
DUNSTERFORCE: A CASE STUDY OF COALITION WARFARE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1918-1919

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The evolution of the Allied strategy during the First World War resulted in many attempts by the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to expedite victory by deploying missions that circumvented the Western Front. According to British Prime Minister David Lloyd-George, “the events in those forgotten and despised theatres in the East brought the war to an end in 1918; but for them it might have dragged its bloody course into the spring and summer of 1919.”¹ A secret force formed for operations in the Caucasus carried out one of the most covert of these missions. Known as Dunsterforce, it clearly exemplified the greater strategic thought that had evolved within Allied supreme command leading into the final year of the war. It was also an early deviation from the typical trend towards mass armies that plagued most of the European fronts throughout the war.



Dunsterforce Convoy

Dunsterforce was indeed an early style Special Forces unit, and it was given a Special Forces style assignment. Made up of choice soldiers from across the Allied armies, it was a highly elite, albeit undersized unit commanded by, and named after, Major-General Lionel Dunsterville. Included among its ranks were forty-one Canadian officers and men.²

Dunsterville's first task was to organize a coherent body of resistance out of the miscellaneous, and often mutually hostile, groups of anti-Bolshevik Russians and anti-Turkish Georgians, Armenians and Assyrians spread across the Caucasus region.³ Once established, the primary mission of his collective force was to guard the Trans-

Caucasian railway line from the Russian cities of Baku to Tiflis, in addition to protecting the oil fields at Baku from the Turks.⁴ It was also hoped that Dunsterville could aid in the establishment and maintenance of an independent group of nations—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Another reason for occupying Baku was to prevent the enemy from obtaining a route to India.⁵

While most historical works on the First World War are justifiably focused on the Western Front, there were a number of other relatively obscure Allied campaigns, including Dunsterforce.⁶ These operations have received considerably less documentation. Correspondingly, little has been written on Dunsterforce. It receives token mention in numerous writings, but is usually amalgamated into the broader theme of Allied intervention in Russia. Dunsterville's own account, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce* (1920), is the only manuscript dedicated in its entirety to this specific mission.⁷

War in the East: 1917-1918

The capitulation of their Russian ally and the collapse of the Eastern Front in November of 1917 had serious ramifications for the Allies.⁸ Although initially the Allies welcomed the revolution, thinking that democratic rule would perhaps revive the morale of a war-weary Russian population, those hopes were short lived. Alexander Kerensky's weak leadership and dispersed power was not strong enough to unite the country and his Socialist Revolutionary Party could not hold back the Bolshevik insurgency.⁹

With the confusion of politics surrounding the Russian Revolution and Leon Trotsky's "no war, no peace" policy, which delayed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Germans commenced a rapid invasions into southern Russia and the Ukraine. They had also captured islands in the Baltic Sea and were pushing up through the Baltic provinces toward Petrograd.¹⁰ Even with the signing of the treaty on 3 March 1917, the Allies feared that Germany would continue its advance in the east, unopposed. The German goal was to capture the important natural, industrial and military resources of an internally embattled Russia.¹¹ Incorporated into this larger strategy was the absorption of Asia Minor, and the penetration into further Asia, by means of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway.¹² These fears were significant factors in the Allied decision to deploy forces to Archangel and Murmansk, the Dunsterforce into the Caucasus, and to initiate intervention in Siberia.¹³

Winston Churchill later wrote that, "the reconstitution of an eastern front against Germany and the withholding of Russian supplies from the Central Powers seemed even from the end of 1917 vital to win the war."¹⁴ To Aleksandr Kolchak, Cossack commander of the anti-Bolshevik forces in Siberia, the treaty was "the heaviest blow...It was clear to me that this peace signified our complete subjugation by Germany, our complete dependence on her, and the final loss of our political independence."¹⁵ It was clear to Allied leaders, including Lloyd George, that:

Although the Bolshevik Government of Russia had deserted the Entente and signed a separate peace with Germany, it was obvious in these circumstances that the Entente could not afford to abandon Russia to the domination of Germany...which stood to gain from its treaty spoils...of foodstuffs and fodder, of oil and minerals. By controlling the Ukraine and the Black Sea, the Caucasus,

and penetrating into Siberia, they hoped to escape from the stranglehold of the Allied blockade.... Further, there were very considerable military stores...at the ports of Archangel, Murmansk, and Vladivostok...the danger was that these would fall into the hands of Germany and be used against us.... Had their hopes been fully realized, the war might have had a different outcome.¹⁶

Correspondingly, with the collapse of the Eastern Front by late 1917, the Germans began to relocate men and material to the Western Front in preparation for a massive offensive. By the time the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, they had already transferred 40 divisions.¹⁷ Between November 1917 and 21 March 1918, when the great German Kaiserschlacht offensive began, they had increased their fighting strength on the Western Front by 30 percent. In comparison, the Allied strength fell by 25 percent over the same time period.¹⁸ The German offensive threatened to prolong the war indefinitely.¹⁹ By early 1918, the situation in the Caucuses was equally troublesome. Not only were the Germans entrenched in the Ukraine, they also seemed to be on the verge of achieving results in their ambitious scheme to penetrate Central Asia.²⁰

By 1914 the Ottoman Empire, the world's greatest independent Islamic power, was in irreversible decline. It had suffered recent military humiliations in the Balkans and in Libya. Although, having been relatively docile over the past decades, it decided to join the Central Powers with the hopes of reclaiming lost territory, world dominance and past glory. The Ottoman/Turkish Army at the outbreak of war numbered roughly 600,000 men, divided into 38 divisions of relatively unknown quality.²¹ The Ottoman Empire's decision to enter the war against the Allies produced numerous problems. Most importantly it threatened Allied colonies in the region and had the prospect of causing serious consequences to the much-needed trade routes between these colonies and their European powers. Thus, it was inevitable that the Middle East would become another theatre of the Great War.

The history of the Middle East in the Great War, up to the deployment of Dunsterforce, is extremely complicated. For the sake of summary, it can be divided up into three distinct phases. The first, from November 1914 lasting until the end of 1915, marks a period in which Britain, Russia and Turkey violated Persia's proclaimed neutrality.²² In short, Britain, France and Russia made a pact for a new division of Middle Eastern properties, and the Persians, with the aid of Germany and Turkey, made a valiant attempt to drive out these foreign forces.

On 2 February 1915, the Turks launched an offensive against the British forces in the Sinai, with a view to overrunning the Suez Canal and also to act as a catalyst for an Islamic revolution in Egypt. The Turkish force, under the strategic command of General Liman von Sanders, a German, and under operational command of Turkish commander Djemel Pasha, was relatively small numbering 39,000 men. The strength was indicative of the Turkish commander's confidence that he could ignite a Moslem revolution in Egypt, and with propaganda produce a holy war. The campaign was a miserable failure and the envisioned *Jihad* never materialized.²³

By the autumn of 1915, northern Arabs were tired of Turkish domination and under Sherif Hussein of Mecca, lobbied to revive the long-fallen Arab Empire. The British Government welcomed his opposition to the Central Powers and began negotiations

with him in October 1915. However, Britain could not promise independence to Syria and other regions of Arabia due to stubborn French interests.²⁴

Still, there were other Allied interests in the area, specifically, the Dardanelles. The strategical advantage in this region, without going into lengthy detail, was the geographical benefit in transportation and trade: the Dardanelles connected the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea. The profits of getting through the Dardanelles were so obvious that Winston Churchill, then Lord of the Admiralty, planned a naval operation. On 18 March, under the direction of Major-General Sir Ian Hamilton, a combined British and French fleet assembled at the Dardanelles Strait and bombarded coastal defences. With no amphibious landings planned, the naval attempt to force the strait was unsuccessful and was aborted.²⁵ However, the plan to take

the Dardanelles was not. On 25 April 1915, now known as ANZAC Day, British, French, Australian, New Zealand and Newfoundland troops landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, supported by a naval bombardment. The campaign was a disaster and the Allied forces abandoned the operation in January 1916.²⁶



General Lionel Dunsterville in the Middle East

The second phase was from the beginning of 1916 until March 1917. During this time, the British and the Russians again invaded Persia, and they successfully drove out the Turks. With the advent of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Middle

East was partitioned into British, French and Russian spheres of influence. Britain extended her control over the rest of the southern and eastern regions, and eventually captured Baghdad in March 1917.²⁷

At this time, the war began to extract a toll on civilians. Widespread famine began to devastate the local populations in Persia in early 1917. Local crops withered and the import of foodstuffs from India, Mesopotamia and the United States became non-existent, due to the use of the local transportation means for war supplies by both sides. In addition, the Allies refused to pay for local oil, which greatly aggravated the conditions brought on by the drought and famine. Between 1917 and 1919, it is estimated that nearly one-half (9-11 million people) of the Persian population died of starvation or disease brought on by malnutrition.²⁸ Those men fit enough to fight, took up active resistance against the British, who now controlled most of the region.²⁹

The third phase ran between April 1917 and January 1918. In this phase, the Russian Revolution unfolded, causing the Russian armies in Persia and the Caucasus to disband and evacuate their positions. The agreements of 1907 and 1916 between the Allies and Russia became moot.³⁰ The United States officially joined the Allied war-effort in April. With the potential of more manpower on the Western Front, thanks largely to

the United States, Britain afforded more troops to General Sir Archibald Murray's Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force (MEF).

Murray's successes in Mesopotamia, including the capture of Baghdad in March 1917 from the Turks, drastically changed the situation in the Middle East, whereby Britain could, if given appropriate troop allocations, conquer all of Persia, as well as, nearly the entire Near East. However, Murray delayed any further attacks and subverted the British War Office with phoney reports of his progress. Hence, General Sir Edmund Allenby replaced him in June 1917. Allenby proceeded to launch successful attacks on Gaza in November 1917, and on Jerusalem in December of that same year.³¹ With these regions safely under British control, the main railway lines from the Mediterranean ports across Syria, through Arabia to the Persian Gulf were in Allied hands. Also, ports on the Mediterranean, Red, and Caspian Seas, the Persian Gulf and the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were open for Allied shipping.³²

In addition, Arab guerrillas, led by T.E. Lawrence since 1916, were wreaking havoc on German and Turkish reinforcement and supply depots in Palestine and Western Arabia, distracting sizeable enemy forces from the main battlefronts.³³ However, in early 1918, the decaying situation in the Middle East, which was spawned by the collapse of the Tsarist Regime, became even more threatening to local Allied strategy.

With the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the Russian troops, under General Judentich, who had been embattled with both German and Turkish forces in the southern Caucuses since 1915, disintegrated. Until the summer of 1917, the Russian line extended from South Russia, through the Caucuses, across the Caspian Sea, through North-West Persia until its left flank joined General Allenby's British forces in Mesopotamia, east of Baghdad.³⁴ By October 1917, this continuous Allied line was melting away. Russian troops were deserting *en masse* and the entire Russian Army announced its intention of withdrawing from the area completely. With the advent of the Russian Revolution, and the final collapse of the southern Russian forces in November 1917, the British faced an entirely new strategical situation.³⁵

The Turkish Army, acting as an unconscious vanguard for German follow-on forces, found nothing between itself and the long-coveted possession of the oil rich region of the Southern Caucuses, and began to work their way along the Trans-Caucasus Railway. A gap, some 450 miles wide, was forming on the right flank of the British Mesopotamian Army, through which Turkish and German agents and troops could encircle the Allied forces and pour into Central Asia.³⁶ General Allenby's forces were not strong enough to repel this inevitable onslaught and alterations were needed to safeguard British interests in the Middle East.³⁷

The situation in the Caucus region of southern Russia, and in the neighbouring northwest Persian region—east of the Turkish border—was of extreme importance to the Allies, most notably to Britain. Throughout the war, India was challenged by the threat of danger from the northwest frontier, aggravated by the hostility of a considerable portion of Afghan nationals. Any advance by Turkey into India would affect the fortunes of, not only India, but also the British Empire as a whole. India was the source of a considerable wealth of raw war materials, which were vital to the Allied war effort.³⁸

The strategical solution to avoiding such a catastrophe was to limit Turkey's access to the transportation routes leading south to India. The majority of these were located in the Middle East. The main cities on both the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, including Mosul, Baghdad, Fallujah and Basra, and northern ports of Enzeli and Baku, were vital ground in halting any southern Turkish advance. With the Russian departure and Allenby's forces already drastically undersized, it was necessary to insert secondary forces to meet the strategical objectives in the Middle East. However, the Russian force that had long held the Caucasus-Persian Front fluctuated between 100,000 and 200,000 soldiers.³⁹ The Allies could not spare sufficient forces from any theatre to replace these numbers. Highly mobile and highly trained special forces seemed to be the only Allied alternative.

The Creation of Dunsterforce

With the envisaged scenes of conflict too far removed from any sizeable force already in the Middle East, the British needed to safeguard the remote regions of the Caucasus with Special Forces. Dunsterforce was one of three “hush-hush” missions, which were secretly inserted, to safeguard British strategical interests in the Middle East. As Lloyd-George noted:

There was an...area of Russian territory where, after the collapse of Russia and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, we found it necessary to intervene in check to prevent them from securing valuable supplies. This was in the south, around the Caspian, where were the oil-wells at Baku.... [T]he road to that valuable region lay open, both the Germans and the Turks began a race for it. Our concern was to prevent either of them from winning.⁴⁰

Nationality	Main Objective or Agenda
1) Turks	To conquer Trans-Caucasia and its resources.
2) Anti-Bolshevik Russians	To control the Caspian Sea and link up with British Forces.
3) Bolshevik Russians	To make peace and return home.
4) The Trans-Caucasian Republic (Formed April 1918, consisting of: and Turkey, Georgia, Russian Armenia and Azerbaijan.)	To obtain independence of both Russia
5) Turkish Armenians (mainly Christian)	To escape Turkish genocide and oppression.
6) Germans (penetrating the Ukraine)	To penetrate into Persia and Afghanistan to control natural resources and trade routes.
7) Persia (neutral)	To be void of all parties. Equally suspicious of all invaders motives.
8) British	To prevent the Turks/Germans from overrunning the Middle East, while protecting India, natural resources and trade routes. ⁴⁵

In December 1917, into January 1918, the Eastern Committee of the War Office, under the direction of Sir William Robertson and Lord Curzon, began organizing special military missions to combat the threat of a joint German/Turkish push south into Central Asia.⁴¹

Unless by the end of the war democratic Russia can be reconstituted as an independent military power it is only a question of time before most of Asia becomes a German colony, and nothing can impede the enemy's progress towards India, in defence of which the British Empire will have to fight at every disadvantage.⁴²

In accordance, three distinct missions were designed to negate these possible disadvantages. The western most force, Dunsterforce, was to move through Persia from Baghdad, with the goal of reaching the ports of Enzeli and Baku, on the Western shores of the Caspian Sea, and establishing contacts with pro-Allied elements in Transcaucasia. A second mission, under command of Major-General Sir Wilfrid Malleon, was to operate east of Dunsterforce. Its objective was to travel north along

the Persian-Afghan border in order to safeguard the cities of Meshed and Ashkhabad, the latter being situated on Trans-Caucasia Railway. Major-General Sir George Macartney was placed in command of the third, and smallest, special force. His mission, operating further east, was to proceed via Chinese Turkestan (Kashgar) into Russian Turkestan to the city of Tashkent, again a vital stop along the railway.⁴³ However, Dunsterforce was given the most critical and dangerous assignment, as its zone of operation was closest to the Turkish threat and was under what the Russians labelled before the war "German orientation."⁴⁴



General Lionel Dunsterville

Seldom has any portion of the world been occupied by such a mosaic of conflicting parties and interests as the region in which Dunsterforce operated in 1918. There were numerous groups, ethnicities and forces battling for the region of the southern Caucasus by early 1918:

Naturally, with the turmoil created by the various interest groups and factions operating in the region, it was necessary for the commander of the "hush-hush" force to be familiar with Russian culture and language, as well as, the state of affairs in the Middle Eastern regions. Dunsterville met these criteria: "My own knowledge of the Russian language and known sympathy with Russia had probably a good deal to do with my selection for the task."⁴⁶ He was widely travelled and had a vast amount of knowledge of Russian institutions, including fluency in Russian dialects. He was commissioned in 1884 and had served in India, Waziristan and China. At the outbreak of war he was posted to India and remained there until his selection to lead the force that would take his name.⁴⁷

On Christmas Eve, 24 December 1917, while in command of the 1st Infantry Brigade on the Northwest frontier of India, Dunsterville received secret orders to proceed to

Army Headquarters at Delhi, with a “view to proceed overseas on special work.”⁴⁸ His stay in Delhi was brief, as the War Office was pushing to expedite the insertion of a Special Force into the Caucasus. After the selection of his General Staff, he embarked at Karachi on 6 January 1918, reaching the port of Basra in Mesopotamia on 12 January.

However, during his conferences in Delhi, Dunsterville had dispatched a special request, through the War Office, to all corps commanders on the Western Front. Interestingly, special attention in the message was given to the commanders of the Canadian, Australian, and South African Dominion contingents. By this time, Dominion soldiers had earned, through bloody victories, the reputation as being the finest soldiers in the Imperial ranks. On 3 January, Australian Corps Commander Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood, his Canadian counterpart Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, and South African leader General Jan Smuts all received the same letter from the Eastern Committee of the War Office. The request stressed that co-operation was needed for “a very important and difficult mission”:

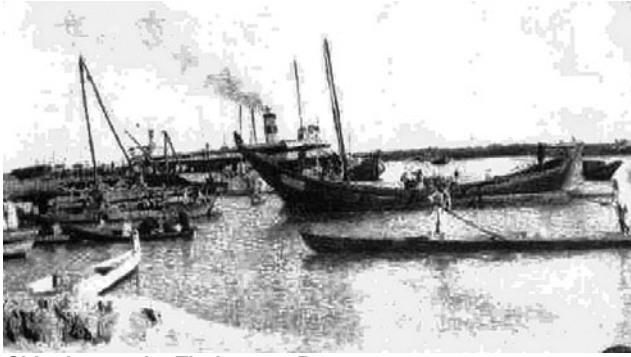
We realize how difficult it is for you to spare good officers, and especially the kind of officers we want...but you will realize what a big question is involved—nothing more or less than the defence of India and the security of our whole position in the East. If we only stem the rot in the Caucasus and on the Persian frontier and interpose a barrier against the vast German-Turkish propaganda of their Pan-Turanian scheme, which threatens to enflame the whole of Central Asia including Afghanistan, our minds will be at rest as regards Mesopotamia and India, the latter of which is practically bled white of Indian troops.⁴⁹

Although, Currie had been notified on 3 January, Britain had secured Canadian consent by directly submitting a formal request for the use of Canadian troops to the Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, Sir Edward Kemp, in late December 1917. Kemp immediately acquiesced to the British appeal for soldiers without consulting Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden. Only on 24 February 1918 did Kemp casually report his concurrence to the Prime Minister:

The Imperial authorities were confronted with a difficult and hazardous situation owing to the demoralization and retirement of the Russian Army in the Caucasus which was operating on the Eastern or right flank of the British Army in Mesopotamia ... I was asked to furnish them with 15 level-headed Officers and 26 Non-Commission officers, to co-operate with the British Officers and Officers from other Dominions in organizing a somewhat mixed and irregular army of different tribes and nationalities which inhabit the territory to the North and East of the British Army..⁵⁰

The Canadian contribution was one component of Dunsterville's request for 150 Officers and 300 N.C.O.'s of, “strong character, and adventurous spirit, especially good stamina, capable of organizing, training and eventually leading, irregular troops.”⁵¹ The process of selecting these elite soldiers was the same throughout the British/Dominion corps, active on the Western Front. The Canadian selection system can serve as the model.

On 5 January, two days after Currie received notification, a message was sent from Canadian Corps Headquarters directly to brigade commanders asking for volunteers to partake in “a hazardous enterprise in a foreign theatre of war.”⁵² The officers were



Shipping on the Tigris, near Bazea



Marching 600 Miles Through Persia

given no other specific details about the mission, but those who accepted the call believed that no duty could be worse than spending another winter in the trenches of the Western Front. On 7 January, another request was sent to the brigade commanders, for the officers who volunteered for the mission to be immediately sent to see Currie personally. At Canadian Headquarters on 10 January, a parade was held and after interviewing each volunteer, 15 officers were selected.⁵³

These men were invited to suggest the names of N.C.O's who showed strong leadership attributes and who might work well in an irregular force. From the nominations forwarded by the selected officers, twenty-six self-reliant and distinguished N.C.O's were hand-picked from across the Canadian Corps. These forty-one men were told nothing of their destination; simply that they would leave for London in a week.⁵⁴ This process was mirrored in the Australian Corps and the South African Division at roughly the same time.⁵⁵ According to Major M.H. Donohoe, Dunsterville's intelligence officer, the soldiers assembled were indeed elite:

With few exceptions our party consisted of Dominion soldiers gathered from the remote corners of the Empire. There were Anzacs and Springboks, Canadians from the far North-West, men who had charged up the deadly shell-swept slopes of Gallipoli, and those who had won through at Vimy Ridge. They were, in fact, a hardened band of adventurous soldiers, fit to go anywhere and do anything, men who had lived on the brink of the pit for three years and had come back from the Valley of the Shadow of Death.... [T]he cream of the fighting men from the South African contingent and from the magnificent

Australian and Canadian Divisions. I do not recall a single officer or N.C.O who had not won at least one decoration for bravery.⁵⁶

Dunsterville agreed with this assessment: "All were chosen for special ability, and all were men who had already distinguished themselves in the field. It is certain that a finer body of men have never been brought together, and that command was one of which any man might well be proud."⁵⁷

The Deployment of Dunsterforce

Having arrived at Basra on 12 January 1918, Dunsterville travelled to Baghdad arriving at General Headquarters, Mesopotamia on 18 January.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the Captains and Sergeants of Dunsterforce, including the Canadians, made their way from their units in the Western Front, and presented themselves as a group at the Tower of London on 14 January.⁵⁹ They were given medical examinations and outfitted with a variety of summer and winter clothing, which further confused them as to their destination.⁶⁰ They were then given a monetary advance and 10 days leave.

On 25 January, both officers and N.C.O's convened again, at the Tower, and were finally briefed on their forthcoming assignment on 28 January. A staff officer from the War Office explained:

The capture of Baghdad by the British in March 1917, had been offset by the Bolshevik Revolution. The Russian Front...had now collapsed...leaving a wide-open door to the eastward advance of the Turks and the Germans. The age-old necessity of protecting India demanded some sort of barrier...and the Mesopotamian Army had no troops to spare. The situation was menacing. When things were at their blackest, however, a War Office visionary had a brainstorm. [The] proposition-to penetrate into the Caucasus Mountains, raise an army, and use that army, against the Turks.⁶¹

The following morning, 29 January, the Western Front volunteers left London, travelling from Southampton to Cherbourg and then across France and Italy by train. The steamship *Malwa*, escorted by three Japanese destroyers, carried them from Taranto in southern Italy to Alexandria, Egypt, over the course of four days. An overnight train trip carried them from Alexandria to Port Said. They then boarded a decrepit transport, the *Nile*, which carried them down the Red Sea, through the Indian Ocean, and up the Persian Gulf to Kuwait, eventually arriving at Basra on 2 March 1918.⁶² Almost two months had passed since the Canadians and their counterparts had left their units on the Western Front.

After a delay of one week in Basra, orders were finally issued for the force to proceed up the Tigris River to Baghdad. The soldiers were loaded onto flat river barges, operated by 28 men of the First Overseas Canadian Pioneer Detail, and ferried north, arriving in Baghdad between 20-28 March. According to Major Donohoe:

The navigation of the Tigris, even in peacetime, is a hazardous undertaking... The despatches of the victorious generals in Mesopotamia...have entirely overlooked the great contribution of the men of the Tigris River Flotilla, who have apparently been left without reward or recognition.... The admirable part played by these river skippers...has never been told, and so has never been properly appreciated by their countrymen [Canadians] at home.⁶³

Too Little, Too Late

With the delay of the main body and the increasingly uncertain conditions in the Caucasus, Dunsterville, being ordered to proceed with haste, was faced with the option of starting the expedition with only a small number of soldiers. Accordingly, on 27 January 1918, two months before the main body arrived in Baghdad, he drew a small number of soldiers from the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. This advance party, consisting of Dunsterville, 12 officers, 2 clerks and 41 drivers, headed north to Tiflis in four Ford touring cars and 40 Ford vans, on 29 January. Dunsterville was ordered to establish his headquarters in Tiflis and to direct his irregular forces from there.⁶⁴

This journey, which Dunsterville later described as a “mad enterprise,” was an extremely arduous undertaking. The terrain was always difficult; more so in the winter



Dunsterforce Soldiers

months, and there were no local services that could be drawn upon. In addition, the route was not secure and opposition from hostile groups in the region would be unavoidable. His advance party was to travel 335 miles northeast, over the 7,600-foot high Asadabad Pass to Hamadan, to proceed north (250 miles) to the port of Enzeli on the Southern shore of the Caspian Sea. From Enzeli, they

were to continue north across the Caspian, on whatever aquatic transportation could be commandeered, to Baku. Finally, the last leg would be a 275-mile journey along the Trans-Caucasian Railway line to Tiflis.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the 53 year-old Dunsterville, and his advance party set out from Baghdad determined to accomplish their objective. After having traveled 600 miles, through inhospitable territory, they reached the outskirts of Enzeli on 17 February: “Now we had to see how the Bolsheviks and other brands of revolutionaries would receive us.”⁶⁶ Unfortunately for Dunsterville, he and his force, would not receive a cordial reception.

On 19 February, Dunsterville met with Bolshevik Committee who had taken over Enzeli with a force of 3,000-5,000 armed Russian supporters. They curtly told him that Russia had made peace with the Germans, Turks, and Austrians, “and among all nations, and they mistrusted only Great Britain as a symbol of Imperialism.”⁶⁷ With a Soviet gunboat guarding the mouth of the harbour, and no hope of circumventing either the guards or the boat, Dunsterville did not argue or delay his withdrawal.⁶⁸

Reinforcements were not yet available, and armed with the knowledge that Baku was more occupied and sympathetic to Bolshevik forces, Dunsterville's only option was to make the return trip to Hamadan, and plan another course of action from there. On the morning of 20 February, the now battered convoy of vehicles, turned south, arriving back at Hamadan on 25 February. There, Dunsterforce remained for the next

three months, "the original plan having for the time being quite broken down, we needed to take our bearings and see what could still be done to thwart the Turk in these regions."⁶⁹ Although the main body did arrive in Baghdad in late March, they were not to be transported to Hamadan until Dunsterville was ready to make a second attempt to reach Baku.⁷⁰

In accordance, between 1-6 May, two groups totalling 67 officers and 204 NCO's, including all 41 Canadians, left Baghdad, led partially by two Canadians, Lieutenant-Colonel John Warden and his Adjutant Captain Cecil John Lewis. The groups travelled the first 70 miles by rail and walked the remaining 230 miles to join Dunsterville at Hamadan. With these reinforcements swelling his ranks Dunsterville again attempted an assault on Enzeli, which was finally occupied on 27 June. Further penetration was made into Baku by a small detachment of Dunsterforce in mid-July.⁷¹ Among this group defending Baku were five Canadian officers.⁷² However, during the five weeks elements of Dunsterforce spent in Baku, they were never in a secure position, nor did they control the surrounding areas. The Allied front at Baku consisted of approximately 6000 troops, the majority Armenian, holding a line 12 miles long.

Correspondingly, on 1 September, 14,000 Turks launched a determined offensive against the sparsely manned Dunsterforce lines in Baku, and sent another equally strong force south against Hamadan. On the morning of 14 September, the day Baku fell to the Turks, and when the massacre of Armenians commenced, Dunsterville arrived back in Enzeli, leaving behind 180 of his soldiers, dead or missing.⁷³ On the surface it appeared that his mission had failed. Lieutenant-Colonel Warden, the senior Canadian, wrote a final comment to what he labelled "Dunsterforce" in his diary before evacuating Baku: "Major-General Dunsterville should be made full General and knighted and kicked out as they do everyone who makes a mess of his job."⁷⁴ His disillusionment is understandable, if unwarranted to Dunsterville personally.

The return of Dunsterforce to northern Persia had numerous effects. The Turkish Army ceased its offensive south, and restricted itself to Baku and the Caucuses. However, Dunsterforce's return to Enzeli also led to its abolition. The War Office abruptly disbanded the force on 22 September 1918: "Orders were now received for the dispersal of the Force.... So ends the story of the adventures of Dunsterforce."⁷⁵ On the disbandment of the force, soldiers were offered similar roles in the theatres of Mesopotamia, North Persia (Noperforce) and Siberia. Of the Canadians, roughly one-third accepted; the remainder chose to return to their original units in France and Belgium.⁷⁶

Conclusion

On 30 October 1918, the Armistice with Turkey was signed and hostilities ceased in the Middle East. Dunsterforce did not meet its operational goals. It failed to penetrate to Tiflis and never created the Caucasian forces to hold the railway line between Batum, Tiflis and Baku. However, it did perform its strategical functions. The forces mustered in North Persia, whose numbers were greatly exaggerated by local rumours, proved sufficient to hold Turkish penetration to the south, thus providing the right flank for the British Mesopotamian Force. Neither this force nor India were ever seriously threatened. Although Turkey occupied Baku and the oilfields, it was only for one

month at the closing of the war. Dunsterforce did succeed in denying the Central Powers the Caspian oil at a time when its possession would have been of immense value.⁷⁷

Dunsterforce clearly exemplified the greater strategical thought that had evolved within Allied supreme command leading into the final year of the war. In addition, it illustrated a deviation from the typical mass armies that plagued the European Fronts. Dunsterforce was indeed a Special Forces unit, which was given a special forces-style assignment. The strategic success of the Dunsterforce mission confirmed the validity of its deployment. General Sir Henry Wilson, who succeeded General Robertson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, on 16 February 1918, believed the Trans-Caucasus was very important to British strategy: "The despatch of a small force at Baku has been sanctioned, admittedly as a gamble, but the stakes involved are so valuable as to make the hazard justifiable."⁷⁸ For the Allies, the gamble paid off.

About the Author ...

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Endnotes

1. David Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs, Vol. VI* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1936), p. 3197.
2. Major-General Lionel Dunsterville, *Stalky's Reminiscences* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1923), pp. 9-10. Dunsterville was commissioned in 1884 and had served in India, Waziristan and China. At the outbreak of war he was posted to India. He was the character "Stalky" in Rudyard Kipling's schools boy tale, *Stalky & Co.* They had gone to school together as young boys. After the war, Dunsterville wrote a book, *Stalky's Reminiscences*, about his entire life, including the war, using this nickname. He died in 1946. A list of the Canadian members of Dunsterforce can be found in an appendix to the first installment of Captain W.W. Murray, "Canadians in Dunsterforce," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* (January 1931).
3. Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *Great Britain and the War of 1914-1918* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 440. These refer to ethnic groups which were, in most cases, not associated with an actual country of the same name. They were part of the Ottoman Empire or undefined border regions within the Middle East. The geography will be explained later in the paper.
4. Roy MacLaren, *Canadian in Russia, 1918-1919* (Canada: Maclean Hunter Press, 1976), p. 12. The British later found out that secret negotiations between the Germans and transcaucasian representatives for the sale of cotton, manganese, and oil had taken place, which clearly ignored Turkish interests. General Erich Ludendorff flatly stated on 9 June 1918, that any attempt by the Turks to occupy Baku would be regarded by Germany as an act of open hostility.
5. MacLaren, *Canadian in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 14-24; Michael Kettle, *The Road to Intervention; March—November 1918* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 205, 217, 296-299; John Silverlight, *The Victor's Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd., 1970), pp. 95-99.
6. There were "side shows" all over the world encompassing: Africa, Northern Russia, Siberia, the Balkans, South/Central America, China, New Guinea, and for the importance of this essay in the Middle East.
7. Major-General Lionel Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce* (London: Edward Arnold, 1920); Colonel A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East, 1918-1922* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1923). Colonel Rawlinson's work contains a very fine primary account of Dunsterforce as well. He was the brother of General Sir Henry Rawlinson, commander of the Fourth British Army.
8. The Allies failed to recognize that what was taking place was very different from the March 1917 Revolution.
9. Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside, *Archangel 1918-1919* (London: Constable, 1953), pp. 14-15. It was actually the German General Staff who tipped the balance of the political scales to the left. They found V. I. Lenin in exile in Switzerland and helped him across Germany into Russia. He arrived in Petrograd on 4 April and was reunited with Trotsky. Trotsky had also been in exile. He had been living in France but was arrested and taken to Spain. Spain proceeded to send him to Cuba, but he was secretly redirected to New York, where he made passage aboard a Swedish ship to Stockholm. However, this ship had to dock in Halifax and he was arrested there, but again found himself on a Swedish ship and eventually reached Petrograd through Finland.

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10. Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs, Vol. VI*, pp. 3155-3157; Leon Trotsky, *The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922: Vol. I, 1917-1919* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964), pp. 10-25, 50-55; General Erich Von Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914-1918, Vol. II* (London: Hutchison, 1919), pp. 511, 544-550; NAC RG9IIIA3 Vol. 358, File 39. American HQ, Intelligence Summaries. Petrograd is modern day St. Petersburg. The Germans had 12,000 troops in the Baltic provinces and an additional 33,000 in Finland under General Von der Goltz. He also commanded some 50,000 Finns. The Bolsheviks were also receiving aid from Sweden in the form of: 123,000 rifles, 9,000,000 Swedish crowns, and the passage of German weapons through its land.
11. Trotsky, *The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922: Vol. I, 1917-1919*, pp. 10-25, 50-55; General Erich Von Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914-1918, Vol. II*, pp. 511, 544-550; Richard Lockett, *The White Generals* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1971), pp. 109-112.
12. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 2; C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Ltd., 1937), pp. 735-738.
13. See: Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside, *The Diaries of Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside 1920-1922* (London: Leo Cooper, 1972); Major-General Sir Charles Maynard, *The Murmansk Adventure* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1969); Andrew Soutar, *With Ironside in North Russia* (London: Anchor Press, 1940). 130 British Royal Marines landed in Murmansk ("Syren") on 6 March 1918. The Allies landed at Archangel ("Elope") on 2 August 1918. By December 1918, the Allies had 14,475 personnel at Murmansk and 15,996 at Archangel. The total combined force of Murmansk and Archangel never exceeded 35,000. The contributing nations were: Britain, Canada, France, United States, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Finland and White Russia. The Allies began landing at Vladivostok in Siberia in April 1918. The contributing nations were: Japan (70,000), United States (10,000), Poland (12,000), Britain/Canada (6,000), Serbia, Romania (4,000 each), France (2,000), Italy (2,000), in addition to the Czech-Slovak Legion (70,000) fighting the Bolsheviks along the Trans-Siberian Railway. Murmansk, Archangel and Vladivostok all had large quantities of Allied military and civil stores that had been provided on credit to the Tsarist regime. The main objectives of these forces were: 1) to reconstruct Russian or Allied forces in the area to oppose Germany; 2) the prevention of access to the sea through Archangel, Murmansk and Vladivostok should the Germans continue their advance into Russia and; 3) to support the White Russians and prevent supplies from falling into Bolshevik or German hands. Major-General Frederick Poole was assigned command of the overall forces in Northern Russia (March-September 1918) but was replaced by Major-General Edmund Ironside (September 1918-October 1919). Brigadier-General R.G. Finlayson commanded the Archangel force, while Major-General Sir Charles Maynard commanded the force at Murmansk. General Lord Henry Rawlinson, who had commanded the Fourth Army on the Western Front, was chosen to orchestrate the evacuations of the British forces from Northern Russia in September-October 1919. Japanese General Kikuzo Otani, appointed on 18 August 1918, was Allied Commander-in-Chief in Siberia. Lieutenant-Colonel John Leckie was the senior Canadian on the Murmansk front, while Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Sharman was senior at Archangel. Major-General James H. Elmsley was placed in command of the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force, which included two British battalions, marking the first occasion that a Canadian was placed in command of an Imperial unit.
14. Churchill as quoted in MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, p. 2; Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919* (New York: Random House, 2003), pp. 67-82. Churchill, the British Minister for War, was vehemently opposed to Bolshevism: "Of all the tyrannies in history, the Bolshevik tyranny is the worst, the most destructive, the most degrading."
15. Aleksandr V. Kolchak, *The Testimony of Kolchak and Other Siberian Materials* (U.S.A.: Stanford Press, 1935), p. 102. On 18 November 1918, Admiral Kolchak executed a successful coup d'etat against the Socialists and assumed dictatorship over Siberia under the title of Supreme Ruler. He was recognized by the Allies to represent the provisional Russian government in Siberia. He was captured and shot by the Bolsheviks in 1920.
16. Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs, Vol. VI*, pp. 3157-3158. By the end of 1917, the Allied naval blockade was finally beginning to take a toll on the German war machine and it was worrisome for Allied leaders to think that the Central Powers might gain in the east the oil, food and resources that the blockade finally began to deny them.
17. Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914-1918, Vol. II*, p. 584; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, p. 2. Due to the overwhelming success of their Caporetto offensive, the Germans were able to redirect troops from the Italian Front to the Western Front.
18. B.H. Liddell Hart, *The Real War, 1914-1918* (Toronto: Little, Brown Co., 1930), p. 388; NAC RG9IIIA3 Vol. 362, File A3SEF115. Notes: Brigadier-General James H. Elmsley, Military Intervention in Siberia. Also, after peace with Russia, prisoners of war from the Central powers, estimated as high as 1.6 million, were freed, producing another increase in manpower. Some of these prisoners formed a fifth column within Russia to help the German cause of attaining Russian resources.
19. NAC RG9IIIA3 Vol. 362, File A3SEF115. G.S. War Office: Allied Intervention in Siberia, 19 June 1918. In June 1918, the Central Powers still had 51.5 infantry divisions and 7 cavalry divisions in Russia, the Ukraine, the Baltics, and Caucasia.
20. George A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921* (U.S.A.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 60. Turkey expected the 1918 German offensive on the Western Front to alleviate British power in the Middle East, and coupled with the withdrawal of Russian forces, would allow Turkey to launch an offensive.
21. Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, pp. 143-147.
22. Captain Andre Judge, "With General Dunsterville in Persia and TransCaucasus," *Army Review* (London, 1998), p. 3. The Turks over-ran Persia in 1915, destroying crops and villages. They also began the mass slaughter of Armenians, in what would prove to be a terrible genocide. The Russians drove the Turks out in 1916 but were not any kinder to the
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local populations, save for not persecuting Armenians.

23. Lieutenant Staniforth Smith, *Australian Campaigns in the Great War* (Melbourne: Macmillan & Co., 1919), p. 11. The Turks suffered roughly 800 dead with another 3,000 wounded or taken prisoner. British losses were 50 killed and 150 wounded. Liman von Sanders was in command of all Turkish and German forces in the southern sector, including Gallipoli. He had been appointed the head of the German military mission in Turkey in 1913, and began training Turkish forces. He commanded the Fifth Turkish Army at Gallipoli and then was transferred to Palestine in 1917.

24. Woodward, *Great Britain and the War of 1914-1918*, pp. 118-121. Between December 1915, and May 1916, Sir Mark Sykes, a Brit, and M. Georges Picot, a French diplomat, drew up an agreement, which was accepted by their respective governments, and also by the Russian government. The Sykes-Picot agreement set out the mandates for these three countries, and divided the Middle East into spheres of power or influence among these three countries. Arab independence was only given lip-service in order to acquire Arab support for the war effort. Nevertheless, Hussein led the successful Arab Revolt in June 1916, with the help of T.E. Lawrence, against the Turks in Palestine and Arabia.

25. Smith, *Australian Campaigns in the Great War*, pp. 14-41. Two British battleships and one French battleship were sunk by mines. Another French battleship ran ashore and was captured and a British cruiser was disabled beyond repair. Four other ships were also damaged. Hamilton was replaced by Major-General Charles Munro in September 1915. He immediately recommended evacuation of the Dardanelles. His evacuation operation is credited with saving a bulk of Allied soldiers. Hamilton had estimated 50% casualties for his evacuation plan. Munro succeeded in evacuating all soldiers with relatively few casualties.

26. John Keegan, *The First World War* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2000), pp. 237-243. ANZAC stands for Australian New Zealand Army Corps. In all 500,000 troops were deployed by the Allies. Roughly 265,000 became casualties. The Turkish losses numbered 300,000. It was at Gallipoli that Mustapha Kemal made a name for himself while commanding the 19th Turkish Division. He was one of the earliest Young Turks and would rise to power in Turkey after the war as Ataturk. He had a profound impact on modernizing Turkey and bringing it into the "western fold."

27. Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921: Britain and the Russian Civil War, Vol. 1-2, Vol. 2* (Princeton: University Press, 1968), pp. 68-70. However, before securing the region of Mesopotamia, including Baghdad, the British suffered a devastating defeat at Kut-et-Amara in April 1916. Major-General Sir Charles Townsend and his force of 10,000 surrendered to Turkish forces on 29 April, after a 143 day siege by General Goltz.

28. Mohammed Gholi Majd, *The Great Famine and Genocide in Persia, 1917-1919* (Toronto: University Press of America Inc., 2003), pp. 3-8; Major M.H. Donohoe, *With the Persian Expedition* (London: Edward Arnold, 1919), pp. 88-89, 117-131; Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East, 1918-1922*, pp. 41-62. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 102. The famine is described in Donohoe, Rawlinson and Dunsterville's primary accounts.

29. David Payne, "Dunsterforce: On the Caucasian Front in the Great War," *The Western Front Association* (London: 2004), p. 1. In March 1916, General Sir Percy Sykes raised an outfit similar to Dunsterforce at Bandar Abbas, Persia, dubbed the South Persia Rifles. It succeeded in bringing the hostile Persian tribes in the countryside under control and largely neutralized German influence and covert operation in the region.

30. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921: Britain and the Russian Civil War, Vol. 1-2, Vol. 1*, p. 303; John Swettenham, *The Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 41; Smith, *Australian Campaigns in the Great War*, pp. 2-4. Britain and France arrived at an agreement in 1904 to divide the Middle East into regions and promote the idea of "splendid isolation" in the region. In 1907 Russia, France and Britain arrived at an agreement over trade and resource rights within the Middle East. Russia formally recognized British interests in Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet and agreed that no Russian troops would be placed at the borders surrounding British held territory. The main British fear was of Russian interests in India. The latter is the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement.

31. Keegan, *The First World War*, pp. 414-415; *The Holy Bible* (London: Zondervan Corp., 1996), Book of Revelation 16:12-16:16; Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs, Vol. VI*, pp. 3224-3225. Allenby had been a commander on the Western Front and had a credible reputation. He had been the BEF cavalry commander and the commander of the Third Army. He was the 34th conqueror of Jerusalem, and the first Christian since the Crusades. Allenby's breakthrough was completed with the defeat of the Turks at Megiddo, 19-21 September 1917, and was according to Lloyd-George a, "brilliant operation." Allenby captured 75,000 Turks, while inflicting another 8,000 casualties. British losses were roughly 5,500. Megiddo was the sight of the first recorded battle in history. Once an ancient fortified city, historians believe it was the site of more battles than any other location in history. The archeological record indicates that Assyrians, Canaanites, Egyptians, Greeks, Israelites, Persians, Philistines and Romans all fought at Megiddo. Also, according to the Book of Revelation (16:12-16:16) it is to be the site of a great clash between East and West shortly before the end times: "...the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. And they assembled them at the place which is called in Hebrew Armaged'don [Megiddo]."

32. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 4-8; G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), pp. 460-472. In 1916, British and Canadian engineers were sent to build bridges in Palestine in support of General Allenby's campaign. From 1915 onwards, a total of 4,000 Canadians (mostly from British Columbia) operated barges in the Middle East along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. (A portion helped transport Dunsterforce).

33. Keegan, *The First World War*, pp. 414-415; T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Toronto: J. Cape Co., 1935).

34. Silverlight, *The Victor's Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, pp. 93-95.

35. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 1-7.

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36. Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Burne, *Mesopotamia: The Last Phase* (London: Gale & Polden Ltd., 1936), pp. 6-10. Germany was arming tribes in Persia, who were hostile to the British. By the beginning of 1918, 300,000 rifles had been given to these tribes.
37. The majority of Allenby's troops were Indian and were not very skilled. He had a smaller number of British troops, as well as, an American contingent from the West Indies. His cavalry was the Australian/New Zealand Brigade. The cavalry performed heroically by all accounts and was a key to later British victories in the Middle East.
38. Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, p. 41. The British also needed to protect the road from Baghdad to the port of Enzeli on the Caspian Sea. The road, 630 miles long, climbed through a succession of mountain ranges and desolate regions, and was frequently raided by Turkish or hostile Persian forces being encouraged by German/Turkish agents. The protection of this route was under Allenby's mandate, but he could not devote any resources to its security, as his numbers were so low. In addition, hostile tribesman controlled all approaches to Enzeli.
39. *Ibid*, p. 41.
40. Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs, Vol. VI*, pp. 3193-3194.
41. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, p. 728; Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921*, p. 60.
42. War Cabinet Memorandum 25 July 1918: British Military Policy 1918-1919 contained in Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921: Britain and the Russian Civil War, Vol. 1-2, Vol. 1*, p. 305.
43. Captain L.V.S. Blacker, *On a Secret Patrol in High Asia* (London: John Murray, 1922), pp. 6-7. See Map of these three missions. Macartney's mission consisted of himself and 16 others. The soldiers were all cavalry and were selected based on linguistic prowess in the languages and dialects of the region. Blacker was part of this mission, as he acted as a guide in the Afghan area throughout the war. His work is an excellent primary account of this little-known mission.
44. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 4. The Christian ethnicities of the Georgians, Armenians and Assyrians feared Turkish occupation and whole sale slaughter of their peoples if Turkish forces occupied the Caucasus.
45. Burne, *Mesopotamia: The Last Phase*, p. 88.
46. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 9; Dunsterville, *Stalky's Reminiscences*, p. 270.
47. *Ibid*, p. 9; *Ibid*, pp. 174-270. See the latter for detailed accounts of his past military services and campaigns.
48. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 11.
49. 3 January letter as quoted in Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, p. 729. The letter received by the Dominion commanders was different from that sent to British corps commanders. Smuts was also a permanent member of the Supreme War Council.
50. Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, pp. 43-44. In the past, Kemp had "loaned out" Canadian soldiers in small numbers without consulting anyone, as this was a right within his portfolio. Given that the British only wanted a small detachment for Dunsterforce, Kemp was within his powers to provide it, without consulting his leader.
51. 5 January statement General Plumber to Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie as quoted in MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 9-10. Given these criteria, it was believed Dominion troops would be better suited, as they had earned the reputation as being the most dominant soldiers of the Allied forces. Due to the nature of their countries of origin, and what was perceived by the British to be, sturdy physiques due to "hard living," they would stand up better under the conditions of the mission.
52. *Ibid*, p. 10.
53. Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, p. 44; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 9-10.
54. MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 9-10. All men selected below the ranks of Captain and Sergeant, were promoted to these ranks.
55. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, p. 730; Like Currie, Birdwood facilitated the selection himself. On 8 January, names of volunteers had been forwarded to him and by 11 January, after interviews, the selection of 20 officers and 20 N.C.O.'s was complete.
56. Donohoe, *With the Persian Expedition*, pp. 3-4; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, p. 10. Of the Canadians, all had won at least won commendation for bravery, valour or courage. Also, 10 of the 15 officers and 8 of the 26 N.C.O.'s had previously been wounded in fighting on the Western Front.
57. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 9.
58. Dunsterville, *Stalky's Reminiscences*, p. 275; Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 11; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, p. 15. Dunsterville had contradicting dates. In the former he claims to have reached Baghdad on 6 January. In the latter, 18 January is given as the date of arrival. It appears that 18 January is correct.
59. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, pp. 730-731; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 10-18; Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, p. 44. In total 271 men were gathered: 67 officers and 204 N.C.O.'s. The figures of nationality are conflicting and incomplete. However, these numbers are correct: Canada: 15 officers, 26 N.C.O.'s, Australia: 20 officers and 20 N.C.O.'s, New Zealand: 10 officers, South Africa: 12 officers, Britain (Scotland and Ireland): 20 officers (some were to serve as staff officers).
60. Nicholson, *The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919*, p. 494. Three Canadians were found to be medically unfit and were replaced in England.
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61. As quoted in MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 11-12.
62. Donohoe, *With the Persian Expedition*, pp. 6-18. Most of these Canadian barge operators remained in the Middle East until 1920.
63. *Ibid*, pp. 37-38.
64. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 12-14.
65. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 13-19; Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, pp. 732-734. The roads were not paved and were in terrible condition. The geography to be traversed consisted of desert, mountains and jungles. Snowstorms frequently blocked all routes through the mountains. There would be no military support and the force would pass through numerous towns which were hostile to British motives. The highest peak of the Elburz Mountains is Demavend, near Tehran, standing at 18,000 feet above sea level,
66. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 36-50; Donohoe, *With the Persian Expedition*, pp. 74-131. In Hamadan, the evidence of the famine was unavoidable. For detailed accounts of this journey and the famine see the sources referenced above.
67. Silverlight, *The Victor's Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War*, p. 96; Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 45. In addition to Bolshevik forces in Enzeli, there was also the Jangali, a Persian nationalist reform movement led by Kuchik Khan. His advice to Dunsterville was to return from where he had come from.
68. MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 16-17.
69. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, pp. 51-57.
70. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, pp. 736-738; Donohoe, *With the Persian Expedition*, pp. 113-116.
71. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and the Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921*, pp. 61-62. Before departing for Enzeli, elements of Dunsterforce provided a hastily constructed rearguard to enable fleeing Armenians to reach safety at Hamadan. Seven Canadians took part in this operation.
72. Nicholson, *The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919*, p. 494; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 24-25. The five were: Warden and Lewis, Captain John William Henry Gerritt Hopman Van Den Berg, Captain Robert Harrison, and Captain Gordon Scott Hopkins. Several Canadian Sergeants later joined them, as did a sixth officer, Major Adam H. Gilmour.
73. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921*, pp. 63-70; MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 23-25. Some 10,000 Armenians were killed. Canadian casualties in the Dunsterforce operations numbered only one. On the night of 31 August, Sergeant Ambrose J. Mahar, was wounded in the shoulder in fighting 10 miles north of Baku. However, Sergeant D.J. MacDonald had been evacuated with smallpox and eventually died in Bombay on 5 December 1918.
74. Warden as quoted in MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, p. 33.
75. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, p. 317. Ironically, another British force led by Major-General W.M. Thomson, dubbed Norperforce (North Persian Force), would re-occupy Baku and the Caucasus on 17 November 1918, after the signing of the Armistice.
76. Nicholson, *The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919*, p. 496; Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. V*, pp. 756-757; Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, p. 50. Captains Peter S. Murray and Guy B. Roberts and Sergeants David F. McWhirter and Alfred P. Gatley volunteered for the Mesopotamian force. Joining Norperforce were Lieutenant-Colonel Harold M. Newcombe, Captain Adam H. Gilmour and Sergeants Lorne F. Weidmark and Samuel Hamilton. To the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force went Lieutenant-Colonel Warden, Captain Lewis and Sergeants Ambrose J. Mahar, John Lawrence and Alexander Ramsey.
77. Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada*, p. 50.
78. Wilson as quoted in MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919*, pp. 23-24.



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