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**Bringing the Boys Home:
A Study of the Canadian Demobilization Policy
After the First and Second World Wars**

by

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Abstract

Canadian military demobilization in 1918-19 and 1945-46 was more than just the mere return of soldiers from war; it included balancing the concerns of the military, the public, business, industry and the soldiers themselves. For the politicians, demobilization was a political minefield, while for the military it was a logistical nightmare. The key problems that had to be addressed were the preparation and implementation of sound policies, both of which had to deal with shipping shortages and delays in the repatriation which lay beyond immediate Canadian control. With the war over, the most feared enemy for the Canadian army had become boredom and impatience amongst its troops. Therefore, both demobilization policies had at their core concern for the soldiers' desire for a quick return home, while simultaneously addressing Canada's post-war economy and residual military obligations abroad.

Curiously the literature on these policies has failed to adequately draw a comparison between 1918-19 and 1945-46. This thesis will do that, and demonstrate that a learning curve did exist between the two experiences. It begins by reviewing both policies individually. The first Canadian attempt at demobilization, which has been symbolized by the Kimmel Park riot (March 1919), was a bonafide failure. Therefore, between 1939-46, Canadian demobilization planners were aware of the challenges that the return of the soldiers could cause. Issues such as early and thorough preparation, consultation with the military, arrangements of necessary shipping, and the means to maintain soldiers' morale were all problems that had to be dealt with. As a result, the second return of Canadian soldiers home from war in 1945-46 was uneventful. A comparison of the two experiences reveals that the development and implementation of both demobilization policies shared several similarities and differences, but they had strikingly different results. The demobilization of the Great War established the groundwork for planning in the next war which was dramatically improved.

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To the Swedes, Russians, Canadians and lone American who play at Joe Louis Arena: the Detroit Red Wings' drive to two Stanley Cups not only allowed me to still feel close to home (and earn some long overdue bragging rights in the process), but taught me that "Faith is to believe in what you cannot see. The reward for faith, is to see what you believe."

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Abbreviations

AEF	American Expeditionary Force
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CAOF	Canadian Army Occupation Force
CAPF	Canadian Army Pacific Force
CASC	Canadian Army Service Corps
CCDR	Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CMHQ	Canadian Military Headquarters, London
CNSB	Canadian National Service Board
DHH	Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence
DRIC	Demobilization and Rehabilitation Information Committee
GAC	General Advisory Committee for Demobilization and Rehabilitation
ISDC	Inter-Service Demobilization Committee
KUC	Khaki University of Canada
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa
NRMA	National Resources Mobilization Act
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy

Chapter One: Getting the Boys Out of Khaki

Military historians, like most participants, regarded demobilization as a boring postlude to the drama of war.

Desmond Morton.¹

In November of 1918, the First World War suddenly ended sooner than many experts had predicted only a few months earlier. Over the summer, the Germans had been forced back from their dramatic gains made in the spring. On 8 August 1918, the Canadians and Australians were victorious at Amiens and on the 27 August broke through the Frèsnes-Rouvroy line. A week later the Drocourt-Quéant line fell to the Canadian Corps, which by 27 September crossed Canal du Nord. On 9 October, Cambrai fell and by 1 November the Canadians had broken through the Hermann Line and captured Valenciennes. The Canadian action serves as a microcosm of the overall strategic and political situation, for the Central Powers' entire war effort was now crumbling. Turkey signed an armistice with the Allies at the end of October, followed by Austria-Hungary on 3 November. In Germany, sailors of the High Seas Fleet mutinied on 29-30 October rather than sail on one last desperate sortie. By 4 November the spirit of revolution had begun to spread throughout the country. On 7 November a Bavarian Republic was declared in Munich, just as the Germans prepared to send a delegation to negotiate an armistice with Marshal Foch. Therefore, on 11 November 1918, the 7th Brigade of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) occupied Mons, the exact location where the war had begun for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) four years earlier.² This sudden

¹ Desmond Morton, "Kicking and Complaining': Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXI, no. 3, 1980, 334.

² G.W.L. Nicholson, Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 386-483 and Peter Simkins, World War One: The Western Front (Surrey, UK, 1991), 217-218.

German collapse resulted in an armistice, and this temporary halt to the war soon evolved into a final peace. What was left of the war by November 1918 was to be settled by the politicians at the negotiation table. For the common soldier the only concern that now remained was how and when were they going home? With the initial post-war celebrations in full swing these concerns were not an issue. Later, as the weeks following the war dragged into months, for the soldiers who sat in military camps waiting for the ships to take them home the issue of demobilization became increasingly important.

Soldiers' discontent and frustration about the delays in their return home grew steadily over the winter of 1918-19. Two days of rioting by Canadian soldiers at Kinmel Park Camp in Britain on March 4 and 5, 1919 signified this restlessness. A dispersal camp for Canadian troops who were waiting for their return home, Kinmel Park was the focal point of Canada's First World War demobilization process. Men of the CEF were sent to Kinmel with the understanding that their stay would be brief. Unfortunately, for many the stay lasted several long weeks and for some several months. As time passed the patience of the soldiers was tested.

On the morning of 7 March 1919, the London Times reported:

On Tuesday night the men held a mass meeting which was followed by a mad riot. The outbreak began in the Montreal Camp at 9:30 p.m., with a cry, "Come on Bolsheviks," which is said to have been raised by a Canadian soldier who is a Russian. The men rushed the officers quarters, helped themselves to all the liquor they could find, then went for the stores, disarmed the guard and with their rifles smashed doors and windows, helping themselves to the contents of the stores. ... By mid-day Wednesday the camp appeared as if it had been passed over by legions of tanks. Unfortunately, a brewer's dray, containing forty-eight barrels of beer arrived at the camp. The men took fire buckets, broke the barrels, and drank the beer. Then they started to shoot all around. In the distant part of the camp a young soldier stood guard and attempted to do his duty. In reply to his challenge one of the rioters shot him dead.

A little later a major from New Brunswick, who [had] gained the VC, attempted to interfere, but in his endeavour to hold the rioters back from a portion of the officers' quarters that were not demolished, he was thrown

down and trampled to death. ... The whole disturbance was quelled by night, and the ringleaders, numbering about twenty, and stated to be mostly of foreign extraction were taken away. The Canadian soldiers in the camp, while explaining the cause of the affair [were] now regretting it. They say 'they did not anticipate that it would go to such lengths and that the mob went further than it meant to. The disturbance caused great alarm at Rhyl, where it was reported that 5,000 or 6,000 men from the camp meant to raze the town.³

Although it was proven later that the British press corps, who had a habit of embellishing stories, had misconstrued some of the facts of this incident, the overall tale was accurate. The Kinmel Park disturbance was, in fact, only one of thirteen such incidents that occurred while the CEF waited in Britain from November of 1918 to June 1919. Yet these two dark days have come to symbolize Canada's initial failure at demobilizing its armed forces after the First World War.

The poor handling of demobilization in 1918-19 was perhaps understandable. Canada had never done it before. Due to its smaller population, and early dependence upon Britain for military support, Canada had very little need for a large permanent military force of its own prior to the First World War. As a result, it was not until the government built a large army for the Great War that Canada had to deal with demobilization, and its first attempt was riddled with errors. Mistakes such as a lack of shipping, the cancellation of sailings, poor conditions in the demobilization camps and the riots that ensued from all of this served as the basis for both Canadian and British historians' criticism of Canada's first attempt at demobilization. The Canadian government was, therefore, determined not to repeat these same mistakes twenty-five years later when, after the Second World War, they again had to demobilize another large civilian army. Even though the demobilization in 1945-46 has been considered by some as one of the true Canadian success stories of the war, until recently Canadian historians have paid scant

³ "Riot In Canadian Camp," London Times, 7 March 1919, 6, col 2.

attention to it. The question can therefore be raised, why has demobilization been consistently overlooked by Canadian historians, and when it has been studied why have they failed to link the two experiences?

In fact, the Canadian 'failure' in 1918-19 was - in hindsight - predictable. The pre-1900 demobilization experiences of European nations was also not one of success. There were few instances where large victory parades or celebrations were orchestrated for the returning veterans. With limited awards showing the monarch's financial gratitude towards even officers, the typical soldier could expect little in return for his services. The demobilization benefits usually consisted of a small pension, land grants, or charity at best. This treatment of soldiers returning home from war has been attributed to the lack of representation by veterans' groups amongst European societies⁴ such as the British, who would not have effective veterans' representation until after the Second World War. It appears that in the absence of extensive post-war veterans' benefits and the primitive nature of transportation services, demobilization was viewed largely as a difficult logistical exercise and nothing more.

With the consolidation of the semi-modern nation states in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the approach to demobilization began to change. Previously countries such as England had relied upon a militia system and hired mercenaries. Nation states now required larger and more reliable bodies of trained men who owed allegiance to a central government. The shift to a standing army required that when it was to be disbanded after a war it became politically wise to offer interim employment to at least a small portion of the troops, and therefore extraordinary yeomen (foot soldiers) were kept in employment. One of the first examples of this occurred in 1550 when Edward VI was given three hundred yeomen to serve him. Selected from those soldiers who returned

⁴ Dean F. Oliver, "When the Battle's Won; Military Demobilization In Canada, 1939-1946," (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1996), 17.

from the Boulogne campaigns these men were chosen in order "not to have cause to murmur and that the kinges majestie may be better furnished of men."⁵ Other than these there was no regular provision for discharged or wounded soldiers besides transport and enough money for them to return directly to their homes. The lawless behaviour of the troops was (along with the costs) employed as an argument against providing any additional benefits for soldiers.

The unemployed soldier set loose upon society was a continuing fear in Britain between 1660 and 1800. Both the government and the public were conscious of the consequences a sudden demobilization of a large number of soldiers and sailors could have upon crime rate. The end of each British war during this time period brought a sudden dumping of thousands of discharged men, especially in the ports such as London,⁶ men whose money would be gone and who would be drawn into a life of crime out of necessity, at a time when so many were usually employed seasonally or casually.

The difficulties of administrating to the dismantling of a large standing army were further evident during the seven years after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Reduced from 450,000 to 100,000 men, the British Army was only a fraction of its former self.⁷ This decline came as a combined result of the public's antipathy to the idea of a standing army and fiscal restraint on the government's part. However, the process was conducted in neither an orderly nor a timely fashion. In many instances a great many soldiers, despite receiving a new array of post-war benefits, were still responsible for finding their own way home after returning to the United Kingdom. What the early European demobilization

⁵ J.R. Hale, Renaissance War Studies (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 253.

⁶ An increase in crime in urban areas of Britain at the end of wars during these periods, 1674-6, 1698-1700, 1714-15, 1747-51, 1762-6, 1782-4, and 1802. J.M. Beattie, "The Pattern of Crime In England, 1660-1800," Past and Present, No. 62, April 1989, 93-4.

⁷ Field Marshal Lord Carver, The Seven Ages of the British Army (London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 114.

experience demonstrates was that even by the late nineteenth century, despite fears that unemployed soldiers were considered a danger to society, no defined methods were in place for the effective demobilization of an army and its later re-establishment into society.

Up to the late nineteenth century this trend was also reflected in North America. The similarity has a degree of difference in part due to particular North American conditions. For the United States and Canada there was a difference in how each dealt with demobilization. The American Civil War (1861-1865) posed the problem of how to deal with veterans' post-war benefits as well as the large scale demobilization of a volunteer army. Lacking a large army and the need to call upon it, in the 1800s Canada was spared such problems. The re-establishment of veterans in Canada, however, did take place.

As in Europe, land in North America was used as the main benefit offered to soldiers who left the service. Unlike Western Europe, which by the 1500 and 1600s was comparatively well developed and populated, the New World offered a limitless quantity of real estate. Although it had been in use in New France two hundred years earlier, an example of the land incentive in Canadian history was after the American Revolution in 1783, when an influx of Loyalists, many of whom were former soldiers (estimated at about 4,500), settled in the Saint John River Valley region of New Brunswick and what is now Quebec and Ontario.⁸ Such provision of land to both pioneers and ex-servicemen became a key element in the development of North America, and a widely utilized link between the military service and society. Used as a means of enticing the soldier to remain where he was sent for duty or to encourage him to settle in under-populated areas, the offering of land was seen as a cheap inducement to satisfy the needs of the soldier and protect the interests of the state. This policy continued well into the twentieth century, even after all

⁸ David Facey-Crowther, The New Brunswick Militia, 1787-1867 (Fredericton, N.B.: New Brunswick Historical Society and New Ireland Press, 1990), 4.

the arable land had been exhausted. Yet prior to 1918 the Canadian government had no reason to consider how they would return their soldiers home from war in a distant land.

More importantly, prior to 1914 Canada never took part in any significant military conflicts in which it had to mobilize a large number of citizens to form a field army. During incidents such as the Fenian Raids (1865-66 and 1870), the Red River (1870) and North-West Rebellions (1885) and various civil disturbances the militia was called to duty. The number of men called upon to bear arms was both minimal and manageable. Beyond a return trip home and possibly an organized welcome from the community, there was little that a returning soldier could expect in the way of government support or assistance. This policy continued even with the returning Canadian volunteers from the Boer War (1899-1902). As they had done in sending them to Africa, the Canadian government took very little official responsibility for them at home. In this environment, demobilization was viewed simply as the transportation home of a small number of troops. If the wars remained short and the numbers small, the process created few obstacles for either social or political planners.⁹ Only when the wars increased in scale and severity was greater consideration afforded to the problem of how soldiers would be returned home after it had ceased.

The slight attention afforded to demobilization by early governments has also been reflected in the historiography on the subject. Never meant to be mistaken for the more glamorous subjects of war, such as the military campaigns, demobilization has been consistently forgotten. Through a combination of lack of appeal and the restraints (both political and literary) placed on Canadian historians, the subject has received only brief mention in the annals of Canadian history. After each major war in the twentieth century considerable research was conducted on demobilization by the Historical Division of the

⁹ Oliver, "When the Battle's Won," 28.

Armed Service. Some of this material found its way to print, but most failed to ever materialize.

Nonetheless, the riots during the First World War created enough of a sensation to attract some attention by historians, both Canadian and foreign. Despite failures such as Kinmel Park, Canadian government publications produced shortly after the war viewed demobilization in a positive light. Historians following the Great War nonetheless made an adequate examination of the origins of Canadian military demobilization in 1918-19. Concluding that the process was a failure, these historians, however, failed to agree as to whether it was the Canadian military or the government who was at fault. Regardless of who was to blame, British historians have chosen to view Canadian demobilization as a complete failure. But in analysing the problems with the Canadian policy they focus on the social and domestic influences on demobilization rather than the political ones that the Canadians consider to be the significant contributing factors to the process's failure.

The first discussion of Canadian demobilization occurred in the Report of The Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada, 1918 published in 1919. The report was meant to serve as a general survey of CEF activities for 1918, and was never intended to be "exhaustive."¹⁰ Although it provided in clear detail the process and procedures that were followed for demobilization,¹¹ the report failed to answer the question of how and why these procedures were adopted. According to the report, demobilization was a success and no problems were encountered with either the shipping schedules or the conditions of the camps. As a means of providing the details about the procedures entailed in the repatriation of troops, the report is an excellent source for better

¹⁰ Ministry of Overseas Military Forces, Canada, Report of the Ministry 1918, (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1918), ix.

¹¹ For further information about demobilization instructions see Ministry of Overseas Military Forces, Canada, Demobilization Instructions (No date of publication).

understanding the bureaucratic process by which the demobilization of a soldier was conducted in 1918-19.

The Report of the Overseas Ministry was followed up by the Department of Militia and Defence's publication of The Return of the Troops: A Plain Account of Demobilization of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (1920), a well-detailed piece that unfortunately whitewashes the conduct of demobilization. Reprinted in the sixth volume of the Series Canada and the Great War (1921), the piece was condensed but still failed to shed any new light on why incidents such as the Kinmel Park riot occurred. As far as the authors of both works were concerned, the return of Canadian soldiers after the war in general was satisfactory. For the authors the simple fact that the soldiers returned home was enough, and the conditions which they had to endure or the difficulties with the selection of who got to go home first, how and when were inconsequential. For nearly the next thirty years, besides brief mention in regimental histories or general Canadian histories of the First World War, this is where the story of demobilization stood.¹²

Both of the Official Canadian Histories of the First World War published in the 1930s and 1960s unfortunately did not reveal any new information about demobilization. The original Official History by Colonel A.F. Duguid (1938) never continued beyond volume one, which only dealt with 1914-15. With the Second World War the project was delayed and eventually terminated, and it was not until 1962 that Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson wrote the Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War. What

¹² See the following regimental histories for individualistic detail of demobilization: Kenneth Cameron, No. 1 Canadian General Hospital, 1914-1919 (Sackville, N.B.: The Tribune Press, 1938), R.C. Fetherstonaugh, 24th Battalion, C.E.F., Victoria Rifles of Canada, 1914-1919 (Montreal: Gazette Print Co., 1930), R.C. Fetherstonaugh, Royal Canadian Regiment, 1883-1933 (Montreal: privately printed, 1936), Bernard McEvoy and A.H. Finlay, History of the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion (Vancouver: Cowan and Brookhouse, 1920), and W.W. Murray, History of the Second Canadian Battalion (Eastern Ontario Regiment) C.E.F. the Great War, 1914-1919 (Ottawa: no publisher, 1947).

Duguid had originally intended as eight volumes had reduced to one. As a result, demobilization was given less attention than it probably would have received had Duguid been able to complete his work.¹³ Noting the shortages in available shipping that resulted in the cancellation of sailings, the poor security procedures at the demobilization camps and the army's failure to keep the soldiers adequately informed about the delays with the process, Nicholson concluded that the Army was chiefly responsible for the mishandling of demobilization in 1918-19. This much was already known and so beyond the mere repeating of facts, Nicholson did not reveal anything new.

The lack of new insight was not entirely Nicholson's fault. The majority of the research conducted for the book was handled by a team of researchers. The chapter on demobilization was based on a report titled "The End of War," written by Captain John Swettenham. Although the work covered demobilization in more detail than what was actually incorporated into the Official History, Swettenham made limited use of primary material. He instead relied heavily on previously published government material such as The Return of the Troops, and The Report of the Overseas Ministry.

Later in his own book To Seize the Victory (1965), Swettenham briefly reviewed demobilization again. The book was written at a time when Swettenham felt that the CEF's contribution to the war had yet to be fully acknowledged. In the introduction he wrote that, "The danger now lay in the flood of American literature, television features and movies prepared in the United States for American readers and viewers," which was

¹³ Although never published, Duguid conducted an enormous amount of research on demobilization. RG 24, volume 1841, GAQ 10-39F, no. 7, contains a portion of his research pertaining to the thirteen disturbances that occurred as the CEF prepared to leave Europe. In his memoirs, C.P. Stacey suggests the delays in producing additional volumes to original Official History were the result of Duguid's concern for fine details and his preoccupation with other activities as head of the Army's Historical Section between the wars. C.P. Stacey, A Date With History (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), 67.

streaming across the Canadian border.¹⁴ Afraid that Americans would present a distorted interpretation of the war, Swettenham considered it vital that Canadians who did not remember it know the truth. To Seize the Victory was meant to serve as an accurate representation of both the CEF's highlights and faults during the war. Some historians considered this to be Swettenham's best work. Unfortunately his study of demobilization is weak. Not even making use of his previous research, Swettenham simply commented that demobilization proceeded with "remarkable smoothness for the Corps."¹⁵ Paying no notice to the difficulties experienced by the CEF, he distanced the Corps from the difficulties of demobilization. It seems that Swettenham chose to portray General Sir Arthur Currie as having less responsibility in the development of the policy than was actually the case. Hence, by the late 1960's, Canadian research on demobilization in the First World War had made no progress in forty years.

The only significant mentioning of demobilization during this time was in connection to General Currie. As Commander of the Canadian Corps during the First World War, Currie had an influential role in the development of demobilization policy by convincing the Canadian government to allow the Corps to return in units as opposed to as individuals. In the end, these recommendations put forth by the general only further complicated an already difficult enough process. Currie has been the subject of several books¹⁶ but those who first wrote about him were not interested in demobilization or the general's involvement in it.

In Sir Arthur Currie (1985) and Spearhead to Victory (1987) Daniel Dancocks attempted to fill the void created by the previous writers of Currie. The author is one of

¹⁴ J.A. Swettenham, To Seize the Victory, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1965), x.

¹⁵ Swettenham, To Seize the Victory, 238.

¹⁶ Hugh M. Urquhart, Arthur Currie (Toronto: Dent, 1950) and A.M.J Hyatt, General Sir Arthur Currie: A Military Biography (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

two Canadian historians who has seriously looked at the issue of Currie's involvement with demobilization. Unfortunately Dancocks portrayed the general no better than the previous biographers. In Sir Arthur Currie the general was depicted as a stonewall who withstood not only Canadian but also British political officials. He was shown to defy political pressure from Winston Churchill and various British War Cabinet members, who sought to influence the Canadian demobilization policy by coercing Canada to follow the British policy which emphasized the return of soldiers based on the post-war economic needs of the country. Spearhead to Victory further explored these difficulties involved in the formation of the demobilization policy and Currie's role in it. Dancocks concluded that the policy the general advocated was correct and his stubbornness about the issue was a reflection of just how right he was. According to Dancocks, Canadian demobilization during the First World War, despite its visible shortcomings, was a success for Currie and the Corps.¹⁷

This optimistic attitude has not been shared by all Canadian historians. Desmond Morton, who wrote about the demobilization of the CEF prior to Dancocks, did not view the situation in the same manner. Morton was the first to look seriously at the Overseas Ministry, a key component of the demobilization story. In A Peculiar Kind of Politics (1983) and again in Winning the Second Battle (1987), Morton did not hold Currie in such high esteem.¹⁸ He examined not only the creation of demobilization policy, but also its

¹⁷ Daniel G. Dancocks, Spearhead to Victory: Canada and the Great War, (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987), 225.

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that in his work on the CEF and demobilization Dancocks pays no reference to any material by Morton, who had published nearly seven years prior. See Desmond Morton, "Kicking and Complaining': Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919" Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXI, no. 3, 1980. Morton, A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry In the First World War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) and Morton and Glen Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

implementation and consequences. Morton's focus was not Currie but rather the Overseas Ministry headed by Minister Sir Edward Kemp, whom Morton considered to be the unsung hero for his role as liaison between Ottawa, London, and the CEF. As Morton concluded, faced with domestic pressure by Canadians to return their boys home and the problems posed by British dock workers, whose strike created the shipping shortage, "In theory, the Overseas Ministry's demobilization system was an administrative marvel."¹⁹ Morton analysed the origins of the demobilization policy, studied the actual living conditions of soldiers during the demobilization period, and provided details about what actually transpired on their return home to Canada. All were issues which the previous government publications and works of Canadian historians had failed to address. According to Morton the failures of demobilization, such as Kinmel Park, helped to accelerate the Canadian repatriation process.

Yet it has not only been Canadians who have shown an interest in the CEF's experiences of 1918-1919. Some of the literature about British demobilization has included examination of the Canadian process. In what can be considered a probable attempt to diminish the disturbing BEF experience with the same process, British historians have depicted Canada's demobilization as a catastrophic failure. In turn they do not pose any new arguments about the success or failure of Canadian demobilization. Rather, what is disheartening about the British interpretation is their unfamiliarity with Canadian research.

In 1972 Dave Lamb's book was meant to serve as an analysis of what was considered a phenomenon in the British Army, Mutinies. A socialist historian, Lamb viewed the British soldier strikes of 1919 as one of the landmarks for working class history.²⁰ Besides focusing on key British disturbances he provided a critique of Canadian

¹⁹ Morton, Peculiar Kind of Politics, 184.

²⁰ Dave Lamb, Mutinies: 1917-1920 (London: Oxford, 1972), 2.

demobilization and the Kinmel Park disturbance. Lamb questioned the Canadian military's post-war plans as well as the socio-economic needs of the returning soldier. As a polemic, Lamb's work is worse than the early Canadian government publications. Riddled with speculation that Canadian demobilization was part of a grand conspiracy scheme, Lamb provided no evidence to prove so. Few sources were used. Not only did he fail to make use of Canadian primary documents, he ignored Canadian secondary ones, including what at the time would have been Nicholson's recently published Official History. In addition, Lamb made limited use of primary British documents. His main concern appeared to be to demonstrate how the soldier disturbances were part of a broader social movement. Attempting to relate these disturbances with the ongoing British labour strikes, Lamb tried to conclude that the Canadian difficulties with demobilization were falsely manufactured by the Canadian government in an attempt to find more volunteers for the Allied forces in Siberia. Too preoccupied with how Canadian demobilization fit into this larger scheme of things and his lack of reputable sources, Lamb's work is highly questionable.²¹

The lack of attention to Canadian research was continued by British historians in the 1980s. Lawrence James' book Mutiny (1987) examined various disturbances amongst British Imperial and Commonwealth troops from 1917 to 1956. Also intent on relating these incidents to the soldiers' social backgrounds, James took a moment to write about the CEF in the First World War. In what is only a brief section of the book, his discussion is disturbing for a Canadian researcher. The conclusions he drew only further illustrated the British disregard for Canadian research. Beginning with a comment such as, "the Canadian government is reluctant to offer its own version of the sombre incident,"²² it is

²¹ In his work on Canadian demobilization, Morton only makes a brief comment on the availability of Lamb's work as an alternative view point, and makes no direct reference to it.

²² Lawrence James, Mutiny: In the British and Commonwealth Forces, 1917-1956 (London: Oxford Press, 1987), 117.

immediately evident that like Lamb, James also never took the time to do research. In fact the main source he used was Lamb.

Much time passed before a serious interest by historians in the development of Canada's demobilization policy in the First World War occurred. Topics such as the mobilization of the Canadian war effort, the Second Battle of Ypres, and Vimy Ridge dominated the Canadian literature. Unfortunately, amongst the thousands of stories the war produced the one about how the boys came home was lost. When authors such as Nicholson, Dancocks and Morton rediscovered it, their interest sparked a series of different interpretations amongst both Canadian and British historians. What can be said about demobilization during the Great War is that more is now known about it than what government publications originally led historians to believe.

Increased interest in demobilization after the First World War did not translate into the same attention for demobilization after the Second World War. Until 1995, the material written on Canadian military demobilization in 1945-46 consisted mostly of summary accounts. It has been suggested that the lack of interest is due in part to Canadian historians' preoccupation with Canada's post-war position, the country's new-found international clout and the domestic changes associated with the war.²³ For example, defence and foreign policy experts have chosen to study Canada's growing relationship with the United States and the development of alliance commitments during the Cold War, while others have concentrated on the evolution of the welfare state and the Canadian economy. For most Canadian historians, the subject of the soldiers' return home has been a mute point. To them, once the VE and VJ Day celebrations were over, so was Canada's association with the war.

Since there has been this limited attention paid to it, no identifiable school of thought has developed with regards to demobilization after the Second World War. Initial

²³ Oliver, 2.

research conducted on it for the Official Histories was brief and lacked analysis. For various reasons (that will be examined further) the lack of recognition that demobilization has received is understandable. Later historians in the 1990s, however, have only begun to study the subject. As it stands, demobilization following the Second World War is considered a complete and unqualified success.

Unlike the First World War, the Canadian Official Histories for the Second World War began to appear in print shortly after the war's completion. This quick response was meant to provide an accurate account of Canadian participation and an appeasement of the publics' desire for such literature.²⁴ However, under Defence Minister Brooke Claxton, these projects were soon deemed unnecessary.²⁵ After pressure from such individuals as Lester B. Pearson, the Army's Official History was spared. The RCAF was not so fortunate and its over-ambitious eight volume series was terminated. And it was not until 1965 when the historical services were unified that the plan was resurrected with the first volume published in 1980.²⁶ By 1994, the last volume was completed but demobilization received no mention and still remains a subject that lies dormant in the National Archives.

Just as the Army had done, the RCN's Official History also escaped the budget cuts and portions found their way to print. The Naval Services of Canada, Its Official History Volume II dealing with Activities On Shore During the Second World War written by Gilbert Tucker (1952) contains one of the better accounts of Canadian

²⁴ C.P. Stacey, "The Nature of an Official History," Canadian Historical Association Papers (1946), 77-8.

²⁵ Claxton biographer, David Bercuson argues that C.P. Stacey's portrayal of Claxton as a "hatchetman" for government defence spending cuts in his autobiography A Date With History were uncalled for. Bercuson argues that Claxton actually bitterly resisted the deep cuts that were forced upon him in 1947. David J. Bercuson, True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898 - 1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 166.

²⁶ Directorate of History & Heritage (DHH), Report No. 1: Historical Section Canadian Forces Headquarters, 2 July 1965, and Stacey, A Date With History, 231.

demobilization.²⁷ Despite his "bland" writing style, Tucker's work provided a detailed description of the development of the RCN's demobilization policy. Spanning nearly sixty pages, the chapter on demobilization went into detail on the RCN's policy for selecting who was to return first and how it was to be conducted. Disappointingly, the chapter ends with the VE Day Halifax riots and never explained whether or not the plans were implemented. The irony is that Tucker's work itself was never completed. A planned third volume detailing the RCN's activities at sea was never written, and the popular account by Joseph Schull titled Far Distant Ships (1952) provided only a few brief lines on the navy's eventual demobilization.

It fell to C.P. Stacey, as the head of the Army's Historical Section in Europe during the war, to secure the necessary material for a yet to be named Official Historian. Under his supervision the Army Historical Section, and later the Directorate of History, produced five volumes on the Canadian Army's role in the war and government war policies. Along with detailed foldout maps, the books provide a wealth of information that cannot be found anywhere else. However, as one author wrote, "C.P. Stacey, in his otherwise comprehensive volumes of army history, puts demobilization on the same level of topical importance as the defence of Greenland."²⁸ In 1955, the first volume of the Official History: Six Years of War was published. Of the five volumes this is the one in which Stacey goes into the greatest detail about demobilization, an entire four pages. Stacey discussed how the Canadian policy was to begin with the return of the troops who had been overseas the longest and then proceed into the return of units based on whether or not they were still needed in Europe. In the third volume, The Victory Campaign (1960) he explained in more detail where and when certain military units were demobilized, but the material still only began to scratch the surface. What Stacey failed to examine in more

²⁷ Oliver, 1.

²⁸ Oliver, 1.

detail were the origins and influences of the policies that were adopted by the Canadians for demobilization.

By 1970, having since retired from the Directorate of History not once but twice, and now teaching at the University of Toronto, Stacey wrote Arms, Men and Governments the final volume in the collection. Again only providing brief information on demobilization, AM&G did offer insight into Canadian policy regarding the war against Japan. The Pacific policy, which had broader post-war implications for the Canadian government, influenced the demobilization process and in AM&G Stacey notes this. Examining the need of determining how many and who from the Canadian armed forces would be used to continue the war, Stacey examined the debates that surrounded the issue of the war with Japan. From the public and soldiers' desire to end the war with victory in Europe, and Canadian politicians' fear of being consumed by British Imperial wars in south-east Asia, the role that the war with Japan played in demobilization is something which Stacey had previously not discussed.

Due to self-censorship Official Histories often avoid controversial matters.²⁹ By writing in 1970, Stacey had more freedom. Regardless, for Stacey demobilization still failed to rise above the "Greenland" status. Again with limited space to work with, Stacey had to limit his subjects. This in the end probably served to the benefit of later Canadian historians, many of whom Stacey either worked with at the Directorate or taught at the University of Toronto.

Just as the Official Histories were being completed, Canadian history along with Canadian military history underwent significant changes. By the mid to late 1960s, in Canadian graduate schools there was mounting pressure from students to examine Canadian history from new perspectives. This resulted in the cultivation of new interests

²⁹ W.A.B. Douglas and B. Greenhous, "Canada and the Second World War: The State of Clio's Art," Journal of Military Affairs, Volume 42, No. 1 (February 1978), 26-7.

in areas related to religion, regionalism and gender history.³⁰ Military history during this period of change became less acceptable. In response to the Vietnam War and the nuclear threat that became associated with war, courses and research in Canadian military history went into hiatus.³¹

Nonetheless Canada's military past was never forgotten. By the 1970s and 1980s, Stacey's former assistants at the Directorate had already resumed the study of the Canadian perspective of the Second World War. W.A.B Douglas and Brereton Greenhous in Out of the Shadows (1977, revised in 1995) wrote what is probably the best general overall account of both Canada's military and political endeavours in the war that can be found in one book. From Hitler's invasion of Poland to the Enola Gay's bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the authors provide a detailed account of the war and Canada's involvement in it. This general survey approach was adopted by J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton. Two of their books Bloody Victory (1984) and Nation Forged In Fire (1989) supply accurate literary and pictorial accounts of Canada in the war. These works have helped to continue battle narratives or discussion of the social issues involved in the Canadian post-war years. But what remained lost in the literature was the story of Canadian demobilization. Considering the wealth of historical information the war produced this lack of attention is partially excusable, but it is disturbing nevertheless. In 1995, Granatstein and Morton combined efforts again to produce Victory 1945: Canadians From War to Peace. Along similar lines to previous books the two had collaborated on, Victory 1945 explored the final year of the Canadian war effort. As part of this survey they briefly discussed demobilization, and concluded that in general the

³⁰ Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 26 (1991-92), 65.

³¹ Marc Milner, ed., Canadian Military History: Selected Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 1.

policy was a success based on the fact that the Canadian government was conscious of the mistakes that had been made in 1918-19. This conclusion and the research the authors used to come to derive it, however, was not their own.

One of the researchers that Granatstein made use of on several of his more recent books was an historian by the name of Dean F. Oliver. A graduate student of Granatstein's at York University, Oliver completed his Ph.D. dissertation in 1996 entitled "When the Battle's Won," which explored Canadian military demobilization during and after the Second World War. Unlike previous surveys, Oliver's was unique because it not only examined the demobilization process during the 1945-1947 period, but also the political origins of the policy. The focus was to show how the politicians and military leaders in a combined effort were forced to come together to seek a mutually beneficial solution to the problems presented by demobilization. He notes that despite several years of thorough preparedness on the part of Canadian officials, incidents of trouble such as shipping shortages and incidents of unrest amongst the soldiers still occurred with demobilization. Nonetheless, Oliver featured a Canadian system that was quick to readjust itself to the adverse conditions presented to it. He concludes that despite these problems, Canadian demobilization in 1945-46 was a success.³²

At present historians appear to agree that the First World War demobilization was a failure. Yet there is no consensus about who is to blame for the mistakes made in 1918-19. Was it the Canadian politicians who decided the policy, or the military whose role was to implement it? This debate, unfortunately, has not created further interest in the study of Canadian demobilization after the Second World War. Although it is argued that Canadian political and military officials used the experience of the First World War as a basis to develop and implement Canadian policy, the literature on the subject is minimal. During the last seventy-five years, demobilization has consistently been set aside by

³² Oliver, 344.

historians in favour of either more traditional topics for military history or newer avenues for Canadian history to explore.

From all of this it should not be concluded that Oliver has had the final word on demobilization. Just as Stacey left the subject open for study by future historians, so too has Oliver, because what is missing in the literature is an adequate comparison of the two Canadian experiences. The First World War is usually only mentioned (if discussed at all) in conclusion as having influenced the experiences of 1945-46. This lack of systematic comparison between the two Canadian war-time policies is curious. Indeed one of the key questions that historians have left unanswered is whether or not there is a learning curve for Canadian demobilization. This thesis sets out to answer that question. Using the First World War as a basis to measure by, this thesis will show how the Second World War rates in comparison. Did the Canadian government successfully conduct demobilization in 1945-46, because it learned from 1918-19? What the literature indicates is that the First World War experience may not have provided the perfect model for the government to follow, but it did provide a sense of caution as to what to avoid.

Before it is possible to make this direct comparison of the two situations, it will be necessary to examine each policy individually. By studying them in their own context what will be determined is the factors and influences that led to the success or failure of demobilization. It is necessary to review the origins of both policies and the political, domestic, and military pressures that were placed upon them, as well as the difficulties encountered when they were implemented. Therefore, Chapter Two will address the demobilization experience after the First World War. The Second World War experience is assessed in Chapter Three. The apparent lessons learned from 1918-19 and their application twenty-five years later are discussed in Chapter Four. From this it can be seen that although a quarter of a century separated the two experiences there are several similarities and differences that exist between the two demobilization processes. In the

end what will be shown is that the Canadian government in developing a demobilization policy for 1945-46 did learn from its past mistakes.

**Chapter Two:
*Esprit de Corps, Shipping, Riots and All That***

My only object in acquainting you with this situation now is that if the pressure goes on and Ottawa insists on impossibilities I see trouble ahead.

Sir Edward Kemp to Sir Robert Borden, regarding demobilization
18 January 1919

So our esprit de corps is waning,
All our pluck and interest too,
The only thing we see to fight
Is mud and Spanish "flu";

"The Mud-Red Volunteers" - Dawn Fraser¹

On 11 November 1918, the Royal Canadian Regiment found itself fighting just outside of Mons, France, the same location where the war had begun for the British four years earlier. In the early morning hours as "A" and "B" companies prepared to enter the city, the headquarters of their battalion received the following message from Brigade:

Hostilities will cease at 11.00 hours November 11th. Troops will stand fast on line reached at that hour, which will be reported to Brigade Headquarters. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy. Further instructions follow.

Lieutenant M.F. Gregg, the Regiment Adjutant, immediately handed the orders to his Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel G.W. MacLeod. For long moments, while the Adjutant stood respectfully by, MacLeod just stared at the paper in silence. Suddenly awakened by the importance of the information that lay in his hands, the Lieutenant-Colonel issued orders for the message to be forwarded to the other companies,

¹ Kemp to Borden, 18 January 1919, NAC, Kemp Papers, MG 27 II D9, vol. 166, File 1e: "Demobilization Correspondence" and Dawn Fraser, *Echoes From Labor's Wars: The Expanded Edition* (Wreck Cove, N.S.: Breton Books, 1992), 82.

remarking only, "Well Gregg, this means that a lot of us will soon have to go to work again."²

This dry remark was prophetic. It instantly recognized the difficulties that faced a citizen army such as the CEF at the end of the First World War, when it had to turn away from fighting and return to civilian life. As the news of the armistice was being celebrated with hysterical joy in the cities of the Allies, the reaction at the front was more subdued from the soldiers themselves. Part of a war machine for nearly four, these men were anxious to see what the future had in store.

Although planning had begun two years earlier, it was not until this surprise end to the war that Canadian demobilization began to take its true shape. During the course of the war the policy for demobilization of the armed forces was influenced both by British and Canadian domestic and economic concerns. As Canadian officials in London and Ottawa prioritized their needs for the post-war, the Canadian policy became significantly influenced by the debate between the Overseas Minister, Sir Edward Kemp, and Canadian Corps Commander, General Sir Arthur Currie. Discussion revolved around the issue of whether or not troops should return home individually according to their length of service or as part of their units. This debate, which eventually involved Prime Minister Robert Borden, resulted in a compromise between the two schemes that for various reasons, was marred with difficulties and tragedy such as the Kinmel Park riot of March 1919. The actions taken by the Canadian government after this incident to increase the rate of repatriation could not hide the fact that prior to the riot the demobilization process was a thinly disguised failure.

One of the most important problems that the First World War demobilization fiasco revealed was how troops abroad were controlled by the Canadian government. The

² R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, Royal Canadian Regiment, 1883-1933 (Montreal: Gazette Print. Co., 1936), 376.

Overseas Ministry of Canadian Military Forces, established in London in November of 1916, was meant to serve as the Canadian government's means of controlling the administration of the CEF. The creation of the office came in reaction to the confused handling of Canadian overseas military affairs by the Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes. During the first two years of the war the self-promoted Colonel established the ground work for what was to become the CEF. However, as this army arrived in England, poorly equipped and improperly trained, Hughes faced accusations of mismanagement of the army. Historians too have found reason to criticize this Ontario Orangeman, while many accept that if it were not for his "bullying tactics" on the Cabinet the Canadian militia would have been in a worse state of condition than it was in 1914.³ But the remaining time he he spent as Minister of Militia, however, Hughes made no progress in the administering the Canadian Army. Continually promising reform, Hughes failed in changing the ways in which the CEF was administered overseas, and only raised attention of his peers in Parliament.

By October 1916 Prime Minister Borden realized that a minister was urgently needed in London at all times to oversee the CEF. The official motive for the decision was to increase efficiency and to improve the economy of the overseas army administration. Unofficially, Hughes' dominating demeanour with the Cabinet and the soldiers had become tiresome. With the war now giving Canada a greater voice in international affairs, senior politicians such as Sir George Perley, warned that it was "necessary that we should just now impress people here that we are both sane and capable in the management of our own affairs."⁴ Regarding Sam Hughes, an historian has noted

³ Desmond Morton, A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry In the First World War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 9.

⁴ Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 136.

that he "was a man of great ability, immense energy, and strong enthusiasms, but possessed a singular aptitude for uttering the wrong phrase at the wrong time."⁵ Through blatant bigotry and posturing during his few years as Minister of Militia, Hughes insulted everyone from the King's representative, the entire French-Canadian community, and the officers of the permanent Canadian forces. An artillery officer in France, Colonel J.J. Creelman, wrote about Hughes' eventual dismissal as Minister of Militia, "I do not like to kick a man when he is down, but I am willing to break nine toes in kicking Sam."⁶ Hughes had threatened Borden that if an Overseas Ministry was established it could expect no co-operation from the Department of Militia as long as he still held the portfolio. The Prime Minister clearly had no choice but to ask for the minister's resignation which he did on 9 November 1916. "It had become essential," Borden later wrote:

to curtail the activities of Hughes and to place in the hands of a responsible Minister in London, the disposition of all such matters affecting the welfare of the Canadian Army as were properly the subject of civil authority.⁷

Sir George Perley became the first Minister for the Overseas Ministry and Sir Edward Kemp replaced Hughes as the Minister of Militia. One of Hughes' political foes, Kemp eventually replaced Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) as Canadian military representative in England in November 1917, and took over control of the Overseas

⁵ Donald M.A.R. Vince, "The Acting Overseas Sub-Militia Council and the Resignation of Sir Sam Hughes," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1950), 2.

⁶ Morton and Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon, 136.

⁷ R.L. Borden, Memoirs II, (Toronto, Macmillan, 1938), 567-8. For more on the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Hughes see Vince, "The Acting Overseas Sub-Militia Council and the Resignation of Sir Sam Hughes," and Ronald G. Haycock, Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press & Canadian War Museum, 1986), Chapter 15.

Ministry.⁸ Kemp's arrival in London was the result of the formation of the Union Government in 1917. A wealthy Toronto industrialist, Kemp was a politician considered by fellow Tories to have a tough and orderly mind. He travelled to London with the goal of restoring control amongst Canadian officials there and imposing his full weight of civil authority on his military subordinates. For example, the new Overseas Minister was afraid that the Canadian Corps Commander, General Currie had taken too much liberty in creating his own army in France. An immediate example of this determination was his pressuring of both British and Canadian officers in France to recognize Brigadier General J.F.L. Embury as liaison between the Corps Commanders and the Ministry in June 1918.⁹ Although political adversaries, a common similarity that Kemp and Hughes shared was the belief that Canadian autonomy had to be fully asserted in relations with the British War Office and General Headquarters.

It was under Kemp that this Canadian independence took shape as he began the serious planning for demobilization. Initially the Department of Militia had shown little interest in how the troops would return home. In the spring of 1917, a committee led by Sir Montagu Allan and surplus staff officers and civilian bureaucrats studied the problem and accomplished nothing.¹⁰ When he learned of this, Kemp formed a new demobilization planning committee headed by the adjutant general, Major-General Percy Thacker in June 1918.¹¹ After only a few short meetings, this new advisory board formulated a general

⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, Beaverbrook (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 91.

⁹ Desmond Morton, "Junior But Sovereign Allies': The Transformation of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918." Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol. 8, October 1979, No. 1, 63.

¹⁰ Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 105.

¹¹ Ministry of Overseas Military Forces, Canada, Report of the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC), 1918 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1919), 515.

plan. Thacker's group recommended that all CEF units be dissolved overseas and the troops sorted and distributed amongst twenty-two "dispersal areas" across Canada.¹² The belief was that such a plan would reduce travel time and costs.

It was not until November 1918 that more detailed planning was conducted by Canadian officials. Until then, the commonly held belief among politicians and military experts was that the war would continue for another year, if not into 1920. Therefore, the the collapse of the Central Powers in November 1918 forced the Cabinet and the Overseas Ministry to finish the plan that had already been partially set into motion. "In theory all the mechanisms for a return to normality were ready;" Morton and Wright observed, "in practice they had been deferred, forgotten, or set aside."¹³ In making use of dispersal areas across the country the planners had considered how to deal with the troops once they had crossed the Atlantic. Thacker's committee unfortunately failed to conclude what the procedure would be for the troops as they were set to leave France. The sudden armistice forced the Cabinet to accelerate the conclusion of this designing process.

Meanwhile the Repatriation Committee sat in November 1918 to deal with the issue of demobilization. Headed by J.A. Calder (Minister of Immigration) the committee consisted of Sir James Lougheed (Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment), Newton Rowell (chief Liberal recruit for the new Union Government), Arthur Meighen (Minister of the Interior), Thomas Crerar (Minister of Agriculture) and Senator Gideon Robertson (Minister of Labour).¹⁴ Established by the Acting Prime Minister, Sir Thomas White the Repatriation Committee was meant to deal with, 'The absorption into civil life

¹² Department of Militia and Defence, Canada, Return of the Troops (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1920), 21.

¹³ Morton and Wright, Winning the Second Battle, 107.

¹⁴ Morton and Wright, 107.

and occupation of discharged soldiers' and 'industrial labour conditions which may arise from industrial dislocation and readjustment.'¹⁵

The committee was meant to serve as a clearing house for information that had been gathered concerning demobilization, and as a means of keeping the public informed about when they could expect to see their husbands and sons return home. The best answer they could give to the public at the time was simply to be patient. Despite some early preparations, the Canadian demobilization policy was still a work in progress in November 1918.

The first influence on the emerging policy was the British demobilization scheme, and the question of whether or not a soldier should be allowed to leave the military simply because he had secured a job offer. Based on national post-war industrial needs, the British demobilization scheme categorized returning soldiers as "pivot" men or "demobilizers." "Pivot" men had the necessary skills to "start up" the British economy and had genuine employment opportunities and hence were given first priority. Yet this concern for the economy did not necessarily equate to fairness, for those who had recently left the job market had a greater chance of regaining their old jobs. The British government was also reluctant to start demobilization without a secured peace treaty. Concluding that demobilization was unavoidable prior to a final peace, the decision to proceed with it upset British military officials. But for Parliament, public sentiment and that of the soldiers waiting discharge won out.¹⁶

The British economic base demobilization scheme initially had public and political support in Canada. The Minister of Finance, Sir Thomas White, favoured a plan based on the economic and employment priorities of the country. Not only did he have the support

¹⁵ Morton and Wright, 107.

¹⁶ Arthur Marwick, The Deluge: British Society and the First World War (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 265-271.

of the Cabinet but also that of employers, unions and veterans. The largest ex-serviceman's organization, the Great War Veterans' Association (membership 16,000), argued that a few extra months in Europe was worth a return to favourable economic conditions.¹⁷ The Minister of the Interior in 1918, Arthur Meighen, convinced Kemp to consider establishing a job retraining program for Canadian soldiers overseas. A census taken of Canadian soldiers earlier in the year concluded that of the nearly 400,000 troops, 105,000 expressed a desire to return to the land.¹⁸ With agricultural resettlement legislation already in place in the Western provinces since 1917, Meighen emphasized a three month program that stressed the practical needs and not the scientific and academic approaches to farming. Further, since it was predicted that demobilization would take somewhere between nine to eighteen months, Meighen argued that the additional time spent in Europe would allow soldiers to be trained properly for the post-war jobs.

In the period between the Armistice and the final peace British military officials showed displeasure with the economic based demobilization planning since it threatened to leave the Empire in a weakened state. Canadian military officials loathed the plan for the way it treated soldiers. Sir Arthur Currie challenged the scheme stating that, "the soldier, who risked all and dared all for a cause he held sacred is to be returned home ... based solely as an instrument for providing national wealth."¹⁹ For Currie the soldiers of the Canadian Corps had proven their worth on the battlefield and had earned the right not to be treated like disposable commodities. The British, however, never had the opportunity to fully demonstrate their plan to critics such as Currie. Following a series of bloodless "soldiers' strikes" by British troops in January 1919, Britain was forced to abandon the

¹⁷ Morton, Peculiar Kind of Politics, 179.

¹⁸ Kent Fedorowich, Unfit For Heroes: Reconstruction and Soldier Settlement In the Empire Between the Wars (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 76-78.

¹⁹ Daniel G. Dancocks, Sir Arthur Currie: A Biography (Toronto: Methuen, 1985), 185.

economic plan. Although based on sound principles, the economic plan failed to take into consideration the opinion of the soldiers. A new scheme that determined the priority of return based on a soldier's age and length of service proved more acceptable to the thousands of men who awaited discharge.²⁰

The Canadian National Service Board (CNSB) which had been established to increase enlistment, had, by the end of the war, assumed the chore of analyzing the Canadian labour-market implications of demobilization. Posing questions about when the best time of the year was to release these men and whether the decision should be based on age, length of service, or secured employment, the Service Board looked to labour unions and employer associations for advice.²¹ The unions and employers were unable to provide an exact answer to these questions. Therefore the CNSB had to conclude that no one correct time of the year could be properly determined for demobilization.

November, however, could not have been a more inopportune time for an armistice. The early winter season was one of the worst times of the year for trans-Atlantic shipping. With the volume of shipping on the rise in a rush to beat the winter storms, securing the needed ships to return the troops was a challenge for Canadian officials. Even though the Canadian merchant navy had suffered during the German U-boat campaign, it was the poor Canadian railway facilities that initially worried demobilization planners. In the Maritimes only limited railway facilities connected Saint

²⁰ For more about the British demobilization process and the difficulties it encountered see Stephen Richard Graubard, "Military Demobilization in Great Britain Following the First World War," Journal of Modern History, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1947, Paul Barton Johnson, Land Fit For Heroes: The Planning of British Reconstruction, 1916-1919 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), Robin Higham, Armed Forces in Peacetime: Britain, 1918-1940. A Case Study (London: G.T. Foulis, 1962), Brian Bond, British Military Policy Between the Two World War (London: Oxford Press, 1980) and Andrew Rothstein, The Soldiers' Strikes of 1919 (London: Macmillan, 1980).

²¹ Morton and Wright, 98.

John and Halifax, the only two ice-free ports on the east coast to the rest of the country. Canadian railway officials estimated that they could only handle a limited number of troops per month through these two locations.²² With this restraint in place an exact order of return had to be determined.

The greatest influence on the Canadian demobilization was the debate between Minister Kemp and General Currie in late 1918. After witnessing the British failure with economic demobilization the plan was withdrawn for consideration by Canadian planners. The Overseas Ministry felt it was then left with only one policy, that of "first in first out." This plan was preferred by the troops because of its apparent fairness to long serving soldiers; it also had the support of Minister Kemp, who embraced the plan because of this appearance of treating the soldiers fairly. Yet just as he had opposed the British scheme, General Currie denounced "first in, first out." One of the General's biographers suggests that Currie may have been upset about being asked so late in the war for his opinion of demobilization.²³ It should not, however, come as a surprise that demobilization planners chose to originally overlook the general's considerations. When this planning was being co-ordinated Currie would have been too preoccupied with conducting the final Canadian offensives of the war. Another factor is that it was within the Overseas Ministry's authority to develop such a plan since it was part of its administrative mandate. Therefore, the action the Ministry chose to take did not necessarily need the approval of the Corps Commander, but rather his willing co-operation.

Currie disliked the minister's course of action for he saw it as a danger to the army. Kemp's plan required a restructuring of both the army administration that was to handle the demobilization and the composition of the units themselves. Currie argued that during

²² Report of the OMFC, 524.

²³ Daniel G. Dancocks, Spearhead to Victory: Canada and the Great War (Toronto: Hurtig, 1987), 222.

the course of the four years of fighting the CEF had formed a strong organization and that the policy of "first in first out" threatened to destroy the unit cohesion that the war had helped shape. Currie argued that he saw no reason why the administration had to be restructured, since the army already had the necessary personnel with the experience and efficiency to deal with the movement of troops and records. Moreover, "first in first out" was extremely detrimental to the Canadian Army Service Corps (CASC), which would be responsible for conducting the return. On the whole the CASC consisted of officers who, because of their less dangerous position during the war, had logged several years of service and so under Kemp's plan would have been the first men allowed to return home. This therefore created the problem of who would then handle the administrative work associated with the demobilization process. There was also the fear that this plan would upset those who had less years in uniform, but had conducted a more dangerous service for their country. Currie feared that the early withdrawal of officers, cooks, clerks and others who had served in safe occupations would cause a disturbance in discipline. Afraid that Kemp's plan would result in inexperienced officers leading disgruntled soldiers with whom they were not familiar, the general warned the minister, "For god's sake do not play with it for you are playing with fire."²⁴ In response to the minister's plan, Currie proposed that Canadian troops be allowed to return as units in order to maintain unit cohesion and discipline.²⁵ The correspondence between the two men in November and December 1918 was cordial, but a tone of sarcasm can be detected within these exchanges.

The general's criticisms of Kemp's plan had validity and did not entirely stem from the fact that he was asked for his opinion late in the planning process. Currie was able to convince the Prime Minister of this. Following discussion with the officers and soldiers

²⁴ Currie to Kemp, 23 November 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, D-2,

²⁵ Currie to Kemp, 6 November 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, file: "Part II: General Demobilization, 1918-1919."

under his command, the general believed he had a true understanding of how his troops wanted to go home. In correspondence with Prime Minister Borden, Currie strongly urged the return of the troops in units. Defending the idea of the *esprit de corps*, he warned Borden that Kemp's plan ran the risk of upsetting the troops' delicate state of discipline. An advocate for one final mass military display of the CEF on the Plains of Abraham, the General made it no secret that he preferred a triumphant return of his corps to all the Canadian cities and towns that sent units to Europe.²⁶ Insisting that they had earned the right to have their efforts acknowledged, in the course of their dialogue the General successfully appealed to the Prime Minister's emotions. In his memoirs Borden later wrote:

To return in units is of course only a matter of sentiment but it was sentiment that gathered to colours great armies from the British Isles and all the Dominions during the first two years of war.²⁷

The General was prone to the pomp and pageantry that the post-war celebrations had to offer; however, he was also aware of the additional benefits that unit repatriation offered. By being allowed to return as units under their own officers, Currie had emphasized that discipline could be more adequately preserved than if soldiers were allowed to return under their own recognisance. This argument won the support of Borden, but there was still the need for a solution that either disregarded one of the two plans or incorporated the best of both.

By the beginning of December 1918, an agreement was reached between the Minister and the General. By stressing how other dominions such as Australia were following similar plans of unit return, Currie convinced the Cabinet to alter the

²⁶ Currie to Kemp, 6 November 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, file: "Part II: General Demobilization, 1918-1919."

²⁷ Borden, *Memoirs, Vol. Two*, 870.

demobilization scheme. Canadian troops leaving from Britain would return home by two different methods. It was agreed that the Corps would be allowed to return as individual units, while soldiers who were outside of Currie's jurisdiction would form individual drafts based on length of service. Soldiers with spouses were given higher consideration because it was more expensive to maintain such troops during peacetime.²⁸ The compromise between the Overseas Ministry and the Canadian Corps appeared to initially satisfy everyone involved.

Kemp reluctantly gave his agreement to this two tier system of return. He feared that the plan allowed for the possibility that the demobilization camps would be left to inexperienced administrators to operate.²⁹ In correspondence with Borden, Kemp had pleaded that Currie's plan posed a threat to the government if troops were not allowed to return in a fair and just manner. The Prime Minister replied that it was not Currie that Kemp needed to worry about, but it was the "one hundred thousand men, who first smashed the Hindenburg line."³⁰ At this point in the planning the General had completely won the support of the Prime Minister who also felt that Canadian soldiers would resent being broken-up before they had been allowed to triumphantly return home.

Approval of Currie's scheme would appear to indicate that the Prime Minister no longer supported Kemp, but this was not the case. Later correspondence between the two politicians suggests that Borden had simply been placed in a difficult situation. He took

²⁸ Desmond Morton, "Kicking and Complaining': Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919" Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXI, No. 3, September 1980, 334. Note: 54,000 foreign dependents of Canadian soldiers were brought home to Canada at the government's expense following the war. Return of the Troops, 131.

²⁹ Kemp to Borden, 14 March 1919, Kemp Papers, Vol. 139, File D11-F.

³⁰ Borden to Kemp, 25 November 1918, Kemp Papers, Vol. 137, "Part II: General Demobilization, 1918-1919."

the opportunity to remind Kemp that only 100,000 of the 285,000³¹ Canadian troops in Europe were affected under the plan. Caught between the Minister, whom he had fought to send to London and the General who had helped to win the war, the best Borden could do was appease both by supporting a compromise for the soldiers' return. It was an agreement which from a political perspective had a clearly defined winner, but in reality the true loser was the Canadian soldier who had to endure the demobilization process.

As a result of the compromise the sequence in which the troops arrived home did not resemble the order in which they had left for Europe. The determined order of return from Britain in January 1919 was the Third Division followed by the First, Second and Fourth.³² Due to occupation duty, the First and Second Divisions were required to serve in the Rhineland from December 1918 to January 1919 with additional duty in Belgium. The original intention was to have the two divisions be relieved by the Third and Fourth Divisions. This plan proved to be impractical due to the positioning of the divisions when the hostilities ceased. What resulted was that the Third Division, which by November 1918 consisted mostly of conscripts who saw little of the war, were the first allowed to return home.³³

Currie had stressed practicality in the plan, but it is odd that Britain was chosen as the point for embarkation rather than France. Again Currie's sentimentality won over Canadian officials. Since a majority of the CEF was of British descent the General argued that many of the troops desired to see their relatives in England before they returned to Canada. It would have been impractical to grant leave to Britain only to have the men

³¹ Borden to Kemp, December 11, 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, file "Part II: General Demobilization."

³² Report of the OMFC, 518.

³³ J.A. Swettenham, "The End of the War," (No Date) NAC, RG 24, vol. 20,543, File 990.013 (D5), 9.

return to France again to ship home. Also all the paperwork that had been gathered over four years for the CEF was already in Britain and to move it to France would have been an accomplishment in itself.³⁴ In addition, France was an illogical and difficult local in which to commence their demobilization process. The United States, who had a million plus men in Europe by the war's end, had also begun to demobilize and chose France as their staging point for embarkation. Because of the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF) late arrival in the war, the Americans were farther behind in demobilization planning than even the British or Canadians. General demobilization for the AEF was not instituted until mid-December 1918. The majority of American troops returned either through Brest or Le Mans. Making use of camps that were larger than any located in the United States, the return of the Americans represented an immense strain on the surrounding French communities.³⁵ For the Canadians to conduct their own demobilization in the same area would have involved direct competition with the wealth and influence of the United States. It was, therefore, more logical to leave from Britain where Canada already had established a foothold.

Following his arrival in Britain from France, a Canadian soldier could expect to arrive at one of nine camps. Bramshott and Witley were reserved for the four corps divisions. Camps at Seaford, Ripon, Shorncliffe, Purfleet, Sunningdale, and Buxton were for troops in the artillery, cavalry and the medical corps. Kinmel Park served as the focal point for Canadian military demobilization.³⁶ The largest of the nine camps, Kinmel had

³⁴ W. Bovey Report, 9 July 1919, NAC, RG 9 III A1, vol. 104. Cited from Dancocks, *Spearhead to Victory*, 227.

³⁵ For more details on the demobilization of the AEF see Benedict Crowell and Robert Forrest Wilson, *Demobilization: Our Industrial and Military Demobilization After the Armistice, 1918-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1921) and Jack Stokes Ballard, *The Shock of Peace: Military and Economic Demobilization After World War II*, (Washington D.C.: American University Press, 1983).

³⁶ *Return of the Troops*, 48.

to deal with the troops who were not specifically appointed to the corps, such as the Railway and Forestry corps. Although designated to handle either individuals or units, all nine camps were expected to be able to accommodate both if required. For soldiers with all their supporting documentation in order, the procedure upon arrival at the demobilization camps was:

- First Day: Arrival at the camp, and completion of the War Service Gratuity Form.
- Second Day: Registration for medical classification.
- Third Day: Bathing and an examination by the Medical Board.
- Fourth Day: Dental Board examination, leave warrants prepared and pay issued.
- Fifth Day: Proceed on two weeks leave.³⁷

All of a soldier's supporting documents were sent to these concentration areas as soon as he left France. In this process it was quite common for either the documentation or even the soldier himself to be misplaced, resulting in a search through the existing paper trail that led back to France, a delay which was frustrating for the soldier. Once at the camp a soldier was required to fill thirteen different forms answering three hundred and sixty-three questions, and gather eighteen different signatures.³⁸ Considered an annoyance by the soldiers, this lengthy completion of paperwork was helpful in the long run. Usually completed during the voyage home, this method allowed for a quick discharge (some instances only a matter of a few minutes) once they arrived at the demobilization centre in Canada. Although the schedule suggests a systematic and rapid passing of the troops through a set routine, it was not as orderly as it appeared in print.

Even though the war was over in the minds of the men involved, for their commanding officers the true battle of maintaining high morale had only just begun. According to the plan that had been devised by Canadian officials, if all the paperwork

³⁷ Return of the Troops, 50.

³⁸ Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 336.

was completed and his leave had expired, a returning soldier was expected to be on his way home to Canada. Again this was an ideal process that usually never manifested itself. For the soldier, who after having endured years of war knew that the goal of seeing home again was almost within reach, a stay at a demobilization camp could prove to be an excruciating experience.

Dealing with the soldiers' boredom as they awaited their return home proved to be as challenging as the war itself. The main weapon that the army had to combat the doldrums of demobilization was the issuing of leave. General Currie's argument for a return through Britain was proven correct. In various war memoirs soldiers wrote of how they spent their leave after the war.³⁹ Famous Canadian post-war writer Will R. Bird wrote of travelling (both officially and unofficially) throughout Europe and Britain. Describing the silent movies and plays he watched and the restaurants he dined at in great detail, Bird noted the wide array of activities a city such as London had to offer a soldier who had money to spend. It was there that action was taken by the government to keep the soldiers occupied. The Beaver Hut situated in the Strand, in the heart of London, became the centre for Canadians on leave. Meant to serve as a recreational club and information centre, the government-supported facility dealt with any problems or questions that soldiers had while visiting the city.⁴⁰ With plays, movie houses, and pubs London had more to offer than the demobilization camps. In time, however, both a soldier's additional leave and pay ran out. A problem for Canadian soldiers was that, unlike the British or French, when they were granted leave there was often nowhere

³⁹ For example: Will R. Bird, Ghosts Have Warm Hands (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1968) Part 4 "Armistice," William Mathieson, My Grandfather's War: Canadians Remember the First World War (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), Chapter 14 "Daddy Is On His Way Home," and David P. Beatty, Memories of the Forgotten War (Port Elgin, N.B.: Baie Verte Editions, 1988), 259-83.

⁴⁰ Report of OMFC, 502.

familiar to go. Europe and England with all that it had to offer a visiting soldier could not substitute for home.

The army's responsibility for keeping the soldier amused and content continued when he was forced to return to the demobilization camps to await his trip home. If required to return, a soldier could expect to endure an endless routine of military drill instruction. After being reacquainted with weapons' training, and hand-to-hand combat exercises, the soldiers were also familiarized with methods that many had learned four years earlier at Camp Valcartier or Salisbury Plains. Meant as a means of keeping the troops prepared for a sudden resumption in hostilities, the decision to continue with training after the war served more than just a military aim. "In the long period of 'marking time' which followed the armistice, the greatest foe was inaction."⁴¹ During the course of the war the YMCA helped to keep the troops' morale high as they served at the front-line. After the armistice the organization's role increased. Dealing with men who had more free time, it became the "Y's" responsibility to broaden the soldiers' programme of activities. With the army providing the food and the "Y" the facilities, entertainment events and post-war celebrations were held.⁴² These events corresponded with the canteens that the "Y" had helped establish and operate in the military camps during the war. Serving as a gathering place, in time the canteens became "clubs" for soldiers to frequent. The only problem with distractions such as these were that they came at a financial cost to the soldiers, many of whom had already spent their pay on leave.

A cheaper means of keeping soldiers amused was the conduct of sporting competitions. The experience of the Spanish-American War (1898) had taught the United States military that the use of sports could be an aid in military training. Used as a means

⁴¹ B.McEvoy and A.H. Finlay, History of the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion: Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (Vancouver: Cowan and Brookhouse, 1920), 174.

⁴² Report of the OMFC, 500.

to combat desertion, alcohol and the lure of prostitution, it was believed that sports helped to instil the soldierly values of obedience and physical fitness.⁴³ By the early twentieth century, athletic activity had come to be seen as another means of fostering *esprit de corps* which Canadian military officials such as General Currie espoused. The YMCA also organized the events and excelled at providing the facilities. The only amenities the Aubin St. Vaast sporting complex lacked were those for the favourite Canadian past-time, ice hockey. The complex had a football field, five indoor baseball diamonds, one outdoor diamond, a quarter mile track, three quoiting pitches, five tennis courts, boxing and wrestling rings, a lacrosse field, cricket, badminton and gymnastic equipment, but no hockey rink.⁴⁴ Nothing in Canada compared. Making use of this equipment, CEF troops still stationed in Europe in the spring of 1919 participated in the Inter-Allied Games.⁴⁵ The fear among both military and YMCA officials was that the peace would entice "morale temptations" and "disorderly physical expressions." Therefore, the staging of sporting competitions not only helped military officials maintain the fitness of their troops, but also served as a safety valve for those who sought to vent their pent-up frustrations.

Besides the soldiers who wished to be entertained, there were also those who wished to spend their final days in uniform being educated. The Khaki University of Canada (KUC) was an idea that originated with the University of Vimy Ridge, a soldier education program established in France in 1917. In the summer of that year, H.M. Tory the President of the University of Alberta was invited to France by the YMCA to study the education possibilities for Canadian soldiers. Tory, who later became the Director of

⁴³ Steven W. Pope, "An Army of Athletes: Playing Fields, Battlefields, and the American Military Sporting Experience, 1890-1920," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 59, July 1995, 436.

⁴⁴ *Report of the OMFC*, 501.

⁴⁵ Pope, 450.

Educational Services for the Canadian Overseas Military Forces, recommended that the KUC be established.⁴⁶ He believed that soldiers who had halted their studies to join the war should be allowed to resume them as soon as possible. In conjunction with Canadian universities, an advisory board was established to grant recognition for work done by soldiers either at British universities or in the demobilization camps through the KUC.

Officially sanctioned by an Order in Council on 19 September 1918,⁴⁷ the purpose of the school was to allow soldiers the opportunity to make full use of the time offered by demobilization to renew their previous studies. Prior to the armistice the KUC consisted of a series of lectures, study groups and libraries throughout military units and camps. During demobilization it was expanded to include a complete spectrum from elementary to university education. It was agreed that while the YMCA would finance it, the university advisory board would control the KUC. For soldiers stationed in France the university which operated through the battalion schools was well received. When the school at Mons opened in November 1918, 400 soldiers immediately joined.⁴⁸ In theory the KUC was an excellent idea, the problem was that once the courses began troops started to receive their orders to move and could not complete their studies. After the war the Overseas Ministry concluded that this was a result of the demobilization period being shorter and more hectic than was anticipated.⁴⁹ As a result of this, the majority of the KUC studies were conducted in England.

⁴⁶ Lewis H. Thomas, The Renaissance of Canadian History: A Biography of A.L. Burt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 29.

⁴⁷ Report of the OMFC, 478.

⁴⁸ Paul P. Hutchison, Canada's Black Watch: The First Hundred Years, 1862-1962 (Bloomfield, ON: privately reprinted, 1987), 138.

⁴⁹ Report of the OMFC, 481.

During the early days of demobilization, life in the Canadian camps appeared to run according to this ideal plan. Yet as the weeks began to pass and the post-war victory parades and celebrations diminished, a sense of anxiety came over Canadian soldiers. Entertainment events and school work could only keep soldiers who were determined to get home amused for so long. Slowly the Canadian demobilization process began to reflect the chaotic post-war world of which it was a part of. The early days after the war witnessed social strife, the wrath of mother nature and an increased public paranoia about the future. As they anxiously awaited their turn to cross the Atlantic, Canadian soldiers were in competition with these evolving social forces. In addition they were the victims of a Canadian policy that in attempting to appease third parties in its two tier system failed to satisfy the soldiers themselves. These alterations and appeasements occurred in a society who in attempting to distance itself from the war still had to deal with its residual effects.

Termed the "Winter of Discontent," post-war Europe and North America in 1918-19 under went a rash of social upheaval. Just as Canada experienced the Winnipeg General Strike (May 1919), Britain encountered strikes by coal miners and dock workers. British coal shortages coincided with the coldest winter that Europe had experienced in decades and an influenza epidemic whose effects were felt on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁰ Besides being exposed to the dangers of the flu, the Canadian soldiers had to tolerate endless delays in shipping caused by British work stoppages. Along with this, the Canadian public was anxious about the repatriation of their war-time heroes. As early as 1916 the soldiers' return was viewed with suspicion as it was believed "that a large majority of these men [would] be unfitted by their experiences in this awful war to take up

⁵⁰ In March 1919, 3,899 British died from the outbreak and in Canada the Stanley Cup which had been awarded annually since 1893 was cancelled midway through the championship series when the epidemic claimed the life of a player for the Montreal Canadiens. Charles Lock Mowat, Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940 (London: Beacon Press, 1955), 22 and Edward F. Dolan Jr, National Hockey League (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1986), 122-123.

civil life for some time after they return[ed] ..."51 There was public doubt about whether these men would return as a potentially armed and uncontrollable mob. The Russian Revolution (1917) and the subsequent rise of Bolshevism helped to fuel this suspicion. Yet what was great than this public paranoia was the belief that returning veterans, specifically those physically or mentally wounded, would be come a economic and social hindrance upon Canadian society. However, the causes for the Canadian soldiers' discomfort with demobilization was more simple than ideology or concerns about what laid ahead for them at home.

Shipping shortages have been considered one of the immediate causes for the repatriation difficulties experienced by Canada. Unexpected and unexplained shipping cancellations riddled the Canadian demobilization process from January to June 1919. It has been suggested by Morton that the process could have been accelerated had the government been able to use the British "monster ships."⁵² The Olympic, Aquitania, and Mauretania, sister ships to the Titanic and Britannic, could accommodate a significantly large number of troops on a single voyage. It was not until late in the demobilization process that Canada chose to use them. It is interesting to note that the Overseas Ministry did have the option in 1918 to use them but declined. Why?

Both during and after the war, the British Ministry of Shipping controlled Allied shipping allotments and schedules. Based on the fact that they had participated in the war longer than the Americans, it was agreed that Canadian troops would be the first allowed to use any available shipping, including the "monster ships." In mid-December 1918 the Ministry of Shipping put forth a request to General D.M. Hogarth, the Quartermaster General at the Overseas Ministry, seeking the Canadians' permission to relinquish the use

⁵¹ J.S. Dennis, 18 December 1916, Addresses Delivered Before the Canadian Club of Montreal, Season 1916-1917 (Montreal: np., 1917), 151.

⁵² Morton, Peculiar Kind of Politics, 184.

of two of these ships. Noting how the Americans attached great importance to the use of the vessels, "the British government [was] very anxious to get the advantage of the good impressions which an announcement to this effort would cause in America."⁵³ Promising that adequate shipping for the Canadians could still be obtained, the ministry emphasized how it made more sense to allow these two ships to continue with their normal routes to New York City. The British eventually succeeded in securing the usage of all three ships.⁵⁴

What would appear to be a classic swindle was, in fact, the British merely profiting from internal Canadian disputes between Ottawa and London. Shortly after the initial British request for the ships, pressure slowly mounted in Canada for the use of smaller troopships. In part this was sparked by the experience of troops who returned on the Northland. Arriving home to Halifax on Christmas Eve 1918, the ship was quarantined for over twenty-four hours. Once allowed to disembark, the soldiers had a tale of horror to tell the waiting journalists. It was a story of a journey on a unsanitary and overcrowded ship, in which two cold meals a day were served and to receive any additional food required the bribing of ship stewards.⁵⁵ The reaction of outrage to this episode was immediate.

Appalled by what was reported, Parliament appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the affair. In a matter of days the commission returned with recommendations on how to improve the soldiers' transatlantic crossing. The commission suggested that smaller ships be used in the future. By reducing the number of troops on board it was

⁵³ E.Foley (Minister of Shipping) to Gen. Hogarth, 21 December 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 138, File D-2d "Demobilization - Ocean Transportation."

⁵⁴ Hogarth to Foley, 21 January 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 138, File D-2d "Demobilization - Ocean Transportation."

⁵⁵ Halifax Herald, 26 and 27 December 1918.

hoped that the living conditions would be more tolerable for the average twelve day journey. The Royal Commission into the Northland incident led to the establishment of a set standards for Canadian troopships. The Commission called for the use of ships that could better accommodate a smaller number of troops, provided improved food and allowed free access for the soldiers to roam the ship wherever they liked.⁵⁶ Not specifically designating them as such, the Commission recommended 'first class' accommodations for returning troops. Meant to improve the soldiers' experience at sea, these recommendations only helped to suit the needs of special interest groups in Ottawa, while extending the soldiers' stay in Britian.

The recommendations for the use of smaller ships coincided perfectly with the requests that had been put forth previously by Canadian railway officials. Without running the risk of creating a bottleneck in Saint John and Halifax, the Canadian Railway War Board in 1918 declared that they could accommodate a maximum of 30,000 troops per month. Reminding the Overseas Ministry of this danger the British chose to note how, for safety reasons, it was wiser to make use of smaller ships. Noting that the "monster ships" were all longer than the piers in the two Canadian ports, the British stressed their alarm over the possibility that high winds could blow the ships over. Fearing that a loss of any of these ships would lead to difficulties in the re-establishment of their passenger trade, the Ministry of Shipping recommended that the Overseas Ministry not use them.⁵⁷ The British, however, were cautious to note that the Canadians always had the right to refuse such suggestions. Persuaded by both British and Canadian officials' arguments, the

⁵⁶ Report of the Royal Commission on the Northland, 25 January 1919, Kemp Papers, Vol. 155, file: C-6.

⁵⁷ Foley to Hogarth, 20 January 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 138, file D-2d "Demobilization - Ocean Transportation," .

Overseas Ministry willingly rejected the idea of using the "monster ships" despite the increased number of soldiers they could accommodate.

No sooner did the Overseas Ministry decline the right to use the "monster ships" than reports began to surface about American troops returning home. In January 1919, the American press reported that the United States' demobilization was proceeding at a pace of 300,000 men per month.⁵⁸ Predicting that all US troops would be home by June, these reports upset Canadians who still sat waiting in Britain. Feeling that he had been cheated, the Quarter-Master General sought an answer to this situation from the Minister of Shipping. Defending his actions the British minister responded boldly that, "there [was] far more accommodation on the North Atlantic than [was] necessary for the conveyance of Canadian troops, and in fixing the programme we study Canada first, and give the United States the balance."⁵⁹ The Overseas Ministry unknowingly found itself agreeing to vie for all available shipping.

Although benefiting from the shipping misfortunes of the Canadians, the United States did not attempt to directly delay the return of Canadian troops. Following the armistice the British withdrew all tonnage they had loaned to the United States for wartime service. This was done in order to assist in the return of colonial soldiers and to restore British foreign commerce. The United State War Department found itself forced to conduct demobilization using as much American tonnage as possible. Making use of converted naval ships, chartered foreign and American vessels and captured German shipping, the United States did not rely entirely on the British for needed shipping.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ New York Times, 12 January 1919.

⁵⁹ Foley to Hogarth, 24 January 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 138, File D-2d "Demobilization - Ocean Transportation."

⁶⁰ Benedict and Wilson, 30-36.

Except for appearance sake, the allowance of the "monster ships" to the Americans did not make a significant difference in the United States demobilization process.

What hurt the Canadian shipping situation the most were the recommendations put forth by the Northland Commission. By creating onboard standards that were higher than those demanded by the Americans, the Royal Commission made repatriation for Canadians all the more difficult. The Haverford was inspected three times before it was rejected by Canadian officials due to poor lighting and ventilation.⁶¹ Although Canadian officials were frantically searching for the needed shipping, the existence of standards meant that they would not settle for rubbish. In a situation such as the Haverford even though it sparked a later riot it was wise to decline the ship. Also in many cases Canadian inspectors were rejecting ships because of inflated standards that had been established in Ottawa. As a result this only further compounded the shipping difficulties.

The arrangement made between General Hogarth and the Ministry of Shipping came as a surprise to Kemp. It was not until early February 1919 that the Minister was made aware of the situation when officials in Halifax informed him of the "monster ships" withdrawal from Canadian usage. When he approached the Ministry of Shipping the British noted that it was Ottawa who desired the use of smaller ships. The Ministry reminded Kemp that the Canadians hurt their own cause by continually rejecting ships that the British considered suitable and the Americans were not above using. The British persuasion to abandon the usage of the "monster ships" did not help demobilization, but in the end Canadian officials had only themselves to blame. The desire to more satisfactorily accommodate smaller number of soldiers retarded the demobilization process creating congestion in both France and Britain. The new shipping arrangements only made it more difficult to administer the demobilization process. Making use of the smaller ships meant additional delays in the process by which soldiers were forced to wait in accordance to

⁶¹ London Times 6 March 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 138.

length of service and not the length of time they had spent in a demobilization camp.⁶² The additional work load that this created in the British shipyards only further outraged the strike-prone dock workers, who in turn stalled the process further. As a result, this created a trickle-down effect that found its way into the behaviour of the Canadian soldiers.

Between 11 November 1918 and 17 June 1919 there were thirteen significant disturbances in the Canadian demobilization camps. A spirit of unrest amongst the Canadians came about as a result of the combined relaxation of discipline and their strong desire to go home quickly, all of which was frustrated by the shipping shortages and lack of information concerning their demobilization. The uncertainty about future employment opportunities in Canada did not help ease the tension amongst the troops. Envisioning the "stay-at-homes" grabbing the best jobs, soldiers refused to accept the explanations offered for sailing cancellations. Even though between January and August 1919, 280,000 Canadian troops were repatriated it came at the cost of six lives, sixty-eight injuries and damage totalling £122,000.⁶³ The disturbance of 4-5 March 1919 at Kinmel Park has come to illustrate the faults that existed in the Canadian demobilization process for the First World War.

Located only a few miles away from the docks of Liverpool, Kinmel Park in North Wales, was opened in the autumn of 1918 under Commandant M.A. Colquhoun. The camp consisted of eleven smaller camps that represented the dispersal areas scattered across Canada. As time passed, Kinmel Park became the gathering place for homesick

⁶² When the demobilization process began in late November 1918, 4,304 Canadian soldiers were returned home. In December the number had risen to 17,149 and 19,417 by January 1919, but as a result of the various social factors beyond the Canadians control and the implementation of the new shipping standards the number of troops returning home plummeted to 15,243 in February 1919. Return of the Troops, Appendix B.

⁶³ A.F. Duguid, "Disturbances In Canadian Camps and Areas, 1918-19," NAC, RG 24 Vol. 20, 543.

Canadian soldiers. The men who awaited demobilization at Kimmel were those who were not associated with any specific unit or division therefore representing a mix of combatants and non-combatants. This intermingling of "old originals" and recent conscripts was something which Currie had disapproved of. Staffed by officers who were resentful about the delays in their own return home, Kimmel Park flirted with danger.

A racial disturbance between white and black soldiers on 7 January 1919 was the first sign of difficulties. Although no exact figures exist of how many were involved, the incident occurred when a black Sergeant Major of the Second (Coloured) Canadian Construction Company tried to arrest a white soldier for improper behaviour. A Benjamin Elms who served in the Construction Company recalled that racial remarks were made by the white soldier and when placed in the guard house, "His buddies came to release him and all hell broke loose."⁶⁴ This incident was only an indication of the further violence that was to come. The shipping delays were impeded further by the military's decision to allow the Third Division and the conscripts that made it up, to return home ahead of the men at Kimmel. By agreeing to allow entire units to return home the demobilization policy failed to consider a length of service requirement as was the case for individual soldiers. Meant as a means to preserve *esprit de corps* and discipline, the policy advocated by General Currie failed to take into account the thousands of conscripts who were needed to fill the ranks of the Corps during the waning months of the war.⁶⁵ As both the soldiers' pay and leave expired the camp population began to swell. By the end of February 17,000 men could be found in the camp, some of whom had been there for as long as six weeks.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Calvin W. Ruck, Canada's Black Battalion, No. 2 Construction, 1916-1920 (Halifax: Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia, 1986), 59-60.

⁶⁵ Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 344.

⁶⁶ Testimony by Maj. F.C. Biggar, and Lt. C.R. Gilpin, Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry On Disturbances at Kimmel Park, RG 9, III B1, vol. 2770, D-199-33, vol. 5

By this point, Kimmel Park was a powder keg ready to explode. Having received no sailing orders since 25 February, rumours spread throughout the camp that the ships were being diverted for use by the Americans and the Third Division. This was on top of the poor weather and the damp huts, poor quality of food, and shortages in heating fuel which had worn at the soldiers' patience. On 4 March a meeting was held by soldiers in the Montreal Camp, in which a strike committee was elected. Disgruntled about Kimmel's state, their treatment and the shipping delays, this select group of soldiers chose to protest before the camp officials. The protesters hoped to involve upwards to 15,000 of the men in their demonstration. Instead, what occurred was a riot involving an estimated eight hundred men. The disturbance in which officers' quarters and canteens were ransacked and looted, began with a signal from a Russian-Canadian soldier William Tarasevich. Tarasevich's participation later helped to fuel press reports that the riot was influenced by Bolshevism. Instead, spurred on by an ample amount of alcohol at the camp, the riot lasted for two days and was finally quelled without the army having to resort to the use of force. Yet in the interim it came at the cost of £ 77,075, twenty-three wounded and five fatalities, and had caught the attention of the locals.⁶⁷

Although confined to a few select newspapers, the British press' reporting of the incident greatly disturbed Canadian officials at the Overseas Ministry. Following Kimmel, several British newspapers such as the Daily Chronicle, Lloyd's News and Daily News focused closely on all incidents at the Canadian camps. The more influential London publications such as the Times and Daily Telegraph were considered fair by the Overseas Ministry in their coverage. Using headlines such as: "Twelve Men Killed in Outbreak by Canadian Troops In Wales. V.C. Trampled to Death," or "Colonial Camp Mutiny, Canadian Russians Raise Bolsheviks' Flag," the smaller newspapers greatly agitated

[hereafter 'Kimmel Inquiry'].

⁶⁷ Swettenham, "The End of War," Appendix D.

officials in the Overseas Ministry. Feeling that this news made it more difficult to sustain high morale amongst the troops, and recalling the British mutiny at Etaples (September 1917) and the earlier soldiers' strikes of January, the ministry was upset that the same press in turn suppressed information about similar disturbances amongst British troops. Arguing that the War Office took all the necessary measures to control the news relating to Imperial insurrections, the ministry believed that none were taken with regards to the Canadians. Kemp's office argued that such CEF incidents were "deliberately pursued because the flood of limelight which was turned on the Canadians helped to obscure infinitely more sinister events which were taking place in connection with the Imperial troops."⁶⁸ Events such as the Etaples base mutiny and the BEF soldiers' strikes earlier in January were larger in scale than Kinmel, but received noticeably less press coverage.

Ironically the Canadian press, although using British sources, did not subscribe to the same detailed approach in reporting the Kinmel and subsequent Canadian disturbances overseas. Beyond reporting the disturbance the day after, Canadian newspapers quickly moved on to other news matters, the obvious reason being the distance between the location and the audience. It was also at a time when it would have threatened to mar the triumphant return of Canadian soldiers who were beginning to arrive in both Ottawa and Toronto. In the incidents that proceeded Kinmel, the Overseas Ministry and the Canadian army introduced measures to deal with the British press. Steps were immediately taken to acquaint all British newspapers with the correct facts of the events in order to prevent the erroneous reporting that followed Kinmel. Occurrences such as the one at Guilford (10-11 May 1919), however, were peculiar. Consisting of two days rioting between Canadian and British troops, the incident helped to confirm the Ministry's suspicions about the British press. The affair fuelled the Overseas Ministry's theory that the British press

⁶⁸ Col. Thomas Gibson, "Canadian Troops Overseas and the British Press," 19 July 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 138, File 11c, 2-3.

intentionally suppressed incidents of poor British troop behaviour. London papers claimed that Canadians had partaken in a reign of terror in the small English town. Ignoring praise that had been given to the Canadian troops by the mayor and Chief Constable, newspapers published photos of two British corporals allegedly stabbed by Canadians. The retractions to this story later issued by the newspaper never made it to print.⁶⁹

In later riots such as the one at Witley (14-16 June 1919) Canadian army officials made the effort in their press releases to associate the uproar with ongoing dock workers' strike in Liverpool. Receiving both the support of the King and British Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill, the Canadians were able to alleviate the negative press coverage the Canadians received.⁷⁰ Yet the later Epsom affair (17 June 1919) was one in which demobilized Canadian troops broke into a local police station to free an arrested Canadian soldier. Involving three hundred troops, the riot resulted in sixteen injuries and the death of one police officer. Although incidents such as Kinmel Park and Witley were arguably highly exaggerated, or those such as Guilford were suspiciously one-sided, not all episodes of Canadian violence in England were entirely excusable.

The sensationalism of the British press was not a new phenomenon and had been around since the earliest days of the country's press. In explaining how the Overseas Ministry was handling this situation, Kemp's report to the Prime Minister attempted to conclude that these newspapers themselves held Bolshevistic sentiments,⁷¹ conclusions that appear weak and unjustifiable. Regardless of these speculations the Canadians' action at Kinmel Park fell victim to what historian George Rude, who has studied riots in eighteenth and nineteenth century, would consider a complete misunderstanding of the

⁶⁹ Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 357.

⁷⁰ Gibson, "Canadian Troops Overseas and the British Press," 21-22.

⁷¹ Gibson, 3-4.

incident. A misinterpretation where "the "mob" in question, having no ideas or honourable impulses of its own is liable to be presented as the "passive" instruments of outside agents - "demagogues" or "foreigners" - and as being prompted by the motives of loot, lucre, free drinks, bloodlust or merely the need to satisfy some lurking criminal instinct."⁷² As a result, what became lost in the British press accounts and was not fully understood until after the investigation in the Kinmel disturbance, were the faces of those in the crowd, who they were, why they rioted, and what were the final results? The poor press the Canadians received, although unjust, was the result of the peculiar situation the nation's soldiers found themselves in. For the Imperial War Office the Canadians served as the diversion needed from Imperial troops who were behaving in a similiar manner. On the verge of leaving the country for good and with the Great War being 'the war to end all wars,' who in 1919 could have imagined that Canadian soldiers would ever need to return to Britain?

In the wake of the Kinmel Park riot Canadian politicians were appalled at what they read in the press reports. Stories of poor food, no blankets, cold and filthy huts were reiterated by Canadian soldiers as they disembarked in Halifax and Saint John. The most serious charges levelled against Kinmel Park officials by the returning soldiers were charges of bribery to secure an earlier position on the return list. Shortly after the riot, Kemp wrote to Borden that the "discomforts which a soldier is willing to put up with when engaged in fighting assumed a different aspect now that the war is over."⁷³ His only defence was that the difficulties of carrying out two different forms of demobilization

⁷² George Rude, The Crowd In History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), 8.

⁷³ Kemp to Borden, 14 March 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 166, File 1e: "Demobilization Correspondence."

side-by-side were unavoidable, and that the reversal of a war machine that had been in operation for nearly four years was not going to occur overnight.

Yet, time was something which Borden and his government in Ottawa were slowly running out of. As further stories of horror about Kinmel were made known with the return of each troopship, the pressure mounted in Parliament. Although the story of the riot itself received minimal attention in the press, the causes for it raised serious questions amongst the political opposition. Duncan Campbell Ross MP voiced the concerns of both the soldiers and fellow politicians to the Minister of Militia Major-General Sydney Mewburn. Mentioning that in the previous five months Canada had returned a little over one hundred thousand troops, he noted that the United States had returned nearly one million. Arguing that, "It should not need a mutiny in a camp with disastrous results to life and limb to wake up the Overseas Minister,"⁷⁴ Ross called for further government action in speeding up the demobilization process. In an attempt to shift the blame, Mewburn had defended himself by noting:

While I wish to take all the responsibility that is coming to me in this matter, still I should like to point out to the House that the demobilization overseas is entirely under the control of the overseas authorities ...⁷⁵

The Prime Minister in turn sought his own answers to what caused the riot and how the situation was to be rectified.

Between 16 April and 6 June 1919, fifty-one Canadian soldiers were tried for mutiny at Kinmel Park. Twenty-three were convicted with sentences ranging from ten years in prison to a few weeks of detention for minor offenders.⁷⁶ Prior to these trials an enquiry into the incident was ordered to be conducted by Brigadier-General J.H.

⁷⁴ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 14 March 1919, 501.

⁷⁵ Canada, House of Common, Debates, 10 March 1919, 323.

⁷⁶ Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 354.

MacBrien. MacBrien, who later became commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was under orders to investigate the causes for the affair and whether or not adequate precautionary measures had been in place.⁷⁷ The investigation was over by the end of the month, but not before MacBrien had interviewed eighty-eight witnesses to the event. Interviewing all ranks who were present at Kinmel, MacBrien's investigation was able to shed some light on the motivations of the soldiers involved. Ranging from poor camp conditions to the cancellations of sailings, his inquiry discovered a wide variety of problems that existed in the camp, but it is the testimony of Captain R.J. Davidson that best exemplifies the mindset of the soldiers who took part in the riot: "In my opinion the idea of the leaders was the more demonstrations we make the quicker we get sailings."⁷⁸

The General's inquiry quickly determined that one of the immediate causes for the disturbance at Kinmel was the consistent cancellation of sailings. For example, between 1 January and 25 March, thirty-three ships were scheduled to sail with men from Kinmel. Of these thirty-three, six were cancelled and only eight sailed on their originally scheduled dates. In addition, three ships were diverted in order to be used by the Third Division. Initially these delays in the schedule in January were only for three or four days, but by February they began to increase. The Cretic serves as an example of what frustrated the waiting soldiers. The ship was scheduled six different times between 12 February and 13 March before it finally set sail for Canada.⁷⁹ Reading newspapers that had been "publishing a lot of stuff about the Third Division sailing, saying that they were the first of Canada's real fighting men to return to Canada; that they were Canada's 'Old Contemptibles',"⁸⁰ it is no wonder that troops who had been in Europe longer were upset.

⁷⁷ OMFHQ to Brig-Gen. J.H. MacBrien, 7 March 1919, 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁷⁸ Testimony by Witness, Captain R. J. Davidson, 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁷⁹ Exhibit H "Sailing Schedule," 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁸⁰ Testimony by Witness, Lt-Col. R.G. Thackery (Quarter-Master General at Kinmel

As for other more detailed concerns, the inquiry concluded that conditions at the camp were not as appalling as the returning troop reports suggested. The quality of the food was not considered to be poor although its preparation was. This problem came as a combined result of the large number of troops that needed to be fed at Kinmel and the shortage of properly trained cooks. Even though the demand for such men rose after the armistice there was no financial incentive for cooks or security to remain at the camps beyond their own demobilization.⁸¹ It was also determined that despite reports that the camp was a breeding ground for the "red menace," Bolshevism played no influential role in the disturbance. "Like other riots, the Kinmel affair had no plan and many leaders - soldiers whose anger, excitement or assertiveness led them to play prominent but transitory roles."⁸² The inquiry concluded with the impression that men arrived at the camp believing that they would only be there for a few days.

Besides shipping difficulties an additional difficulty in the demobilization process was the poor communication effort made between officers running the camps and the soldiers. Had there been an increased effort by the officers to explain the reasons for the delays and the circumstances surrounding compassionate cases, then there would have been less likelihood of incidents such as Kinmel occurring.⁸³ Disgruntled themselves that their own return home was being delayed, the officers in a majority of the camps were not

Park), 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁸¹ Testimony by Capt. R.J. Davidson, noted that there was no suitable inducement to keep NCOs at the demobilization camps when MSA clerks received better pay than Lieutenant-Corporals. Lieutenant-Corporal C.M. Rutten testified that a financial incentive had been considered for cooks but it was determined by camp officials that this would create obstacles with other trades. 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁸² Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 351.

⁸³ G.W.L. Nicholson, Official History of the Canadian Army In the First World War (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 532.

were allowed to leave earlier. As a result of this, the soldiers were left with plenty of questions, but no answers. Although the lack of shipping was the main contributor to the demobilization difficulties, it was also the modifications that were visibly made to the policy of "first in, first out" that upset the waiting troops.⁸⁴ The only source of information they had were the newspapers and rumours, neither of which explained all the facts involved. Although for Canadian officials much of the delay in the process were unavoidable, there was not enough effort made to explain them to those who it affected the most. As a result soldiers, such as those at Kinmel, were forced to resort to protest as the last means possible to secure shipping.

The following can summarize the Canadian demobilization policy:

While length of service [was] the governing feature of demobilization theoretically, practically it [was] the length of service in each area or camp at the particular minute which govern[ed].⁸⁵

The two-tier approach for demobilization as displayed by Kinmel Park proved disastrous for the Canadians. In attempting to appeal to all respective parties involved in the process (the military, government and special interest groups) the Overseas Minsitry and the military failed to take into consideration whom the policy affected the most, the soldiers themselves. Although on paper the policy appeared to be a sound one, when applied to actual situations and the events of the world outside of the demobilization, it can be viewed as a failure due to the violence by the soldiers. "They were part of the experience or ordinary Canadians, asserting their own interests against authorities who always professed to know better."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Nicholson, *Official History*, 532.

⁸⁵ Testimony by Lt-Col. G.H. Cassels, 'Kinmel Inquiry.'

⁸⁶ Morton, "Kicking and Complaining," 360.

The Kimmel riot resulted in a marked acceleration of the repatriation process.⁸⁷ The British, who were now pressured from both the Overseas Ministry and the British public who desired to see the Canadians leave, were forced to let the Canadians use the "monster ships," but having the needed shipping did not necessarily solve all the problems. In April, the British continued to unexpectedly cancel sailings due to sporadic dock workers' strikes. Situations such as these remained beyond the control of the Overseas Ministry and could not be dealt with. On 10 May a tugboat operators' strike appeared to impede the sailing of the Olympic which had 4,483 Canadian troops on board. The ship's captain, Bertie Hayes, defied the striking operators. Normally needing seven to ten tugs to pull the ship out of the harbour, the Olympic set sail using none.⁸⁸ By this time the homesick Canadians began to rally the support of the British public. Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in a letter to the London Times, called for Canadians to volunteer to work on the docks during these strikes to speed up their return home. The author of the Sherlock Holmes stories further defended the hard fought reputation the soldiers of the CEF had earned by writing:

It is very painful to those who admire the Canadians to see them spoiling their good name at the last moment. It is only fair to ask, however, whether some of the blame does not lie with want of tact or want of hospitality in these different centres. I have had considerable experience of Canadian troops, having had a whole division encamped for a year close to my house, and having had 700 officers under my own roof, and I can testify that no men could have behaved better, and that they were regretted in this village, when they left us.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ The number of Canadian troops that returned following Kimmel were: March 46, 733, April 33, 471, May 58, 992, June 33, 914, July 41,760, August 28, 520, September 17, 736. Return of the Troops, Appendix B, 154.

⁸⁸ Beatty, Memories of the Forgotten War, 277.

⁸⁹ "Canadian Troops Overseas and the British Press," 23.

Successfully making their mark on the battlefields of Belgium and France, by 1919 the Canadians had unfortunately worn out their welcome in England.

If any good came from the Canadian soldiers' disturbances overseas it was the marked acceleration in their repatriation after such incidents of violence. By the autumn of 1919 only a few hundred officers remained overseas. A process that had originally been estimated to take up to eighteen months had been completed in just under a year. The initial fear of Canadian railway facilities creating delays for the return process never transpired. Thanks in part to the extensive documentation that was handled both in England and at sea, upon arrival in Saint John or Halifax troops were usually quickly ushered to waiting trains which transported them to one of the dispersal stations across the country. Although the conditions were not as difficult as those experienced at sea for the soldiers, the train ride still had its moments "... particularly in those interminable stretches of Northern New Brunswick whose sole product, so far as it could be determined from the inadequate observation post of a railway coach, was Christmas trees."⁹⁰ Once at the dispersal station, a soldier's final pay and discharge papers were issued. In some instances the occasion was marked by a ceremony which the returning troops marched back into the city or town in which they had left four years earlier. This was followed by one last assembly of the soldiers and final words from their commanding officers. Many of these CEF units were then ordered to dismiss for the last time, and the men finally had arrived back to 'Civvie Street.'

Even though this process had begun to develop several years earlier, it was not until the situation was thrust upon Canadian officials that serious action was taken. As a result, Canadian demobilization policy for the First World War centred around the debate between General Currie and Minister Kemp and the issue of return by units or "First in,

⁹⁰ W.W. Murray, History of the 2nd Canadian Battalion (Ottawa: np., 1947), 347.

first out." The forced compromise that was orchestrated by Prime Minister Borden appeared to help alleviate the situation in the short term; however, by early 1919 outside factors such as the British labour strikes and the ensuing shipping shortages showed the stress points in the Canadian plan. Highlighted by the Kinmel Park riot, life in Canadian demobilization camps was not a vacation for soldiers who sat idly waiting for their return home. What the riots showed was that despite the efforts by such organizations as the YMCA and the Khaki University of Canada, a soldier's patience in peacetime could only be tested for so long. Although the poor conditions the soldiers had to bear and the violence they resorted to led to review in the policy applications and a drastic speeding forward in the process, in the end it was incidents such as these that left a tarnished mark on the Canadian demobilization process for the First World War.

Chapter Three: After the Victory Campaign

A cynic might remark that in this war the government began planning for demobilization even before it made provision for a really effective war effort.

C.P. Stacey¹

In late March 1945 the great cities that formed Hitler's Third Reich fell to the Allies' assault on "fortress Europe." Along the west bank of the Rhine eight Allied armies stood poised for the final thrust into north-west Europe. General Dwight D. Eisenhower's plan for crossing the Rhine consisted of a deliberate assault on a wide front, with the heaviest effort made in the north by the Canadian, British and American Ninth and First Armies. The objective was to have these forces encircle the great industrial region of the Ruhr. Codenamed "Grenade" and "Plunder" the plan was initiated on 23 March and encountered light opposition.² Meanwhile on the eastern front Soviet Generals Georgi Zhukov and Marshal Ivan Konev had assembled the supplies and equipment needed for the final assault on and siege of Berlin, and Marshals F. I. Tolbukhin and R. Y. Malinovsky began their drive from central Hungary towards Vienna.

At the beginning of April the First Canadian Army was expected to drive rapidly through north-eastern Netherlands, the German coast east to the Elbe and the western Netherlands. The Second Canadian Corps handled the first two tasks, while the First Canadian Corps undertook the latter. The fighting they experienced was difficult, but the advances were rapid. Second Corps cleared Deventer, Zwolle, Groningen, Ewden, Wilhelmshaven, and Oldenburg, and the First captured Arnhem and Appeldoorn. This was followed by the Soviets' completion of their siege of Berlin on 29 April. On this same

¹ C.P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939-1945 (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1970), 63.

² For a detailed account of these two operations and the Canadian role in them see W. Denis Whitaker and Shelagh Whitaker, Rhineland (Toronto: Stoddart, 1989).

day an armistice was struck with SS General Karl Wolff in Italy. Then on 3 May Admiral Hans von Friedeburg surrendered all German forces in Denmark, the Netherlands and northern Germany to Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery. The war in Europe was finally drawing to a close.

For the Canadian Fifth Infantry Brigade these last days meant fighting against a disorganized German resistance which had an ample supply of mortar rounds. For everyone involved these final moments were miserable. Through poor weather and physical exhaustion the men of the Fifth were asked to push on and maintain the pressure on the Germans. Then suddenly on 3 May the Calgary Highlanders, who faced an enemy blocking position outside of Berne, noticed that the German defenders had vanished. This was followed the next day by a BBC news bulletin stating that as of 8 a.m. 5 May 1945 all remaining German forces in north-west Europe were to surrender.

Throughout the Fifth Brigade the German collapse and the cease-fire caught the soldiers completely by surprise. As historian Terry Copp wrote,

No one cheered and there were no signs of celebration. Rumours about a surrender had been current for several weeks but the fighting had not stopped and the steady drain of casualties had sapped the energy and morale of the men in the rifle companies. To be killed or wounded in the last few days of the war seemed a particularly cruel fate and the predominant emotion on 5 May 1945 was simple relief at having survived.

The soldiers now faced a very different future. Some volunteered for service in the Pacific and it was these adventuresome souls who got home to Canada first. The rest faced the prospect of occupation duties or long periods of waiting for their turn to be sent home. The professional soldiers, and those who hoped to make a career in the post-war army, spent time analyzing the "lessons learned" in the campaign ... The vast majority wanted little more than a quick return to civilian life and said so, loudly and often.³

³ Terry Copp, *The Brigade* (Stoney Creek, ON: Fortress Publications, 1992), 197.

The conclusion to the war in Europe and later the Pacific in 1945 for many of these men signalled the conclusion to Canada's role in the war. Yet before they could take part in the victory celebrations, the Canadian soldiers had one more obstacle to endure, the process of returning home. For Canadian demobilization planning in the Second World War, the government and the military drew heavily from the experiences of the First World War. Using this as an inspiration, planners set out to establish an organization of committees to effectively deal with the implementation of Ottawa's demobilization policy in 1945-46.

Much of the preparation for demobilization occurred long before the need had arisen, and it demonstrated a great deal of co-operation between Canadian civilian and military organizers. Collaboration between political officials and organizations for veteran re-establishment encouraged the military to think early in the war about the eventual demobilization of the Canadian forces. In doing so, both civilian and military planners were forced to give consideration to the needs of the Canadian post-war economy as well as the soldiers themselves. Of the three services, the Army had the greatest influence on demobilization planning, in part due to its size, and its previous failure in the First World War. The disturbing incidents such as the Kinmel Park riots signified the earlier failure. The political and military planners for the demobilization of a civilian Canadian military force twenty years later had not forgotten this episode. Therefore, much of the attention afforded to demobilization in 1945-46 focuses on the Army.

Besides emphasizing the need for early preparation there were additional factors throughout the course of the war that had to be considered as the government developed a policy for demobilization. Whatever shape the final policy took, the one issue it had to address was distinguishing a difference in return for soldiers who volunteered for overseas duty and those who remained in Canada, specifically those soldiers who fell under the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMAs) of June 1940 and who served as conscripts in the Canadian Home Defence Force. Therefore, the problem that needed to

be addressed was the determination of which of these two soldiers, the volunteer or the conscript, would be allowed to return home first. In addition, what also had to be kept in consideration was the fact that this war was fought on two fronts. The Canadian Army Pacific Force (CAPF) and the Canadian Army Occupation Force of Europe (CAOF) were two additional factors that complicated the final demobilization policy. In the end, demobilization was more than just the repatriation of soldiers. It was an attempt by the federal government to simultaneously satisfy several segments of Canadian society.

The demobilization experience after the First World War contributed significantly to the planning for Canadian demobilization during the Second World War. Studying history, federal bureaucrats, many of them veterans of the Great War, were quick to conclude that in order ensure the support of the troops, demobilization had to be a rapid and smooth process. At the start of the war H.F. McDonald, chairman of the Canadian Pension Committee, lobbied Ian Mackenzie the Minister of Pensions and National Health, to begin planning for demobilization. "While it may seem a little early to consider this question," McDonald wrote on October 13, 1939, "the history of the re-establishment efforts on demobilization in the last war indicate that the question requires very full and thorough consideration before a policy is decided upon." He later wrote, "no country has ever successfully demobilized a larger army and reabsorbed the personnel into normal civilian life." He went on to describe the earlier Canadian effort as "slipshod and inappropriate."⁴ The past cautioned against undue optimism and a haphazard approach to demobilization. Aided by a Liberal government's general receptiveness to social welfare

⁴ Mackenzie Papers, MG 27 III B-5, Vol. 56, File 527-10(1), McDonald to Mackenzie, 13 October 1939 and 15 October 1939.

reforms, a favourable environment for the preparation of demobilization existed in the federal government.⁵

Therefore the first politician to take responsibility for demobilization was Ian Mackenzie. Unfortunately Mackenzie was not known for his administrative ability. Previously as Defence Minister (1935-39) he had ineffectively handled the Bren Gun scandal (1938), an incident that served to highlight what many considered Mackenzie's ineptness. The minister's philosophy was that he was the figurehead and spokesman for the department, and the detailed work was to be handled by his staff.⁶ Therefore, as Dean Oliver concluded, "a weak minister with little administrative ability was thus ensconced at the helm of what was, for much of the war, the government's main clearing house for demobilization and rehabilitation planning."⁷ Nonetheless, the minister did not lack all the necessary qualities for the new position he was appointed to in September 1940.⁸ As one of the longest serving Liberal members, Mackenzie was considered a "superb parliamentarian." A rousing public speaker, his oratorical skills helped to secure a firm voice for his department in the House of Commons. In addition, his close friendship with Prime Minister Mackenzie King did not hurt the department's handling of veterans' affairs.

A former staff captain who served in the 72nd Battalion of the CEF, Mackenzie was also known as a defender of veterans' rights. In October 1939, while still Minister of Defence, he proposed the establishment of a cabinet committee on demobilization to gather information and make policy recommendations. Showing such concern for

⁵ Dean F. Oliver, "When the Battle's Won: Military Demobilization In Canada" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1996), 48.

⁶ M.A. Hooker, "Serving Two Masters: Ian Mackenzie and Civil Military Relations in Canada, 1935-1939," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring 1986), 50.

⁷ Oliver, "When the Battle's Won," 51.

⁸ C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), 70.

demobilization in a war that was barely six weeks old demonstrated Mackenzie's personal commitment to the issue. Senior advisors to Mackenzie, Robert England and Walter Woods, were in support of this call for early action. Both men had been wounded in the Great War and England had also won the Military Cross. While serving as the director of the Canadian Legion Educational Services, England commented that the government must "learn some of the lessons of [its] former hard experience [with] regard to the thoroughness and sufficiency of rehabilitation plans."⁹ Also the Chair of the Canadian Pension Committee, Brigadier-General H.F. McDonald, believed that Canadian soldiers had been mistreated during their return home in 1918-19. In a speech given in 1941, he said, "We cannot say therefore that we have not had experience, and if we do not profit in some measure by that experience, then we have only ourselves to blame."¹⁰

With the idea "that early and thorough consideration be given" to the issues of the demobilization and discharge of troops the Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation (CCDR) was established on 8 December 1939.¹¹ The committee was responsible for the procuring of information and reporting on the problems which could occur during demobilization. Chaired by Mackenzie, the CCDR did not enter into regular debate until August 1943.¹² In the meantime, demobilization planning was handled by a small but steadily growing network of bureaucrats and appointed experts associated with the Department of Pensions and National Health. The centre of this activity was the General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation (GAC), which was

⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, 26 March 1943.

¹⁰ "Veterans of the Present War," Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) 729.009(D1) "An Address to the Rotary Club, Montreal by Brig-Gen H.F. McDonald on Demobilization and Rehabilitation, 4 November 1941," 4.

¹¹ P.C. 4068½, 8 December 1939.

¹² Oliver, 65.

formed on 8 October 1940 and was chaired by McDonald.¹³ The GAC was granted the powers to examine in further detail the issues that the CCDR had been assigned in 1939.

Even though the government was off to a quick start in dealing with demobilization, the planning process initially lacked cohesion. McDonald called for the formation of a co-ordinating committee between the federal government and the armed forces.¹⁴ Not meant to deal with the creation of the machinery for the process, this additional committee was to make further policy recommendations to the GAC. McDonald stressed that ongoing co-operation between military and political officials could prevent the problems of 1918-19 from reoccurring. By allowing a forum for military officials to voice their views and still maintain civilian control over a uniform policy, it was argued by McDonald that the previous planning disagreements that occurred between Minister Sir Edward Kemp and General Sir Arthur Currie in November and December 1918 could be avoided. Besides fostering civil-military co-operation the GAC was considered a quick means of dispensing information to the soldiers.

The key idea that was initially emphasized by civilian bureaucrats was how the Canadian economy stood to profit from the early return of military personnel. Soldiers were considered crucial to the rejuvenation of the country's post-war industry, such as the auto industry which soon ceased civilian production. This interest came as a result of increasing public pressure from both labour unions and veterans' associations to avoid a flood of labour onto the Canadian job market as had been the case in 1918-19. Similar to a plan instituted by the British in 1918, the Canadian "pivot scheme" emphasized that a "retarded demobilization" would be "applied to unskilled, untrainable labour in areas

¹³ P.C. 5421, 8 October 1940.

¹⁴ McDonald to Mackenzie, 28 July 1941, NAC, Mackenzie Papers, MG 27 III B-5, Vol. 56, File 527-10(4) "Rehabilitation Committee, Feb-Sept 1940."

where demand [was] weak."¹⁵ After reviewing the hasty attempt to develop and implement a demobilization policy in November 1918, the political officials believed they had a solution for the Second World War. The GAC believed that if the groundwork was established early and effectively communicated to the troops, it would be possible to have the best of both worlds: a deliberately slow demobilization and a content army.

By August 1943, the consideration for the implementation of military demobilization grew as the fortunes of the Allies changed. They were defeating the U-boats in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean was reopened with the invasion of Italy, and the strategic bombing of Germany had reached a new plateau with the introduction of long-range fighters to escort bombers.¹⁶ Meanwhile in the Pacific, on the cliffs of Kahoolawe testing began of the highly successful Mark XIV torpedo, and Admiral Chester Nimitz demonstrated a freedom of manoeuvre with the Fifth Fleet that was unimaginable two years earlier. The month before in what was to be the largest tank battle of the war, the Soviets defeated the Germans on the Kursk salient.¹⁷ With these favourable changes continuing, planners felt that a reduction in the Canadian Home Defence Forces was feasible. Troops from disbanded units in Canada would then be steered towards the reinforcement stream or other home units. Their relocation was meant to facilitate the release of General Service personnel for service overseas, and allow non-essential men to return to civilian occupations. The Minister of Munitions and Supply, C.D. Howe, preferred this plan because of an existing labour shortage in Canada. For months, he had been pressuring Colonel J.L. Ralston, the Minister of National

¹⁵ Oliver, 90.

¹⁶ Chester Wilmot, The Struggle For Europe (New York: Collins, 1952), 243.

¹⁷ Robert M. Dienesch, "Submarine Against the Rising Sun" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1996), 127 and C.L. Sulzberger, World War Two (New York: American Heritage, 1985), 130.

Defence of the Army, for the early release. He believed that because of the labour scarcity there would be no difficulties in locating employment for these men. Ralston, who disapproved of the idea, begrudgingly agreed to the release of nonessential troops in August 1943. He considered the gesture a one-time offer. The minister felt that in the future the Army should not be called upon to alleviate short fallings in the civilian workplace.

This early demobilization of Canadian troops revealed problems that were to be encountered in the future. Although the number of men released to alleviate the labour shortage was relatively small (20,873),¹⁸ their discharge heavily taxed the return process by creating delays and a confusion in paperwork. In a system that to date had only dealt with a minimal number of troops, the release of twenty thousand caused officials to realize that the flow of discharges would only increase as Canadian personnel overseas became more involved in the war and returned due to injury. The process also revealed the existence of a slight rift in Canadian civil-military relations. Not opposed to the elimination of superfluous or redundant personnel, representatives such as Ralston did not care to do so at public request. The military and those associated with it believed they knew what the right course of action was and did not wish to be told otherwise by civilians.

Ralston supported a demobilization plan proposed by the British in 1943 which was based on a soldier's length of service. The British were hesitant to return to a policy that stressed economic release, because of the difficulties that it had caused in 1919. Their "chosen solution tended to subordinate economic requirements to those of the military or of public opinion."¹⁹ An immediate disadvantage was that a plan based on length of

¹⁸ Oliver, 94.

¹⁹ Rex Pope, "British Demobilization After the Second World War," Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 30 (1995), 67.

service did not translate equally to all categories of service personnel. For example, despite lengthy careers RAF technical specialists were required to remain in the service longer than their counterparts in the Army and Navy. The government informed them that it was because of their unique qualifications that they had to remain stationed abroad. As a result, the RAF in 1946 suffered a rash of strikes at bases in India, Ceylon, and the Middle East in response to the policy.²⁰ As simple as the plan appeared, it still had faults that had to be considered by Canadian planners.

C.D. Howe, in 1944 the new Minister of Reconstruction, argued that wartime Canadian industry could easily be converted to peacetime with minimal unemployment and disenchantment by Canadian soldiers. There had been a four-year build up in demand for civilian goods, which Howe felt represented a bonanza for Canadian industry.²¹ Therefore, in September 1944 the minister called upon Ralston to release more military personnel to meet current and future Canadian industrial needs. This time, in addition to the Prime Minister, Howe had the support of T.A. Crerar (Minister of Mines and Natural Resources) and J.L. Ilsley (Minister of Finance). All four felt that in order to ensure full and profitable employment for discharged servicemen the government had to continue with the expansion of the national industrial conversion, and the infusion of new labour.

In 1940 the GAC had studied the issue of subordination of demobilization priorities to the economic needs of the country. The committee had determined that a successful re-establishment of troops would depend on "general industrial conditions after the war." They concluded that a large reservoir of employment opportunities had to be in existence at the end of the hostilities.²² According to Howe, the only way new

²⁰ For more information on the RAF strikes of 1946 see: James Lawrence, Mutiny: In the British and Commonwealth Forces, 1917-1956 (London: Oxford Press, 1987).

²¹ Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, C.D. Howe: A Biography (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 181.

²² McDonald to Mackenzie, 23 April 1940, Mackenzie Papers, Vol. 56, File 527-2.

employment opportunities could be created was through the early release of non-essential troops. Demobilization planners found themselves in a no-win situation. The labour Canada needed was already in the country, but the government still had to maintain a promise that there would be jobs for troops overseas to return home to. Ralston was intent on holding Ottawa to its word. He argued that if servicemen overseas were released late they needed reassurance that employment would still exist. Ralston believed that promises of a quick and speedy return and post-war employment were pointless if the good jobs were taken by those who had spent the war safely in Canada.

The target of Ralston's criticism were the soldiers who fell under the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMAs) of June 1940. The NRMAs, or "zombies" as they were publicly referred to, were conscripts who were ridiculed by "patriotic," and usually conservative politicians and media organizations. The early release of these conscripts was opposed by Ralston for its apparent unfairness to troops overseas. Howe and King's advocacy of an early release reflected the best advice that was given to them at the time. Primarily civilian points of views, their opinions had been formed prior to the reinforcement crisis of October 1944, in which Canadians learned that the Army had underestimated its manpower requirements and hence experienced a shortage in infantry in north-west Europe.²³ At a time when Canadians could be found valiantly struggling in the Battle of the Scheldt, additional troops could have helped increase their success dramatically. It has been noted that the reinforcement crisis "demanded that as many soldiers as possible volunteer for overseas service, to promise employment opportunities, however temporary, to those serving in Canada was not clearly an effective recruiting

²³ The Canadian Army Overseas had accepted as a basis for planning the "rates of wastage" used by the British War Office, which had a much wider experience of operations than the Canadians. These rates, however, were based mainly on fighting in North Africa, and proved inapplicable to north-west Europe. C.P. Stacey, The Victory Campaign, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer 1960), 284-5, 385.

tool."²⁴ By this time any proposal for the release of NRMA's only further strengthened Ralston's argument that fairness towards the soldier was being sacrificed on the basis of political and economic expediency.

A compromise was reached in late 1944 which called for NRMA's to be released before volunteers, but only on a temporary basis. NRMA's were discharged at the government and military's leisure. When the "real heroes" returned, their jobs in the post-war economy would be waiting for them. Faced with tension from the public and the military, the cabinet was forced to choose a final policy that pleased everyone. On 19 April 1945, the policy of "first in, first out," was chosen in which release was awarded based on a point system. NRMA's who had been sent overseas to alleviate the reinforcement crisis were also to be treated in accordance to the length of time spent in the military. Ottawa had reached an agreement on basic demobilization priorities and established an extensive legal and bureaucratic infrastructure to handle the massive number of returning personnel. It was up to the Armed Forces, however, to see to its implementation.

The principle of "first in, first out" permitted a wide latitude for the military to follow, and it was they who were held responsible for the logistical problems that demobilization presented. By 1943 all three services had established their own demobilization directorates.²⁵ Inter-service co-operation between the Army, Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), however, was noticeably absent. Agreeing to disagree by the end of 1944 the three produced a reasonably coherent plan for demobilization for each of their services respectively.

The Army, who had the greatest influence on demobilization planning, began examining the issue in September 1940. At the request of the Department of Pensions and

²⁴ Oliver, 105.

²⁵ Oliver, 114.

National Health the Army Historical Section led by Colonel A.F. Duguid, was asked to prepare a report for the GAC. Duguid was a logical choice for advice on demobilization because as the Official Canadian Historian for the First World War he had recently completed research on the subject for future use in the Official History. The material he collected was used to write a monograph for the GAC's review. In it the Colonel argued that the First World War provided a significant basis to begin planning for demobilization in the Second.²⁶ Duguid recommended that questionnaires regarding the soldiers' plans for their future be circulated to them as had been done in 1918. The men would then be dispersed in accordance with their answers. It was a plan that tried to reconcile the inevitable demands of the economy, and the troops' desire for a quick return home. Duguid believed that this method highlighted the need for closer interaction between the civilian and military bodies handling post-war problems. The Co-ordinating Council for War Work and Civilian Services in Greater Vancouver agreed. Marjorie Bradford, the Council's Secretary, in a report submitted to the GAC wrote:

It is not deemed possible or expedient, for demobilization to be considered a purely military problem, and demobilization of necessity must, in the main, be based upon a pre-determined rehabilitation plan.²⁷

After thoroughly studying the disturbances of 1918-19 and considering public opinion Duguid concluded that demobilization for the Second World War had to be prearranged and done as quick as possible.

The plan Duguid put forth to the GAC emphasized the utilization of existing facilities in Canada. He viewed demobilization as the reverse of mobilization and it thus needed the same facilities and staff personnel in order to function. Beginning with troops

²⁶ Duguid to Deputy Adjutant General, 14 September 1940, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 2839, File HQC-8350-4, vol. 2.

²⁷ Oliver, 86.

already in Canada, his plan called for troops overseas to be released last. The problem with this in hindsight is obvious, but understandably Duguid cannot be faulted for failing to foresee the reinforcement crisis and the debates between Howe and Ralston about the early release of non-essential personnel. By studying the past, however, he did anticipate other problems. Since it was still early in the war, he cautioned against any hasty ideas for demobilization until all information regarding transportation and the rate troops could be reabsorbed into society was known.²⁸ At this time in 1940, Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London had established a liaison with the British War Office's Director of Demobilization. The information exchange kept the Canadians abreast of demobilization planning done by Britain, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and, eventually, the United States.²⁹ Other than this, the only information CMHQ had to work with was that prepared by Duguid.

The Army, however, was not the only service that contemplated its eventual demobilization. Both the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Canadian Navy had their own Directorates of Demobilization established by 1943. Yet despite individual planning efforts by the three, there was limited formal inter-service co-ordination before 1944. Each had been kept aware of the others' plans through their membership on the GAC, but only on 5 January 1944 was the Inter-Service Demobilization Committee (ISDC) formed. Consisting of two officers from each service, and a representative from the Department of Pensions and National Health, the committee's broad mandate was "to

²⁸ Duguid to Captain R. England, 30 September 1941, Mackenzie Papers, Vol. 89, File "Subcommittee Methods" Vol 1. 19/7/1941 - 12/1943.

²⁹ Oliver, 121.

thoroughly investigate all phases of demobilization."³⁰ Regardless of the unity the ISDC presented, a lack of co-ordination amongst the three services persisted.

Although agreeing that length of service would be the guiding principle for demobilization, the three services could not agree on how it was to be orchestrated. The debate raged between the use of a point system or one based on the priority needs of the services, hence a return by units. In the Army there were proponents for both ideas. Influenced by British and United States demobilization planning, a point system was considered. The British awarded a soldier one point for every year of age, and for every two months served. The Americans had a more elaborate process which awarded points based on age, length of service, marital status, number of dependants, the theatres of war served in as well as any awards won in battle.³¹ In their review the Army's committee for demobilization noted the advantages to a merit system. The process was fair in the sense that the factors being weighed not only reflected a soldier's service but their rights earned in the war when applied to everyone on an equal basis. Based on a point score the GAC and ISDC felt that a soldier would have a better understanding of where their place was in the repatriation schedule. The point system appeared to be the magic solution to all the problems of applying a fair method to demobilization.

Of course there were disadvantages to the plan. It would be difficult to apply if the army chose to address its needs first and adopt a return of entire units. A further fault with the point system was that the more complex the scoring became, the more difficult it was to effectively execute. The system meant that troops with low scores in Canada

³⁰ DHH, 114.1 (D69) "Demobilization Committee," "Brief Summary of Demobilization Planning to 15 March 1944," 5.

³¹ DHH, 114.1(D69), "Minutes of the Army Demobilization Committee," 5 September 1944. For more on the United States system for demobilization in the Second World War see: Jack Stokes Ballard, The Shock of Peace: Military and Economic Demobilization After World War II (Washington D.C.: American University Press, 1983) and R. Alton Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," Journal of American History (December 1966).

(NRMAs) would have to be retained long after the war's end. This unnecessary retention of low priority troops threatened to create low morale and upset the Canadian public who deplored such uselessness. Then there were the intangible factors, such as shipping delays, troop congestion in England, and the post-war industrial needs of the Canadian economy.³² Based on high scores accumulated by working relatively safe jobs during the war, the administrative personnel would be the first allowed to leave. In their place would be inexperienced personnel performing the essential services needed for the repatriation process. The point system threatened to contribute to an inevitable disintegration of entire units. In theory a scoring system was fair, but it ran the risk of allowing the personnel who were needed the most for demobilization to leave too soon.

As the discussion between the point system supporters and the advocates for units continued, a growing concern was shown for the individual soldier. The question was raised by the GAC whether it would be possible to have a return based entirely on units? Alleviating the complexity of a point system, this approach was dangerous nonetheless. Ralston, who "understood the soldiers' mind better than some of his generals,"³³ opposed such an idea. He recognized the hazards that an individual return posed, but he could not see what sense "carrying Maritimers to Ontario or to the West merely for the sake of a parade" had served in 1919.³⁴ By 1944 a compromise was reached. The Canadian Army Overseas would return based on a soldier's length of service, but to a greater extent, a return by units based on their length of service overseas was to be conducted. The problem with the agreement was determining when the individual point system gave way to unit repatriation. This was never made clear by either political or military officials, and would later return to haunt the Army.

³² DHH, 114.1(D69), 5 September 1944.

³³ Oliver, 178.

³⁴ Toronto Evening Telegram, 31 August 1944.

In addition to balancing the needs of both the economy and the military, the final demobilization policy that Ottawa agreed to in 1944 also had to take into consideration public opinion. The manner by which public opinion was reviewed and considered by both the government and the military helped to determine the policy's content. During the early war years the only means that the Canadian government had to gauge public opinion was through newspapers or correspondence with constituents. Thus in the initial years demobilization planning was secretive in the sense that only government and military officials were made aware of it. Public opinion was incorporated into the process with the introduction of the Gallup Poll in 1942. Even though older methods of measuring public attitudes continued, the Wartime Information Board began to rely heavily on the new 'scientific' polling method.³⁵ Ottawa had what it believed was a more accurate means of determining the public's impressions of its wartime and post-war policies.

Not until 1943, when Canada's participation in the war increased dramatically, did the Canadian public take a greater interest in the federal government's demobilization policy. Polls taken during this year revealed a growing concern by Canadians about the state of Canada's post-war economy and the country's expected employment rate.³⁶ Those on the homefront wanted some reassurance that the jobs they held were secure, while those overseas wanted a guarantee that there would still be work to return home to. With victory becoming increasingly imminent the political consequences of government inaction were obvious. The Liberals' wartime image of being conscience of the public's needs had the potential of being tarnished, and the prospects of their re-election slim if the

³⁵ Oliver, 188.

³⁶ In April 1943, 78% of Canadians expected to keep their current jobs after the war, by December 1943 this figure had dropped to 68% and by January 1944, 58% of Canadians surveyed anticipated serious post-war unemployment. Public Opinion Quarterly, 4 July (Summer 1943), 339, 1 August (Spring 1944), 158-9.

demobilization of the Canadian army did not address these post-war employment concerns of both the homefront and the soldiers.

As this concern grew, the Liberals created public support for their policies and the disarmament of their critics through the skilful manipulation of public information. In 1942, when the public interest in demobilization began to grow, Ian Mackenzie made sure that they were kept aware of the government's intent. In April of this year, the minister forwarded to several of the country's leading newspapers (The Globe and Mail, Montreal Star, Winnipeg Free Press, Halifax Herald, and Vancouver Sun) a copy of a statement he read before Parliament the previous month concerning demobilization and its intention to be as fair as possible. "The object of this statement [was] to make the whole story a matter of public record so that each individual measure may be assessed in relation to the whole programme."³⁷ Although at this time Mackenzie wanted the public to be informed, he did not necessarily solicit their advice. Nevertheless, the Department of Pensions and National Health received correspondence from agencies and organizations from across the country offering their services and suggestions.³⁸ Not all of this advice was solicited, but it did not prevent the minister and his department from keeping the Canadian public informed. As time passed the public relations war at home was slowly won by the federal government. Winning the 'hearts and minds' of the Canadian public was only half the battle. Ottawa still had to take into consideration the needs and opinions of the soldiers themselves.

³⁷ Mackenzie to John Bassett (President of Montreal Gazette), 1 April 1942, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 56, File 527-10(6) "Rehabilitation Committee, January-June 1942."

³⁸ For example: The Lumberman's Safety Organization of Ontario, offered suggestions on how soldiers' rehabilitation treatment could be handled in the same fashion as those of injured lumbermen. Memorandum: 7 April 1942, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 56, File 527-10(6).

The one lesson the First World War had taught government planners was the need to keep all participants in the process accurately informed. Through the use of the media keeping Canadians at home apprised of demobilization was not difficult. Access to the soldiers overseas, however, was not as easy. Walter Woods, an advisor to Mackenzie in 1942, proposed the introduction overseas of a series of lectures and radio programmes on post-war topics. The Army preferred that civilian agencies not interfere with the troops overseas during the course of the war, and that included the flow of information that the soldiers received about demobilization. Keeping in tune with the idea of winning the war, Ralston and the Army specifically did not want personnel becoming "demobilization-minded" before it was over.³⁹ They felt that when the war was done army education and rehabilitation officers in co-operation with civilian agencies could deal with the troops. By 1943, these officers were being added to all the military districts in Canada for the purpose of teaching courses about awareness towards post-war life.⁴⁰ It should be noted, however, that Ralston and the Army did not oppose the idea of soldiers who were discharged early receiving access to such information. The government simply wanted to stress to its soldiers that it would not abandon them when the war was over. Therefore, they were to be informed of all options once the fighting was finally over.

Most experts anticipated that the war would end in Europe before it did in the Pacific. With Britain and France no longer retaining the same global status they had before 1939, other allies such as the United States were forced to increase their role in post-war affairs.⁴¹ From a military perspective it was believed that once the war in Europe was completed the British along with the Soviets and the Americans would be

³⁹ RG 24, Vol. 13329, "Directorate of Public Relations (Army) May 1943."

⁴⁰ RG 24, Vol. 13329.

⁴¹ Jack Stokes Ballard, "Demobilization and Its Impact, 1944-47," Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1965, 112.

responsible for the occupation of the Balkans and Germany. This created a need to find troops to fight in the Pacific. Both Britain and the United States looked to Canada for help to solve the problem. Increased Canadian involvement in the Pacific theatre in 1945 did not destroy the demobilization planning that had already been done, but it did force a restructuring of it in the last few months before it was put into effect.

By 1944, the Canadian public, politicians, and those who were serving overseas had grown tired of the war. In everyone's mind, the war for Canada was over when the fighting in Europe was finished. Therefore, with a demobilization plan already established and a public wishing a return to normal life, why would Ottawa choose to become involved in the Pacific war? In 1941, Mackenzie King had accepted the fact that Canada lacked the ability to influence the grand strategy in this theatre, but that it still had a role to play. As a founding member of the new United Nations, Canada was committed by strong moral and political convictions to participate. Yet despite these beliefs that involvement was inevitable, Mackenzie King's cabinet was hesitant to specify during the final two years of the war what the Canadian contribution to the Pacific would be.

Fearing that political opponents would deem participation "a tool of British Imperialism," Mackenzie King desired to limit Canadian operations to the United States theatre in the North Pacific. Out of fear that a closer association with Britain ran the risk of being embroiled in future "Imperial Wars," the Prime Minister was determined to have Canada follow an American policy.⁴² The policy for the Pacific was also seen as a threat to the impending 1945 federal election. At the Quebec Conference (1944) Mackenzie King remarked to British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, "I am sure that any yielding on the South Pacific would be fatal politically and would help to hand the government to

⁴² W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, Out of the Shadows: Canada In the Second World War (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), 227.

the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation)."⁴³ Mackenzie King believed that Canadian involvement in the Pacific would sound the death knell for the Liberals in Ottawa. Therefore, "token forces" and nothing more was his formula for the Canadian effort in the region.

While the Navy and Air Force suffered from illusions of grandeur, the Army supported the Prime Minister's position of limited intervention in the Pacific. Putting forth an offer of one division with limited infantry units, the Army's plan reflected the lack of enthusiasm towards further participation in the war amongst all its ranks. The Army was hesitant to volunteer for Pacific duty for the lack of jungle warfare training that would have been needed for Burma or the Central Pacific.⁴⁴ Plans offered by the RCN and the RCAF called for elaborate co-operation with the Royal Navy and RAF. Both ideas were opposed by Mackenzie King and the cabinet, who slashed the proposals in half. They knew that even though naval and air force participation could serve as a political "face saving" tactic, it was troops on the ground that nations were gauged by with regards to their contribution to the war effort.⁴⁵

Therefore, in April 1945, as Canadian troops in Europe prepared for the final thrust into Germany, Mackenzie King gave his support to the Pacific policy drafted by his new Minister of Defence General A.G. McNaughton. The Prime Minister later wrote:

⁴³ Stacey, Arms Men and Government, 60.

⁴⁴ DHH, File 193.009 (D32), "Appreciation of Canadian Participation in the Pacific Theatre of War," 24 Apr. 1944. From Galen Roger Parras, "Once Bitten, Twice Shy: The Origins of the Canadian Army Pacific Force, 1944-1945," Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945, ed. Greg Donaghy (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1996), 84.

⁴⁵ Capt. M.B. Huffman, "The Repatriation of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas 1945-47," 4 July 1947, RG 24, Vol. 6920, File "Report No. 177, Historical Section, Canadian Military Headquarters," 9.

When I began to read it, it was again as though an Unseen Hand had placed it before me just at the moment that it was the most opportune to have it. It really set out the whole background as I felt it should be set out. Instead of narrowing the picture to the Japanese war, it read naturally out of the present situation in Europe into the possible activities of the future.⁴⁶

The plan recommended that Canada send only one division of 30,000 troops to the Pacific. The force was to consist only of volunteers and as an incentive all who joined would receive thirty days leave in Canada before going to the Pacific. Even though to Mackenzie King this plan appeared to have divine inspiration, it was not perfect.

In fact, Canadians were already fighting in the Pacific. On 9 August 1945, Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray led a flight of Corsair fighter-bombers from HMS Formidable against a number of Japanese ships located at Onagawa Wan on the northern island of Honshu. Suffering two serious hits during his direct approach against a Japanese destroyer, Gray was still able to release his bomb load destroying the ship before his riddled plane crashed. Three months later the Lieutenant was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. Incidents such as this revealed a significant flaw in the Canadian Pacific policy. "No one had asked the former medical student whether or not he wanted to serve [in the Pacific]."⁴⁷ Those already stationed in the Pacific when the policy was announced were initially ignored, but eventually forced acknowledgement. In July 1945, HMCS Uganda was already in the Pacific and two others were en route. The volunteer criteria put forth by Ottawa were eventually offered to those onboard Uganda, and therefore they had the right as a crew to decide if they would continue fighting. The Uganda thus has the distinction of being "the only ship in recorded naval history whose own company actually

⁴⁶ John Swettenham, McNaughton: Volume 3, 1944-1966, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), 87.

⁴⁷ Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Victory 1945: Canadians From War To Peace (Toronto: Lester & Orpen, 1995), 141.

voted her out of war."⁴⁸ At the time their decision to stop fighting was frowned upon by the Allies, but the context in which it was made must be considered. The ship had been away from home for nearly nine months, and most of its crew had not had shore leave since March. The men of the Uganda, like other Canadian servicemen at this time, when given the opportunity, did not hesitate to put the war behind them.

Besides the Pacific, McNaughton had earlier consented to the appropriation of an infantry formation consisting of 25,000 men for European Occupation duty, the Canadian Army Occupation Force in Europe (CAOF), to serve in the British zone in Germany. The CAOF was seen by the Canadian government as a result of logistical and political necessity. In anticipation of impending shipping shortages, it was felt that occupation duty would provide the soldiers with something useful to do as they waited to return home. Rather than have them sit idle, the CAOF was considered to be a part in the larger process of the changing Canada from a wartime to a peacetime economy. For the Liberals the timing was impeccable because in surveys three-quarters of Canadians favoured post-war participation in maintaining world peace through military force.⁴⁹ While satisfying the mechanics of demobilization, the CAOF in early 1945 was considered part of Canada's means of fulfilling its post-war international responsibilities.

In June 1945, there were several more immediate factors that the Army had to consider before it allowed demobilization to begin. First was the manpower drain the army experienced because of the need to despatch volunteers to the Pacific. Second, was the subsequent drain that was to follow the repatriation of long service personnel, and the

⁴⁸ Tony German, The Sea Is At Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 201.

⁴⁹ NAC, King Papers, MG 26 J4, Vol. 46, File "Wartime Information Board Survey No. 23, 6 November 1943." From Angelika Sauer, "'So Untimely a Retreat:' The Decision to Withdraw the Canadian Occupation Force From Germany," Uncertain Horizons, ed. Greg Donaghy (Ottawa 1996), 38.

despatch of soldiers for the Canadian Army Occupation Force in Europe. The European force was expected in Germany by 30 June.⁵⁰ This was all in addition to the release of British and Allied units that were under Canadian command at the conclusion of the war.

Factors beyond the scope of Europe and the Army also had to be considered for demobilization. For many Canadians the end of the war meant celebration across the country. VE day in Canadian history, however, has also conjured the images of the riots by naval personnel in Halifax. Even though the Halifax disorders were not the result of naval demobilization, they served as a cautionary reminder for Army officials. Two days of rioting (8-9 May 1945) witnessed the city's downtown core looted and every drop of alcohol that could be located drunk or seized.⁵¹ One of the more notable targets for the rioters was the historic Keith's brewery at Salter and Water Streets. As a means of controlling the violence the owner, Colonel William Oland, and his employees distributed free cases of beer to the crowd. At the brewery the size of the mob that formed "around there a drunk didn't have room to fall down."⁵² The incident has been attributed to pent-up frustration and resentment that had grown between sailors and the city. Before the war, Halifax had a population of 65,000, yet by 1945 it had swelled to 120,000 because of the increase in servicemen.⁵³ This population boom created a housing shortage in a city that had few living or recreational accommodations. The Halifax association of the YMCA did the best it could to meet the needs of the servicemen who crowded into their buildings, "but it was an impossible task." In May 1945, the "Y" found

⁵⁰ RG 24, Vol. 12,833, File 390-30A, "Army Plan for Disbandment of Canadian Army."

⁵¹ For specific details on the exact amount of damage done during the riots see Justice R.L. Kellock, Report on the Halifax Disorders, May 7th-8th, 1945, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1945), 61.

⁵² Graham Metson, An East Coast Port: Halifax At War, 1939-1945 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1981), 139.

⁵³ Metson, An East Coast Port, 134.

all of their accommodations full with servicemen living in social and committee rooms, auditoriums and gymnasiums.⁵⁴ Still the Navy has been criticized for allowing the gangway to remain open, when officials knew that there was little for the sailors to do on VE Day. Later defenders of the RCN have stressed the civilian participation in the riot.⁵⁵ The incident emphasized the importance of considering the needs of troops at all stages of demobilization. As the celebrations in Europe died down and Canadian troops began the wait to go home, they would have to be kept both entertained and informed about their demobilization status.

Shortly after VE Day the Army issued a twelve page pamphlet titled After Victory In Europe (May 1945) which outlined the demobilization plans. In the brochure General H.D.G. Crerar stressed how it had taken Canada over three years to build the army. He did not anticipate it taking long to disassemble, but he did not consider it any less difficult a task. Reflecting on his own experience with demobilization in 1918-19, the general was reminded of how at an end of a war a soldier begins to think more and more about his own future and less about their company or formation.⁵⁶ Although sympathetic to the desire

⁵⁴ Alan M. Hurst, The Canadian YMCA in World War II (Toronto, np., nd.), 131.

⁵⁵ The Royal Commission conducted immediately after the disturbance deemed Admiral Leonard Murray responsible for the Navy's failure to have adequate security measures in place on VE Day. This led to the dismissal of the Admiral who had an exemplary war record. In 1977, his biographer was upset that the Directorate of History could not grant him access to the RCN Inquiry that was conducted at the same time as the Royal Commission. James M. Cameron, Murray: The Martyred Admiral (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1980), 104-125. Again in 1980, Cameron had his MP inquire and again access to the information was denied. DHH, File 80/557. For an additional pro-navy view of this incident see: Stanly R. Redman, Open Gangway: The (Real) Story of the Halifax Riot (Halifax, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1983).

⁵⁶ After Victory In Europe: An Explanation of the Plan for the Reallocation Repatriation and Demobilization of the Canadian Army Overseas, Mackenzie Papers, Vol. 45, File G-156 A: "Demobilization Priorities, June-August 1945," 2-3.

for "first in, first out" Crerar believed that the needs of the Army had to be addressed before those of the individual soldier.

Following its release, demand for After Victory In Europe grew. Additional shipments of the pamphlet, available both in English and French, were flown into Europe by bomber.⁵⁷ The pamphlet was the soldiers' first opportunity to know exactly the Army's plans for the immediate future. The stipulations for volunteering for the occupation forces were explained. The Army acknowledged that with the war in Europe over, there was a surplus of personnel. The basic procedure for the repatriation of this excess was drafts of individuals with the highest point scores⁵⁸ for service, and later by units in order of priority of embarkation overseas. According to After Victory In Europe, all measures were to be applied equally to the women in the Army. The only difference in the policy with regards to women was if they had a husband in the armed forces who was discharged prior to them.⁵⁹ Even though a promise that those with the "highest priority" would be released first, the army was greatly concerned with maintaining efficiency and organization during the waning days of the war. Thus officers and men were warned to prepare for the possibility of remaining longer if their services were still required. Like any piece of wartime literature, After Victory In Europe, while attempting to clarify the policy, also played upon patriotic emotions. Canadian soldiers were reminded of how Germany had been able to escape the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles (1920), and of the Hong Kong tragedy (1941): "no world settlements will be safe or certain until the third axis

⁵⁷ RG 24, Vol. 12,835, File 391-21 "Re: After Victory In Europe."

⁵⁸ 31 March 1945 had been chosen as the cutoff date for point scores. A soldier was awarded two points for every month served in Canada, three for every month overseas or if a portion of the month was spent overseas. For those who were married, widowers or divorcees with dependents twenty percent was added to the score. Any time spent on compassionate leave was not considered in the final score. After Victory In Europe, 8.

⁵⁹ After Victory In Europe, 11.

power, Japan is thrashed and beaten beyond the possibility of revival."⁶⁰ The underlying theme of the pamphlet was that the fighting was not over: "And this time we must win the peace as well as the war."⁶¹

The collapse of Nazi Germany in May 1945 saw Canada prepared for a full-scale military demobilization. Even though some aspects were still incomplete, pending final decisions regarding the Pacific and the Army of Occupation, demobilization in Canada itself had started. Troops had begun to return from Newfoundland, and the British Commonwealth Air Training Program was dismantled.⁶² The administrative staff in Europe that dealt with demobilization was increased. Troops who did not have enough points to return home were reposted to operational units in order to make room for those being repatriated. The reinforcement and training establishments that had been operating in Britain since 1939 had begun to reverse its duties. Unfortunately despite nearly five years of planning Canadian demobilization hinged on the availability of transportation at the war's end. Shipping "was one physical limitation on repatriation which could scuttle all plans and the one which Canadian authorities had the least direct control of."⁶³

The issue of securing needed shipping vessels for demobilization was as crucial as determining who would return home first. It was not simply a matter of transporting a company, a regiment or a division; demobilization meant the transporting of nearly 300,000 military personnel across the Atlantic. This was a problem that could not be solved by the Canadian government alone. At the same time that Canadians were ready to

⁶⁰ After Victory In Europe, 4.

⁶¹ After Victory In Europe, 12.

⁶² Stacey, Six Years of War, 186 and F.J. Hatch, Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan 1939-1945 (Ottawa: Directorate of History & Heritage, Dept. of National Defence, 1983), 188-9, 192.

⁶³ Oliver, 251.

return home, there were over one million American soldiers anxiously waiting as well. The British had almost as many troops scattered around the globe, and like the Americans, they had to formulate plans for the redeployment in the war against Japan.⁶⁴ The need to secure shipping for Canadian demobilization demonstrated a lack of co-operation that existed amongst the Allies at the end of the war.

In the Second World War all Allied shipping was controlled by the Allied Shipping Pool. A system that worked effectively during the war, the pool nonetheless greatly reduced Ottawa's control over the return of Canadian military personnel. Despite having one of the largest merchant fleets that numbered four hundred ships equalling 3.8 million gross tons,⁶⁵ Canada like all other allies had to bid for tonnage. Ottawa believed that demobilization should have reflected one reality of the war, that Canadian forces had been in Europe longer than American forces. On 30 March 1945, the British War Office notified CMHQ that shipping would be allotted for only 50,000 Canadian personnel for the first six months after VE Day. NDHQ in turn pressed for further shipping to accommodate 150,000 troops.⁶⁶

Ottawa was not prepared to have London dictate how much shipping Canada would receive. When the British were slow to respond to the Canadian counter offer, the Canadian High Commissioner to London, Vincent Massey, pressured them further. He placed an ultimatum before London: The Canadian Department of Munitions and Supply was prepared to recall thirty cargo ships of Canadian ownership, and convert them to carry between 500-700 men each. Such a measure would have meant a reduction of 750,000 tons of available shipping for the next year, and stalled the construction of new

⁶⁴ Huffman, "The Repatriation of the Canadian Military Force," 35.

⁶⁵ Robert G. Halford, *The Unknown Navy: Canada's World War II Merchant Navy* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Pub., 1995), 23.

⁶⁶ Huffman, 36.

ships in Canada.⁶⁷ The Cabinet War Committee was aware of the impracticality of this conversion, but they sought to press their threat anyway. In response, the British shipping offer was increased to 132,000 for the six month period, and the Canadians were told to expect no more.

The Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation (CCDR), however, could not overlook reports that the Americans received almost three times as much shipping for the same time period. They could not ignore the reports because the same information was making its way to the troops overseas. In correspondence with Churchill, Mackenzie King reiterated the threat of withdrawing the thirty cargo ships. Acknowledging the fact that shipping commitments for the long term were difficult to make, the Canadian Prime Minister felt that an immediate allotment of 150,000 for the next six months, with some indication of a further allotment, could go a long way to alleviating the situation.⁶⁸ For King it was not only important that the ships became available, but that the Liberals could take credit for having obtained them. The collapse of Japan in August 1945 eased the situation by freeing more shipping than had been originally anticipated.

During this time soldiers were kept regularly informed about the demobilization situation in order to convince them that they were being treated fairly. Previously, in 1942, the government had begun to receive surveys from NDHQ and letters culled by military censors. What both of these revealed was that a growing distrust existed amongst Canadian soldiers towards King, because of his failure to order conscription. Canadian soldiers overseas were increasingly believing that the federal government would renege on any post-war promises it made. By May 1943, of nine hundred soldiers surveyed, twenty-one percent believed they would be better off after the war, while over thirty

⁶⁷ Huffman, 39.

⁶⁸ Huffman, 41.

percent foresaw difficult times ahead.⁶⁹ The Demobilization and Rehabilitation Information Committee (DRIC) took measures early in the war to bolster the discipline of the soldiers, and to divert their attentions from daily military life . As the war drew to a close the committee's role increased. All indications by late December 1944 suggested that the message was reaching its intended audience. The conduct of an effective public relations campaign regarding demobilization was critical for the policy to succeed.

The DRIC's responsibility was similar to that of the work done by the Wartime Information Board. Whether it was in the form of books, pamphlets, news releases, short films or posters, both were primarily concerned with getting information to the Canadian soldier. The DRIC was particularly concerned with stopping rumours that suggested the government was not going to assist soldiers. The committee always sought new mediums or channels to spread their positive message to the troops. At the end of the war in Europe it was more important than ever that this favourable news reach its target audience. At this point the DRIC was aware of the limited amount of shipping that had been allotted to Canada. The fear was now that, because of Ottawa's earlier promises of a quick return, both the public and more importantly the soldiers would be too hopeful about a quick return home. It became the DRIC's responsibility to present the reality of the situation. Hence in mid-May plans were made to "help offset the effect of over-optimistic reports which [had] been received from overseas," through more cautious news releases.⁷⁰ At this time the three services called upon the DRIC to keep this steady stream of positive as well as cautionary information flowing to the troops overseas at the end of the war. A survey of seven thousand soldiers overseas showed that fifty-two percent

⁶⁹ DHH, 113.3 R4003, V. 1 (D1), Survey, May 1943.

⁷⁰ Memorandum: 24 May 1945, NAC, Privy Council Office, RG 2, Series 18, Vol. 99, File R-70-10, Vol 2, "Rehabilitation & Demobilization Committee: Information Committee Minutes (1945)."

of those interviewed "had enough" rehabilitation information for their immediate needs and only thirty-two percent sought more.⁷¹ With an increased enrollment in professional programs such as the Army Agricultural School at Dordrecht, Netherlands the Canadian soldier in the Second World War was interested in what laid ahead after the battles were won. As they looked ahead towards the future what was most important was the present and the Army kept them busy enough to maintain this positive attitude.

When the European war concluded in May 1945, the bulk of the Canadian Army was in the Netherlands. A country that spent five years under German occupation, Holland in 1945 was weak, poor and demoralized. Yet it still played host to nearly 170,000 Canadian soldiers who were funnelled through the country as part of an occupation force on its way home. The Canadians had spent that spring slogging across the flooded Dutch countryside in pursuit of fleeing German forces. Now with the war over and the wait to return home begun, the Canadians simply "wanted some diversion and who could blame them?"⁷²

The GAC had concluded early that the key to effective demobilization was maintaining high morale amongst the troops. The longer they remained stagnant after the cease in hostilities the more important it was to keep their spirits up. At first this was not an immediate problem in the Netherlands, where the Canadians found themselves idolized by the entire nation. Unlike the situation in other allied occupied countries, in the Netherlands fraternization was officially encouraged. Soon enough the Canadians learned

⁷¹ Dean Oliver, "Awaiting Return: Life in the Canadian Army's Overseas Repatriation Depots, 1945-46," 41 in The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada, Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein (Editors), (Montreal-Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

⁷² Michiel Horn, "More Than Cigarettes, Sex and Chocolate: The Canadian Army In the Netherlands, 1944-1945," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 16, No. 3&4 (Autumn-Winter 1981), 158.

to appreciate the meaning of **gezelligheid** (a word that encompasses, coziness and companionableness).⁷³ A long way from home, the soldiers of the Canadian Army were prepared to participate in the daily lives of their hosts.

The city of Nijmegen located near the German border in south-eastern Holland was significant for the Canadian's both during and after the war. The events surrounding General Montgomery's operation "Market Garden," which were later popularized in Cornelius Ryan's book A Bridge Too Far, have come to explain the military significance of the Dutch city. Yet besides serving as the base of operations for all Canadian forces during the remainder of the war, Nijmegen served as the central location for all Canadian troops demobilized in north-west Europe. Today Nijmegen resembles many North American "university towns" and still retains much of the Dutch charm and hospitality that the Canadians would have experienced during their stay there and throughout the Netherlands in 1945-46.

Yet problems were quick to arise in a place where a package of **Players** was more valuable than the guilder. Incidents of Canadian officers looting Dutch artwork were soon followed by complaints about delays in the repatriation process. Soldiers who had families in Canada believed that in the Netherlands they were just "marking time." Of the 170,000 who passed through the country, only 16,000 had left by June and 59,000 by the end of August 1945.⁷⁴ As time dragged on the desertion rate of soldiers in the Netherlands increased.⁷⁵ In Utrecht, in September 1945, a brawl between two hundred disgruntled servicemen and Dutchmen erupted. Facilities were overtaxed by Canadian soldiers and the Dutch wanted them back. Slowly the Canadians had worn out their welcome. Before

⁷³ Horn, "More Than Cigarettes," 162.

⁷⁴ Horn, 164.

⁷⁵ Meeting at HQCFN, 2 September 1945, RG 24, Vol. 10,605, File 215C1.(D702) "Repatriation-Demobilization-Reallocation (May-October 1945)."

the war the Netherlands was a conservative society, and the Dutch now were not prepared to pay for their freedom with the honour of their women, with whom the Canadians fraternized.

The Canadian Army was forced to place their presence in Holland in a more positive light. To counter disturbances such as the one at Utrecht the Dutch media was supplied with regular press releases. These notices emphasized the positive aspects of the Canadian presence, such as the supplying of a police force, engineers to repair the damaged dykes and bridges, and the resumption of a public transit system.⁷⁶ The Army was aware of the impact that it was having on Dutch society and knew that the length of their stay was limited. By autumn, the repatriation, thanks in part to the shipping freed from the end to the war with Japan, increased dramatically. At the end of November 1945, 70,000 troops remained and by 31 December only 10,000 with 2,000 staying through until the spring of 1946.⁷⁷

What the Netherlands experience helped demonstrate was the importance of keeping the troops occupied while they waited their return home. The military had to fill that void. For weeks immediately after the armistice Canadian troops were kept busy with the disarming and marshalling of surrendered Germans, feeding Dutch civilians and maintaining public order in the occupied zones. Eventually this became routine and mundane, and boredom threatened to settle in. The military was thus forced to develop ways of keeping the troops entertained and content during the demobilization process.

Many of the methods the military relied on to keep the soldiers occupied were borrowed from the First World War. As in 1918-19, sporting competitions were

⁷⁶ For further information on Canadian military activities in post-war Holland see: Chris Maden, "Canada, Britain and the Surrender of the Kriegsmarine," *Uncertain Horizons*, ed. Greg Donaghy (Ottawa, 1996).

⁷⁷ Home, 170.

orchestrated between Canadian units, and movies theatres were established both on the continent and in Canadian camps in Britain. Live performances by acts such as The Canadian Army Show and Meet the Navy were performed for the soldiers' benefit. Small and easily transportable, what set these shows apart from others the Allies presented was that not only were they for the soldiers, but they were performed by service men such as Wayne and Shuster.⁷⁸ Along with educational tours of Europe that soldiers could take while on leave, the army's distractions helped to relieve boredom in the short term.

The demobilization experience in the Second World War also demonstrates that both soldiers and planners remained concerned about the future. The desire to prepare military personnel for civilian life prior to their release had assumed a greater significance as the war progressed. During the fighting, education and social services for soldiers were never lacking. The Khaki University of Canada (KUC) was revived in August 1945. Meant to educate the soldier for post-war life, the KUC was also an additional means of preventing the soldier from becoming restless. For the Second World War the school was expanded to include a junior college that taught basic high school courses as well as first and second year university. In order to correct a flaw of the First World War, no student was admitted to the KUC unless there was reason to believe that they would be able to finish the proposed courses before being repatriated. Unlike 1918-19 when the YMCA financed the institution, in 1945 the soldiers themselves had to pay as a means to ensure attendance.⁷⁹ CMHQ refused to establish the school on the continent, because the First Canadian Army's education officers believed it did not offer enough variety in its curriculum to be useful there. The program was only offered in Britain when soldiers had

⁷⁸ Ted Barris and Alex Barris, Days of Victory: Canadians Remember, 1939-1945 (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1995), 142.

⁷⁹ RG 24, Vol. 12,835, File 391-16 "Estimates Khaki Student Movements."

begun demobilization and was accelerated in order to maintain the same schedule as their repatriation.

In total the five Canadian divisions were home in just under ten months, but before this was possible they had to spend additional time in more familiar surroundings. Canadians with familiar unit and divisional patches were seen in pubs, restaurants and stores as they wound their way home through England. At one time or another nearly every Canadian in the army stationed overseas passed through the sleepy little English town of Aldershot. The town housed four Canadian Repatriation Depots and served as the focal point for the Canadian demobilization process in Britain. As one army Report described it, Aldershot was "An 'army town,' if ever there was one, of huge, old, cold, dilapidated, broken down and condemned barracks with large parade squares."⁸⁰ Aldershot citizens were outraged by Canadian demonstrations there in the summer of 1945. On 5-6 July, Canadian troops who were upset about the delays that they were experiencing in their repatriation, rioted in the English town. Combined with a rumour that three Canadian soldiers were under arrest in the local jail, the Aldershot riot, which left nearly eight hundred shop windows broken, caused damages valued at \$41,451.⁸¹ The rioters successfully brought attention to their problem of their slow return home to Canada, but not in the fashion that they had probably hoped for. Within twenty-four hours of the first day of rioting, 3,000 troops were ushered out of the town. The remaining soldiers were spread out amongst other depots to continue their wait to go home, and for a short duration Aldershot was effectively closed.⁸² After the second day of rioting the Canadian Army newspaper the Maple Leaf wrote:

⁸⁰ Huffman, 32.

⁸¹ Stacey, Six Years of War, 433.

⁸² Memorandum: 5 July 1945, NAC, Crerar Papers, MG 30, E 157, Vol. 4, File 5-4 "Discipline."

The hoodlums who tossed the good name of Canada to the dogs - a reputation won by the blood of thousands of men to speak of nothing else - have richly earned the ingratitude of the bulk of the Canadian Army Overseas.⁸³

The riot did not receive the same public sympathy that was associated with those by the CEF in 1919. Although brief references to the Kinmel Park disturbance (March 1919) were made in editorials reviews, no in-depth attempt appears to have been made at the time to draw a comparison between the two. In the end those punished for rioting received sentences ranging from sixteen months to seven years imprisonment. This event was inexcusable, because it happened so soon after the end of the war and just when the movement of troops was beginning to increase.

Repatriation Depots such as Aldershot could have handled a greater number of troops than they did. In Britain there were a total of eleven Canadian Repatriation Depots⁸⁴ which were simply the same camps that had been used for housing and training purposes during the war. The number of troops returning home at the start of demobilization was not high, because shipping remained the determining factor. The general principle for administrators of these depots was not to keep the troops "hanging about" too long. They were to hold them for the minimum time needed to complete the necessary paperwork and then send them on leave. Although the system unavoidably caused a soldier to do too much in too little time or nothing in a whole lot of time, the military believed it was the best they could do for the men.

The Aldershot riots, however, served as the incentive for a change in the Army's demobilization process. Even though he appeared to approve of the government's plan,

⁸³ *Maple Leaf*, 8 July 1945, 2.

⁸⁴ The depots were located at Thursley-Bramshott, Witley, Blackdown, Cove, Fainborough, Haslemere, Leatherhead, Forest-Row and the three in Aldershot. Huffman, 31.

General Crerar preferred the return of troops as part of territorial units. This preferred method of return went against what he had previously supported publicly. In After Victory In Europe, Crerar had affixed his name to a policy that emphasized individual repatriation, then a shift to a return by units. The problem was that no defined moment was specified when this transformation in the process was to occur. Always having the best interests of the army in mind, the General made use of this loophole to work at "cross purposes" with Ottawa.⁸⁵

The problem Crerar posed was that his plan contradicted Ottawa's previous promise of a return according to length of service. The public had demanded it and the soldiers had come to expect it. To change this system midway was dangerous, yet the General failed to see the severity of the situation. He pressed for territorial demobilization and his justification was that individual rights could not be permitted to detract from sound military judgement.

He stressed that unless the fullest practicable advantage of this cohesive influence is taken, the reallocation process will show all the bad features which arise when 'individual rights' take the place of 'collective values.' He felt that the straight 'points system' suggested definitely eliminates 'collective values' such as a unit esprit de corps and encourages each man to measure his 'rights' and his 'wrongs' against every other man.⁸⁶

By July 1945 Crerar believed that the policy of "first in, first out" had been stretched to its feasible limit. Facing shortages of qualified personnel, he believed the system could not continue and still allow for the Army to function effectively. Ottawa, on the other hand, was simply anxious to have the process continue uninterrupted. Therefore, the changes that the General ordered calling for a return of units based on territorial affiliations were

⁸⁵ Oliver, 270.

⁸⁶ Memorandum: 27 February 1945, RG 24, Vol. 2841, File HQS-8350-36 (vol.2).

not challenged. NDHQ and CMHQ's refusal to voice opposition to Crerar's actions added a sense of approval to the change in the policy.

The General, however, did not try to force the new scheme onto the army in areas where it was not practicable to do so. When informed that not all units could be demobilized according to territorial affiliation because they had none, he obliged by having them disbanded overseas according to the soldiers' length of service. Therefore, Crerar did recognize the need for long service personnel to be sent home, but he was willing to allow only an initial two month window of opportunity between May and June 1945 to do so. The problem with Crerar was that he chose to ignore that Ottawa's promise of "first in, first out" was an article of faith with both the public and the troops. His changes not only contradicted the policy, but the spirit of it. Regardless of his interference, demobilization continued. In the end, of the over 300,000 troops returned from Europe, only 29,381 did so according to the General's method.⁸⁷

The responsibility of computing point scores and the movement of drafts home to Canada was that of the Overseas Record Office. Previously in 1944, the Army Demobilization Committee had proposed that all soldiers' paperwork for discharge be handled overseas.⁸⁸ Therefore, finding the time and the personnel to do this and the necessary auxiliary programmes was often difficult. Even though for months the end to the war had been foreseen, it still arrived too quickly in May 1945 to have all the final scores tallied. The Record Office had fallen behind, because of need to have the scores as accurate as possible and still ensure that necessary personnel were not released. "Key" personnel were considered to be clerks, cooks, butchers, storemen, shoemakers or any category of soldier that was deemed vital to the maintenance of administration and morale

⁸⁷ Huffman, 27.

⁸⁸ Memorandum: 27 October 1944, DHH, 114.1 "Army Demobilization Committee Minutes."

in units.⁸⁹ In order to fill each succeeding draft the qualifying point score was reduced, but restrictions were placed on the "key" personnel due to their scarcity. This required a vast amount of detailed planning and further cross-postings in order to keep existing units stable. Despite this attempt to keep all things running smoothly, problems still arose.

In the late summer of 1945, reports circulated that soldiers with higher point scores were being overlooked in the draft selection process. Complaints about soldiers manipulating the point system increased. For example, a radio operator who had only spent two years in Britain lacked the necessary points, but had the opportunity to attend a Canadian university. Within two weeks of having his high school transcripts wired overseas he was on his way home, because he met first-year university requirements.⁹⁰ It was exceptions to the rules such as this that helped fuel rumours amongst the troops that the point system, despite its apparent fairness, was being abused.

The chief instigator of these tales and the main outlet for the soldiers to vent their frustrations was the Canadian Army newspaper the Maple Leaf. The newspaper editor Major J. Douglas MacFarlane crusaded on behalf of the soldiers who he felt were unjustly treated in the demobilization process. In August 1945 MacFarlane, in reference to the First Division wrote, "The First is truly the veteran division - the first to come overseas, the first to see battle action and rightly the first to head for Halifax."⁹¹ This editorial was only the first salvo in a battle between the newspaper and the brass over demobilization.

MacFarlane would not allow the point score issue rest. In September he had reporters investigate the transfer of troops from Nijmegen to the No. 8 Repatriation Depot in Britain. Their investigation of the Saskatoon Light Infantry (First Division) found that

⁸⁹ Huffman, 19.

⁹⁰ Barry Broadfoot, Six Years of War, 1939-45: Memories of Canadians at Home and Abroad (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1974), 396.

⁹¹ Maple Leaf, 28 August 1945, 2.

30.1% of it consisted of NRMA's.⁹² What the newspaper wanted to know was how such soldiers found their way into First Division units?

Some of the men in them, who have just come overseas, who have never fired a round anywhere but on the ranges are steered into a First Canadian Infantry Division unit draft for HOME!⁹³

In response to the claim that the army was doing this in order to fill unit drafts the newspaper asked, "has the need ever been that great?" Surprisingly, the answer was yes. On 17 June 1945, General Crerar informed NDHQ that despite not having the required points the First Parachute Battalion was being released. The Battalion, which was still stationed in Britain, was going home early because of the sudden availability of shipping given to the Canadians by the Allies. The army was aware that shipping at this time was not guaranteed, and that it would have been unwise to allow an under-strength draft to proceed if it could have easily been filled by available non-essential low-point personnel. As Crerar noted to NDHQ, "Obviously failure to fill all shipping offered would prejudice our position in negotiating for maximum amount of shipping in the future."⁹⁴ The Maple Leaf at this time was not prepared to hear further excuses about shipping shortages, when Canadian troops in Europe and Britain impatiently waited to go home.

MacFarlane argued that demobilization was too serious to be conducted in a "luck of the draw" manner. The responsibility of seeing the process through to its conclusion became that of General Guy Simonds who replaced Crerar as the Commander of the Canadian Army in Europe on 30 July 1945.⁹⁵ The General ordered MacFarlane to publish

⁹² Maple Leaf, 19 September 1945, 2.

⁹³ Maple Leaf, 20 September 1945, 2.

⁹⁴ Memorandum: CMHQ to NDHQ, 17 June 1945, Crerar Papers, vol. 4, 958C.009 (D106) File 5.5: "Employment."

⁹⁵ Stacey, Victory Campaign, 619.

both sides of the story in the Maple Leaf, but he refused. Simonds promptly dismissed the editor and noted that although the 'freedom of press' was important, the soldiers' newspaper was not entitled to it. "The Maple Leaf differ[ed] from an ordinary newspaper in that it [held] a monopoly."⁹⁶ Simonds condemned the editorials, because they advocated that for the purposes of repatriation NRMA's be treated differently than General Service personnel, something which Ottawa had specifically forbidden in 1944. When General Crerar made the change to a unit return in July, Simonds opposed it and later readjusted it to allow more long-servicemen the opportunity to go home.⁹⁷ By September, Simonds believed that any further changes in the scheme would have led to detrimental results in morale and the administration of the policy. Realizing that the Canadians had been in Holland and England too long, Simonds pressured Ottawa for more shipping with marginal success. The accusations raised by the Maple Leaf that the soldiers were being mistreated contrasted to the efforts put forth both by the military and men such as Simonds to ensure that demobilization ran quickly and fair.

With the war over, this proved to be a trying time for all involved in the demobilization process. In Canada the concerns of both the public and soldiers was unemployment. In both North America and Britain post-war labour strikes erupted, and the spotlight focused on Windsor, Ontario and Ford Motor Company of Canada where 10,000 autoworkers walked the picket lines for ninety-nine days demanding union security and dues check-offs.⁹⁸ As the troops anxiously awaited their trips home the concern about their job prospects grew. The Legion had demanded legislation for hiring and

⁹⁶ Maple Leaf, 24 September 1945, 1.

⁹⁷ Dominick Graham, Price of Command: A Biography of General Guy Simonds (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), 218.

⁹⁸ For more on the domestic issues in the immediate months after VJ Day see: Herb Colling, Ninety-Nine Days: The Ford Strike In Windsor, 1945 (Toronto: NC Press, 1995).

seniority rights for veterans. This concept had been condemned by union leaders from across the country who had seen it as a means to smashing unions. The need now existed that to avoid the creation of a competitive atmosphere between veterans and displaced civilians for post-war work.⁹⁹ Yet for most soldiers the resumption of their normal lives was their main priority. "I just felt that I had done my job," one veteran recalled, "and I was looking forward to just getting back to my wife and child ... That was all I was interested in."¹⁰⁰ Therefore, it became increasingly important for the military to convince the soldier that they were working on their behalf, and not against them.

Long before MacFarlane's scathing editorials the Maple Leaf received numerous letters from soldiers complaining about the process. Initially the paper chose not to print these letters but instead presented them to the Army in hopes of getting a response. Previously Army officials, such as Crerar, considered utilizing the Maple Leaf as a means of keeping the soldiers informed about demobilization. It was decided, however, that officers, albeit slower, were more effective for this task. It was considered important that the officers first understand how the process worked, because they to had the same questions as the soldiers. Once the officers understood what was going on, it was believed that they could convey the situation more effectively to the soldiers than the newspaper could. Although it was a faster medium of communication, the Army did not want an 'official' column on demobilization, for fear that the newspaper would lose its value as a morale builder.¹⁰¹ CMHQ felt that the Maple Leaf was first a newspaper and not a handy means of disseminating Routine Orders or Official Information.

⁹⁹ Michael D. Stevenson, "National Selective Service and Employment and Seniority Rights for Veterans, 1943-1946," in Neary and Granatstein, The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada, 100.

¹⁰⁰ Letters from William G. Spring, Toronto, ON, 21 November 1992 and 22 January 1993, from Oliver, 298.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum: 18 July 1945, RG 24, Vol. 12,835, File 391-18 "Enquires Re:

The Army therefore responded to the newspaper's allegations of impropriety with a flurry of press releases both overseas and in Canada in order to prevent the issue from growing out of control. Regardless of this disturbance in harmony amongst the troops, demobilization through the combination of point scores and unit return continued until it was completed in February 1946. Although the Cabinet had chosen "first in-first out" as the policy, the fact that the Army was allowed to shift from it to unit repatriation shows it was not one that was rigidly adhered to. Simonds' firing of MacFarlane for expressing misgivings about the Army's demobilization machinery demonstrates that an equilibrium in the repatriation process was precariously maintained.¹⁰²

When the Canadian Army officially reverted to a peacetime status in October 1946, 343,000 military personnel had been repatriated from overseas and discharged to civilian life.¹⁰³ An increase in the speed of this process created difficulties. Canadian railroads were hard-pressed to accommodate the returning troops, and the repatriation depots in Britain were forced to expand their facilities as the army increasingly eliminated personnel in Europe. Many of these delays were minor and were quickly surmounted, but for the waiting soldier it was frustrating nonetheless. The preparation for the return to Canada for both individuals and units was a confusing process that in a great part depended on the location and type of unit, its time spent overseas and such variables as available shipping and the progress of the war in the Pacific. It also depended on the qualifications of the individual, and whether or not his services were considered necessary to effect the demobilization of others. For a soldier involved in this procedure it could be

Repatriation Plans."

¹⁰² Dean F. Oliver, "Canadian Military Demobilization in World War II," The Good Fight: Canadians and World War II, ed. J.L. Granatstein and Peter Neary (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995), 379.

¹⁰³ Huffman, 45.

confusing if he was not kept aware of how the process was handled. Hence the military attempted to alleviate this confusion by keeping the soldier informed at all stages of the process, but in doing so, officials did not wish to see soldiers become so distracted by the idea of returning home that they forgot why they were overseas. Volunteers for the Pacific, compassionate cases, prisoners of war and other unique groups received special priority which resulted in a considerable turnover in the repatriation depots. These releases caused the long-term residents of the camps to be annoyed, but the military's method of providing information concerning the special situations helped to alleviate this discontent. Eventually all Canadian soldiers' scores finally came up and they found themselves on their way home.

Whether they returned by freighter, converted warship or a luxury liner, Canadians in all three services returned to Canada followed the same procedure. If they returned home according to their length of service they immediately went to a discharge centre where they were given leave for thirty days in order to return home. If they were a member of a unit they first proceeded to the unit's home town or city, before beginning leave. Their final release was effected at the discharge centre nearest to their home, where they were given medical examinations and counselling on adjustment to post-war life. For volunteers who served in the CAPF this process of discharge did not vary. With their final discharge paperwork in order, the soldier had finally accomplished what he set out to do, return home.

The independent research that has been conducted for this chapter comes to many of the same conclusions as other work that has been recently done on this subject. With regards to the key ideas that planning for demobilization was conducted early, hinged upon the availability of shipping and attempted to address the needs of the public, the military and the soldier, there is very little to disagree with. Whether General Crerar was acting properly in ordering the shift to a return by units, or jumped the gun, is a moot

point. Historians agree that demobilization was one of Canada's unheralded success stories in the Second World War.

Chapter Four: Learning From Experience

There are many factors to be considered and at this time no more can be said than that the fairest possible system under existing circumstances will be employed.

"How Demobilization Will Be Handled", Back To Civil Life (August, 1944)¹

On 19 August 1942, the Essex Scottish Regiment suffered a devastating defeat on the beaches of Dieppe, France. Three years later in November 1945, after having fought in Northwest Europe, the Scots' return home signaled a celebration for the city of Windsor, Ontario. There were wild cheers when the train was first sighted and the excitement reached a fever pitch as the locomotive slowly nosed its way into the CNR station on Station Street. The train held smiling soldiers who leaned out of the car windows in order to feast their eyes on familiar scenes. There were tears of joy and wild shouts when they began to pour out of the train and relatives got their first glimpses of the men they had long waited to see. The cheers continued as Mayor Arthur J. Reaume paid tribute to the honour which the regiment had brought to the city.

As the soldiers were regrouped for one final march along Sandwich Street to the city's main downtown street Ouellette Avenue, the crowds who had been gathered since earlier that morning lined the way. Hung with flags and draped in bunting, Ouellette was a riot of colour when the soldiers first caught sight of it. For as far as the eye could see there were thousands massed along the mainstreet cheering wildly. In fact, although the Essex were a Windsor regiment, by 1945 few locals remained. Depleted of many Windsorites on that fatal day at Dieppe, the Scottish were reconstructed by using men from across Canada. Thus for many in the regiment the first time they had ever laid eyes on the city was when they marched down Ouellette to the music of "We Are the Essex

¹ Back To Civil Life (August, 1944), 10, NAC, England Papers, MG 27, C-181, Vol. 2, File: "Pamphlets and Acts of Parliament, 1938-1944."

Scottish" played by the pipe band. The parade ended at the armoury on London Street, where the regiment drew up before Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth W. MacIntyre DSO. In his speech to the soldiers MacIntyre noted:

We in Windsor - yes in Canada - since the Scots are now a far flung family - are justly proud of the record you have made for the unit in the six years and four months of its active service life ... We humbly owe our survival to you of the regiment and to those who fought with you against a common foe.

With these words the Lieutenant-Colonel retired the regiment from active service.²

A joyous celebration such as this one was something every Canadian serviceman between 1914-18 and again in 1939-45 waited to experience. Yet for every one of these soldiers what was even more important than the commemoration of victory was just the return home itself. As it has been noted in chapter two, the demobilization of the CEF in 1918-19 was a gruelling experience for both the federal government and the military. When this process had to be repeated again in 1945-46 the government and the military found themselves prepared for the difficulties that the repatriation of nearly 300,000 servicemen presented. They were ready to deal with the problems that could arise during the planning stages of a demobilization policy, such as what the policy would be, how it would be implemented and how it all could depend upon a single factor beyond Canadian control, shipping. In the twentieth century demobilization was more than just the return home of soldiers from war, it was a policy that had to serve as a compromise between the homefront, the government, the military and the soldier himself. For Canada, the demobilization experience in both world wars had similar problems that had to be addressed, and learning from their past experience, in 1945-46 Canada was able to successfully prevent the repetition of critical errors that were made in 1918-19.

² Windsor Star, 21 November 1945, 1-6.

The initial error in the Canadian demobilization experience in the First World War was that the planning began too late, and caused an irreversible effect that continued throughout the entire procedure. As a result of the lengthy arguments between Sir Sam Hughes and the cabinet regarding the establishment of the Overseas Ministry in 1916, preparation for demobilization was all but forgotten until Minister Sir Edward Kemp went to London in 1917. Prior to this, what little work that had been done on demobilization was practically useless. Unfortunately this neglect was only the first in a series of errors that plagued the Canadian government's first attempt at demobilization.

Planning for demobilization in the First World War was initially hindered by the widespread belief among political and military experts that the conflict would not end until 1919 or even 1920. Under the presumption that enough time remained for co-ordinating the process, the sudden end to the fighting in November 1918 came as a surprise. Planners at the Overseas Ministry scrambled to devise the exact procedure for the return of the troops, and to arrange for the necessary shipping and repatriation facilities in Britain. Prior to 1917 the military had not been too concerned with demobilization. The original planning committee led by Sir Montague Allan and a handful of surplus staff officers demonstrated the military's lack of interest and enthusiasm for the process during the war. The rudimentary recommendations of the committee provided a starting point for repatriation, but they failed to consider all the possible consequences that it entailed.

Not until after Kemp's arrival in London was more serious and meaningful planning for demobilization conducted. Critical time for the preparation of the soldiers' return had already been lost and soon the government and the military realized that the CEF would not be returning home from Europe as quickly as it had arrived there in 1914. The process started by Kemp was too late to be fully effective when General Thacker's committee on demobilization in June 1918 concluded that it should be based on the popular concept of "first in-first out." By November 1918, the Canadians had a theory but lacked the means to effectively implement it, because of their failure earlier to consider

all the options and ramifications. These difficulties were alleviated in the Second World War with the elimination of the position of an Overseas Minister.³ This allowed for all the initial demobilization planning to be co-ordinated centrally in Ottawa as opposed to Ottawa-London. The quick action taken by Ottawa was in response to politicians such as Ian Mackenzie and J.L. Ralston, who as former soldiers acted on behalf of future Canadian veterans during the war years. Spurred on by their memories of lengthy delays in 1918-19, and in co-operation with veterans associations, these politicians were intent on not allowing the same demobilization errors to be repeated.⁴ The idea of a return by units was something that particularly inspired Ralston to speak up for Canadian veterans. "It will be pretty hard to convince a man who went over with the Second Division in the fall of 1940 that he should be kept in service if he wants to return home," Ralston noted, "while a man who happens to have left Canada in 1943 and joined the First Division is given the break and allowed to return to his wife and family."⁵ Supported by a Liberal government that was sympathetic to public opinion, the planning for the demobilization of the next generation of Canadian veterans was started in 1939, even as the war began.

The Cabinet Committee on Demobilization and Rehabilitation (CCDR) and later the General Advisory Committee (GAC), between 1939-44 helped to provide something which was missing for demobilization in 1917-18, a sense of direction. What these committees had to bear in mind was that success hinged on the return of a victorious military and the maintenance of a stable economy. Therefore, a plan had to be devised

³ Desmond Morton, "'Kicking and Complaining': Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 61, No. 3, (September 1980), 360.

⁴ J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, Victory: 1945: Canadians From War to Peace (Toronto: Lester & Orpen, 1995), 144.

⁵ RG 24, Vol. 2841, File HQS-8350-36, Vol. 2, "Army Demobilization Planning Committee," Ralston to Stuart, 9 September 1944, from Dean F. Oliver, "When the Battle's Won: Military Demobilization In Canada" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1996), 178.

that not only satisfied the troops but also took into consideration general social and economic conditions of Canada, such as inflation, social unrest, racial and industrial strife and the continuance of public confidence.⁶ It was also clear that any plan Ottawa proposed had to have the support of those whom it affected. During the First and Second World Wars the priorities of these respective policies reflected the need for the cabinet to balance the concerns of the public, Canadian industry, the military, and most importantly the servicemen.

For each war the initial demobilization plans proposed by the federal government were influenced by concerns about the post-war economy and the role the returning soldier played in it. The basic notion that demobilization should be based upon a soldier's job skills and their relation to the needs of industry was supported both by the government and veterans' organizations. The belief that these "pivot" men could prepare the conversion from a wartime to a peacetime economy was a commonly accepted notion during both wars. Canada in 1918-19, however, was not a conducive environment for the quick discharge of several hundred thousand men. After the Great War a retarded demobilization was considered a means of stemming public fears about soldiers who may have been exposed to Bolshevism overseas. The dominating fear, however, was that veterans would become "a charge on the public," and thus the need for a demobilization plan that emphasized the economy and the soldier's place in it.⁷ By 1944 the Communists were an ally and the demobilization plan was primarily a means of preventing the employment glut which had occurred in 1919-20. The plan was also different in the respect that it considered further job training prior to a soldier's release. In the Second World War servicemen were exposed to educational and training facilities that had not

⁶ Robert England, Living, Learning, Remembering: Memoirs of Robert England (Vancouver: Centre for Continuing Education, University of British Columbia), 118.

⁷ Dean F. Oliver, "Canadian Military Demobilization," in eds. Peter Neary and J.L. Granastein, The Good Fight: Canadians and World War II (Toronto: Copp Clark), 370.

been available in 1914-19. During the course of the war, "the navy, army and air force had become huge technical training schools."⁸ In consultation with Canadian industry, the demobilization committees had a more accurate idea of what needs had to be met for the post-war and where the personnel could be located to meet these requests.

A difficulty for a demobilization based on post-war industrial requirements was being able to simultaneously satisfy the needs of the military and its servicemen. The plan for 1918 also demonstrated a failure between the Overseas Ministry and the military to come to agreement. A retarded demobilization was subjected to the sharp criticism of General Currie and his belief that he better understood the needs of his soldiers. Minister Kemp, however, was bound and determined to demonstrate why a civilian presence was needed overseas, and thus had his department prepare a demobilization plan without military consultation. These conflicting views were evident in Currie's shock and dismay over the proposed demobilization plan that was presented to him in November 1918. Expected to simply give his approval, Currie surprised the Overseas Ministry when he openly opposed it for its lack of consideration towards the soldier and the administrative needs of the CEF. Upon reviewing the plan and seeing the ministry's failure to have measures in place to deal with the embarkation, the General responded, "Things will work far more smoothly and less dissatisfaction will arise if you get your camp in order, get the organization there, and get your troops there."⁹ The planning for demobilization in 1918 demonstrated a failure by both the military and the federal government to agree to a plan prior to the time in which it needed to be implemented.

This lack of co-operation between civilian and military planners was rectified in the Second World War. The Army, who of the three services had the greatest influence on

⁸ England, Living, Learning, Remembering, 117.

⁹ Currie to Kemp, 17 December 1918, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, "Part II File D-2a: Demobilization and Documentation."

demobilization, was able to address early the problems with the process. Beginning with Colonel A.F. Duguid's report to the Department of Pension and National Health in 1940, the Army was allowed to voice its opinion much earlier than it had in the previous war. By examining the experiences of the First World War, both the military and the government had a better understanding of what problems could occur during demobilization. Historical evidence was something which the planners in 1917-18 had lacked, because of Canada's brief pre-1914 military experience. Duguid's reflection on the past helped to provide a starting point for civilian planners in the 1940s. Although his work was initially ignored by an army consumed by mobilization, it did open the way for their later concerns to be addressed. When civilian and military officials set out to plan for demobilization in the Second World War, the tension that was present in the First did not exist.

The planning in 1918-19 was chaotic in comparison to that of 1945-46. Due to Kemp's separation from the Cabinet, the Overseas Ministry and Ottawa at times contradicted each other in their plans for demobilization. The Ministry's refusal to consult with the CEF created further difficulties. As a result, the official planning for demobilization did not commence until the Order-in-Council was passed on 15 November 1918.¹⁰ In contrast the planning in the Second World War from the start was more thoroughly organized. The Privy Council's immediate establishment of the CCDR in 1939 set out from the beginning who was responsible for the planning and what their objectives were. The later establishment of the GAC helped to refine these goals further allowing for more serious detailed preparation to take place. In addition, by having military representation on the GAC, concerns that involved the Armed Forces such as the need to keep "key" personnel in the service longer were more effectively addressed and dealt with.

¹⁰ Repatriation Committee, General Survey of Canada's Repatriation Plans (Ottawa, 1919), Kemp Papers, vol. 137, "Part I: Demobilization - General, 1918-1919," 3.

Hence, when a final plan was announced by Ottawa in 1944 it was not a surprise to the military as it had been for Currie and the CEF in 1918. At the end of the war in 1945, both the Canadian government and the military knew what each desired for demobilization: a plan that addressed Canada's post-war economy and the needs of the military, but was still fair and quick to satisfy its soldiers.

Another significant difference that had to be taken into consideration in 1939 was the fact that the military consisted of three distinct services, all of whom had their own preferences for demobilization. Despite their tardiness in beginning preparations for their return, the army, navy and air force were kept steadily informed of the government's development of a policy for demobilization. Through representation on the Inter-Service Planning Committee they were allowed to provide suggestions for Ottawa to consider. This was a privilege that had not been granted to General Currie in November 1918 when the initial plan for demobilization was thrust upon him. The establishment of effective communications between civil and military planners for demobilization early in the war is only one area in which demobilization was improved upon in the Second World War.

Despite the difference in preparation for the end of both wars, in each a similar compromise was put in place. The accord that was struck between the military and the government in 1918 and 1944 was the idea of combining the method of "first in-first out," with the repatriation of units in their entirety. The agreement reached in 1918 can be attributed to the pressure placed on Minister Kemp and Prime Minister Borden by General Currie when he learned of Ottawa's intention to follow only "first in-first out." While the return of Currie's divisions can be considered a partial success, the disturbances that occurred with the return of individual soldiers suggests that this compromise, in the end, satisfied only the General. After studying the results of a combined method of return it would have been expected that Canadian officials would have selected only unit repatriation in 1944. Pressure from both the Canadian public and soldiers for a quick return based on length of service, however, could not be ignored. Consideration also had

to be given to the military itself who was responsible for seeing through the implementation of the policy, and who for administrative efficiency preferred unit repatriation. The agreements reached prior to full demobilization tried to satisfy the federal government and the military in each war.

Both plans relied on what at the time was considered a fair and just determination of the order of return for soldiers. A soldier's length of service, in 1918-19, was a fair process, because it was based strictly on his time spent overseas. The problem with it was that necessary administrative personnel were some of the first allowed to leave. This loss of the staff clerks and officers needed to oversee demobilization created critical delays in the process as well as a build-up of disgruntled troops in the repatriation camps. The point system adopted in 1944 was intended to alleviate the difficulty in choosing who went home first.¹¹ Placed out of the control of one single individual, the government and the military could turn to the needed point scores to justify any decisions made. The system was, however, unable to solve all the problems of demobilization. Once again, necessary administrative personnel were the recipients of an early return, and hence a freeze on the repatriation of these individuals was needed. The Army's opinion was that a longer stay for staff clerks was the price they had to pay for their relatively safe jobs during the war. These delays ensured that the process ran with a greater degree of consistency than it had in 1918-19. The point system was also considered a means of avoiding rumours that soldiers could bribe their way onto troopships as was speculated in 1918-19. The accusations by Major J. Douglas MacFarlane and the Maple Leaf, however, raised a debate in the summer of 1945 that still continues today.¹² The newspaper failed to take

¹¹ Mackenzie Papers, vol. 89, File "Subcommittee (Demobilization) - Priorities and Methods, vol. 1, 19/7/41 - 12/43."

¹² Forty years later in his book about the Maple Leaf, MacFarlane still believed that a manipulation of the point system occurred in the summer of 1945. Barry D. Rowland and J.D. MacFarlane, The Maple Leaf Forever: The Story of Canada's Foremost Armed Forces Newspaper (Toronto: Natural Heritage/ Natural History, 1987). His argument

into account the circumstances involved in the particular instances where troops with lower scores returned home early. Attempting to be fair to the soldier in both wars, the government and the military devised a system that at the time they believed was fair to everyone.

The key difference between the two plans was the time frame in which the compromise method was expected to operate. In 1918-19, "first in-first out" and the return of units occurred simultaneously. Even though there were disturbances such as the riot at Kinmel Park, there was no direct conflict between the two processes. In 1945-46, the two methods of return were meant to occur separately with "first in-first out" eventually giving way to a return by units. The problem was that the government failed to specify when the change was to take place. This gray area in which a soldier's length of service was to make way to that of a unit provided the opportunity for General Crerar, who did not prefer 'first in-first out,' to introduce the switch. Citing the Aldershot disturbance as a reason why the Army should have followed a strict unit return, the General used the riot and the lack of specification in government's policy to order a change sooner than had been expected. Even though the return figures suggest that "first in-first out" was the method by which a majority of Canadian personnel returned home, Crerar's actions demonstrate that Ottawa was not willing to interfere with the Army once demobilization had begun. What the incident also shows is that although length of service was the government's policy, it was not necessarily adhered to by the military in all

was later supported by Ted and Alex Barris in their anecdotal chronicling of Canadians in the war. Ted Barris and Alex Barris, Days of Victory: Canadians Remember, 1939-1945 (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1995). Work conducted by Dean Oliver, J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, suggest that despite these rumours no manipulation took place and the return of troops with lower point scores was simply a means of filling scarce shipping with available troops. Oliver, "When the Battle's Won: Military Demobilization In Canada 1939-1946" and Morton and Granatstein, Victory 1945.

situations. The method for the demobilization plan in 1918-19 was therefore more rigid than it was in 1945-46.

In addition to the plans adopted for both of the wars, what also needs to be examined are the participants involved in the planning and implementation of the two policies. Those who partook in the processes were individuals who were influenced by their own concerns, and those who held the needs of soldiers ahead of personal motivations. Many of the opinions expressed about demobilization in the Second World War were influenced by the failure of the First World War. From cabinet members, to prime ministers and generals, the individuals who had influence in the return of troops both in 1918-19 and 1945-46 shared many similarities, as well as differences.

The Cabinet Ministers who led their respective demobilization processes had to perform their responsibilities under similar circumstances; yet each responded differently leading to contrasting results. Sir Edward Kemp, in 1918-19, was prevented from single-handedly controlling demobilization. The impression is that Kemp personally tried to demonstrate that Sam Hughes' dismissal and the establishment of the Overseas Ministry in 1916 was not a mistake. Yet as he increasingly tried to improve his authority in London, the process of running the ministry took a toll on the minister. Before the war's end, Kemp was threatened with a parliamentary review in response to criticisms raised by Hughes that the department was ineffectively operated in 1917. This was then followed by the demobilization itself, which occurred in a chaotic post-war world. Kemp increasingly found himself having to deal with problems from outside of the military, such as the rise in shipping delays, which hampered the soldiers' return. By February 1919, he struggled to make his colleagues in Ottawa understand the problem: "The men all want to go home - not next month or the month following, but this week, or tomorrow if you like

to put it this way."¹³ From the evasive officials at the British Ministry of Shipping, to his own living conditions, by this point in time everything overseas infuriated Kemp.

The fact of the matter is the whole country is in turmoil. I am not able to get a meal in the hotel which I live. The electricians are threatening to go on strike and the city to be thrown in darkness tonight. You have no idea of the conditions which exist here. You are living in paradise in Canada as compared with this place.¹⁴

It is no surprise that no one was happier to return home to Canada after the war than the Minister himself.

Following the riots at Kinmel Park and other Canadian demobilization camps in 1919, these criticisms of the Overseas Ministry's effectiveness only increased. This is partially a reason why the use of an Overseas Minister in the Second World War was not repeated. Mackenzie King's Cabinet included three ministers of national defence, but the Armed Forces overseas were led by officers who reported directly to Ottawa. Therefore, what did the Borden government feel that an overseas cabinet minister could accomplish, that a military officer invested with authority from Ottawa could not? The answer lay in the circumstances at the time. In 1916 only a cabinet minister could have replaced Sam Hughes.¹⁵ According to the structure of the Canadian government at the turn of the century, it would only have been proper for a cabinet minister with government approval to seek the reforms that Kemp sought in London. By 1939-45, this concern for political protocol appears to have subsided as the Minister of National Pension and Health Ian Mackenzie displayed the freedom to plan and organize for demobilization from the comforts of Ottawa. Although both Ministers wanted to prove their worthiness,

¹³ Desmond Morton, Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry in the First World (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 185.

¹⁴ Kemp to Mewburn, 6 February 1919, Kemp Papers, vol. 137, D-2.

¹⁵ Morton, Peculiar Kind of Politics, 202-03.

Mackenzie's persistence, unlike Kemp's, was influenced by having experienced long delays in his own repatriation in 1919. In contrast to the First World War, Mackenzie was able to make use of fellow members of parliament who shared both his experiences and beliefs for the fair treatment of veterans. The minister's efforts symbolize a growing concern by Ottawa for the future of Canadian soldiers in the Second World War. For Canada, this early action by the government meant a good start for the preparation of the eventual return home of its soldiers from war.

The Prime Ministers during the war years, on the other hand, had limited influence on demobilization. Robert Borden's most significant contribution was his decision to establish the Overseas Ministry. For a Prime Minister who had never fired a cabinet member before, to have his first dismissal be the prominent and ever popular Sam Hughes suggests the importance that he attached to the ministry.¹⁶ The establishment of the Overseas Ministry, although not immediately leading to the development of a final demobilization plan, opened the way for civilian planners to begin the process at a later date. Borden's presence overseas at the end of the war helped in the continuing dispute about demobilization between Kemp and Currie, as the Prime Minister acted as a mediator between the two men. But just like many world leaders who had flocked to Europe, Borden was more concerned about the future than the present. Overseas from November 1918 to May 1919, his main preoccupation was to ensure that the wartime recognition of Canada's independent status within the Empire would be maintained and accepted by the rest of the world.¹⁷ Borden was too concerned with securing these rights to worry about how Canadian soldiers would return home. The Prime Minister was also susceptible to General Currie's sentimentality and suggestions for unit repatriation. Currie's argument

¹⁶ Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919 (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 136.

¹⁷ Gwynne Dyer and Tina Viljoen, The Defence of Canada: In the Arms of the Empire 1760-1939 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 302.

that the gallant return of units to Canada would assist in preserving discipline came at a time when both men were swept away by the pageantry surrounding the end of the war. Only when it appeared that no solution could be found between Kemp and Currie did the Prime Minister make an effort to resolve the issue.

Mackenzie King's presence in the demobilization process during the Second World War was even more distant than Borden's. As a Prime Minister who also served as his own Minister of External Affairs, the workload King held from 1939-46 was heavy. He thus preferred to have the responsibility for an issue such as demobilization relegated to a lower level of government planning, a notable difference between the two wars. From 1939-46 there was a hierarchy of committees and personnel who dealt with the planning for demobilization. Whether it was the CCDR, GAC, or the committees that sprang from it such as the Joint Inter-service Committee, there was always another level in which problems or difficulties could be solved at before they had to be dealt with by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. In 1918-19, after the Committee on Demobilization submitted its final report to the Overseas Ministry the hierarchy began and ended with Kemp. All critical matters that had to be dealt with were brought to the minister's attention, and eventually to Borden if they could not be resolved. With a chain of command below him, Mackenzie King simply served as the final seal of authorization if the planning committees had previously approved. The only issues concerning demobilization that he became directly involved in were the debates between Ralston and Howe concerning the early release of troops in 1943, the creation of a Canadian Army Pacific Force in the spring of 1945, and shipping shortages later that same year. Like Borden, King could not help himself nonetheless from taking part in the dramatics the end of the war meant and the preparations for the post-war international community.

A similarity shared by both Prime Ministers was their concern for the state of the federal government at the end of the war, and the effects demobilization could have had on it. Even before discussions about demobilization had begun, the Union Government

that Borden led was unstable. The conscription crisis of 1917 had threatened to divide the country along French and English lines. A demobilization that failed completely would not have helped ease this tension in French-English Canadian relations nor that of the one between the Canadian public and the federal government. In 1945 the Liberals believed that a successful return of the troops weighed heavily in their favour for re-election scheduled for the spring of 1945. Liberals such as Mackenzie King and Mackenzie knew that they would not fare well at the polls if the failure of 1918-19 was repeated. It is interesting to recall the Prime Minister's remark to Winston Churchill at Quebec in 1944 about the possibility of a CCF victory in the next federal election. The irony was that it was the famous British wartime leader who went to electoral defeat and not the Canadian. The successful start to demobilization in 1945 did not hurt the Liberal party's chance at re-election.¹⁸ In the end, although Mackenzie King took his political survival more seriously than Borden in both wars, the Canadian Prime Ministers considered the repatriation process a possible threat to their respective political parties.

There was also a shared ideology regarding demobilization between the two men who led the Canadian Army overseas at the conclusion of both wars. General Currie's and General Crerar's shared belief in *esprit de corps* and the idea that a soldier's loyalty to his unit was greater than his own self-interest contributed to altering the demobilization plan in 1918 and again 1945. Currie argued for the implementation of this idea as a means of sustaining discipline in the CEF. As a Lieutenant-Colonel in 1918, Crerar was subjected to this philosophy during his own repatriation and supported a continuation of it

¹⁸ The results of the 11 June 1945 Canadian General Election found the Liberals with 125 seats, the Conservatives with 67, CCF 28, Social Credit 13 and others 12. Churchill's coalition government fell to the Labour Party in the British General Election of 5 July 1945. Labour had advanced from 38 percent of the popular vote (in 1935) to 48 percent, while the Tories fell from 54 percent to 40 percent. Granatstein and Neary, *The Good Fight*, 352 and Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today: 1830 to the Present* (6th Edition) (Toronto, 1992), 340.

twenty-seven years later. The two men believed that a greater sense of community existed amongst soldiers in units. Besides maintaining discipline, they felt that because of this spirit soldiers would desire a return to Canada as units in order to preserve the camaraderie for as long as possible. This sense of family unity may have existed when men shared the horrors of war, but the popular consensus amongst the soldiers in both wars was a return home according to "first in-first out."

Although they wished to implement the same philosophy, Currie and Crerar did so in different ways. Despite the late consultation with the Overseas Ministry, Currie was able to alter the process in 1918-19 before it began. Crerar, who had been given the opportunity to voice his concerns about the proposed demobilization plans in 1944, chose initially to defer. By waiting until after the procedure had begun the following year, Crerar was able to capitalize on the policy's vague terminology as outlined in the pamphlet After Victory in Europe (May, 1945). His refusal to discuss the procedure earlier was a result of the fear that the Army would become so preoccupied with the post-war that it would lose sight of the war itself.¹⁹ Selecting different methods of application, the two Generals were still able to impose their philosophy of esprit de corps upon the army.

Each of the men demonstrated that the compromise of "first in-first out" and unit repatriation could work to a limited degree. Currie's interference early in the demobilization process proved effective in maintaining discipline amongst the Corps troops. This preservation of obedience occurred at a time when it was lacking elsewhere in the CEF. Of the thirteen riots that occurred during the First World War, only three involved soldiers from the four divisions for which Currie was responsible.²⁰ The call for

¹⁹ Oliver, 171.

²⁰ Those involved were the 26th (New Brunswick) Battalion, 22nd (French Canadian) Battalion, and the 21st (Eastern Ontario) Battalion, all of the Canadian Second Division. J.A. Swettenham, "The End of the War," Appendix "D," 3-4, RG 24, Vol. 20,543 and A.F. Duguid, "Disturbances In Canadian Camps and Areas, 1918-1919," 1, RG 24, Vol. 20,543, File "General Demobilization," .

a change from “first in-first out” to a return by units by Crerar in July 1945 was also a means of improving not only troop discipline but morale. The decision to focus entirely on a return of units in July 1945 was sudden and unexpected. In combination with the difficulties experienced with the point system, the General's change in the policy was disruptive. It is possible that there may have been further incidents such as Aldershot had it not been for General Simonds' pressure to follow a return according to length of service when General Crerar returned to Canada in August 1945. Both wars revealed that a combined method of return was possible, but only if military officials such as Currie and Crerar were not allowed to interfere with it once it had begun.

The repatriation of Canadian soldiers in 1918-19 and 1945-46 was also affected by international influences. Demobilization after both wars occurred in the confines imposed by other theatres of war, shipping agreements and post-war responsibilities. Whether it was the Allied Expedition to Siberia in 1918-19, participation in the Pacific war in 1945 or Allied shipping arrangements, Britain and the United States indirectly affected Canada's demobilization programs. As Canadian allies, the two countries held a marginal degree of influence over Canadian decision makers and the conditions in which demobilization was conducted. During the First World War the British and Americans' power of persuasion over Canadian demobilization officials was strong, in the next war this influence appears to diminish as the Canadians refuse to allow earlier demobilization mistakes to be repeated.

In comparing post-war responsibilities, it can be concluded that more was expected from the Canadian military in 1918-19 than in 1945-46. Although the war ended in Europe on 11 November 1918, Canadians could still be found fighting in Russia. As members of an Allied intervention force that was later sent to Siberia, the Canadians found that their military contribution to the war had not ceased with the armistice. After the high

spirited life France had offered, the monotony of garrison duty in Siberia was "irksome" to say the least.²¹ Suggestions that the Canadian demobilization was delayed in 1918-19 in order to supply this force are erroneous and unsubstantiated. Of the 619,636 Canadians who served in the war, only 4,000 were ever sent to Russia.²² Like those who later served in the CAPF in 1945, the Canadian members of the Allied Expedition in Siberia were there on a volunteer basis. In 1918-19 neither the soldiers nor the Canadian public would have accepted the forced recruitment of troops to take part in the operation. As time passed and they learned of those returning home to Canada from Europe, the Canadians still in Siberia raised the call "Home or Fight," and the Borden government was obliged to comply and despite British pleas to stay withdrew them in May 1919.²³ Thus, the Canadian demobilization process was not sacrificed to serve Western society in its fight against communism.

The policy towards the war in the Pacific, however, did cause problems for demobilization in 1945. The hesitation by Ottawa to become embroiled in a theatre of war that concerned primarily Britain and the United States delayed the final planning for the return of Canadian troops. Mackenzie King's personal uncertainty about a Pacific policy in the spring of 1945 prevented the Army, RCN, and RCAF from finalizing their demobilization plans. Unsure of what would be demanded of them after the war Europe and the expected delay in the end of the Pacific war into 1946, the three services decisions for the post-war military were impeded. Ottawa's eventual decision to create a force entirely of volunteers for the Pacific was an administrative nightmare for the forces who

²¹ John Swettenham, Allied Intervention In Russia, 1918-19 and the Part Played By Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), 164 and W.E. Dunham, "Canadians In Siberia," Macleans, Vol. XXXII, no. 5, (May 1919).

²² G.W.L. Nicholson, Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 516.

²³ Nicholson, Official History, 522.

had to ensure that the necessary men were moved to the new theatre of war, and still received thirty days leave in exchange for their service. Made the number-one priority following VE Day, the transfer of Pacific Force volunteers caused a delay in the repatriation of soldiers who no longer wished to fight. After the final end to the war in August 1945, the only factor the Pacific played in demobilization was the determination of who had returned home early but still lacked the necessary points for release. What the Siberian and Pacific experiences demonstrate is that once both wars had concluded in Europe, Canada was not willing to significantly delay demobilization in order to meet Allied military needs abroad. This was especially so when the sentiment of both the Canadian soldier and public at the end of each war were against such continued action.

Canada's responsibility for European occupation duty also did not alter the manner in which they dealt with both the Allies and demobilization. The return of units after the armistice in 1918 did not go according to their length of service overseas as the Third Division left before the First and Second. Occupation duty was viewed simply as part of the process of allowing entire units to return home. Consisting of a short duration of a few months, the Canadian occupation duty in the Rhineland did not drastically alter the demobilization process, and did not contribute to the disturbances that occurred during it. This scene was played out again in 1945. According to George Stanley, "the weak voice given Canada in the direction of occupation policy disposed the Canadian government towards meeting the demand for the return of Canadian troops to Canada."²⁴ By 31 July 1946 the "interim army" was down to 38,148 all ranks after having left Europe in May.²⁵ Historically the argument has been that because of a lack of influence in the occupation policy and the failure to secure an occupation zone of its own, Ottawa felt no need to

²⁴ George F.G. Stanley, Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of An Unmilitary People (3rd Edition) (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 380.

²⁵ C.P. Stacey, Canadian Army, 1939-45: An Official Historical Summary (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1948), 307.

remain, but more recently the fear of the CAOF being both a political liability and public relations nightmare has been put forth. This second argument is more accurate with regard to the state of moral within the CAOF at the end of 1945. The soldiers' attitude was less enthusiastic than had been expected.²⁶ This poor attitude was signified by General Chris Vokes' reaction, "The bastards," upon learning that he had been named the commander of the CAOF.²⁷ The General was representative of most soldiers whose low point scores had condemned them to this task. Nonetheless, European occupation duty, as was the case in the First World War, did not significantly delay the return of soldiers who wished to go back to Canada after the war.

Instead shipping difficulties were the main contributing cause of demobilization delays during both wars. After having earned the privilege to be the first to use the British 'monster ships' such as the Olympic in 1918, it was surprising to learn that Canadian officials refused. This was thanks in part to the salesmanship by the British Ministry of Shipping, who capitalized on disagreements concerning the use of ships between officials in Ottawa and the Overseas Ministry. Able to convince the Overseas Ministry that Ottawa's fears about the inadequacies of Canadian harbour facilities were valid, Britain secured the ships for American use. Yet the British were not entirely to blame for the Canadians' shipping woes. The stringent living requirements inspired by the putrid conditions aboard the Northland in December 1918 did not help the situation. More ships than necessary were rejected for Canadian usage in response to these rigid standards. If these standards had been reduced earlier more shipping would have been available for the

²⁶ Note: Of the 21,504 soldiers that made up the CAOF in October 1945 only 6,455 were volunteers, while the remaining 15,049 were non-volunteers who lacked the necessary points needed to return home. RG 24, Vol. 12,833, File 390-35, "Statistics On Composition of CAOF."

²⁷ Angelika Sauer, "'So Untimely A Retreat': The Decision to Withdraw the Canadian Occupation Force From Germany," from Greg Donaghy (Editor) Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1996), 41.

Canadians, but it would not have solved all of their problems. Events such as dock-workers strikes and poor weather for trans-Atlantic travel were beyond Canadian control. Therefore, Colonel Duguid in his report to the CDR in 1940 noted the need to be aware of these difficulties for demobilization,²⁸ and both civil and military officials did not allow them to be repeated in 1945-46. Despite lacking the necessary qualifications to do so, the early return of the First Parachute Battalion in June 1945 is an example of the change in the Canadians attitude towards shipping. Canadian military and political officials had learned of the importance that shipping meant for a successful demobilization. Preposterous shipping standards and the failure to utilize all ships that were offered to Canada was not allowed to reoccur at the end of the Second World War.

The pressure placed on Canadian officials by Britain to relinquish shipping was also not allowed to be repeated. Not satisfied with the original allotment of shipping offered to them, in 1944 Ottawa pressured London for more. The threat to withdraw thirty cargo ships from the Allied Shipping Pool shows that the Canadian demobilization planners had learned how to deal with their shipping difficulties with the Allies. Yet Mackenzie King's belief that the repatriation should reflect the fact that Canadians had been in Europe two years longer than the Americans proved to be naïve. Instead, the reality that the United States had the wherewithal to secure shipping was shown in their own demobilization. Unlike 1918-19, the Canadians had prepared well enough in advance and did not find themselves scrambling to secure extra shipping when anticipated shortages arose. Learning from past experiences Canadian demobilization organizers did not allow themselves to be treated as gullibly as those previously were in 1918-19.

The riots at Kinmel Park (March 1919) and Aldershot (July 1945) have served to highlight the faults in the two demobilization policies. Soldiers upset about delays in their repatriation were the essential cause for the two incidents. At Kinmel Park it was

²⁸ RG 24, Vol. 2839, File HQC-8350-4, vol. 2.

concluded that poor security measures and the unexpected access to alcohol helped to extend the life of the riot "beyond all original intentions."²⁹ Drunkenness was ruled out as a contributor to the Aldershot mêlée. Instead investigators found that the uproar in the small English town was caused by a select group of individuals. Ironically these men were in the midst of being rushed home to serve in the CAPF, and this was not their first altercation with military authority.³⁰ Fortunately the Army never had to resort to military force in either instance, but the means by which they dealt with the situation when the violence stopped differed. Despite the lack of security and the suddenness of the incident, Kimmel Park was never closed after the riot was quelled. In contrast, within twenty-four hours after the first outbreak of violence at Aldershot soldiers were ushered out of the camp to other repatriation depots.³¹ The Army in 1945 had learned the importance of dispersing any built up tension. Kimmel Park officials did not see this tension before the riot and failed to effectively deal with it after it erupted. The investigations that were conducted after each of these incidents and the punishments that were handed down were swift. For Canadian soldiers, however, the damage to their reputation was done.

The press's reaction to both of these disturbances, as noted in the previous chapter contrasted sharply. The difference is due in part to the state of affairs at the time of the two events. The war had been over for nearly four months by March 1919 and it had become obvious to both the soldiers and the public that faults existed in demobilization. With earlier disturbances at other camps setting a precedent for Kimmel Park, the press was critical of both Canadian and British officials. They were upset that neither government sped up the process, and instead allowed it to progress to the state of

²⁹ RG 9, III B1, Vol. 2770, File D-199-33, vol. 5, "Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry on Disturbances at Kimmel Park."

³⁰ C.P. Stacey, Six Years of War: the Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), 433.

³¹ Memo: 5 July 1945, Crerar Papers, vol. 4, File 5-4 "Discipline," .

frustration demonstrated at Kinmel. For the press, Canadian demobilization was on the verge of being a farce. In July 1945 the orders for general demobilization were only a few weeks old and before Aldershot the process had been operating relatively smoothly. The government had sought to simultaneously satisfy the desire of returning troops as well as meet its obligations in the war against Japan. Hence when it was learned that the instigators were Pacific volunteers, the idea that soldiers were taking advantage of the demobilization policy by volunteering to receive an earlier return home was raised amongst the troops.³² If Canadian soldiers had earned any sympathy from the press because of the riot, it was lost when this revelation was made public.

The poor press, however, was not as damaging as it had been in the previous war. In 1919, the Overseas Ministry and the CEF were slow to deal with the British press. Over time they learned how to subdue journalists through the issuing of press releases that put a favourable slant on the incidents, as well as placing pressure on British politicians. These methods were successfully implemented later in Britain and the Netherlands in 1945. In a statement sent to Prime Minister Churchill on 6 July 1945, Mackenzie King wrote, "The disturbances at Aldershot emphasize the importance of securing repatriation of at least 150,000 this year."³³ Gradually the Army learned to work with the press instead of against it. After further episodes of violence in Holland Army officials capitalized on privileged access to the Dutch press and reminded them of the benefits the Canadian presence had meant for the country since its liberation. Although wishing to have quashed all damaging press reports about the Canadians, the Army learned that this was impossible to do. The problem in dealing with the British press in either war was that forcing it to paint a more favourable picture of demobilization tampered with the laws

³² Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 433.

³³ RG 24, Vol. 6920, Report No. 177 Historical Section CMHQ "The Repatriation of the Canadian Military Forces Overseas 1945-47," 43.

protecting the freedom of press.³⁴ Learning from the problems experienced in 1918-19, the Army took advantage of the foreign press as a means of reducing the criticisms they received overseas in 1945-46.

A critical misjudgement found in the demobilization process of 1918-19 was the soldiers' limited access to this information pertaining to it. The soldiers of the CEF were not kept adequately informed of demobilization's progress and the reasons for its delays.³⁵ Living in repatriation camps that were sheltered from the rest of the world, these men were not accurately aware of the dock-workers' strikes, the poor weather, and the previous arrangements that had been made between British and Canadian officials which caused cancellations in sailings for Canada. Even their officers, whose own returns had been delayed, were not informed. Therefore, the Army learned early in the Second World War that the provision of detailed and accurate information was essential for demobilization to succeed and for morale to remain high. This became increasingly evident as problems arose between General Service and NRMA personnel. The criticism raised by the overseas volunteers about the early return of the "zombies" worried both the government and the Army. This sign of pent-up anger demonstrated the need for the issuing of clear and authoritative statements on the Army's demobilization plan. Thus in contrast to 1918-19, officers were the first to be taught about how demobilization worked in 1945-46. The belief was that if they thoroughly understood the procedure then they were to be the best means in which it could be explained to the rest of the troops.

This need to spread accurate information was influenced by the First World War experience and the widespread belief that not enough had been done to prepare that

³⁴ Kemp Papers, Vol. 138, File "Disturbances - British Press," 18-19 and C.P. Stacey and Barbara Wilson, The Half-Million: The Canadians in Britain, 1939-46 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 166.

³⁵ Nicholson, 532.

generation of veterans for their return to 'civvie street.' An incident such as Aldershot, however, can be attributed to a morale building process that was too successful.

Reports of a quick return [had] enjoyed an understandably favourable reception with the troops. Subsequent delays made the generals and politicians look like liars.³⁶

The Army therefore found it had to tone down the good news they had been giving to the soldiers. The success rate of their attempt at keeping the troops informed had helped to create men who were over optimistic about when they could expect to return home.

The methods used in 1945 to further enhance the morale of the troops were either adopted or improved techniques from 1918-19. Demobilization camps such as Kimmel Park did nothing to help raise the spirits of Canadian soldiers. Cold, damp, and poorly heated wooden huts provided deplorable conditions for troops to spend their time in before they left for home. As a result, in June 1945 thorough cleanings and new coats of paint were ordered for the repatriation depots in Britain as a means to improve the living conditions there.³⁷ The hope was that if a pleasant atmosphere was provided the soldiers' mood would not be prone to undisciplined behaviour. It also helped that it was summer.

Military officials knew that once the goal of winning the war had been met, it would be necessary to fill a void that was created amongst soldiers' views towards life in the military. Once in the camps, similar methods that were successful in 1918-19 were employed again to keep the troops occupied. Entertainment shows, sporting competitions and educational programs such as the Khaki University were all offered with similar success rates as in the previous war. The difference between the two periods was that in 1918-19, parade drills, inspections, and military training continued after the fighting had ceased. This continuing presence of military authority did not help improve the

³⁶ Oliver, 318.

³⁷ Oliver, 316.

relationship between officers and the soldiers. In 1945-46, this pressure on the troops was significantly decreased. The Army had come to believe that if soldiers were kept occupied with more enjoyable and useful means of marking time they would neither have the desire nor the will to resist military discipline. "In a sense, the legitimacy of military authority would be reinforced by making it far less obvious and intrusive."³⁸ As a result of this modification of an old plan for relieving boredom, the Army experienced a greater success rate in 1945-46 than it did in 1918-19 in preserving discipline amongst the troops.

The change in the Canadian soldiers' response to demobilization can be attributed to all of the previously discussed differences in the preparation and conduct of the procedure. There was, however, also a difference in the soldiers' attitude themselves. During the First World War, with the exception of individual leave, there was limited interaction between Canadian soldiers and English society. These few short days of vacation could not match the five years between 1939 and 1944 that Canadians spent in England preparing for war and enjoying the simple joys of British pub life.³⁹ This extended stay allowed for the fostering of a better relationship between the guests and their host. This understanding was further enhanced by the German bombings in 1940-41 and later the V1's and V2's.⁴⁰ Brought together by a commonly shared ordeal, the two had a greater appreciation for what the other had to endure during the war, than did the Canadians and British who met in 1918-19.

The remainder of the two demobilisation experiences were relatively similar. A large congestion of troops occurred at the demobilization camps in Britain both in 1918-19 and again in 1945-46. The bottleneck of soldiers attempting to return home in

³⁸ Oliver, 300-01.

³⁹ Stacey and Wilson, *Half-Million*, 160.

⁴⁰ Stacey and Wilson, 174.

1919 was alleviated by the rash of disturbances in the camps between March and April of that year. Under pressure from both the soldiers and the British public, Canadian demobilization organizers, in conjunction with British shipping authorities, were forced to secure additional ships in order to reduce the tension that had been allowed to build up in the Canadian camps. In 1945-46, the obstacles created by shipping delays, dock worker strikes and poor weather were all factors that had been anticipated by the CCDR. The sudden end to the war with Japan helped to ease the frustrations that these delays created, by freeing additional shipping. In doing this, the tension that had been allowed to build up after the First World War was not allowed to reoccur after the Second World War. Having studied the experiences of 1918-19, the significance of having a steady flow of troops returning home without delay had been made apparent to both Canadian civilian and military demobilization organizers.

In order to meet this movement of troops, railway facilities on both sides of the Atlantic were expanded to meet the increase in demand. Even though Canadian railway officials initially pleaded with Ottawa to keep the numbers low, fears of a backlog in troops arriving in Saint John, Halifax and Montreal never materialized. Despite Canadian officials' pride that on average it only took six minutes to process a soldier's paperwork upon arrival in 1918-19, in 1945-46 attempts were made to make this transfer from troopship to train even quicker.

Once back in Canada all that remained for Canadian soldiers in both wars were the parades and ceremonies that marked the return of units and soldiers to the cities and towns that they had represented. Whether it was in 1918-19 or 1945-46, these occasions were commemorated with the pomp and circumstance that the returning heroes deserved. For not only did they mark the victory in war, but for the soldiers who took part it finally signified an end to their long journey home.

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