

R E P O R T N O 166

HISTORICAL SECTION

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

29 Nov 46

Administrative Aspects of the Operations
of 1 Cdn Inf Div in Italy, December 1943.

1. This Report deals with the administration and reinforcement of 1 Cdn Inf Div in Italy during December 1943. It should be read in conjunction with Report No. , which is the operational narrative of the heavy fighting which took place at that time. The main sources of this present report are the War Diaries of the Services concerned, accounts by the Administrative Staff of 1 Cdn Inf Div, and correspondence of senior Canadian officers in the Mediterranean Theatre at that time, all of which are available in the files of the Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters.

2. During December the administrative problem within 1 Cdn Inf Div was strictly that of supply and demand, whereas in the previous months it had, with the rapid advance, been that of fighting troops outmarching supply elements. In September, the Division's dash had been made over the poorly-surfaced roads which ribboned across the highlands of the Aspromonte; these roads had been as precarious for drivers as they had been harmful to vehicles.

Although our L. of C. was at that time dangerously stretched out, and we

were in addition short of transport, we managed somehow to keep things going.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Inf Div/O/D: Account
by Lt-Col W.P. Gilbride)

As the advance progressed from the "toe", supply vehicles had been undertaking trips of over 300 miles (Ibid). Although little more than five miles separated the Moro River from the Riccio River the volume of materials required to sustain a formation in prolonged heavy fighting to cover that short distance presented the staff with difficulties unlike those which it had had to face previously. These difficulties had to be overcome by the organization at the various formation headquarters, and by the efforts of the servicing units.

3. No picture of the supply aspect could be complete, however, without consideration of the conditions which existed in the Mediterranean during the early months of the Italian campaign and which had a restrictive effect on the Eighth Army. There was an overall lack of resources. Afterwards General Montgomery wrote:

We became involved in a major campaign without having made in advance the administrative plans and arrangements necessary to sustain the impetus of our operations.

(Field Marshal Montgomery, El Alamein to the River Sangro, p.151)

The Fifth Army's landing at Salerno had made it necessary to divert much of the material that should have been available to General Montgomery: the heavy campaign which later developed found the administrative preparations inadequate.

The complete priority awarded to the Fifth United States Army absorbed such reserves of administrative resources as were immediately available in the Mediterranean.

(Ibid)

Added to these particular difficulties within 15 Army Group was the necessity of accumulating resources in the United Kingdom for "OVERLORD". On the Peninsula itself, the lack of port facilities and the heavily demolished road and rail communications were the obstacles the overcoming of which caused as much concern as the shortage of resources. Taranto and Brindisi had become the two ports through which the Eighth Army was supplied, but both were of extremely limited capacity. Nor was the capture of Bari the complete solution, for soon after that much larger port fell to the Allies, so, too, did the Foggia airfields on which was subsequently based the tremendous power of the strategic air forces. If the capture of these air bases was to be fully exploited by the air forces, their supply would make additional demands which the three "heel" ports would be unable to meet. (Ibid)

4. Some hope, therefore, was placed in the enormous capacity of Naples.

Much restoration of the harbour installations had been achieved by the United States Engineers. Whilst Naples had become the base of the Fifth Army, it was considered that its surplus accommodation would help alleviate the supply problems of the Eighth Army and the Strategic Air Force on the Adriatic "slope" of the Apennines, although any assistance would have limitations because of the one single line track through Potenza and Taranto. The Peninsular Base Section, responsible for the Fifth Army's rear administration, had been set up in Naples, while Headquarters Fortbase, its counterpart for the Eighth Army, had been located at Taranto. Because 10 British Corps had been incorporated into the Fifth Army, and because of the large number of United States Army Air Force personnel at Foggia, both these organizations were handling British and United States supplies. This dual responsibility required utmost co-ordination between the two staffs if time was not to be lost by unnecessary diversion of shipping and overland transport. Eventually it was decided to close down Headquarters Fortbase and transfer the staff to Naples where it merged with components of the Peninsular Base Section to form an advanced administrative echelon of Allied Force Headquarters with authority to control administration of both British and United States supplies.

In particular it was given power to control the acceptance of cargoes at all ports, to allocate rail capacity and to lay down priorities for rail repairs. The officer in charge of this advanced echelon Headquarters was also appointed as administrative staff officer to General Alexander, who simultaneously dispensed with his own administrative staff.

(Ibid, p. 154)

5. When in December the command of this administrative staff passed to Headquarters 15 Army Group, the Eighth Army was beginning to feel the benefit of the reorganization, since priorities could then be allotted by Army Group Headquarters in accordance with the strategic plan of the Army Group Commander. (Ibid, p.155). It was to this advanced administrative echelon of A.F.H.Q. that Brigadier A.W. Beament became attached as Officer in Charge, Canadian Section, G.H.Q. 1 Echelon. His task was to administer Canadian base and L. of C. units. He was also concerned at that time with liaising with A.F.H.Q. and H.Q. 15 Army Group on the complicated business of equipping 5 Cdn Armd Div and 1 Cdn Corps Tps, which arrived in the theatre at the end of October.

6. While the high level planners were contending with these problems of administration, the servicing units were doing magnificent work to ensure that the troops north of the Sangro were not without essential commodities. Ammunition expenditure had been far higher than anticipated.

A new feature of the Italian campaign was the heavy rate of ammunition expenditure... The Battle of the Sangro was the first real warning given to us that in close and easily defended country we should expect a need for ammunition on a scale far higher than that to which we had been accustomed.

(Ibid, p. 153)

Most in demand was 25-pr ammunition for the tremendous barrages in support of 5 Corps, and particularly 1 Cdn Inf Div. Day and night drivers of the R.C.A.S.C. laboured to transport this most essential commodity. From the outset they met handicaps, for no sooner did the main body of the Division get across the Sangro than the bridges were washed away. For days the company of D.U.W.Ks at the disposal of C.R.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div, plied around the mouth of the Sangro from Torino beach to Fossacesia beach; they were the only means of getting supplies forward, and the only means of evacuating casualties. Lack of good roads from the narrow strip of beach on to the plateau restricted the employment of the D.U.W.Ks once they were ashore. Their drivers became unofficial couriers between units, parts of which had been stranded on the south bank. It is doubtful if the messages they carried were ever delivered along the chain of motionless vehicles that stretched back from the River across the plateau and gully as far as Vasto. (W.D., H.Q., R.C.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div, 4-6 Dec 43).

7. While the bridges were rapidly repaired, it was some time before the congested traffic became disentangled; nothing was more doubtful than the expected time of return of a unit's vehicles once they had been despatched on some errand that took them across the Sangro. But with the building of three permanent bridges there was no serious holdup in the flow of traffic. Military Police, among whom was 1 Cdn Pro Coy (R.C.M.P.), instituted and maintained one-way traffic circuits around the narrow, muddy lanes.¹

¹It was not uncommon to see at times on the cross roads at Fossacesia traffic being controlled by Military Police of the various parts of the Empire. Beside British Troops from the U.K., Canada and New Zealand, they included Maoris, Sikhs and Gurkhas. (Personal note of

8. The bridging situation was at its gloomiest when the R.C.A.S.C. were required to supply ammunition for 1 Cdn Inf Bde's attack across the Moro on 8 Dec. The majority of the Service Corps vehicles were south of the Sangro, making it necessary to off-load the administration lorries to assist in the carrying task. That none of the gun-pits were lacking ammunition when the time for the barrage came moved the Divisional Commander to direct that his personal thanks be sent to all ranks of the R.C.A.S.C. for "such a masterly show during the past 24 hours." (Ibid, 8 Dec 43). Throughout the month, the Service Corps ensured the maintenance of the Division despite the numerous handicaps imposed by the weather and shortage of roads. Ammunition and supply points grew on the plateau south of S. Vito, and when the heavy rain turned the fields to mud, it became the "drill" to drive vehicles into the fields as far as they could go, and when they had been off-loaded, to winch them back to the road. (Ibid, 14 Dec 43)

9. While the Service Corps was doing such outstanding work hauling ammunition, petrol and supplies into the Divisional Maintenance Area, it was the much ridiculed donkey that brought to the forward infantryman his food and ammunition. These beasts "with sickening cry and ears like errant wings", were noble substitutes for mechanical creations, to which terraced slope and rocky stream bed were unnegotiable. C.R.A.S.C., 1 Cdn Inf Div had available some 350 mules, which were despatched from a "harbour"² as they were required

narrator)

²The animal harbour was under the care of Indian Mule Company, R.I.A.S.C. (Ibid, 20 Dec 43)

by the forward battalions. (Ibid, 16-22 Dec 43). Many Canadian servicemen would voice agreement with the leader writer of The Times whose Tribute To The Mule urged that the services of this beast of burden be acknowledged by its appearance in the Victory Parade in London.

... It is often obstinacy which encourages a man to persevere in what seems a forlorn and desperate hope, and if the mule can lay his ears back and dig in his heels, he can also march forward with a neat sure-footedness over country which seems impossible. He, the outcast and despised, can go where all the vast and intricate mechanical inventions of man are powerless to move, and a war which saw rocket projectiles crossing seas and penetrating the stratosphere at a speed far greater than sound was not above relying in some measure on a method of transport slow, primitive, and proved by the years... If the mule finds his way into the procession on June 8 there will be 'a soundless clapping host' of the shades of old soldiers glad to pay their ancient friend and enemy the tribute due to him.

(The Times, 13 May 46)

10. Although the efforts of the servicing units ensured the flow of essential commodities, by the time that the Riccio gully had been reached, 1 Cdn Inf Div was unable to maintain the offensive. This condition was largely brought about by the lack of reinforcements during the periods of intense fighting. Since the early days of the Italian campaign, the administrative staff of 1 Cdn Inf Div had been dissatisfied with the

reinforcement system. On 2 Nov 43, Lt-Col W.P. Gilbride, A.A. & Q.M.G., 1 Cdn Inf Div, said:

In our opinion reinforcements have been very badly handled. It was necessary throughout the whole of the Sicilian campaign for the D.A.A.G., ... to arrange transportation to bring reinforcements from Base to the forward area. In some cases he had to go back personally to get them...

(Gilbride, op cit)

11. During the planning of operation "HUSKY" it had been decided to form 1 Canadian Base Reinforcement Depot, consisting of a depot headquarters and four reinforcement battalions, one of which was to land in Sicily behind 1 Cdn Inf Div. The remainder of 1 C.B.R.D. was to be established in the cork forest of Phillippeville in Algeria. 4 Bn C.B.R.D., which was to land in Sicily, was, in fact, to be a forward holding battalion to which reinforcements were shipped from the main depot in North Africa. (Hist Sec File Italy: 1944/1 CBRG/M/F: Training History, 1 CBRGp). Such a system might have had a reasonable chance of success, had there not been heavy demands on shipping between Africa and Sicily. It was the intention that 4 Bn remain close to the Divisional Maintenance Area, and so be in a position to forward reinforcements within a short time of their being required. In practice, however, the plan never worked out, for whenever the Division advanced, 4 Bn, not having sufficient transport of its own, was left behind until the Division's R.C.A.S.C. vehicles were able to undertake this extra lift. Although in

Sicily no crisis had developed over reinforcements, the faults in the system were sufficiently revealed. (Gilbride, op cit)

12. One step towards improvement was taken for Operation "BAYTOWN" by having reinforcements with the assault force. By D plus 6, 1,000 were available, but their movement forward had to be organized by 1 Cdn Inf Div, although technically they were L. of C. troops. On 15 Sep, a request was made that 4 Bn be moved to Taranto, but because of shipping arrangements it was some weeks before this move had taken place. When reinforcements eventually began to disembark at Taranto, it still fell to the Division to provide vehicles for their movement, which meant a round trip of 500-700 miles to bring them to an operationally satisfactory location. (Ibid)

13. By the time that Campobasso had been reached such an obviously impracticable method of personnel maintenance was causing concern to the Divisional Staff. It appeared that the movement of Canadian reinforcements had been given a low priority amongst the increasing demands then being made on shipping resources in the Mediterranean. Although only one Canadian formation was at that time operational, it was clear that Canadian personnel maintenance required a separate organization, and one which should be assisted by 15 Army Group L. of C. rather than be dependent on a division which was committed to action. Continuing his account of 2 Nov, Lt-Col Gilbride said:

At present the Division is below strength to the number of 50 officers and 750 other ranks. The prospect of returning more reinforcements

depends entirely upon the provision of transport by ourselves to send to Taranto for them.

(Ibid)

14. Despite the objections which had been raised to the highest possible quarter little had been done to move 4 Bn to a location near the Division at Campobasso. The Divisional Staff argued that there should be an adequate holding of reinforcements at Army road or railhead. In concluding his account, Lt-Col Gilbride said:

Previous complaints we have made not having been productive of results, I propose to report it directly to General Montgomery because we don't intend to operate on the present basis. In actual fact, the Division has never been short of officers and O.Rs when in action due principally to tremendous efforts on the part of 'A' staff and also to long hauls by the R.C.A.S.C.

(Ibid)

15. With the arrival of 1 Cdn Corps and 5 Cdn Armd Div in the Mediterranean Theatre, much improvement was necessary in the reinforcement system if these two additional formations were to become operational. When General Simonds left 1 Cdn Inf Div to take command of 5 Cdn Armd Div, he informed General Crerar, who as G.O.C. 1 Cdn Corps was the senior Canadian officer in the Theatre, that the handling of reinforcements had not been satisfactory. The latter immediately took the problem up with Brigadier A.W. Beament at

G.H.Q. 1 Echelon. On 3 Nov, in a letter to Brigadier Beament, he wrote:

I would request that you look into this matter and see and determine what can be done to improve it.

...do not forget that I place great importance on territorial rft of all units which have a territorial status. I am aware of the additional administrative burden this places on 2nd Ech but this will need to be accepted and the difficulties overcome.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Corps/GOC/E: Personal letter Crerar to Beament, 3 Nov 43)

16. Brigadier Beament, at that time, was trying desperately to bring his various sections in Algeria and Italy into a compact headquarters in Naples, and was constantly urging the immediate transfer of Canadian reinforcements from North Africa to Italy. On 6 Nov he reported to General Crerar, whose Headquarters was in Sicily:

When I saw General Robertson³he expressed strongly the view, with which I most heartily concur, that it was desirable to base Canadian personnel maintenance upon NAPLES at the earliest possible date. In order to outline the factors involved I cannot do better than enclose a

³Maj-Gen Sir B.H. Robertson, Bt., Chief Administrative Officer, A.A. I.

copy of the memorandum I addressed to DAG, AFHQ and with which AFHQ and 15 Army Group are in complete agreement. In the result after eliminating a few red herrings raised by the DAG, Adv Adm Ech, AFHQ it was decided that the plan suggested in paragraph nine of my memorandum⁴ should be carried out. It will be seen that without any increase in shipping demands we automatically make a large stride towards moving our personnel base from NORTH AFRICA to ITALY and closing up our maintenance. This should result within a measurable period in eliminating the unsatisfactory administrative situation which is created by the present wide dispersion of the various elements of the reinforcement installations.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Corps/GOC/E: Personal
letter Beament to Crerar, 6 Nov 43)

17. The problem facing Brigadier Beament at that time was not only to reinforce 1 Cdn Inf Div, but also to "service" the un-equipped 5 Cdn Armd Div and 1 Cdn Corps in order that they could become operational as soon as

⁴The suggestion in paragraph nine of Brigadier Beament's memorandum to D.A.G., A.F.H.Q. was that certain units, mostly L. of C., but including 1,761 reinforcements, which had disembarked at Naples, should be retained in Italy rather than be trans-shipped to North Africa. His further suggestion was that 3,500 reinforcements arriving during November and bound for North Africa be re-routed to Naples. It would appear that the only argument for sending these troops to Africa was lack of accomodation in Italy. As Brigadier Beament pointed out, to send them back to Phillippeville would mean using shipping space to return them to Italy, and if it was a question of accomodation, Canadians would be willing to "operate tented camps around a small nucleus of buildings". (Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Corps GOC/E: Memorandum from Beament to D.A.G., A.F.H.Q., 3 Nov 43)

possible.⁵ The maintenance of these additional formations meant more demands on available shipping. The decision, therefore, to retain in Italy those reinforcements which reached Naples in November rather than send them across to Africa was a definite step forward in bringing the base units closer to the scene of operations.

18. While these decisions were being made, 1 Cdn Inf Div, the greater part of which was resting at Campobasso, was not heavily committed. The Staff however, anticipating offensive operations when the line of Sangro was reached, sought means to establish a more reliable method of getting reinforcements.

19. In his report of 6 Nov to General Crerar, Brigadier Beament continued:

....the difficulties in getting up reinforcements to 1 Cdn Div are not by any means entirely attributable to him.⁶ Col Vining can of course, only send forward reinforcements which he has in his battalion. We have encountered great difficulty in getting shipping to bring reinforcements from NORTH AFRICA to ITALY despite continuous pressing. We got 1,000 across in the latter part of August but were unable to get any from then until 15 Oct when we got 1200 across. All personnel suitable as to Corps and trades were rapidly absorbed and in consequence for some

⁵The equipping of these last two formations is dealt with in Report No. 161.

⁶C.O., 4 Bn, C.B.R.D.

time Col Vining has not had resources to meet the demands of the Division. That situation, however, will be much alleviated since we landed 1600 at TARANTO today and expect another 400 very shortly. Of course with the establishment of our main personnel based on the mainland this difficulty will be eliminated. The difficulty in relation to transportation again cannot be entirely attributed to Col Vining. He has no transport resources of his own... I agree entirely that it should not be the responsibility of the Division to send transport back to lift its reinforcements.

(Beament to Crerar, loc cit)

With the establishment of Canadian base units in Italy, it was hoped also to remove the difficulty of transportation presented by the inadequate facilities for moving troops north from Taranto.

20. Those reinforcements which disembarked at Taranto in November were rapidly absorbed into 1 Cdn Inf Div. On 1 Dec, the Division was 49 Officers and 604 other ranks below Light Scale establishment (Hist Sec File Italy: 1944/1 Cdn Corps/C/E: Personal letter Vokes to G.O.C. 5 Corps, 3 Jan 44). After the first attempts to cross the Moro River on 6 Dec, Brigade Commanders became worried about reinforcements. After two days fighting it became only too clear that the reinforcement system was justifying the criticism it had received, and that, whatever the plans then being made might be, the effect would not be felt until it was too late. 1 Cdn Inf Div took two immediate

steps: the Canadian liaison officer at H.Q. Eighth Army was asked to advise General Montgomery: and a message was sent to Brigadier Beament asking him to come forward and see General Vokes. (W.D., G.S. Main H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 8 Dec 43). The War Diary of the Administrative Staff of 1 Cdn Inf Div for December records the constant inadequacy of reinforcements to meet the increasing rate of casualties. (Ibid, 8-30 Dec 43)

21. Since it had become known that the main reason for the lack of reinforcements in Italy was cancellation of shipping priorities by A.F.H.Q., it was considered that some action on the part of Army Headquarters would carry more weight with A.F.H.Q. The decision to inform the Army Commander had an immediate effect. On 9 Dec his D.A. & Q.M.G. cabled A.F.H.Q:

Position Canadian reinforcements serious. Only 350 arrived from NA in November instead of 1250 demanded. Understand.... this due to cancellation of priorities by your G(SD). Most grateful if you would arrange immediate shipment from NA of at least 2500 all ranks. Future ops render this most important.

(Ibid, Appx 9)

22. The following day, when effects of the S. Leonardo battle were being felt, units began calling for more reinforcements. Practically none were available (W.D. A & Q, H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div, 10 Dec 43). On 12 Dec, General Vokes reported to General Crerar:

The reinforcement situation remains serious, you will have received a copy of my message to Beament advising him that the position is critical and that future operations may be prejudiced. You will recall that I have been concerned about the problem for some time; on the eve of our present battle I was informed by 2 Ech L.O. from 1 Ech that there were not sufficient reinforcements in ITALY to replace the existing deficiencies let alone replace the inevitable battle casualties.... Reinforcements are the only 'commodity' with which we are having supply difficulties and I am sure that this will continue to be the case until they are placed on a similar supply basis to ammunition.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1 Cdn Corps/GOC/E: Personal letter
Vokes to Crerar; 12 Dec 43)

On 12 Dec, Brigadier Beament arrived at H.Q. 1 Cdn Inf Div to discuss the reinforcement situation with General Vokes, and to advise him of the steps that had already been taken towards improvement.

23. The most valuable outcome of the conference was a detailed scheme for reinforcing 1 Cdn Inf Div. The first and most important irregularity to be removed was the anomalous position of 4 Bn C.B.R.D. Thenceforth 4 Bn was to provide one company in the D.M.A., 1 Cdn Inf Div, and one company in the F.M.C., 5 Corps. These companies would be respectively under the commanders of the D.M.A. and F.M.C. for local administration, but the control of

personnel flowing through them was to be maintained by 2 Echelon Liaison Officers. Each of these two forward companies were to hold approximately 300 reinforcements, at least 75 per cent of which were to be infantry. The remaining companies of 4 Bn, which were to be located as near as possible to railhead, were to hold approximately 600 reinforcements, of which two-thirds were to be infantry. The non-infantry holdings were to be small numbers of the more common type of tradesmen.

24. The proper functioning of this improved system depended largely on building up the base reinforcement installations at Avellino. Once these base units were established, the forward echelons of 4 Bn were to be kept filled by a "milk run" from Avellino to that part of 4 Bn at railhead. These runs were to be made three times a week, each lift being approximately 240 all ranks.

25. Three distinct advantages emerged. The forward reinforcing echelons were under a definite commander who was responsible for caring for them at all times, and moving them when the D.M.A. or F.M.C. moved. The personnel to replenish the forward echelons could normally be sent forward on supply and ammunition lorries. All highly skilled tradesmen, among whom the casualty rate was much lower, were to be held at a pool in Avellino and sent forward only when they were demanded. This arrangement would avoid large numbers of skilled tradesmen lying idle in the forward echelons and becoming unpractised in their trades. (Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Corps/GOC/E: Memorandum from Beament to Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., 18 Dec 43)

26. Outlining this new plan to the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q.,

Brigadier Beament wrote:

Although admittedly, 1 Cdn Inf Div was slightly below fighting scales, they really had no perturbation about it. Their concern about the situation was largely due to the fact that they did not know:-

(a) The presence of 5 and 6 Rft Bns in ITALY.

(b) The recovery and despatch of 4 Rft Bn of approximately 400 personnel from the rest centre at CATANIA.

(c) The fact that approximately 1600 infantry reinforcements for 1 Div were to arrive in NAPLES 20 Dec.

... It is true that our difficulties of reinforcing have been fundamentally caused by the inability to get movements from NORTH AFRICA...

(Ibid)

27. At the same time Brigadier Beament reported to General Crerar:

There has been considerable flap regarding reinforcements for 1 Cdn Div, particularly infantry. In my opinion Vokes took entirely too gloomy a

view. There is no doubt that we have been greatly embarrassed by the failure of British staff to meet our reasonable demands for movements from NORTH AFRICA to ITALY. However, on 20 Dec we expect to get in 7 and 8 Bns and a draft of approximately 1700 from PHILIPPEVILLE (sic)... almost exclusively comprised of infantry reinforcements for 1 Cdn Div. I have made special arrangements to have 1200 of these moved at once into the Divisional Maintenance Area. This will close up all present and probable deficiencies in infantry and will provide a reasonable immediately available reserve.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1943/1 Cdn Corps/GOC/E: Personal
letter Beament to Crerar, 18 Dec 43)

29. Some pressure must have been placed on 1 Echelon to release the reinforcements which had landed at Naples in early November.⁷ On 18 Dec Brigadier Beament wrote to General Crerar:

I was almost placed in position yesterday of having to send forward to 1 Cdn Div the reinforcements held at AVELLINO with the 11 Inf Bde. Before doing so, I informed General Robertson of our view regarding territorial reinforcements and told him that I was not prepared to send them forward unless he informed me in writing that Eighth Army considered it an operational necessity. He took the matter up with Eighth Army and they, particularly in view of the provision of infantry

⁷See above para 16.

expected on 20 Dec were not prepared to so certify. Consequently these reinforcements are not being moved.

(Beament to Crerar, 18 Dec, 43, loc cit)

30. The steps taken by Brigadier Beament during November and December resulted in complete reorganization of the reinforcement system. His aim was to provide for the future employment of 1 Cdn Corps as well as the immediate problem of 1 Cdn Inf Div. In the meantime, however, the struggle to cross the gully and capture the Berardi crossroads had taken an increased toll on the infantry battalions.

The infantry has suffered heavier casualties in the last few days than they have ever had in the past... Total deficiencies of personnel are 104 offrs and 1,569 ORs.

(W.D., A & Q 1 Cdn Inf Div, 15 Dec 43)

31. On 23 Dec the first large draft of reinforcements reached the depleted battalions of 1 Cdn Inf Div. Circumstances were such that they could be allowed no rest after the journey across the Mediterranean and through the Apennines to the Adriatic coast. On 3 Jan 44 in a report to the G.O.C. 5 Corps⁸, General Vokes said:

⁸The report in full is included as Appx "A".

The reinforcements... arrived at a rate which prohibited a normal and gradual absorption. Large numbers... are reported to be lacking in the polish of trained infantry soldiers. It is up to the units to train the men to the high standard required, but the large intake cannot be absorbed without a protracted period of re-organization and intensive training.

(Hist Sec File Italy: 1944/1 Cdn Corps/C/E, Folio II:
Letter Vokes to G.O.C. 5 Corps)

By 3 Jan, the Division had taken in 150 officers and 2,258 other ranks as reinforcements, but was still deficient 60 officers and 990 other ranks. Battle casualties for the month of December, as reported by General Vokes to the G.O.C. 5 Corps, were: officers, 35 killed, 127 wounded, 14 missing; other ranks, 467 killed, 1544 wounded, 152 missing. Personal evacuated through sickness were: officers, 77; other ranks, 1540. It is General Vokes' report to the G.O.C. 5 Corps which provides the best account of the condition of 1 Cdn Inf Div after S. Tomasso, S. Nicola and Point 59 had been captured. With a large part of the rifle companies of the infantry battalions made up of inexperienced troops a great deal of re-organization and training was necessary to restore the fighting efficiency of the Division.

32. This report was prepared by Capt H.A. Porter, C. Int. C.,
Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters.

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel,
Director Historical Section
Canadian Military Headquarters

APPENDIX "A"

G.O.C.
5 CORPS

H.Q., 1 CDN DIV
G.O.C., 1.
3 Jan 44

FIGHTING STATE - 1 CDN DIV

as of 2 Jan 44

1. During the period 1 - 31 Dec 43 casualties incurred by the division were as follows -

		<u>Offrs</u>	<u>O.Rs</u>
(a)	Battle		
	Killed	35	467
	Wounded	127	1544
	Missing	14	152
	TOTAL	176	2163
(b)	Sick	77	1540
(c)	TOTAL	<u>253</u>	<u>3703</u>

2. A proportion of those who have become sick have returned through the normal channels but this incidence remains fairly constant throughout.

3. On 1 Dec 43 the division was approx 49 offrs 604 other ranks below LIGHT SCALE establishment.

4. Since 1 Dec 43 the following reinforcements were received-

150 officers

2258 Other Ranks (approx)

5. Taking into consideration sick casualties returned during the month, deficiency of 31 Dec was approx 60 offrs and 990 O.Rs.

6. During the month under review all three inf bdes of the div were engaged in heavy fighting. Amongst the infantry, especially in rifle coys, the attrition in junior leaders, i.e., coy comds through the junior grades to L Cpl, has been particularly heavy. This, together with the loss of trained and experienced riflemen has been a serious blow to the fighting efficiency of each of the nine inf bns. It must be appreciated that the usual fighting strength of a rifle coy (110 at light scale) seldom exceeds 80 - 90 men when the sick and employed are discounted. Hence the rifle strength of a bn would number between 320 to 360 effectives, and under the very best conditions not more than 400 - a total of 3600 for all nine bns. These figures do not, of course, include the effectives of carrier, mortar and anti-tank pls.

7. It must be realized therefore that during December all nine bns have received losses which have materially upset their fighting efficiency. The reinforcements were not available to units until late in December and consequently arrived at a rate which prohibited a normal and gradual

absorption. Large numbers of these reinforcements are reported to be lacking in the polish of trained infantry soldiers. It is up to units to train these men to the high standard required, but this large intake cannot be absorbed without a protracted period of re-organization and intensive training.

8. It is most noticeable that the standard of minor tactics and unit tactics has deteriorated, and opposition which at one period would have been brushed aside in their stride, now causes untold delay and stickiness. The troops are tired and the team play within units is lacking. The men and officers are cheerful enough and in good spirits and morale is high, but units are not fighting fit.

9. I am compelled to bring to your attention, therefore, that in my opinion the infantry units of this division will not be in fit condition to undertake further offensive operations until they have had a period of rest, free of operational commitments, during which they can carry out intensive training.

10. In conclusion, while considerable re-organization and training can be carried out under present conditions, and is being done, the training is pretty well limited in scope to "individual". Unit training can only be carried out as outlined in para 9 above.

(Sgd) (C. Vokes)
Major-General
GOC 1 Cdn Div

Copy to -

Lt-Gen H.D.G. Crerar, CB, DSO,
Comd, 1 CDN CORPS.

(Hist Sec file: Italy 1944/1 Cdn
Corps/C/E, Personal letter Vokes
to G.O.C. 5 Corps, 3 Jan 44)