As with hockey, the men requested bats, balls, and gloves soon after their arrival in England. Local English enthusiasts also knew well the Canadian love of the game. One of the earliest offers of an exhibition game in England in any sport came on 8 March 1940 from Mr. S. Bisset, Chairman of the Birmingham Baseball Association. He noted,

As you no doubt know, baseball is a noted Canadian sport and, as we boast a fairly strong team here in Birmingham, composed mostly of Canadians incidentally, we thought it an idea to try and arrange an exhibition game with a team from one of the Canadian troops stations. We feel that a fixture such as this would not only boost the game but would be an ideal entertainment for the troops.¹²⁹

By the end of their first summer, the YMCA noted that softball was far and away the most popular sport with 1,551 participants in YMCA events alone (as against 306 playing

¹²⁵Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 17 April 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: 4/Censor/4/6.

¹²⁶Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: 4/Censor/4/6.

¹²⁷Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 September – 4 October 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: File 4/Censor/4/8.

¹²⁸"Trends in the Thinking of Army Units – Sports Within the Army" August 1944, Vol. III, No. VIII, Reel C-5290, File: 8917-3-6. "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary"- P. 1

¹²⁹"S. Bissett to Mr. J. Spence, Press Office, Canada House, London," 8 March 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

soccer).¹³⁰ The Salvation Army Canadian War Services Report of 30 September 1940 similarly reported that in August, "Delivery of softball equipment outpaced all others."¹³¹ In that same season, a "Softball championship was arranged and is being played off to the finals".¹³²

Every summer, as soon as the hockey playoffs were complete, troops looked forward to baseball, even if on a casual basis. A memoirist writing in 1942 commented on the soldiers' thirst for their "national game".

A fine spell of weather set in, and after our trench-digging duties were over each day we were able to indulge in our favourite sports. There was a good open space suitable for baseball. We had brought our bats and balls and other paraphernalia along, and were able to indulge our insatiable appetite for our national game. Indeed, we were well equipped with the requirements for several games and sports broke out all over the place.¹³³

Commanding officers, unit sports officers, and Auxiliary Services supervisors set time aside on Canada's national holiday, Dominion Day, 1 July, for the playing of sports and baseball featured prominently. Regular duties were largely suspended and the men were encouraged to participate in fun sports. As one chaplain, a sports officer, wrote, "A quasi holiday. Sports and such amenities to celebrate the natal day of a Dominion with a glorious past, a more glorious present and a most glorious future."¹³⁴ The last Dominion Day celebration before 1st Canadian Division embarked for the Italian campaign in July 1943 was noted as especially well-attended in the Chaplains' war diaries. "Dominion Day and

¹³⁰ Canadian YMCA - Overseas Statistical Report," August 25 - September 21 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI/II, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹³¹ Salvation Army Canadian War Services Report for the Month of August 1940," War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI/III, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319.

¹³² "Auxiliary Services Report: Aux/2," 30 September 1940, War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, December 1940, Appendix VI, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 2.

¹³³ Clegg, *A Canuck In England*, 112.

¹³⁴ Report of the Deputy Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), II Canadian Corps," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

the Canucks have a big programme of sports with which to celebrate. In the afternoon trek to Horsham to umpire ball game between two Pay Corps teams..."¹³⁵ Given the time of year, softball was the most popular sport played on Dominion Day.

The arrival of American troops in large numbers in the spring of 1942 saw little change in the Canadian softball schedule. Many Canadian troops were resentful of the newly arrived GIs, whom many saw as interlopers come to replace them as interesting and unique foreigners from across the sea, an issue that made for some rough encounters. While in some instances, such as with music, Canadian preferences for American products were quite clear, one soldier's comment on the arrival of American troops themselves is fairly typical, "If they ever come here, one of us is going to leave!...Cdns have been the biggest novelty here since the war began, and they know damned well what would happen if the Yanks come over and usurped our position, as they undoubtedly would."¹³⁶ His was a prescient view. Once American troops did arrive, tensions were quick to follow in many locales. Comments over the fighting prowess of Americans over Canadians were especially off-limits. For example, a soldier of the 1st Canadian Tank Brigade Company, RCASC, commented, "'Freefor all' fights take place between American and Canadian soldiers in the local pubs over the 'we won the last war' attitude."¹³⁷

With such tensions rising, softball and baseball provided a natural outlet for the troops to display their national pride. When an American unit was posted near a Canadian one, the two would often play inter-unit games of softball and baseball. In July 1942, the

¹³⁵ "Report of the Chaplain (RC) HQ First Army," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹³⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 2 – 15 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File: 4/Censor/4/5.

¹³⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 18 March – 1 April 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/5.

Local Eastleigh Football League invited the Canadian team to play a US side in baseball, since "Such a thing has not been seen here since the Great War."¹³⁸ Around the same time, the Manchester County Baseball Team proposed a match against a Canadian team on 3 August, adding that they would like to schedule a Canada-US game for the same weekend, a suggestion quickly taken up.¹³⁹ Nor did resentment at US troops keep Canadians from maintaining a keen interest on US sports.¹⁴⁰ A report on "Views of Men Respecting G.I. and Entertainment Movies" revealed that when asked what movies they liked, a high proportion of men mentioned that they liked the GI Movie "World Series 1943".¹⁴¹ As evidenced by the tensions outlined above, however, their respect for this American sport should not be interpreted as affection for everything American. The popularity of softball for Canadians is exemplified most by the number of men who engaged in the sport, especially at the unit level. The number of men participating in softball far outpaced the closest rival.¹⁴² By 1943, Baseball nomenclature and rules were so well entrenched they came to inform other activities,

Quizz [sic] games are conducted and recently have been based on the game of baseball, using nine men to a side and giving each team the floor in turn until three men have failed to answer their questions. Questions are rated as singles, doubles, home runs, etc.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ "Baseball Game," 29 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7. Also see: Horrall, "Keep-a-fighting! Play the Game!"

¹³⁹ "Manchester County Baseball Match," 21 July 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7.

¹⁴⁰ Their mutual interest in North American-style football resulted in the playing of two very popular contests at London's White City Stadium between the Canadian and American armies in February 1944. These were popular with troops from both countries, as well as with British spectators. US and Canadian forces had difficulty playing such games more frequently because of the lack of dedicated fields of proper size and format. See: Stacey and Wilson, *The Half-Million*, 88-90.

¹⁴¹ "Views of Men Respecting G.I. and Entertainment Movies," Special Report #143, 28 August 1944, LAC, RG24, National Defence, File: 8917-3-6, "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary," 10.

¹⁴² "Review of Summer Sports Activities 1943," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File 23/sports/1/9, "Sports Activities – Generally. Policy."

¹⁴³ "Programme High-Lights," Canadian YMCA Report, 28 February 1943, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

While baseball and softball came to dominate unit sports, and enjoyed very well-attended inter-unit seasons, most Canadian troops saved their most heated passions for the ice, despite serious limitations on participation and attendance.

As the army's second winter overseas approached, the development of the hockey program grew ever more complex. There were two main factors driving the army's support for hockey overseas. From a purely military standpoint, commanders supported hockey as they did other sports, because it promoted physical fitness and health and encouraged team-building and cooperation. Of less import to overseas administrators at first, as we have seen in the case of education, was the morale and psychological effects of hockey. However, in the static period, the sport's psychological benefits were hard to ignore. Hockey drew both mass participation and large crowds of spectators to contests that closely approximated social life in Canada. Gathering around a rink, cheering on "their" hockey team, was a Canadian experience that many of the overseas soldiers shared.

As the 1940-41 season approached, the hockey program increasingly became regularized and organized along recognizably professional lines. With the approach of a full winter, thoughts turned in September 1940 to the establishment of a full-scale hockey season, played through to a championship final. Although a sports committee existed early on, in October 1940, 1st Canadian Infantry Division organized a dedicated "Hockey Committee".¹⁴⁴ The original aim of the committee was to ensure the active involvement of many Canadian soldiers:

A Hockey Committee is being formed with a view to organizing a league composed of teams from all units of the Division, if possible. The general idea is to have as

¹⁴⁴ "Report No.13, Auxiliary Services Overseas, October 31st, 1940." War Diary of the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, 1-31 January 1941, Appendix XXIII, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 13319, 2.

many teams as possible and only a few spectators attending the games at any one time. Considerable interest has been shown along this line and it is expected that the project will be very successful. The divisional championship will also be declared towards the end of the hockey season.¹⁴⁵

Despite the early structural hurdles to playing hockey, including lack of equipment and play space, Canadian troops came to play and watch hockey to such a degree that it clearly symbolized the wholesale cultural inclusion of Canada's national game overseas. Not only was the game widely played, but most other organizational and administrative aspects of hockey were also imported to Britain. It was played on the basis of seasons leading to playoffs, leagues were established, and championships set up with prizes. There existed a tradition of inviting persons of significance to ceremonially drop the puck at the opening face off at important games, such as when General P.J. Montague faced off the 1942 finals between 1st Division's RCAMC team and 2nd Division's Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada.¹⁴⁶ In short, Canada's national game was replicated in England down to its minute details and, as such, it served as a powerful link to cultural, historic, and nationalist imperatives from Canada.¹⁴⁷

As a prerequisite, in October 1940, the Canadian YMCA Overseas took steps to facilitate access to hockey and skating facilities for Canadian troops by taking over operation of the Imperial Ice Rink at Purley.¹⁴⁸ As the season approached and teams began choosing their players, it appeared that the hockey season would progress slowly as Canadians had access to only the Purley rink. However, in late November, the Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services noted that "A recent offer has reached this Office from the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ "Memorandum on Facts concerning Hockey With Canadians," 22 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10771 file: 222c1 (D276).

¹⁴⁷ Nationalist because Canada had eschewed British games in favour of their own.

¹⁴⁸ "Report of Meeting of Auxiliary Supervisors Held at Majestic Theatre, Reigate," 22 October 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

Secretary of the Sports Stadium at Brighton, stating his Company would be willing to consider re-opening their ice rink.”¹⁴⁹ The Secretary wrote,

As you are aware, there are a good number of Canadians in Brighton at the present time, and we have had many appeals from them to re-open our ice rink, which is at present closed, so they may skate. While we would be only too pleased to be able to re-open our rink and encourage the Canadians to skate and play Ice Hockey, we could not do this unless we were sure there would be a fair number of Canadians in the town and district for three or four months, as we would not get enough support from the local population or British troops to enable the rink to pay its way.¹⁵⁰

Troops stationed further afield played either at Purley, which was centrally located, or travelled (often in army convoys) to participate in and watch Canadian hockey games in Brighton on the south coast.

The securing of the Brighton rink, which together with the Purley rink became ubiquitously known as “the P&B rinks”, facilitated an expanded hockey program. The timing of the Brighton contract was also lucky since bomb damage delayed the opening of the Purley rink until early December. In its first week of operation after reopening in December 1940, Purley handled, “about 200 Hockey Players per day, and another 500 to 600 Canadians were skating on each of Saturday and Sunday afternoons.”¹⁵¹ A report by Oscar Pearson, Sports Secretary, 1st Canadian Infantry Division and YMCA Manager of the Purley Rink noted that with this new season, hockey had proven to be the most popular sport in the army. “In the past week... the spotlight of course [was] centred on hockey. During the week 925 played hockey, representing 40 different formations. The handing out

¹⁴⁹ “Auxiliary Services, Additional Facilities Ice Hockey, Winter Months 1940-1941,” 29 November 1940, LAC, RG24, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1.

¹⁵⁰ “To The G.O.C. Canadian Army Headquarters from W.L. Williams, Secretary, Sports Stadium, Brighton,” 15 Nov 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10168, File: 23/Sports/1.

¹⁵¹ Correspondence from E.D. Otter Senior Officer, YMCA., CASF, Overseas to Major J.M. Humphrey Senior Officer, Auxiliary Services, 11 Dec 1940, 23/Sports/1, Vol. 10168)

of equipment to this number has been a super task.”¹⁵² Here already can be seen the limitations on hockey as a sport for mass physical training as relatively few could play, but it still represented a focal point of sporting interest. Pearson added, “The troops are quite thrilled at what the YMCA have done to make their favourite Canadian sport possible in England.”¹⁵³ Skating, another favourite Canadian sport was possible on a grander scale since there were fewer limits to the amount of people on the ice. “A total of 6007 participated during the week in pleasure skating, hockey, and as spectators, the breakdown of this is: Public 1752, Troops 2525, Spectators 805, Hockey 925, Total 6007.”¹⁵⁴ The draw that Canadian games had for the English public is also evident in these numbers. Pearson, presaging the type of efforts that would follow in organizing Canadian hockey seasons and championships, noted, “The formal opening on Saturday, 14th December, will stand out as one of the biggest events yet attempted by the Overseas YMCA and with some 1500 happy people present.”¹⁵⁵ By the end of December 1940, hockey overseas was enjoying support from army officials, soldiers, supervisors, and even members of the British public.

After the 1940-41 season, hockey became a well entrenched, army-wide institution. If facilities for hockey were absent, or a unit was posted far from the P&B rinks, the men became worried. One such soldier of the 8th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, RCA, likely posted on remote duty, opined, “There is no further word of Hockey and have just about

¹⁵² “Report of Oscar Pearson Week-Ending 14th December, 1940,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 101678, 23/Sports/1.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

given up hope.”¹⁵⁶ Despite such worries, hockey had come to enjoy the services of a dedicated committee, regular equipment supply, its own cobbler to repair skates,¹⁵⁷ and the posting of fatigue details to keep the rinks in order and to keep the players and spectators in line. Hockey was so effective in eliciting the soldiers’ excitement that COs had to be reminded that “hockey players, whether amateur or professional, will be accorded exactly the same treatment as any other soldiers who have joined the army at the same time as the hockey players.”¹⁵⁸ Paradoxically, in recognition of hockey’s ability to “materially enhance esprit de corps,” members of the unit’s hockey team were “to be encouraged to engage in hockey, and to represent the Unit or formation to which they are at the time posted.”¹⁵⁹ In effect, hockey players were given “hockey duty”. To avoid charges of favouritism, the policy also stated that, “no interference will be tolerated in the regular progress of hockey players through basic training, advanced training and trades training, and no player may play hockey for a military station other than his own.”¹⁶⁰ This last point suggests that even units to which hockey players were not posted desired use of the players’ services. Members of the hockey team were allowed to practice during rink times, whereas non-members had to share the rink with other pleasure skaters. The question of affording preferential treatment to hockey-playing soldiers led the army to remind its COs of the

¹⁵⁶ Field Censor (Home) Report, 24 November – 7 December 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁵⁷ Telegram from CMHQ to HQ CRU, 25 December 1943, LAC, National Defence, Volume 10170, File: 23/Sports/9. Skates were in constant use and there was no way to replace them in required quantities except from Canada. The AAG (Personnel) was informed that “approximately 200 pairs of boots and skates [are] out of action and requiring attention... [The] trouble is experienced to a much greater degree in England than in Canada because the skates... are in almost continuous use on soggy ice [owing to the relatively warmer temperatures and more humid air in Britain]... Spalding Brothers in London... are unable to cope with the tremendous amount of work... It is most important that these skates should be put back into use as soon as possible as the ‘casualties’ are mounting.” “Hockey Skate Repairs,” 23 December 1943, LAC, National Defence, Volume 10170, File: 23/Sports/9.

¹⁵⁸ “Policy Concerning Hockey Players in the Army,” 22 October 1943, DHH, 006.066 (D8).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

sports policy. The army highlighted the requirements of a good sports program: "skilled sports officers, more and better equipment, inducement of participation by all rather than the production of champions, [and] regular schedules of unit and inter-unit competitions."¹⁶¹

The concern over preferential treatment mirrored a similar issue that had arisen almost simultaneously in Canada. Back home, a national controversy was brewing over hockey players engaging in sport rather than enlisting. Federal officials in Manitoba and Saskatchewan refused passports to six professional hockey players to enter the United States, which sparked the controversy. An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* stated:

The Manitoba Board takes six Canadians of military age and sets them apart from 600,000 other young Canadians and says to this particular six "why the hell aren't you in the army?". The government is going to bully, coerce and humiliate a handful of its more celebrated young citizens in such a public and forcible way to join the army.¹⁶²

But not all editorials rose to the defence of hockey players, as noted in the *Kitchener Daily Record*:

It is astonishing that the public continues to patronize public exhibitions of professional athletics by young men who should be in the army... The simple fact is that Canada is at war and young men are required for the armed forces.¹⁶³

The resultant editorial debate was fierce and highlighted the passion that Canadians held both for their sporting traditions and their contribution to the war effort. While army and government officials understood the morale benefits to fielding a good ice hockey team, the

¹⁶¹ "Army Sports," Trends in the Thinking of Army Units. Vol. III, Number VI, June 1944. File: 8917-3-6. "Morale Reports – Monthly Summary."

¹⁶² Ralph Allen, *Globe and Mail*, 13 September 1941, p. 14. Quoted in Bruce R. McIntyre, Which Uniform to Serve the War: Hockey in Canada Versus Military Service During World War Two," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*; 1993 24(2): 68-90.

¹⁶³ "Regina's Divisional Registrar Refuses Passports," *Kitchener Daily Record*, 20 September 1941, p. 8. Quoted in Bruce R. McIntyre, Which Uniform to Serve the War," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 68-90.

potentially disruptive effects of unevenness of sacrifice in the end outweighed the benefits of putting all of Canada's elite players on the ice in battle dress. The need for equal regional, ethnic, and linguistic representation in the forces required sensitivity in management at home.¹⁶⁴

Regardless of political imperatives, a number of high profile hockey-playing Canadians volunteered for service. Most famously at the time, the Boston Bruins' so-called "Kraut Line" – the members of which were 1, 2, and 3 in scoring in the 1939-40 season – volunteered together and served in the RCAF from 1942 to 1946. Maurice "The Rocket" Richard volunteered for service, but was listed as Category "C": unfit for overseas service. Despite this, he became the first NHL player to score 50 goals in one season in 1944-45. Estimates record that between 75 to 90 of the NHL's 120 players went into the services, many of whom undoubtedly adorned unit teams. Their presence, however, is not celebrated in the documentary record.¹⁶⁵ In the meantime, hockey continued overseas, featuring growing participation and organization each season. In the 1941-42 season, 125 teams, including 6,021 participants, played in the season and over 25,000 spectators turned out to watch.¹⁶⁶

Debates back home notwithstanding, many troops *wanted* to see their unit's team beat a rival Canadian team or Allied army team. For this reason, a select few soldiers who represented their units and divisions played championship and exhibition games against

¹⁶⁴ For a good discussion of this debate see: Gabriel Stephen Panunto, "For Club or Country? Hockey in Wartime Canada, 1939-1945," (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2000). Also see: Doug Hunter, *War Games: Conn Smythe and Hockey's Fighting Men* (Toronto: Viking, 1996), 63-81.

¹⁶⁵ See: Red Fisher, "The Original Six," in Al Strachan, ed., *One Hundred Years of Hockey: The Chronicle of a Century on Ice* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999), 36; and Bruce MacFarlane, *One Hundred Years of Hockey* (Toronto: Deneau, 1989), 43.

¹⁶⁶ "Memorandum on Facts Concerning Hockey With Canadians," 22 Jan 42, LAC, RG24, Volume 10771, File: 222c1 (D276).

other unit, formation, and, sometimes, national teams. This pattern closely resembled the way men followed NHL games or their local league playoffs in Canada. The manner in which unit teams selected their players also suggested that ability, coupled with a desire to see their own unit's team on the ice, trumped the official desire to ensure the participation of all soldiers. On 15 September 1942, for instance, the army sports committee approved a recommendation that hockey begin on 1 November instead of 1 December as in previous years, "to give more teams a chance to qualify as one of the teams which will remain in the finals."¹⁶⁷ Players devoted much of the off-duty time to hockey training, but when important games were played, training schedules were often postponed to accommodate play and spectatorship. November was used as a practice month in which players could try out before selection of the final roster, thereby satisfying soldier demands that their team be a strong one.¹⁶⁸

Such soldier demands also explain why the army eventually came to include spectatorship as a form of participation. Hockey's morale benefits for Canadian soldier spectators was undeniable, which justified promotion of the sport, and the high costs involved, for a relatively small PT benefit (which was nominally the prime factor in army sports promotion). The cream of the crop surfaced for official games to which all senior staff were invited. Competition for seating at championships was so fierce that General Crerar had to write in advance and could only be afforded six tickets to the Canadian

¹⁶⁷ "Memo for Consideration by Canadian Forces Sports Committee," Sept 9 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/7. These recommendations were accepted at a subsequent meeting on 15 September 1942.

¹⁶⁸ Auxiliary Services, Ice Hockey," 27 Oct 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/8, "Sports Activities – Generally".

hockey final held on 11 March 1942 in the Brighton stadium.¹⁶⁹ Clearly, the army came to recognize that even spectatorship was excellent for morale and unit esprit de corps.

By 1942, the posting of ancillary units and fatigue parties to organize and regulate the hockey season testifies to its ever-growing sophistication. Commanders and sport committee members began to worry more for the spectator aspects of the hockey program than its fitness benefits. YMCA Supervisors were stationed at P&B to supervise and organize hockey operations for the Canadian Army. Fatigue parties were supplied from nearby units consisting of one NCO and six men that would be in charge of “looking after and keeping track of the equipment, cleaning the ice after each period and other general duties connected with [the] hockey operations of the rink.”¹⁷⁰ Canadian Army engineers were also employed to convert the skating rink for hockey, because its constant use was beginning to degrade the facilities and interfere with its normal operation. Engineers installed “a screen to protect the glass of the cafeteria at the north end of P rink.”¹⁷¹ The committee also concluded, “hockey is particularly valuable from a spectator angle as regards morale.” Adding that it is, “very desirable that as many spectators as possible should be allowed to see these hockey games, especially the playoff games and also formation games during the season.”¹⁷²

Major-General G.R. Turner, in September 1942 Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, First Canadian Army, gave official sanction to hockey’s spectator appeal, tabling committee agenda items revolving around there being, “(a) not enough

¹⁶⁹ “Tickets for Hockey Final,” 8 Mar 42, LAC, RG24, Volume 10771, File: 23/Sports/1/4.

¹⁷⁰ “Minutes of Canadian Army Hockey Meeting at Army HQ”, 21 Oct 42, LAC, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/8, “Sports Activities – Generally,” 1.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

hockey hours and (b) not enough accommodation for the troops, at play-off games.”¹⁷³

Such high-level discussions attest to hockey’s massive popularity and the high command’s significant acquiescence in the soldiers’ desire to watch such games, as if they were watching a local amateur or even NHL game back home. The YMCA’s senior representative at CMHQ and Sports Committee chairman, D.E. Strain, outlined the solution:

...in tentative talks with the rink people this year, they had agreed to allow us 56½ hours per week this year as against 42¾ hours per week last year. On the basis of seven formations taking part last year this allowed approximately six hours per formation per week. With eight formations taking part this year, 56 hours per week would allow for seven hours per formation per week...¹⁷⁴

Considering that organized hockey was played only at the P&B rinks for the first three years, the number of troops and spectators eventually accommodated is impressive. Soldier demand, coupled with the lack of rink space – and the need to share it with civilians – also led to tight controls on hockey games. The rules in Brighton stipulated that, “All games must start on time, in order that all three games can be played in one morning period. We get the ice sharp on time, not one minute before, and we leave the ice exactly at the appointed hour, 1700 hours, not one minute after. Each game will consist of three fifteen minute periods, with five minutes in between periods... There will be no overtime allowed.”¹⁷⁵

In the 25 September 1942 meeting, Strain pointed out that there was enough equipment to start the season in Purley and Brighton, where rink time had been secured, but that he had not enquired about rink space at a facility in Richmond owing to lack of

¹⁷³ Minutes of a Meeting Held at CMHQ on Hockey,” 25 September 1942”, LAC, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ “Rules Covering Games at Brighton Rink For Hockey,” 28 Oct 42, LAC< RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/8, “Sports Activities – Generally”.

equipment to support league games in that location. Lieutenant-Colonel C. Lloyd, representing the army, asked that Mr. Strain “check into the Richmond rink situation”.¹⁷⁶ Regarding the lack of equipment, the meeting turned to the crucial factor of the “heavy loss of new equipment coming over, due to enemy action.”¹⁷⁷ Distance from Canada was an important factor because there were no means of securing the required amount of hockey equipment in England and so this essential morale life-line was connected directly to Canadian equipment manufacturers. With the 1942-43 season approaching the equipment issue loomed as a major morale factor.

The question now being to get more equipment into the country as soon as possible. Lt.-Col Lloyd agreed to take this up with the proper authorities and see if there was any possibility of having replacements of these two consignments lost sent over by bomber or failing this to secure priority space on the earliest boat.¹⁷⁸

The discussion went on to the question of playoff games and how there was not enough space to accommodate all Canadian troops who wished to attend. One idea was to hold the game in the morning, during normal YMCA hockey hours, eliminating local competition for seating, which would also eliminate the need to drive large convoys to the rink during the blackout. By the end of the 1942-43 season, 639 official games were played, involving 19,375 participants and at least 100,000 spectators.¹⁷⁹

The important point of competitive advantage was also raised because, in the year before, the Brighton rink had invited one or two Canadian teams to play against an all-star English team. The following year, Canadian authorities wanted to ensure such invitations were distributed equitably because the one or two teams getting to play such games gave

¹⁷⁶ Minutes of a Meeting Held at CMHQ on Hockey,” 25 September 1942”, , LAC, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ “Review of Winter Sports Activities, Canadian Army Sports Committee,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/Sports/1/8.

them an advantage in league and playoff games against Canadian teams. Here again, it was believed that any unfair advantage afforded in hockey might be detrimental to overall morale. The very seriousness with which hockey's influence on the morale of the troops was viewed suggests that by the beginning of the 1942-43 season, Canada's national sport had taken on a momentum of its own. It observed its own rules, it had caused the army to bend and break its own regulations, and had caused the massive movement (with related costs in time and money) of troops to both play and watch hockey games. It had caused engineers, fatigue parties, and tens of thousand of dollars to be spent on just this one aspect of the sports program. In February 1941, despite lack of seating, "Two thousand Canadians from practically every unit and division," attended the 1st Canadian Infantry Division hockey championship, the largest yet attempted overseas. "The rough-and-tumble battle... produced some of the best hockey played [in England] this winter."¹⁸⁰ The men's rabid-like devotion to the game is a reflection of their affection for it in general and as such, hockey, and its massive organization overseas, provided a powerful mirror on Canadian society and thus served as strong agent for the maintenance of morale overseas.

Hockey's inherent appeal for Canadian troops, and its utility as a common "language" was recognized by its inclusion in *The Battle of Brains: Lectures*, discussed in Chapter 4. The booklet references ice hockey in clearly nationalistic terms, using it as tool for teaching democratic values. Not only does it recognize the sport as a useful teaching tool, because of its familiarity to most Canadian soldiers, but it also reminded the soldiers that hockey was "their" game. The chapter begins,

A hockey game without rules would be a shambles and a hockey game without a referee and goal umpire would be meaningless insofar as sport is concerned. Hockey

¹⁸⁰ Ross Munro, "RCA Team Wins Army Hockey Title," *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 February 1941, 11.

players place themselves voluntarily under the direction of game officials who are entirely guided by the rules.¹⁸¹

Here the links between organized sports and military discipline are made clear. But the army's recognition of the power of hockey as a teaching tool helps to further explain why the army promoted it so strongly and was willing to bend its own rules to facilitate full-scale participation.¹⁸² The booklet links the experience of hockey to Canadian values of civilized life, reminding them of why they are fighting.

Men found they must have certain rules to guide them in living together. They found out too, that officials must be given power to enforce these rules. They discovered, likewise, that every man must be prepared to give up certain individual rights to ensure a wider enjoyment of rights by all... Under all of these regulations the game of life in the democratic world is played.¹⁸³

In other words, hockey teaches Canadians to live civilized and organized lives. In explaining the linkages between hockey and the man's life in the military, the booklet adds,

The rules permit team work, combinations, brilliant individual sorties, fair obstruction, clean body checking. The game exacts penalties for those who take unjust advantage, for personal deliberate bodily injury, for dangerous cross-checking, boarding, hooking and high sticking. Fighting is heavily penalized and abusive profanity directed at game officials who are doing their duty, may cost a player a game penalty as well as a heavy fine.¹⁸⁴

Speaking specifically of the *quid pro quo* relationship a man enters into with the military, the booklet continues the hockey motif,

Clubs can enact that players conform to training regulations, abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and heavy smoking, but they in return provide medical attention for injury, and care and pay during periods of inactivity through injuries sustained in the line of duty.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ *The Battle of Brains*, 106.

¹⁸² Such rules included discouraging large-scale play of sports that limited player participation. Given play space and equipment limitations, hockey was played by a relative few, while the majority played softball. The army was willing to "bend the rule" on participation in hockey only after its morale benefits became clear and the army redefined "participation" to include spectatorship.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Through such texts, life in the army (and thus life in England) was framed in recognizably and uniquely Canadian terms. No other morale program ignited the passion of the men so strongly as hockey. Canada's national past time was perhaps never so intensely practiced and followed as it was in those dusty old English pleasure rinks over an intense four-year period.

Finally, the serious limitations on soldier participation and attendance at Canadian army hockey games did not stop soldiers from following the fortunes of their unit or formation team even if they could not attend. For this reason, the Sport Committee kept meticulous statistics of team rosters, playoff results, and league schedules at CMHQ. A Committee memorandum on the usefulness of such statistics stated,

Canada's Weekly is very anxious to secure results of Unit and Brigade athletic events as well as Formation. The men get a kick out of seeing their names in print and the folks back home get a real thrill seeing the name of a relative or close friend in the news.¹⁸⁶

Likewise, separation from Canada did not keep them from closely following their favourite team back home. The soldiers devoured sports news from Canada. Scores were routinely printed in *Canada's Weekly*. Newsprint, however, was no substitute for actually hearing a hockey broadcast from Canada. The BBC re-broadcast parts of hockey games from Canada, which the soldiers were especially keen to hear. A soldier of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada wrote with some frustration,

We heard a broadcast of last night's game in Toronto. It came over the air at quarter to five until a quarter after five, a half hour. This is a bad time to put on a program for the Canadians here, as five o'clock is just supper time. You either have to miss

¹⁸⁶ "SPORTS PUBLICITY – Canadian Army." LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

the broadcast or your supper and that is the supper time for practically all troops. Too bad they wouldn't change it to some other time.¹⁸⁷

The field censor observed a trend in this behaviour, noting, "The men appreciate the broadcast of sporting events in Canada, and they like to follow the fortunes of their favourite team."¹⁸⁸ The BBC also grew to understand the need to broadcast hockey games earlier in the afternoon. *Canada's Weekly* reported in November 1942,

The C.B.C., in co-operation with the B.B.C., will again send the Saturday night hockey games from the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto this winter. A condensed commentary of each game, by Foster Hewitt, will be beamed from Canada to London each week, and will be part of the B.B.C.'s Sunday afternoon programme for the forces. The first broadcast will be on Sunday, November 8, at 2:15 p.m., and others will follow each Sunday thereafter at that time.¹⁸⁹

This article, and many like it, went on to report on sporting events from coast to coast to feed the Canadian soldiers' appetite for news about their favourite local team from home. Examples include a report on the growth of the Saskatchewan Amateur Hockey Association, the opening of the Vancouver College's football season, the status of the Ontario Curling Association, and a detailed report on the upcoming NHL season, noting, "If preseason form is any indication, then Les Canadiens are the team to beat."¹⁹⁰ *Canada's Weekly* also reported amateur, senior, and community-based hockey results from across Canada, which was important given that by 1945 NHL hockey had been firmly established in only six cities, only two of which, Montreal and Toronto, were in Canada. *Canada's Weekly* was widely available in all Canadian leave centres and at most stations. As such it was an invaluable source for Canadian sporting news.

¹⁸⁷ Field Censors (Home) Report, 15 – 28 September 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/3.

¹⁸⁸ Field Censors (Home) Report, 19 January – 1 February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File: 4/Censor/4/4.

¹⁸⁹ Percy Hurd (ed.), *Canada's Weekly*, Vol. CXX, Oct. 1942 – Mar. 1943, 119.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Sport is something more than the mirror of the society in which it is played. Colin Howell argues that in Canada, sport has always been, “understood as a way of supporting citizenship and nation building.”¹⁹¹ The ubiquity of sport in pre-war Canadian life meant that it formed an integral part of the soldiers’ memories of community and everyday life.¹⁹² For Canadian soldiers overseas, it embodied social connections and patterns from home which were important to the men. Sports fostered and kept alive local, but innocuous rivalries with which sports fans can relate to the present day. By the publication of local Canadian scores and NHL playoff results, the soldiers were still able to brag about the success of the Montreal Canadiens or the Maple Leafs’ recent losing skid.

In a lasting tribute, soldiers who excelled at official sports were given an enduring memorial. In 1942, the army began discussions to create a Canadian Forces Sports Hall of Fame to honour elite Canadian soldier-athletes. In so doing, the army incorporated Canadian soldier-athletes into the nation’s sporting tradition. Starting around this time, CMHQ requested that meticulous records be kept of the soldiers’ achievements in sport overseas, an initiative that had more than just “tombstone” significance. Major P.J. Philpott, Assistant Director, Auxiliary Services and Chairman of the Sports Committee struck a sports sub-committee to approve “records made in this country.”¹⁹³ This sub-committee liaised with Ottawa and compared the overseas soldiers’ sporting records with those stationed in Canada in an endeavour to set up a continuity of Canadian Forces sports

¹⁹¹ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Tears*, 144.

¹⁹² Ronald Lappage has outlined the complexity of sport in interwar Canada in: Ronald Lappage, “The Canadian Scene and Sport, 1921-1939,” in Maxwell Howell and Reet Howell, eds., *History of Sport in Canada* (Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1985), 224-302.

¹⁹³ Minutes of Canadian Forces Sports Committee Meeting Held at CMHQ 1400 Hours, 15 September 1942,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

records, and to harmonize these with Canadian sports records generally. The push to set up a Canadian Forces Sports Hall of Fame was simultaneously intended to honour and immortalize the sporting accomplishments of Canada's soldiers.¹⁹⁴ This initiative emulated the pride that developed in the sporting accomplishments of Canada's overseas forces. There is perhaps no more fitting testimonial to the link between morale, sports, and national pride than setting up an institution to honour these soldiers as Canadian sports legends in their own right.¹⁹⁵

As a matter of policy, the Canadian army and government turned largely to sport as a meaningful, useful, and enjoyable activity for Canada's soldiers. The army actively encouraged play and sports as an integral part of its training and morale "curriculum" designed to foster kinship, team, cohesiveness, and solidarity. Most importantly, the army *officially* recognized not only that sport contributed to the soldier's overall fitness, but also recognized its social and psychological benefits in terms of maintaining morale.¹⁹⁶ In the Canadian Army, we find one of – if not the single – earliest examples of a massive government-sponsored sport and physical activity program aimed at Canadians from all provinces and administered by the national government. The value of sports for maintaining the soldiers' physical fitness was indisputable. More importantly, perhaps, its role in maintaining the morale of officers and enlisted men was widely accepted both because it combated boredom and it linked them to memories of sporting and entertainment traditions back home. Sports sustained the soldiers' passions and served as a vital link to the lives that they had left behind.

¹⁹⁴ DHH 113.72003 (D1), Canadian Forces Sports Hall of Fame.

¹⁹⁵ Minutes of Canadian Forces Sports Committee Meeting Held at CMHQ 1400 Hours, 15 September 1942," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10169, File: 23/sports/1/7.

¹⁹⁶ "Sports activities - CMHQ - General correspondence," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12541, File 6/SPORTS CMHQ/2.

Chapter 6: The Canadian Chaplain Service

Canada largely employed civilians to attend to the physical and moral welfare of its soldiers through the Directorate of Auxiliary Services. But in the field, a significant exception to this came in the form of the *padres* – a term used specifically to refer to military chaplains – in the Canadian Chaplain Service (CCS) who, in theory, cared for the men's "spiritual and moral" welfare. In practice, Canadian Army chaplains carried out many of the same duties as the Auxiliary Services supervisors and so, in addition to their spiritual duties, they did a great deal to minister to the troops' physical and psychological welfare. In fact, in the early years, many chaplains did almost all of the work of the Auxiliary Services Supervisors until the latter could better organize their operations. The organizing of sports, dances, games, libraries, tours, and much more, along with their official duties – all were grist to the Canadian chaplains' mill.

The CCS's activities also generally reflected Canadian social norms. First and foremost, chaplains felt themselves representatives of their respective churches' hierarchies and congregations in Canada. Their work often linked the man to the values prevalent in his home congregation. This was systemically reflected in the creation of separate Roman Catholic and Protestant chaplain services and, within the Protestant service, strict adherence to a proportional denominational breakdown, itself largely reflective of the religious character of non-Catholic Canada. As with the Auxiliary Services, denominational or service differences extant in Canada were mirrored in Britain, as were certain devotional duties and proscriptions. The soldiers' overseas experiences of religion were either reminiscent of their experiences in Canada, were the result of ecclesiastical demands in Canada, or were informed by their personal relationship with the *padres*. As such, this

chapter will examine the administrative structure of the Canadian Chaplain Service, to illustrate the various administrative links to Canada, as well as the morale and spiritual work of padres on the ground in the United Kingdom.

The chaplain's primary nominal duty was religious. In a nation whose citizens professed an overwhelming sense of faith, it follows that many of its soldiers spent some of their leisure time at religious activities.¹ But even the tiny minority who professed no religion used the padre's services for the work they did in terms of general welfare services and it is this work that formed the bulk of their activities during the army's static period until July 1943; religious troops likewise used the padre's services in this manner. Such encounters reminded non-religious troops of their homeland's religious structure. Further, the chaplain worked diligently to maintain harmony between the soldier and his family at home and even tried to assuage the fears of his home congregation. The chaplain's ties to Canada were strong and informed much of his work among the troops. The prominence given to the Sunday church parade was the army's recognition of the place of institutional religion in Canada's national life. For their part, soldiers viewed padres mostly positively and frequently used their services as a way to communicate with loved ones. The serviceman's relationship with his padre frequently reminded the soldier of those little aspects of Canadian life absent from the English pub and damp countryside. When chaplains heard soldier comments that the padre's service "reminds me of home," he knew

¹ An overwhelming majority of Canadians professed adherence to religion in 1939, even if they did not regularly attend church services. The 1941 Census reveals that out of a total population of 11,506,655 only 19,161, or 0.166%, professed "No Religion". By contrast, the 2001 Census reveals that that of 29,639,030 Canadians, 4,796,325, or 16.2%, professed "No Religion". For statistics of the 1941 census, please see Statistic Canada census data at: http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/11-516-XIE/sectiona/A164_184.csv. For 2001 Census data, please see: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1>

he was doing his job.² An examination of how the army attempted to maintain morale cannot ignore the role played by its religious leaders and officers.

* * *

Canadian religious histories largely ignore the padres' essential role in the Second World War.³ Thomas Hamilton's Ph.D. dissertation covers both the Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains' roles throughout the war, but focuses mostly on the padres' role in combat in Italy and Northwest Europe.⁴ Research on padres in the First World War is better served by Duff Crerar's *Padres in No Man's Land*.⁵

The overall lack of historiographical notice belies the Canadian chaplains' important role as part of Canada's military heritage. Canada fielded chaplains during the South African War of 1899-1902; Father Peter O'Leary, a Roman Catholic, and the Reverend John Almond, Church of England, were among the most senior.⁶ Although they served on active duty, the chaplains returned to their civilian congregations immediately upon their return home. There was no coordinating body or official "Chaplains' Service" in

² A.J. Brace, "The YMCA Gets There," *The United Church Observer* (1 March 1945), 15.

³ These histories of the church and religion in Canada all but ignore the padres' Second World War role in the life and history of their respective churches. See: Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996); Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992); John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); George A. Rawlyk, *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, (Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Company, 1990).

⁴ Thomas Hamilton, "Padres Under Fire: A Study of the Canadian Chaplain Services (Protestant and Roman Catholic) in the Second World War" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2004).

⁵ Duff Crerar, *Padres in No Man's Land: Canadian Chaplains and the Great War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). In his introduction, Crerar surveys other works on the chaplains' service in the First World War, noting that many religious Canadians in the First World War viewed the conflict as a "providential opportunity to demonstrate their own national vision." Historians, he notes, have portrayed the First World War padres overseas as extensions of the same sense of national idealism.

⁶ "The Chaplain's Service, C.A.S.F.," Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), 76/110. Carman Miller notes, in the context of the South African War, that while awaiting action in the field "two days before they left for Wilge River Station," the Anglican chaplain J.W. Cox arranged sing-songs and religious services. The padre's provision of morale services evidently has a storied pedigree in Canadian military history. See: Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal: Canadian War Museum, 1993), 215.

the South African War and, perhaps partially because of the lack of an official bureaucracy to record their actions, little is now known of their activities.⁷ The appointment of O'Leary and Almond seems to have been informal and ad hoc, each being in the militia and selected by their commanding officer. In the First World War, a chaplain went to England with every battalion or unit. The ad hoc steps taken in the First World War provided a model and lesson from which the army, through the Adjutant-General in Ottawa, drew in 1939. The chaplains made a place for themselves very early in the First World War and left a tradition of which they had reason to be proud.⁸ The Canadian Chaplain Service was disbanded on 31 December 1920.⁹

In the interwar years, like the Canadian military it served, the chaplain "Service" – no longer a formal entity – withered on the vine. Moreover, this neglect reflected a larger series of crises in the Canadian churches during this period. Because the churches had become accustomed to influencing intellectual, social, and cultural life in Canada in the years after 1867, they had become unable to cope with the accelerated changes which took place between 1914 and 1939.¹⁰ Protestant church life, as a result, had undergone considerable stress and fragmentation. This period also witnessed church union when the United Church of Canada was founded in 1925, but even this was not an altogether smooth theological transition.¹¹ For the Catholic Church, too, this was a period of internal stress. A major source of infighting was the slow Anglicization of the church hierarchy, especially

⁷ "The Chaplain's Service, C.A.S.F.", Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), 76/110.

⁸ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain, Protestant, 1-31 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634.

⁹ "Memorandum G.O. 194" LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 1742, File: DHS 4-26.

¹⁰ Robert A. Wright, "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945," in George A. Rawlyk, *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* (Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Company, 1990), 139.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 140. The United Church was inaugurated on 10 June 1925 in Toronto, Ontario, when the Methodist Church, Canada; the Congregational Union of Canada; and 70 per cent of the Presbyterian Church in Canada entered into a union. Joining as well was the small General Council of Union Churches, a predominantly prairie-based movement begun in Melville, Saskatchewan in 1908.

outside the province of Quebec as anglophones slowly replaced French-speaking archbishops upon their retirement or were installed in newly created archdioceses. This happened in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Winnipeg.¹² Both linguistic groups in the church hierarchy were largely united, however.

Despite the absence of cohesive organizational continuity as the country moved from peace to war, the various denominations contacted Ottawa to proffer assistance even before Canada's declaration of war.¹³ On an individual basis, ministers and former military chaplains inundated the government with offers of assistance. Immediately recognizing the need to establish systematic organization for the chaplains, the Adjutant-General, Major General H.H. Matthews (likewise responsible for establishing the Directorate of Auxiliary Services) wrote the District Officers Commanding across Canada. "Appointment [of] Chaplains to CASF units mobilizing [is] to be deferred pending [the] organization of Chaplain Service CASF [which is] now receiving attention."¹⁴ It is perhaps unsurprising that men who had chosen such a service career were so quick to offer their services in this war.

The *overseas* CCS began with the embarkation of the first Canadian troops for overseas duty. Unlike other soldier welfare groups, the CCS had representatives with the troops from the beginning. On 10 December 1939, four ships sailed from Halifax containing the advance elements of 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the first padres,

¹² A good account of this process can be found in Brian Murphy, "English Speaking Catholics: Adaptation and Social Reform," in Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 348-354. Rome was sympathetic to the anglophone hierarchy's view that English-speaking priests and bishops were essential ingredients to Catholic growth in the west.

¹³ J.C. Wells, *The Fighting Bishop* (Toronto: Cardwell House, 1971), 393.

¹⁴ "Chaplains History File, Message from the Adjutant General to all District Commanding Officers dated 16 Sept 1939," DHH, 76/110.

Protestant and Roman Catholic alike.¹⁵ The army abandoned the system employed in the First World War when only one chaplain service functioned to serve all religions. The service was divided into two sections: a Protestant section for all denominations, other than Catholic, and the Roman Catholic section for the Roman and Greek Orthodox Catholics.¹⁶ The administration of the CCS was vested in the Adjutant-General who was advised by two Principal Chaplains representing the two sections. Generally speaking, the proportion of troops from each denomination was represented by a like proportion of representative chaplains. District Chaplains were appointed to each Military District in Canada, Senior Chaplains for divisions overseas, and Camp Chaplains for training centres in England. In each infantry brigade there were to be four chaplains, “one for each of the main branches of the Christian church,” and there were three in each hospital.¹⁷ Although the service came close, it never maintained these establishments consistently.

In the Second World War, 1253 Canadian ministers, priests, and rabbis served overseas as full-time chaplains. Many chaplains had a special understanding of the “minds and spirits” of their men because they considered themselves representatives of Canada’s churches, a link between servicemen and their families, and a characteristically Canadian

¹⁵ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain, (RC), 10 December 1939, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹⁶ “The Royal Canadian Army Chaplains Corps,” Historical Matters – General – Chaplain Corps, DHH, 76/109. Jewish chaplains were administered by the Principal Chaplain, Protestant.

¹⁷ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain, Protestant, 1-31 January 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634. It is unclear to which four main branches the Principal Chaplain, Protestant refers. The Christian “branches” that enjoyed sizable representation included, Church of England, Roman Catholic, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist. Anglicans and Roman Catholics accounted for two of the four “main branches”. The others were likely United and Presbyterian. A report of March 1942 identified the Protestant denominational breakdown, listing how many chaplains *should* be on strength for each denomination and the actual number then on strength. The numbers that should have been on strength were as follows: Baptist, 7; Church of England, 56; Presbyterian, 21; United Church of Canada, 31; others, 7. The respective number actually then on strength respectively were: 13, 53, 23, 30, 3. Also see, “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – March 1942,” Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632. 2-3.

way of life. In short they represented a link between the men overseas and what they loved most about Canada: their families, the different regions, the Church establishment. Families were reminded throughout the war that their religious leaders ministered to their loved ones overseas. The *Montreal Gazette* reported, "Army Chaplains enlighten, direct and sustain their soldiers [and] know every member of their regiments."¹⁸

Once in England, field chaplains were given the rank of Honorary Captain on a pay scale identical to that of Auxiliary Service Supervisors. This rank entitled them to the precedence and other privileges of the corresponding rank for combatant officers. Unlike many combatant officers, however, the chaplain mingled freely with all ranks and policy dictated that he have the men address him as "padre" or "chaplain" rather than by his title or rank.¹⁹ The level of familiarity engendered by such regulations meant that the men spoke more freely with their chaplains and such conversations often returned to life in Canada. The chaplain's administrative, ecclesiastical, and personal links to the homeland were well known and his connection with local congregations often facilitated the solving of many heartbreaking problems and misunderstandings between soldiers and their Canadian loved ones. The duties of a chaplain were primarily and essentially to uphold the spiritual and moral welfare of the men of the formation to which he was posted.²⁰ In practice, like Auxiliary Services Supervisors, his duties routinely exceeded these basic necessities. For example, a padre assigned to a Canadian hospital outlined a typical day, names omitted, which highlighted his important morale function,

¹⁸ Captain, the Rev. Rene Bachand, "Tells of Activity of Army Chaplains," *Montreal Gazette*, 1 October 1942, 18.

¹⁹ H/Lt.-Col. W.T.R. Flemington, "Memorandum: Instructions to Chaplains," LAC, RG24, Vol. 43, File CCS (P) Instructions/Training.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Early interviews with ____ and ____ who left at 8:45a.m. on their return to Canada. Had a long talk with ____ [regarding] his wish to marry. Another with _____. Visited all wards. Had a visit from Capt. Tierney of the [Knights of Columbus] who brought sports goods, cigarettes and chocolates.”²¹

It was recognized that the methods the padres would adopt varied according to existing conditions. Chaplains were an exceptional source of comfort for the men because, while they rarely exerted rank, they shared the dangers of combat with the men in their care and lived among them month after month, year after year. In this regard, the Chaplain Service policy on leave mirrored that of the army; in fact it was even more stringent,

Chaplains should be placed on the same basis for leave as the other officers of the Units to which they are attached, and should not expect any special consideration. A chaplain should not expect to get leave as often as the other officers of his rank, as it is not always easy to get another chaplain to take his duties.”²²

However, in practice this strict guideline was applied laxly because, as the Assistant Principal Chaplain, Protestant, W. Ross Flemington, commented a year later, “in order to deal successfully with the troops [the chaplains’] own morale must be high and their philosophy of life healthy.”²³

Formal links to the church establishment were strong and informed much about the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of the chaplain. Each denomination having chaplains in the forces had direct access to the military hierarchy through the Adjutant General.

According to the Principal Chaplain, Protestant, C.G. Hepburn, the CCS bore a “relationship and responsibility to the churches throughout Canada” which was discharged

²¹ “Extracts from the Diary of H/Capt G.D. Johnston,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), May 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

²² War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), 29 July 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634.

²³ Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – July 1942,” Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-30 June 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15633. 7. The APC(P) and APC(RC) were the senior representatives of the respective Protestant and Roman Catholic Chaplain Services. In 1942, their titles were upgraded to Principal Chaplain (Overseas) such that they became administratively equivalent to the Principal Chaplains at NDHQ in Ottawa.

through a hierarchical committee structure.²⁴ Many issues encountered on the ground in England had to be referred back to Canada through this administrative framework which linked the overseas chaplain to the Canadian ecclesiastical hierarchy. For example, any important religious services performed overseas, such as marriage or baptism, required permission from Canada. In such cases, the CCS stipulated that consent “must be obtained from the proper church authorities before action is taken.”²⁵ Through such structural means the churches maintained denominational relationship with the overseas representatives.

The chaplain’s role as liaison between the various Canadian ecclesiastical establishments and the soldier extended beyond the church hierarchy. The army asked the chaplains to explain the federal government’s plans for the soldiers’ post-war rehabilitation and required that they interpret numerous other Canadian governmental policies. The Senior Chaplain with 2nd Canadian Infantry Division commented that, “the chaplain can do no better job in the maintenance of morale than by pointing forward to a future bright with hope. The plans of our Government offer this gleam of hope and it is the duty of each chaplain to make himself conversant with these plans and to pass them on.”²⁶ Since the army wanted to avoid “peace-mindedness” among the men, it forbade formal instruction on postwar rehabilitation. This task therefore fell to the padres, and the men repeatedly asked them for such information. The soldiers seem to have appreciated the information chaplains provided in this regard. When discussing how little soldiers learned of post-war

²⁴ H/Brig. C.G. Hepburn, “Technical Narrative by Directorates NDHQ, Canadian Chaplain Service (P), 1939-1945,” DHH 113.71 (D1), 3.

²⁵ *Instructions for the Canadian Chaplain Service: The Canadian Army* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1943), 13. No such rites could be performed without the permission of the man’s Commanding Officer. Such permission was a *sine qua non* of religious service provision and, throughout the war, chaplains were administratively subordinated to the army command. However, the padres did, on occasion, ignore ecclesiastical and governmental policy in the name of morale.

²⁶ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – June 1942,” Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

planning, a sergeant of the Royal Canadian Engineers, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, commented, “Our Padre was the only one who ever talked about rehabilitation.”²⁷ How welcome must the chaplain’s knowledge of Canadian policy have seemed to the man hungry for information on his post-war future. As we have seen, demands for news and information on Canadian issues were intense. The padre’s role in maintaining morale was complex: he needed to reduce the often-conflicting policy imperatives of his own church, of other denominations, and the government’s own war policies down to the individual soldier in such a way as to maintain his spiritual welfare. This task was complicated by the fact that, in very personal ways, chaplains also linked with the men by drawing on the latter’s own congregational affiliations in the home country and, by extension and in practice, the soldiers’ families.

Regardless of their religion or denomination, all chaplains provided reminders of those little things about Canadian civil society that most Britons did not understand. As formalized links to that which the men knew best, chaplains sought to raise morale by “seeking relationships with military personnel.”²⁸ Canadian chaplains constantly worked to forge personal bonds with the men, while serving the desires and rules imposed by their own church organizations in Canada and the army command in Britain. This mixture of close personal contact with systemic and religious imperatives, largely defined in a Canadian context, added yet another layer of Canadianism into the soldiers’ every-day lives. The Protestant and Roman Catholic Principal Chaplains both envisioned a unique role for the chaplains owing to their ability to, “seek the spiritual and moral welfare of the

²⁷ “Special Report No. 161, 5.

²⁸ H/Col. M.C. O’Neill, “Report: Canadian Chaplain Service (RC). [no date],” DHH, File Number 113.7 (D1): Notes and Documents on Canadian Chaplain Services – 1939-45,” 1.

men...by maintaining a high morale among [them].”²⁹ The implication was that the happiest men were Christian men and vice-versa. Chaplains needed to transcend the boundaries of their rank and gain the trust of the men, a task more easily achieved by sharing their dangers, rarely exerting rank, and moving freely about the soldiers.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that when the Senior Padres “had a discussion on ‘Talking to the Troops’. [They] preferred that title to ‘preaching’.”³⁰ For their part, many men viewed the padre as essential to upholding morale, some even attended church for the first time in their lives. For one soldier in the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps, the denomination did not matter, but church service in general was a psychological salve.

You may or may not believe me, but I went to both Mass and Protestant Church services purely voluntary at that. I have heard that men who never went to Church in their lives are going to Church voluntarily, while on active service, and I guess its true enough, as I for one never went to any Church unless I was dragged to it.³¹

In March 1941, the APC(P) reported that the chaplains’ morale work was undeniable, pointing out that soldiers increasingly approached padres seeking, “...a solution from [their] difficulties, domestic, moral and spiritual.”³² The Senior Chaplain, Protestant, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, explained that it was a padre’s job to “be a companion to his men, on the march and in their tents... Friendship is always an incentive to confidence.”³³ Add this attitude to the padres’ close and frequent connections with Canada – as well as his

²⁹ H/Lt.-Col. W.T.R. Flemington and H/Col. M.C. O’Neill, “Memorandum,” “Instructions for Chaplains,” LAC, RG24, Volume 43, File CCS (P) Instructions/Training.

³⁰ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – February 1942,” Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), February 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 6.

³¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

³² “Second Division C.A.S.F., Report of Senior Chaplain, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division,” March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

³³ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – June 1942,” Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 May 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 8.

seeking solutions to their “domestic” problems – and the chaplains’ role in linking the soldier to his homeland becomes manifest.

Maintaining denominational balance was important and adherence to this principle resulted in the replication of the structural religious picture extant in Canada. The Protestant Principal Chaplain informed his staff that the issue had to be kept in constant view.³⁴ Clergy were also to be appointed from across Canada to ensure that every province was well represented.³⁵ All nominees for appointment as chaplains in the Protestant service had to be sponsored by the civilian churches and each candidate was required to have at least three years’ service in his church in Canada.³⁶ The Canadian Catholic hierarchy likewise insisted on its supremacy regarding appointments.³⁷ The chaplain’s attachment to the civilian church, and his long service in it, meant that the padre brought with him a level of social and systemic continuity not found amongst the combatant officer corps. Preference for overseas service was given first to those candidates who had already served overseas, but such service was a secondary requirement behind the need to have had three years’ religious experience in civil society.

In this examination of denominational balance, one issue appears conspicuously absent: the relationship between the Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplaincies. This administrative separation was a uniquely Canadian development. In the British Army, the

³⁴ See for example: War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), 12 August 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634. The Roman Catholic Chaplaincy, administering the services of but one branch of the Christian Church, did not encounter this problem. In the Protestant Branch, there were fears that Anglican chaplains would be seen as predominant and it was hoped that the maintenance of proportional balance would avoid specious comparisons. Because of the uneven availability of chaplains from the various protestant denominations in Canada, which changed from week to week, perfect balance was never achieved, but attempts to adhere to the truest possible representation persisted throughout the war.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Chaplains History File, History of the Chaplain Service,” DHH, 76/110.

³⁷ Catholic appointees to the CCS had to have the “permission and approbation” of their bishop. “Bishop J.F. Ryan to W.L.M. King, 16 September 1939,” Historical Matters – General – Chaplain Corps, DHH, 76/109.

Chaplain-General was Church of England and he had under him assistants representing Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and other faiths. In the United States, the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish sections of the service were also operated under one Director, who was sometimes Protestant and sometimes Roman Catholic. In Canada it was considered necessary to organize the two completely separate and parallel services which were given equally favourable consideration and equality in rank.³⁸ The relationship between the two services was mostly harmonious during the war, especially overseas. The Protestant Principal Chaplain glowed at war's end, "sound co-operation and friendship have been maintained between the [two] Canadian Chaplain Services."³⁹ The separation of the Catholic Chaplain Service reflected experience gained in the First World War, as well as the institutional and political importance of Catholicism in Canada. Catholic organization and advocacy very early in the war also played no small part in this development.⁴⁰

The army understood the need to provide chaplains who could better relate to the men under their care. Their sacrifices and hard work certainly endeared them to the men, religious and non-religious alike. One soldier wrote,

The Padre of this Unit has been a grand worker. He has won the hearts of all the men, has been busy with their personal problems, has arranged for special speakers, has given extensive refresher courses to NCO's preparing for O.C.T.U. exams, i.e. academic exams for those recommended to train as officers, working hard with those going to special Sunday classes in accountancy etc....⁴¹

³⁸ H/Brig. C.G. Hepburn, "Technical Narrative by Directorates NDHQ, Canadian Chaplain Service (P), 1939-1945," DHH 113.71 (D1), 5.

³⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁰ The early insistence of the Catholic Church on retaining the final say over whom it appointed to the Chaplain Service is an example of this advocacy. See: "Bishop J.F. Ryan to W.L.M. King, 16 September 1939," Historical Matters – General – Chaplain Corps, DHH, 76/109.

⁴¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20th Sept. – 4th Oct. 1942, Appendix "A", LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

This sense of cooperation with the men and with each other was a point of pride for the CCS. The Principal Chaplain, Protestant, outlined the inclusiveness of the CCS's policies and members in a 1941 address intended to recruit chaplains,

In the Canadian Armed Forces, today, there is being concentrated the flower of this country's youth. Here is a cross-section of the nation's young manhood from town and village, city and country-side, from every type of home in the community, and from almost every form of occupation in which Canadians engage. No clergyman could ask for a more representative parish, or one which presented a greater challenge... Christian leaders... have placed themselves heart and soul, unreservedly and loyally, behind the national effort and our National Leaders.⁴²

Clearly, the CCS was not above appealing to the Canadian nationality of the fighting man or potential chaplain recruit. This plea appealed not only to the potential candidate's religious nature, but also to his national pride. The address also reminds us that chaplains saw their overseas work as an opportunity to preach to a larger and "more representative" Canadian parish than they were used to in Canada. Their reports demonstrate that chaplains found their audience more receptive than back home, although this likely had less to do with the men's spirituality and instead reflected their *bonhomie* with the chaplain along with their appreciation of the padre's auxiliary role, not to mention the fact that the chaplain risked being killed on active service with the men. One report noted,

...we have found in the army very few cases of "sincere disbelief". While the prevalent army attitude towards religion is not one calculated to inspire the chaplains with an easy sense of satisfaction, nevertheless there is a wonderful opportunity for Christian work based on our regular contacts with the men... The chaplain goes so far as to describe his Army activities as "the most fruitful time in my ministerial experience."⁴³

⁴² War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), October 1941, Appendix 2, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634.

⁴³ "Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – February 1942," Appendix 7, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5. The "prevalent army attitude" here likely refers to the frequent subordination of the chaplain to an auxiliary role, which forced padres to devote less time to religious duties and more to the provision of auxiliary services.

The Canadian chaplains work therefore included ministering to and befriending those who would not normally be available to receive religious instruction in Canada. Ironically, the troops' exposure to the doctrines of Canada's churches surpassed that which most would have expected had they remained in Canada.

To many in the army administration, the chaplains' unquestioned and principal *stated* role was religious. In a February 1941 meeting, Major-General G.R. Pearkes addressed the chaplains, claiming to represent the "soldiers' attitude".

He emphasized that soldiers wanted a chaplain, that they looked upon him as their liaison officer between themselves and God, as one to articulate their prayers and thoughts. The chaplain must mix with and know his men, and above all he must keep a high moral standard and tone. He must be respected by his men, he is God's representative, a human one in their midst.⁴⁴

To be sure, the padres' role as spiritual advisor underscored most of their activities. But their work came to encompass much more than their religious training could provide.⁴⁵ In fact, without their work in the practical areas of providing "secular" welfare services, the Canadian soldier's life would have been a dreary one; chaplains came to provide such services as a matter of course. When explaining why his monthly report was so meagre, H/Major G.J. Cherrier, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, noted,

I feel that a day-by-day report would be more of a personal acclaim of my own achievements. Rather, would I merely list the few topics which were somewhat out of the ordinary routine of visiting the Units under our charge which all our Chaplains do regularly, visiting the sick, personal interviews, sports officers, educational officers, entertainment assistants, etc.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 17 February 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

⁴⁵ In popular culture, this dual role was exemplified in the post-war play, *Tit-Coq* in which a Padre counsels the protagonist, for example, in his relations with his family, his drinking habits, and his religion. Gratien Gélinas, *Tit-Coq: pièce en trois actes* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1950).

⁴⁶ "1st Canadian Division Senior Chaplain's Report, 1 January 1942," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), Appendix 2, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

All of these duties, by early 1942, had become “routine” for Canadian chaplains. In this short explanation, 1st Division’s Senior Chaplain succinctly elucidated the vastly expanded role of the chaplain into that more generally of “Morale Officer”. Padres, for instance, often took parties of men to see the historic sites of Britain and even provided lectures on the significance of each stop.

Much appreciation is [expressed] for the organized parties... for visits to places of interest. The efforts of Padres, to arrange entertainments, are also praised. A visit to Chichester, arranged by a Padre, who took a party of 20 men and explained the history of the Cathedral to them, gave much pleasure. Outings to Windsor Castle in parties of ten, also appreciated... Such outings are very much appreciated, and are described as a very welcome change from army life, besides being instructive.⁴⁷

The chaplain often facilitated this task by establishing close relationships with the men.

When chaplains first began trying to establish such relationships, and the army administration more generally, they were often forced to choose between the way things had been done in Canada – and what their Canadian parishioners would think – as against the realities of military life overseas. These tensions affected the way they forged their relationships and provided service for the men. One chaplain, serving as Mess Secretary, commented that at first, “I always found it embarrassing to be asked to purchase the whiskey and wines for the Mess...As a minister of the Church I have had to learn a lot of new tricks and do things which I fear our good church people in Canada might frown upon.”⁴⁸ This padre added that most COs did not obstruct their work and were “a credit to the Christian Church in Canada.”⁴⁹ However, the chaplain quickly learned that compromise would be essential in forging relationships with the men, finding that they also needed to

⁴⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20 October – 3 November 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/9.

⁴⁸ H/Major J.G. Jones, “Report: Early Days in the Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas (P), 23 April 1943” DHH, File 113.7 (D1): Notes and Documents on Canadian Chaplain Services – 1939-45,” 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5. He does not generalize in his comments, making specific reference to the Canadian church.

immerse themselves in the soldiers' lives. One commented, "...we enter the service from Civie Street, rather green and shy and uninitiated, and the truth of the matter is that these lads in the ranks...are just as shy and reticent. It is only after we have overcome these difficulties that we can go boldly out and among the men with personal religion..."⁵⁰

Clearly the chaplains and the many men they served had one thing in common, neither were very used to military life or life in England and both would have to learn a great deal along the way.

Using their connections and access to their Canadian congregations, chaplains maintained close ties between the soldiers and the home community. This was facilitated by the chaplains' deep concern for the spiritual and emotional health of the soldiers' loved ones in Canada as well. In conducting themselves, padres also wanted to be "...a credit to the Christian Church in Canada," rather than simply the "Christian Church".⁵¹ One Senior Chaplain summed up this desire, stating, "I shall try to fill [this exalted position] with loyalty to you [the Principal Chaplain Overseas] and honour to myself and the Church I represent."⁵² Padres did not want to disappoint their home congregations either. Chaplains would, for example, send news back home that told of the soldiers' good conduct, which calmed frayed nerves in Canada and usually tended to smooth issues between the men and their families. In May 1943, the Principal Chaplain (Overseas), explained how padres attempted to buoy morale at home by forging more harmonious ties between the soldier and his family.

⁵⁰ H/Major R. McCleary, "Letters of a Padre," *Onward: A Weekly Illustrated Paper for Young People and Adults* (7 January 1945), 10.

⁵¹ H/Major J.G. Jones, "Report: Early Days in the Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas (P), 23 April 1943" DHH, File 113.7 (D1): Notes and Documents on Canadian Chaplain Services – 1939-45," 4.

⁵² H/Maj. J. Logan-Vencta, "Monthly Report, Senior Chaplain (P), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division," 2 July 1943, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10834, File 222C1.99 (D32).

[Father] Lesage [enclosed] a letter from a British Army Tommy expressing how the example of Cdn. Soldiers going to Mass and Sacraments was a source of edification to him and others of the British Army. Letter sent to [Principal Chaplain] with suggestion that it be forwarded to Canada for publication as a consolation to relatives of Cdn. Soldiers. Undoubtedly even the civilians around Farnborough and Aldershot are amazed at the living faith of Cdn. Catholics.⁵³

Here the Senior Chaplain references the sometimes close spiritual relationship between the soldier and his home country, suggesting that the troops are representative of *all* Canadian Catholics, civilian and soldier alike. The church hierarchy in Canada also “strongly” felt that chaplains must “continue a relationship with his congregation.”⁵⁴ In the deaths of soldiers too, padres maintained links with Canadian relatives, proving their commitment to both the men overseas and their families in Canada. Of the comparatively few deaths suffered in England from 1939 to 1943, the 5th Canadian (Armoured) Division’s Senior Padre commented, “Photographs of each grave (after the cross has been erected) have been sent to the next-of-kin in Canada. This service has been deeply appreciated.”⁵⁵ This practice allowed Canadian families to participate more meaningfully in the grieving process. Photographs of every soldier’s grave were also kept on file with each division’s Senior Chaplain. The padre had an important role in linking the soldier’s experience in England with his life in Canada and that of his family with the soldier overseas.

It remains to examine some of the details of the padre’s work overseas, which had a strong bearing on soldier morale, the maintenance of which was made easier by the padre’s

⁵³ “War Diary of the Senior Chaplain, CRU,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 May 1943, Appendix 9, LAC. RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

⁵⁴ “Relationships of Chaplains to Congregations,” *United Church Observer* (15 February 1940), 1. The church added, however, that the impression must be avoided that chaplains held two full-time jobs and so were encouraged to indicate their nominal relationship with the congregation as being “On leave of absence for the duration of the war.”

⁵⁵ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – June 1942,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 May 1942, Appendix 7, LAC. RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 6.

connections with Canada. The problem of morale immediately took hold upon the 1st Canadian Infantry Division's arrival in England and their quartering in "inadequate" billets at Aldershot. H/Major W.J. Gilling added his voice to the condemnation of general conditions in the Canadians' first station.

Our stay in Aldershot was not happy, the men were not used to English money and felt often that they had been cheated. The civil population of Aldershot has seen soldiers of one kind or another ever since the town has been an Army centre, it was nothing new to them that hundreds of Canadians suddenly appeared in their midst, and it was a bit of a shock to the Canadians to see the casual way in which they were accepted by the Aldershot people. The men hated the place...⁵⁶

As explained in Chapter 3, Directorate of Auxiliary Services Supervisors were barely in a position to effect much good at this stage, and so many chaplains took up the challenge themselves. However, the CCS itself was hamstrung by inadequate organization at CMHQ and at HQ 1st Canadian Infantry Division. H/Captain M.C. O'Neill (a future APC) wrote, "The chaplains outside of their religious duties were not certain what they were wanted to do...The OC's on their part did not know either...It was soon apparent that there was much to be done."⁵⁷ Chaplains had virtually no equipment or facilities at their sole disposal, even often having to arrange their own transport. Dedicated facilities and a proper establishment were finally arranged – albeit in rudimentary form – in the summer of 1940, a step which should have come long before.⁵⁸

From the start, one of the service's most basic religious tasks was the provision of bibles to every soldier who wanted one. Ten thousand copies were sent overseas and

⁵⁶ H/Major W.J. Gilling, "History Up To 1940" (no date); DHH, File Number 113.7 (D1): Notes and Documents on Canadian Chaplain Services – 1939-45," 1.

⁵⁷ H/Capt. M.C. O'Neill, "Report: Canadian Chaplain Service (RC), [no date]," DHH, File Number 113.7 (D1): Notes and Documents on Canadian Chaplain Services – 1939-45," 1.

⁵⁸ "Major-General H.F.H. Hertzberg to the Senior Officer, CMHQ," 5 July 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 43, File: CCS(P) Instruction/Training.

distributed to the men of 1st Canadian Infantry Division in April 1940.⁵⁹ In mid 1941, 1st Division's Senior Chaplain reported that owing to the large number of troops and units added to the division since its arrival, "our Chaplains are once more canvassing their detachments for the purpose of giving every soldier a copy of the scriptures."⁶⁰ Still, for many troops, the scriptures were less important than the ideas for which they fought, or even the hockey sticks with which they played. A paper by one of the District Chaplains prepared for a chaplains' conference of 14 and 15 January 1942 reported that very few soldiers were interested in the niceties of theology or in the differences between one branch of the church and another, "but they are impressed with the fact that freedom of religious views is an integral part of the larger freedom for which they fight."⁶¹ He added that, "the interest of the soldier in religion can be seen in the close attention that is given at services conducted by the chaplains and in the large attendance at voluntary services as well as at Church Parades."⁶² At the same conference, H/ Major Kidd explained that, "I believe the men are more approachable in regard to the things of religion than they were in the last war... the enlisted man of today knows definitely what he wants. When he is being entertained he wants good entertainment, and in religion he demands reality."⁶³ The soldier's knowledge of the place of religion in his life and his prizing the freedom to practice his religion was certainly a mindset he brought with him from Canada, a belief reinforced by the citizenship training they received in England.

⁵⁹ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), 17 April 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634.

⁶⁰ "Monthly Report (May)," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), May 1941, Appendix J, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁶¹ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), 14 and 15 January 1942, LAC, RG24, Volume 15634. The idea that soldiers were fighting for a greater Canadian cultural ideal reflects much of the "citizenship education" soldiers received in booklets such as *Battle of the Brains*. Please see chapter 4.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (P), January 1940, Appendix 1, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15634.

French-Canadian troops were generally considered to be more religious, a belief partially borne out by the appointment of a separate Roman Catholic Chaplaincy.⁶⁴ At the same time, church leaders felt that appeals to their Canadianism would help alleviate morale issues. The war diaries, memoranda, and correspondence of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC) inevitably contain more references to French-Canadian troops, who were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. While the English version of a sermon given by the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Archbishop Hinsley, hinted at the Canadian identity of the troops, his French version did so quite blatantly. The French speech focused more on the “purely Canadian” identity of the French-Canadian soldier. One finds more numerous references such as, “Mes chers amis canadiens!” and “Mes enfants canadiens!” He even suggests that while awaiting action, and while in battle, the men should take comfort in the fact that they are adherents of the *Canadian* Catholic Church.

Vous êtes venu de si loin servir une bien noble cause, vous avez laissé au pays tant de personnes qui vous sont chères: vos mères, vos femmes, vos enfants – maintenant et pendant toute votre vie militaire soyez dignes de la souche dont vous êtes sortis, soyez dignes du grand Canada catholique.⁶⁵

The focus on Canada is perhaps more natural when speaking to French-Canadian troops, especially considering popular anti-imperialist arguments, still current in the late 1930s, that highlighted French-Canadian attachment to Canada and not to Britain and Empire.⁶⁶

The above sermon could not have failed to impress upon the audience the pointed differentiation between Catholic troops and French-Canadian Catholic troops.

⁶⁴ For statistical information and a brief narrative of the establishment of the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy, please see “Historical Matters – General – Chaplain Corps,” DHH 76/109, which contains a number of relevant documents.

⁶⁵ “Address of His Eminence, Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, to the soldiers of 3 Cdn Div. St. Michael’s Garrison Church, Aldershot, Sunday, August 31, 1941, French,” War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 August 1941, Appendix 2, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

⁶⁶ See, for example: Casey Murrow, *Henri Bourassa and French-Canadian Nationalism Opposition to Empire* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1968).

It is evident, though not often remarked upon, that the troops brought with them an understanding of the bi-cultural reality of Canada. Roman Catholic chaplains had more cause to consider French-Canadian troops owing to the likelihood of their adherence to that religion; as such, the bi-cultural Canadian reality more directly affected French-Canadian troops. In areas where French-Canadian units were stationed alongside their English-speaking brethren, Roman Catholic chaplains held services in each language on the same topic or occasion.⁶⁷ Still, more than soldiers from other English-speaking countries, English Canadians overseas were exposed to the bi-cultural nature of Canada by exposure – even passing – to things such as French-language sermons and services. As time passed, approval was given in some units to routinely hold separate French- and English-language Sunday Church Parades.⁶⁸ Sermons and hymns, which of course were religious primarily, would frequently allude to Canada through the mention of loved ones, church congregations, the national landscape, or the national character itself. French-language hymns often focussed on Canadian themes, whereas those English frequently highlighted the philosophical and religious rationale behind the war. Still, many English-language hymns included such Canadian themes, too, and time was reserved at every sermon for the singing of *O Canada*. Hymns were also broadcast throughout camp locations for all Canadian troops to hear. One such hymn, *Notre Dame du Canada*, was broadcast in the Bordon camp area; its opening verse and the chorus set a Canadian tone:

Regarde avec amour sur les bords du grand fleuve
Un peuple jeune encore qui grandit frémissant.
Tu l'as plus d'une fois consolé dans l'épreuve,

⁶⁷ Evidence of this trend can be found in numerous places throughout the War Diaries of the Roman Catholic Chaplains. Specific instance can also be found in the War Diaries of the French-speaking regiments. For an example, please see "War Diary of the Senior Chaplain (CRU), 6 January 1942," War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (RC), LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

⁶⁸ See also: Ibid., 7 January 1942.

Ton bras fut sa défense, et ton bras est puissant.

Chorus:

Garde nous tes faveurs,
Veille sur la patrie,
Et sois du Canada
Notre Dame Ô Marie.⁶⁹

Chaplains addressed French-speaking troops somewhat differently than English-speaking ones in terms of their religion and their nationality, although this was largely a matter of degree. One finds ample references to the soldiers' patriotism in English-language sermons, too. In his sermon, Hinsley tried to link English-speaking Catholics to their fellow Canadians *and* to the intellectual and religious aspects of the war. He asked,

How is it that tens of thousands of Canada's men have freely left their homes and fatherland in order to join the British fighting forces? Is it love for England? Is it love for Europe? Or is it patriotic love for their country which is in danger? Or is it simply love of adventure? In speaking to you, true soldiers of the loyal land of Canada, I am convinced that these motives are not enough to account for your self-sacrifice and bravery... Patriotism is indeed a great virtue: it is a natural virtue which Christian charity has exalted to the supernatural order. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".⁷⁰

In closing, the Archbishop refers to the "men of Canada." Hinsley employed such linguistic devices throughout the speech in obvious recognition of the soldiers' strong attachment to Canada. While we cannot be certain of his intent, the archbishop avoids focusing on Britain or the Empire (or even using words such as "Dominion"), all of which are important semantic considerations contributing to a tone that at least downplayed attachment to Britain. While Hinsley focused on the Canadian identity of his audience in this sermon, he also referred to the need to combat evil in all its forms; abhorrence of Hitler and his

⁶⁹ "Programme of Radio Broadcast," *Notre Dame du Canada*, War Diary of the Principal Chaplain (Overseas) (RC), 1-28 February 1943, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629, 1.

⁷⁰ "Address of His Eminence, Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, to the soldiers of 3 Cdn Div. St. Michael's Garrison Church, Aldershot, Sunday, August 31, 1941," War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 August 1941, Appendix 1, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

methods were well-known motivations for the enlistment of many English-Canadian soldiers.

The Roman Catholic chaplain's daily routine differed from that of the Protestant chaplains in more than just linguistic considerations. One padre reported that "[RC] chaplains occupied much of the time...having the R.C. troops paraded to them individually to give them opportunity to receive the Sacraments."⁷¹ The practice of the Roman Catholic liturgy also reveals links to the Church in Canada in procedural and ritualistic matters. "On Dec 8 the feast of the Immaculate Conception [was held]... Capt. Gratton, the Chaplain, sent the act of consecration to the National Shrine of Notre Dame du Cap in Canada."⁷²

The daily experiences of the Catholic and Protestant chaplains differed to some degree, but they shared similar experiences in terms of how they travelled around Britain with their various accoutrements, and then found and ministered to the troops. Each of the Protestant Canadian padres carried with them a "Field Service Communion Set", the official "Order of Divine Service for the Canadian Army", and the Book of Common Prayer. These basic items of worship allowed the padre to perform religious services in the most far-flung military establishments and, later, on the field of battle. Catholic padres likewise transported the tools of their trade, often with great difficulty. Of great assistance to both was the availability of small organs that could fit into a truck, which meant that a more elaborate service could be held wherever a truck could reach. Services were wide-ranging and included spiritual counsel, visiting patients in hospital, arranging education programs and travel outings, arranging special teas, visiting prisoners (that is, Canadian

⁷¹ "R.C. Chaplain's Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 1-31 December 1942, Appendix A, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Vol. 15629.

⁷² Ibid.

soldiers who had committed a crime and were held in British or Canadian detention) and attending their trials at courts martial, giving talks to groups of men on the international situation, among other duties. Padres even assisted the new British brides of Canadian soldiers. A monthly report of May 1941 from 1st Canadian Infantry Division's Senior Chaplain reads, "Whenever necessary these women will be visited by our chaplains, occasionally parties will be arranged for them and their husbands, and from time to time they may be invited to listen to lectures on Canada."⁷³ The army and the chaplains were keen to educate Canada's newest soon-to-be citizens on the many aspects of their new homeland.

Padres were also called upon to assist families in more complicated situations, many of which drew upon their links with Canada. One such situation occurred when a padre from 1st Canadian Infantry Division visited a prisoner awaiting court martial in detention barracks in August 1941. The prisoner, who was married with a family in Canada, "has also a Common Law wife and baby here, who are now destitute. The chaplain arranged for the Common Law wife and baby to receive financial assistance."⁷⁴ This situation illustrates the complex matrimonial and "relationship" problems which increasingly came before the chaplains. These were frequently complicated by the padre's need to consider the soldier's family in Canada, which was affected by his concern for the well-being of his congregation at home.

In light of the chaplains' common remarks that the men in peacetime spent little time thinking of religion, the presence, availability, and popularity of religious services and

⁷³ "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), May 1941, Appendix J, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁷⁴ "War Diary of Senior Chaplain (P), First Canadian Infantry Division," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 7 August 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

activities overseas suggests that the men either needed such services, at best, on a spiritual level while in the army or perhaps attended such services as a distraction. Doubtless, the presence of a “captive audience” presented the chaplain with the opportunity to draw non-believers to the Church, a desire driven by church needs in Canada. Further, living in the shadow of death may also have contributed to the popularity of church services. The Senior Chaplain with 1st Canadian Infantry Division spoke for more than himself when he noted, “the nights are more difficult as planes laden with death pass over our heads. We know better than ever before what it means to commit our safety to the hands of the everlasting God.”⁷⁵

The popularity of church services is abundantly evident. Despite official restrictions on the gathering together of large groups of men while the possibility of enemy aerial action persisted, many routinely gathered together for religious services. Sometimes they were gathered together under large trees to hide their numbers and, in one place, “a whole battalion could be gathered together under two trees.”⁷⁶ More often, services were carried out among company- or platoon-sized groups. Also, in the more permanently located units, efforts were made to have rooms set apart in local buildings for Holy Communion, prayer and meditation.⁷⁷ On some occasions, local English parishes would donate time in their churches so that the Canadians could hold their services with a greater sense of permanence.

⁷⁵ “First Division C.A.S.F – Report of Senior Chaplain for September 1940,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), December 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁷⁶ Ibid., August 1940.

⁷⁷ “Monthly Report,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), August 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

In a report that reveals the greater extent to which chaplains had come to bolster soldier morale, the Senior Chaplain with 2nd Canadian Infantry Division reported to the APC (P) in March 1941,

Reports from individual chaplains are revealing. With the passing of time, increasing confidence is being placed in them. Soldiers are coming voluntarily, seeking:

- (a) a solution from the difficulties, domestic, moral and spiritual, and gratefully acknowledge the help and advice given them. This kind of service is neither visible nor spectacular, but it is enduring and necessary.
- (b) Chaplains have been with their units at all moves within the division.
- (c) Discussion Groups are meeting regularly each week under supervision of chaplains. We find many men searching for something other than the usual entertainments provided for troops...⁷⁸

The chaplains' service also recorded the number of troops engaging their services. A statistical report for the month of April 1941 reveals that 219 church parades were held in the Canadian Corps with a total attendance of 46,732, for an average of 213 men per parade.⁷⁹ Attendance at the sometimes-mandatory church parades often satisfied any feeling of obligation the men may have had to attend religious services and were held on Sunday morning. It was suggested that attendance at church parades would be improved if routine military duties were minimized on Sundays. The 2nd Division Senior Chaplain suggested that, "so long as [the] Division is on a 'passive' front, the morale of the men would not suffer but be helped by cutting to a minimum Routine Duties on Sundays."⁸⁰ Sixty-seven voluntary services were held during that April with 4,122 men attending for an average attendance of 61 attendees per service. Also in this month, padres visited 4,219

⁷⁸ "Second Division C.A.S.F., Report of Senior Chaplain, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division," March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁷⁹ Assuming Canadian military forces in Britain numbered 57,000, the number C.P. Stacey reported at the end of 1940, approximately 80% of Canadian troops in Britain attended church parades. See: C.P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary* (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1948), 27.

⁸⁰ "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), June 1941, Appendix F, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

patients in hospital (not counting the totals of hospital padres whose work was almost exclusively in this category) and held 2,944 “personal interviews”.⁸¹

The term “personal interview” was nebulous and chaplains spent countless hours at this task, which consumed most of their residual duties. The soldiers themselves often instigated these interviews, and were very frequently the result of the padre visiting the soldiers on their own terms. The padre typically had a hut or office where he was available for interviews with anyone wishing to see him privately. Soldiers requiring spiritual advice, moral encouragement, friendly counsel, or more generally advice on home life, morale, personal problems, their sense of homesickness and/or boredom would make their way to the padre’s office. In this task, the padre operated as an emotional and moral conduit between the soldier and his loved ones in Canada. A chaplain attached to 1st Canadian Infantry Division reported in July 1941, “The number of personal interviews continues to increase. There is frequently a line up, like a sick parade outside my door.”⁸² The same report further reveals the breadth of effort involved in just this one aspect of the chaplain’s work,

Several messages have been received recently from people in Canada expressing their thanks and appreciation for personal letters written to clear up misunderstandings, to seek solutions to financial and domestic problems, to give reports about sick or injured soldiers, and to comfort and sympathize with those who have been bereaved. Letter writing, when thoughtfully and sympathetically undertaken by our Chaplains, is a source of real help to our soldiers and their families at home.⁸³

⁸¹ “Report of the Chaplain Services for April, 1941,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), April 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁸² “Monthly Report,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), July 1941, Appendix F, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4. Considering that the number of padres grew roughly on a par with the size of the overall military force, this increase seems to indicate either greater anxiety among the troops, or a growing acceptance of padres as providers of “auxiliary” or morale services, or both.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 5.

Few other comments bear such testament to the emotional link chaplains created between Canada and the soldiers in England. This type of work was indispensable in an army operating so far from home. Interviews allowed the chaplain to gauge the morale of his men and to form general impressions of this aspect of their lives. One chaplain noted the importance of having soldiers from the same area of Canada serving together. He wrote, "In those units where the soldiers know each other well, or where they have come from the same district in Canada, a fine 'Esprit de Corps' has been built up on the basis of friendship and goodwill."⁸⁴ Reinforcing the important link between re-creating normative patterns of existence in Canada and high morale, the chaplain continued, "This (*Esprit de Corps*) is increased when the soldiers receive letters and parcels from their families and friends at home."⁸⁵ The Senior Chaplain (RC), 2nd Division, commented in his War Diary that recruitment in the same district in Canada can foster links with the homeland, and reported that "serving with men whose families know one another seems to have affected the soldiers' lives in one way or another."⁸⁶ The British field censor noted the trend of importing Canadian allegiances or rivalries when he pointed out that soldiers often harboured animosity for other groups of soldiers with whom they maintained rivalries in Canada. He mentioned, for example, that, "there is no love lost between men from Cape Breton district and those from other places in Canada."⁸⁷

Padres were also appointed "Comforts Officers," a position critical to the maintenance of morale. When serving in this capacity, they were responsible for receiving,

⁸⁴ "Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – March 1942," War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 March, 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "War Diary of Senior Chaplain, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division – November 1942," War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), November 1942, Appendix 4, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

⁸⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 3 – 18 May 1942, RG24 Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/6.

acknowledging, and distributing all comforts received from Canada including items such as cigarettes, mittens, sweaters, and socks. "On schemes the chaplains distribute various kinds of comforts, such as wash cloths, razor blades, chocolate and magazines."⁸⁸ Chaplains also facilitated good relations between soldiers and British civilians, which was recognized as being important for promoting the welfare of Canadian troops. In this regard, one chaplain described himself as the "Social Liaison Officer" of his unit.⁸⁹ Such contacts helped encourage people to invite troops into their homes for dinners and discussions, which undoubtedly reminded the soldier of some sense of domesticity. Such invitations were especially appreciated around Christmas.

Fortunately, the adoption of this role tended to make the padre a more popular officer, for not only was he ministering to the soldiers' spiritual welfare, but he also provided all those other things that made army life bearable. All kinds of comforts and recreations were administered in an ultimate endeavour to make the soldier comfortable and happy. "... (A)ssistance was given to sports and entertainment for the troops, and every encouragement given to all projects for the good morale of the soldiers."⁹⁰ Soldiers recognized the padre's auxiliary role and some prized it over his spiritual one. A soldier of the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, RCASC commented, "He is a good old boy our chaplain, good for a smoke or two."⁹¹ Not all padres, however, were seen in a positive light, "The point that makes the C. of E. boys the most sore is the fact that our Church has to be judged by a weak-kneed selfish jelly-fish. There is not one of them that one could go

⁸⁸ "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), December 1941, Appendix 8, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ War Diary of the Office of the Principal Chaplain (RC), 9 February 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

⁹¹ Field Censor (Home) Report, 22 December 1941 – 4 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

to and expect help and understanding.”⁹² Despite his anger, this soldier’s comment suggests that the padre was known as one officer to whom a soldier *should* take his problems. As the war progressed, and more men spent time training away from home, the importance of the CCS and of the individual chaplains grew.

According to chaplain reports, the value of letters, parcels, and simple contacts with loved ones in Canada was indisputable. One chaplain remarked that if the army did not set about coordinating the soldiers’ personal problems in Canada, morale would surely decline. He commented,

Our chaplains feel that something should be done to expedite the solving of those problems where there is infidelity, moral delinquency, or marital distress of one kind or another. There are too many people attempting to set right those difficulties, and far too little coordination between the various agencies working on them. So long as the army is in England and so long as it fails to deal with these problems through a central agency there will be delays resulting in fretting and lowering of morale.⁹³

To combat such problems, many chaplains went so far as to recommend short furloughs back to Canada for “those soldiers who enlisted early in the war.”⁹⁴ The reason for such a request, which addressed the padre’s concern for the soldier *and* his family, was to “arrest the disintegration of family life in Canada, [as] there is a limit to how much the human spirit can endure. The fidelity of many men and women, which had stood the test of more

⁹² Such anger was not representative of most men’s impressions. This padre likely had a number of non-religious duties. Being stationed at a casualty clearing station, he would likely have to adopt the role of morale, comforts, and religious officer; sometime they even served as medics. Field Censor, Special Report, No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station, 16 January 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12318, File 4/Censor/4/4.

⁹³ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – March 1942,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 March 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 6. The various agencies included the Canadian Chaplain Service, the Directorate of Auxiliary Services, numerous other patriotic organizations in Canada, as well as new government agencies back home, including the growing rehabilitation regime in Canada. Children’s Aid Societies were also involved in trying to solve soldier problems related to the care of their children in Canada, but this agency frequently provided too little information on events going on in the soldier’s home.

⁹⁴ H/Major J.G. Jones, “Report of the Senior Chaplain (P), 1st Cdn Div for the Period Ending 19 April 43,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10834, File 29C1.99 (D33).

than three years separation, is showing signs of breaking.”⁹⁵ This padre unsuccessfully argued that such a scheme would be practicable since “only a relatively small proportion of those serving overseas would be directly involved at any time, whereas psychologically the whole army would benefit and the National interest be served.”⁹⁶ Another chaplain hints at the severity of family problems occasioned by the soldier’s separation from his family.

...insofar as the investigation of Domestic Problems by Children’s Aid Societies concerns men in the Canadian Army Overseas, and particularly when the investigation leads to action by the Society (such as assuming wardship of the soldier’s children), it is suggested that the soldier concerned be supplied with full details of the investigation and proposed action.⁹⁷

The Senior Chaplain (P), 1st Canadian Division, H/Major J. Gordon Jones, laid out the consequences of such activities in Canada, stating that, “this naturally causes an anxiety which is prone to reduce their efficiency as soldiers.”⁹⁸ Such cases demonstrate the lengths to which padres went to serve soldier morale and familial harmony.

In describing the chaplain’s almost mind-boggling array of duties, the Senior Chaplain, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, put it best,

Our experience is this, that in almost every instance Commanding Officers, Company Commanders, and Officers Commanding Sectors have sought from the Padres as many services as are humanly possible for one man to offer. For the most part, these have been Drum-Head services, while some have taken place in the local church.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – March 1942,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 March 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 6.

⁹⁸ H/Major J.G. Jones, “Report of the Senior Chaplain (P), 1st Cdn Div for the Period Ending 19 April 43,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10834, File 29C1.99 (D33).

⁹⁹ Ibid. Drum-head services are a tradition whereby soldiers in the field, without access to chapels or churches on Sunday, would lay out their drums, consecrate them by laying their standards on them, and use them as an altar.

The following table further demonstrates the types of service that padres offered as part of their official duties over a three-month period in 1941, and the frequency of their use:¹⁰⁰

	Corps Troops			First Division			Second Division			Canadian Base Units		
	May	June	July	May	June	July	May	June	July	May	June	July
Church Parades	60	63	52	102	74	109	35	33	101	44	47	69
Attendance	9392	11057	11893	18615	12877	15732	15569	13149	8414	17135	19982	19835
Voluntary Services	12	1	10	22	19	6	8	2	59	76	63	76
Attendance	959	61	1208	655	941	542	332	1030	2184	370	720	812
Communion Services	7	6	11	29	18	34	19	25	47	27	29	30
Attendance	107	112	176	317	209	374	216	357	417	166	223	429
Marriages (by Chaplains)	3	7	2	4	11	4	7	0	0	1	1	2
Funerals	5	6	1	6	0	2	2	4	4	2	2	2
Church Membership	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Patients Visited	359	1009	659	664	607	494	1871	2289	1480	496	981	927
Personal Interviews	325	734	463	507	728	630	1439	2074	1792	232	670	556

Naturally, attendance at voluntary church parades was consistently lower than at mandatory ones. The number of personal interviews, which outstripped attendance at voluntary parades is striking. In some cases the number of interviews amounted to 21% of attendance at mandatory parades and, considering that personal interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis whereas parades included any number of soldiers, the importance of interviews for maintaining morale (which as mentioned the soldier usually initiated) seems clear. These “routine” duties were supplemented by sometimes more than a dozen hours of extra work per week in other “welfare” duties securing recreation for the troops, providing for their education, etc.

It was often impossible for a chaplain to minister to his men in the same way as back at training camp in Canada. Chaplains, like Auxiliary Service Supervisors, had to become masters of improvisation. The experience of H/Captain G.D. Johnston, chaplain

¹⁰⁰ Information drawn from: “Monthly Report,” War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), July 1941, Appendix F, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

attached to the Artillery Headquarters, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, is instructive. On Christmas Day 1940, Johnston was stationed with the 1st Field Regiment on coast guard in the south of England. As was usual for this type of posting, the men were quartered in scattered villages some well back from the coast and were manning their positions on the coastal hills overlooking the beaches around the clock. Johnston outlined his duties that day,

Owing to the wide distribution of the men over a twenty mile front any attempt at a regimental parade was obviously impossible so I decided to arrange for the men who were off duty to attend the local parish churches while I went around the gun positions and the observation posts myself...[one of these] was opposite the Jolly Fisherman pub... towards the beach. There I saw a strong post made of concrete, pushing my way in I asked to the darkness if there were any men there and was immediately greeted with a Merry Christmas padre. Here in this little dog house hardly big enough for a man to stand in were three good lads... We set up my chalice and cloth on an artillery board and by the light of two smoky candles renewed our vows unto the Lord.¹⁰¹

The sight of a friendly face in the cold and dark must have brought much assuagement to the men in their positions, far from their families on Christmas Day. The CCS's senior leadership, too, spent time with the most far-flung Canadian troops, as when the Protestant and Roman Catholic APCs made a joint trip to Scotland to inspect the troops of the Canadian Forestry Corps in early December 1941.

Another aspect of the padre's work in England was necessarily spent participating in the various training exercises and schemes. The padre, too, would train for his future role on the battlefield. In such schemes, padres would, for example, "plan and carry out their work, in ministering to casualties in R.A.P.'s [Regimental Aid Posts], W.W.C.P.'s [Walking Wounded Collection Posts], A.D.S.'s [Advanced Dressing Stations] and

¹⁰¹ "Extracts from the Diary of H/Capt G.D. Johnston," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), May 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

M.D.S.'s [Main Dressing Stations]."¹⁰² In the largely logistical Exercise "BUMPER", held from 29 September – 3 October 1941, some valuable lessons about man management were reinforced, such as, "the importance of building up our work on the basis of personal relationship rather than dependence on Sunday parades."¹⁰³ Also, in terms of their military training, all chaplains received the Course for Officers, conducted by C.M.H.Q. for officers recently arrived from Canada. All underwent a complete course including military education, map reading, anti-gas, weapons training, motorcycling, and First Aid. Because of this training, the troops could also see the chaplain as a military figure, which enhanced his standing. Here, too, the chaplain was endeared to the soldiers precisely because he exerted his authority so infrequently.

Marriage and its related issues posed numerous moral conundrums. Padres spent much time counseling men to stay loyal to their wives and families back home. This was an especially troublesome problem for men who had only recently married prior to embarking for England. The Senior Chaplain, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division commented, "Whenever and wherever our Chaplains have opportunity the matter is discussed with the men and emphasis laid on the moral obligation that marriage or the promise to marry has imposed on both parties. We believe there is such a thing as honour."¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, tens of thousands of marriages were initiated in England.¹⁰⁵ Many Catholic padres hoped that when marrying Catholic troops, non-Catholic Englishwomen would be converted. Likewise, they

¹⁰² "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), August 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

¹⁰³ "HQ 1st Canadian Division Report," War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 4 October 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹⁰⁴ Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – July 1942," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-30 June 1942, Appendix 7, LAC. RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

¹⁰⁵ A good survey of the war bride experience, from meeting their husbands to traveling to and settling down in Canada, is: Joyce Hibbert, ed., *The War Brides* (Toronto: PMA Books, 1978).

were more likely to approve a marriage if the soldier was bound to conversion into Catholicism because of his bride's religion. H/Major J.G. Côté, on giving his approval to such a marriage, noted "The bridegroom was a convert received into the Church on 23 December 1941."¹⁰⁶ In applying the marriage policy, chaplains sometimes also served as agents of army policy. In their monthly reports, Senior Chaplains repeatedly expressed their concern over the possibility of Canadian men marrying English women. While their individual concern was based on religious and moral grounds, it nicely dovetailed with army policy, which dissuaded such unions, partly on national grounds.¹⁰⁷ The Army Routine Order on marriage specifically noted that it was desirable for Canadian soldiers not to marry women from "foreign lands," stipulating that both parties should be "domiciled in Canada."¹⁰⁸ During the month of October 1941 in the Canadian Base Units alone, "12 of the [Roman Catholic] personnel were dissuaded by chaplains from marriages that seemed most ill advised."¹⁰⁹ That twelve Roman Catholic soldiers in just the Canadian Base Units in only one month were *dissuaded* from marriage suggests that the issue of local marriage was pervasive. The number of war brides that came back to Canada at war's end is a testament to that fact.¹¹⁰ In recognition of Routine Order No. 788 and the chaplain's experiences in this field, Major-General Pearkes, then commanding 1st Canadian Infantry

¹⁰⁶ "Report of H/Major J.G. Côté," War Diary of the Senior Chaplain (RC), 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, CMHQ, 15 January 1942, LAC, RG24, Vol. 15629.

¹⁰⁷ Joyce Hibbert cites Canadian Army Routine Order No. 788, "Permission to Marry." The Routine Order reads, in part, "The general policy is to dissuade members of the Cdn Army from marriage in foreign lands." The Order continues, "COs, with the help of the Chaplain, [must] protect [soldiers] from improvidence and impetuosity." See: Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Hibbert, *The War Brides*, 17.

¹⁰⁹ "Senior Chaplain (RC) Canadian Base Units War Diary," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 32 October 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹¹⁰ Some 44,886 women were known to have married Canadian soldiers in Britain to 31 December 1946. See: History - Directorate of Repatriation, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 6545, Part 1, File: HQ-650-124-33, 34.

Division, asked for the chaplains' cooperation in "the control of marriage of the Canadian Soldiers (Overseas), to aid the soldier in using judgment and discretion."¹¹¹

It is worthy noting, too, that these men were separated from the normal influences in their lives, such as parental support, which might have convinced them not to embark on such unions. Padres were sometimes asked to act as surrogate parents to young men in need of advice. One mother, in a letter expressing concern that her son, a sapper in 2nd Canadian Infantry Division's 7th Field Company, RCE, was planning to marry an English bride, pleaded,

That her son is a naïve and guileless sort of chap, had perhaps been easily influenced by the beguiling matrimonial intent of some wily female. She thinks that her boy's response to such advances should be rigidly sifted before he is allowed by his C.O. to go ahead with plans for marriage. She does not object to her son being married, but is solicitous that he marry properly.¹¹²

This quote highlights how many of these soldiers were still very young. The Roman Catholic chaplain duly interviewed the soldier and concluded that, "without going back to the Victorian age," the soldiers in England were badly deprived of parental advice. In this case, the chaplain agreed to the union after meeting the bride and her family. Ensuring that they conducted themselves in accordance with contemporaneous social norms was a difficult and complex task in the face of army, government, and family pressures which were often placed squarely on the hard-pressed Senior Chaplain.

Such work was essential to maintaining morale and so it is not altogether surprising that chaplains lent copious assistance to the Auxiliary Services Supervisors. In so doing they also reflected Canadian values by facilitating sporting and educational traditions as

¹¹¹ War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 17 February 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹¹² Report of Senior Chaplain, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), September 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

described in previous chapters. The chaplain, owing to his position, knew as much as anyone about the needs of the men as far as morale was concerned. APC (P) Flemington noted in July 1941,

The biggest problem all those interested in the welfare of the troops have to contend with is a certain mental weariness and war listlessness which is bound to be in evidence where troops have a prolonged period of waiting – C.O.s of formations, Auxiliary Services and Chaplains are combining to do everything possible to counteract this by a variety of training, occupational selection, educational facilities, organized sports, concerts, sing-songs, hospitality in English homes, religious activities, etc.¹¹³

The evolution of this “auxiliary” role can be briefly summarized in relation to sports. Policy dictated that it was a good thing for the chaplain to take an interest in the sports program as long as he understood that this was not his main task. But by late 1941, some chaplains had “taken a leading place in promoting the sports programme.”¹¹⁴ Some became “Senior Sports Officers” in their units, organizing hockey and softball matches. The 1st Canadian Infantry Division’s Senior Chaplain functioned as manager of the division’s HQ hockey team, which took part in playoff matches against the Saskatchewan Light Infantry on 22 December 1941 and then again on 29 December against the divisional HQ medics.¹¹⁵ But the chaplains’ role in promoting recreation and in filling the troops’ leisure time did not stop at sports.

The CCS recognized that it was the responsibility of the Auxiliary Services to provide educational courses for the men, but encouraged overseas chaplains to assist this work in any way possible, such as by working as registrars. In the August 1940 chaplain’s

¹¹³ “Monthly Report,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), July 1941, Appendix F, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

¹¹⁴ “Monthly Report,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), December 1941, Appendix 8, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

¹¹⁵ War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 22 and 29 December 1941, Appendix 2, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

report submitted to the Assistant Principal Chaplain, Protestant, 1st Canadian Infantry Division's Senior Chaplain reported,

It now looks as if Canadians would spend another Winter in England and the menace of boredom is looming up. In this situation the Chaplain can be of great service and that is being acknowledged on every hand. I have tried to impress upon Major Humphrey, the new head of the Auxiliary Services the need for educational and recreational advances and I am sure he is quite aware of the situation and the need.¹¹⁶

His September report echoes this desire: "While this is primarily the task of the Auxiliary Services, all Chaplains are doing everything possible to assist and forward such work... Major Humphrey... may count on the complete cooperation of the Chaplains."¹¹⁷ While they understood the challenges facing Supervisors, individual chaplains were not above reproaching the Auxiliary Services if they saw service falling short. In March 1941, one chaplain complained that educational courses are not being provided as necessary, commenting "The difficulty that prevents education as such from functioning is the division of authority which is partly military, partly civilian and partly Legion."¹¹⁸ In the absence of dedicated education officers in the early years, the CCS reported, "You will be interested in knowing that a number of our Chaplains are also Education Officers." This correspondent goes on to outline one specific case and concludes hopefully, "...I understand from Corps that this is only a temporary appointment pending the arrival of the civilian E.O."¹¹⁹ Padres were also instrumental in advocating for and preparing OCTU

¹¹⁶ "First Division C.A.S.F, Report of Senior Chaplain for August 1940," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), August 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹¹⁷ "First Division C.A.S.F, Report of Senior Chaplain for September 1940," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), September 1940, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹¹⁸ "Report of the Senior Chaplain (P), 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, March 1941," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹¹⁹ Report of the Chaplain Services (P) for April, 1941," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), April 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

candidates for their exams.¹²⁰ Many padres, normally being highly literate, also delivered lectures and courses.

For their part, the lay education advisers were evidently thankful for the service discharged in this regard: "Without exception the Chaplains have accepted the onerous duties of Education Officers.... educational activities could not have been carried on without their assistance."¹²¹ The Roman Catholic A.P.C. reported in March 1941 that his chaplains, "in most cases are Educational Officers for the Units to which they are attached."¹²² The Protestant Deputy Assistant Principal Chaplain reported,

In both the Social and Educational field, our chaplains have been giving splendid assistance. Indeed in the case of the latter, we feel that it would be impossible for the work of education to be carried on without the help of the chaplains, and extreme care must be taken not to burden any chaplain unduly with the whole responsibility for this work.¹²³

At a more basic level, some chaplains held simple reading and writing classes to help instruct members of their units who were "quite illiterate".¹²⁴ Chaplains also sponsored efforts to educate the men about the English districts in which they were living; these were reportedly popular since chaplains delivered eleven such lectures in 1st Canadian Infantry Division in the month of December 1941.¹²⁵ Some Canadian chaplains took it upon themselves to educate the locals about Canada. One chaplain addressed a British Army

¹²⁰ "Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – August 1942," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-31 August 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15633, 5.

¹²¹ "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), July 1941, Appendix F, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

¹²² War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 31 March 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹²³ "Report of Chaplain Service for April, 1941," File: 47P/CMHQ/1, War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), April 1941, Appendix B, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹²⁴ "Monthly Report," War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), August 1941, Appendix H, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

¹²⁵ "Monthly Report," War Diary of Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), December 1941, Appendix 8, LAC, RG24, Volume 15632.

Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA) conference on the general subject "Canada".¹²⁶ Another chaplain donated a prize to the pupil at Christ's Hospital who wrote the best essay on Canada. His report adds, "Amongst the howlers in these essays were: 'One of the largest rivers is Lake Superior'; 'Before we visit Ottawa, the Capital, we will go over Niagara Falls'; 'Saskatchewan is the state which is reserved for Indians.'"¹²⁷ The chaplains had their work cut out for them in audiences young and old.

At the men's request, chaplains formed discussion groups where social, political, educational, and religious problems were debated.¹²⁸ These were often conducted in lieu of the same kinds of discussion groups that the Army Education directorate encouraged junior officers to run among their troops. If secular groups were not running, padres often stepped in to set them up on their own authority. For example, two chaplains endeavoured to cooperate with the Y.M.C.A. and Salvation Army to create informal religious gatherings when they learned that soldiers had little to do on Sunday evenings. H/Major W.G. Maclean, Senior Chaplain, 2nd Division, explained "I have been assisting with a Sunday evening programme...[consisting] of community singing of good songs [and closing] with the singing of standard hymns...The YMCA provides tea and biscuits."¹²⁹ Maclean's partner in the endeavour, H/Major T.H. Stewart, Senior Chaplain, Canadian Reinforcement Units, later added, "Through the courtesy of the Salvation Army a religious film and a very

¹²⁶ "Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – March 1942," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), March 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ "Senior Chaplain (P) 1st Canadian Infantry Division," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 20 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹²⁹ "Report: Senior Chaplain (P), 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, September 1941," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, File 47/Monthly Reports/1, 5.

good educational film was provided. We had a very enjoyable sing-song...and a prayer for the week.”¹³⁰

The soldiers liked these meetings to such a degree that they began to ask for more of them. “In one case, a Chaplain reports that the men have asked for a voluntary Sunday Evening Service where they have an opportunity of singing the old-time hymns.”¹³¹ “Old-time hymns” were important because the morale among religious-minded attendees was boosted by evocations of memories of Sunday School and childhood, and the churches and families back home. One padre commented, “The boys select their own hymns, the ones they used to sing in church long ago.”¹³² After one such service a number of words of appreciation were heard including from one soldier who said, “This reminds me of home.”¹³³ Another expressed his gratitude, adding, “I came in looking for a speak-easy and see what I found... One glowing heart sets another on fire.”¹³⁴

Other chaplains used such meetings to read news from Canada.¹³⁵ Eventually these informal gatherings were formalized as “Padre’s Hour” and it was decided that an hour would be taken from “Educational Work” and devoted to this “to teach ethics and morality.”¹³⁶ Other general interest topics, including Canadian affairs, were discussed here too. The army also provided special speakers for the chaplains, to better equip them to lift

¹³⁰ “Report: Senior Chaplain (P), Canadian Reinforcement Units, 1 February 1942,” LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, File 47/Monthly Reports/1.

¹³¹ H/Lt.-Col. W.T.R. Flemington, “Report: Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), April 1941,” LAC, RG24, Volume 15632, File 47/Monthly Reports/1, 5.

¹³² “Extract from a Padre’s Letter,” *The United Church Observer* (15 January 1944), 15.

¹³³ A.J. Brace, “The YMCA Gets There,” *The United Church Observer* (1 March 1945), 15.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ H/Major N. Coll, “Report: Deputy Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), February 1942”; “The Formations – Corps Troops,” LAC, RG24, Volume 15632, File 47/Monthly Reports/1, 4.

¹³⁶ H/Major J.C. Keohan, War Diary of the Senior Chaplain (RC), Canadian Reinforcement Units, Vol. I, 31 January 1943, LAC, RG24, Volume 15629.

soldier morale during these lecture hours, and even during their every-day interactions. A Chaplain Service report stated,

Dr. Blatz – a psychologist sent by the authorities from Canada – spoke to all the chaplains upon the psychological stability of men removed from a peaceful background of home 3000 miles away, and subjected to a discipline determined by the immediate threat of total war. It is our opinion that this type of talk to officers should be frequently repeated.¹³⁷

This report highlights the basic human problem related to Canadian soldiers in Britain: their separation from Canada, the loss of their old home lives to be replaced by army discipline, and all under the threat of death. The Padre's Hour was also believed to be an invaluable way for padres to build relationships with the men. This was best facilitated through the innumerable personal interviews. In these examples we can see that the chaplains often played a leading role in implementing those services already identified as contributing to a sense of Canadian identity – namely education, informal lectures, and sports – in the United Kingdom.

The chaplain's efforts to bolster the effectiveness of auxiliary services were facilitated by their often sharing administrative space with Auxiliary Services personnel or various unit music directors.¹³⁸ Such cooperation facilitated the padres' welfare work. For example, access to Auxiliary Services Supervisors helped those chaplains who served as librarians, usually at static postings, such as hospitals or training depots.¹³⁹ Most library books were purchased out of regimental funds, others were donated, while others were provided by the Legion Travelling Library, which was acknowledged as a great help to

¹³⁷ "Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – February 1942," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), February 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 6.

¹³⁸ "Report: Canadian Base Units Senior Chaplain (RC)," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 16 October 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹³⁹ "Monthly Report," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), June 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

many men in the Canadian Army. Many such books were collected through private and corporate donation in Canada.¹⁴⁰

Chaplains also organized shows on occasion using men from their own ranks. When the BBC, the Broadcasting Liaison Officer at CMHQ, and an Auxiliary Services administrator wished to put on a “Gaelic Show” to broadcast to the people of Scotland, the chaplains’ service largely organized the event and provided some of the talent. The show, according to the Senior Chaplain (RC), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, was partly intended to showcase the Gaelic traditions of eastern Canada.¹⁴¹ Evidently this was a stressful time as the Senior Chaplain, Father McGillivray, reported, “that I did not seek solace in drink is guarantee that I never shall no matter how aggravating the circumstances.” In the end they managed to cobble together a cast of 32 despite “all turmoil and stinking prospects,” and in a tone common to the time the chaplain reported that they, “worked like niggers all P.M.... Went on air (from) 0730-0800 hours over B.B.C. Tremendous success.”¹⁴² The Senior Chaplain and some of his staff subsequently collapsed and slept under the dressing room tables.

Chaplains were better able to assist in the organization of such shows and events largely because their tireless and personal ministration gave them a deeper understanding of the men in their units. Many chaplains had been with the men they served from the beginning, most accompanied units into the field on training exercises, and many of the men spoke privately with their chaplain both officially and on a casual basis. The chaplain’s depth of knowledge regarding his unit was, in a holistic sense, unmatched:

¹⁴⁰ “Memorandum - Aux Serv Supervisors (2 Div), 17 June 1942,” Organization and Administration, 2nd Canadian Division, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12469, File: 6/2 DIV/1.

¹⁴¹ “Report: Senior Chaplain (RC) 3rd Canadian Infantry Division,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 27-28 October 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹⁴² Ibid.

unlike the regular officer, the chaplain knew the men both in a military sense and also in a more personal and individual one. His camaraderie with the men exceeded that even of most Auxiliary Services Supervisors who, while usually friendly with the men, were not expected to share the same level of danger as were padres, which earned the latter a great deal of currency with the front line soldier. Many soldiers in England were reminded of the risks the padre runs in battle, and the near-unbreakable bonds he formed with his men, when they heard of the exploits of Honorary Captain John Foote who landed on the Dieppe main beach with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. This officer attached himself to the Regimental Aid Post on the beach and spent eight hours treated the wounded and carrying them to safety all while exposing himself “to an inferno of fire,” saving, “many lives by his gallant efforts”.¹⁴³ Foote won the Victoria Cross for this action; the VC citation exemplified the strong bonds between padre and soldier,

On several occasions this officer had the opportunity to embark but returned to the beach as his chief concern was the care and evacuation of the wounded. He refused a final opportunity to leave the shore, choosing to suffer the fate of the men he had ministered to for over three years.¹⁴⁴

The chaplain also dealt with unit and personal financial issues, often mediating between personal financial problems of the soldier in Britain and the consequences these problems produced for the soldier’s business or family finances in Canada. He held conferences with what one Senior Chaplain described as “financial parasites” (bankers, brokers, insurance agents) to achieve better cooperation with Canadian credit unions for the benefit of the men. The aforementioned chaplain railed that “Their ignorance of and their

¹⁴³ H/Captain John Foote, VC, Citation, *The London Gazette*, 14 February 1946.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

indifference to the rights of their fellow man is simply amazing.”¹⁴⁵ The range of activities that the CCS undertook to care for the soldiers’ welfare was almost limitless.

The stresses of caring for the moral and spiritual welfare of Canadian troops sometimes had a negative effect on the morale of chaplains themselves. In mid-1941, Senior Protestant Chaplains in England advised the APC(P) that morale amongst chaplains could be improved and that overwork and separation from Canada were the primary reasons.¹⁴⁶ This is not surprising given the wide breadth of responsibilities they came to inherit and that all this extra work required them to adopt, according to some reports on a “normal” month, 80 extra hours of work.¹⁴⁷ This was on top of their normal spiritual and counseling duties, which no doubt required them to work far in excess of 40 hours per week. It was therefore not unusual for a padre to work more than 60 hours per week, often more, in a post that placed constant emotional, physical, and intellectual demands. Thus in June 1941, the Senior Chaplains suggested that padres “at present overseas may be sent back to Canada from time to time to receive appointments in new formations.”¹⁴⁸ This was suggested because opportunities for promotion would be greater in newer formations and units and, in turn, those new units would benefit from the experience of a chaplain with recent overseas experience.¹⁴⁹ The Senior Chaplains also suggested that the CCS be empowered “to promote chaplains occasionally, even though there may not be senior

¹⁴⁵ “Report: Senior Chaplain (RC) 3rd Canadian Infantry Division,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 27-28 October 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15629.

¹⁴⁶ “Monthly Report,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), June 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Appendix F, 2.

¹⁴⁹ That chaplains thought in terms of promotion might seem odd, but professional advancement remained one of the only “carrots” the army could provide faced with the “stick” of constant work, strain, and stress.

appointments open.”¹⁵⁰ There were obvious morale implications to this expedient. Given that there were necessarily rigid guidelines governing how many chaplains were to be posted to each unit, opportunities for advancement were rare.

Nevertheless, by war's end, Bishop C.G. Hepburn, former Principal Chaplain, Protestant, came to believe that “Chaplains have been very favourably treated in the matter of rank, although not without some struggle from time to time.”¹⁵¹ Their position compared favourably with chaplains in the US Army and was better than those in the British army, who received less pay. Hepburn added that, in the main, padres were “accorded a position in the mess, and in the Unit generally, beyond their rank.”¹⁵² The problem of having too few senior positions was partially overcome in 1942 by allowing 20% of chaplains to hold the rank of Honourary Major (normally reserved for Senior Chaplains) beyond those who did so by virtue of their appointments. Additionally, promotions in Canada and England were kept separate, which worked to the advantage of chaplains overseas because when an H/Major returned to Canada he left a space that could be filled with another promotion overseas in his denomination. He then filled one of the 20% additional spaces also allotted in Canada. Also in 1942, another step was taken to alleviate the padre morale problem when the upper command structure of the CCS was promoted en masse, thereby allowing more senior appointments.¹⁵³ Such allowances facilitated the promotion of older chaplains, theretofore serving in the field, to staff positions in higher formations.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ H/Brig. C.G. Hepburn, “Technical Narrative by Directorates NDHQ, Canadian Chaplain Service (P), 1939-1945,” DHH 113.71 (D1), 6.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Despite these changes, the Senior Chaplains suggested, probably owing to the increasing and somewhat unexpected demands of the job overseas, that “older men should be allowed... to return to Canada for duty there.”¹⁵⁴ In Canada the demands made on a chaplain’s time and emotional strength would be much reduced and he would be closer to his family and to his peacetime congregation. It was further suggested that *all* chaplains form even closer relationships with their churches and denominations in Canada.¹⁵⁵ These last points exemplify the morale predicament not only of members of the CCS, but of the army more generally. Everyone was under stress and all were expected to perform away from home for years on end; this was itself an extraordinary and difficult situation for everyone concerned. Like the men to whom they ministered, the chaplains too were not above griping over command decisions:

Brigadier Salmon ordered an outdoor Brigade service for the whole 7th Brigade. The Chaplains protested, but were overruled. Two of the units had to march several miles to attend the service, and then stood about in a cold wind and got thoroughly chilled... The parade was drawn up so that the preacher had to talk into the wind, with the result that no-one could hear him, and the whole service was of no value to anybody.¹⁵⁶

On other occasions, some chaplains buoyed their spirits in the same way as many of their flock: through socializing and drink. This was a double-edged sword because it allowed closer relations with the men, but exposed overindulgent padres to charges of hypocrisy. One soldier of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery stated that, “In some cases [the chaplains] drink more than the average soldier.”¹⁵⁷ Chaplains also found reason to complain

¹⁵⁴ “Monthly Report,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), June 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Report: Senior Chaplain (P), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division,” War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 9 November 1941, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632.

¹⁵⁷ Field Censor (Home) Report, 20th Sept. – 4th Oct. 1942, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 12319, File 4/Censor/4/8.

if the entertainments provided were unsatisfactory for raising the men's spirits. One chaplain leveled scorn when the Ladies Pipe Band, playing at a 3rd Division mess hall, "played 'Over There', 'Old Black Joe', 'The Sidewalks of New York', 'Yankee Doodle', and 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean'."¹⁵⁸ With the exception of "Bonnie", these were American songs. One is left to wonder whether the chaplain objected to the use of almost entirely American songs for a Canadian audience, or whether the forlorn message conveyed in each of them drew his scorn, or both. Nevertheless, the monthly report displayed his disapproval, "I wept at the sacrilege."¹⁵⁹

Military chaplains have accompanied armies into battle as agents of spirituality and morale for centuries. In this regard, the Canadian chaplains of the Second World War fulfilled an age-old role with distinction. These men, however, had a much more complicated job than ministering to the wounded, dying, or frightened soldier, essential as that task was. Their task encompassed their normal, titular duties, but they also took on all of the residual duties concerning the soldier's welfare and morale. Where other services failed to provide comfort or support, the chaplain was usually there. The CCS also intentionally served as the overseas agent for each of the denominations of the Canadian churches with representatives overseas. In this way, the CCS itself mirrored Canada's church establishment (in terms of denominational balance, codes of moral conduct, and the requirement to seek sanction from the parent organization for the conduct of any important rites and rituals). Similarly, the individual padre came to represent a personal, individual

¹⁵⁸ "Report of the Senior Chaplain (RC), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), October 1941, Appendix E, LAC, RG24, Volume 15629.

¹⁵⁹ "Report of the Senior Chaplain (RC), 3rd Canadian Infantry Division," War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 28 November 1941, Appendix D, LAC, RG24, Volume 15629.

link to Canada for the soldier. Through his institutional links to the home congregation, the soldier was reminded of his life in Sunday school or in the community church. The soldier was also brought closer to his loved ones at home through the padre's mediatory services. In this way, the chaplain worked to smooth the soldier's problems in Canada, secular and spiritual, in an attempt to ensure his happiness and tranquility while awaiting probably the most trying time in his life. Their work demonstrates the complex and continuing ties that the soldiers held for their lives in Canada. The chaplain worked to fill holes in the army's and government's morale and welfare safety net and in this way was the soldier's last line of defence between happiness and heartache. The padre's institutional and congregational links informed his welfare work with the soldier, which work in turn benefitted by those very linkages.

Of the work of the Canadian chaplain, General A.G.L. McNaughton, Commander of First Canadian Army, said, "No one could do what they have achieved in maintaining the morale of our men Overseas during their extended period of inactivity."¹⁶⁰ In doing this work, the padre provided an intimate and personal link, while the organization he represented, the CCS, linked the soldier to Canadian institutional religion. In the Canadian Chaplain Service, as in the Auxiliary Services, the Canadian soldier overseas was provided with an indispensable conduit to his normal life in Canada, without which he would have functioned much less efficiently in the service of the state.

¹⁶⁰ Monthly Report of Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas – June 1942, "War Diary of the Assistant Principal Chaplain (P), 1-30 June 1942, Appendix 7, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15632, 5.

Conclusion: Building at Home the Canada They Loved Overseas

The Canadian soldiers who boarded ships, first for Sicily in July 1943, then for Normandy in June 1944, were largely the same men who had spent years in England. The experiences there likely helped ease the stresses and trials of life in combat. The organization and provision of such widespread and deeply appreciated services maintained the soldiers' morale, as has been argued, largely by maintaining important personal, institutional, and systemic linkages with Canada. The complex system of welfare provision in England also accompanied the men into combat in Italy and France. Their performance and morale on the continent was likely affected in no small measure by their mindset upon embarking for those hostile shores. The deep personal and systemic linkages built and fostered in the United Kingdom facilitated the continued provision of effective services on the continent.

The men did not sail to the invasion beaches alone. They did not leave their baseball bats for the English to play rounders; their text-booklets did not rot in damp, English cellars; and their bibles were kept close at hand. While still in England, in April 1943, H/Major J. Gordon Jones had advocated for the men he served in England by insisting that the government coordinate its efforts to solve the men's problems at home, lest their morale crumble and their lives overseas become an unbearable ordeal.¹ He cared for his men and he formed close personal bonds with them, partly by acting as liaison with their families in Canada. Jones knew that such harmony was essential to the man's happiness. He, and all the other Canadian chaplains, took this knowledge with him to Sicily where Canadians [held] Church Parade on Sicily Island," for which H/Major Jones "specially prepared"

¹ H/Major J.G. Jones, "Report of the Senior Chaplain (P), 1st Cdn Div for the Period Ending 19 April 43," LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 10834, File 29C1.99 (D33).

Protestant services for every man in the 1st Canadian Infantry Division.² As usual, this Senior Chaplain worked tirelessly in the service of his men. Although the Principal Chaplain (P) Overseas had received “no report” from Jones by the end of July, the Senior Chaplain had managed to send a cable from Italy, stating, “All chaplains safe and well work proceeding satisfactorily.”³ Jones’s knowledge of the soldiers undoubtedly helped him prepare those services, which, then more than ever, were required to see the men through. The familiar and trusted pattern had proven its worth in the United Kingdom and would be no less useful once combat had been joined.

Neither did most Canadian troops in Sicily start playing traditional Italian games behind the lines. Auxiliary Services supervisors also accompanied the soldiers into the combat zone and there worked to provide the same or similar services as they had in England. In June 1944, the *Montreal Gazette* reported General E.L.M. Burns’s⁴ message of congratulations to the YMCA on its one-hundredth birthday. Burns added that, “Recreation, entertainment and relaxation for fighting troops is greatly appreciated by all ranks.” The report points out, too, that the Canadian sports enjoyed in England, likely played with the very same equipment, were enjoyed in Italy also. When stress was at its worst, supervisors knew what to do, they had done so for the past four years. “When Canadian troops first landed in Sicily Y.M.C.A. war service secretaries were on the job and organized baseball games.”⁵

² Canadian Press Cable, “Canadians Hold Church Parade on Sicily Island,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 August 1943, 10.

³ “Monthly Report of the Canadian Chaplain Service (P) Overseas, July 1943,” War Diary of the Principal Chaplain (P) Overseas, July 1943, Appendix 9, LAC, RG24, National Defence, Volume 15633, 4.

⁴ At that time, Lieutenant-General Burns was General Officer Commanding, I Canadian Corps.

⁵ “‘Y’ Work in Italy Lauded by Burns,” *Montreal Gazette*, 2 June 1944, 21.

Neither were Canadian soldier-scholars disappointed when they left England behind, for the CLES and the Directorate of Army Education ensured they took their text-booklets with them. Dr. Arthur Chatwin, Overseas Director of the CLES, tried to reassure worried families back home, after it was known that their loved ones were in the fight. He reminded family members that the soldiers were happier and better citizens for the education they had received in England and continued to receive in theatre. He told, "every mother and father with a boy or girl overseas, that their boys and girls are not coming back the same... they are coming back better Canadians."⁶ The report added that, "Study courses follow the men to the fronts," citing a report of 76 men temporarily back in England from the Sicily campaign on convalescence. There they were taking six courses, "organized to help them in [the] correspondence courses,"⁷ they were taking in Italy so that they could easily pick up where they had left off when they returned to the front. In 1945, those soldiers fighting in northwest Europe, also continued their education; in March of that year, 84,917 text-booklets were shipped to the European theatre of war for all the courses being held in Britain and on the continent.⁸

For General McNaughton, a fierce Canadian nationalist and chief promoter of the soldiers' education, overseas army education served as an incubator of Canadian solidarity and identity. For McNaughton, the greater purpose of army education and, as it turned out, most other welfare measures, was to cement a stronger community among the men, one that mirrored and nurtured Canadian values. Dr. Chatwin noted the general's persistent interest. "Wherever McNaughton goes... he asks what is going on in education. How are the

⁶ Jim Wright, "Teaching the Troops," *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 October 1943, 22.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Monthly Report – Education - Canadian Legion Educational Services," 5 April 1945, UNIVERSITY LEAVE COURSES, DHH 159.1032 (D1) AUX SERVICES – EDUC SERVICES, 25 Feb 43/12 Feb 46.

men building their Canadian community away from home? How are they fitting themselves to take their part in building Canada when they return?"⁹ McNaughton's two-fold desire – to forge a community of Canadians overseas and to return men and women to Canada motivated to build a stronger country – operated throughout the war to cement that sense of Canadian identity which sustained the men through many months away from everything they knew.

The present work has examined the manner in which the army tried to ameliorate morale problems, and has shown that a highly developed sense of Canadian identity in the soldiers overseas necessitated the provision of specifically Canadian measures, and the maintenance of strong institutional and familial ties with Canada, to maintain their morale. The army's efforts to strengthen a sense of nationalism and identity among its members had a number of causes, not the least of which was a desire among commanders like McNaughton and Crerar and politicians up to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, to enhance Canadian autonomy in general. However, it is clear that the desires of Canadian soldiers, from the private up to the general, were the strongest impetus generating change throughout the war. Historian Jean-Yves Gravel notes that Canadian soldiers of both linguistic groups sought to reinforce their own conceptions of national identity: "L'un voulait faire reconnaître son identité, l'autre cherchait son identité."¹⁰ By 1945, English-Canadian soldiers' sense of national identity was decidedly stronger than it had been in 1914 or, for that matter, 1939. In this sense, soldiers of both linguistic groups had come closer to consensus. They had achieved a stronger shared sense of Canadian identity, if only because English-Canadian soldiers had increasingly discarded the British connection.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gravel, ed., *Le Québec et la guerre*, 108.

No collective experience as large as that of the Canadian army overseas between 1939 and 1943 is entirely homogenous. Not every soldier despised the NAAFI canteens, or found ENSA shows objectionable. Not every soldier longed to return home at the earliest opportunity. Many ignored attempts to provide them with education and others, although smaller in number, eschewed sports. Many men enjoyed English hospitality, loved going to pubs, and enjoyed the company of English women. This was natural and expected given the length of time the soldiers spent in England. Phillip Buckner notes that, on the whole, the Canadian veterans “who had served in Europe did not come home harbouring anti-British sentiment.”¹¹ While the evidence presented in the foregoing chapters suggests that at least *some* of them did harbour such feelings while in England, the majority of soldiers returned to Canada not with an aversion to things British, but with a greater affinity for things Canadian. Buckner is correct in noting: “The wartime experience of the Canadians ‘made them more consciously Canadian than they had been before; but their particular experience in England brought them close to the British people and gave a new reality to the ‘commonwealth connection’.”¹²

Despite all this, the fact remains that Canadian troop morale was sustained mainly through the maintenance of familial, structural, and civic links with Canada, and through the provision of the products of Canadian industry, ingenuity, and imagination. As a mass of individuals, their various experiences somewhat defy neat and tidy summary. But there can be little doubt that if one Canadian auxiliary service was ignored or Canadian product rejected, several others vied for the individual soldier’s attention. While Private Lauzon might not have played hockey, he may have learned about operating a dairy farm in Quebec

¹¹ Phillip Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire,” 110.

¹² *Ibid.*, 111.

and planned his post-war career. Corporal Jones might have ignored invitations to padre's hour, instead spending his leave among Canadians at the Beaver Club, reading *Maclean's Magazine*, and eating griddlecakes with maple syrup. In short, the ubiquity of Canadian products, services, and connections with home made it impossible for a Canadian soldier to escape physical and psychological reminders of his homeland.

Those factors that *did* threaten their morale sprung most often from factors related to their Canadian nationality. At first, English civilians treated Canadians as odd and different, and then many levelled public scorn at the Canadians for the bad behaviour of a minority. For their part, Canadian soldiers clearly missed a number of things about their homeland which made it impossible for them, as a group, to fully integrate or settle down in English society. Nevertheless, the efforts of many British civilians also contributed to feelings of goodwill and kinship that left many soldiers with an understanding of the importance of the British Commonwealth that co-existed alongside their newfound sense of national identity.

Nevertheless, as has been shown, the task of caring for the soldiers' morale fell, in the main, to the Directorate of Auxiliary Services and the Canadian Chaplain Service. These two agencies of morale found that the soldiers' worst problems, be they feeling out of place in England or being bored by inactivity, were best addressed through the provision of things Canadian. Those issues that tended to make Canadian troops feel closely attached to one another – a shared sense of community and national identity – were those seized on to help assuage the worst problems of morale which it was found were largely related to being a Canadian living in a foreign land.

These bonds were built up in the overseas army so effectively that many discharged soldiers' sense of nationality and citizenship were shaken when they returned home to

encounter civilians ready to forget the war. In this connection, many overseas soldiers' sense of national identity was more *consciously* strengthened than for those who remained in Canada. Discharge was sometimes shocking because that strong sense of community built up overseas did not exist to the same degree in civilian Canada. Many men returned to a "rose-coloured glorification of 'home'," thinking that, back in Canada, all problems would pale by comparison.¹³ It was precisely when a feeling of community was perhaps most required, when they would leave their cohesive overseas "family" and return home, that the bonds of citizenship, nation, and community often failed the returning Canadian soldier. A lieutenant from 3rd Canadian Infantry Division summarized his feelings, showing both the existence of a sense of home abroad and the fact that his idealized "home" in Canada was a sham: "I want to get back overseas, I feel lost here."¹⁴ In this sense, the army had created a Canadian community, more "authentic" to these men's experience than Canada itself. Although much of this tension back home likely had as much to do with the soldiers' indignation at civilian attitudes in general, rather than the presence of startlingly different conceptions of Canada. Adding to the sense that the army had gotten it right, by creating a "home away from home," a returned captain of 3rd Canadian Infantry Division complained, "I feel hurt because we are not properly treated by the civilian population, but that is not the Army's fault."¹⁵ This soldier's ennui reflects the disappointment felt when those expectations nurtured and encouraged overseas about the greatness of Canada, its national effort, and the whole-hearted support of the civilian population were dashed with a few hard knocks from a civilian world ready to forget the war. Returned veterans ensured

¹³ Special Report No. 161, 9.

¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵ Ibid.

that Canada would not forget the war and made their mark on postwar Canadian society. Their strong involvement in postwar intellectual and political life ensured that the values enshrined overseas – acknowledgement of the British connection mixed with a belief in the strength and greatness of Canada as a nation – would become current in the Canada of the future.¹⁶ Their experiences in England altered the outlooks of Canadian veterans not because they valued the British connection any less – although experience in England often strained this relationship – but because they rated the primacy of their Canadian nationality more highly than before.

It was precisely such concerns – over civilian commitment to the common, national cause – that Dr. Chatwin hoped to allay when speaking of the soldiers, then recently committed to battle, who expected to return to the Canada they had been taught to defend. “The boys who have lived overseas and worked there co-operatively, submerging their personal interests in the larger interests of the group, will return to Canada expecting to find a similar spirit at home, and the people here [in Canada] can be assured that the men and women returning will do their share.”¹⁷ Chatwin was right: Canadian soldiers returned to Canada with a stronger sense of purpose and unity. General McNaughton said that he wanted his soldiers to create a “Canadian community away from home.”¹⁸ When they

¹⁶ Peter Neary notes that, in 1946-7, veterans formed nearly half of the 80,000 students in Canadian universities. In 1946, the high point of veteran enrolment in Canadian universities, some 35,000 registered. By 1949, veterans still accounted for 21% of university enrolment in Canada. See: Peter Neary, “Canadian Universities and Canadian Veterans of World War II,” in Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War Two Canada*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 119-122. Buckner notes that a substantial number of cabinet ministers and MPs in the 1950s and 1960s were veterans of the Second World War. The soldiers' experiences during the war support Buckner's conclusion that veterans continued to believe in the value of the British Commonwealth, but also advocated the creation of a stronger Canadian nationalism, albeit somewhat mitigated by nostalgic memories of the once-strong imperial link. Phillip Buckner, “Canada and the End of Empire,” 110-126.

¹⁷ Jim Wright, “Teaching the Troops,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 October 1943, 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

returned home, Canadian soldiers of the Second World War set about creating the very kind of Canada they had come to love while serving overseas.

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