

**HISTORICAL OFFICER**

**CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS**

The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion;  
Organization and Training, July 1942-June 1944

1. This report is an outline of the events leading up to the formation of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion and its subsequent history to, but not including, its participation in the first phase of the Allied invasion of France (The part played by the Battalion in France is separately described in [Report No. 139](#)). Most of the material relating to the early training of the Battalion in Canada and the United States is not available overseas. The relevant files at C.M.H.C., and the unit War Diary at Action, have provided the chief sources of information.

BACKGROUND TO FORMATION OF UNIT (NOVEMBER 1940 - JULY 1942)

2. The use of airborne troops, with which the Russians originally experimented and which the Germans used with conspicuous success when they invaded the Low Countries in May, 1940, was first considered, from the point of view of application to the Canadian war effort, in November of that year. On 12 Nov, in a memorandum prepared at N.D.H.Q. for the Chief of the General Staff by Col (now Maj. Gen) E.L.M. Burns, the advantages of this form of warfare were considered, and the opinion was expressed that: "Airborne troops are merely the most mobile form of land forces, and the fact that some of them land by parachute is due to the characteristics of the aeroplane" (C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: Memorandum by Col E.L.M. Burns to C.G.S. 12 Nov 40). With

respect to reported parachute training in the United Kingdom, the suggestion was made that Canada might make a contribution in this field.

3. The suggestion was forwarded to C.M., in December, 1940, with the request that the views of the War Office be ascertained. British parachute troops were then being organized and one "special service battalion" was undergoing active training (ibid: Memorandum by Brigadier M.A. Pope, 6 Dec 40; Tel G.S. 3140, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 16 Dec 40). The intention was to use these troops in the role formerly filled by Light Cavalry, "to seize bridge crossings, defiles and aerodromes well in advance of the slower-moving main body of the army" (Pope Memo). The War Office did not however visualize the use of these troops in large numbers, and it was not anticipated that there would be any request for provision of such personnel by Canada (ibid: Tel G.S. 3140, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 16 Dec 40).

4. At a meeting held at C.M.H.Q. on 20 Dec 40, and attended by Lieut.-General A.G.L. McNaughton, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., G.O.C. 7 Corps, and Major-General H.D.G. Crerar, D.S.O., C.G.S., the question of training various categories of airborne troops was raised. The record of the meeting states:

General Crerar said that while he is agreeable to a proportion (say a platoon) in each infantry battalion being trained in this work, he is not in favour of training special airborne units unless the War Office make specific requests for them, when is unlikely .... General McNaughton stated that he feels that the use of air-borne troops has distinct possibilities but, having regard

to the remarks of General Crerar and the scale of such units as proposed by the War Office, he is not prepared to press his views.

(First Cdn Army file P.A. 5-3-1:

Memorandum by B.G.S., 21 Dec 40.)

There is nothing to indicate that any further development occurred for the ensuing eight months. The critical situation, both in the Atlantic and on the other war fronts, served to focus attention elsewhere during this period, and the official British attitude had suggested limitations on progress along the lines originally contemplated.

5. In August, 1941, by which time the prospects of offensive action against the enemy had brightened, the question of organizing Canadian Parachute Troops was raised again at N.D.H.Q. The advantages of organizing for this type of warfare were reviewed, as were the disadvantages - the latter being principally the problem of whether, considering the time, money and equipment involved, a Canadian contribution would be practicable. (C.M.H.Q.) file 1/Para Tps/1: Tel G.S. 0493, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 14 Aug 41). There was also the point that the Canadian Corps was not then complete, and its existing role did not require such specialized troops. In answer to an enquiry from N.D.H.Q. General McNaughton stated: "I do not advocate the establishment of any separate Para Tps in Cdn Forces" (ibid: Tel G.S. 1647, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 19 Aug 41). In his view, the only justification for such special units would be: "(a) Probability of early and continued employment in special role (b) Need for specialized training on lines greatly different from regular

units" (ibid.). He thought that neither of these conditions existed at that time, and that if, at some future date, it was felt necessary to provide these troops, they would be selected from existing units and given the requisite training.

6. Two factors operated to bring about a revived interest in the possibility of organizing Canadian parachutists during the autumn of 1941 and the early part of 1942. By October, 1941, the War Office was considering a much more ambitious programme of airborne activity than had been originally contemplated, and, simultaneously with this development, the Royal Canadian Air Force began to anticipate a demand for co-operation with airborne troops. The War Office was now thinking in terms of an "Air Landing Brigade Group", with an additional parachute component of possibly three battalions (C.M.H.Q. file 1/A B Tps/1: War Office letter, 10 Oct 41, 20/Misc/044 (S.D.4)). A force of 2,500 parachutists, was to be formed and this number might be increased. The possibility of even an infantry division in a dual role as airborne troops was under examination (ibid.: War Office letter, 29 Oct 41, 0164/6437/ (S.D.4)). Finally, on 1 Nov 41, the War Office decided to form an Airborne Division consisting of a Divisional H.Q. with R.A.F. Wing incorporated, a Parachute Brigade, an Airlanding Brigade Group and a Glider Battalion (a regiment of army glider pilots) (ibid.: Memorandum on the Organization and Employment of the Airborne Division, by Major-General F.A.M. Browning, D.S.O., 24 Jan 42).

7. At the same time, R.C.A.F. Headquarters in Canada, with a view to ascertaining what equipment they might be expected to supply, had solicited

information through the Air Officer Commanding R.C.A.F. in Great Britain (C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: A.O.C., R.C.A.F. in Great Britain, to Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 24 Oct 41). The matter was referred to the Canadian Corps Commander once more and, while adhering substantially to the view expressed on 19 Aug 41 (see para 5), he stated that, if facilities existed, "it might be useful to give attention to this type of training in Canada," and he added that he hoped similar arrangements for Canadian units in the United Kingdom might be possible when equipment became available (ibid: Tel G.S. 2403, 3 Nov 41: B.G.S., Canadian Corps, to the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 30 Oct 41). A further reference to General McNaughton's attitude is to be found in a memorandum relating to a conference which he had with General Sir Bernard Paget, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., C.-in-C., Home Forces, on 25 Dec 41. In the course of this meeting, General Paget "agreed with Gen McNaughton's policy in regard to not forming special paratroops units; i.e., that such units should fundamentally be standard military units which, with a comparatively short period of special training, could be employed as paratroops" (W.D., G.S. Branch, H.Q., 1 Cdn Corps, March 1942: Appx 1).

8. The policy to be adopted with regard to paratroops remained under consideration by General McNaughton and N.D.H.Q. during the early part of 1942. There is little material available to throw light on this important period. A letter of 17 Feb 42 from C.M.H.Q. stated that:

The policy to be adopted by the Canadian Army with regard to paratroop training is under consideration by N.D.H.Q at the moment. According to our latest

information no decision was to be given until this matter had been thoroughly discussed with Lt.-General McNaughton.

(C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q. to Air Officer in Chief, R.C.A.F. Overseas, 16 Feb 42).

This negative evidence suggests that the decision was ultimately taken at N.D.H.Q. to provide a war establishment for "A Canadian Parachute Battalion", effective 1 Jul 42 (The W.E. stated that it was based on B.W.E. X/127/2, and was published November 1942). Briefly, this establishment consisted of a battalion headquarters, a headquarters company and three rifle companies, with a total strength of 26 officers and 590 other ranks. A revised establishment Cdn III/127/2, effective 19 May 44, provided for 31 Officers and 587 other ranks.

#### FORMATION AND EARLY TRAINING (JULY 1942 - JULY 1943)

9. Again, there is a lack overseas of available material covering the actual organization and early training of the Battalion, under Lt.-Col. G.F.P. Bradbrooke, formerly of the Saskatoon Light Infantry (M.G.); but it is known that the Battalion was not recruited from any specially designated units. The officers came mainly from overseas units, and nearly all other ranks were taken from training centres and infantry units in Canada. (The call for volunteers for the 1st and 2nd Parachute Battalions in July and

November 1942; the dispositions made respectively of the Canadian personnel who trained at FORT BENNING, GA., and at HELENA, MONT.; and the relationship of the formation of the two battalions to the organization of the Canadian-U.S. Special Service Force, are matters for investigation in Canada on the basis of the files of D.N.D.). A letter from Major-General G.R. Turner, then D.A. & Q.M.G. First Cdn Army, to the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., of 28 Jul 42, stated:

I am to inform you that the G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, has agreed to provide personnel from the Cdn Army Overseas, for return to Canada for employment with a Parachute Bn, which will be shortly authorized and which will receive special training in connection with certain military projects now contemplated.

(C.M.H.Q. file 6/1 Para Bn/1: D.A. & Q.M.G., First Cdn Army to Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 28 Jul 42.)

Between 23 Aug and 12 Sep 42, 25 officers and 60 other ranks attended a R.A.F. Parachute Course at RINGWAY, before joining the unit in Canada.

10. By 22 Mar 43, the Battalion had completed four months' training at FORT BENNING, Georgia, U.S.A., and had then moved to a Parachute Training Wing which had been set up at SHILO Manitoba (C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: N.D.H.Q. Parachute Training Instruction No. 1, 26 Mar 43; Tel C.G.S. 142, DEFENSOR to CAN-MILITARY, 6 Mar 43). The American training absorbed by 1 Cdn Para Bn was

of an elementary nature and there were slight variations from British methods (ibid: Airborne Liaison Report No. 11, 5 Oct 43, para 13). Jumpers qualified under the American system subsequently required a one week's conversion course in the United Kingdom. At the conclusion of the American training all officers and 97 percent of other ranks, including first reinforcements, had qualified for their parachutist wings, but no collective training had been carried out. It was estimated that a further two months' training in the United Kingdom would be necessary before the unit was fit for active service (ibid: Tel C.G.S. 142, DEFENSOR to CANMILITARY, 6 Mar 43).

#### INCORPORATION IN 6 BRIT AIRBORNE DIV

11. The integration of 1 Cdn Para Bn into the British Airborne force was the next subject of discussion. On directions from N.D.H.Q. General McNaughton took the matter up with General Paget. The latter welcomed the offer of the Battalion, and stated that it could be included in the British Airborne Division which was then being brought up to strength (ibid: Tel G.S. 538, CANMILITARY to DEFENSOR, 18 Mar 43). It was agreed that the unit would remain part of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom, but would be placed under command of the Airborne Division, to the staff of which Canadian Administrative officers would be added. It was also agreed, subject to the approval of the War Office, that standard British equipment would be provided and maintained by the Airborne Division (ibid.) (Personal clothing and battledress continued to be a Canadian issue).

12. On 7 Apr 43 N.D.H.Q. cabled the necessary authority for inclusion of 1 Cdn Para Bn in the 6th British Airborne Division (ibid: Tel C.G.S. 212, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 7 Apr 43). At the same time General McNaughton was advised that the Battalion would represent an increase to the overseas manpower ceiling of 232,100 (ibid.) From this decision to include the Canadians in the British Airborne Division many problems arose. Prominent among these were the question of reinforcements for the battalion, the special problem of legal relationship between the Canadian unit and the British formation, and the mass of intricate administrative detail covering such matters as postal, pay and hospitalization arrangements. The way in which these difficulties were solved will be dealt with in subsequent paragraphs.

#### ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (28 JUL 43)

13. N.D.H.Q. originally contemplated an early sailing, in May 1943, for 1 Cdn Para Bn and first reinforcements (ibid: Tel C.G.S. 142, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 6 Mar 43). But the fact that adequate training facilities in the United Kingdom were not available before June necessitated the date of despatch being postponed a month. A further month's delay occurred because of the curtailment of shipping allocated for the movement of army personnel from Canada to the United Kingdom (ibid: Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., to Under Secretary of State, 30 May 43). The unit did not actually arrive at GREENOCK until 28 Jul 43; it had made a rapid transatlantic crossing from HALIFAX on the "Queen Elizabeth". Because of rejections of personnel found unsuitable by medical and other standards, it was not possible, prior to departure, to complete the unit up to full strength, plus first reinforcements, and the

total strength upon arrival was 31 officers and 548 other ranks (ibid: Tel G.S. 932, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 17 Mar 44). In an attempt to bring the battalion more nearly to War Establishment, the concurrence of the War Office had been obtained in making up some deficiencies in personnel with basically-trained soldiers who had not received parachute training (ibid: Tel G.S. 1493, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 26 Jun 42). The Battalion brought with it all weapons provided for in the War Establishment (ibid: Tel G.S.W. 362, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 22 Apr 43).

#### PROBLEM OF REINFORCEMENTS

14. The question of the scale upon which reinforcements for 1 Cdn Para Bn were to be calculated was under discussion before the unit left Canada. On the basis of anticipated replacements being required at rates of six months' intense, followed by three months' normal and three months' quiet activity, first reinforcements for the battalion added six officers and 111 other ranks to the Unit War Establishment requirements (ibid: Tel G.S.D. 490, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 22 Apr 43, and tel G.S. 1417, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 17 Jun 43). At a meeting between General McNaughton and Major-General R.N. Gale, O.B.E., M.C., G.O.C. 6 Airborne Div, on 2 June 43, it was agreed that these reinforcements would be held by the Division to ensure adequate training and immediate availability (ibid: Memorandum of Conversation between General McNaughton and General Gale, 3 June 43. At the same conference it was further agreed that, if the number of such reinforcements was more than could be accommodated by the Airborne Division, quarters would be found for them at Canadian Reinforcement Units in the ALDERSHOT area. Subsequently, pending

authorization of a training increment to 1 Cdn Para Bn, No. 1 Canadian General Reinforcement Unit was designed as the channel through which reinforcement were to pass (ibid: C.M.H.Q. Adm Instr No. 10, 21 Jul 43). Arrangements for a flow of trained parachute reinforcements from Canada were effected with the establishment of S14 Canadian Parachute Training School at SHILO in May 1943. The School was designed to have under training 100 in the Parachute Training Wing, 200 in the Advanced Training Wing, and 480 in the Trained Soldier Companies. After 14 Nov 43, these quotas were to be reduced to 50, 100 and 240 respectively (ibid: N.D.H.Q. Para Trg Instr No. 2, H.Q.S. 8846-1 (Trg 2) 22 Jun 43). But these arrangements failed to provide a sufficiently large flow of replacements, and by the end of 1943 the problem of keeping 1 Cdn Para Bn reinforced was to reach a stage that was considered serious (See para. 35).

#### LEGAL RELATIONSHIP TO BRITISH FORMATIONS

15. An important aspect of the administrative problems was the relationship of 1 Cdn Para Bn to 6 Airborne Div under military law. This matter was directly related to the larger question of the application of appropriate Canadian legislation, as represented by the Visiting Force (British Commonwealth) Act, 1933, to Canadian Troops in general, whether serving in or outside of the United Kingdom. Briefly stated, the difficulty insofar as the Battalion was concerned was to determine whether the relationship should be one of "attachment" or of being placed "in combination" with the British formation under the Visiting Forces Acts of Canada and the United Kingdom. If placed "in combination" with the Airborne Div under the provision of the Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act and Privy Council Order No. 3464 of

29 Apr 43, the Battalion would remain subject to Canadian military law and personnel would have "reciprocal powers of command and arrest" and in exercising disciplinary power, British officers would act under Canadian law as if they were Canadian officers. Under "attachment" all Canadian troops in the Para Bn would become in effect British troops and would be subject to British military law, i.e. the statutes and regulations for the British Army during the period of "attachment". It was felt that the controlling consideration was the matter of the confirmation of severe sentences, and the retention of authority of Major-General P.J. Montague, C.G., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C., V.D., Senior Combatant Officer at C.M.H.Q., at J.A.G., Canadian Army Overseas: If "in combination", such matters would be controlled by Canadian privy Council Orders which had been carefully designed to reserve such sentences on Canadian troops "in combination" to the senior combatant officers or the Governor-General-in-Council for confirmation. If 1 Cdn Para Bn were "attached" it would be necessary to obtain a special British privy Council Order from His Majesty modifying the British Army Act so that such severe sentences would be reserved for Canadian confirmation (C.M.H.Q. file 1 Para Tps/1: D.J.A.G. Memo to A.D.A.G.(B) 3 Aug 43).

16. While the legal position of the Battalion was still under consideration, it became necessary to make administrative arrangements for the unit, which was scheduled to arrive in the United Kingdom in the latter part of July. Accordingly C.M.H.Q. on 21 Jul issued Admin Instr No. 10, which stated that 1 Cdn Para Bn would be under command C.M.H.Q. for all purposes, and would come under 6 Airborne Div for training and operations on a date to be decided. C.M.H.Q. Admin Order No. 115 of 1 Aug placed the Battalion under command

C.M.H.Q. w.e.f. 22 Jul; C.M.H.Q. Admin Order No. 117 of 6 Aug placed it under command H.Q., C.R.U., w.e.f. 5 Aug for local administration only; and on 12 Aug, C.M.H.Q. Admin Order No. 121 attached 1 Cdn Para Bn to 6 Airborne Div for training and administration. The Battalion was declared to remain under C.M.H.Q. for administrative matters of purely Canadian nature.

17. Following the precedent provided by the Canadian troops then serving with the British forces in the Mediterranean theatre of operations (P.A. file 1-14-1-8; General McNaughton's Directive to G.O.C. 1 Cdn Div and Comd 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde, 19 Jun 43), General McNaughton gave instructions for 1 Cdn Para Bn to be placed "in combination" with (Airborne Div (C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: General McNaughton to Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 6 Aug 43).

Accordingly, C.M.H.Q. Order to Detail No. 13 was issued over the signature of General Montague on 11 Oct 43, directing that:

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, being part of the  
Military Force of Canada, do act in combination with  
all the Naval, Military and Air Forces of the several  
parts of the British Commonwealth, serving in the  
United Kingdom as from the date hereof.

18. A directive issued by General Montague to the Battalion Commander on the same day contained detailed instructions on various matters. The Battalion Commander would take operational and training directions from the G.O.C. 6 Airborne Div. But in all matters affecting the unit and its administration, the Commanding Officer would continue to have the right of reference to the

Government of Canada. If it became necessary to try personnel of 1 Cdn Para Bn by General Courts Martial, such personnel would be posted to the appropriate Canadian Reinforcement Unit for trial under that C.R.U. It was not possible at that time under Canadian legislation to issue to British commanders in the United Kingdom General Courts Martial warrants. With respect to trials by Field General Courts Martial (which ordinarily by reason of the Directive might not be convened by any but Commanders in 6 Airborne Div not below the rank of Brigadier), the provision of P.C. 4875 dated 15 Jun 43 reserved for confirmation or other disposal by the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q. all cases involving serious sentences, i.e. death or penal servitude, and additionally in the case of officers, imprisonment, cashiering or dismissal from His Majesty's service (ibid: Directive by Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 11 Oct 43).

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

19. A great deal of administrative detail was involved in the overseas movement of the Battalion. In accordance with the earlier understanding (see para 11) arrangements were made between General McNaughton and General Gale for the unit to be placed under command of 6 Airborne Div for training and operations. For liaison purposes, and to deal with purely Canadian administrative matters, a Canadian C.S.O.2 and a D.A.A. & Q.M.G. were appointed to General Gale's Headquarters (ibid: Memorandum of Conversation between General McNaughton and General Gale, 3 Jun 43). The officer selected for the former appointment was Major E.W. Cutbill, C.I.C. who had previously held a similar liaison appointment with Headquarters of 1 Airborne Div in

North Africa. The D.A.A. & Q.M.G. was Major E.T. Munro R.C. Sigs. (In Dec 43, Maj W.H. Hemphill C.I.C. succeeded Maj. Munro as D.A.A. & O.M.G. and the appointment of G.S.O. 2 was discontinued). Terms of reference, dealing with the relationship of the Canadian Liaison Section to C.M.H.Q. and Headquarters First Cdn Army, were issued by General McNaughton (Ibid. P.A. to G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, to Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 5 Jul 43), and the necessary increment to H.Q. First Cdn Army was authorized by C.M.H.Q. Administrative Order No. 105, 14 Jul 43.

20. Postal instructions, documentation, hospitalization and pay were subordinate matters that required attention. In the case of hospitalization it was decided that Battalion personnel requiring evacuation behind a Field Ambulance or Casualty Clearing Station would be passed to the nearest Canadian hospital, provided that the latter was within a reasonable distance of the unit. Cases admitted to British or American hospitals for emergency treatment were to be transferred to a Canadian hospital as soon as possible under arrangements to be made by the D.M.S. at C.M.H.q. Adm Instr No. 10, 21 Jul 43). Upon discharge from hospital, all such personnel would return to the Battalion by way of Canadian General Reinforcement Unit.

21. Extra pay was authorized for all officers and other ranks of the Battalion who qualified as Parachute jumpers within the War Establishment (The W.E. provided that only one officer - the Paymaster - and 28 other ranks should be non-jumpers). The additional rate was two dollars per pay for officers and seventy-five cents per day for other ranks. Should an officer or soldier become a prisoner of war he would continue to be entitled to the extra

pay. If injuries due to flying or parachute duties, or wounds received in action, kept him from duty or training, he would draw the increased rate for a period of up to 91 days. In case of illness or injuries not received in these ways, a limit of 28 days for officers, and 21 days for other ranks was placed on the payment of the additional scale (Overseas R.O. 5191). These financial provisions applied also to personnel of the 1st Canadian Parachute Training Company (see para 31).

#### TRAINING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (AUGUST 1943 - FEBRUARY 1944)

22. Upon arrival in the United Kingdom on 28 Jul 43, 1 Cdn Para Bn was accommodated at No. 1 Canadian Base Staging Camp, CHOBHAM, Surrey, in order to facilitate documentation and various other matters of administration peculiar to a newly-formed unit. The Battalion was inspected by the Hon J.L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, on the morning of 3 Aug 43. On 11 Aug the unit moved to the Carter Barracks at BULFORD Camp, Wiltshire (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, 11 Aug 43). Here the Battalion formed part of 3 Para Bde under Brigadier S.J.L. Hill, D.S.O. M.C., within 6 Airborne Div. The latter formation was under the direct command of 21 Army Group, which comprised the British and Canadian component of the Allied forces destined for the invasion of France. But, for any particular operation, 6 Airborne Div would be placed under command of an Army (Airborne Liaison Report No. 11, 5 Oct 43). Possible roles which the Division might be called upon to perform in the early stages of a landing on the Continent were:

- (a) Direct co-operation with seaborne assault divisions.

- (b) Seizing ground which dominated a bridgehead and holding it until the follow-up formations arrived.
  
- (c) Delaying the movement of enemy reserves located inside or outside the bridgehead.

23. The training of 1 Cdn Para Bn was adjusted to cover the role it might be expected to have in action. A comprehensive syllabus was drawn up, covering the period from August to December 1943, in two phases. In the first phase, to the end of October, attention was given to the training of specialists and junior leaders, emphasis being placed on weapon training and physical fitness for all ranks. Weekly Training Syllabi and Training Directives during the autumn and early winter carried repeated insistence on the need for improving efficiency in the handling of rifles and Bren and Sten guns. Airborne troops in action would not have an unlimited supply of ammunition, and every shot fired must find its target. In late November the standard attained by the Canadian battalion was still below the average of the brigade (1 Cdn para Bn, Rifle 93, Bren 98, Sten 48; 3 Para Bde; Rifle 111, Bren 120, Sten 72). A staff sergeant from BISLEY was attached to the unit to assist in weapon training and range work, and in ordering 6 - 8 hours weekly training in these weapons for all personnel, the C.O. declared that "skill and efficiency in the handling of all weapons must reach and will reach a higher standard than any arm of the service" (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, November 1943, App 4, Training Syllabus, 11 Nov 43). The fruits of this emphasis upon weapon training were seen in the achievements of the battalion in France when it faced an enemy much more heavily armed (see [Report No. 139](#)).

24. Detachments were sent to the Parachute Training School, at the R.A.F. Station, RINGWAY, for additional experience. The main difference between the earlier American training which the Battalion had absorbed and the British methods were reconciled. These differences were not fundamental, but had to do with the American use of two parachutes, known as "T5 assembly", as opposed to the British use of one main parachute; the American use of a different methods of opening the parachutes, and the fact that in the United States preliminary jump training was carried out from a tower, whereas in the United Kingdom a moored balloon and basket were employed (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Para Tps/1/2: Memorandum by Col. J.G.K. Strathy, 25 Jun 44). Canadian Army Overseas Routine Order 3867, 28 Sep 43, authorized a parachute badge, the qualification for which required all officers and other ranks to have made eight jumps and to have reached the prescribed standard at a qualifying course. Personnel who had been awarded a parachute badge in Canada were not required to re-qualify. Shortly afterwards, a system of identification stripes was instituted to distinguish different battalions in 6 Airborne Div. A half-inch band was worn at the base of the shoulder strap, the colour gold being allotted to 1 Cdn Para Bn (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, Pt I Order No. 49, 11 Oct 43).

25. On 13 Oct 43, Brigadier Hill visited the ranges and saw trial jumps with special net kit bags performed by 64 Canadian parachutists. These jumps were made from Whitley aircraft with kit bag loads of mortars and other equipment weighing up to forty pounds. Rigorous forced marches in cold, rainy weather were a feature of the training during this period, with a goal of fifty miles in eighteen hours as the objective. At the end of the initial training

period, on 21 Oct, the entire 3 Para Bde was granted ten days' leave - the first privilege leave for the Canadian Battalion since its arrival in the United Kingdom. Special trains from BULFORD siding took the men to London and as far north as Scotland (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, 21 Oct 43).

26. The second phase of training began after the Battalion's return from leave on 1 Nov 43. From then on emphasis was placed on full-scale battalion exercises, usually at night. The first of these, held on the night 8/9 Nov, was called (aptly or not) "SCHEMOZZLE". This was a brigade scheme, involving a night move culminating in an early morning attack on enemy-held positions. Participating with 1 Cdn Para Bn were its companion units. 8 Para Bn and 9 Para Bn. Although an actual descent by parachute did not take place the flares which illuminated the country side at the time of the simulated "drop", completely deceived the "enemy" as to the location of the "dropping-zones", and the attack was carried through without opposition in the initial stages. In view of later experiences, when the unit participated in the airborne assault of 6 Jun 44 on the French coast, a distinctly realistic touch was given to the exercise by the umpires taking two platoons away and depositing them as if they had missed the dropping zone completely.

27. The Battalion was inspected by General Sir Bernard Paget, at this time C.-in-C. 21 Army Group, on 4 Dec 43. During the absence of Brigadier S.J.L. Hill, 10-15 Dec, Lt.-Col. Bradbrooke assumed temporary command of 3 Para Bde. Early in December a battalion scheme, "PROCEDURE", designed to put into actual practice the procedures and lessons brought out by the 3 Para Bde exercise "SCHEMOZZLE", and involving a mass jump of the battalion, was

first postponed and then cancelled because of unsatisfactory weather. The experience gained, however, in the planning of administrative details, the packing and loading of containers, and the routine of orderly movement to and from the different airports, all helped to forge more strongly another link in the chain of training. A week before Christmas, preparations were made for another Brigade night scheme, Exercise "SHILO". This 24-hour exercise involved a holding action, with a counter-attack role, in the area of COWDOWN, LUDERSHALL and HUNGERFORD. Valuable practice in the tactical employment of machine guns, mortars, wiring and mines was obtained, and Brigadier Hill subsequently observed that: "Morale of the men was quite first-class .... The men played extraordinarily well." (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, Dec 43, Appx 1.) Taken as a whole, during December, considerable attention was devoted to developing a battle procedure that could be used successfully either by day or by night. By the end of the year the battalion was perfecting methods of movement across country by day in the face of enemy opposition and a drill for attacking strongly defended features and battery positions by night.

28. During the early part of 1944, 1 Cdn Para Bn continued routine training in the BULFORD area. Weather conditions were not always favourable and high winds caused the cancellation of some jumping exercises. An important Battalion exercise called "MANITOBA" took place on 20 Jan 44, near WINTERBOURNE-STOKE. In the words of the Commanding Officer: "The idea behind this exercise is to drop the complete fighting personnel of this unit on one dropping zone in the shortest possible time with a rapid clearance of the dropping zone of all personnel" (C.M.H.Q. file 6/1 Para Bn/1: Lt.-Col G.F.P. Bradbrooke to Lt.-Col. W.B. Wedd, 17 Jan 44). "MANITOBA" gave practice

in co-operation with 38 Group R.A.F., the formation whose planes were subsequently to carry the Battalion into action on D-Day. 500 all ranks took off from three airfields in 50 planes. They were all dropped with their equipment on to the dropping zone in fifteen minutes (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, Opn Ord. No. 1, 17 Jan 44). A spectator's account of the parachutists' descent on this occasion is provided by a Canadian War Artist:

The whole D.Z. which is extensive, was covered with gold, green, red, and blue blobs of the deflated chutes. Some men landed on farms, on roof tops, some in trees from which the chutes were later torn by main force by the R.A.F. men. On landing the men rushed on their containers, took out packs and Bren guns, and ran under cover as much as possible to the agreed rendezvous. At no time were more than a few men discernible on the field although 500 or more were dropped that afternoon.

(C.M.H.Q. file 24/Reports/2: Report on Attachment to 1 Cdn Para Bn, Lieut G.C. Timming, 17 Feb 44).

29. During February 1944, 1 Cdn Para Bn participated in a full brigade exercise called "CO-OPERATION". It is significant of the unit's role during the forthcoming invasion of France that the exercise consisted of a simulated attack by 6 Airborne Div upon a section of the French coast. The battalion

was assigned the task of seizing and holding against northward penetration a sector of country in which a U.S. Parachute Battalion and Airborne Light Tank Squadron represented the defending enemy. The first jump was made at 1700 hours, 7 Feb. All men jumped with full battle equipment, and containers were used for the heavy weapons, the mortars and machine guns. A few minor injuries were sustained by some personnel, but a considerable amount of equipment was damaged. The Battalion "dug in" during the night and patrols were sent out early in the morning. Later, the unit did an eight-mile march to LARKHILL, where transport awaited to bring the parachutists back to the Carter Barracks. A message from Brigadier S.J.L. Hill to the Commanding Officer contained war praise for the Canadians' effort on this exercise:

I feel I must write and congratulate you on the excellent show your Battalion put up from the Albermarles on Exercise "CO-OPERATION". If they continue to make progress in this connection at this rate they will soon be the best jumping exponents in our Airborne Corps and I should very much like to see them achieve this end for themselves. Well done.

(W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn: quoted, in unit Para 1 Order No. 22 dated 14 Feb 44.)

1 Cdn Para Bn had clearly established its reputation as an efficient unit in 6 Airborne Div.

30. A "Quarterly Morale Return", submitted to the Brigade Commander on 25 Jun 44, is of some assistance in throwing light on the life of the Canadian parachutists at this time (W.D. 1 Cdn Para Bn: Jan 44, Appx "J"). Concerning living quarters at the Carter Barracks the comment was made that "these are satisfactory and no discomfort exists. Quarters are usually warm". The policy with respect to leave, providing as it did a 36-hour pass twice each month, in addition to ten days every three months; was naturally a source of general satisfaction to Battalion personnel. This satisfaction extended to the question of pay, and; as qualified parachutists received the basic army pay plus the special rate (see para 21) the statement could be safely made that: "This unit remains the best paid in the Canadian Army" (ibid). Relations with the British component of 6 Airborne Div were at all times excellent. During the period 22-31 Jan 44, the entire Battalion, less a skeleton crew, as again on ten day's leave.

#### 1st CANADIAN PARACHUTE TRAINING COMPANY

31. During October 1943, the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., drew attention of General McNaughton to the fact that the existing organization of Canadian reinforcement units provided no facilities for the training of reinforcement for 1 Cdn Para Bn (C.M.H.Q. field 1/Para Tps/1: General Montague to General McNaughton, 12 Oct 43). The suggestion was made that approval be granted for the organization of a training increment to the unit. The proposal was adopted, but it was later discovered that reinforcements for the increment would have to be computed at intense rates applicable to a field force unit, rather than the quiet rates applicable to C.M.H.Q. units, and, in addition,

"administrative difficulties with reference to the posting of reinforcements developed" (ibid: General Montague to General McNaughton, 17 Nov 43). A decision was accordingly reached to abandon the training increment idea, and to substitute for it a Canadian Parachute Training Company. The latter would be a separate unit, but would be located with, and would be under command of 1 Cdn Para Bn while that unit was in the United Kingdom (ibid). The proposed establishment of the Training Company consisted of 5 officers and 32 other ranks, to hold and train 14 officers and 348 other rank reinforcements. Pending formal authorization by the Privy Council, which was forthcoming on 18 Feb 44 (ibid: Tel a.G. 1911, DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, 26 Feb 44), General McNaughton approved this establishment on 22 Nov 43. The Training Company, under Major D.H. Taylor, was actually attached to the Battalion for rations, quarters and administration, with effect 1 Jan 44 (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, 7 Jan 44).

#### MOBILIZATION AND PREPARATION FOR D-DAY (MARCH - JUNE 1944)

32. A routine mobilization of 6 Airborne Div for service overseas was ordered by the War Office on 23 Dec 43, to be complete by 0001 hours, 1 Feb 44 (C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: Tel 51493, WAR OFFICE rptd to C.M.H.Q. file 6/1 Para Bn/1: War Office Urgent Memorandum 79/Mob/5774/597 (A.G. 5 Mob) 5 Jan 44). The mobilization order referred to 1 Cdn Para Bn as a unit within the Airborne Division, whereupon two legal issues at once arose in connection with Order to Detail No. 13, which had placed the Battalion "in combination" with the Airborne Division (see para 17). First, there was the question of whether the War Office could legally order the mobilization of 1 Cdn Para Bn;

second, there was the point that the Order of Detail applied only to service within the United Kingdom. The opinion of the D.J.A.G. at C.M.H.Q. was that "an order of the War Office to mobilize for service outside the U.K. can be said to be legal insofar as mobilization itself is concerned but not in respect of serving abroad" (C.M.H.Q. file 6/1 Para Bn/1: D.J.A.G. to A.D.A.G. (A), 8 Jan 44). To settle the first matter, on 23 Feb 44, C.M.H.Q. Mobilization Order No. 98 was issued to mobilize 1 Cdn Para Bn by 29 Feb 44, "under supervision of H.Q. Southern Command, in collaboration with H.Q. First Cdn Army" (Ibid: Mobilization Order no. 98, 23 Feb 44).

33. The second point, that of 1 Cdn Para Bn acting "in combination" with British Military Forces outside the United Kingdom as well as within, was covered by the general terms of Order of Detail No. 10 of 20 Mar 44 made by the Chief of Staff, C.M.H.Q., and the G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army. The operative parts of the Order of Detail ordered that:

- (a) Components of First Cdn Army, and
  
- (b) Canadian elements of Airborne, G.H.Q., L. of C., Base or other troops, which are now or hereafter serving under command 21 Army Group, do act in combination with the Military Forces of His Majesty raised in the United Kingdom or any other part of the British Commonwealth and also serving under command 21 Army Group.

34. The effect of the Order of Detail of 11 Oct 43 and the Directive of the same date had been to place 1 Cdn Para Bn under command 6 Airborne Div. That

Division had come under command 21 Army Group by 28 Jul 43 (C.M.H.Q. file 6/1 Para Bn/1: Letter Lt.-Gen. McNaughton to Maj.-Gen. Montague, dated 28 Jul 43), and it had so remained since that time. The consequence was that when Order of Detail No. 10 or 20 Mar 44 was made, 1 Cdn Para Bn, as a unit in 21 Army Group, was automatically "in combination" within and without the United Kingdom with the British Military Forces.

35. Routine training continued along the lines indicated above during March, April and May 1944. The prospect of impending operations against the enemy, for which 6 Airborne Div as part of 21 Army Group under General Sir Bernard Montgomery had been carefully groomed, grew daily more certain. Appropriate administrative arrangements for the battalion were completed. The unit changed to a field return basis with effect 6 Mar 44; and, on 26 May, the Liaison Increment with H.Q., 6 Airborne Div (see para 19) was reallocated from H.Q. First Canadian Army to C.M.H.Q. This reallocation was largely due to the fact that C.M.H.Q. provided a more direct link with N.D.H.Q. in the matter of reinforcements, and because the forthcoming operations in NORMANDY sent the Parachute Battalion into action ahead of First Cdn Army (Hist Sec file AEF/1 Cdn Para Bn/C/D: Interview with Maj W.H. Hemphill, 2 Jun 45). In harmony with the accelerated tempo of events, drafts of reinforcements from Canada poured into the Training Company. Urgent representations had been made by the Commander, 6 Airborne Div, to have the supply of replacements speeded up in order to build up an adequate reserve by the target date. Wastage during the battalion's non-operational role had been more rapid than originally foreseen, and on 1 Mar 44 C.M.H.Q. had reported the reinforcement situation to N.D.H.Q. as serious, with deficiencies in the total establishment of Battalion,

Training Company and Reinforcement Pool amounting to 16 officers and 348 other ranks (C.M.H.Q. file 2/Para Tps/1/2, Tel G.S. 639 CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 1 Mar 44). A subsequent revision reduced these figures to a deficiency of 248 other ranks and a surplus of six officers existing on 14 mar 44 (ibid: Tel G.S. 832, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 17 Mar 44).

36. On 15 Apr 44 a draft of six officers and 90 other ranks arrived, to be followed, on 25 April, by a further draft of six officers and 100 other ranks (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Trg Coy, Jun 44: Summary of events from December 1943 to 31 May 1944). These and additional reinforcements were necessary in view of the following War Office forecast of invasion activity for the 6 Airborne Div:

First month	-	double intense
Second month	-	quiet
Third month	-	intense
Fourth month	-	quiet
Fifth month	-	intense
Sixth month	-	quiet

(These monthly intense rates were 25% officers and 20% O.R.s. of ".E. Quiet rates were 3/4 percent, of all ranks.)

(C.M.H.Q. file 1/Para Tps/1: Col. J.G.K. Strathy to  
D.A.G., C.M.H.Q., 15 May 44.)

By the middle of May, 1 Cdn Para Bn together with its Training Company and Reinforcement Pool had a surplus of 21 officers and a shortage of only 67 other ranks. It was proposed to make up this deficiency from United Kingdom sources (ibid: Tel G.S. 1621, CANMILITRY to DEFENSOR, 31 May 44).

37. As D-Day approached for Operation "OVERLORD", the code name given to the Allied invasion of France on 6 Jun 44, all jumping activity within the Battalion stopped. The cessation of this form of training was necessary in order to prevent casualties to key personnel in the period immediately preceding the invasion. Consequently, the Battalion did not take part in the mass jump performed by 1 Cdn Para Trg Coy on 26 May 44, when the Canadian parachutists were honoured with a visit from Their Majesties, the King and Queen. 1 Cdn Para Bn and its equipment were, however, included in the royal inspection (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Trg Coy, Jun 44: Summary of events from December 1943 to 31 May 44).

38. The Battalion's activities in Operation. "OVERLORD" form the subject of a separate report (No. 139). As far as the present account is concerned the story of the unit's formation and early training in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom may be said to have reached its conclusion when the Battalion emplaned at DOWN AMPNEY (between SWINDON and CIRENCESTER) at 2330 hours, 5 Jun 44. Two hours later, with all the skill and confidence engendered by their training, Canadian parachutists were dropping on French soil in the first wave of the long anticipated invasion.

39. The foregoing report was begun by Capt T.M. Hunter and was revised and completed by Maj G.W.L. Nicholson. The material contained in it has been checked by Major W.H. Hemphill, D.A.A. & Q.M.G., Cdn Liaison Sec, H.Q. 6 Airborne Div. Para 15-18 and 32-34 have been examined and approved by Brig. W.A.I . Anglin, V.J.A.G.

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FURTHER MATERIAL RELATING TO THE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING OF  
THE 1ST CANADIAN PARACHUTE BATTALION

40. This appendix supplements the information contained in those sections of Report No. 138 which deal with the background and the formation and early training of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion. The chief sources of information have been the relevant files at A.H.Q. Other material consulted included the War Diary of General A.G.L. McNaughton, various directorate diaries at A.H.Q., and the unit War Diary. For convenience in reference, the paragraphs are numbered consecutively with those of Report No. 138.

BACKGROUND TO FORMATION OF UNIT

41. Although the memorandum prepared by Colonel Burns in November 1940 was the first to be brought to the attention of the Overseas authorities (see para 3), that officer had put forward similar proposals three months earlier, on 13 Aug. This earlier memorandum was examined by Col (later Lt-Gen) J.C. Murchie, D.M.O. & I., N.D.H.Q., who expressed the opinion that although the value of the parachute troops in certain situations was very great, the provision of such troops by Canada would be a project of doubtful value to the combined Empire war effort in view of the expenditure of time, money, and equipment which would be involved. Further, having regard to the probable operational roles of the Airborne Forces, it would be likely that any Canadian

parachute units would form part of a United Kingdom Parachute Corps, would be difficult to administer and would be largely out of Canadian control during

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\* This appendix was prepared by Major D.H. Cunningham on 5 Dec 49. operations. For these reasons Col Murchie did not recommend the formation of a Canadian Parachute Battalion, but considered, rather, that the Canadian war effort should be directed towards the maintenance of such commitments as had already been accepted. "If any additional commitments are accepted these should be limited to the formation of units to which Canadians are particularly adapted by reason of the nature of this country". (H.Q.S. 8846: Memorandum by D.M.O. & I. for D/C.G.S., 16 Aug 40).

42. Col Burns continued, however, to press his views on the subject, and on 28 Aug submitted a further memorandum, for consideration by the C.G.S. on the desirability of creating a body of Canadian airborne troops. In this memorandum he pointed out that, apart from the advantages to be gained by the use of such troops in the main theatres of operations, they would be useful for employment in Canada as a highly mobile internal security force. He stated that:

In the defence of Canada against raids or a serious attempt at invasion, they would be the quickest means of building up a front against an attacker, and also could harass his communications. We have often thought of the problem of preventing an enemy from establishing a base for supplying

submarines in remote sections of the coast which could not easily be reached by land.

If we had even a battalion of Paratroops who could be landed to counter-attack such bases, it would make their establishment very much more difficult for an enemy; it would probably be necessary for him to send about a brigade of troops for land defence.

(Ibid, Memorandum by Col Burns for C.G.S., 28 Aug 40).

Col Burns also mentioned the stimulating effect that the commencement of paratroop training would have on the morale of both the services and the public. General Crerar expressed agreement with the long term aspects of Col Burns' proposal but felt that: "It is not a project of importance to the winning of the war just now." (Ibid). Further, a paratroop training programme would mean a heavy commitment in machinery and organization (such as the provision of a transport squadron) for the R.C.A.F., which he was loathe to introduce. He suggested that Col Burns bring the matter to his attention in three months' time. (Ibid)

43. In November, Col Burns prepared a further memorandum for the C.G.S. in which he reiterated the points raised in his earlier submissions, and when in December the C.G.S. visited C.M.H.Q., he took steps to ascertain the view of the Overseas Commander and the War Office on this subject. (For policy

discussions during the visit of the C.G.S. to London and subsequent to November 1941 see paras 3-7).

44. As the Army Programme was under discussion during the closing weeks of 1941 and since it was not desired to bring forward the matter of paratroop training at that time, the implications of General McNaughton's cable of 3 Nov (see para 7) were not considered at N.D.H.Q. until January 1942. On 5 Jan, Maj-Gen M.A. Pope, V.C.G.S., in a memorandum prepared for Lt-Gen K. Stuart, C.G.S., stated that although he found it difficult to reconcile the Corps Commander's statement of policy in August 1941 (see para 5) with his subsequent statement in November, he felt that the latter's intention was to initiate paratroop training only as and when prospective operations indicated a need for such troops. For this reason, and because he could not see that the operations of the home army provided any scope for the employment of parachute troops, the V.C.G.S. felt that N.D.H.Q. could afford to defer action on the matter for the time being. (Ibid: Memorandum by V.C.G.S. for C.G.S., 5 Jan 42). In reply General Stuart ordered that C.M.H.Q be advised that he would discuss the matter with General McNaughton in the near future\*. (Ibid, Minute by C.G.S. for V.C.G.S., 6 Jan 42)

45. During the following months the theory continued to be held at N.D.H.Q. that when the need for parachute units arose they could be rapidly and easily formed by the conversion of existing infantry units. This was clearly revealed in a statement made by Mr. Ralston in the House of Commons on 22 Apr.

The formation of a paratroops unit is not being gone ahead which at the present moment, but rather the training of men so they can be used as paratroopers when the time comes, with the additional training to be done with aircraft, except the preliminary jumps which are done from a tower.

(Debates - House of Commons)

1942 Session, Vol 2, p. 1852)

46. In June, NDHQ sent Lt-Col R.H. Keefler of D.M.T. to the U.S.A. to obtain up-to-date information respecting the training of paratroops as carried out at the U.S. Army Parachute School at Fort Benning, Ga, and to investigate the possibility of obtaining for the Canadian Army parachute jump towers of the type used in the U.S.A. Col Keefler's findings in the U.S.A. were instrumental in bringing about a complete reversal in policy at N.D.H.Q. One of the principal conclusions arrived at in his report was that once paratroop training was

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\* It is probable that the C.G.S. discussed the Paratroops question with Gen McNaughton during the latter's visit to Canada during February and March 1942, but neither the relevant files at A.H.Q. nor the War Diaries or files of General McNaughton, make any mention of the matter.

started, it was necessary to carry it through - if excessive wastage of personnel through refusals was to be avoided - to the ultimate step of jumping

from an aircraft. Many personnel, he felt, who would make the grade initially on the basis that they felt, who would make the grade initially on the basis that they "would't quit", might be reluctant to volunteer a second time if interruption of training made this necessary. Another factor, which would operate to reduce wastage of personnel and to increase the number, of volunteers, was the attraction of belonging to a "Corps d'Élite". He recommended that a unit of some sort, complete with all equipment and aircraft, be organized from the start or, if this was not possible, that the project be postponed until this could be done. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 21: Report of Visit to U.S.A. of Lt-Col R.H. Keefler, M.T. (L), N.D.H.Q., 1-14 Jun 42).

47. On the basis of this report and from discussion with A.V.M. Steadman, R.C.A.F., who had recently returned from a visit to 6 A.B. Div in the U.K., the decision was taken to organize, train, and equip a parachute battalion for employment in Canada with the operational role of "recapture of aerodromes or reinforcing remote localities" (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 5: Tel, Murchie to Stuart, 20 Jun 42). In view of the facilities available in the U.S.A. for initial training of instructors and as the unit was for operational employment in Canada, it was intended to follow the U.S. training system. This involved the use of jump towers for initial training and the employment of Army personnel for all training, exclusive of the operation and maintenance of aircraft. The battalion would be organized, however, on the basis of a British War Establishment (see para 8). On 26 Jul the proposal was placed before the Minister and on 8 Jul received his approval. (Ibid: Memorandum by Maj-Gen J.C. Murchie for the Minister, 26 Jun 42).

## FORMATION AND EARLY TRAINING

48. Meanwhile the Army had gone ahead with preliminary planning for the organization, and training of the parachute battalion. On 27 Jun Brigadier (later Maj-Gen) E.G. Weeks, D.C.G.S. (B), announced, at an Army-R.C.A.F. conference called to discuss the training of airborne troops, that in order that training could commence immediately, the Army intended to follow training methods of the U.S. Army rather than those of the British Army. By taking advantage of the U.S. Army facilities it was hoped to train a cadre and if necessary a limited number of personnel with a minimum of delay. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 2: Memorandum by D.C.G.S.(B) for C.G.S., 27 Jun 42). At a subsequent inter-service meeting it was decided that, on the return of its cadre to Canada, the unit would be assembled at Shilo Camp where individual training would be carried out. This camp, which was located within easy reach of two aerodromes, at Douglas (12 miles distant) and Brandon (18 miles distant), had been selected on the recommendation of the R.C.A.F. When the battalion had completed individual training, it would move to an area, to be selected at a later date, to carry out advanced training. (Ibid: Meeting of Inter-service Committee, 25 Jul 42).

49. On 16 Jul N.D.H.Q. requested, through the Military Attache, Washington, vacancies at Fort Benning Parachute School for six officers and 20 N.C.O.s. It was anticipated that this personnel would be concentrated and ready to proceed to Fort Benning on or after 15 Aug. On the 21st, word was received from Washington that the United States authorities had granted the required number of vacancies for the course at Fort Benning commencing 17 Aug

(H.Q.S. 8846-1: C.G.S. to Military Attache, Washington, 16 Jul 42; Tel Military Attache, Washington, to N.D.H.Q., 21 Jul 42).

50. Originally it was intended that the training in Canada would commence on 12 Oct (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 4: A.G. Circular Letter, 12 Aug 42). In September, however, it became apparent, from the difficulties being encountered in the preparation of certain items of the training equipment, particularly the jump tower, that it would not be possible to commence training at Shilo Camp before December at the earliest. In the light of this situation the training plan had to be revised. On 24 Sep N.D.H.Q. directed the Military Attache at Washington to seek permission from the U.S. Army for 55 personnel to be sent to Fort Benning for the full course starting 12 Oct, these to be followed by the same number each week until the course starting 14 Dec. (Ibid: Tel C.G.S. to Military Attache, Washington, 24 Sep 42). On the 28th, N.D.H.Q. received word that U.S. Army Ground Forces had approved the scheme. (Ibid: Tel, Military Attache, Washington, to N.D.H.Q., 28 Sep 42).

51. On 3 Oct, however, a further change occurred in the situation with regard to Shilo Camp. On that day representatives of the Canadian Army and the U.S. Army, meeting in Ottawa, selected Shilo as a suitable site for cold weather testing of U.S. and Canadian Army vehicles. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 10: Minutes of a Meeting held in connection with the Selection of a Suitable Site for Cold Weather Tests of U.S. and Canadian Army Vehicles, 2 Oct 42). Since these tests were to commence on 15 Nov and continue until 15 Mar 43, and as the accommodation and training facilities at Shilo would not be available during that time, it was necessary to find suitable alternative accommodation

for 1 Cdn Para Bn. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 11: Minutes of the Directors Co-ordinating Meeting, 14 Oct 42). Agreement was reached with the U.S. Army Ground Forces for the extension of the existing arrangements for training at Fort Benning and for the provision of facilities for the concentration of the battalion in the U.S. (Ibid: U.S. Military Attache, Ottawa, to D.M.O. & P., N.D.H.Q., 28 Oct 42).

52. The recruiting plan for 1 Cdn para Bn was based on the rate of intake at Fort Benning. Volunteers were to be concentrated in Canada in sufficient numbers to ensure the maintenance of the weekly quota of 55 for despatch to Fort Benning. (H.Q.S. 8846-1: A.G. Circular Letter, 10 Aug 42).

This plan, which was based on an estimated rate of wastage of 10 per week, would, it was estimated, bring the battalion up to full strength by the end of the training schemes. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 2: Minutes of a Meeting called to discuss the Organization and Administration of 1 Cdn Para Bn, 6 Aug 42). At the beginning it was laid down that only personnel who had had both basic and advanced training would be eligible. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, A.G., Circular Letter, 10 Aug 42). On 30 Sep, however, it was decided that in future personnel need only complete their basic training. (Ibid, Vol 4: Minutes of Directors Co-ordinating Meeting, 20 Sep 42.) If possible 30% of the volunteers were to be found among bilingual French-Canadian personnel). As the battalion was being raised for operational duty in Canada, Home Defence (N.R.M.A.) as well as active personnel were permitted to volunteer. In the event, by 15 Oct some 30 Home Defence personnel had volunteered for service with the Parachute Battalion and of these 13 had been included in the first two quotes while 17

others were being held in reserve for future quotes. To enable these personnel to serve outside of Canada, an Order-in-Council was passed (P.C. 10003) on 3 Nov 42. This order specifically authorized the despatch of H.D. personnel to the U.S.A. for the purpose of training with 1 Cdn Para Bn. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 10: D.M.T. to D.C.G.S.(B), 15 Oct 42.)

53. The initial response to the call for volunteers was disappointing, and on 10 Oct the V.C.G.S. cabled General Stuart, then in London, that he considered that the reason for this was probably because the unit was labelled for home defence and included N.R.M.A. personnel, and suggested that the latter no longer be permitted to volunteer. The C.G.S. was not in favour of this proposal, however, replying that because of the manpower situation such personnel must continue to be used. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 10: Tel, Murchie to Stuart, 1 Oct 42; Tel, Stuart to Murchie, 5 Oct 42.)

54. The inclusion of Home Defence personnel continued to be a matter for dissatisfaction, particularly within the unit itself. On 2 Nov Brigadier E.G. Weeks in a memorandum prepared for the C.G.S., stated:

There is a definite feeling that the inclusion of HD personnel in 1 Cdn Para Bn is having an undesirable effect in respect to the type of man who has volunteered to serve in this unit. The inference is that the unit would be used for employment in Canada only, whereas the type of soldier required for parachute training is the aggressive individual who is anxious to serve overseas.

(H.Q.S. 8846-7: Memo by D.C.G.S.(B), for C.G.S., 2 Nov 42).

Brigadier Weeks strongly recommended that only Active personnel be permitted to volunteer for service with 1 Cdn Para Bn. He felt that it would not be necessary to announce that the unit was for service anywhere but that the restriction of volunteers to active personnel only would result in an improvement in the type of personnel obtained. (Ibid.) This proposal met with the approval of the C.G.S., and on 19 Nov an instruction was issued to the effect that, commencing with the quota due on 30 Nov, all parachute volunteers for 1 Cdn Para Bn must be Active personnel; Home Defence personnel were to be accepted only if they "went active" prior to their despatch from their home district. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 10: A.G. Circular Letter, 19 Nov 42.)

55. The qualifying course at Fort Benning took place in four weekly stages, with a new course commencing each week. The training cadre completed this course in September and, as planned, the first quota entered the school on 12 Oct. By early December 1942, a number of the Canadian personnel were being used as instructors at the School (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 15; Parade State, 1 Cdn Para Bn, 5 Dec 42). On 1 Feb 43 a Canadian school was set up within the American school and thereafter all training of Canadian was carried out by Canadian instructors. (H.Q.S. 8846-7: Progress Report, 1 Cdn Para Bn, 15 Jan 43; H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 19: C.O., 1 Cdn Para Bn, to Secretary, D.N.D., 4 Feb 43). Between August 1942 and March 1943, when 1 Cdn Para Bn returned to Canada, 42 officers and 947 other ranks were despatched from Canada to Fort Benning. Of these 41 officers and 780 other ranks qualified as

parachutists. Not all remained with the unit, however, 109 other ranks being posted to 2 Cdn Para Bn (the Canadian component of 1 Special Service Force). Of the remaining personnel 151 failed to qualify, while a number of others were s.o.s. for such reasons as desertion, hospitalization, detention etc. There were two accidental deaths, one of whom, Maj H.D. Proctor, A/O.C., 1 Cdn Para Bn, was killed on 7 Sep 42 when making his first jump from an aircraft. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 22: Weekly Parade State 1 Cdn Para Bn, 20 Mar 43; W.D., D.A.G., N.D.H.Q., September 1942: Appx 1. Memorandum by D.A.G., 8 Sep 42.)

56. When 1 Cdn Para Bn returned to Canada on 22 Mar 43, it had a strength of 41 officers and 671 other ranks, of whom 39 officers and 621 other ranks were qualified paratroopers. At that time the battalion was carrying 15 officers and 81 other ranks supernumerary to establishment as the nucleus of a proposed training centre in Canada. (H.Q.S. 8846-1, Vol 22: Weekly Parade State 1 Can Para Bn, 20 Mar 43; and NDHQ Para Trg Instr No. 1, 26 Mar 43). As all ranks were granted leave immediately on arrival in Canada, it was not until 15 Apr that the battalion assembled at Shilo Camp and resumed training. Using a R.C.A.F. Lockheed "Lodestar", the unit carried out its first jumps from aircraft in Canada on 4 May (W.D., 1 Cdn Para Bn, 4 May 43).