

by the Department of National Defence. In Canada we had available for selection, having in mind the necessary training and experience, the 4th division, the units comprising the brigade groups of the 6th division, which was then mobilizing, and a number of unattached battalions. The 4th division had already been assigned to an operational duty in defence of our eastern coast and it seemed therefore that the selection should come from the other forces I have mentioned.

Included in these available forces were three infantry battalions which had seen garrison duty service in Newfoundland and in the West Indies, where they had trained in defensive measures against invasion, a type of operation which might be anticipated at Hong Kong. These three battalions, because of the experience which they had had, seemed the most suitable for the Hong Kong duty, and, of the three, the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers were finally selected.

The Royal Rifles of Canada was mobilized on the 28th June, 1940, and moved to Newfoundland on the 21st November, 1940, where it formed a part of the garrison of that island. The regiment returned to Canada in two parties on the 18th and 28th August, 1941, respectively. The commanding officer of the Royal Rifles was Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Home, M.C., an experienced officer who had seen extensive service in France and Belgium during the last war.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): May I interrupt to ask whether the Royal Rifles were at one time stationed at Sussex and, if so, when?

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot give the date.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Was it 1941 or 1940?

Mr. RALSTON: It was 1940, I think.

Mr. POWER: From September or August of 1940 to December.

Mr. RALSTON: The Winnipeg Grenadiers was mobilized on the 2nd September, 1939. On the 25th May, 1940, it proceeded to the West Indies where it formed part of the Jamaica garrison until the 9th September, 1941, at which date the advance party of the unit returned to Canada followed by the main body of the regiment in two groups on the 21st September and the 8th October, 1941, respectively. This regiment was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. R. Sutcliffe, who served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium in 1915, and later in India, Mesopotamia, Persia, Russia and Turkey.

When selected for the Hong Kong duty these two battalions had thus been mobilized for fifteen months and twenty-five months respectively. Both of them had trained in Canada prior to embarkation in 1940 for their garrison duties in Newfoundland and Jamaica. Their training was continued throughout these periods of service abroad. Each battalion had the advantage of having had the same men training for a long period under the same officers and non-commissioned officers. As battalions they were, I believe, properly regarded as among the most seasoned and experienced Canadian units available for this duty.

3. Preparation of the Canadian forces. When these two battalions were selected for the duty at Hong Kong, the Royal Rifles was up to full strength (with two men surplus) and the Winnipeg Grenadiers was 129 men under strength. The lower strength of the Winnipeg Grenadiers was due to its operating in Jamaica at reduced strength in accordance with British garrison establishment. In addition to bringing the Grenadiers up to strength, it was decided to provide each battalion with a surplus or reserve of 156 men, known as "first reinforcements." These "first reinforcements" are usually kept at the base when a unit goes into a theatre of war.

The total number of additional men required to prepare these two battalions for the Hong Kong duty was thus 127 men to complete the ordinary strength and 312 men as surplus or first reinforcements, making 439 in all. These additional men had to be obtained without delay from other units and training centres.

The total force which finally embarked for Hong Kong, as reported by Brigadier Lawson on board the transport, amounted to 100 officers and 1,885 men—a total of 1,985 all ranks.

Regarded as a whole, this was a well-trained force consisting mainly of two experienced and well integrated battalions. It included, however, the 439 additional men and reinforcements whom I have already mentioned, who were new to these particular battalions. Of the 439 men, there were 172, or more than sufficient to bring the force up to full strength, who had service of a year or more. Including these, there were 291 men who were fully up to the established standard of training required for overseas duty as reinforcements and 138 who were below this standard. This leaves ten men whose training record has not yet been completely reported to me.

Departmental orders require that infantry with less than 16 weeks' training shall not proceed overseas unless authorized by headquarters at Ottawa. In this case it is clear that although training requirements were observed in provid-