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Enemy Air Action and the Canadian Army
in the United Kingdom, 1939-43

1. This Report is an account of the effect of enemy air action on units and men of the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom during the period 1939 - 1943, and of the part played by Canadian Units in the defence of Britain against the enemy air force in those years.

2. The Canadian Army Overseas from the arrival of the 1st Division in December 1939 until the summer of 1943, found itself playing, in the main, a static defensive role in Britain. During this period the Germans did not venture to attempt the invasion of the United Kingdom although they were securely based upon the French coast just across the Channel; but they have launched repeated air attacks in varying strength against it. In these circumstances, Canadian contact with the enemy has been in great part through these air attacks alone, and their importance in the history of the Canadian Army in this war is therefore not inconsiderable. This Report falls into two main sections: the story, first of the Canadian casualties caused by the Luftwaffe's bombs and machine guns, and secondly, of the losses inflicted on

the enemy by the Canadian Army as its anti-aircraft organization grew in size and improved in equipment.

COURSE OF THE AIR ATTACKS ON BRITAIN

3. During the opening months of the war, Britain and Germany made no effort to cripple each other by air attack, and not until the night of 9 May 40 was a bomb dropped on English soil (at CANTERBURY), although the first to fall on the British Isles had been dropped on the Orkneys in the previous October (Front Line 1940-41: The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain: LONDON, HMSO, 1942, p. 6). Then the Low Countries and France fell before the tactics of the Blitzkrieg; and the first bombs fell on the LONDON Area, at ADDINGTON, Surrey, on 18 June. Night bombers were sent over thereafter in some numbers as a herald of what was to follow (ibid., p. 6) and a few appeared by day as well. Germany was working feverishly during the early summer, getting ready for the day when the Island might be attacked with a certainty of success. Her preparations were thorough, and Goering, it would seem, believed the Luftwaffe could destroy the Royal Air Force and in great part cripple the other defences of Britain as a preliminary to the movement of the Panzer Divisions across the Channel. It is believed that to this end the German High Command has conceived of an air attack in three phases. Shipping and ports were to be the first targets. The Luftwaffe would then turn its attention to the inland fighter aerodromes; and finally, with the RAF out of the picture as a real force, LONDON could be bombed into submission as WARSAW and ROTTERDAM had been (The Battle of British, August-October 1940, HMSO, LONDON, 1941, pp. 9-10).

4. Massed flights of bombers escorted by fighters made 26 attacks on convoys and the English Channel ports in the period 8 Aug to 18 Aug, creating a great deal of havoc, even though the bombers were no match for the RAF (ibid., p. 10). But the Hurricanes and Spitfires had to be dealt with if the Luftwaffe was to bring Britain to her knees, so after a five-day rest to recoup the loss of 697 aircraft (ibid., p. 11), Goering turned his attention to the inland aerodromes. There were 35 major attacks up to 5 Sep (ibid., p. 14), but again the RAF came out on top, although not without paying a heavy price. Much damage had been done, but the first two objectives were still unattained on 7 Sep 40, when Goering nevertheless ordered the main attack switched to LONDON. Brigadier (now Major-General) M.A. Pope, then at CMHQ, remarked later that the capital that day presented an appearance which well illustrated Jomini's famous definition of war: "A dreadful and impassioned drama". On the days that followed, more and more fighters appeared with the bombers and there were dogfights in the skies of Kent, the Thames Estuary and the South in general. The Germans suffered terrific losses (185 aircraft on 15 Sep alone), but if LONDON could be knocked out, then success would still, it seemed, be within their grasp (ibid., p. 17). The people of LONDON with the RAF fighting over their heads refused to be beaten, however, and the heart of the Empire was saved. In what has come to be known as the Battle of Britain, which "died gradually away" during October, the RAF won the first great Allied victory of the war.

5. As autumn progressed, and daylight raids produced only heavy losses, a change was made to night bombing. These night raids, which continued intermittently until May 1941, wrought great destruction in LONDON but failed

to produce the necessary result, so a new policy was introduced with the big night raid on COVENTRY of 14 November -- that of striking at industrial centres and ports in an endeavour to cripple war production and imports (Front Line, pp. 82-83). The new policy was likewise a failure. Hitler now turned eastward, and on 22 Jun 41 his armies attacked Russia. England now ceased abruptly to be the main theatre of the European war. There was no daylight alert in LONDON from 6 Jun 41 until 16 Mar 42, (The Telegraph, LONDON, 17 Mar 42), and very few night alarms; after which date there was a continuance of small, sporadic raids chiefly for propaganda and nuisance purposes. Ports like PORTSMOUTH and PLYMOUTH, as well as occasionally LONDON itself, continued to receive visitors and damage, but the attack was now much weaker than before, and the defence much stronger.

6. The principal target of the German Air Force, after its initial attacks, had been Greater LONDON, and the Canadian troops, being in the main on or beyond the southern fringe of this area, were not directly involved in the worst of the air devastation. So great, however, had been the magnitude of the assault in the late summer of 1940, that many of the attacks had been met and thwarted over the Home Countries. In Surrey, where they were being held as a striking force in GHQ reserve to repel invasion, Canadians watched the spectacle of the battle over their heads. Many of the less experienced pilots who accompanied the veterans of the Luftwaffe in their flight to the main target daily turned off and directed their bombs onto outlying districts or were compelled to jettison them in order to escape from British fighters. Then again some of the enemy escorting fighter aircraft took the opportunity

of ground-strafting on the way home, and on these occasions were engaged by troops with whatever weapons were available.

THE CANADIANS IN THE "BLITZ"

7. News of the invasion of the Low Countries, and the possibility that now German Airborne attack and bombing might become a reality over Britain, caused orders to be issued to Units of the 1st Canadian Division, now at NORTHAMPTON after its move from ALDERSHOT in May, to man their AA machine guns during the daylight hours and to "Stand To" every morning from 0430 hrs to 0630 hrs and again at dusk (WD, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, May 1940). The War Diary of the 1st Canadian Division for 31 May notes that the GS01 had made arrangements for the 48th Highlanders to protect SYWELL aerodrome, the proposed base of the 110th AC Squadron RCAF, against possible attack by troop-carrying aircraft; this would appear to have been cancelled at the last moment by an order for the unit to return to ALDERSHOT (WD, 48th Highlanders of Canada, June 1940). All through the summer exercises were carried out by the Canadian Division on "Action against hostile parachutists" in the GUILDFORD - WESTERHAM district of Surrey where, after 21 July, it formed part of the new 7th Corps, constituted under the command of General McNaughton (See [Report No. 15](#), Appendix B) as a mobile counter-attack force in GHQ reserve. In this connection it should be noted that on 20 Aug a report was received, verified by the Home Guard, that enemy parachutists had been seen descending in the REIGATE area. A Platoon of the 48th Highlanders were despatched to investigate but could find no trace of any invaders; eventually it was learned that RAF personnel putting up a new balloon barrage had been mistaken for

descending Germans (WD, GS, HQ 1 Cdn Div, Aug 40). Canadian troops, however, captured four German airmen who had baled out of their planes during the same month and passed them through Div HQ to the RAF (ibid.). The following excerpt from the War Diary of the 48th Highlanders of 30 Aug is interesting in this regard:

P.S.M. Osborne's platoon followed a German bomber which was forced down. They drove their 15 cwt too close to the plane which exploded and set fire to the truck destroying it and a lot of ammunition and guns which was (sic) loaded on the truck.

8. In July the Canadians began to suffer casualties. How different from previous conflicts this war was proving to be, is shown by the fact that the first Canadian unit in England to sustain casualties by enemy attack was No. 2 Army Field Workshop, RCOC. Hitherto, Ordnance had been considered merely as a supply and maintenance service for combatant troops. The tradesmen of this unit were busily engaged in servicing Norton Motorcycle combinations at Salamanca Barracks, ALDERSHOT, on 6 Jul 40, when raiders appeared and two HE bombs were dropped. Three other ranks (B.94646, SQMS Knox, R.T.; B.88063, S/Sgt Bailey, J.F.; and B.94409, Pte Sword, L.H.) were killed, while a Lieutenant and 28 Other Ranks were wounded. (A complete list, prepared by Records, CMHQ, of Canadian casualties caused by air raids to 1 Nov 43 can be found on CMHQ file 18/AIR RAIDS UK/1). Despite this, the Nortons were delivered to 2 Cdn Recce Sqn the same day, and General McNaughton, who arrived to inspect the work of the unit three-quarters of an hour afterwards,

complimented it for its coolness under fire (WD, 2 Army Field Workshop, RCOC, July 1940).

9. As the raids increased in intensity, seemingly as the prelude to invasion, troops had to seek shelter more frequently while the AA teams, inadequately equipped with Bren and Lewis guns, tried to shoot it out with the bombers and low flying fighters. The Seaforths note in their War Diary of 26 Aug that air raids "are incessantly hampering training. Troops spend considerable amount of time squatting in slit trenches". Nos. 2 and 3 Cdn Infantry Holding Units at BORDEN, Hants, were attacked by six bombers in the late afternoon of 16 Aug. Men in barracks were got under cover without casualties being received from the falling HE and incendiary bombs which destroyed the tin huts of the last named unit. Troops who were outside the barrack areas, took cover in ditches; but one group from 2 Cdn Infantry Holding Unit which was a short distance away at the time of the attack was caught in the danger zone. Lt L.A. Wheeler, of the Carleton and York Regt, in charge of this party, managed to get his men under cover but was himself hit by a bomb fragment as he stood on the road. He was killed instantly -- the first Canadian officer to be killed in an air raid. In addition, there were two men killed and 11 wounded from among the personnel who were outside of both barracks areas at the time (WD, 2 Cdn Infantry Holding Unit, August 1940). Two days later four Messerschmitt 110s attacked the 1st Division Supply Column, RCASC, at OUTWOOD, Surrey, flying a mere 50 feet over the camp with machine guns firing. A Corporal was shot in the head and died instantly while directing men into slit trenches and two Privates were wounded before

the machine gun crews got into action (WD, 1 Div Supply Column, RCASC, August 1940).

10. The personnel of CMHQ were in the thick of the LONDON Blitz and took their chance with the Londoners. For a time this static headquarters was literally in the front line, more exposed to enemy attack than any other part of the Canadian Army Overseas. The area in which the Sun Life Building is situated was repeatedly bombed during September, October, and November and, although the building was not actually hit, it suffered damage from the effect of a bomb landing close to the entrance in Pall Mall East on the night of 10/11 October ([Report No. 5](#)). Major A.D. Cameron was wounded on 27 Sep and an OR on each of the two preceding days -- the first casualties for CMHQ. This story is covered in [Report No. 5](#), however, and the condition of bombed LONDON itself is described in Reports [1](#) and [8](#). A Lieutenant and three Other Ranks of CMHQ were wounded during October. Colonel J.K. Lawson, later killed at HONG KONG, received injuries on 22 Dec, during a raid on LIVERPOOL, while he was waiting to return to Canada by ship. He had been attached temporarily to CMHQ to study the system of training overseas.

11. Throughout the autumn the Canadians in Surrey had been subjected to relatively few attacks by the raiders which had passed on over them to kill more than 13,000 civilians in September and October alone ([Evening Standard](#), LONDON, 8 Mar 41). Although 7th Corps was employed on an operational role in the defence of Britain there was certainly little deliberate attempt to strike at it when more vulnerable targets were at hand. A soldier of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regt was seriously injured during the first week of October,

two men belonging to the Corps Troops Supply Column, RCASC, were killed the following week and the Progress Report for the week ending 19 Oct mentions one officer of 1 A Tk Regt, RCA, as wounded by enemy action (CMHQ file 4/PROGRESS/2). There were two more Canadian fatalities before the end of the month; then the raids on the LONDON area began to lessen in intensity during November, and there was a comparative lull until March, broken by such episodes as the great fire raid of 29 Dec 40 in which a considerable section of the City was destroyed (See [Report No. 1](#)). There were fewer raiders now passing over the Canadian areas and no further casualties occurred until the second week of January 1941, when 2 A Tk Regt RCA had three gunners killed and another wounded (CMHQ file 4/PROGRESS/2).

12. An improvement in flying weather with the coming of March 1941 brought the last phase of the Blitz ([Front Line](#), p. 88) to LONDON. On Saturday night 8/9 Mar, bombs landed in the vicinity of CMHQ and an HE bomb wrecked the Cafe de Paris in Coventry Street, causing many casualties, eight of whom were Canadian military personnel. Capt P.F. Seagram of the 48th Highlanders, Lt J.D. Wright of 11 Fd Coy RCE, Sgt R.A. Bradshaw and Cpl G.W. Quinn were killed (the last two mentioned being the first fatal casualties suffered by CMHQ), while two officers, a nursing sister and one OR were wounded (see [Report No. 17](#)). [The Times](#), LONDON, in its report mentions that:

It was filled with a gay crowd on Saturday evening, many in uniform. The lively band had opened its programme and the floor was crowded with dancers. "Oh, Johnny", the band was playing,

while outside the guns crashed, but here unheard against the accompaniment of cheerful music and chatter.

Then suddenly there was an explosion somewhere above, the ceiling fell in, and all but one of the lights went out. The restaurant was filled with dust and fumes, which blackened faces and frocks. Couples dancing had been flung apart; those able to do so struggled to their feet, and many searched amid the confusion with torches and lighted matches for their partners of a second before. Many had been killed; others were seriously hurt. (The Times, LONDON, 10 Mar 41.)

13. The lull in the raids had caused night life to resume, and it was inevitable that a Saturday night attack would result in many casualties with so large a number of military personnel visiting LONDON on week-end leaves. The civilian air raid casualties for this month were 4298 killed and 4794 wounded (amended figures, The Times, 15 Oct 41). The ports and industrial centres also had taken a heavy pounding.

14. The following month (April, 1941) brought still heavier civilian casualties -- a total of 6,131 killed and 6,900 injured (The Times, 15 Oct 41). The night of 16/17 Apr witnessed one of the heaviest raids on LONDON. This results in the deaths of 21 Canadians and the wounding of 30 more, in LONDON and its suburbs. Incendiaries were dropped at SHIRLEY, CROYDON where 1 A TK Regt RCA was billeted. Officers and men turned out and successfully extinguished fire bombs, but a "Gun Tower" 15 cwt vehicle of 90 A Tk Bty,

returning to the unit, was almost completely destroyed by an HE bomb. A sergeant, a bombardier, and six gunners were killed and two gunners wounded (WD 1 Cdn A Tk Regt, April 1941). In WEST WICKHAM, Kent, flares were dropped on RHQ of 3 Fd Regt RCA followed by a few large HE bombs as well as incendiaries. The men commenced firing at the parachutes attached to the flares until ordered to desist and put out fires which had started in the unit's wagon lines. A large bomb which dropped in the billet area killed three and wounded four ORs of 19 Bty (WD, 3 Fd Regt, RCA, April 1941). In LONDON itself the destruction of the Victoria League Club (Malet Street, WC1) a popular resort for Canadian soldiers on leave, resulted in nine killed and 24 wounded (see Report No. [24](#), paras 20 and 21). Four of these latter deaths were of CMHQ personnel. In addition, a mechanic of the CMHQ garage was killed at his place of residence. This night's raid inflicted heavier casualties on the Canadian Army than any other single similar episode previous to the date of the present report. Subsequently, on the night of 10/11 May, in one of the largest raids on LONDON, during which Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and the British Museum were damaged and 33 of the invaders shot down (The Times, LONDON, 12 May 41), three Canadians on leave were killed.

15. In the fall of 1941 the Canadian Corps (now 1 Cdn Corps) began to move into Sussex, and by the beginning of December it had established itself in a mainly static role as the defender of 85 miles of Sussex coastline, ready to repel any possible invasion or seaborne raids coming from the shores of France ([Report No. 58](#)). During the next phase of the war, enemy air effort against Britain continued to be on a very reduced scale, and took the form of small tip-and-run raids chiefly against towns on or near the South Coast. An

episode of this period was the so-called "Baedeker" raids of April 1942, directed upon BATH, EXETER, NORWICH and YORK (The Times, 30 Apr and 15 Jun 42). Although the new role of 1 Cdn Corps brought it into an area particularly exposed to such raids, no fatalities occurred until 11 Aug 42, more than a year after the last Canadian loss of life from air attack. During a sharp raid on EASTBOURNE on this date a bomb landed in the doorway of a shelter in the billet area of 9 Cdn Fd Amb and killed eight and wounded three men of "A" Coy. Another leave incident occurred on 16 Dec 42 near the village of BRAMLEY when a lone enemy raider made a low-level attack on a train, killing one and wounding three soldiers who were returning to RYDINGHURST, Surrey, where their unit 2 Cdn Army Ord Fd Pk, was stationed (WD, 2 Cdn Army Ord Fd Pk, December 1942).

16. The LONDON Times of 24 May 43 reported, "Considerable damage and many casualties were caused when enemy tip-and-run raiders attacked three towns on the south coast early yesterday afternoon". The three towns were HASTINGS, BRIGHTON and EASTBOURNE. 7 Cdn Recce Regt at HASTINGS was the only Canadian unit to suffer loss of life on this occasion, but its loss was heavy. Twelve Focke-Wulf 190s swept in from the sea at roof-top level and sprayed the town with bullets as they released their bombs. The Queen's Hotel containing the Officers' Mess was demolished but by good luck no one was injured. The Men's Mess of "A" Squadron and the YMCA canteen, housed in the nearby Albany Hotel were destroyed by a bomb but, as the noon hour was just finishing fortunately only 50 men were present. The Regiment quickly mobilized its resources and besides getting its own men out of the ruins, aided the townspeople in the work of rescue. Truck loads of the injured were taken to the Royal East

Sussex Hospital and for three days the soldiers aided in the work of clearing up after the destruction. The Regiment lost 10 men killed, three of these having been buried in the ruins, and 31 were admitted to hospital (WD, 7 Cdn Recce Regt, May 1943). The Regiment did a particularly fine piece of work, from all accounts, in assisting the people of the town, and its War Diary contains an excellent description of the incident, complete with photographs.

17. The bombing on 9 Jul 43 of the Whitehall Theatre in EAST GRINSTEAD, Sussex (The Times, LONDON, 7 Aug 43), where Capt Harcourt of HQ 1 Cdn Corps and five men of 1 Cdn Corps Sigs were killed and one Signalman was wounded, was the only instance during the summer of 1943 in which Canadian casualties were caused. Small nuisance raids have been growing in number during the fall of this year (1943), and the LONDON area was visited almost nightly during October and the early part of November. The coastal towns have been receiving similar visitations and one tip-and-run raider over BOSCOMBE, in the BOURNEMOUTH area where 3 Cdn Div is concentrated at present, dropped a bomb in the lines of the Regiment de la Chaudiere at about 1800 hrs on 1 Nov. Major J.G. Savoie, who was attempting to reach shelter, was hit by a bomb splinter about 10 feet from his quarters and killed instantly, while Lt L. Frenette, who was just coming out of the Officers' Mess when the bomb landed, was quite seriously wounded (Telephone conversation Lt Hitsman -- Adjutant, Le Regiment de la Chaudiere, 19 Nov 43). Such raids have little military value but occasionally Canadian personnel may become casualties.

18. Information compiled by Records, CMHQ (CMHQ file 18/AIR RAIDS UK/1) indicates that the total casualties suffered by the Canadian Army in the

United Kingdom down to and including 1 Nov 43 were 21 officers and 277 other ranks. The breakdown of these figures is as follows:

	<u>Offrs</u>	<u>ORs</u>
<u>Killed</u>	5	71
<u>Died of Wounds</u>	1	12
<u>Wounded</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>194</u>
Totals	21	277

For details of Officer casualties, see Appendix "C".

GROWTH AND ACTIVITY OF CANADIAN AA UNITS

19. Since air activity over Britain was practically nil when the first Canadians arrived and during the early months of their stay it was not considered as a factor, except as regards training. The 1st Canadian Division did not at first contain a LAA Regt and the only weapon available for fire against even low-flying planes was the general purpose Lewis gun of the last war. It was this lack which prompted General McNaughton to suggest to the War Office that one of his machine-gun battalions might be converted into a LAA Regt. The impossibility of providing the necessary equipment, even for training purposes (the BEF had an insufficient quantity of Bofors guns in France and was eking them out with Lewis and Bren guns) led the War Office to reject this proposal on 13 May 40 (Memorandum of Major-General Crerar, 13 May 40, CMHQ file 1/M.GUN/2).

20. The first Canadians to be employed in a definite anti-aircraft role were lent to the Admiralty in March 1940. The story of the Shipping Anti-Aircraft Protective Detachments supplied by 1 Cdn Div for AA work in vessels in the North Sea, however, is covered in detail in paras 56-63 of the Preliminary Narrative, The History of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas 1939-40, Chapter IV. These Canadians did not see very much action and there were only a few instances of engagements with enemy planes. According to the Weekly Report submitted to CMHQ a team from the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada claimed to have inflicted damage on a JU 86 on 23 May, the plane being "seen to disappear into the fog losing height rapidly and with smoke pouring out of it but because of the fog it was impossible to find any wreckage" (CMHQ file 3/AA/2/2, Parker to Senior Officer, 2 Jun 40). Some further information as to life on the patrols themselves is contained in an account by Lt H.H.A. Parker, their Administering Officer, in Appendix XX of War Diary, GS, HQ 1 Cdn Div for April 1940.

21. The Canadian units sent to France in June 1940 did not shoot down any enemy aircraft despite a story concerning the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment at BREST; this is repeated here as it appeared in The Times, LONDON, of 18 June:

Their only engagement with the enemy was when they were evacuating on Sunday night and were bombed from the air. But they brought down the aeroplane with a Bren gun. Then they found it was a French machine flown by Germans.

The War Diary of 1 Cdn Inf Bde for that same day brands such stories as "a lot of damned fool and inaccurate misleading reports of our trip".

22. What would appear to be the first authentic account of an enemy plane being shot down by Canadian soldiers on land is given below, as it appears in the War Diary of 1 Tunnelling Coy, RCE, being the eye witness account of Major Howard Watson, Officer i/c No. 1 Section at that time:

On 18 Aug 40 No. 1 Section was camped at Harbledown near Canterbury. During the day there was an air raid. The men were ordered into slit trenches. There was a Lewis gun on an AA mounting manned by F.54631 Cpl Stevenson, F.J. and B.75955 Cpl Smither, F.W. A plane appeared -- flying low over a ridge just in front of the gun. The plane was low enough and near enough that its enemy markings could easily be seen. Stevenson fired at the plane and the tracer could be seen entering the fuselage. Stevenson kept on firing until he had emptied one magazine, then he lifted the gun off its mounting and together with Smithers ran forward to a site from which they could still see the aircraft and then continued to fire, resting the gun on, and firing over Smither's shoulder. The aircraft which was banking when Stevenson started to fire continued to swing in a circle and turned slightly on one side and crashed to the ground. The aircraft caught fire after hitting the ground.

It would seem likely that this plane was already in a damaged condition, probably having flown too low over an AA Battery and been hit, at the time it was engaged by Cpls Stevenson and Smithers. Queries to HQ, AA Command and GHQ Home Forces elicit only the fact that those headquarters have no record of the destruction of this aircraft (CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1).

23. The Toronto Scottish claimed the destruction of a Dornier 17 on 26 Nov 40, at PORTSLADE, Sussex, but again this success cannot be supported by the records of either HQ, AA Command or GHQ Home Forces (ibid.). Yet the claim of the Toronto Scottish is given a considerable degree of authenticity by the West Sussex Divisional Area Intelligence Report for 21-26 November 1940 which stated that:

A lone plane machine-gunned the beach near Pagham on the 22nd and escaped unscathed, but a Dornier 17 emulating those tactics on the afternoon of the 26th on the front of the 2nd Cdn Inf Bde was engaged by the Vickers guns of the Toronto Scottish and brought down in the sea. This is the first German plane shot down by Canadian Forces in Great Britain. (WD, Tor. Scot. R. (MG), November 1940.)

For further details of this incident, see [Report No. 19](#), para 12.

24. Canadian successes actually confirmed by AA Command, Fighter Command or GHQ Home Forces do not antedate 6 Aug 41. By this date the organization of

anti-aircraft units of the Royal Canadian Artillery overseas was already far advanced.

25. Considerable material relating to the organization of these units and particularly to the arrangements made for training them at COLCHESTER, is contained in Reports Nos. [18](#) and [57](#); see also CMHQ file 6/CDN AREA/1. As noted in [Report No. 57](#), the first Canadian LAA battery to reach the United Kingdom was 1 (later redesignated 2) (YORKTON) LAA Bty, which arrived in September 1940, and took over a group of Air Defence of Great Britain gunsites, using British equipment, on 15 Jan 41. From this time organization proceeded rapidly, and by the spring of 1941, 1, 2, and 3 Cdn LAA. Regts had been concentrated at COLCHESTER for training. The extreme shortage of Bofors guns was a limiting factor for a long period, but as units became adequately trained they were placed on operational duties under ADGB using British equipment.

26. In April 1941, it was decided to convert 2 Cdn Med Regt, RCA into a Heavy AA (Mobile) Regiment, there being now a probability of getting 3.7-inch equipment, and the unit reached England in August and September of 1941, (Reports Nos. [46](#), [57](#), [59](#)). On 1 Oct 41 the existing establishment at COLCHESTER was converted into 1 Cdn AA Bde, composed at the time of 2 Cdn Heavy AA Regt and 1 Cdn LAA Regt with 2, 3, 4 and 5 Cdn LAA Regts attached for training and administration, under the command of Brigadier G.A. McCarter (CMHQ file 6/CDN AREA/1, GS 2096, Canmilitary to Defensor, 6 Oct 41).

27. At the time of writing, 2 Cdn HAA Regt remains the only Canadian heavy anti-aircraft regiment overseas. There are, however, nine LAA regiments (numbered 1 to 8 and 11) in the Canadian Army Overseas (Overseas RO 3844).

28. The destruction of one German aircraft was officially credited to a Canadian unit in 1941. The incident took place on 6 Aug when a JU 88 was shot down near WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE by guns of "B" Troop, 16 Bty, 3 Cdn LAA Regt; the target was illuminated by searchlights of a British unit which thus shared in the victory. The episode is fully described in [Report No. 57](#), para 11, where it is pointed out that the detachment concerned was one deployed from COLCHESTER, where the system was being pursued of sending down detachments nightly for duty on the coast. The Troop scoring this success had not been to practice camp.

29. No further success was officially credited to a Canadian unit until May of 1942, but that year proved to be a moderately satisfactory one. Reference to Appendices "A" and "B", below, will indicate that a total of eight enemy aircraft were officially admitted as destroyed or damaged by Canadian units, the credit in one case being shared with a British searchlight battery. Two of the success were credited to infantry, the remainder to LAA units, RCA. In seven of the eight cases the action took place in the vicinity of towns on the Sussex coast, against enemy "sneak raiders" attacking this area; in the remaining case the locale was the Thames Estuary. In only two instances was the enemy aircraft listed as certainly destroyed.

30. These official awards are far from constituting a full record of the action of Canadian AA units during 1942, or even of actual successes. The British authorities demand very complete evidence before making awards, and there were almost certainly cases in 1942 when enemy planes were shot down by Canadian units and no official credit given. A special case in point was that of 3 Cdn LAA Regt on 19 Aug, the day of the raid on DIEPPE. Several small detachments of this unit accompanied the raiding force, and moreover 10 guns were ordered deployed at BOGNOR REGIS to protect the returning raiders from interference by the Luftwaffe. German aircraft duly appeared over SELSEY and BOGNOR REGIS about 1600 hrs. The unit diary for that day notes that "a good deal of enthusiastic and useful shooting was produced from detachments consisting of drivers and cooks etc. in absence of gun crews on raid. Three bombs were dropped about 150 yards from one gunsite of 17 Bty -- no casualties or damage". Three aircraft were claimed as destroyed and two as damaged. Good evidence of these successes was collected, but unfortunately it did not reach HQ, Fighter Command until 17 Oct 42, when it was too late to make awards (CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1, letter HQ, RCA, 1 Cdn Corps to HQ, RCA, First Cdn Army, 8 Jan 43).

31. 2 Cdn Heavy AA Regt came under the Command of HQ Medium Artillery, First Cdn Army on 1 Sep 42 but remained on ADGH work, for the Weekly Progress Report of 18 Nov states the roughly half of the regiment was manning gun sites in the LONDON area, using British static equipment (CMHQ file 4/PROGRESS/11). 8 Bty of the regiment was at SHOREHAM by early December and moved over to BRIGHTON at the New Year. During this period 1 Cdn LAA Regt and 7 Cdn LAA Regt and 7 Cdn LAA Regt were manning gun sites in the HASTINGS area. It should be

noted in this connection that 18 gun sites in the BORDEN area have been manned by a succession of Canadian LAA Batteries since the Base Ordnance Workshop was set up there in 1941 to handle repairs and conversions for the Canadian Army (Correspondence on CMHQ file 3/ADGB/1/2).

32. There have been some further successes during 1943. On the morning of 23 Jan 43, five planes attacked EASTBOURNE, diving low over the town; the leading plane was engaged and shot down by Bofors of 2 Cdn LAA Regt, the PPCLI sharing in the credit for this Category I victory (CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1, letter, 23 Jan 43, OC, 2 Cdn LAA Regt to HQ, RCA, 1 Cdn Div, and 11 Feb 43, AA Command to CMHQ). A Focke-Wulf 190, which similarly was engaged and crashed into the sea in flames was not officially credited to the gunners of 3 Cdn LAA Regt since the victory could not be confirmed officially. Again on 3 Apr at 1150 hrs, 2 Cdn LAA Regt shared with 1 Cdn LAA Regt in Category I and III awards against a raid on EASTBOURNE by 12 planes, engaged in low level bombing and machine gunning (CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1, letter 28 Apr 43, Brigadier Plow to HQ, RCA, First Cdn Army). After almost a year of operational duty, most of which had been in the LONDON area, 2 Cdn Heavy AA Regt finally got official credit for its first aircraft -- a plane which the 8th Battery shot down during a daylight raid by about 20 enemy machines on BRIGHTON on 25 May 43 (WD, 2 Cdn HAA Regt, May 1943 and The Times, LONDON, 26 May 43).

33. Two planes damaged by 11 Cdn LAA Regt, the first at LEWES on 10 May and the other at EASTBOURNE on 6 Jun, bring the account up to the end of September; during the third quarter of 1943 there were no Canadian successes

confirmed, and a nil quarterly return was forwarded to CMHQ by AA Command on 27 Oct 43 (CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1).

34. Examination of Appendices "A" and "B" indicates that the total number of enemy aircraft officially recorded as destroyed or damaged by Canadian units in the United Kingdom since 1939, as known at CMHQ at the date of this Report, is 16, of which eight were awarded as destroyed; some of these successes were shared with British units, or between Canadian units. In addition, the three cases described in paras 20, 22 and 23, above, are quite probably GHQ Home Forest, when queried by HQ First Cdn Army concerning them, replied on 19 Oct 43:

... Records of this description are not retained at GHQ and both Fighter and A/A Commands state their records do not specify the Regt or Corps making claim and that it is therefore impossible to check these casualties ... (Copy on CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1.)

35. The total of successes is not impressive, and may require some explanation. Due note must be taken of the fact that the official record probably does not represent the full toll taken of the enemy (see para 30, above). The main explanation of the smallness of the total must, however, be sought in the simple fact that there have been no really heavy attacks on the United Kingdom since the Canadian Army Overseas acquired anything like its proper equipment of anti-aircraft artillery. In the days of the "blitz" in 1940, Canadian units had no weapons more effective than machine-guns with which to join in the defence. Since properly-equipped artillery units became

available, these have spent most of their time on operational sites awaiting attacks which did not materialize. For example, on 19 Mar 42 the writer visited a 4.5-inch ADGB gunsite at HADLEIGHT (M 20), overlooking the Thams Estuary; it had been manned for many weeks by 11 Cdn HAA Bty, but they had not fired a single round. When targets do present themselves they normally take the form of aircraft swooping in singly or in small formations, intent on doing limited damage and escaping. Frequently a target is visible from any one gunsite for a very few seconds only. In these circumstances the Canadian performance as outlined above appears quite creditable.

THE ROLE OF CANADIAN RADAR PERSONNEL

36. Some mention should be made of the Canadian share in the development of radiolocation as an element in the defence of Britain against air attack. Both in the production of G.L. (Gun Laying) equipment and the provision of operators, Canadians have played an important part.

37. The Battle of Britain found the British insufficiently supplied with Radar (then called RDF -- Radio Direction Finding) equipment and operators. A request was accordingly made to CMHQ on 22 Nov 44 for the loan of up to 100 potential operators for a six months period. At the same time the British Ministry of Supply contacted the National Research Council (OTTAWA) as to the possibility of G.L. Mk III sets being developed and manufactured in Canada. Lord Hankey believed that at the end of six months sufficient British personnel would be trained as a result of his Radio Training Scheme to enable the Canadians to be returned to the CASF (WD, No. 1 Cdn Radio Location Unit,

22 Nov 41 - 31 Jan 42). In these circumstances General McNaughton concurred in the request, and on 18 Dec 40 the first group of Canadians was interviewed for this work at AA Command School, PETERSHAM. Of these, Capt E.R. Gill and Lt L.G. Eon were retained at this school to take a radio Officers Course, while Lt J.D. Bourne and 19 other ranks were attached to 6 AA Div Wksp, RAOC, to commence a five week course on maintenance (ibid.).

38. The question of training RDF personnel in Canada was taken up by General McNaughton. In February 1941, moreover, 87 other ranks were picked out of No. 1 Survey Regt, RCA, for training as Operators Fire Control at Nos. 1 and 5 AA Div Schools (ibid.). The three Canadian officers mentioned above were attached to British formations to gain experience and then, on 27 March, the first group (24) of Canadian OsFC were placed on operational duty with British units. As time went by more Canadians were trained and put on similar duty pending the formation of a purely Canadian unit, for which Capt (now Colonel) F.F. Fulton at CMHQ was drawing up an organization chart and war establishment. It was General McNaughton's wish that the proposed Canadian Radio Location Unit should remain as an extra-regimental establishment and not belong to any one arm of the service, for the time being at least (ibid., Appx II, letter 21 Jan 42, LCol N.E. Rodger to Senior Officer, CMHQ).

39. Approval for a revised WE finally having been given organization of No. 1 CRLU was commenced on 26 Jan 42 by Capt Gill at Quebec Barracks, No. 1 CARU (BORDON, Hants). The unit was administered from CMHQ by Capt Fulton, who had now been promoted Major and was subsequently appointed to command it with the rank of LCol. Personnel who had been attached to British units were now

recalled to form a nucleus, and on 24 Mar 42 five officers and 226 ORs arrived from Canada as reinforcements. A detachment of two officers and seven NCOs was sent to SPURN HEAD where operational trials on the National Research Council prototype Canadian GL Mk III Set, which had arrived in England during the previous December, were being conducted by the Army Operational Research Group. Weather conditions being poor the trials dragged on until June before the Canadian Set could be proved satisfactory. The War Diary entry for 7 Apr notes that this detachment had tried out its equipment during a raid and that "several good plots were obtained", as a result of which a British four-gun battery was credited with a Category III victory.

40. No. 1 CRLU moved to COLCHESTER during the summer, by which time the training of Canadian personnel was well in hand and their loan to the British enabled the latter to place many more sets in operation (CMHQ file (GS Branch) 55/5930/1/6 SD Weapons, dated 4 Aug 43, p. 2). LCol F.F. Fulton having become SD Tech at CMHQ, the command of the unit fell to LCol E.R. Gill on 5 Sep 42. Two detachments were operating Canadian GL Mk III Sets with 2 Cdn HAA Regt from November, and the beginning of 1943 found personnel of No. 1 CRLU serving with British batteries on the south coast at DOVER, SHOREHAM, SOUTHSEA, PORTSMOUTH, MORELANDS CAMP, HAYLING ISLAND, CHICHESTER, and NEWHAVEN (WD, No. 1 CRLU, Jan 43, Appx 6).

41. A decision was reached in February 1943 to disband the unit in order to make Canadian organization conform to that of the British Army. This being done on 31 May, the operation of six GL sets was turned over to 2 Cdn HAA Regt, their maintenance was taken over by the RCOC and the training of

personnel became the task of the Radar Wing, No. 1 Cdn Signals Reinf Unit. Early in September, 2 Cdn HAA Regt was re-equipped with British sets so that all units intended for a mobile role with the British Army would be similarly equipped. The existing Canadian sets and as many more as can be obtained, however, are to be used in ADGB work and, in addition, there are still approximately 80 Canadian Operators with them. (Information obtained from Capt A.K. Wickson of SD8, CMHQ, 23 Nov 43.)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

42. This Report is in part the result of a programme pursued for more than a year past with the object of assembling as complete a record as possible of successes obtained by the Canadian Army in the United Kingdom against enemy aircraft. The cooperation of HQ, AA Command, has been sought and obtained, and that Headquarters has furnished CMHQ with all information in its records concerning awards to Canadian units. HQ First Cdn Army, HQ 1 Cdn Corps, and GHQ Home Forces have also given assistance. The information obtained has been collected in CMHQ file 3/ENEMY AIRCRAFT/1, which is now believed to contain references to all successful Canadian engagements as well as information relating to many not resulting in awards. The material on this file is digested in the present Report, and particularly in Appendices "A" and "B".

43. Details of Canadian personnel casualties derive from a return prepared by Records Office, CMHQ, to be found in CMHQ file 18/AIR RAIDS UK/1.

44. Canadian War Diaries have been freely drawn upon, as noted in the text, for additional details of incidents referred to. British official pamphlets, mentioned above, have provided the general background for the account.

45. This Report was draft by Lt J.M. Hitsman, RCOC.

(Sgd) C.P.S.

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Historical Officer,

Canadian Military Headquarters.

SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENTS BY CDN AA UNITS WITH ENEMY AIRCRAFT

Date	Place	Time	Bty	Regt	Type of A/C	Award	Remarks
6 Aug 41	WALTON-ON-THE NAZE	2330	1 LAA	3	JU. 88	Cat. 1 (shared with S/L Bty)	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/13 Aug 42
23 Mar 42	NEWHAVEN	1745	4 LAA	2	Four M.E. 109s	Cat. III	Auth: HQ Fighter Command Fc/S 18162/Int d/6 Apr 42
8 May 42	LITTLE-HAMPTON	1245	5 LAA	2	M.E. 109	Cat. III	Auth: GHQ letter HF 12702/12/RA (FA) d/30 May 42
3 Jun 42	CHISLET COLLIERY KENT	0245	100 LAA	4	JU. 88	Cat. I (shared with S/L Bty)	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/13 Aug 42
2 Jul 42	BEXHILL-ON-SEA	1130	38 LAA	3	M.E. 109F	Cat. III	Auth: GHQ Letter HF/12702/12/RA (FA) d/25 Sep 42
3 Sep 42	SELSEY	1030	53 LAA	3	F.W. 190	Cat. III	Auth: GHQ Letter HF/12702/12/RA (FA) d/27 Sep 42
18 Sep 42	BOGNOR REGIS	1845	17 LAA	3	F.W. 190	Cat. III	Auth: HQ Fighter Command Fc/S 18162/Int d/1 Oct 42
23 Jan 43	EASTBOURNE	0950	2 LAA	2	M.E. 109	Cat. I (shared with PPCLI)	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/31 Mar 43
10 Feb 43	BOGNOR REGIS	1632	17 LAA	3	Do. 217	Cat. I (shared with Br. units)	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/31 Mar 43
3 Apr 43	EASTBOURNE		89 LAA	1	Two F.W. 190s	Cat. I Cat. III	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/6 Jul 43
10 May 43	LEWES	1820	4 LAA	11	HE. III	Cat. III	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/2 Jul 43
25 May 43	BRIGHTON	1223	8 HAA	2	F.W. 190	Cat. I	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/2 Jul 43
6 Jun 43	EASTBOURNE	1340	53 LAA	11	F.W. 190	Cat. III (shared with Br. units)	Auth: AA Command Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/2 Jul 43

SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENTS AGAINST ENEMY AIRCRAFT CLAIMED BY CDN UNITS OTHER THAN AA

Date & Time	Place	Unit	A/C	Claim	Award	Remarks
23 May 40	NORTH SEA	Seaforth Highrs. of Canada	JU. 86	Cat. III		CMHQ file 3/AA/2/2 (Detachment employed on shipping AA Protection).
18 Aug 40	CANTERBURY	1 Tunnelling Coy RCE	JU.	Cat. I		7 Corps File CRE7C-2-4 d/21 Aug 40.
26 Nov 40	PORTSLADE	Tor Scot R (MG)	Do. 17	Cat. I		Unit War Diary.
4 Aug 42 1029 hrs	PORTSLADE	AA Det 2 Cdn Inf Bde	F.W. 190	Cat. II	Cat. II	Auth: AA Comd Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/1 Oct 42.
26 Aug 42 0835 hrs	EASTBOURNE	AA P1 Seaforth Highrs of Canada	F.W. 190	Cat. I	Cat. I	Auth: AA Comd Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/1 Oct 42.
23 Jan 43 0950 hrs	EASTBOURNE	P.P.C.L.I.	M.E. 109	Cat. I	Cat. I (shared with 2 Cdn LAA Regt)	Auth: AA Comd Letter AAC/40211/3/G/Int d/11 Feb 43.

OFFICER CASUALTIES DUE TO ENEMY AIR RAIDS IN THE UK

(Information compiled by Records Office, CMHQ)

Extracted from CMHQ file 18/AIR RAIDS UK/1

KILLED

Rank	Name	Unit	Date
Lieut.	Leslie Ambrose WHEELER	Carleton & York Regiment	16 Aug 40.
Lieut.	John David WRIGHT	11 Fd Coy RCE	8 Mar 41.
Capt.	Philip Frowde SEAGRAM	48th Highlanders of Canada	8 Mar 41.
Capt.	Robert Wesley HARCOURT	1 Cdn Fd Regt, RCA	9 Jul 43.
A/Major	Joseph Guy SAVOIE	Regiment de la Chaudiere	1 Nov 43.
	<u>DIED OF WOUNDS</u>		
Lieut.	Robert Clifford CRAUFORD	18 Fd Coy, RCE	9 Jul 42.
	<u>WOUNDED</u>		
Lieut.	Walter Charles BLEAKEN	2nd Cdn Army Field Wksp RCOC	6 Jul 40.
Major	Alexander Douglas CAMERON	CMHQ	27 Sep 40.
Lieut.	John KEEFFE	1 A Tk Regt, RCA	10 Oct 40.
Lieut.	Ralph James KIDSTON	CMHQ	15 Oct 40.
Lieut.	Harold W.J. BARNETT	Unit Pay Detachment, RCAPC	20 Dec 40.
Col.	John Kelberne LAWSON	CMHQ (Attached)	22 Dec 40.
Lieut.	Rupert Reginald YOUNG	4th Fd Regt, RCA	8 Mar 41.
N/S	Thelma Blanche STEWART	1 Cdn Gen Hosp, RCAMC	8 Mar 41.
Capt.	Robert George ROBERTS	1 Div Supply Column, RCASC	8 Mar 41.
Capt.	James Howard COLEMAN	4 Fd Regt, RCA	8 Mar 41.
Major	A.H. JARVIS	1 Div Supply Column RCASC	10 Mar 41.
Capt.	D.G. HEGGIE	1 Cdn Base Depot (Lorne Scots)	8 May 41.
Lieut.	Peter Gordon CAMPBELL	No. 2 Arty Holding Unit	10 Jul 41.
Lieut.	Wilson Graham MILNE	Canadian Training School	15 Apr 43.

Lieut.	Leonard FRENETTE	Regiment de la Chaudiere	1 Nov 43.
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