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Biggest Contingent Of War Arrives In Great Convoy

Britain's Mastery of Seas Proved as Men Stream Ashore After Quiet Crossing; 1,200-Bed Military Hospital Is Included

FIRST ARMORED FORCE EVER SENT

A BRITISH PORT, July 2 (CP).—Canada's battle-primed overseas fighting forces have been strengthened by the largest contingent of troops to arrive in the United Kingdom in this war. Headed by rugged men of the First Canadian Army Tank Brigade, the men streamed ashore in thousands from a huge convoy, brought safely across the Atlantic in a mighty naval escort, which proved anew Britain's mastery of the seas.

Fittest and gayest groups to land this year, they poured off their grim, grey ships whistling and laughing at the end of the crossing.

The convoy, sent on its way by Canadian warships, made a rapid, uneventful crossing in pleasant weather. Only incident occurred a few days out when one of the escort ships dumped depth charges overboard, but it was not made known whether a submarine had been lurking in the vicinity.

The troops came ashore in tenders, lustily cheering the Royal Navy as they passed units lying about the harbor. They piled their kits in baggage cars of the "funny" English trains which chugged from the station to carry the new arrivals to camps on Britain's battle lines.

The contingent included a complete 1,200-bed hospital from Montreal with more than eighty nursing sisters; lumbermen-soldiers to complete the Canadian Forestry Corps operating in Scotland, and several small units and some headquarters officers of the 3rd Division.

Airmen, Sailors, Too.

There were reinforcements for the infantry, artillery and Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, reconnaissance battalions and other units as well as a large number of airmen and Canadian naval personnel.

First and largest group to land were thousands of black-bereted Canadians of the tank brigade, first armored formation ever raised and sent overseas by Canada.

Officers and men of Central Ontario, Alberta and Quebec battalions crowding the docks were welcomed by Geoffrey Shakespeare, Dominions Under-Secretary; Brig. F. F. Worthington, commander of the armored brigade who came to England in advance, and Gordon B. Johnson, Canadian Government Trade Commis-

sioner for Scotland, who represented Hon. Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner.

Mr. Shakespeare, standing atop a pile of trunks, said:

"The British Government and the whole country is glad to receive this fine reinforcement of fighting men from Canada.

"This is a historic occasion for it marks the first time tank formations have come from Canada and shows how far-seeing are the Canadian Government and military in realizing that not only men but machines are needed in this war.

"The war has shown it is aircraft and tanks that are important and vital."

"Handsome and Healthy."

Mr. Shakespeare said that if Germany "cleans up" Russia it will be our turn next.

"In that case the only obstruction in the path of the Nazis will be the embattled force of the Empire," he added. "We are determined that our free way of life will prevail and that we will rid the world of this pestilence and plague known as Hitler's New Order.

"The inhabitants of England will sleep much better now that this brigade of cheerful, handsome and healthy Canadian tankmen is here."

The brigade, which will be commanded by Brigadier Worthington, was led overseas by Brigade Major John Andrews of St. Thomas, Ont.

Staff Capt. Frank Schmidlin, Kingston, Ont., and Major J. S. Gow, Windsor, Ont., commanded the troops on the largest ship. Major E. F. Armsby, London, Ont., and Major George Perrigard, Three Rivers, led other large batches.

Aboard transports which served as liners in peacetime, the tank troops crowded the decks and passageways

as word was flashed around to move ashore.

There were trappers and hunters from the northern outposts of the Dominion, farmers, tractor drivers and mechanics and men from the cities, all aching for action in their big cruiser tanks.

"All Have Same Idea."

The brigade was complete with its workshop, signals, army service corps and medical sections.

"We're a mixed gang, but we've all got the same idea—work like the devil on our tanks getting ready for a fight," said Tr. A. K. Thompson, Calgary. L.-Cpl. Don Garrison, Peace River, Alta., was a trapper before he enlisted, and Tr. Fred Leary, Vancouver, was a lumberman.

Tr. G. R. Gerhardt, Edmonton, was a barber; now he's a tank driver. L.-Cpl. Ralph Lepper and Cpl. Johnny Naylor worked in Toronto offices before signing up.

"We're ready to take over any kind of tank right away and get handy with them," said S.S.M. Norman Kirkham of Red Deer, Alta., as he lined up his men for debarkation with R.S.M. Willy Law and S.S.M. Bill Spencer, both of Calgary.

Major W. B. Welbourn of Toronto, for twenty years a missionary in China, where he also served the Chinese Army, is the Salvation Army officer with the brigade. He tossed handfuls of chewing gum like pennies to the crowded tenders alongside.

Hugh Plaxton in Group.

Lieut. Hugh Plaxton, former Toronto member of Parliament, was with the group of naval men.

The hospital was headed by a Montreal colonel and Matron Blanche Herman, native of Lunenburg, N.S., who worked in Montreal. Major B. S. Johnston, Montreal, was registrar and there were more than thirty doctors, including Capt. Munro Bourne of Montreal, former Canadian Olympic swimming star.

The nurses staged a concert directed by Nursing Sister Agnes Tennant of Montreal on their last night at sea.

Brig-Gen. J. B. White met the Foresters. Their officers included Majors J. M. Soy, Halifax; R. E. Maude-Roxby, Kelowna, B.C.; L. M. Hanbury, Vancouver, formerly of Brandon, Man.; A. C. McCall, Kirkland Lake; W. A. H. Ferguson, Halliburton; R. A. Montgomery, Chicou-

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timi, Que.; Capt. Wilma Stewart, Ottawa, and Lieut. Art Hudson, Prince Albert, Sask.

"The lads will be happy when they are cutting down those Scottish pines and hear sawmills again," said Pte. J. B. Mitchell of Vancouver, for seventeen years a British Columbia lumberman, as he sat on his kit, awaiting to debark.

"And don't forget the sawdust fusiliers are here to fight, too," interjected Pte. Burns MacDonald of Sydney Mines, N.S.

Gunner reinforcements for the new Canadian light anti-aircraft regiments, commanded by Lieut. D. E. Steacy of Kingston, Ont., manned ships' machine-guns day and night.

A group of Belgian and Netherlands soldiers and Norwegian airmen trained in Canada was among the arrivals.

Number of Men Secret.

Ottawa, July 2 (CP). — Defense Headquarters announced late today the safe arrival in the United Kingdom of the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade. The number of men involved in the movement was not given but the Department said arrival of the brigade "was hailed as a spectacular achievement."

"Six months ago this new unit of the Canadian Army was unheard of; it was not even on the army program, but today it is a fact," said Defense Headquarters.

It was made known, however, that the men of the Tank Brigade were part of the largest contingent of troops to arrive in the United Kingdom in this war.

The Tank Brigade, commanded by Brig. F. F. Worthington, M.C., M.M., is one of three formations the Government has undertaken to send overseas this year. The others are the Third Division and an armored division.

Defense Headquarters, in announcing safe arrival of the Tank Brigade, said it was "in fast fulfillment of Canada's pledged word to the British Government."

GLOBE AND MAIL

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Work Under McNaughton.

The Tank Brigade will work in conjunction with the Canadian Corps under the command of Lt.-Gen. A. G. L. McNaughton, giving the Canadian formation already in Britain added striking power.

Previously it was announced the Tank Brigade would be equipped with vehicles in the United Kingdom and that the desire of the British Government was to get this formation from the Dominion into the British Isles as soon as possible.

Brigadier Worthington preceded his men to Britain, it was announced. He flew across the Atlantic to prepare for their final training in conjunction with the Canadian corps commander.

Proposal to organize the brigade came by cable from Defense Minister Ralston, after consultation with the British Government, when he was in England just over five months ago.

Although plans were then under way for an armored division, the proposal for a tank brigade as well was something entirely new.

"Elite" Unit of Army.

Said the department in its statement tonight: "The landing on British soil of the Canadians wearing their jaunty black berets was an outstanding example of speed in mobilizing, organizing as a unit and passing through initial training."

The department termed the army tank brigade one of the "elite" units of the army—the heavy, massive force that tramples down opposition with an impression of irresistible power. It forms part of the armored shock force which works with the infantry and is an adjunct or supplement to these forces.

In Canada the tank brigade

trained at Camp Borden, using out-moded tanks obtained from the United States as a means of practicing the rudiments of tank warfare.

These old tanks were held to be of considerable value for training purposes, though not sufficiently up to date to be of any great use in combat.

The tank brigade commander gave his men the benefit of his own extensive training in armored fighting vehicle warfare. As an officer of the permanent force he had specialized in this type of training.

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