

Practical Inclusion: Representing French-Canadians in the Army during the Second World War

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This dissertation offers a thorough re-examination of the process and reasons for why French-Canadian representation in the Canadian Army increased during the Second World War. It argues that the army's leadership endeavoured to increase French-Canadian representation because of a shortage of recruits for the expanding army to combat the growing Axis threat and to avoid conscription for overseas service. The Goforth Report in 1941 proposed solutions to increase representation and by 1942-1943, the number of French-speaking units, officers, French language manuals, French language training camps, trades, and advanced training centres increased considerably. During the 1944 reinforcement crisis, senior officers exhausted efforts to maintain Francophone army representation within the four French-speaking battalions prior to sending conscripts overseas. This thesis also argues that French-Canadians, especially when compared to those who joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), made an even more significant contribution to the strength of the wartime Canadian Army.

Other studies in this thesis further explore the French-Canadian army experience. An examination of the Parliamentary debates and the Francophone press shows that most Francophone Members of Parliament (MPs) did not want to participate in another global war while the stance of the French language press was more complex. A random sample of courts martials of both French and English-speaking soldiers shows that the most common crimes were absence without leave (AWL) and desertion. Francophones faced harsher punishments as they were charged and convicted slightly more often of AWL and desertion and spent more time incarcerated for these two crimes. Both language groups also had significant differences to explain their offences. Finally, a study of Francophone soldiers and their Catholic faith shows that Catholicism both sustained and undermined French Canada's relationship with the army.

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The pandemic made research difficult for many academics. During lockdown, Dr. Caroline D'Amours and Dr. Daniel Byers provided me with valuable sources to continue my research. Their generosity helped to write an accurate history of French-Canadians in the army during the Second World War.

A final thank you goes out to my parents and friends who have supported me in the last five years. Without their support, empathy, and nonsensical hilarity, this dissertation would not have been completed.

Dedication

To my uncle Lance Corporal Aldric Joseph d'Eon who was a dispatch rider during the Second World War. He received a mention in despatches for his service.



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List of Abbreviations

British Columbia (BC)
Bureau of Public Information (BPI)
Canadian Army Basic Training Centre (CABTC)
Canadian Army Educational Basic Training Centre (CAEBTC)
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)
Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC)
Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ)
Chief of General Staff (CGS)
Department of National Defence (DND)
Directorate of Special Services (DSS)
Fusiliers de Mont-Royal (FMRs)
General Officer Commanding (GOC)
Judge Advocate General (JAG)
Library and Archives Canada (LAC)
Member of Parliament (MP)
National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ)
National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA)
Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)
Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM)
Officer's Training Centre (OTC)
Prince Edward Island (PEI)
Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA)
Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC)
United Kingdom (UK)
Wartime Information Board (WIB)

Introduction

As Canada declared itself in a state of war on Germany on 10 September 1939, the country mobilised its small army to protect Canada's shores and sent a single division to the United Kingdom (UK) to join in overseas operations. The German conquest of Western Europe, the beginnings of direct attacks on Britain in 1940, and Japan's entry into the war against the western powers with dramatic victories in the Pacific in December 1941, resulted in a large-scale expansion of the army. Men were urgently needed by the tens of thousands to fill its ranks in units both overseas in Europe and on home defence to defend Canada's coasts. There was one major issue however, the Canadian Army had always been a dominantly English-speaking institution, thus discouraging French-Canadians from enlisting. Francophones had few training options and there were few French-speaking units in which they could serve.

The 1941 census shows that there were plenty of French-Canadians available for the army as approximately one third of the Canadian population was Francophone. The total French-speaking population in Canada was 3,655,755 out of a total of 11,506,655 people. Quebec had the highest number with 2,016,089 French speakers and 892,984 bilinguals.¹ For those of the age of military service (19 to 45), the census groups the youngest at 15 to 19 and the oldest at 35 to 44. The total French-speaking population of military service age for both men and women was 1,755,750 (883,693 men and 872,057 women), about half of the total French-Canadian population. Quebec alone had 697,023 men (358,991 unilingual and 338,032 bilingual) and 697,288 women (451,557 unilingual and 245,731 bilingual).² If senior officers wanted an

¹ *Eighth Census of Canada 1941 Vol II: Population by Local Subdivisions*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1944), 740.

² *Eighth Census of Canada 1941 Vol III: Ages of the Population*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty and Controller of Stationery, 1946), 542-545.

expansion of its forces, French-Canadians would need to be encouraged to enlist using French language training facilities, manuals, and French-speaking units.

Increasing French-Canadian representation in the army would serve as a practical solution to meeting recruitment goals. Aspiring to make Canada's army more attractive to Canada's Francophone population involved a broad exercise of mobilising French-speaking units, French language training facilities, translating army manuals, and commissioning French-speaking officers. Some of these efforts proved more successful than others, but they do suggest that an otherwise English-speaking institution went to considerable lengths to make the wartime army more attractive to Canada's Francophone population.

Some historians have examined the efforts made by wartime military and government officials to encourage French-Canadians to enlist in the army, but a thorough examination of the army's leadership's reasons for doing so has yet to be conducted. One particularly significant document to help answer this question is the Goforth Report. It was written in 1941 to better understand and provide solutions for the lack of recruitment in Quebec. Despite its importance, it remains surprisingly understudied. Historian J. Hitsman briefly mentions the report in the context of French-speaking units having difficulty filling their ranks.³ Other historians such as Robert Rumilly, C. P. Stacey, Jean-Yves Gravel, and J. L. Granatstein mention the report in the context of conscription, the army needing men, and French-Canadians having difficulties training or receiving representation.⁴ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier's book on French-Canadians in the

³ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44.

⁴ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la province de Québec Vol. 39* (Ottawa: Fides, 1968), 66; C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 421-422; Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 87-89; J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 58-59.

armed forces does not discuss the report whatsoever. The report will be given much more attention here as it helps to understand how the shortage of recruits was one of the primary reasons why French-Canadian army representation increased.

The primary question this dissertation will answer is: why did the army's leadership decide to increase French-Canadian representation in that service during the Second World War? This dissertation argues that the army's leadership endeavoured to increase French-Canadian representation because of a shortage of recruits for the army's expansion to combat the growing Axis threat and to avoid conscription for overseas service. French-Canadians had little army representation relative to their population in 1939, but the Goforth Report in 1941 proposed solutions to increase it. Through 1942-1943, the report's suggestions helped increase French-Canadian representation in the army considerably. The number of French-speaking units, officers, French language manuals, French language training camps, trades, and advanced training centres helped make the Canadian Army more representative of its French-speaking population. As army priorities (prompted by the war) shifted to fighting overseas in 1944 during the reinforcement crisis, senior officers did everything they could to maintain French-Canadian representation within the depleted ranks of the four French-speaking infantry battalions prior to sending conscripts overseas. Nevertheless, French Canada's contribution to the wartime army, especially in comparison to the First World War, was satisfactory as they filled the ranks of the French-speaking units, both new and old. Others enlisted in English-speaking units.

This study is grounded in a close reading of primary sources from the Library and Archives (LAC). War diaries from the French-speaking units both overseas and on home defence have been examined against the regimental and military histories of Quebec, but few have looked at the enlistment numbers within the home defence units as well as the smaller French-

speaking units. These war diaries helped in assessing their recruiting success to show that French-Canadian military contribution was satisfactory. Other sources from the LAC include army documents containing efforts by senior officers to increase the number of French-speaking officers to highlight the successful increase of French-Canadians who took a commission. Sources relating to solutions proposed by the army's leadership to solve the 1944 reinforcement crisis within the four French-speaking overseas battalions are also used. These sources will show how some of the solutions proposed helped to maintain Francophone army representation.

Other sources include the debates in the House of Commons and French language newspapers. Historians such as Ronald Cormier examined calls from the French language Acadian press for more Francophone army representation, but a thorough examination of the calls by the Francophone press and politicians throughout Canada has yet to be conducted.⁵ They will help to highlight what Francophone MPs and the French language press advocated for in relation to army representation (to little effect), their reaction to its increase, and that they worked to show that French Canada was doing its part in the war effort. All these sources will shed light on how the army's leadership worked to represent French-Canadians to help fill the ranks in the Canadian wartime army.

Debate about the army's lack of Francophone representation is not unique to the Second World War. The CEF offered limited opportunities to join a French-speaking battalion outside of Quebec. There was the 165th Acadian Battalion, created in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1915 and commanded by Louis-Cyriaque D'Aigle. According to Andrew Theobald, the battalion was created with the belief that English military units both hid and threatened Acadian identity. The battalion had a total of 24 officers and 526 men, making it 200 short of full strength. As a result,

⁵ Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 64.

the battalion was disbanded in September 1916 to reinforce the Forestry Corps and the front.⁶ French-Canadians were able to raise 15 battalions. Most were in Quebec, but one was raised in Ottawa, Ontario, two in New Brunswick, and one in Edmonton, Alberta. Only Le Royal 22^e Régiment served overseas while the rest were disbanded to reinforce the unit.⁷ Only two of these 15 French-speaking battalions reached full strength because of competition and a lack of acceptance towards French language contributions.⁸ As will be shown in this dissertation, Francophone army representation increased significantly during the Second World War compared to the first.

By 1917, the need for reinforcements became a greater issue, especially amongst French-Canadians, making conscription necessary. Because Quebec had the most men available for service, Postmaster-General, P. E. Blondin and Major-General François-Louis Lessard tried to create another Quebec battalion to encourage enlistment, but failed.⁹ Conscription was enacted because of the lack of overall volunteers in the CEF which caused strong divisions between English and French-Canadians. The issue of conscription would come back to haunt French-Canadians once again during the Second World War, but there would be a greater effort from the government and the army's leadership to prevent divisions between English and French Canada as well as conscription for overseas service.

The extent of French-Canadian enlistment in the First World War has been the subject of recent scholarship. Historian Nic Clarke stated that French-Canadians did not want to enlist

⁶ Andrew Theobald, *The Bitter Harvest of War: New Brunswick and the Conscription Crisis of 1917* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2008), 44-46.

⁷ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 79.

⁸ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 22.

⁹ K. H. Barry Gallant, "The Development of the Canadian Army as a Unilingual Institution in a Bilingual State," (MA thesis., McGill University, 1968), 49.

despite the army lowering physical standards in 1915 because of manpower shortages.¹⁰ Richard Holt stated that French-Canadians were reluctant to enlist. He cites Desmond Morton who says married men, rural dwellers, and those with deep ancestral roots were the least likely to enlist which according to Granatstein and Hitsman, were more likely to be French-Canadian. He also cites Patrice Dutil who says that Quebec isolationism played a role. Farmer's sons did not want to serve overseas as they believed they would only have to fight if Canada was attacked.¹¹ However, Jean Martin argued the opposite. After counting all soldiers with a French surname within the LAC First World War enlistment records, he found that 74,795 were of French-Canadian origin out of 619,636. These numbers led him to conclude that French-Canadians enlisted in greater numbers than were previously understood. Even when recruits were lacking in 1915-1917, Martin argues that Francophone enlistment was stable compared to other parts of Canada. The worst years for French-Canadian enlistment were 1914 and 1918. They were not welcome in the CEF in 1914 because some unit commanders rejected volunteers who did not fit with the British environment. In 1918, they were conscripted.¹²

The role of French-Canadians in the army continued to be an issue in the next war. The Quebec press and politicians pressed the army to demonstrate that French-Canadians were 'doing their bit', either by enlisting in English-speaking battalions, or in the growing number of French-speaking units that were slowly mobilised through the war. They raised concerns about a shortage of French-speaking officers to lead these units, or of manuals that would allow French-Canadians to train in French. They also called out the dearth of senior French-speaking officers.

¹⁰ Nic Clarke, *Unwanted Warriors: The Rejected Volunteers of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 35-36.

¹¹ Richard Holt, *Filling the Ranks: Manpower in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1918* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 81-82.

¹² Jean Martin, "Yes, French-Canadians Did Their Share in the First World War," *Canadian Military Journal* 17, no. 4 (2017): 49-51.

The memory of the First World War ensured that the experience of the French-speaking soldier in the Second World War was not going to be repeated.

Certainly French-Canadian units in the inter-war period faced the same retrenchment experienced through the tiny Permanent Force and the Non-Permanent Active Militia (NPAM). Even so, there were limited attempts to increase French-Canadian representation. The Royal 22^e became part of the Permanent Force in 1920. To 1939, the Royal 22^e received part of its training in French while its manuals, commands, and external correspondence remained in English. Maurice A. Pope, a First World War veteran and one of the militia's few bilingual officers, was tasked with writing an analysis of the militia for General A. G. L. McNaughton who was then General Officer Commanding (GOC), 1st Division. Pope suggested reorganising the militia to ensure proportionate participation of all citizens. He did not, however, recommend that French-Canadians receive their training and commands in French. This decision according Pariseau and Bernier would cause a shortfall of French-speaking militia and technical units.¹³ Lieutenant-General Maurice Pope served in many areas of the Canadian military during the Second World War such as the Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London and as Vice-Chief of the General Staff in Ottawa. As military staff officer to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, a position he received in September 1944, Pope witnessed the conscription debates in Cabinet and tried to prevent conscripts from being sent overseas.¹⁴ He was one of just a handful of French-speaking officers in 1939 who rose to general rank and worked to increase French-Canadian army representation.

¹³ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 95-100.

¹⁴ Maurice Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoir of Lt. General Maurice A. Pope* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 247; See also Claude LeBlanc, "Maurice A. Pope: A Study in Military Leadership," (PhD diss., Royal Military College of Canada, 2018).

Pre-war changes to Canada's defence plans reflected other problems incorporating French-speaking formations in the event of war. French-speaking units in Military Districts No. 4 in Montreal and No. 5 in Quebec City, were to be part of the militia in branches other than the infantry. However, no officers were available for these units.¹⁵ Still, French-speaking units were not ignored. The 10th Infantry Brigade included Le Régiment de St. Hyacinthe and Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke in addition to the English-speaking Sherbrooke Regiment and armoured Three Rivers Regiment. The Three Rivers Regiment was originally French-speaking, but because French-Canadians were more likely to be anti-military, and many left their homes in search of work, English-Canadians working in local factories took their place. The unit would become bilingual during the Second World War.¹⁶ Other formations such as the 11th and 13th Infantry Brigades consisted entirely of French-speaking units. The 15th Brigade included Le Régiment de Québec, Lévis, Les Voltigeurs de Québec, and the English-speaking Royal Rifles of Canada.¹⁷ Senior officers did indeed endeavour to include a French-speaking brigade for overseas service during the Second World War, but they would fail in the face of the practical and strategic realities of the early war years.

The army formed three defence schemes in the 1920s. Defence Scheme No. 1 was directed at the United States, the second at Japan, and the third for intervention overseas.¹⁸ In 1937, army planners revised Defence Scheme No. 3 to include a Mobile Force to support coastal defences, or, if the government so decided, to go overseas. Units would be selected based on

¹⁵ LAC, RG24-C-1-a, Vol. 6415, File HQ-154-1-6. French-speaking Representation in Active Force, 6 May 1946.

¹⁶ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 96; Jean-Yves Gravel, *Les Soldats-Citoyens: Histoire du Régiment de Trois-Rivières, 1871-1978* (Trois-Rivières: Éditions du Bien Public, 1981), 28-29.

¹⁷ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 96.

¹⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 29-30.

their efficiency by the officers commanding Canada's 11 military districts. Most French-speaking militia units were not selected because of peacetime inaction. The Permanent Force Royal 22^e was the only French-speaking unit available.¹⁹ In July 1939, Defence Scheme No. 3 changed again, listing units for coastal garrison duty, and to protect Canada's vulnerable points. Included were refined plans for the Mobile Force of two divisions and ancillary troops for employment in Canada, or despatch overseas, all of which could be mobilised by short telegraph messages to the district commands across the country.²⁰ Much however would have to be done to bring the small peacetime units up to war strength. There would, moreover, have to be special efforts if French-Canadians were to have a place in the army.

The lack of French-Canadian representation in the army did not deter historians from writing about them. The historiography of French Canada during the Second World War includes many regimental histories. Some were published to commemorate a unit's one hundredth anniversary and others to showcase their presence in the Canadian Army. From the late 1700s to the start of the First World War, 15 French-speaking infantry regiments were formed that served during the Second World War. The regimental histories of these units, which are books published by the unit and/ or written by historians, give details regarding their battles, daily activities, training, and formation.²¹ The significance of these regimental histories is that they

¹⁹ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 5; *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 31-33.

²¹ G. E. Marquis, *Le Régiment de Lévis: Historique et Album* (Lévis, 1952); *Les Voltigeurs de Québec: Notes Historiques* (Québec: Voltigeurs de Québec, 1952); C. D. Guy de Merlis, *Le Régiment de Hull, 1914-1964* (Hull: Le Régiment de Hull, 1964); Charles-Marie Boissonault, *Histoire du Royal 22^e Régiment* (Québec: Régie du Royal 22^e Régiment, 1964); Jacques Gouin, *Par la bouche de nos canons: Histoire du 4^e régiment d'artillerie moyenne, 4th Cdn Medium Regt, RCA, 1941-1945* (Hull: Gasparo Limité, 1970); *Cent ans d'Histoire d'un Régiment Canadien-Français: Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal, 1869-1969* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1971); Gérard Marchand, *Le Régiment de Maisonneuve Vers la Victoire, 1944-1945* (Montréal: Les Presses Livres, 1980); Jacques Gouin et al, *Bon cœur et bon bras: Histoire du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1880-1980* (Montréal: Cercles des officiers du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1980); Denise Rioux, *Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 1910-1980* (Sherbrooke: Université

highlight the participation of French-speaking units in war. While some are drawn directly from unit war diaries, they provide insight into mobilisation, casualties, and their disbandment. All this information was useful when writing this dissertation to understand their journey throughout the war and the struggles they faced during recruitment.

French-Canadian military memoirs started to appear as early as the 1940s from both veterans of the army and air force.²² The majority simply describe their time in service and do

de Sherbrooke, 1980); Jean-Yves Gravel, *Les Soldats-Citoyens: Histoire du Régiment de Trois-Rivières, 1871-1978* (Trois-Rivières: Éditions du Bien Public, 1981); Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983); Jacques Castonguay, *Les Voltigeurs de Québec: Premier Régiment Canadien-Français* (Québec: Voltigeurs de Québec, 1987); Paul Corriveau, *Le Royal 22e Régiment: 75 ans d'histoire, 1914-1989* (Québec: Régie du Royal 22e Régiment, 1989); François Dornier and Marie-Claude Joubert, *Soldats de la Côte: Les Fusiliers du St-Laurent: d'hier à aujourd'hui* (Rimouski: La Régie du régiment, Les fusiliers du Saint-Laurent, 1992); Serge Bernier, *Le Royal 22e Régiment 1914-1999* (Montréal: Art global, 1999); See also François Pouliotte, "Le Royal 22e Régiment pendant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale: une étude socio-militaire," (MA thesis., Université de Québec à Montréal, 1995); Laurier Duchesne, *Le Régiment du Saguenay, 1900-2000* (Chicoutimi: Les Éditions Felix, 2000); Sébastien Denis and James Beaulieu, *Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent: déjà 140 ans: 1869-2009* (Rimouski: La Régie des Fusiliers du St. Laurent, 2009); Michel Litalien, *Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 1910-2010: L'épopée d'une institution des Cantons-de-l'Est* (Sherbrooke: GGC éditions, 2010); Michel Litalien, *Le Régiment de Maisonneuve: Régiment Officiel de la Ville de Montréal, 1880-2017* (Ottawa: Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2018); Michel Litalien, *Honneur et Devoir: Le Régiment de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1871 à 1956* (Ottawa: Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2018); Bill Rawling, *L'Alouette en Guerre: La 425e Escadrille, 1939-1945* (Outremont: Athéna Éditions, 2010); Gilbert Boulanger, *L'alouette affolée: Un adolescent à la guerre* (Sherbrooke: G. Boulanger, 2006); Marc-André Valiquette, *Je te plumerai: 425 Alouette Squadron: Defending Freedom since 1942* (Laval: Imaviation, 2012).

²² Robert Bernier, *Jacques Chevrier: Chef d'escadrille R.C.A.F. tombé en service au large de Cap-Chat* (Montréal: Éditions: de L'A.C.J.C., 1943); Charles Miville-Dechénes, *Souvenirs de guerre* (Québec: s. é., 1946); Sévigny Pierre, *Face à l'ennemi* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1946); J. G. Poulin, *696 heures d'enfer avec le Royal 22e Régiment: Récit vécu et inspiré d'un journal tenu tant bien que mal au front* (Québec: Éditions A. B., 1946); Alphonse-Claude Laboissière, *Journal d'un aumônier militaire, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Éditions franciscaines, 1948); Pierre Vallée, *Prisonnier à l'oflag 79* (Montréal: Éditions de l'Homme, 1964); Lucien Dumais, *Un Canadien français à Dieppe* (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1968); Lucien Dumais, *Un Canadien français face à la Gestapo* (Montréal: Éditions du jour, 1970); Maurice Desjardins, *Mo-Mo s'en va-t-en guerre* (Montréal: Ferron Éditeur, 1973); Jacques Gouin, *Lettres de Guerre d'un Québécois, 1942-1945* (Québec: Éditions du Jour, 1975); Maurice Juteau, *Ma drôle de guerre* (Farnham: Formulaires Durcharme Inc., 1980); Maurice Juteau, *L'envers de ma guerre* (Farnham: Formulaires Durcharme Inc., 1982); Jacques Henry, *La Normandie en flammes: Journal de guerre de Gérard Leroux, Capitaine au Régiment canadien de la Chaudière* (Condé-sur-Noireau: Éditions C. Corlet, 1984); Jacques Gouin and Lucien Brault, *Les Panet de Québec: Histoire d'une lignée militaire* (Montréal: Bergeron Éditeur, 1984); Veterans Canada, *Uncommon Courage: Canadian Secret Agents in the Second World War* (Ottawa: Veterans Affairs, 1985); Claude Châtillon, *Carnets de guerre: Ottawa – Casa Berardi 1941-1944* (Ottawa: Les Éditions du Vermillon, 1987); Léon Balcer, *Léon Balcer raconte* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1988); Arthur Gladu, *Tel que j'étais...récit autobiographique* (Montréal: Éditions de l'Hexagone, 1988); Louis A. Sirois, *Un Canadien derrière les lignes ennemies* (Regina: Les Éditions Louis Riel, 1991); Roland Bernier, *Carnet de Guerre* (Cap-Saint-Ignace: Amicale des vétérans, 1992); Maurice Taillefer, *Maurice Taillefer: Pilote de l'Aviation royale du Canada* (Chicoutimi: Les Éditions JCL, 1992); Marjolaine Saint-Pierre, *Léo Gariépy: Un héros récupéré* (Varenes: Éditions de Varenes, 1993); Gabriel Taschereau, *Du salpêtre dans le gruuau: Souvenirs d'escadrille, 1939-1945* (Sillery: Éditions du Septentrion, 1993); Charles Forbes, *Fantassin: Pour mon pays, la gloire et...des prunes*

not discuss anything relating specifically to French-Canadians. Others mention how their backgrounds provided real assets, especially in France. Ronald Cormier (1988 and 1990) mentions how Acadian Fidèle Landry of the North Shore New Brunswick Regiment helped destroy German fortifications in Normandy by speaking to a local Frenchman who had previously worked on them. They were promptly destroyed by the navy.²³ This example is an exception as most Acadian Second World War veterans Cormier interviewed only discuss the harsh realities of war.²⁴

(Sillery: Les éditions du Septentrion, 1994); Lucien A. Côté, *Je les ai vu mourir: les souvenirs de guerre d'un jeune soldat canadien-français* (Montréal: Macadam, 1995); Ernest Laliberté, *Conscription, amour, guerre, 1939-1945* (Chicoutimi: Édition Myrtille, 1996); Georges Verreault, *Diary of a Prisoner of War in Japan, 1941-1945* (Rimouski: Michel Verreault, 1996); Ludger Houde, *1939-45, ma guerre, mon implication personnelle et générale: Récit anecdotique* (Boucherville: Éditions Sans âge, 1997); Denis Chantal and Louis Rasmussen, *Armand Hébert: Le plus grand mutilé du Royal 22^e Régiment de la guerre 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Orion, 1997); Geneviève Auger and Raymonde Lamothe, *De la poêle à frire à la ligne de feu, La vie quotidienne des Québécois pendant la guerre 1939-1945* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1981); Paul Brisson, *Coq-à-l'âne de mes souvenirs* (Beloeil: Paul Brisson, 2000); Norman Shannon, "Gentille Alouette: 425 Squadron's Big Sixty," *Esprit de Corps* 10, no. 173 (2002): 15-16; Roy MacLaren, *Derrière les lignes ennemies* (Montréal: Lux Éditeur, 2002); Stevens LeBlanc, *Mon plus beau souhait: Revenir sur les îles de mon enfance* (Québec: 2003); Émilien Dufresne, *Calepin d'espoir* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2003); Charles Laforce, *Soldat de cœur: Mémoires de la guerre, 1939-1945* (Montréal: MFR Éditeur, 2003); Sébastien Vincent, *Laissés dans l'ombre: quatorze Québécois racontent leur participation volontaire à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2004); Charles Laforce, *Retour à la vie civile* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2004); Pierre Vennat, *Général Dollard Ménard, de Dieppe au référendum* (Montréal: Art Global, 2004); Bernard Castonguay, *Prisonnier de guerre au Japon (1941-1945)* (Montréal: Marquis, 2005); Jacques Nadeau, *Dieppe, ma prison: Récit de guerre de Jacques Nadeau* (Outremont: Athéna éditions, 2008); André Duchesnay, *Les anges gardiens de la guerre: Mémoires d'un aviateur de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Montréal: Carte Blanche, 2008); J. S. Benoit, *Journal de guerre* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2011); Germain Nault, *J'ai Survécu au Débarquement: Germain Nault, Ancien Combattant, se Raconte: Témoignage* (Chicoutimi: Les Éditions JCL, 2012); Paul Dumaine, "Keeping His Memories Alive: Paul Dumaine Fusiliers de Mont-Royal Second World War," *Esprit de Corps* 22, no. 1 (2015): 48; Lorenzo Tremblay, "Keeping His Memories Alive: Lorenzo Tremblay Régiment de la Chaudière Second World War," *Esprit de Corps* 24, no. 6 (2017): 48; Fernand Lauzon, *C'était les Ordres: Récit du Soldat Canadien Fernand Lauzon, 1939-1945* (Gatineau: Paul Lauzon, 2018).

²³ Ronald Cormier, *The Forgotten Soldiers: Stories from Acadian Veterans of the Second World War* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press 1992), 67. See other notable memoirs such as Maurice Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoir of Lt. General Maurice A. Pope* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Jean V. Allard and Serge Bernier, *The Memoirs of General Jean V. Allard* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988); William Henry Pope, *Leading the Front: The War Memoirs of Harry Pope* (Waterloo: The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, 2002); John Macfarlane *Triquet's Cross: A Study of Military Heroism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

²⁴ See Ronald Cormier, *J'ai vécu la guerre: Témoignages de soldats acadiens, 1939-1945* (Moncton: Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1988); Ronald Cormier, *Entre bombes et barbelés: Témoignages d'aviateurs et de prisonniers de guerre acadiens, 1939-1945* (Moncton: Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1990). See also Joseph Gautreau, "Keeping His Memories Alive: Joseph Gautreau 1st Can Para Battalion Second World War," *Esprit de Corps* 21, no. 11 (2014): 50; Anselme Bourque, *My Experiences: Royal Canadian Air Force World War II 1939-1945* (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, 1996); Yvette Saulnier-Johnson, *Memoirs of an Acadian WWII Soldier* (Tusket: Argyle Township Courthouse and

These memoirs have received some academic attention. In his analysis of French-Canadian memoirs and novels, Historian Sébastien Vincent (2010) argues that they should be read alongside historical documents or books to better understand the war since human memory is not always accurate. He also states that memoirs should be seen as accounts that have changed through time and word of mouth. Vincent demonstrates that these memoirs form a collective record of life on the front lines, but not necessarily specific to French-Canadians.²⁵ Most memoirs discuss experiences which could relate to anybody serving overseas, meaning many will not be used here. Sergeant-Major Charles Martin of the Queen's Own Rifles and Acadian Zoël LeBlanc of the North Shore New Brunswick Regiment recount similar experiences during Operation Overlord (D-Day) such as the machine gun and mortar fire as well as feeling calm amidst the chaos.²⁶ The only major difference as noted above would be their ability to interact with other Francophones. The significance of these French-Canadian memoirs is that they highlight their service during the war and some of the unique roles they played.

Official histories written by historians of the Canadian Army Historical Section, G. W. L. Nicholson (1956) and C. P. Stacey (1955 and 1960), contain considerably less information about French-Canadians compared to the regimental histories and memoirs.²⁷ However, J. Mackay Hitsman (1953), who worked for Stacey at the Department of National Defence (DND), wrote about Canada's manpower pool during the Second World War which includes a section that

Archives, 2014); There is also *The Argus*, a locally published newsletter in the municipality of Argyle, Nova Scotia, which sometimes contains Acadian memoirs from the war.

²⁵ Sébastien Vincent, *Ils ont écrit la guerre: La Seconde Guerre mondiale à travers des écrits de combattants canadien-français* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2010), 31-32; *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁶ Ronald Cormier, *The Forgotten Soldiers: Stories from Acadian Veterans of the Second World War* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press 1992), 82; Charles Martin and Roy Whitsed, *Battle Diary: From D-Day and Normandy to the Zuider Zee and VE* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996), 5-6.

²⁷ G. W. L. Nicholson, *The Canadians in Italy, 1943-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1956); C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957); C. P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe, 1944-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1960).

explores the shortage of French-speaking infantrymen in 1944 and how the army's leadership tried to resolve it. He argues (quoting Lieutenant-General Ernest William Sansom, former II Canadian Corps commander) that the crisis was not resolved until January 1945 when home defence units were sent overseas.²⁸ His work will be used and supplemented with primary sources to provide a more complete picture of how senior officers tried to fill the ranks within the overseas French-speaking battalions in order to maintain Francophone representation. Some solutions helped, but in the end, conscripts had to be sent overseas.

C. P. Stacey's *Arms, Men, and Governments* (1970) gave much more attention to French-speaking representation in the military. Coming just two years after the Canadian Armed Forces became bilingual in 1968, the book gives a closer examination of the army's administrative, organisational, and policy aspects briefly discussed in the army's official histories. Stacey argues that Quebec only had 25.69 percent of its eligible men serve during the war, suggesting that the province could have done more. He also briefly mentions the abandonment of the French-speaking brigade (also discussed in *Six Years of War*), the lack French-speaking officers, and ways in which senior officers sought to increase French-Canadian representation.²⁹ This dissertation will expand on what Stacey has briefly touched on to show how wartime needs increased Francophone representation in the army. It will also argue counter to Stacey that French-Canadian army contribution was satisfactory.

Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier (1986) add to the conversation by covering 200 years of French-Canadian military history to highlight their participation in numerous wars. Their single

²⁸ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 481.

²⁹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 420-424; C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 45.

chapter on the Second World War provides a useful list of French-speaking units and training camps. They also briefly discuss enlistment rates, the lack of French-speaking officers, and the lack of resources to train French-speaking soldiers. They disagree with Stacey as they conclude that French-Canadian participation in the Second World War should be praised, and that representation had improved since the First World War. Pariseau and Bernier believe, however, that French-Canadian participation would have increased if there had been greater Francophone military representation.³⁰ This dissertation will make a similar argument, but will emphasise that the army's leadership during the Second World War provided much more representation than previously thought.

When examining the historiography by province, it is not surprising that Quebec has the most works on French-Canadian Second World War history. One cannot separate the study of French Canada's military past with the impact of the Quiet Revolution and a growing French-Canadian nationalism in the post-war. Barry Gallant (1968) published his master's thesis on the willingness of French-Canadians to participate in war from 1763 to Korea based on the effects of the army's institutional structure. Using works from Hitsman, Stacey, and regimental histories, he argued that during the Second World War, French-Canadians largely refused to participate in the army overseas. For home defence however, their participation was proportionate to their population.³¹ But Gallant ignores the number of French-Canadians who enlisted in English-speaking units, a fact that would soon be covered by historian Jean-Yves Gravel in the 1970s.³²

³⁰ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 117-122; *Ibid.*, 127; *Ibid.*, 142; See also *The Second Quebec Conference Revisited*, ed David B. Woolner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) and J. L. Granatstein, "Ethnic and Religious Enlistment in Canada During the Second World War," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 21 (2014): 175-176.

³¹ K. H. Barry Gallant, "The Development of the Canadian Army as a Unilingual Institution in a Bilingual State," (MA thesis., McGill University, 1968), ii; K. H. Barry Gallant, *Ibid.*, 121.

³² See Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 87-88.

The decade of Quebec's Quiet Revolution brought some debate about French Canada's wartime role. Robert Rumilly (1968) countered Gallant by examining recruiting. He argues that the province played its part despite struggles with military representation.³³ Mason Wade (1968) turned to the home front, drawing upon Quebec newspapers to argue that Quebecers saw the war as a righteous one, citing threats to Catholicism and the spreading of communism as reasons to fight. However, he argues that Quebecers wanted to remain neutral or have limited participation. Wade also argues that the French language press outside Quebec also wanted to remain neutral, but cites only *Le Droit* in Ontario as evidence. He also mentions how Quebecers opposed conscription which was made apparent with the rise of the *Bloc Populaire*, a political party which held anti-conscriptionists and anti-imperialist sentiments.³⁴

This thesis will address some of these issues. Chapter one will show how French language newspapers beyond Quebec showed concern with the purge of Catholicism in Europe under Nazi rule. It will also argue counter to Wade that while French language newspapers such as *Le Devoir* vehemently opposed participating in another war, some outside Quebec supported it. This dissertation will also support Rumilly's argument by using enlistment figures in French-speaking and some English-speaking units to show that French Canada did do its part.

The 1990s saw different approaches providing new insight into French-Canadians and the army. J. L. Granatstein's (1993) study of the army's wartime generals provided some brief insights on senior French-speaking officers. He says many Francophones were unqualified to

³³ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la province de Québec Vol. 38-41* (Ottawa: Fides, 1968), 65-67. See also Charles-Marie Boissonault, *Histoire Politico-Militaire des Canadiens-Français, 1763-1945* (Trois-Rivières: Éditions du Bien Public, 1967).

³⁴ Mason Wade, *The French-Canadians, 1760-1967 Vol II* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 922-928; *Ibid.*, 957; See also Ramsay Cook, *French-Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969), 228; Paul André Comeau, *Le Bloc Populaire, 1942-1948* (Montréal: Québec/ Amérique, 1982) for more on the Bloc Populaire.

take a commission due to language difficulties and lack of education. Senior officers were also desperately looking for French-speaking candidates.³⁵ This dissertation will provide a re-examination of this issue to demonstrate how senior officers increased the number of French-speaking officers through additional training.

Others sought to insert French-Canadians in places where they have been forgotten. Long time Quebec journalist and historian Pierre Vennat (1997-1998) published a three-volume set discussing Quebec's military history during the Second World War. These books were written to highlight French-Canadian participation.³⁶ He discusses notable French-speaking officers such as Brigadier-General Thomas-Louis Tremblay, First World War commander of the Royal 22^e. He also examines home defence, conscription, battles, and French-speaking units in the infantry and artillery to highlight the French-Canadian presence in these areas.³⁷ His books help to show that French-Canadian military contribution was greater than previously thought hence the title: *Les héros oubliés*.

The popularity of Vennat's accounts reflected a wider interest inspired by the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Even French-speaking academic historians took note. In 1995, the *Bulletin d'histoire politique* published a series of articles discussing the historiography of French-Canadians in Quebec. Gilbert Drolet explored how novels such as *La Guerre! Yes Sir* by Roch Carrière and others reflected wartime society by showcasing stories of average Quebec soldiers. He notes their reasons for enlisting such as adventure and

³⁵ J. L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1993), 238-241; See also Geoffrey Hayes, *Crerar's Lieutenants: Inventing the Canadian Junior Army Officer, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

³⁶ Pierre Vennat, *Les héros oubliés: L'histoire inédite des militaires canadien-français de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale Tome I* (Montréal: Éditions du Méridien, 1997), 11.

³⁷ Pierre Vennat, *Les héros oubliés: L'histoire inédite des militaires canadien-français de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale Tome I-III* (Montréal: Éditions du Méridien, 1997-1998).

unemployment as well as their combat experience. Béatrice Richard et al discuss French-speaking soldier participation using secondary sources by Serge Bernier, Jean Pariseau, and Jean-Yves Gravel. They argue how their memory of the war does not discuss how it affected Quebec society. They also note a lack of studies on French-speaking enlistment numbers and how their participation at Dieppe, D-Day, and Italy have been ignored. However, Serge Bernier estimates that over 160,000 Francophones volunteered in all three military branches. Francophone Quebecers did participate during the war.³⁸ This dissertation will help to provide French-speaking enlistment numbers, especially in relation to the home defence units. It will also show that the reasons why French-Canadians enlisted did indeed revolve around adventure, but less so for unemployment. These works marked a shift in the literature as historians began to examine soldier's lives while others inserted French-Canadians in areas where they have been previously left out.

Terry Copp and Christine Hamelin (1999) examined soldiers of Le Régiment de Maisonneuve to discuss casualties, the soldiers' year of enlistment, education, their father's occupation, and AWL rates in England. This article provides insight into the jobs they worked back home, how many years they spent in school, family size, etc., and demonstrates that going

³⁸ Robert Comeau, "Présentation: La participation des Canadiens français à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 3, no. 3-4 (1995): 13-14; Jean-Pierre Gagnon, "Les historiens canadien-français et la participation canadien-français à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 3, no. 3-4 (1995): 25-42; Gilbert Drolet, "La littérature de guerre du Canada français," *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, 3, no. 3-4 (1995): 334-337; Béatrice Richard et al. "La Participation des soldats canadiens-français à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale: Une histoire de trous de mémoire," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 3, no. 3/ 4 (1995): 383-392; Serge Bernier, "Participation des Canadiens français aux combats: évaluation et tentative de quantification," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 3, no. 3/ 4 (1995): 23. See also Sébastien Vincet, "Les frères d'armes, le Royal 22^e Régiment et l'armée canadienne dans les témoignages publiés par des combattants Québécois Francophones avant participé à la campagne d'Italie, 1943-1945," *Bulletin d'histoire politiques* 16, no. 2 (2008): 179-196; Wilfrid Sanders, *Jack et Jacques: L'opinion publique au Canada pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Montréal: Éditeurs à l'enseigne du chien d'or, 1996), 12-13.

AWL was a common occurrence amongst soldiers in the unit.³⁹ These two things will be further examined within the courts martial records to reveal how the home lives of soldiers impacted their reasons for going AWL, and that AWL was frequently committed by Canadian soldiers in general.

The 2000s saw more French-Canadian soldiers being examined by Yves Tremblay (2006). He interviewed French-speaking soldiers from Quebec and discusses their reasons for enlisting. His discussions of training and combat reveal how many French-Canadians had difficulties with English. For example, one soldier failed to become an officer because he could not communicate in English properly by radio.⁴⁰ This work jives with that of Serge Durflinger (2006) who discusses civilian and military participation in Verdun, Quebec where the community was 58 percent English and 42 percent French. He examines how both groups interacted with one another, arguing that they cooperated and equally supported the war effort.⁴¹ He also highlights the difficulties with language as many French-Canadians could not work or train in French. Despite that, 329 unilingual French-speaking soldiers enlisted in Verdun.⁴² As will be shown however, the army's leadership went to considerable lengths to give French-Canadians training in their own language for both officers and other ranks.

³⁹ Terry Copp and Christine Hamelin, "Le Régiment de Maisonneuve: A Profile Based on Personnel Records," *Canadian Military History* 8, no. 4 (1999): 17-21; See also Caroline D'Amours, "Idéalistes, pragmatiques et les autres Profils des volontaires du Régiment de la Chaudière, 1939-1945," *Histoire Social/ Social History* 51, no. 103 (2018): 125-147.

⁴⁰ Yves Tremblay, *Volontaires: Des Québécois en guerre, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Athéna, 2006), 22; See also Bernard Lejeune, *A la Recherche de L'Etoile France-Allemagne: Histoires de Soldats Latuquois* (L'Assomption: Bernard Lejeune, 2008).

⁴¹ Serge Durflinger, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 3-5; See also Jean-Marie Fallu, *Le Québec et la guerre 1860-1954* (Sainte Foy: Publications du Québec, 2003) for an illustrated history of Quebec during the Second World War.

⁴² Serge Durflinger, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 34; See also Jacques Castonguay, *C'était la guerre à Québec* (Montréal: Art Global, 2003); Patricia Burns, *Life on the Home Front: Montreal, 1939-1945*. Montréal: Véhicule, 2012).

The place of Francophones in the Canadian military drew attention when Canada's deployments to Afghanistan increasingly divided Canadians, especially in French Canada. Bernd Horn and Roch Legault (2007) explored French-speaking military leaders from the colonial period to the Rwandan Genocide. They highlight how French-speaking men in the navy rarely received promotions during the Second World War despite their heroic efforts. This was the case for Lieutenant Commander Stanislas Déry who sank a German submarine on 27 December 1944. Their work then examined Jacques Dextraze and his heroic efforts in Normandy.⁴³ These books in the 2000s demonstrate how there were multiple areas where historians explored French-Canadian military history. New areas were being examined such as the home front and the navy.

More recent works continue to highlight French-Canadian participation while also arguing against common myths. Caroline D'Amours (2012) examines reinforcements in Le Régiment de la Chaudière during the 1944 reinforcement crisis. Rather than examining the reinforcement crisis itself, she argues that contrary to popular belief, reinforcements were well trained.⁴⁴ That being said, she provides useful historical context for this dissertation, specifically in relation to strength numbers. Daniel Byers (2016) discusses conscripts and gives special attention to French-Canadians. He makes the important point that most conscripts were not French-Canadian or of a foreign background as most assumed. They instead reflected the demographics of Canada, which was majority English-Canadian. This work is significant because it shattered the myth that most conscripts were French-Canadian, a belief commonly

⁴³ Horn, Bernd and Roch Legault: *Loyal Service: Perspectives on French-Canadian Military Leaders* (Toronto: Dundurn Group, 2007), 238. *Ibid.*, 248. *Ibid.*, 268-272; See also Aimé-Jules Bizimana, *De Marcel Ouimet à René Levesque: Les Correspondants de guerre canadiens-français durant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2007); Serge Bernier et al, *Military History of Quebec City, 1608-2008* (Montreal: Art Global, 2008); Jean-Pierre Gagnon, *Une vie de soldat: le Général Jacques A. Dextraze* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université de Laval, 2019).

⁴⁴ Caroline D'Amours, "Reassessment of a Crisis: Canadian Infantry Reinforcements during the Second World War," *The Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 14, no 2 (2012), 73.

held by Anglophones who thought that French-Canadians did not contribute to the war effort. It also gives insight into the increase of French language training.⁴⁵ This book, like others discussed here, helps to demonstrate that many French-Canadians did support the war effort. This dissertation will expand on this work by looking more closely at the enlistment numbers of French-speaking home defence units and how they helped to provide reinforcements for the four French-speaking battalions overseas.

The historiography of French-Canadians in Quebec during the Second World War reveals a persistent debate about whether French Canada did its bit. The regimental histories show that French-speaking units did exist even though few were present in the official histories that tended to limit or critique French-Canadian participation. Officers such as Maurice Pope showed concern for the lack of French-speaking recruits while regimental histories focused on their formation, battles, and training. The historiography of Quebec's military history also shows a shift in focus. It began with Quebec's politics during the war in the 1960s, more representation in the 1970s, inserting them in places previously left out in the 1990s, and the home front in the 2000s. Despite these shifts, many aim to show that French-Canadians participated in the war.

The issue of Acadian participation in the Second World War has garnered considerable attention amongst historians of that community. This dissertation also contributes to our understanding of the Acadians in the wartime Canadian Army. Works on Acadians appeared in the 1940s, much sooner than those from Quebec. Emile Lauvrière (1947) briefly covers everything from the first explorers and founders of Acadia in the 16th and 17th centuries to

⁴⁵ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 6; *Ibid.*, 57-59; See also Yves Tremblay, "1940, la conscription (1re partie)," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 26, no. 1 (2017): 335-350; Yves Tremblay, "1940, la conscription (2e partie)," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 26, no. 2 (2018): 283.

Acadians in modern times. Lauvrière discusses the editor's wartime opinions of the Acadian newspaper *La Voix d'Évangeline* during the Second World War. He also shows statistics for voluntary enlistments and war bond purchases. Lauvrière claims that Acadians did not know "French" (most likely referring to their dialect), meaning they could not join French-speaking units. He also claims that because Acadians did not have their own pre-war militia, they were less prepared than the average Canadian to enlist and go into basic training, though he gives no evidence to prove any of these claims.⁴⁶ This book, as well as others published during this time, do not reveal much about Acadian or French-Canadian history during the war, but they do highlight the potential challenges of Acadian participation. This dissertation will build on these works by highlighting their struggle to obtain representation through units and French language training, and where they enlisted.

The 1980s and 1990s saw works coming to different conclusions about the Acadian stance on conscription. Philippe Doucet (1982) claims that most Acadians and French-Canadians were against conscription but despite this, still supported the war.⁴⁷ Ronald Cormier (1996) also maintains that Acadians supported the war effort but opposed conscription.⁴⁸ Helen Jean McClelland Nugent (1983) argues that Acadians acquiesced to the pro-conscription stance of the Maritime community.⁴⁹ Nugent disagrees with Doucet even though she suggests that Acadians were reluctant to support conscription. The problem of conscription is tackled again in an

⁴⁶ Émile Lauvrière, *Brève histoire tragique: son martyre et sa résurrection* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1947), 198-199; See also Guy Courteau and François Lanoue, *Une Nouvelle Acadie, Saint-Jacques de l'Achigan*, (Montréal: Imprimerie Populaire Limitée, 1949); J. Henry Blanchard, *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island 1720-1964* (Ottawa: Le Droit and Leclerc Commercial Printers, 1964).

⁴⁷ Philippe Doucet, "Politics and the Acadians," in *Acadians in the Maritimes: Thematic Studies*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Centres d'études acadiennes, 1982), 257-259.

⁴⁸ Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 110; Ronald Cormier, "Les Acadiens, la conscription et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale: "une question de race...", *Les Cahiers* 41, no. 2 (2010): 127.

⁴⁹ Helen Jean McClelland Nugent, "The Acadian Response to the Conscription Crisis of World War II," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1983), 113.

undergraduate thesis by Patricia D. Thibodeau (1997). She argues that because of the 1942 plebiscite on conscription, New Brunswick Acadians became more politically expressive and rekindled their identity. As a result, New Brunswick Acadians gained more rights after the Second World War.⁵⁰ Also, she agrees with Doucet that Acadians opposed conscription but says this opposition resulted from them wanting political equality.⁵¹ I also argue that Acadians opposed conscription as opinion polls (noted by Granatstein) claim that amongst French-Canadians (including those outside Quebec), the “no” vote was closer to 90 percent.⁵²

The most recent works are master’s theses written by Ryan d’Eon (2018) and Nancy Carvell (2019). The former examines Acadians from south shore Nova Scotia and the latter from New Brunswick. My master’s thesis argues that south shore Nova Scotia Acadians supported the war effort, the nation, and the British Empire. Their motivation was to protect their religion (Catholicism) which was being stripped from Europeans. Despite their involvement in the war effort, they also supported their local communities.⁵³ Carvell’s thesis argues that New Brunswick Acadians opposed conscription, thus agreeing with Doucet and Thibodeau. She also argues that they supported the war effort and that their opposition to conscription was more nuanced than in Quebec.⁵⁴ Both these theses and other works show that Acadians supported the war effort but

⁵⁰ Patricia D. Thibodeau, “The Re-Emergence of an Acadian Collective Identity as Highlighted by the Conscription Crisis of 1942” (undergrad thesis, Mount Allison University, 1997), 2-4.

⁵¹ Thibodeau, “The Re-Emergence of an Acadian Collective Identity as Highlighted by the Conscription Crisis of 1942,” 51; See also Mélanie Morin-Pelletier, “‘j’ai combattu le bon combat, j’ai achevé ma course, j’ai gardé la foi’: Récit de guerre d’un conscrit néo-brunswickois, 1943-1945,” *Canadian Military History* 22, no. 4 (2015): 45-58; Julien Massicotte and Mélanie LeBlanc, “l’Acadie et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale,” *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 45, no. 2 (2016): 49-67.

⁵² J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 96.

⁵³ Ryan d’Eon, “Away but Still at Home: A History of South Shore Nova Scotian Acadians During the Second World War,” (MA thesis., University of New Brunswick, 2018), 17.

⁵⁴ Nancy Carvell, “A People Apart: New Brunswick Acadians, Conscription, and the Second World War,” (MA thesis., Carleton University, 2019), ii.

were opposed to conscription as was the case for the rest of French Canada. Still, they also faced special challenges, for the government ignored repeated calls for an Acadian army unit.

This study of French-Canadians in the army during the Second World War will demonstrate how the army's leadership successfully promoted greater French-Canadian representation. Doing so was a practical way for the army's leadership to meet the army's demands of expansion when recruiting was falling short. It will also show how French Canada's contribution in relation to the army's need for recruits was satisfactory.

The first chapter will begin with an analysis of Francophone opinion on Canada's participation in 1939 in the French language press and Parliament to show that not all Francophones were against participation and had a wide range of views. It argues that French-Canadian MPs were mostly opposed to overseas conscription but supported home defence and stressed loyalty to Canada and the Empire. French language newspapers, on the other hand, held a variety of views. Most saw the Axis as a threat, but only those from the Maritimes wanted participation. Ontario and Quebec's French language press opposed participation and most from the Prairies took a neutral stance, publishing on both sides of the debate.

The second chapter will cover 1939 to 1941. It will discuss the state of the Canadian Army to demonstrate how the need for recruits resulted in increased representation for French-Canadians. A discussion on recruitment advertisements directed towards Francophones, their motivations for enlisting, and the growth of French and bilingual training camps will be included. It argues that 1941 marked the point when senior officers steadily increased French-Canadian army representation due to the need for recruits. It will also show how despite the lack of representation during this period, French-speaking units filled their ranks.

The third chapter, covering 1942-1943, examines how solutions proposed in 1941 helped increase French-Canadian representation in the army considerably. The increase of trades and advanced training, French-speaking units, and French-speaking officers form the largest part of this chapter. It argues that French-Canadian representation increased in 1942-1943 because of a shortage of recruits when they were most needed to sustain expansion of the army. Encouraging French-Canadians to enlist to foster the army's growth resulted in a wider range of French language training facilities, more French-speaking units, and officers. It also shows how units, both English and French-speaking, received plenty of French-speaking recruits to fill their ranks.

The fourth chapter takes a different turn by providing an examination of the solutions provided to solve the reinforcement crisis of 1944-1945 within the four French-speaking infantry battalions overseas: Le Royal 22^e Régiment, Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal (FMRs), Le Régiment de la Chaudière, and Le Régiment de Maisonneuve. It argues that prior to sending conscripts overseas, senior officers did what they could to replenish these depleted battalions using only French-speaking volunteers to maintain Francophone representation.

The next two chapters aim to better understand the French-Canadian army experience through discipline and religion while highlighting other forms of representation they received. The fifth chapter will examine the French-Canadian experience within the army's disciplinary system with the help of a sample from the courts martial trials consisting mostly of General Service soldiers in Canada, preserved on microfilm. The number of French-Canadians who had their trial in French will be examined along with their crimes and reasons for committing them. The fairness of their trials and the harshness of their sentences will also be examined. Included is a comparison between English and French-Canadian cases. It argues that the two most common crimes both groups were charged with was AWL and desertion, but Francophones were charged

and convicted slightly more often and spent more time incarcerated for these two crimes. This chapter also argues that French-Canadians in the sample were twice as likely to defend their decision to go AWL or desert because of sickness, medical and family issues. Other reasons such as going home to help with farm work or to help ailing family members may have lessened sentences in some cases. Although the army provided more access to French language officials and translation services, some French-Canadians remained disadvantaged because of the army's dependence on English.

Lastly, the sixth chapter will examine the role of Catholicism to highlight its importance to French-Canadians in the army while also discussing the clergy's hindrance to the war effort. It will also look at religious representation and activity within the French-speaking units. The chapter argues that their religious needs were taken care of, and that Catholicism sought to bridge their religious exceptionalism and the wider cause of the war. For others, religion hindered the war effort as clergymen and the French language press used it to discourage French-Canadians from enlisting.

Chapter 1: French-Canadian Opinion on the War, 1939

This chapter discusses the French-Canadian opinion of Canada's involvement in the war in 1939. An examination of French language newspapers and the House of Commons debates will show that not all Francophones were against participation and had a wide range of views. Canada during the Second World War was in a different constitutional position than in the First World War as she could declare herself in a state of war. This is what Prime Minister Mackenzie King did on 10 September 1939, a week after Britain, following an extensive debate in the Canadian House of Commons. It is commonly held that French-Canadians, notably in Quebec, were against participation. Quebec nationalists both in Parliament and the press, brought forth a slew of arguments to support the notion that Canada should not be committed to the war. For example, André Laurendeau, director of the *L'Action Nationale* magazine, questioned Ottawa's decision to join the war in 1939. He mentioned how the 1931 Statute of Westminster had given Canada constitutional autonomy from Great Britain. Other nationalists considered themselves Americans who no longer had ties to France.⁵⁵

During the Second World War, there were French-Canadian MPs in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and the Maritimes. The 18th Parliament in 1939 had 66 MPs out of 245 with French-Canadian surnames. One came from Alberta, one from Manitoba, three were from New Brunswick, one in Nova Scotia, five in Ontario, and 55 in Quebec. Sixty-one were Liberals, two were Conservatives, and the last three were Social Credit, Independent Liberal, and Independent Conservative respectively. Upon close examination of their opinions, it is clear that most did not support Canada's participation in war. Specifically, those located in Ontario and Quebec were opposed to overseas participation. Though, they had no problem with home defence and stressed

⁵⁵ Olivier Courteaux, *Canada between Vichy and Free France 1940-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 19.

loyalty to Canada and the Empire. A variety of arguments supported their cases spanning from the destructiveness of the First World War to the right to remain neutral.

As for the Canadian wartime press, historians have shown how newspapers from Ontario and Quebec had predictable opinions when it came to Canada's participation in war. Terry Copp shows how newspapers in Ontario supported Canada's entry into war as far back as the signing of the Munich Agreement in September 1938. Broader support for the war effort solidified further in March 1939 after the German occupation of Prague.⁵⁶ In Quebec, Mason Wade says that most newspapers saw the war as a righteous one and showed sympathy to Catholics in Europe. However, they wanted to remain neutral or have limited participation. He also argues that French language newspapers outside Quebec opposed participation, but offers only *Le Droit* in Ontario as evidence.⁵⁷ There were many other French language newspapers outside of Quebec publishing during wartime, few of which have been examined.

Studying the French language press beyond Quebec paints a more complex picture of Francophone opinion. French language newspapers were published in Ontario, the Prairies, and the Maritimes. One newspaper from each province was selected to conduct this research. These are *Le Petit Courrier* from Nova Scotia, *La Voix d'Évangeline* from New Brunswick, *Le Devoir* from Quebec, *Le Droit* from Ontario, *La Liberté* from Manitoba, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* from Saskatchewan, and *La Survivance* from Alberta. Most of their editors saw the Axis as a threat, but only those from the Maritimes supported participation after the war in Europe began. The editors of *Le Petit Courrier* gave full support to protect Christianity while *La Voix d'Évangeline* took a moderate stance by advocating for a unified Canada. *La Survivance* also wanted to foster

⁵⁶ Terry Copp, "Ontario 1939: The Decision for War," *Ontario History* 86, no. 3 (1994): 269-272.

⁵⁷ Mason Wade, *The French-Canadians, 1760-1967 Vol II* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 922-928.

unity though its editors did not say whether Canada should intervene while *La Liberté* published opinions on both sides of the debate. *Le Devoir* was aggressively opposed to participating from the beginning while *Le Droit* and *La Patriote de l'Ouest* came out against participation once the war began. Francophone wartime opinion cannot be simply categorised as against participation.

Quebec's opposition to participating in overseas conflicts dates back to the First World War. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was the leader of opposition for the Liberals and the former Prime Minister, did not agree with the politics of the Quebec caucus and initially supported Canada's entry into war. By 1916 French-Canadians turned their backs on the war as few had enlisted.⁵⁸ During the Conscription Crisis of 1917, when the Military Service Act came to Parliament, it faced strong opposition from French-Canadian MPs. For example, Liberal MP Ernest Lapointe for Kamouraska, Quebec, voiced his opposition to conscription. While not as vocal as other members, he argued that the bill was anti-democratic because it selected who would go to war and who would stay home.⁵⁹ Wilfrid Laurier said the bill would cause disunion in the country, something he had spent his life fighting against. However, the bill passed by 119 to 55. Only five French-Canadian MPs voted for the bill, three of whom were from Quebec. Widespread violence and anti-conscription meetings followed. There was even a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Robert Borden.⁶⁰ While Lapointe was not as active during the First World War; he would play a much greater role in Parliament as Minister of Justice during the Second World War.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King's French-speaking caucus was held in check by Ernest Lapointe. Since his first election to the House in 1904, Lapointe had taken a leading role

⁵⁸ Brock Millman, *Polarity, Patriotism, and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 60-65.

⁵⁹ Lita-Rose Betcherman, *Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Québec Lieutenant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 14-15.

⁶⁰ J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 22.

representing Quebec interests. In 1919, Lapointe emerged as the senior Liberal in Quebec when he took over the seat left by the death of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. His support of William Lyon Mackenzie King was eventually rewarded with the Justice Ministry in 1924, and they remained allies until Lapointe's death in 1941. As King's Quebec lieutenant, Lapointe sought greater Canadian autonomy in international affairs. But issues of national unity drew Lapointe's energy and influence. His primary domestic role was now to ensure political unity between English and French Canada. That was strained in January 1939 when King announced, "When Britain is at war, Canada is at war." Lapointe reminded King that the Statute of Westminster gave Canada permission to declare war on her own. One account claimed that it was "a highlight of (Lapointe's) career" in 1939 when he agreed that Canada enter the war, but only if overseas service remained voluntary.⁶¹

During the inter-war period, the 1931 Statute of Westminster gave Canada the ability to declare war on her own. French-Canadians celebrated the Statute including Justice Minister Lapointe who played a part in its finalisation. French-Canadians now believed they would play an equal role in the country with Canada's newfound independence.⁶² When Lapointe became the president of the League of Nations Society of Canada in 1934, he was uncomfortable taking a hardline stance against the dictatorships of Italy and Germany who in 1933, withdrew from the League of Nations. For example, right before the 1934 parliamentary session, the Liberal's chief organiser, Norman Lambert, wanted to boycott any country that used war in violation of the

⁶¹ "Lapointe, Ernest," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed 17 July 2022.

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lapointe_ernest_17E.html; Mackenzie King, 16 January 1939, cited in Lita-Rose Betcherman, *Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Québec Lieutenant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 259.

⁶² Robert J. Talbot, "Francophone-Anglophone Accommodation in Practice," in *Fighting with the Empire: Canada, Britain, and Global Conflict, 1867-1947*, ed. Steve Marti and William John Pratt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 92-93.

League of Nations. He sent his resolution to Lapointe, but Lapointe did not send Lambert's resolution to the League of Nations because getting involved with the League was unpopular in Quebec. In 1935, when Italy was preparing to invade Ethiopia, all political parties in Canada promised they would not drag Canada into war because of Quebec's opposition.⁶³ In 1938, as the Czechoslovakia crisis was developing, King wrote in his diary on 31 August that he would do everything he could to stop fascist countries. He knew there would be dissent in Quebec, but he would not let his Quebec ministers deter him. These MPs would have to lead the province while participating in international conflicts.⁶⁴ King's government would continue to deal with Quebec's dissent in 1939 as the province's MPs did not hesitate to voice their opposition to war.

As the international situation declined through the last year of peace, some Francophone MPs were eager to stress the loyalty of their constituents. The most vocal opponents of the war were from Quebec while French-Canadian MPs from Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia generally stayed silent. Some MPs such as Liberal Eli-Oscard Bertrand for Prescott, Ontario, showed ambivalence in supporting a Canadian war effort. Bertrand argued in the House in January 1939 how his compatriots did not like war and were not ready for it.⁶⁵ MP George Héon, an Independent Conservative for Argenteuil, Quebec, expressed French-Canadian loyalty to the Crown. However, he insisted that Canadians should not have to pay for the foreign policy mishaps of the British and French. Héon said during the First World War, Canada lost 70,000 men and faced two billion dollars in debt. He could not understand how Canada could not help

⁶³ Lita-Rose Betcherman, *Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Québec Lieutenant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 194-198.

⁶⁴ J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 121.

⁶⁵ Elie-Oscard Bertrand, 17 January 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fourth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 98-99.

the poor, the unemployed, and hungry but be willing to sacrifice more lives and spend millions on war. He then stressed that Canada could decide for herself when to enter war.⁶⁶

On 15 March, Germany marched on the rest of Czechoslovakia, breaking the Munich agreements signed the previous fall. Germany made the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia into German protectorates while the remaining territory was taken by Hungary. Czechoslovakia's dissolution placed Mackenzie King's government in a difficult position. King was dealing with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain who on 17 March stated publicly that the dominion countries supported Britain. King was annoyed as Chamberlain's statement implied that he had consented to supporting Britain. However, King stated on 20 March that Canada would help Britain if it was attacked, but back peddled on the 30th by stating that Canada should not always take part in wars overseas. He also came out against conscription.⁶⁷ King was clearly trying to balance the line of wanting to help Britain while keeping Quebec happy.

On 31 March, Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe helped to balance King's statements by stating that Canada could not remain neutral when Britain is at war. He agreed that Canada should prepare to defend herself while also helping the Allies. As much as Lapointe supported Canada joining the war, he opposed conscription, and would resign if enacted.⁶⁸ This statement was crucial. Lapointe knew his value to Prime Minister King to gauge Quebec opinion.

Despite Lapointe's statement, Liberal MPs from Quebec continued to voice their opposition from the government back benches. Liberal MP Liguori Lacombe for Laval-Two

⁶⁶ George Héon, 30 January 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fourth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 471-473.

⁶⁷ J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 127-128; *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶⁸ Ernest Lapointe, 31 March 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fourth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol III*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 2465-2471.

Mountains believed that increasing Canada's defences would not be used solely to defend the country and thus wanted to amend the National Defence Act to limit the obligations of military service to home defence only. He also mentioned how the First World War negatively affected the Canadian economy and that participating in foreign wars would lead to conscription. Liberal MP Arthur-Joseph Lapointe for Matapédia-Matane, a relative of Ernest Lapointe, agreed with Lacombe by saying Canada should only engage in war if attacked. As a veteran of the First World War, he said no one should experience the horrors that he did.⁶⁹ The isolationist rhetoric of many of the French-Canadian MPs demonstrate how little had changed in their opinions since the First World War. They were aware of the debt and loss of life from the last war and did not want to participate in another global conflict. Europe's descent into war would not change their stance.

During the summer, the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Russia was signed on 23 August which also called for a joint occupation of Poland. Germany then invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Honouring their guarantees with Poland, Britain and France declared war against Germany on 3 September. King, eager to demonstrate Canada's constitutional independence, but wary of the divisions within his own party, convened Parliament for a debate from 7 to 13 September where MPs again discussed the war. As before war began, Quebec MPs were vocal while those elsewhere in Canada remained mostly silent. Liberal MP Maxime Raymond for Beauharnois-Laprairie, Quebec pressed for Canadian neutrality and urged the country to focus on itself. Raymond was a staunch isolationist who would join *La Ligue pour la défense du Canada* in 1942. In 1943, he joined the *Bloc Populaire* after resigning from the

⁶⁹ Liguori Lacombe, 31 March 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fourth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol III*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 2475-2477; Arthur-Joseph Lapointe, 31 March 1939, *Ibid.*, 2499-2500.

Liberal Party over conscription and led the new party at the federal level. Both organisations were formed to oppose conscription for overseas service. In Parliament in September 1939, Raymond repeated the concerns about debt and casualties from the last war and incorrectly claimed that Britain never fought to defend Canada during the War of 1812 and the American War of Independence. Despite Raymond's opposition, he believed that Canada could play an important role by supplying the countries of England, France, and Poland with food and materials.⁷⁰

When it was Justice Minister Lapointe's turn to speak, he pushed back against the isolationist rhetoric of the French-Canadian MPs. He reminded Raymond that it was the British tradition of freedom of speech which allowed him to voice his opposition to participating in the war. Lapointe also said that to be neutral would be to side with Hitler and that people in Quebec were enlisting. Lapointe also refused to discuss an idea raised in meetings and newspapers that Canadians who wanted to fight be paid by England. Lapointe stated that he was "too proud, too conscious of Canadian dignity, to discuss such a proposal." The Justice Minister then reaffirmed his declaration back in March that if conscription was enacted, he would resign. Lapointe also said that the Minister of Public Works, Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin and Minister of Pensions and National Health, Charles Gavan Power would resign as well.⁷¹ As a First World War veteran who opposed conscription, Power became a notable figure once he became the Minister of National Defence for Air in 1940. He was born into an Irish family in Quebec but could speak

⁷⁰ Maxime Raymond 9 September 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 61-64.

⁷¹ Ernest Lapointe, 9 September 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 64-68; Lita-Rose Betcherman, *Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Québec Lieutenant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 280; MP Joseph-Alphida Crête for St. Maurice-Laflèche also argued that Britain should pay the wages of those willing to fight after Canada declared war. See Joseph-Alphina Crête, 11 September 1939, *Ibid.*, 105-106.

French and was an advocate for French-Canadian views. He also helped raise the French-speaking 425 Alouette Squadron in 1942.⁷² In these debates, Lapointe was much firmer as he attacked MPs directly and criticized what he thought were ridiculous reasons for keeping Canada out of the war.

While many Quebec MPs did not support Canada entering another war, Lapointe's position ensured that the country would be united as it declared itself in a state of war with Germany on 10 September 1939. Canada's unity was made clear when MP Lacombe tried to introduce a non-participation amendment to the Address from the Throne after Lapointe spoke. He repeated many of the same arguments above as his reasons for wanting this amendment. It was seconded by Liberal MP Wilfrid Lacroix for Quebec-Montmorency, Quebec, but no other MPs, even those strongly against participation, supported it.⁷³

Social Credit MP René-Antoine Pelletier for Peace River, Alberta, agreed with Ernest Lapointe that Canada should go to war. Pelletier was a rare figure, a Franco-Albertan (born in Quebec) who supported the war effort. He acknowledged the views of the Quebec MPs and those of other provinces, but affirmed that Canada was committed to helping Great Britain. He also spoke in favour of conscription. He argued it would help bring people out of bread lines and that it would be a long war, meaning Canada would eventually need reinforcements.⁷⁴ Among French-speaking members, Pelletier stood alone with his views.

⁷² Bill Rawling, *L'Alouette en Guerre: Le 425e Escadrille, 1939-1945* (Outremont: Athéna Éditions, 2010), 73-74.

⁷³ Lita-Rose Betcherman, *Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Québec Lieutenant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 282.

⁷⁴ René-Antoine Pelletier, 9 September 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 76-79.

The place of religion saw limited discussion in the September debates, but MP George Héon opposed the war effort on religious grounds. He believed that a potential alliance between Britain, France, and atheist Russia would be a “prostitution of all the Christian principles of freedom and individual liberty.” He also said that war contradicted Christianity and that to fight would be to support the Pagan concept of an “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”⁷⁵ Liberal MP Maurice Lalonde for Labelle, Quebec also mentioned religion. He described the war as a defence of Christian democracies against Pagan barbarism. He wanted Canada to stay out of war and opposed conscription, believing that it would put the country into more debt.⁷⁶

The Parliamentary debates in 1939 demonstrate that most French-speaking Quebec MPs opposed Canada’s military participation in the war just as they would have during the First World War. The debate repeated old arguments such as mass casualties and debt from the last war, but included new ones such as opposing the war on religious grounds. Not all Francophone MPs were opposed. Justice Minister Lapointe and Pelletier supported Canada’s entry into war while those from outside Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta were silent. While many of the Quebec MPs were vocal about not wanting to fight in another war overseas, some of the French language newspapers did not follow suit.

As with French-Canadian MPs, most French language newspapers were centred in Quebec. There were 542 French language newspapers, journals, and other media created in Quebec between 1935 and 1944.⁷⁷ *Le Devoir* was founded in Montreal in 1910 by ex-Liberal MP

⁷⁵ George Héon, 9 September 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 81-83.

⁷⁶ Maurice Lalonde, 11 September 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 106-108.

⁷⁷ Beaulieu, André et al. *La Presse québécois des origines à nos jours Tome VII* (Québec: Presses de l’Université de Laval, 1987), Avant-propos.

Henri Bourassa. Despite its relatively low circulation, it remained an influential newspaper in the province. *Le Devoir* and Henri Bourassa played a key role in opposing conscription during the First World War.⁷⁸ Under the editorship of Georges Pelletier who replaced Bourassa in 1932, it would remain a strong opponent to the war effort a generation later.

Francophone newspapers outside of Quebec were more modest enterprises, reporting weekly to their small communities in Atlantic Canada, Ontario, and the Prairies. In Nova Scotia, *Le Petit Courrier* was founded by Desiré d'Eon in 1937 in the Acadian village of Pubnico, Nova Scotia. It was the only French language newspaper in the province. d'Eon originally wanted to become a teacher but throat problems pushed him towards journalism. He knew that it would be difficult to sustain a newspaper in the Great Depression. There was a desire for a French language newspaper, however, most Acadians did not have the money, time, or interest to read them. d'Eon tackled this problem by writing about the people in the region and the events in each community. This decision led to the success of *Le Petit Courrier* which operates to this day.⁷⁹

The Prairies each had one French language newspaper in their respective provinces. *La Liberté* was founded in 1913 in Winnipeg, Manitoba while in 1910, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* opened its offices in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. The two merged under the banner *La Liberté et le Patriote* in 1941.⁸⁰ Alberta also had one French language newspaper publishing during the war. *La Survivance*, known today as *Le Franco*, was founded in 1928 in Edmonton. It was the official publication of l'Association canadienne-française.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Geoff Keelan, *Duty to Dissent: Henri Bourassa and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 47; *Ibid.*, 145.

⁷⁹ Jeanelle and Lorna d'Entremont, *Désiré d'Eon: journaliste* (Pointe-de-l'Église, NS: Centre provincial des ressources pédagogiques, 1988), 5-6.

⁸⁰ "Le Patriote de l'Ouest," *ualberta.ca*, accessed 20 March 2023. <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/PDW/>; "Journal de colonisation: Le Patriote de l'Ouest," *musee.histoiresk.ca*, accessed 20 March 2023. <http://musee.histoiresk.ca/journal-de-colonisation-le-patriote-de-l-ouest-n384-t384.html>.

⁸¹ "La Survivance," *ualberta.ca*, accessed 20 March 2023. <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/LSV/>.

The provinces of New Brunswick and Ontario, however, had more than one French language newspaper publishing during the war. There were two in New Brunswick and three in Ontario. New Brunswick had *La Voix d'Évangeline*, which was founded in Digby, Nova Scotia in 1887 but then moved to Moncton, New Brunswick in 1905. It was the longest running Acadian newspaper until publication ceased in 1982. The other is *Le Madawaska* which began in Edmundston in 1913. In Ontario *Le Droit* was founded in Ottawa in 1913 to combat Regulation 17, a law that limited instruction in French in Ontario schools.⁸² The other two are *La Rotonde* which is the French language newspaper of the University of Ottawa as of 1932, and *L'Ami du Peuple* which published in Sudbury from 1942 to 1968.⁸³

Unlike in Parliament, the issue of religion and war gained greater prominence in some of the French-language press in 1939. In February, the editors of *Le Petit Courrier* wrote about how it had been sometime since any news had surfaced about Hitler's assault on the Catholic church in Europe. They questioned whether this was because of resistance within the country. They also mentioned how according to *La Voix d'Évangeline*, the German church was to be regulated by a Minister of Worship to control all communication between the episcopate (bishop's office) and Holy See (church's jurisdiction). They also reported how pilgrimages, religious weeks, and congregations were also banned in Germany.⁸⁴

In the Prairies, *La Liberté* and *La Survivance* also followed this debate. On 8 February, *La Liberté* discussed how relations between the German church and state were deteriorating and that "souls" were in danger under the Nazi Empire. That same day, *La Survivance* mentioned

⁸² "The first edition of *Le Droit* is published," *Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages*, accessed 21 February 2022. <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/timeline-event/the-first-edition-of-droit-is-published>.

⁸³ "A Brief History of *La Rotonde*," *uottawa.ca*, accessed 20 March 2023. https://www.uottawa.ca/archives/sites/www.uottawa.ca.archives/files/larotonde_1.pdf; "*L'Ami du Peuple*," *sfu.ca*, accessed 20 March 2023. <https://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/adp-collection>.

⁸⁴ "Nouvelle Tactique," *Le Petit Courrier* (Pubnico, Nova Scotia), 9 February 1939.

how Germany was minimising religious education and putting people in concentration camps for defending their religion.⁸⁵

The editors had reason for concern. In 1933, a concordat between the German Catholic church and the Nazi government decreed that bishops could not be involved with politics. This concordat was supposed to protect the Catholic church. However, the Nazis violated the concordat resulting in many German Catholics and clergy members being persecuted.⁸⁶ The editors of these journals did not openly call for war, but such grim news offered a real incentive to fight for the religious rights of European Catholics. Through the year Canada's rural Francophone press remained naively hopeful that peace could be achieved.

La Voix d'Évangeline also reported on events in Europe with no speculation on Canada's position in the conflict. On 15 June, the editors reported that Hitler sought the free city of Danzig, located near Poland. Danzig was a product, and a symbol of the Treaty of Versailles that Hitler had openly violated in 1936 when he reoccupied the Ruhr. The article explained how Joseph Goebbels, Germany's Minister of Propaganda, proclaimed that the city belonged to Germany. It soon became part of Germany's plan to retake "lost" land. In Poland, the city denied its access to the Baltic Sea. Danzig was eventually taken by the Germans during the invasion of Poland and placed under the Reichsgau (administrative division) of Danzig-West Prussia on 8 October.⁸⁷ However, the newspaper had a shift in opinion in August. The editors subtly suggested sending books to European hospitals since the continent would be spending money on more urgent resources. The article concluded by stating the Allies would go to war if Hitler did

⁸⁵ "Dangers de L'Hitlerisme Pour la Foi," *La Liberté* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 8 February 1939; "'L'Observatoire Romano' Accuse A. Hitler," *La Survivance* (Edmonton, Alberta), 8 February 1939.

⁸⁶ Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943-1950* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 24-25.

⁸⁷ "Hitler veut Dantzig," *La Voix d'Évangeline* (Moncton, New Brunswick), 15 June 1939; Paul Latawski, "Danzig, free city of," in *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

not settle for peace.⁸⁸ While no endorsement for war was made, the editors seemed to embrace the reality of the situation.

Le Droit mirrored the previous newspaper as its editors also realised the threat the Axis posed, but no discussion was had on Canada's potential involvement. For example, on 22 March, *Le Droit* reported on the Grand Council of Fascism and the German-Italian alliance. Included was an excerpt from Fascist journalist Virginio Gayda claiming Italy would help Germany in both peace and war. Gayda also accused London, Paris, and the United States of wanting to form an alliance to start a war against Germany and Italy.⁸⁹

Le Patriote de l'Ouest, on the other hand, was the first to publish opinions which advocated for Canada's neutrality. These opinions (published 18 January) belonged to Norman Mackenzie of the University of Toronto and Percy Corbett from the University of McGill. Both specialised in international law. Corbett said Canada asserting its neutrality would be the only way to have autonomy in foreign policy. Mackenzie however believed Canada should have an imperial conference to approve its neutrality.⁹⁰ It was unclear if these opinions were shared by the editors since they belonged to other people. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that not only Francophones were against participation.

While the editors of *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* may have been against participating in war, this was certainly the case for *Le Devoir*. Its editors reported the events of Europe that year through an isolationist lens fixed on the legacy of the First World War. Much of their opinions mirrored those of the French-Canadian MPs. On 4 February, editor Georges Pelletier asked

⁸⁸ "S'il Faut Faire la Guerre, Pourquoi pas Payer a Mesure?," *La Voix d'Évangeline* (Moncton, New Brunswick), 31 August 1939.

⁸⁹ "La guerre, si l'on touche à l'axe Berlin-Rome," *Le Droit* (Ottawa, Ontario), 22 March 1939.

⁹⁰ "La neutralité du Canada," *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* (Duck Lake, Saskatchewan), 18 January 1939.

whether the events of 1917 would be repeated. This article affirmed *Le Devoir*'s position on the upcoming war as he mentioned Quebec's mistreatment by the hands of a country that sought to enslave it. Pelletier called on readers to support politicians who put the country first and to not let "true Canadians" be isolated. He concluded by saying "Ne vivons et ne nous battons au Canada que pour le Canada, notre seule patrie."⁹¹ The invasion of Czechoslovakia in March did little to change the journal's editorial stand. Pelletier asked readers if they wanted another war, especially after the costs of the First World War. He then concluded by stating that Canadians should defend the country which values peace.⁹² It was clear the editors were staunchly opposed to participating in another war.

We can see how the editors of the French language newspapers above, aside from *Le Devoir*, did not take a stance on whether Canada should participate. Despite opposition from *Le Devoir* its editors did, however, recognise Nazi Germany and Italy as threats to democracy. As the war began on 1 September, some of the newspapers would continue to cover events in Europe without sharing their opinion on Canada's involvement.

The editors of *La Liberté* and *La Survivance* continued to keep track of events in Europe without endorsing war. On 6 September, an article from *La Liberté* reported on the Saar Offensive, when France attacked Germany's Siegfried Line from its Maginot Line. It also mentioned how Britain responded to the sinking of the passenger line *Athenia* by bombing two of Germany's war vessels in the Kiel canal.⁹³ When Canada declared war against Germany, *La Liberté* informed its readers that there would be no conscription.⁹⁴ The newspaper also published

⁹¹ "Irions-nous recommencer 1917?," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 4 February 1939.

⁹² "Vous voudriez la guerre," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 4 March 1939.

⁹³ "Premières Opérations Militaires," *La Liberté* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 6 September 1939.

⁹⁴ "Il n'y aura pas de conscription au pays; Le Canada déclare la guerre," *La Liberté* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 13 September 1939.

a mix of opinions such as Lapointe's opposition to conscription and the opinion of American aviator Charles Lindberg, who was against participation in the war.⁹⁵ The editors of *La Survivance* published an article on 6 September stating that Canada would participate in the war. Included was a quote from King stating that Canada would cooperate with Britain to resist Germany's aggression as well as take necessary measures for Canada's defence. He was positive that Canadians would face this current situation with calmness, confidence, and in the spirit of preserving the country's unity and liberty. Included was a statement from Conservative leader Robert Manion supporting Canada's participation.⁹⁶ These articles from both *La Liberté* and *La Survivance* were as close as their editors got to forming an opinion.

In Quebec, *Le Devoir* continued to oppose Canada's participation, but became much more aggressive once the war began. On 4 September, *Le Devoir* published an article written by journalist Omer Héroux where he said Canada should focus on itself. He covered events unfolding in Parliament where King spoke to the British people to say Canada would follow them to war. King also said the war was a fight for social order and one of Christian ideals versus Hitler's pagan ideals. Despite King's good intentions, Héroux did not agree with Canada's participation. He repeated arguments made by Quebec MPs such as how the First World War "ruined" the country. Héroux further argued that Belgium, Switzerland, and the United States hold similar democratic, human, and Christian ideals, but remained neutral. Their neutrality, he said, was not because they supported Hitler, but because they had no interest in the conflict. He concluded by stating that politicians have a right to say "no," and that Canadians should have the right to express their opinions. Despite King's call to defend Christianity, *Le Devoir* did not want

⁹⁵ "M. Lapointe se prononce pour la participation et contre la conscription," *La Liberté* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 20 September 1939; "Lindberg désapprouve la participation Canadienne," *La Liberté* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 18 October 1939.

⁹⁶ "Le Canada Participera à la Guerre," *La Survivance* (Edmonton, Alberta), 6 September 1939.

to budge from its stance. The newspaper was aware of Europe's religious persecution as it published articles on Russia's anti-religious propaganda and Germany's religious persecution. However, it was not enough to convince them to support the war effort.⁹⁷

Le Devoir was not the only French language newspaper in Quebec that was against participation. Others such as *Le Soleil*, *La Tribune*, *L'Événement-Journal*, *L'Illustration Nouvelle*, *L'Action Nationale*, and many others also opposed Canada joining the war.⁹⁸ In addition to these newspapers, a survey conducted in July 1942 showed that Quebecers were 70 percent against participation in 1939.⁹⁹ There was clearly a strong opposition to participating in another war within the province and these newspapers helped to foster it.

The beginning of the war in Europe emboldened other editors besides those of *Le Devoir* to share their opinion on Canada's involvement. There was a mixed reaction amongst those who shared their opinion as the war commenced. In October, the editors of *Le Petit Courrier* began to support Canada's involvement. While MPs in Quebec used religion to argue against Canada's participation, *Le Petit Courrier* used it for the opposite purpose. Published on 5 October, the unknown author believed that Christian nations had to oppose Nazism and communism. The article stated that Hitler wanted to re-establish German paganism while Stalin, sought to rid the world of religion. The article ends by stating that no Christian nation should remain indifferent to current events in Europe. The author could understand remaining neutral in terms of armaments, but he believed the Christian and civilised nations should give moral support to England and

⁹⁷ "C'est la guerre," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 4 September 1939; "L'Allemagne du Dehors and La propagande antireligieuse," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 21 October 1939.

⁹⁸ Mason Wade, *The French-Canadians, 1760-1967 Vol II* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 924-929.

⁹⁹ Daniel J. Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy: Polling, Market Research, and Public Life, 1930-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 105; Wilfrid Sanders, *Jack et Jacques: L'opinion publique au Canada pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Montréal: Éditeurs à l'enseigne du chien d'or, 1996), 10.

France.¹⁰⁰ There was a clear contrast between the Acadian editors of *Le Petit Courrier* and Independent Conservative George Héon. The Quebec MP did not want to fight alongside atheist Russia while the Acadian editors believed they would be fighting against both Germany and Russia since both nations were anti-Christian.

La Voix d'Évangeline moderately supported Canada's participation. Its editors agreed that Canada had to defend its own borders. They also supported the decision to protect Newfoundland and the French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon to prevent the enemy from establishing a base near Canada. Lastly, the editors stressed the fact that Canada was in a moderate state of war, meaning no conscription for overseas service. They also hoped that English and French-Canadians would maintain national unity, something the editors believed was of the highest importance to maintain peace.¹⁰¹ These editors were clearly concerned about the war overseas, but showed equal concern and awareness of tensions within their own country.

As for *Le Droit*, its editors confirmed that they were against participation on 5 September. Editor Henri Lessard repeated similar arguments noted above. These included Canada having the right to declare war on her own, that other countries, many of which close to Germany, have remained neutral, and the costs of the previous war. Lessard also said that people from other provinces were against participating as well but gave no evidence to support this. Lastly, he discussed how French-Canadians were interested in defending British liberties but were not willing to serve overseas.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ "La guerre qui sevit," *Le Petit Courrier* (Pubnico, Nova Scotia), 5 October 1939.

¹⁰¹ "Le Canada est en guerre avec l'Allemagne," *La Voix d'Évangeline* (Moncton, New Brunswick), 14 September 1939.

¹⁰² "Contre la participation," *Le Droit* (Ottawa, Ontario), 5 September 1939.

The editors of *Le Droit* agreed with those of *Le Petit Courrier* that the war was one of religion. *Le Droit* blamed the war mostly on communism and that Catholicism opposed Hitlerism and communism. The editors also expressed sympathy for the Catholics of Poland and Germany, though it was not enough for them to support the war. When Canada declared war, *Le Droit* continued its rhetoric by suggesting in mid September that Canada should declare its neutrality to Britain once the war was over because Canada's declaration of war set a precedent that the country was not automatically at war when Britain was at war.¹⁰³

La Patriote de l'Ouest also came out against participation. Its front page included Canada's declaration of war, the country's war budget, the prevention of profiteering and price gouging, and reassuring that there would be no conscription. On the following pages however, editor Joseph Valois said that if Germany's citizens had the right to voice their opinion, they would not be at war as it was only Hitler who wanted it. As for Canada's entry into war, he discussed the budget of the First World War as well as Canada's current defence budget. He argued that Canada would not benefit from participating as was the case during the First World War. He concluded by stating that Canadian unity was important and hoped King would keep his promise of no conscription.¹⁰⁴

French-Canadians had a variety of views during the early phase of the war, not all were opposed to participation. Most in Parliament fit the conventional stereotype that Francophones were against participation just as they were during the First World War. They used a range of arguments to support their case such as the destructiveness of the First World War, mass debt, the right to neutrality, the neutrality of other democratic countries, putting Canada's economy

¹⁰³ Mason Wade, *The French-Canadians, 1760-1967 Vol II* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 922-928.

¹⁰⁴ "Le Canada est en Guerre," *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* (Duck Lake, Saskatchewan), 13 September 1939.

and people first, and that going to war was against Christian principles. Others such as Raymond made false claims that Britain did not protect Canada during the War of 1812 and the American War of Independence. However, those opposed mitigated their statements by expressing their support for the country, empire, and for home defence. These politicians were not oblivious to the fact that they would have to participate to some degree even if Canada did not declare war.

Lapointe for the Liberal Party and Pelletier for Social Credit further highlight the range of opinion within the French-speaking caucus as they spoke in favour of participation. Lapointe took a moderate approach to expressing his views in early 1939 but became more aggressive in his support for war in September. He attacked his party members directly while arguing against some of the arguments put forward for why Canada should not participate. Pelletier went further by supporting conscription, arguing that the country would eventually need reinforcements. They argued that to stay neutral would be to side with Hitler and that Canada was committed to helping Britain. These politicians were a minority, but they demonstrate that even when much of Parliament's French-speaking caucus vocally opposed the war, there were still detractors.

The French language newspapers present a more complex view of the French-Canadian wartime opinion. During the early part of 1939, most French language newspapers examined in this chapter saw the Axis as a threat and informed their readers that there would be no conscription. *Le Petit Courrier* was hopeful that resistance groups would crush the Nazis while *La Voix d'Évangeline* showed concern for Danzig and Poland. *Le Devoir* however was aggressively against participation from the beginning. Its editors used many of the same arguments presented by the French-Canadian MPs.

Once war began, the editors of some of these newspapers began to share what they thought about Canada's involvement. Those from the Maritimes supported Canada's

participation with only *Le Petit Courrier* believing in giving full support to protect Christianity. All were aware of the religious persecution happening in Europe; however, *Le Petit Courrier* was the only one arguing in support of Canada's participation to protect it. *La Voix d'Évangeline* instead supported the war moderately and called for unity. However, *La Patriote de l'Ouest* along with *Le Droit*, came out as against Canadian participation once the war began. From the Prairies *La Liberté* detailed events in Europe while publishing opinions on both sides of the debate. *Le Devoir* also continued to oppose Canada's participation in the war after the country entered war. These newspapers give clear indication that there was a variety of opinion in French Canada. Some naturally opposed participation while others supported it, either moderately or enthusiastically.

Despite the fierce opposition to participation from the Quebec caucus and press, their opinions failed to gauge the fact that French-Canadians were enlisting into the province's French-speaking units. Though, senior officers would have to find ways to represent French-Canadians if the army was to successfully expand.

Chapter 2: Rough Beginnings, Steady Progress

French-Canadians had limited army representation in 1939 as few of the French-speaking militia units had been mobilised. If the army's leadership wanted them to enlist, they would have to make the army appeal to them. Not only would representation have to come in the form of French-speaking units, but training camps, trade courses, officers, and manuals would have to be provided. The question answered here is: what prompted senior officers to increase French-Canadian representation? This chapter will cover the years 1939 to 1941 to highlight the events which forced the army's leadership to increase representation for one third of the Canadian population. It will also discuss the state of the Canadian Army, recruitment advertisements, what induced French-Canadians to enlist, note what the army was aware of regarding the needs of French-Canadians, and examine enlistment numbers to determine their level of participation.

While there was little army representation for French-Canadians relative to their population from 1939 to 1940, this changed in 1941 because of a recruitment shortage during the time when the Canadian Army was in the process of expanding. To avoid conscription for overseas service and a divided Canada, French language training camps were incorporated into the Active Army (men on active service for home defence or overseas), the monthly intake of French-speaking officer candidates increased, and bilingual training was made mandatory for the trades and advanced training schools. It was also in 1941 when the army's leadership increased Francophone army representation with the Goforth Report, which provided solutions to increase French-Canadian enlistment. French-Canadian wartime contribution was also satisfactory during this period as the four overseas French-speaking battalions and others reached full strength. Recruitment in Military Districts No. 4 in Montreal and 5 in Quebec City was also satisfactory.

Before the war, Canada's defence was in a poor state. A 1935 memorandum revealed that there were no modern anti-aircraft guns, little artillery ammunition, and no service aircraft for active operations. In 1936, the Joint Staff Committee consisting of representatives from the army, air force, and navy recommended a five-year programme of \$200 million to expand the military. However, only \$36 million was appropriated when the programme was launched in 1937. In 1939 the budget increased to \$64 million though this would still not be enough to meet upcoming war demands. The militia also received less money compared to previous years because the government prioritised the navy and air force. Its Permanent Active Militia also consisted of only 4,169 men.¹⁰⁵ In short, Canada's army was not in a state to go to war, nor was it prepared to increase French-Canadian army representation.

Once Germany invaded Poland on 1 September, the government authorised the army to fully implement Defence Scheme No. 3, including, in addition to coast defences and guards on vulnerable points, two field divisions. The field divisions could be employed either in Canada to support the coast defences, or sent overseas, depending upon the government's decision.¹⁰⁶ Discussions were had in Parliament about Canada's next steps. The government's approach was based on a paper titled "Canadian War Policy," completed by Prime Minister King's adviser, Dr. O. D. Skelton, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs on 24 August when it became apparent war might soon break out. Skelton said Canada should prioritise home defence for the army and use the air force for overseas combat. On 5 September, the Cabinet Defence Committee concluded that the present policy was only for the defence of Canada.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 3-4.

¹⁰⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 43.

¹⁰⁷ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 9.

However, as a result of demands from English-Canadian ministers that the army had to be represented overseas, Cabinet approved the despatch of 1st Division. The division, which moved to Britain in December 1939 where it was to complete its training to prepare for combat operations, included units from across the country: the first brigade had units from Ontario, the second from the west, and the third from Quebec and the Maritimes.¹⁰⁸

A French-speaking brigade was one of the first proposals to increase French-Canadian representation during the Second World War, but could not be achieved amidst the uncertainties and other problems mobilising the army in the summer and fall of 1939. Brigades during this time consisted of three infantry and one machine gun battalion, each with a strength of about 800 men. Stacey mentions how in June 1939, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), Major-General Thomas Victor Anderson, used the proposed brigade as an argument to mobilise the whole of the two divisions in the Mobile Force, the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Division as planned at that time being fully comprised of French-Canadian units, including the Royal 22^e, a permanent force unit, along with the Chaudières, then designated a machine gun battalion, Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal (FMRs), and the Maisonneuves. The other two permanent force infantry regiments, the Royal Canadian Regiment, and the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, were included in the other brigades of the 2nd Division.¹⁰⁹

Soon after, however, the staff developed an alternative divisional organisation to be employed in case the government approved the mobilisation of only a single division, which would leave the army's only permanent force infantry units on the side lines. Thus these units were moved to the 1st Division, the Royal 22^e being included in the 3rd Brigade with units from

¹⁰⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 43-45.

¹⁰⁹ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 44-45.

the Maritimes, the whole brigade, as we have seen, representing Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.¹¹⁰

In August 1939, the government did indeed authorise the mobilisation of two divisions, but approved the despatch overseas of only the 1st Division. Thus, as C. P. Stacey, the official historian, surmised, the army implemented the alternative organisation that put all three permanent force infantry regiments, including the Royal 22^e, in the 1st Division. That decision left a gap in the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Division, originally designated as Francophone, that under pressure of events was filled by an English-speaking unit. As Stacey explains, to assign the Royal 22^e to a second division whose employment overseas the government had not yet approved would have left the sole Permanent Force French-speaking unit, and a unit that had become a powerful symbol for French Canada, on home service. French-Canadians would thus be deprived of representation in a formation that was going to be the first to see action.¹¹¹ J. Mackay Hitsman argued that the army wanted to avoid the criticisms of the First World War for not having a French-speaking unit in the 1st Division.¹¹² It is understandable why the Royal 22^e was moved to the 1st Division in circumstances in which there was no certainty that the government would ever authorise the despatch overseas of the 2nd Division. There would be attempts to revive the proposed Francophone brigade in the overseas forces later in the war, but with little success as the re-assignment of units among established brigades would have interfered with training and operational deployments.

¹¹⁰ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 44-45.

¹¹¹ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 44-45.

¹¹² J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 9.

It did not help that the mobilisation of Canada's militia forces in late summer 1939 was marked by confusion, especially in French Canada. Maurice Duplessis, Premier of Quebec, protested against mobilisation arguing that it infringed on provincial rights. He called for a provincial election to stress the province's opposition to war. Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe, Public Works Minister Pierre Joseph Arthur Cardin, and Minister of National Defence for Air Charles Gavan Power, threatened to resign if Duplessis was re-elected. Their threat encouraged Quebec to vote for Adélard Godbout's Liberal Party as their resignation would open the door to a pro-conscription government. This move succeeded as Duplessis was defeated by Godbout in October, thus securing Canada's commitment to war.¹¹³

Major Jean V. Allard, who served in the armoured Three Rivers Regiment and the Chaudières in England, and then commanded the Royal 22^e in Italy, recalls in his memoir Canada's slow early mobilisation. Many French-speaking recruits were rejected because they lacked proper trades education. The bilingual Three Rivers Regiment, mobilised in August 1939, was to serve within the 1st Armoured Brigade and needed mechanics and radio technicians. The lack of French-speaking technicians resulted in English-speaking soldiers enlisting in the unit. They came from Quebec regiments that had not yet mobilised. Allard took a contrarian view when he addressed the lack of French-speaking soldiers in non-infantry roles. He claimed that Quebec was to blame for the lack of French-speaking recruits in non-infantry roles because of its anti-military sentiment. However, Quebec politicians and newspaper editors had a great deal of interest in the state of their soldiers. Nevertheless, Allard's squadron in the Three Rivers Regiment was bilingual. To foster mutual respect, he made everyone speak English one day and

¹¹³ J. W. Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record Volume I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 35; C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 10.

French the next. That way everyone could improve their language skills.¹¹⁴ Not having trades training in French limited options for French-Canadians, forcing them to become infantrymen.

Mobilisation also highlighted the lack of French-speaking officers. J. L. Granatstein claims that French-Canadians had lower literacy rates and lower standards of education, meaning not many were qualified to take a commission. Granatstein also argues that the lack of support from French-Canadians in Quebec, was a contributing factor.¹¹⁵ Stereotypes aside, Granatstein may be correct. There were few push factors within French-Canadian society to join the officer corps, especially in rural areas. There were fewer incentives that pulled French speakers into the armed forces, especially the Permanent Force. Colonel Maurice Pope recalled in September 1939 how a regiment from Ottawa which was half French-speaking, had no French-speaking officers.¹¹⁶ Those who did qualify barely met the army's standards. For example, a 1939 inspection report concluded that officers in the Royal 22^e were lacking in quality.¹¹⁷ The lack of French-speaking officers highlighted another area where the army was failing to represent French-Canadians. However, issues such as these had little effect on their enlistment rates during the early phase of the war.

Recruiting was brisk in some areas of French Canada. Senator Joseph Lacasse noted how in the three days since Canada's war began, 1,200 French-speaking men in Montreal had enlisted

¹¹⁴ Jean V. Allard and Serge Bernier, *The Memoirs of General Jean V. Allard* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 27-30; 15 French-speaking units were mobilised from August to December 1939. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

¹¹⁵ J. L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1993), 238-241.

¹¹⁶ Maurice Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoir of Lt. General Maurice A. Pope* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 169.

¹¹⁷ Yves Tremblay, *Instruire une armée: Les officiers canadiens et la guerre modern, 1914-1944* (Montréal: Athéna, 2007), 97-99.

in two local battalions, the Maisonneuves and the FMRs.¹¹⁸ The former was Canada's first regiment to reach its recruitment objective, which drew praise from Mackenzie King.¹¹⁹ In ten days, it received 900 recruitment applications. Unemployment was a factor for such large enlistments. The FMRs also received 1,200 recruitment applications within ten days. The officers of both regiments claimed that the number of applications would be enough to fill the ranks, if the men were in good shape.¹²⁰

Other units took longer to fill their ranks. On 16 September, the Royal 22^e with the 1st Canadian Division was to be sent overseas. According to Stacey, it arrived in England in December poorly trained and equipped.¹²¹ Prior to its arrival, the regiment was short some 285 men in October. The regiment responded by recruiting across the whole province of Quebec, and beyond.¹²² In November, *La Survivance* in Edmonton, Alberta announced that up to 100 French-Canadians in Alberta could enlist in the Royal 22^e to give the regiment a more national character.¹²³ Certainly the Francophone MP from Red Deer showed real support for the war effort, but it is unclear how many French-speaking men from Alberta enlisted in the unit.¹²⁴ By 9

¹¹⁸ Joseph Lacasse, 13 September 1939, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1939, Official Report, Fifth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 55.

¹¹⁹ Jacques Gouin et al, *Bon cœur et bon bras: Histoire du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1880-1980* (Montréal: Cercles de officiers du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1980), 24-25; *Ibid.*, 71

¹²⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15185, File 188. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve, 6 September 1939; Terry Copp and Christine Hamelin, "Le Régiment de Maisonneuve: A Profile Based on Personnel Records," *Canadian Military History* 8, no. 4 (1999): 20.

¹²¹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 13-14.

¹²² Jean-Yves Gravel, *Les Soldats-Citoyens: Histoire du Régiment de Trois-Rivières, 1871-1978* (Trois-Rivières: Éditions du Bien Public, 1981), 35; K. H. Barry Gallant, "The Development of the Canadian Army as a Unilingual Institution in a Bilingual State," (MA thesis., McGill University, 1968), 70.

¹²³ "Pour L'Enrôlement des Canadiens Français," *La Survivance* (Edmonton, Alberta), 15 November 1939.

¹²⁴ The Commonwealth Graves Commission only lists one Alberta man, George Edmond Patenaude, who died in Italy on 24 December 1943 with the Royal 22nd. "George Edmond Patenaude," CWGC, accessed 24 February 2022. <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2205058/george-edmond-patenaude/>.

December, when the unit was ready to go overseas, it had 800 men.¹²⁵ Of French-speaking units in Quebec, only the Chaudières were below full establishment while the other three French-speaking battalions reached full strength.¹²⁶ Francophones were enlisting despite having limited options and difficulties amidst a tense political atmosphere. Increased representation would be needed as the war progressed to fill Canada's growing army.

Through the winter of 1939-1940, the war entered the "Phoney War," a time when there was little military action. This phase further dampened recruitment. The 1st Division was firmly fixed in the ancient barracks at Aldershot, England while the 2nd Division remained in Canada where its recruitment campaigns had a tepid response.¹²⁷ By January 1940, the Chaudières had only 250 men which was less than a third of its full strength. It did not help that an outbreak of mumps in the unit left the men quarantined and unable to train at Valcartier for three weeks.¹²⁸

Two weeks before the "Phoney War" ended with the invasion of Norway in April 1940, a federal election was held on 26 March from which King's government won a solid majority. Vocal Francophone Liberals such as Raymond, Lacroix, and Lacombe had also been re-elected, meaning there would continue to be a strong opposition towards conscription. The period of "limited liability" was over, and the wartime Canadian Army would grow beyond all expectation. As the Germans were invading France, the 3rd Division was formed in late May and a 4th in early June. A Canadian Corps was also announced in May which would form in

¹²⁵ Yves Tremblay, *Instruire une armée: Les officiers canadiens et la guerre modern, 1914-1944* (Montréal: Athéna, 2007), 104.

¹²⁶ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 11-12; LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

¹²⁷ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 72-73.

¹²⁸ R. Daniel Pellerin, "Sharpening the Sabre: Canadian Infantry Combat Training during the Second World War," (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 2016), 131.

December and an Armoured Corps would be raised in August.¹²⁹ Despite this growth, the mobilisation plans for May and June completely ignored Quebec's French-speaking units. Since the beginning of the war, five out of 15 French-speaking infantry regiments had been mobilised compared to 62 of 79 English-speaking units. In addition, only one French-speaking Field Ambulance had been mobilised for overseas service.¹³⁰ On top of the lack of French trades training and French-speaking officers, French-speaking units for overseas service was yet another area where army representation fell short.

After the invasion of Norway, German forces swept into France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. There was little resistance. On 17 June 1940, just days before the surrender of France, the Canadian government began to formulate Bill No. 43 which would become the National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA). At its core was conscription but only in service in Canada for home defence. The bill became law on 21 June after a three-day debate in the House of Commons.¹³¹ The act was a compromise by the Prime Minister, who had always promised there would be no conscription for overseas service. He agreed to conscription, but for home service only, in the face of enormous pressure from English Canada, not least from leading ministers in his own cabinet. This half measure, nevertheless, promised significant benefits to the army, as home service conscripts could be used to replace the thousands of General Service volunteers in the units protecting the coasts and vulnerable points in Canada, and thus make the volunteers available for the army overseas. Compulsory service at home would also bring men

¹²⁹ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 76-80.

¹³⁰ LAC, R8207-412-0-E, MG27-IIIB10, Vol. 90. Summary of Quebec's Recruiting Problem, 25 June 1941.

¹³¹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 33.

with no interest or knowledge of military life into the military community and possibly inspire them to volunteer for General Service.¹³²

Some French-Canadian politicians opposed conscription for home defence. MP Liguori Lacombe opposed what would become the NRMA. He wanted to amend Bill No. 43 so that Canada's home defence army would consist only of volunteers. He then called again (as he did in 1939) for the amendment of the Militia Act to be for home defence only. He also wanted Canadians to be able to express their opinion on the bill through a plebiscite. As with Lacombe's 1939 non-participation amendment, he again only received support from MP Wilfrid Lacroix.¹³³ It was clear that the Quebec Liberal caucus had become largely unified in their support for Canada's war effort despite their vocal opposition in 1939.

The following day, Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe again made his position on conscription clear. He supported the bill, but reminded Parliament that he did not want conscription for overseas service. He also wanted Canada to provide for its own defence through the production of modern military equipment. Lapointe's stance was supported by other nationalist MPs such as Maxime Raymond, who had previously spoken out against Canada's participation in the war.¹³⁴ Having just won a majority in March, King's Liberal government was unified by the promise that there would be no conscription for overseas service.

On 22 June, France surrendered, and further changes were brought to the Canadian Army. Spending restrictions on the military's expansion were removed, and Dr. O. D. Skelton's

¹³² Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 71-72.

¹³³ Liguori Lacombe, 19 June 1940, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1939, Official Report, First Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1940), 924-925.

¹³⁴ Ernest Lapointe, 20 June 1940, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1939, Official Report, First Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1940), 944-945.

extreme caution about the overseas military effort that had shaped policy in the early months of the war lost much of its influence. However, there was no clear plan in place for the military's expansion. Major-General Harry Crerar became CGS to help with the army's growth because of his experience in England, meaning he could be a liaison between the overseas forces and Ottawa. Crerar was a distinguished officer of the First World War and Commandant of the Royal Military College in 1939. He would help to bolster Francophone army representation. Crerar considered the National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) an obstacle to growth and knew changes had to be made. He established a policy to immediately expand the army and make NDHQ more efficient.¹³⁵ Crerar's army programme for 1941 included a Canadian Corps of three divisions plus an armoured brigade. While hesitant to sketch a long-term plan for the army, Crerar envisioned six or seven overseas divisions (two of which would be armoured) and two divisions for home defence consisting of NRMA troops.¹³⁶

These changes likely led to uncertainty regarding the fate of the French-speaking brigade. Brigadier Pierre Edouard Leclerc, a First World War veteran who commanded Le Régiment de Joliette during the inter-war period, assumed command of 5th Brigade in May 1940. However, strategic events dampened any hopes that he would lead an all-French-speaking formation.¹³⁷ The FMRs, which was part of the 5th Brigade 2nd Division, was despatched to Iceland on 1 July for garrison duty and was replaced by the Calgary Highlanders. The Chaudières were then transferred to 8th Brigade 3rd Division, making the idea of a French-speaking brigade impossible to achieve. Because these two regiments left for other formations, Brigadier Leclerc suggested

¹³⁵ Paul Dickson, "The Politics of Army Expansion: General H. D. G. Crerar and the Creation of First Canadian Army, 1940-1941," *The Journal of Military History* 60, no. 2 (1996): 276-280.

¹³⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 33-34.

¹³⁷ "Major-General Pierre Edouard Leclerc," *Biblio.com*, accessed 17 March 2022.
<https://www.biblio.com/book/major-general-pierre-edouard-leclerc-signatures/d/617890411>.

abandoning the brigade in the spring, and its current organisation made permanent. The Divisional Commander, Major-General Victor Odlum, concurred. On 19 November 1940, National Defence Headquarters officially abandoned the idea of a French-speaking brigade.¹³⁸

The motives for abandoning the brigade were varied. Pariseau and Bernier claim the brigade was abandoned because senior officers wanted each brigade headquarters to use English only.¹³⁹ A lack of French-speaking officers also contributed to the decision, as did the desperate strategic realities of the time.¹⁴⁰ The lack of French-speaking officers caught the attention of the French press. *Le Droit* noted the dearth of French-speaking officers in the higher echelons of the army. The editors claimed the army's staff positions had only one French-Canadian officer out of 34. In addition, certain army branches had few French-speaking officers. Only six French speakers out of 90 were in the adjutant-general branch, while the ordnance branch had just three French speakers out of 43. The quartermaster general's branch had none.¹⁴¹ French-Canadians wanting to take a commission would have to speak English, leaving unilingual Francophones to remain in the other ranks. There were plans for English conversation courses for French-speaking soldiers, but they were cancelled in May due to the intensification of the war.¹⁴²

The lack of French-speaking officers did not deter the army's leadership from raising more French-speaking units. The 2nd Division was also sent overseas in August, meaning French Canada now had two French-speaking battalions overseas compared to only one during the First

¹³⁸ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: The Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 110; C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 45.

¹³⁹ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: The Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 113.

¹⁴⁰ Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 90.

¹⁴¹ "Les officiers de langue française dans l'État-major de l'armée," *Le Droit* (Ottawa, Ontario), 26 July 1940.

¹⁴² C. P. Stacey, "The Educational Programme of the Canadian Army Overseas, 1940-41," CMHQ Report No. 53, 30 November 1941, 3; *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 5.

World War. The FMRs would also soon arrive from Iceland in late October. More French-speaking units were raised after Crerar convinced Minister of National Defence J. L. Ralston to form an Armoured Corps.¹⁴³ Ralston was a native Nova Scotian, First World War veteran, and lawyer. He became Defence Minister in July 1940 after the previous minister, Norman Rogers, died in a plane crash. Having previously occupied the position in October 1926, he was the ideal replacement. Unlike many ministers and politicians discussed here, Ralston was a strong supporter of conscription for overseas service which forced his resignation in November 1944.¹⁴⁴ He would be an important figure for increasing French-Canadian army representation.



Figure 1: Sherbrooke Fusiliers Advertisement

The creation of the Armoured Corps prompted the mobilisation of an armoured unit, the Sherbrooke Fusiliers, on 13 August 1940. Advertisements (figure 1) for the regiment highlighted its bilingual identity by merging the name “Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke” with the “Sherbrooke Regiment.” Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, however, still operated during the war, retaining its French-speaking identity. It was mobilised in March 1942. This advertisement was seen only in Sherbrooke and the surrounding area.¹⁴⁵

The French-speaking enlistment rate of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers was only 20 percent of the formation’s full strength while English-speaking men were at 80 percent as of 3 August. However, French-Canadian enlistment gradually started increasing to 30 percent

¹⁴³ Paul Dickson, “The Politics of Army Expansion: General H. D. G. Crerar and the Creation of First Canadian Army, 1940-1941,” *The Journal of Military History* 60, no. 2 (1996): 276-280.

¹⁴⁴ John Robinson Campbell, “James Layton Ralston and Manpower for the Canadian Army,” (MA thesis., Wilfrid Laurier University, 1984), iii.

¹⁴⁵ “Enrôlez-vous maintenant avec votre unité des cantons de l’est pour service actif,” *La Chronique de Magog* (Magog, Québec), 15 August 1940; C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 44.

on 5 August and 40 percent on the 14th.¹⁴⁶ Other French-speaking units such as the overseas 82nd Anti-Tank Battery had 123 men at its peak by 13 August. Some of the recruits were English-speaking, however.¹⁴⁷ The Chaudières also reached full strength after another recruitment campaign in the ridings of Beauce, Dorchester, Frontenac, and Mégantic was launched in June. Priests, postmasters, mayors, and volunteers from Gaspé and les Îles-de-la Madeleine, helped the regiment acquire 900 men in autumn, 1940.¹⁴⁸ French-Canadians were enlisting despite having little representation compared to their population.

A fourth French-speaking infantry regiment up to strength increased pressure to raise more French-speaking units in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec. Editors of *La Voix d'Évangeline* on 10 October 1940, asked why Acadians did not have their own unit. During the First World War, there was the 165th Acadian Battalion, established in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1915. No response was received from the government or the army.¹⁴⁹ It was the first of repeated attempts to raise an Acadian battalion. All of them were unsuccessful.

In Ontario, the editors of *Le Droit* on 3 December correspondent Charles M. Gautier advocated for the creation of a French-speaking unit for the province. Gautier claimed that since 1885, Francophones in Ontario had been demanding one. He argued that such a unit would help foster national unity and give French-Canadians the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to Canada. The journal also showed concern that French-speaking men in Military District No. 3 in southern Ontario and Western Quebec had little choice but to enlist in English-speaking units.

¹⁴⁶ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14283, File 1044. War Diary Summary of Events, Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment, 3-31 August 1940.

¹⁴⁷ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14477, File 908D. War Diary Summary of Events, 82nd Anti-Tank Battery, 30-31 July, and 13 August 1940.

¹⁴⁸ Serge Bernier et al, *Military History of Quebec City, 1608-2008* (Montreal: Art Global, 2008), 265.

¹⁴⁹ Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 72; While no Acadian battalion would be raised, five French-speaking units were mobilised from July to December 1940. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

One soldier quoted by Gautier claimed that because none of the French-speaking units in his district (No. 3) were being mobilised, French-speaking men were forced to enlist in English-speaking units. The article claimed that between 20 to 50 percent of French-speaking men were in English-speaking units which hindered efforts for more French-speaking representation in the military. According to Gautier, this trend fostered the belief that French-Canadians were opposed to war, and prevented English-speaking Canadians from enlisting in their own units.¹⁵⁰ Gautier was correct in his claims as few French-speaking units had been mobilised since the start of the war. Available units were only in Quebec, leaving Francophones outside the province no choice but to enlist in English-speaking units. No French-speaking unit was formed in Ontario.

New Brunswick and Ontario also suffered from a lack of French-speaking instructors and training options, making it difficult to raise French-speaking units. In New Brunswick just one camp, the No. 71 NPAM Training Centre in Edmundston, allowed 150 of 250 men to train in French.¹⁵¹ Acadians in English counties such as Kent, Westmorland, and Victoria could only train in English. The Edmundston camp was only available for those in the counties of Madawaska, Restigouche, Gloucester, and Northumberland where the largest populations of Acadians lived. Acadians from Nova Scotia and PEI would also not be able to train at Edmundston. They would be sent to one of three basic training centres and/ or three infantry training centres in Atlantic Canada. The editors of *La Voix d'Évangeline* complained as a result.¹⁵² In September 1940, the bilingual Number 22 NPAM Training Centre in North Bay and Number 31 NPAM Training Centre in Cornwall, Ontario could only train each a company's

¹⁵⁰ "La contribution du Canada français," *Le Droit* (Ottawa, Ontario), 3 December 1940.

¹⁵¹ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 57.

¹⁵² Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 64-67; "Un camp bilingue, mais pour qui?," *La Voix d'Évangeline* (Moncton, New Brunswick), 10 October 1940.

worth of French-speaking recruits. By the fall, Cornwall increased its capacity for French speakers to 100 men. In October 1940, both camps could train up to 250 in French.¹⁵³ Despite this slight increase, the limited training options for Francophones meant that the likelihood of French-speaking units being formed in the Maritimes and Ontario was slim.

Proposed French-speaking units in Quebec were also rejected. Liberal MP Jean-François Pouliot mentioned in Parliament how sometime in 1940, his proposal to form a French-speaking regiment in his constituency of Témiscouata in Eastern Quebec was rejected.¹⁵⁴ A lawyer who joined the House of Commons in 1924, Pouliot was strongly opposed to conscription, but was an advocate for French-Canadian representation in the army during the Second World War. Pouliot was no stranger to controversy and was disliked by the English language press. *The Globe and Mail* referred to Pouliot as the “Parliamentary jester” as he never shied away from giving his opinion. For example, in 1946, during Prime Minister King’s last day in Parliament, Pouliot claimed King governed by Order-in-Council and said he should have retired two years earlier.¹⁵⁵ His bombast aside, Pouliot was a strong advocate for French-Canadian representation in the army.

The year 1941 brought new problems for the Canadian Army. As the Canadian Corps formed overseas in December 1940 with the arrival of the 2nd Division, there was a noticeable lack of recruits in January 1941. That same month, the government approved a tank brigade and

¹⁵³ DHH, File 112.1, D16, “CDN ARMY ORG-Survey as of Sep 41,” George H. Cassels, Brigadier, D.A.G.(M), for B.W. Browne, Major-General, Adjutant-General, to All District Officers Commanding, 16 September 1940; Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 57-59.

¹⁵⁴ Jean-François Pouliot, 18 February 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 700.

¹⁵⁵ “A Compromise with Conscience,” *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), 13 November 1941; “Mr. King’s Great Day Marred by Criticism,” *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), 15 July 1948.

an armoured division for the defence of Britain in addition to the already existing three divisions.¹⁵⁶ There were 5,863 General Service enlistments in January, less than what was needed. From January to March 1941, the army was short by 6,900 recruits and the navy and air force were competing for men, making recruiting much more difficult.¹⁵⁷

To solve this issue, the army's leadership changed the NRMA and the army's training scheme, effective March, and April 1941.¹⁵⁸ Plans had been recommended by the Director of Military Training and Staff Duties back in August 1939 to train new recruits. However, with the emergence of the NRMA, a new training scheme in October extended the NRMA training period from one to four months.¹⁵⁹ Conscripts would then be paid the same rate as active recruits, and be eligible for dependents' allowances.¹⁶⁰ Also, conscripts and General Service recruits would be trained together by merging most training camps into one system, turning them all into General Service training camps. This scheme made it possible to keep conscripts on home defence for the duration of the war while most General Service recruits, originally on home defence, could be sent overseas.¹⁶¹

Under the new scheme, NPAM Training Centres absorbed recruits for the Active Army as of 15 February 1941.¹⁶² Some had French language training. Nine Canadian Army Basic

¹⁵⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 91.

¹⁵⁷ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 37; C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 115.

¹⁵⁸ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 82-83.

¹⁵⁹ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 133-134.

¹⁶⁰ J. L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 201.

¹⁶¹ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 120-122.

¹⁶² Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 528-535.

Training Centres (CABTCs) and one Canadian Army Educational Basic Training Centre (CAEBTC) offered French training in Quebec. In April 1941, some of these camps changed their language of instruction. Lauzon became bilingual, Huntingdon became English only, and Sherbrooke became French only. After April 1941, Quebec had two bilingual camps, seven exclusively in French, and one exclusively in English.¹⁶³ Other bilingual camps also opened in early 1941 in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec.¹⁶⁴ One camp in Dundurn, Saskatchewan, was reported to have enough French-speaking officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to train French-speaking recruits, but it was not listed as a bilingual camp.¹⁶⁵

Five French trade schools located in Quebec City, Lauzon, and Rimouski, Quebec taught motor mechanics, mechanic fitting, welding, carpentry, plumbing, painting, and clerk/ secretary work as early as February 1941. Trades courses were also given at the Citadel in Quebec City for motor mechanics and at the International Harvester Company in Quebec for driving.¹⁶⁶

Of 29,750 spots available for trainees in Canada by September 1940, 6,600 of those were for French-speaking men and 650 for bilingual men. An additional 1,350 spots became available

¹⁶³ These were the Number 41 CABTC in Huntingdon, 43 in Sherbrooke, 44 in St. Jérôme, 45 in Sorel, 47 in Valleyfield, 51 in Chicoutimi, 53 in Lauzon, 54 in Montmagny, 55 in Rimouski, and the 42 CAEBTC in Joliette. See DHH, File 112.1, D16, "CDN ARMY ORG-Survey as of Sep 41," George H. Cassels, Brigadier, D.A.G.(M), for B.W. Browne, Major-General, Adjutant-General, to All District Officers Commanding, 16 September 1940; LAC, RG 24, File HQ 1161-1-18, Vol. 1, H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Army), to J.R. Hurtibise, Esq., Sudbury, Ontario, 16 July 1941.

¹⁶⁴ These were the Number 22 CAEBTC in North Bay, the 31 CABTC in Cornwall, Ontario, and the Number 71 CABTC in Edmundston, New Brunswick. Another two were bilingual infantry training centres in Quebec. These were the A12 Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC) in Farnham and A13 in Valcartier. The former became bilingual in April 1941. There was also one militia training centre in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. See DHH, File 112.1, D16, "CDN ARMY ORG-Survey as of Sep 41," George H. Cassels, Brigadier, D.A.G.(M), for B.W. Browne, Major-General, Adjutant-General, to All District Officers Commanding, 16 September 1940; LAC, RG 24, File HQ 1161-1-18, Vol. 1, H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Army), to J.R. Hurtibise, Esq., Sudbury, Ontario, 16 July 1941.

¹⁶⁵ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 57.

¹⁶⁶ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 125-126; *Ibid.*, 327-328.

for French-speaking men and 100 for bilingual men by April 1941.¹⁶⁷ The training spots available for Francophones by April 1941 highlight an increase in French-Canadian army representation as they made up just above 29 percent of the total number of training spots which is close to the proportion of French speakers in Canada. The increasing number of training opportunities for Francophones were starting to reflect Canada's French-Canadian population.

Still, the army's growth exposed the lack of overseas French-speaking units and officers. In April 1941, the Francophone press covered a speech by Major-General Léo-Richer Laflèche. He was a veteran of the First World War, Deputy Minister of National Defence from 1932 to 1940, the Associate Deputy Minister of War Services from 1940 to 1942, and then Chairman of the National Film Board from 1941 to 1943. Speaking at a meeting of the influential l'Institut Canadien de Québec, Laflèche expressed concern with the number of French-speaking troops filling the ranks of English-speaking units. He noted that the British High Command understood the importance of letting units maintain their identity, noting that the Free French, Polish, and Czech squadrons were led by their own officers. He concluded that French-Canadians should be allowed to command and have their ethnic and linguistic rights respected.¹⁶⁸ Maurice Pope recalled hearing similar concerns. He spoke with Conservative MP Louis Côté during the spring/summer of 1941 who claimed that when enlistments were high, there were few openings in French-speaking units. Côté also did not like the fact that when enlistments dropped, French-Canadian MPs were expected to convince French-speaking men to join English-speaking units, which he did not think was fair.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 58-59.

¹⁶⁸ "L'effort de guerre du Canada français," *Le Droit* (Ottawa, Ontario), 9 April 1941.

¹⁶⁹ Maurice Pope, *Soldiers and Politicians: The Memoir of Lt. General Maurice A. Pope* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 169-170.

These complaints were justified as few French-speaking units had been mobilised for overseas service, many of which were smaller than a battalion. Seven were mobilised in 1939: the four French-speaking infantry battalions, the bilingual Three Rivers Regiment, and two medical units. Two mobilised in 1940: an anti-tank battery and the bilingual Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment. Another seven mobilised in 1941: one anti-tank and one anti-aircraft battery, an engineer battalion, a service corps company, two medical companies, and a provost (military police) company.¹⁷⁰ Few of these units could absorb a substantial number of recruits. More French-speaking officers and units would be needed to meet these demands.

With army training centres opened throughout Canada in the spring of 1941, a National Campaign Committee (established in May) worked to raise recruiting. It had representatives from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the National Film Board, Wartime Information Board (WIB), advertising agencies in Canada, and the Directorate of Public Relations (Army). Its first meeting was held on 5 May 1941. On 11 May Defence Minister J. L. Ralston created Canada's first recruitment campaign. He asked for 32,000 recruits in two months. From then on, each Military District had its own recruiting officer who was assisted by civilian recruiting advertisers and committees.¹⁷¹

Seven different advertisements were distributed in French language newspapers in 1941 to encourage men to join the General Service. These were likely created by the Bureau of Public Information (BPI) which translated posters, pamphlets, and other pieces of information directly from English texts. That being said, none mentioned being able to join French-speaking units or

¹⁷⁰ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

¹⁷¹ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 115-116.

train in French. The BPI had a minimal role in designing recruitment campaigns for Quebec meaning they could have also been made by the WIB, who had a French language department.¹⁷²

One example (figure 2) featured a soldier pointing upwards with the text stating that the country needs recruits quickly for the Active Army. The advertisement explained how things had changed since the First World War as soldiers are now trained in Canada instead of England. Men were needed to work in the army's various jobs such as the artillery, infantry, medical services, and to operate tanks and armoured vehicles. It also summarised the army's benefits: \$1.30 a day plus food, clothing, a place to sleep, medical, and dental care.¹⁷³



Figure 2: 1941 Recruitment Advertisement

Other advertisements contained similar texts as the one described above, but in language that public relations staff thought appealed to men at the time. One made an appeal to manhood by showing a soldier marching. It carried the title: “Enrôlez-vous. Endossez l’uniforme. Marchez avec fierté. Montrez que vous êtes un homme!” Another depicting a tank and soldiers on motorcycles made an appeal to those who enjoy driving motored vehicles.¹⁷⁴ Others advertised the army's various jobs such as the artillery, infantry, engineers, and the stewardship.¹⁷⁵ Another

¹⁷² William Young, “Making the Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government’s Home Front Information Structure and Programmes during World War II,” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1978), 200-201.

¹⁷³ “La Patrie a besoin de vous tout de suite dans l’armée active,” *Journal de Waterloo* (Waterloo, Québec), 16 May 1941.

¹⁷⁴ “Enrôlez-vous. Endossez l’uniforme. Marchez avec fierté. Montrez que vous êtes un homme!,” *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 21 May 1941; “Voici l’action que vous recherchez! Enrôlez-vous dès maintenant,” *L’Action Populaire* (Joliette, Québec), 23 May 1941.

¹⁷⁵ “Feu sur l’ennemi!,” *Journal de Waterloo* (Waterloo, Quebec), 20 June 1941; “Choisissez votre emploi Il faut en finir!,” *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 5 June 1941.

mentioned fighting for liberty while one last example bluntly stated that the army needed men.¹⁷⁶

It is unclear what impact these advertisements had on French Canada's population, but they demonstrate the expanding army's need for Francophone men to become active. They also showed more opportunities for Francophones beyond the infantry.

French-Canadians joined the army for a variety of reasons. Some related to what was advertised during the spring recruitment campaign. Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke received recruits because of the benefits noted in the advertisements. Families would no longer have to depend on municipal handouts.¹⁷⁷ Dieppe veterans Ludger Houde and Jacques Nadeau as well as Charlie Muise, who was with the Princess Louise Fusiliers, noted later that they enlisted because of the benefits.¹⁷⁸

The trades advertised must have also appealed to French-Canadians as Omer Jeannotte, a French-Canadian from Saskatchewan, enlisted to be a driver in the Westminster Regiment (Motors) because of his experience driving cars, trucks, and tractors.¹⁷⁹ Others joined to learn typing skills such as Donald Lafleur of the Governor-General's Foot Guards in Ottawa.¹⁸⁰ Florian Roy, who was with the Royal 22^e, wanted to be a mechanic, but was recommended for

¹⁷⁶ "On demande: Des hommes pour défendre la liberté! Entrez dans la lutte contre l'Hitlérisme – Enrôlez-vous maintenant!," *L'Avenir du Nord* (St. Jérôme, Québec), 6 June 1941; "On demande d'urgence des hommes pour l'armée active du Canada," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 19 June 1941.

¹⁷⁷ Michel Litalien. *Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 1910-2010: L'épopée d'une institution des Cantons-de-l'Est* (Sherbrooke: GGC éditions, 2010), 219-220.

¹⁷⁸ Charlie Muise, in discussion with author, July 2017; Ludger Houde, *1939-45, ma guerre, mon implication personnelle et générale: Récit anecdotique*. Boucherville: Éditions Sans âge, 1997), 25-26; Jacques Nadeau, *Dieppe, ma prison: Récit de guerre de Jacques Nadeau* (Outremont: Athéna éditions, 2008), 19.

¹⁷⁹ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Omer Albert Jeannotte," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 17428, Vol. 26193. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=17428&q=Omer%20Albert%20jeannotte>.

¹⁸⁰ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Donald George Lafleur," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 19259, Vol. 26293. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=19259&q=Donald%20George%20Lafleur>.

the artillery.¹⁸¹ Roland Aubry joined because he wanted to learn a trade, but was recommended for a non-tradesman role such as the infantry and ended up with the 48th Highlanders of Canada from Toronto.¹⁸²

Some enlisted for reasons not advertised. French-Canadians had the desire to join the paratroopers, which was organised in 1942. Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson, who was part of the army's Historical Section, noted that 30 percent of volunteers for this force were most likely bilingual French-Canadians. It is unclear, however, how many became paratroopers.¹⁸³ Richard Bélanger of the Royal 22^e initially joined up to become a paratrooper but withdrew because his wife was worried and having a child.¹⁸⁴ Paul Allard was not accepted into the paratroopers and instead joined the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. Allard's failure may be because he had trouble speaking English and had a lower M test (intelligence test) score than was required.¹⁸⁵

The army's leadership realised that French-speaking men had greater trouble taking the M test because it was originally designed for English-speaking men. A French version of the test was implemented on 1 January 1942, but a memorandum on army training noted that there were inherent cultural distortions in these tests as they included things only English-Canadians would

¹⁸¹ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Florian Roy," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 31018, Vol. 26946. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=31018&q=Florian%20ROY>.

¹⁸² "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Roland Aubry," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 1117, Vol. 25358. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=1117&q=Roland%20Aubry>.

¹⁸³ G. W. L. Nicholson, "The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion; Organization and Training. July 1942 - June 1944 Appendix A," CMHQ Report, No. 138, 7 July 1945, 5.

¹⁸⁴ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Richard Napoleon Bélanger," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 2190, Vol. 25423. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=2190&q=Richard%20Napoleon%20Belanger>.

¹⁸⁵ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Paul Allard," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 345, Vol. 25304. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=345&q=Paul%20Allard>.

know. Numerous complaints about the test prompted the No. 3 Military District commander to state that the test did not decide whether one became a soldier. Scores were adjusted so that French speakers only had to score 145 on the test to become an officer whereas English speakers needed 160. For NCOs, French speakers needed 125 while English speakers needed 145.¹⁸⁶

Historians have also found a variety of reasons for why French-Canadians enlisted. Yves Tremblay found that patriotism, adventure, trades training, and money were amongst some of the reasons.¹⁸⁷ Sébastien Vincent's analysis observes that French-Canadians enlisted because they wanted an adventure, liberty for Europe, and money.¹⁸⁸ Jacques Gouin (5th and 4th Medium Regiments, Royal Canadian Artillery [RCA]) and Charles Laforce (3rd Engineer Battalion) said they joined to fight Hitler.¹⁸⁹ Christine Hamelin, who examined a small number of personnel records from the Maisonneuves, found that men enlisted for some of the same reasons listed above such as adventure and liberty for Europe. As mentioned, Copp suggests that unemployment was a reason why many French-Canadians joined the Maisonneuves in 1939, however, he also argues that the probability of being conscripted was also a factor.¹⁹⁰ Caroline D'Amours, who examined personnel files of the Chaudières, found that the regiment's men did not enlist for economic reasons as over 90 percent had a job prior to enlisting.¹⁹¹ Copp supports D'Amours' findings through an analysis conducted by the General Advisory Committee on

¹⁸⁶ Caroline D'Amours, "Notre tâche est de rendre les hommes prêts au combat: La formation des sous-officiers de renforts d'infanterie du Canada pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale," (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 2015), 101-102; Yves Tremblay, *Instruire une armée: Les officiers canadiens et la guerre moderne, 1914-1944* (Montréal: Athéna, 2007), 165-166.

¹⁸⁷ Yves Tremblay, *Volontaires : Des Québécois en guerre, 1939-1945* (Montréal : Athéna, 2006), 24-25.

¹⁸⁸ Sébastien Vincent, *Ils ont écrit la guerre: La Seconde Guerre mondiale à travers des écrits de combattants canadiens-français* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2010), 43-49.

¹⁸⁹ Jacques Gouin, *Lettres de Guerre d'un Québécois, 1942-1945* (Québec: Éditions du Jour, 1975), 13; Charles Laforce, *Soldat de Cœur: Mémoires de la guerre, 1939-1945* (Montréal: MFR Éditeur, 2003), 40.

¹⁹⁰ Terry Copp and Christine Hamelin, "Le Régiment de Maisonneuve: A Profile Based on Personnel Records," *Canadian Military History* 8, no. 4 (1999): 20-24.

¹⁹¹ Caroline D'Amours, "Idéalistes, pragmatiques et les autres Profil des volontaires du Régiment de la Chaudière, 1939-1945," *Histoire Social/ Social History* 51, no. 103 (2018): 142.

Demobilisation and Rehabilitation of 347,900 servicemen. It found that 85 percent of men left their jobs in the first three years of the war to enlist.¹⁹² These studies indicate that French-Canadians wanted to support the war effort even though they were already employed.

Anglophone personnel records show similar reasons for enlistment. Many wanted practical skills. Saskatchewan native Hartley Anderson of the Algonquin Regiment enlisted to be a driver.¹⁹³ John Johnson of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment also wanted to drive and learn motor mechanics.¹⁹⁴ Frederick Smith of the Perth Regiment (Motors) in Ontario enlisted because he wanted to go overseas. He was killed in Italy in December 1944.¹⁹⁵ Whether for adventure, to learn a trade, earn regular pay, there was often no difference in the reasons why a Francophone or Anglophone enlisted.

The spring 1941 recruitment campaign was a success, surpassing targets by around 16,000, but the number of Francophones recruited remains unclear.¹⁹⁶ What is clear is that Military Districts No. 4 in Montreal and 5 in Quebec City had an untapped reserve of men. Major W. W. Goforth, an officer in the army's Directorate of Staff Duties, predicted that if Canada's voluntary system did not change, less than 30,000 men would be recruited from Quebec within a year.¹⁹⁷ Goforth did not mention increasing recruitment in Quebec to avoid

¹⁹² Terry Copp and Christine Hamelin, "Le Régiment de Maisonneuve: A Profile Based on Personnel Records," *Canadian Military History* 8, no. 4 (1999) : 20.

¹⁹³ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Hartley Murdoch Anderson," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, K15984, Vol. 25326. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=548&q=anderson>.

¹⁹⁴ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 John Paul Johnson," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, 17662, Vol. 26209. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=17662&q=Johnson>.

¹⁹⁵ "Service Files of the Second World War-War Dead, 1939-1947 Frederick Arthur Smith," *Library and Archives Canada* RG 24, A11766, Vol. 27067. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=33028&q=Smith>.

¹⁹⁶ Paul Dickson, *A Thoroughly Canadian General: A Biography of General H. D. G. Crerar* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 161.

¹⁹⁷ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

conscription for overseas service, but since conscripts were now serving on home defence for the duration of the war due to a recruitment shortage, avoiding conscription for overseas service was surely on his mind.

The need to increase recruitment resulted in the Goforth Report, which advocated for greater French-Canadian army representation. Dated 7 June 1941 and titled the “The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec,” the report highlighted issues French-Canadian soldiers in Quebec were facing. It provided solutions to fix such problems such as the lack of reinforcements in Military No. 4 in Montreal. The report also advocated for the increase of French language trades training, French-speaking units, Francophone officers, and French language manuals to encourage Francophone enlistment. The CGS, General Harry Crerar, ordered Major W. W. Goforth to write the report on 14 May. It was then circulated to senior officers from the Military Districts of Montreal and Quebec for comment. Their opinions were incorporated for action by Defence Minister Ralston after discussions with Justice Minister Lapointe and Minister of National Defence for Air Power.¹⁹⁸ The fact that this report received attention at the highest political levels suggests the importance of increasing French Canada’s wartime role.

Major Goforth was a veteran of the First World War and a professor of economics and political science at McGill University. He became an officer in the militia, the 17th Duke of York’s Royal Canadian Hussars in 1932, and in 1933, wrote an award-winning essay on the mechanisation of the Canadian Militia that was published in the *Canadian Defence Quarterly*. He was appointed as a General Staff Officer at NDHQ in January 1941 in the Directorate of Staff

¹⁹⁸ “The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec,” 7 June 1941; J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44.

Duties, which was responsible for the organisation of the army.¹⁹⁹ Goforth's training as an economist was reflected in the 31-page document that drew from statistical and historical records as well as consultations within the army's Historical Section. Goforth acknowledged English Canada's failure to appreciate Quebec's contribution to the war. He knew that the army's Anglophone identity discouraged French-Canadians from enlisting.²⁰⁰ Goforth's role as an intellectual in Quebec and militia experience made him well suited to write a report on recruitment issues in the province, and likely account for his appointment to the Directorate of Staff Duties at this critical time. His immediate superior, Colonel M. H. S. Penhale, the Director of Staff Duties, was a native of Sherbrooke, Quebec, and thus probably especially well aware of recruiting challenges in the province and Goforth's qualifications to address these issues.²⁰¹ In short, Goforth was the right man who had been installed in the right position at the right time. This accounts for the large influence of his report, which otherwise might seem remarkable in that it was quickly produced by a militia officer – not a regular officer specially trained in staff work – who had just been appointed at Army Headquarters in Ottawa.

One of the first things discussed in the report was the failure of Military District No. 4 in Montreal to meet its reinforcement quota. No evidence pointed to Montreal's French-speaking population as the reason for this shortage. In fact, French-speaking units were raising their quotas due to having many enlistments.²⁰² In April, the DND noted that all French-speaking reserve units fulfilled and even exceeded their reinforcement targets when others failed.²⁰³ Goforth also

¹⁹⁹ "Local Officer Named G.S.O.," *The Montreal Star* (Montreal, Quebec), 13 August 1941; *Canadian Who's Who Volume V, 1949-1951* (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1951), 408.

²⁰⁰ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

²⁰¹ "Lieutenant Matthew Howard Somers Penhale," *Canadian Great War Project*, accessed 15 December 2023. <https://canadiangreatwarproject.com/person.php?pid=156578>.

²⁰² "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," June 7th, 1941; LAC, R8207-412-0-E, MG27-IIIB10, Vol. 90. Summary of Quebec's Recruiting Problem, 25 June 1941.

²⁰³ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-A, Vol. 37304, File 112.1 (D6). Recruiting and Reinforcement, 26 April 1941.

noted that from February to April 1941, Military District No. 5 in Quebec City obtained more reinforcements than the Canadian average.²⁰⁴ Low recruiting numbers in Canada's largest city caused alarm.

For Montreal to meet its quota, the report suggested posting weekly vacancy lists at training centres so recruits could know when spots within the French-speaking units were available. It also recommended providing rations, provisions, and pay to facilitate travel for rural Quebecers.²⁰⁵ Liberal Témiscouata MP Jean-François Pouliot also raised this issue in Parliament nearly a week after the report had been written.²⁰⁶ Goforth also quoted Lieutenant-Colonel Leonard McEwan Chesley, a former Montreal businessman who served with Goforth in the Directorate of Staff Duties. Chesley recommended sending French-Canadians to English-speaking units. He argued that only French-speaking recruits could fill the ranks of Quebec's English-speaking units since they made up most of the province's population.²⁰⁷

Despite the increase of French language trades training in early 1941, Goforth claimed there was still a lack of trades and advanced training centres for Francophones which contributed to the lack of enlistments. He urged more representation of French-speaking personnel in trade schools as well as more courses for French-Canadians.²⁰⁸ A synoptic table appended to the report suggested reviewing the army trades school system to ensure full proportional representation of

²⁰⁴ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

²⁰⁵ "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," 7 June 1941.

²⁰⁶ Jean-François Pouliot, 13 June 1941, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Second Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3938-3940.

²⁰⁷ Richard A. Preston, *To Serve Canada: A History of the Royal Military College since the Second World War* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1991), 24; LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

²⁰⁸ "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," 7 June 1941.

French-Canadians.²⁰⁹ For advanced training centres, the five artillery training camps in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Manitoba had no French language training. Only the A7 Signals Advanced Training Centre in Barriefield, Ontario, had limited French language instruction and accepted French-speaking soldiers in the technical arms and services if they had special qualifications.²¹⁰ Soldiers in Quebec's 20th Field Regiment may have met these qualifications since in April 1942, 21 French-speaking NCOs and other ranks began a signaller's course.²¹¹ The Goforth Report also suggested the formation of bilingual artillery wings at advanced training centres near Quebec.²¹² Increasing representation in the trades and advanced training camps would encourage more French-Canadians to enlist so that Military District No. 4 could meet its quota.

Goforth also recommended more French-speaking formations. He tried to revive the idea of a French-speaking brigade, this time within the 5th Division, but two English-speaking battalions would have to be converted into French-speaking technical units. The Voltigeurs and Le Régiment de Hull were proposed as replacement options.²¹³ As in 1940, however, the brigade met with opposition during the summer of 1941. Lieutenant-Colonel Chesley appreciated the idea of a French-speaking brigade, but was worried it would increase criticism of Quebec's unwillingness to supply troops. According to Gravel, almost all English senior officers who commented on the report opposed the idea of segregation.²¹⁴ Two other high-ranking officers who commented in the pages of the report, Colonel Penhale, Goforth's immediate superior, and Major-General Maurice A. Pope, Vice Chief of the General Staff, opposed the idea and wanted

²⁰⁹ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37526, File 112.3S2.009 (D36). French-Canadian Representation in the Army.

²¹⁰ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-A, Vol. 37304, File 112.1 (D6). Recruiting and Reinforcement, 3 June 1941.

²¹¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14532, File 811. War Diary Summary of Events, 20th Field Regiment, 13 April 1942.

²¹² LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

²¹³ "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," 7 June 1941.

²¹⁴ Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 90; LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

French-speaking units to be spread throughout the army. Pope, like Penhale, was born in Quebec, and was fluently bilingual (Pope's mother was a Taschereau) and like Penhale was a First World War veteran.²¹⁵ Their combined military experience and connections to French Canada were essential in the efforts to increase French-Canadian representation in the army. Pope did want more French-speaking units, which he thought could be provided by mobilising the 6th Division, a home defence formation mainly comprised of NRMA conscripts.²¹⁶

Pope's suggestion may have had an impact as the 15th Infantry Brigade, which was part of the 6th Division (raised in August 1941 for home defence in the Pacific), was to become French-speaking in March 1942.²¹⁷ Raised in September 1941 at Valcartier and mobilised in October under Brigadier Leclerc's command, it was originally composed of the Voltigeurs, Le Régiment de Hull, and the Halifax Rifles. There would have to be another French-speaking battalion attached to replace the Halifax Rifles for it to be French-speaking, and that was done.²¹⁸ By March 1942, it was composed of the 1st battalions of Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, Le Régiment de Montmagny, Le Régiment de Québec, and the No. 15 Defence Platoon.²¹⁹

Colonel Penhale and Major-General Pope agreed with Goforth that the lack of French-speaking officers was an issue. The report noted that only 6.5 percent of officer candidates in training were French-speaking. It also noted that French-speaking officer candidates needed to learn in both languages, lengthening their training period. The report recommended increasing

²¹⁵ Claude LeBlanc, "Maurice A. Pope: A Study in Military Leadership," (PhD diss., Royal Military College of Canada, 2018), 1; "Lieutenant Matthew Howard Somers Penhale," *Canadian Great War Project*, accessed 15 December 2023. <https://canadiangreatwarproject.com/person.php?pid=156578>.

²¹⁶ "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," 7 June 1941.

²¹⁷ "Sixth Division to be Raised Fifth to Depart," *Toronto Daily Star* (Toronto, Ontario), 8 August 1941.

²¹⁸ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37526, File 112.3S2.009 (D36). French-Canadian Representation in the Army, 8 October 1941; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14170, File 1039. War Diary Summary of Events, 15th Infantry Brigade, 20 October 1941.

²¹⁹ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 157.

senior French-speaking officer training to improve their chances of higher promotions in Military Districts No. 3 (Ontario), 4, 5 (Montreal and Quebec City), and 7 (New Brunswick). Goforth also envisioned a wide campaign to encourage French-speaking men to take a commission.²²⁰

A CMHQ historical report from July 1941 noted complaints from the French language press to increase the number of senior French-speaking officers. Quick action followed. A special company commander's course at one of the training schools opened in July to increase their numbers.²²¹ The bilingual No. 52 Junior Leaders School in Mégantic, Quebec also began to train NCO candidates in August.²²² If successful in their three-week course, French speakers would become instructors at the French language training centres in eastern Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick.²²³ Having more French-speaking officers and NCOs would allow for more French-speaking units to be raised and men to be trained. But French training manuals would be needed.

On 1 August 1940, the army had started translating manuals under the supervision of Colonel J. H. Chaballe of the Directorate of Military Training.²²⁴ Chaballe began with a small team, but its progress increased the prospects of Francophones wanting to work in the army's technical arms. The translation of army training manuals was an important issue that Penhale and Pope agreed required close attention. Since the summer of 1940 to June 1941, Chaballe had

²²⁰ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941; LAC, R8207-412-0-E, MG27-IIIB10, Vol. 90. Summary of Quebec's Recruiting Problem, 25 June 1941.

²²¹ C. P. Stacey, "Situation of the Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom, Summer 1941. Part II: Recent Changes in Commands and Staffs," CMHQ Report No. 36, 7 July 1941, 7-8.

²²² C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 534.

²²³ Lionel Chevrier, 22 July 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol V*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1943), 4561.

²²⁴ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

overseen the translation of 27 manuals. To speed up the process, the Goforth Report suggested the creation of a Directorate of Translations within the General Staff. Bilingual scholars from Canadian universities and secondary schools would be selected to help with the translation process.²²⁵

An Army Language Bureau (figure 3) was formed in July 1941, a month after the



Figure 3: Army Language Bureau

Goforth Report appeared.²²⁶ This bureau would aid in the success of the translating process. *Le Devoir* reported that over the course of a year (1943 to 1944), 30 manuals and brochures were translated followed by 50 more in over two months (April and May of 1944). The army also provided more English to French dictionaries and glossaries to give

French-Canadians access to more courses. Jean-Yves Gravel claims that by 1944, educational and propaganda films were translated as were 359 army manuals, routine and general orders. A French language military dictionary was also created. By the end of the war, 500 manuals and documents were available to Francophones.²²⁷ These helped make trades training accessible and the army more attractive to Francophones.

The Goforth Report gave senior officers a better understanding of the problems Francophones faced and suggestions for increasing their representation. The report immediately followed Crerar's plan to expand the army and train conscripts and General Service recruits together. He knew training both together would pressure conscripts to switch to General Service

²²⁵ "The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec," 7 June 1941.

²²⁶ "Le bureau des publications françaises de l'armée," *Le Bien Public* (Trois-Rivières, Québec), 29 January 1942.

²²⁷ "Quand Ottawa voulait rendre l'armée parfaitement bilingue," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 9 June 1944; Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 91; K. H. Barry Gallant, "The Development of the Canadian Army as a Unilingual Institution in a Bilingual State," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1968), 79-80.

and strain relations between English and French-Canadians. Crerar would work to enact policies to acquire more French-Canadian recruits and senior appointments for French-speaking officers to ease tensions.²²⁸

The report received praise from Major-General Pope who stated that “it [the report] has been done from within and not as a result of pressure from without,” meaning the army’s leadership took it upon themselves to fix the issue regardless of the opinions of Francophone MPs or the French language press.²²⁹ Pope was mostly correct as the pressure from the outside had minimal influence. The report clearly stated that the shortfall in recruitment was the reason why it was written. Only a few articles from the French language press urged the formation of French-speaking units in New Brunswick and Ontario in 1940. There were also complaints that English-speaking units were receiving French-speaking men from Major-General Léo-Richer Laflèche and Conservative MP Louis Côté. Complaints from the French language press about the lack of French-speaking officers was the only pressure which yielded results. Other issues such as the lack of French training manuals, trades, and advanced training centres also suggests that Pope’s statement was mostly true since they were not mentioned by the press or politicians.

In his endorsement of the Goforth Report, Colonel Penhale clearly stated the limits of the wartime army’s commitment to French speakers: “It is not the intention to create a bilingual Army, but rather to provide, for French-speaking officers and and [sic] understood in their mother tongue, while at the same time encouraging a competent knowledge of military English.”²³⁰ Creating a bilingual army would require a complete overhaul of its organisation – a

²²⁸ Paul Dickson, “The Politics of Army Expansion: General H. D. G. Crerar and the Creation of First Canadian Army, 1940-1941,” *The Journal of Military History* 60, no. 2 (1996): 287-288.

²²⁹ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-1-a, Vol. 37523, File 112. 3S2 (D2). The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec, 7 June 1941.

²³⁰ “The Recruiting Problem in the Province of Quebec,” 7 June 1941.

difficult task to accomplish in wartime while having to recruit, train, and raise units for overseas service and home defence. It would also increase tensions between English and French-Canadians as there was certainly men in the army who possessed anti-French beliefs (see chapter 5). While there would be no bilingual army, there was now a practical plan to increase French-Canadian representation.

The Minister of National Defence approved many elements of the Goforth Report on 5 August 1941. These included plans for more French language manuals, textbooks, and pamphlets, and more bilingual courses, schools, instructional staff, officers, and units. Further measures aimed to foster interest in military service amongst French-Canadians. These included the provision of staff to the Directorate of Public Relations to better communicate information about army activities to the French language press. French language universities would receive visits by senior officers to promote their Officers Training Corps contingents. Senior members of the Roman Catholic clergy would also encourage enlistments.²³¹ Approval of the report's suggestions less than two months after it was written demonstrates the willingness of senior officers to include more French-Canadians in the army's expansion.

The army's leadership was quick to act after Defence Minister Ralston's approval of the report as manpower demands for expansion of the army rapidly increased. Between July and September 1941, 3rd Division was sent overseas. The 1st Armoured Division, redesignated the 5th Canadian (Armoured) Division, arrived in England in November. This division was the largest troop movement thus far during the war.²³²

²³¹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 421-422.

²³² C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 87-93.

As the pace of recruiting increased into the fall of 1941, more French-speaking units began to mobilise. Le Régiment de Hull mobilised for active service on 18 August 1941. Its men on reserve were encouraged to join the unit's active battalion for home defence.²³³ But recruiting stopped at the end of November and the unit instead took reserve recruits from the Voltigeurs. The regiment's officers were disappointed as they had hoped to lead active recruits.²³⁴ Another four French-speaking units mobilised in August, one for home defence and three for overseas.²³⁵ The mobilisation of these units demonstrates that the Goforth Report was producing results. For the army to expand, it needed French-speaking units to encourage French-Canadian enlistment.

Even with such developments, criticisms continued from Quebec MPs who insisted that Francophone representation in the army was undercounted. An article by Jean-François Pouliot appeared in the *Evening Citizen* in Ottawa on 3 September 1941 noting that many French-speaking men remained in English-speaking regiments in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, but received no credit for their contribution. Pouliot claimed that significant numbers of French-Canadian men were in the ranks of the Calgary Highlanders, while The Royal Montreal Regiment and 87th Canadian Grenadier Guards also had companies of French-speaking officers and enlisted men. The Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch) and the Victoria Rifles, also from Montreal, had a significant number of French-speaking men, at least half of the personnel in the latter unit, Pouliot claimed. However, he noted that no French-speaking officers were posted to either regiment. Pouliot also insisted that Quebec's enlistment rate at that point in the war was 58 percent higher than the first year and a half of the Second

²³³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15182, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, 18 August 1941.

²³⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15182, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, 19 November 1941.

²³⁵ These units were the 15th Field Company for home defence and the 3rd Engineer Battalion, No. 6 Field Dressing Station, and a provost company for overseas. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

World War. Enlistments in Quebec also exceeded the total in the First World War by 15,000.²³⁶ Such figures, bolstered by NRMA conscripts, were no doubt intended to counter the claims of some in English Canada that Quebec was not doing its bit.

More needed to be done. Pouliot cited an article published from *Le Devoir* on 21 July by Emile Benoist, former president of Quebec's Press Gallery. Benoist called on Parliament to publish bilingual military manuals, raise French-speaking units outside of Quebec as well as a French-speaking brigade, recruit more French-speaking officers, and train French-speaking officers in proportion to the number of French-speaking soldiers available. Benoist also mentioned how the Three Rivers and Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiments were becoming increasingly Anglophone.²³⁷

Pouliot's claims caused some within the army to grumble. An anonymous army officer described Pouliot's article as a "leak" since many of the things the article demanded were then being implemented. The officer complained to Major Goforth that the article should be ignored. He also repeated Pope's statement that the steps taken to increase French-Canadian representation came only from NDHQ and not from outside pressure.²³⁸

Pouliot's comments may have prompted a public announcement from Mackenzie King's ailing Quebec lieutenant, Ernest Lapointe. On 24 September 1941, Lapointe announced at the Château Frontenac, Quebec, that there would be more French-Canadian representation in the army. Perhaps in that venue, Lapointe was making a not-so-subtle rebuke to Maurice Duplessis, a long-time resident of the hotel. Lapointe repeated the main thrust of the Goforth Report and

²³⁶ "The French-Canadian War Effort," *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, Ontario), 3 September 1941.

²³⁷ "The French-Canadian War Effort," *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, Ontario), 3 September 1941.

²³⁸ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37526, File 112.3S2.009 (D36). French-Canadian Representation in the Army, 5 September 1941.

conceded Pouliot's point that some regiments containing French-speaking recruits only had English-speaking officers. However, Lapointe stressed that efforts would be made so that French-speaking soldiers would be commanded by French-speaking officers. He also promised that the number of French-speaking officers would be proportional to English-speaking officers, that they would have access to French manuals and other military publications in their own language, have more promotion opportunities within the higher echelons of the Canadian military, and that there would be more French-speaking regiments.²³⁹ The fact that the "leak" came out only after the Goforth Report's approval shows that the army, as Pope and Penhale have stated, was working on increasing Francophone army representation with minimal outside influence.

The French-Canadian press welcomed the army's plan to include more French-Canadian representation.²⁴⁰ Editor Victor Urbain of *Le Boussole* in Montreal was happy to hear that Francophone representation was to be increased. He was hopeful that French language services would soon expand to other government sectors, namely the agricultural sector as Quebec farmers did not have access to bilingual civil servants.²⁴¹ In Atlantic Canada, Lapointe's announcement raised expectations of more French-Canadian army representation in the Maritimes. On 9 October 1941, *La Voix d'Évangeline* again noted the lack of French-speaking officers to command an Acadian unit.²⁴²

With Lapointe's announcement came a campaign to increase recruitment in Quebec. Maurice Pope, then Assistant CGS, visited Montreal and Quebec City to explain the details of

²³⁹ "L'honorable Ernest Lapointe annonce la nouvelle. Les soldats canadien-français commandés par des officiers canadiens-français," *L'Asbestos* (Drummondville, Québec), 9 October 1941.

²⁴⁰ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37526, File 112.3S2.009 (D36). French-Canadian Representation in the Army, 26 September 1941.

²⁴¹ "M. Lapointe et le français," *Le Boussole* (Montréal, Québec), 11 October 1941.

²⁴² Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 73.

this plan to district officers. Equally important was the support of the Catholic church in Quebec. Pope had an interview with Cardinal Jean-Marie-Rodrigue Villeneuve, the Archbishop of Quebec, on 26 September 1941.²⁴³ Born in Montreal, Villeneuve was a philosophy professor at the University of Ottawa before becoming the Archbishop in December 1931. He was originally a Quebec nationalist, but shifted his politics after war broke out. He encouraged French-Canadians to enlist. He stated in 1941 that “We are legally at war and we are bound to fight...”²⁴⁴ During this meeting, Pope insisted that French-speaking officers should be bilingual so that French-speaking units could serve side by side with English-speaking units. After Lapointe’s announcement in September, Brigadier Georges Vanier, a First World War hero, and commander of Military District No. 5 in Quebec City, called on Quebec’s mayors to encourage French-Canadian enlistment. These announcements were published in *The Montreal Daily Star* and the *Gazette* in October 1941.²⁴⁵

Ernest Lapointe’s announcement in the fall of 1941 demonstrates the growing political and military importance of French Canada. If the army was to follow through with General Crerar’s 1941 army programme and avoid conscription for overseas service, the army’s leadership would have to find ways to increase French-Canadian representation as the need for men was critical. Just nine days before Lapointe’s announcement, Defence Minister Ralston called on Canadians to enlist. He wanted employers to release men for the army as he was desperate for recruits.²⁴⁶ The Goforth Report would surely help to ease his worries.

²⁴³ J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44.

²⁴⁴ “It is the End,” *Time Magazine* (New York, New York), 27 January 1947.

²⁴⁵ J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44.

²⁴⁶ “Recruiting ‘A Job for All’ Ralston Seeks Manpower,” *Toronto Daily Star* (Toronto, Ontario), 15 September 1941.

Ernest Lapointe had strongly opposed conscription a generation before. As King's Quebec lieutenant, he had spent his career defending the interests of French Canada. In the face of bitter opposition, Lapointe had brokered the agreement of no conscription for overseas service. Lapointe had led Canada into the war united, but as the army continued to grow in 1941, he must have realised that another conscription crisis could only be avoided if the army attracted more French-Canadians into its ranks. More Francophone units, officers, and training facilities that permitted more opportunities to train outside the infantry offered the possibility that French Canada could find a place in an otherwise English-speaking institution. Ernest Lapointe died of pancreatic cancer in November 1941 without knowing if these measures would be enough to avoid another conscription crisis.

The army's leadership continued to increase representation using Goforth's suggestions. In late October, the NDHQ made bilingual instruction mandatory at trades and advanced training centres for the artillery, engineering, signals, army service, the medical corps, and the armoured corps in Military Districts No. 1 to 5.²⁴⁷ French-Canadians could now train in areas previously closed to them or with limited availability due to the lack of French-speaking instructors. Units already overseas, however, had to use their own resources. In November, for example, senior officers became aware of the demand for motor mechanics, civil, and electrical engineering courses in the Royal 22^e. The difficulty was that an estimated 40 percent of the men did not speak English and 75 percent would have trouble following an English lecture. The situation was

²⁴⁷ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37415, File 112.3M3.009 (D187). General Directorate of Military Training Correspondence, etc., 23 October 1941.

helped by the fact that several men of the Royal 22^e were motor mechanics and could teach in French.²⁴⁸

Despite the progress senior officers were making, issues remained. Jean-Francois Pouliot complained in November 1941 that there was no census to determine how many French-speaking men were in English-speaking regiments. He also claimed that the Black Watch had issued bilingual invitations in front of the armouries of Montreal when the Joliette, St. Hyacinthe, and Châteauguay regiments had yet to mobilise. Because French-speaking regiments were not available, French-speaking men would have to enlist in English-speaking ones, making them lonely and miserable.²⁴⁹ Liberal MP Hervé-Edgar Brunelle for Champlain, Quebec agreed. He noted in Parliament on 27 January 1942, how French-speaking soldiers stationed at Petawawa, Peterborough, and Kingston felt lost amidst English-speaking men.²⁵⁰ French-Canadians also faced greater difficulty adapting to English culture when they first arrived in the UK. Field censors reported that homesickness was common amongst French-Canadians in Canada and overseas.²⁵¹

Others however had adjusted well. Jacques Nadeau recalled no problems adapting to English life. Having arrived in England on 1 March 1941 with the FMRs, he tried to improve his English and made friends with the locals.²⁵² However, Paul Lapointe, with the Royal Canadian

²⁴⁸ C. P. Stacey, "The Educational Programme of the Canadian Army Overseas, 1940-41 Appendix A," CMHQ Report No. 53, 30 November 1941, 4.

²⁴⁹ Jean-François Pouliot, 12 November 1941, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Second Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 4344.

²⁵⁰ Hervé-Edgar Brunelle, 27 January 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 95.

²⁵¹ C. P. Stacey, "Canadian Relations with the People of the UK and General Problems with Morale, 1939-1944," CMHQ Report No. 119, 30 June 1944, 13-14; See also R. H. Roy, "Morale in the Canadian Army during the Second World War," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 16, (1986): 42.

²⁵² Jacques Nadeau, *Dieppe, ma prison: Récit de guerre de Jacques Nadeau* (Outremont: Athéna éditions, 2008), 33-34.

Engineers, wrote to his wife that he was one of three French-speaking men in his unit. The undated letter mentioned how there were no tensions between him and the Anglophone soldiers, but complained that his inability to understand English made him lonely.²⁵³

In some parts of Canada, whether in the West or in Atlantic Canada, Francophones faced little choice but to join English-speaking units. Nancy Carvell notes that Acadians in New Brunswick joined the North Shore New Brunswick and Carleton and York regiments. Some New Brunswick Acadians also enlisted in Quebec. Conservative MP Alfred Brooks for Royal, New Brunswick noted in November 1941, that an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 New Brunswickers had enlisted in Quebec. Liberal MP for Restigouche-Madawaska, J. E. Michaud, claimed that New Brunswick Acadians were also being counted as enlistments in Quebec even though they were from New Brunswick.²⁵⁴ It is likely that nothing could be done about French-Canadians already in English-speaking units. However, because the army acknowledged the issue, Francophones who had yet to enlist could be directed to French-speaking units.

Towards the end of 1941, things began to improve for French-Canadians in the army. The treasurer of Quebec, J. Arthur Mathewson on 25 November, stated that Quebec had met its recruitment target, with Quebec City having surpassed its objective by 122 percent.²⁵⁵ That same day, senior officers stated that 20 percent of instructors at advanced training centres should be French-speaking. For the A12 and A13 CITCs in Farnham and Valcartier, the estimated percentage of Francophone instructors was set between 50 and 90 percent, based on the number

²⁵³ “Lapointe, Paul Letter,” *The Canadian Letters and Images Project*, accessed 15 December 2020. <https://www.canadianletters.ca/content/document-3898?position=1&list=EeR2KZgJp9D-Zw-e4fHnoM06JGqyKH-tsLXyx65iQQw>.

²⁵⁴ Nancy Carvell, “A People Apart: New Brunswick Acadians, Conscription, and the Second World War,” (MA thesis., Carleton University, 2019), 111-112.

²⁵⁵ Wallace McDonald, 25 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3719-3720.

of French-speaking men under instruction.²⁵⁶ Bernier and Pariseau claim that by spring 1944, the percentage of advanced training centres offering informal bilingual services was indeed 20 percent. However, the only two advanced training centres not designed for infantry, specialised, and technical training in Quebec operated only in English.²⁵⁷ Limitations were still clearly present.

As the year 1941 ended, Francophones were gaining greater visibility in the army. Francophone units were being formed under the command of Francophone officers. On 5 December, *Le Devoir* announced the formation of the 17th Canadian Anti-Aircraft Battery after Defence Minister Ralston adopted a policy to form more French-speaking units in August.²⁵⁸ Also in December, two French-speaking brigadiers were appointed to senior commands. Joseph Pierre Urgel Archambault assumed command of the 8th Infantry Brigade while Hercule Lefebvre took over the “D” Group Reinforcement Units.²⁵⁹

Increasing the overall number of French-speaking officers was the paramount objective. In December 1941, CGS Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, proclaimed that Francophone candidates for commissions would be selected by civilian committees in Military Districts No. 3, 4, and 5. Those selected could either join the reserves or the Active Army.²⁶⁰ Training would commence in February 1942. As changes were being made to French-speaking officer

²⁵⁶ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37415, File 112.3M3.009 (D187). General Directorate of Military Training Correspondence, etc.

²⁵⁷ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1988), 127.

²⁵⁸ “Batteries contre-avions canadiennes-françaises,” *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 5 December 1941; 12 French-speaking units were mobilised from March to November 1941. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

²⁵⁹ C. P. Stacey, “Situation of the Canadian Forces in the United Kingdom, Winter 1941. Part I: Recent Changes in Commands and Staff,” CMHQ Report No. 55, 9 December 1941, 7.

²⁶⁰ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-a, Vol. 37400, File 112.3M3.009 (D90). Selection and Preparatory Instruction French-Canadian Candidates for Commission, 31 December 1941.

recruitment and training, the monthly intake of French-speaking recruits at Brockville increased from 40 to 50 men in the summer to the army's desired number of 125 by year's end.²⁶¹ The increase of French-speaking officer candidates again highlights the impact of the Goforth Report.

The expansion of the Canadian Army provided the vessel through which French-Canadians received more representation. From 1939 to 1940, progress was slow. The French-speaking brigade was abandoned in 1940 and there was a lack of French-speaking units and officers. Manuals were also just beginning to be translated in the summer of 1940. But in early 1941, things began to change as Active Army basic and trades training centres became available for French-Canadians in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Ontario. They were proportionally representative of French Canada's population and were formed with the primary goal of obtaining more volunteers when the army was looking to expand amidst a recruitment shortage and help to avoid the prospect of conscription for overseas service.

The biggest steps towards French-Canadian representation in the army were marked by the Goforth Report in June followed by Justice Minister Lapointe's announcement of upcoming Francophone army accommodations in September. The report mentioned that enlistment numbers amongst French-Canadians in Quebec was satisfactory, but it made senior officers aware of issues French-Canadians faced such as the lack of officers, units, manuals, and trades. The French language press raised questions about French-Canadian representation through the year, but the army anticipated many of these concerns. As a result, more French-speaking units were mobilised, recruitment in Quebec increased, and bilingual instructors became available for the trades and advanced training centres. French-speaking officers were also appointed to senior

²⁶¹ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44-45.

positions with help from both the report and the French language press. Lastly, the monthly intake of French-speaking officer candidates increased at the Officer Training Centre in Brockville. Compared to the First World War, much more was clearly being done to represent French-Canadians as senior officers realised they would be needed to fill their expanding ranks.

Some problems remained. Francophone MPs and senior officers noted the number of French-speaking men in English-speaking units. Despite this, more of the Goforth Report's suggestions would be implemented through the years 1942 and 1943 as the war in the Pacific began, prompting yet another expansion of the army. These initiatives would further contribute to making the Canadian Army more representative of its French-speaking population.

Chapter 3: The Goforth Report's Implementation

This chapter traces the progress of the policies laid out in the Goforth Report in June 1941. While some were implemented in 1941 (see chapter two), they became even more important in 1942 when more home defence divisions appeared in response to the war in the Pacific after December 1941. When the Hong Kong garrison surrendered on Christmas Day 1941, nearly 2,000 Canadians became casualties.²⁶² The war was now global and the threat the Axis posed seemed greater than ever before.

This chapter argues that the further expansion of the army, to meet the growing demands of the war resulted in a considerable increase of French-Canadian representation. Having more French-speaking units, officers, NCOs, and French language trades training helped make the army more representative of its French-speaking population. The Goforth Report, and Ernest Lapointe's announcement of the measures that would be implemented, gave the army's leadership a better understanding of the problems Francophones faced, and a road map to address those problems. Thus during 1942-1943, in the face of unrelenting manpower demands that made French-Canadian participation essential to avoid conscription for overseas service, the army pressed forward with the initiatives stated in the latter part of 1941.

While Canada suffered significant losses in Hong Kong, it was the attack on Pearl Harbor which prompted another army expansion as the country now had to worry about a possible attack from the west. Prime Minister King announced in January 1942 that a Canadian Army Headquarters would be created in the UK containing two corps, with a total of five divisions and two armoured brigades. To meet the increased threat to Canadian territory, the 6th, 7th, and 8th

²⁶² C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 487-488.

Divisions were mobilised for home service from March to June 1942, and these would be filled largely with conscripts.²⁶³

The fall of Hong Kong brought renewed calls for overseas conscription from Conservative leader Arthur Meighen and Defence Minister J. L. Ralston in December 1941, forcing a re-examination of the issue in 1942.²⁶⁴ Meighen and other Tories reflected a strand of English-speaking thinking that the only way for French-Canadians to contribute fairly was through conscription.²⁶⁵ After Justice Minister Lapointe's death in November 1941, Quebec lost an important voice in the fight against conscription for overseas. A plebiscite announced in January 1942 asked Canadians to relieve the government of the promise that there would be no overseas conscription. The decision to hold a nation-wide plebiscite led to a divisive political campaign before the national vote on 27 April 1942.

The plebiscite prompted Quebec politicians to react. *La Ligue pour la défense du Canada* formed with the stated goal of opposing conscription for overseas service. The Ligue had influence not just in Quebec but in Ontario and New Brunswick as well. Its leadership included Liberal MP Maxime Raymond, André Laurendeau, and Georges Pelletier, the chief editor of *Le Devoir*.²⁶⁶ They would work to convince the public to vote "non" in the plebiscite and argued that Canada should be defended first.²⁶⁷ Not all French-speaking organisations supported the "non" campaign. *Le Conseil de la vie française en Amérique*, an organisation to promote the

²⁶³ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 94-97.

²⁶⁴ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 106.

²⁶⁵ J. L. Granatstein and J. M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1985), 159-160.

²⁶⁶ "Fonds ligue pour la défense du Canada," *Archives nationales à Montréal*, accessed 18 June 2022. <https://advtam.banq.qc.ca/notice/483130>.

²⁶⁷ Roger Le Blanc, "La Ligue pour la défense du Canada et le plébiscite de 1942," (MA thesis., Université de Québec à Montréal, 1997), 58-63.

development of French-Canadian communities, remained silent while Acadian federal politicians supported King's request to be relieved of his promise.²⁶⁸

Quebec MPs also voiced their opposition to overseas conscription during their addresses in advance of the plebiscite. Minister of Public Works Alphonse Fournier and MP for Hull argued that the plebiscite threatened national unity.²⁶⁹ Liberal MP Édouard Lacroix for Beauce called conscription supporters extremists and claimed that Canada was doing more than her share.²⁷⁰ Conservative MP for Carleton, Ontario, George Russell Boucher, questioned why a plebiscite was needed if conscription was not necessary during this point in the war.²⁷¹ The results were not surprising. All provinces except Quebec voted "yes" for overseas conscription. Quebec was 74 percent against. The only other province that came close to voting "no" was New Brunswick where only 65 percent voted "yes."²⁷² Granatstein notes that if opinion polls are considered, the "no" vote was closer to 90 percent amongst French-Canadians both in and outside Quebec.²⁷³

As sides began to form in advance of the plebiscite, the wartime army continued to open its training facilities to more French-Canadians. In January 1942, the No. 4 Vocational Training School in Montreal opened for trades training. Initially, less than half of its courses were given in

²⁶⁸ Marcel Martel, *Le Deuil d'un pays imaginé: Rêves, luttes et déroute du Canada français* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1997), 44.

²⁶⁹ Alphonse Fournier, 23 January 1942. *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 11-12.

²⁷⁰ Édouard Lacroix, 27 January 1942. *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 101.

²⁷¹ George Russell Boucher, 29 January 1942. *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 171.

²⁷² J. L. Granatstein and J. M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1985), 169.

²⁷³ J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 96.

French, but overall about half of the 4,000 men who took trades training in Military District No. 4 were French-speaking. In Military District No. 5, trades courses at Rimouski and Valcartier received 2,106 French-speaking men during the war.²⁷⁴ No. 55 CABTC in Rimouski, which opened in February 1941, also nearly doubled its production from 700 to 1,300 soldiers a year later.²⁷⁵ A pamphlet from February 1944 mentioned how French-speaking men ages 17 to 18 interested in technical units could go to l'École d'Arts et Métiers in Rimouski. A two-year course taught students how to write, work on automobiles, radios, or other electric machinery.²⁷⁶ These developments certainly gave French-Canadians more access to trades training, but the total number of trained French-speaking tradesmen in both Military Districts made up only four percent of the 100,000 men who trained throughout the country. A persistent lack of French-speaking trades instructors was to blame.²⁷⁷ Though an improvement, French-Canadians were underrepresented in the army trades training.

There was greater success in increasing the number of French-speaking officers. In January 1942, with the help of civilian committees, specially chosen French-speaking civilians could now train at a special wing in the No. 44 CABTC in St. Jérôme, Quebec.²⁷⁸ These civilians were given four weeks of accelerated basic training by bilingual officers. Successful candidates then entered the cadet wing of the same camp for four more weeks. The special wing and cadet wing at St. Jérôme could hold 100 men each. If successful in their cadet training, they would be

²⁷⁴ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 126.

²⁷⁵ François Dornier and Marie-Claude Joubert, *Soldats de la Côte: Les Fusiliers du St-Laurent: d'hier à aujourd'hui* (Rimouski: La Régie du régiment, Les fusiliers du Saint-Laurent, 1992), 79.

²⁷⁶ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 17471, File 3830. War Diary Summary of Events, No. 5 District Recruiting Company, February 1944.

²⁷⁷ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 126.

²⁷⁸ "Recrutement d'officiers canadien-français," *L'Asbestos* (Drummondville, Québec), 16 January 1942; LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-a, Vol. 37400, File 112.3M3.009 (D90). Bilingual Instructors to Help French-Canadians.

sent to the French wing at the Officers Training Centre (OTC) in Brockville for four months of training. Other ranks not yet eligible to become officers as well as army reserve lieutenants who qualified for commissions prior to 1 April 1941, could also take part in the program if officials believed they could benefit from the bilingual aspects of training.²⁷⁹

Advertisements in *L'Action Catholique* stated that the St. Jérôme camp accepted civilian men ages 19 to 30 who were in good health, had a good appearance, and knew English.²⁸⁰

Looking outside the army for French-speaking officer candidates marked a real departure for an army that was then searching within its enlisted ranks for its reinforcement officers.²⁸¹ No doubt privileged Francophones had a better chance of being bilingual, making them ideal candidates. The new French-speaking officer training program likely stifled the criticisms of Francophone Liberal MP Hervé-Edgar Brunelle, who complained about the lack of French-speaking officers in late January.²⁸²

Cardinal Villeneuve and Justice Minister Lapointe had sought a purely French-speaking officer training camp back in 1941, but Major-General Crerar, and Brigadier Maurice A. Pope, Assistant CGS, countered that bilingual training centres would be better to foster unity. Senior officers hoped that 30 percent of the officers graduating from Brockville would be French-speaking.²⁸³ Admission to the rigorous training programme at Brockville was not a guarantee

²⁷⁹ LAC, R112, RG24-C-3-a, Vol. 37400, File 112.3M3.009 (D90). Bilingual Instructors to Help French-Canadians; J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 44-45.

²⁸⁰ "Il faut plus d'officiers canadien-français," *L'Action Catholique* (Québec, Québec), 2 November 1942.

²⁸¹ On wartime officer recruitment, see Geoffrey Hayes, *Crerar's Lieutenants: Inventing the Canadian Junior Army Officer, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

²⁸² Hervé-Edgar Brunelle, 27 January 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 95-96.

²⁸³ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 45.

they would succeed and become officers. Even then, they could not rest on their laurels. Major-General Pierre Edouard Leclerc, GOC, 7th Division, warned French-speaking officers graduating from Brockville in 1942 that they would have to continue to study to demonstrate that they had earned their place.²⁸⁴

The nearing plebiscite renewed discussions about French Canada's war effort which prompted Francophone MPs to insist that French Canada's participation was satisfactory. In March 1942, long time MP Jean-Francois Pouliot never seemed to back down from a fight. He highlighted, as he had in September 1941, that many French-Canadians had enlisted in the overseas English-speaking units. He again called for more bilingual military manuals, French-speaking units outside of Quebec, a French-speaking brigade, and more French-speaking officers.²⁸⁵

Subsequent studies have tended to support Pouliot's claims that French-Canadian army enlistments did not include those who had joined English-speaking battalions. Jean-Yves Gravel draws upon strength returns to conclude that French-Canadian enlistments were not limited to the four overseas French-speaking infantry battalions: the Royal 22^e, FMRs, Chaudières, and Maisonneuves. He claims that in March 1942, half of the 55,000 French-speaking soldiers were in English-speaking units. He estimated that 65 percent of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment and 20 percent of the Royal Montreal Regiment, Black Watch, and Grenadier Guards in Montreal were French-speaking. French-speaking recruits outside of Quebec had also enlisted in significant numbers. Gravel estimates that French-speaking men made up 50 percent of the Essex

²⁸⁴ "Les officiers c.-f. doivent étudier pour réussir," *La Liberté et le Patriote* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 9 December 1942.

²⁸⁵ Jean-François Pouliot, 2 March 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 952-953.

Scottish Regiment, raised in and around Windsor, Ontario.²⁸⁶ Also, morale reports from September 1943 showed a significant percentage of French speakers within English-speaking home defence units. For example, the St. John Fusiliers were 35 percent French-speaking.²⁸⁷ Such numbers suggest that considerable numbers of Francophones were not considered part of French Canada's war effort.

In addition to wanting to prove that French Canada was participating in the war effort, Francophone MPs continued to oppose the plebiscite as they had in January. Their arguments were familiar. On 2 March, Pouliot argued that no minister had given a reason for why a plebiscite was being called and that Canada should focus on its own defence.²⁸⁸ The following day, MP Liguori Lacombe said he would vote against the plebiscite simply because he has always been opposed to conscription for overseas service. MP Maxime Raymond urged that those eligible for conscription should be the first to vote since they would be paying the price. He also wanted those currently in the service to be able to vote as well, which they were allowed to do. On 4 March, Pouliot moved to delay the plebiscite, but the majority voted against his motion.²⁸⁹ Despite the opposition, the plebiscite vote took place on 27 April 1942. Canadian voters across the country freed Mackenzie King from his promise to French Canada that there

²⁸⁶ Jean-Yves Gravel, *Le Québec et la Guerre* (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1974), 87-88.

²⁸⁷ "Department of National Defence: Subject Files: C-5290," *Canadiana Héritage*, accessed 22 November 2022, Images 642-646. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c5290/642.

²⁸⁸ Jean-François Pouliot, 2 March 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 954-955.

²⁸⁹ Liguori Lacombe, 3 March 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 980; Maxime Raymond, 3 March 1942, *Ibid.*, 996; Jean-François Pouliot, March 4th, 1942, *Ibid.*, 1026-1027.

would be no conscription for overseas service. As a result, the Minister of Public Works and Transport, Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin, resigned from Cabinet.²⁹⁰

But the debate about conscription was not over. Indeed, the result likely made Francophone MPs advocate for more army representation. In the aftermath of the conscription campaign, J. F. Pouliot on 5 May 1942 reminded Parliament about how Justice Minister Lapointe in September 1941 promised that French Canada would be better represented in the army. Pouliot further maintained that the DND, who he had written to in January 1942 about the supposed lack of French-speaking regiments, made a mistake at the beginning of the war by not mobilising existing French-speaking regiments. He argued that the only option for French-Canadians was to enlist in the Black Watch, which was being advertised using bilingual recruitment posters, or other English-speaking units.²⁹¹ Pouliot was clearly not following army unit activity as 12 of out the 15 French-speaking infantry regiments had already been mobilised. Two more (Les Régiments de Montmagny et Québec) would also be mobilised in May.²⁹² The only other regiment yet to mobilise was Le Régiment de Saguenay, a reserve unit formed in 1900.²⁹³ It would not mobilise until 1944.²⁹⁴ Contrary to the belief of some Francophone MPs, Francophone units were being mobilised.

²⁹⁰ Mackenzie King, 11 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol III*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2280.

²⁹¹ Jean-François Pouliot, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2157-2159.

²⁹² See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

²⁹³ Laurier Duchesne. *Le Régiment du Saguenay, 1900-2000* (Chicoutimi: Les Éditions Felix, 2000), 31-32.

²⁹⁴ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

Pouliot then pressed the government for a census to see how many French-Canadians had enlisted in French and English-speaking regiments.²⁹⁵ Defence Minister Ralston responded by saying a census was not necessary and time consuming.²⁹⁶ However, a number of censuses would eventually be produced (see pages 95-96) which highlighted the level of Francophone participation in the war effort. *Le Devoir* published numbers to highlight how many French-Canadians had enlisted until June 1942. It reported that of the 74,415 army enlistments in Quebec since the beginning of the war, nearly half (36,235) were French-speaking. Of 56,722 from Quebec in the Active Army, the editors claimed that 29,651 were French-Canadian.²⁹⁷ The editor did not elaborate on these remarkable numbers that countered that French-Canadians were not doing their part.

Despite Ralston's initial refusal to conduct a census, he affirmed to Pouliot that French-Canadians were to have increasing representation in the army. He drew from the Goforth Report, listing many of its suggestions he approved in August 1941. He noted that the army had more French-speaking staff at the training centres in Quebec and eastern Ontario, that there would also be more French-speaking units raised, more French-speaking officers recruited, more French language training in places such as Brockville, more French training manuals, and more French-speaking people hired at NDHQ in areas such as public relations, publicity, and photography.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Jean-François Pouliot, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2159; Pouliot would ask for a census a third time in June, but was silenced by other MPs. See Jean-François Pouliot, 9 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol III*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3207-3208.

²⁹⁶ J. L. Ralston and Jean François Pouliot, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2165.

²⁹⁷ "Les Canadiens français enrôlés," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 25 June 1942.

²⁹⁸ J. L. Ralston, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2174-2176.

Other advances included the promotion of more Francophones to the army's senior staff, long a criticism levelled by MPs and the French language press. The most prominent promotion was Brigadier Pierre Edouard Leclerc to the rank of Major-General. One source claims Leclerc initially refused the promotion and continued to command the 15th French-speaking Brigade in early 1942. He later accepted the promotion and commanded the 7th Division in late 1942, making him the first French-Canadian to command a division.²⁹⁹ Defence Minister Ralston claimed that bilingual staff taught at the army trades school in Hamilton, but he did not mention how many French-Canadians were attending.³⁰⁰ It is unclear if Pouliot was satisfied with Ralston's responses, but those responses reflected a further acknowledgement that French-Canadians had a place in the army.

Shortly after the plebiscite, a memorandum written by two Francophone External Affairs officials, Marcel Cadieux and Paul Tremblay on 6 May 1942, was sent to Norman Robertson, the under secretary of state for external affairs. These men drew upon public opinion polling in Quebec to suggest measures to overcome opposition to the war effort in the province.³⁰¹ The memorandum discussed Quebec's possible refusal to comply with conscription for overseas service and urged closer collaboration with the province to ensure national unity. According to Cadieux and Tremblay, Quebec opposed conscription because most French-Canadians thought that their military contribution was limited to serving as privates. As a result, writers and publicists were demanding more French-speaking units. The memorandum acknowledged many

²⁹⁹ Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la province de Québec Vol. 39* (Ottawa: Fides, 1968), 120; "Major-General Pierre Edouard Leclerc," *Biblio.com*, accessed 17 March 2022. <https://www.biblio.com/book/major-general-pierre-edouard-leclerc-signatures/d/617890411>.

³⁰⁰ J. L. Ralston, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2175.

³⁰¹ Daniel J. Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy: Polling, Market Research, and Public Life, 1930-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 105.

“practical difficulties” in forming more French-speaking units but warned that the army’s inaction was taken as confirmation that French-speaking soldiers were not being treated fairly.³⁰² However, 45 French-speaking units had in fact been mobilised from September 1939 to April 1942.³⁰³ It is possible the officials were referring to overseas units as the majority raised were for home defence. Nevertheless, the officials seemed to be unaware of the efforts being made to increase French-Canadian representation in the army. More units were made available to Francophones than ever before and more would be mobilised through 1942-1943.

Ralston held true to his promise to raise more French-speaking units. Between January and November 1942, 28 were mobilised, the most of any year of the war. Twenty-four of these units were for home defence and four were for overseas deployment.³⁰⁴ The need to improve Canada’s defences because of the war in the Pacific, and the beginning of large-scale German submarine operations on the Atlantic coast of Canada and the United States following the American entry into war, helped justify why so many French-speaking home defence units were mobilised. The 6th and 8th Home Defence divisions defended the west coast while the 7th defended the east, replacing the 4th Division which was then slated for service overseas.³⁰⁵ French language units were formed in all branches, notably the artillery because of the October 1941 policy mandating bilingual instruction at advanced training centres, meaning Francophones were no longer confined to the infantry.³⁰⁶

³⁰² LAC, MG26-J4, Vol. 358, File H-1534. WWII French-Canadians, Marcel Cadieux and Paul Tremblay, “Quebec and the Conscription Issue,” 6 May 1942.

³⁰³ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁰⁴ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁰⁵ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 171-172.

³⁰⁶ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37415, File 112.3M3.009 (D187). General Directorate of Military Training Correspondence, etc., 23 October 1941.

A concerted effort in the press and from the pulpit urged Francophones to join some of these units. A recruitment advertisement in May 1942 stressed that 10,000 men were needed for active military service in Quebec's 4th Military District. It made a plea to Quebec's manhood: "tout homme de coeur voudra entrer dans la bataille immédiatement." The advertisement listed French-speaking units such as Le Régiment de Châteauguay and Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, mobilised for home defence in March 1942. It also included one English-speaking unit, the 2nd Battalion of the Black Watch.³⁰⁷

German submarine attacks on shipping vessels in the St. Lawrence, sometimes within sight of shore likely encouraged recruiting that spring. Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke seemed to have no problems obtaining recruits as on 21 May 1942, the unit received 500 of them.³⁰⁸ These enlistments happened ten days after two ships were sunk off the Gaspé Peninsula by a German U-Boat, and the people of small coastal hamlets had to care for the survivors who came ashore in lifeboats. On the night of 11-12 May, Angus MacDonald, the Minister for Naval Services, broke his own security provisions by announcing the sinkings in the press and Parliament.³⁰⁹ Such announcements were meant to show that the enemy was nearing the shores of French Canada.

King used the U-boat attacks near Gaspé to convince French-Canadian MPs to support the government. He received support from MP Ernest Bertrand for Laurier who put forward a resolution that the Liberal caucus had confidence in King's leadership. In Quebec, Liberal premier Adélard Godbout, used the Gaspé attacks to critique Maurice Duplessis, leader of the

³⁰⁷ "Quand réellement, avez-vous l'intention d'entrer 'dans active'," *L'Avenir du Nord* (St. Jérôme, Québec), 8 May 1942.

³⁰⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15069, File 1067. War Diary Summary of Events, Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 21 May 1942.

³⁰⁹ Roger Sarty, "The "Battle we Lost at Home" Revisited: Official Military Histories and the Battle of the St. Lawrence," *Canadian Military History* 12, no. 2 (2003): 41-42.

Union Nationale opposition. Godbout did not support overseas conscription, but had confidence that King would respect Quebec's "no" vote.³¹⁰

When Parliament debated whether to enact Bill 80 to allow for overseas conscription in June, many Francophone MPs spoke against it, citing satisfactory Francophone participation as a reason not to enact it. On 11 June, former Minister of Public Works and Transport, Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin, questioned why this amendment was being proposed shortly after the plebiscite since there was no immediate need for overseas conscription. He then insisted that Quebec was contributing to the war despite not knowing how many French-Canadians had enlisted in English-speaking units. MP Arthur-Joseph Lapointe for Matapédia-Matane, Quebec, nephew of the late Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe and a First World War veteran, believed the war was worth fighting but was worried conscription would jeopardise national unity. In his view the volunteer system alone was satisfactory.³¹¹ Other Liberal MPs such as Joseph-Alphida Crête for St. Maurice-Laflèche, Lucien Dubois for Nicolet-Yamaska, Eugène Durocher for St. James, and others protested the amendment.³¹² Despite their arguments, the NRMA was amended to allow conscription for overseas service after a vote in Parliament on 7 July. Only 54 MPs voted against the amendment while 158 voted for it. The majority who voted against were Francophone.³¹³

³¹⁰ Roger Sarty, *War in the St. Lawrence: The Forgotten Battles on Canada's Shores*, ed. Margaret MacMillan and Robert Bothwell (Toronto; Penguin Canada, 2012), 87-90.

³¹¹ Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin, 11 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol III*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3276-3278; Arthur-Joseph Lapointe, 11 June 1942, *Ibid.*, 3298-3299.

³¹² Joseph-Alphida Crête, 12 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3309-3311; Lucien Dubois, 12 June 1942, *Ibid.*, 3318-3319; Eugène Durocher, 15 June 1942, *Ibid.*, 3360-3363.

³¹³ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 122-123; 7 July 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 4016-4017.

Editors of French language newspapers such as *L'Ami du Peuple* in Ontario voiced their frustration with the amendment. They claimed that Prime Minister King was a prisoner of the five or six pro-conscription ministers, who could enact conscription even if King opposed it.³¹⁴ The editors from *Le Temps* in Quebec City, quoted Maurice Duplessis, who stated that conscription was passed so that the government could divide Canadians.³¹⁵ Many in the French language press and in the Liberal caucus felt betrayed by the government.

Critics in the House continued to push for more representation, but their complaints seemed curiously outdated in light of events. Liberal MP Joseph Miville Dechêne for Athabasca, Ontario stated on 15 June 1942, that French-speaking men were not enlisting in large numbers because they were not able to train in French.³¹⁶ But official sources tried to counter that claim. In addition to the French training camps that appeared in February 1941, officer production was certainly increasing. On 23 June 1942, Ralston noted that of the 329 officers who had recently graduated from Brockville, 127 were French-speaking while 305 French speakers were still present at the camp out of 1,106.³¹⁷ Liberal MP for Stormont, Ontario, Lionel Chevrier, appreciated the efforts made to increase the numbers of French-speaking officers and instructors. He also noted that at the No. 3 Military District in Kingston, Ontario, 82 French-Canadians were sent to advanced training schools.³¹⁸ These numbers do not show how many French-speaking instructors were available, but the fact that French-Canadians were able to become officers or

³¹⁴ "Le bill du Premier Ministre est une loi de conscription pour le service outre-mer," *L'Ami du Peuple* (Sudbury, Ontario), 18 June 1942.

³¹⁵ "Conscription," *Le Temps* (Québec, Québec), 15 July 1942.

³¹⁶ Joseph Dechêne, 15 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3338-3339.

³¹⁷ J. L. Ralston, 23 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3557.

³¹⁸ Lionel Chevrier, 22 July 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol V*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1943), 4561.

take advanced training suggests that there was a sufficient number. Dechêne was clearly not aware of the increase of Francophone representation at training facilities.

Press reports in French Canada also began to reflect the army's efforts to better represent French speakers. *La Voix d'Évangeline* noted an increase of French-speaking officer candidates at the Brockville camp on 27 August 1942, which caused a month-long waiting period for a contingent of French-speaking cadets wanting to enter. No time was wasted however as the contingent marched from St. Jérôme to Brockville as a training exercise. They would soon face keen competition with their English-speaking compatriots. In less than a month and a half, the camp produced 1,100 French-speaking officers.³¹⁹ A high demand for French-speaking NCOs resulted in the Junior Leaders School in Mégantic becoming entirely French-speaking in August 1942. Once the army was satisfied with its number of French-speaking NCOs, the school closed in December 1943 having produced 1,170 French-speaking graduates.³²⁰ The closing of the school highlights how Francophone army representation was being increased considerably.

Senior officers hoped that increased representation would encourage home defence troops to volunteer for active service. Not everyone in the army was pleased. On 22 September 1942, an officer of Le Régiment de Québec became upset after six men switched to General Service and were sent overseas. He exclaimed: “Je ne veux pas voir venir un homme dans mon bureau pour me dire qu’il veut se joindre à la Force Active, car je le sortirai dehors aussi vite que je le pourrai.”³²¹ This remark was recorded not long after the *Bloc Populaire* was founded in Quebec

³¹⁹ “Affluence de canadiens français à l’école militaire de Brockville,” *La Voix d'Évangeline* (Moncton, New Brunswick), 27 August 1942; Geoffrey Hayes, *Crerar's Lieutenants: Inventing the Canadian Junior Army Officer, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 85.

³²⁰ Andrew Brown, *Building the Army's Backbone: Canadian Non-Commissioned Officers in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 125-127.

³²¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15189, File 1065. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Québec, 31 May, 18 June, and 22 September 1942.

on 8 September. As with the Ligue, the party's main goal was to oppose conscription for overseas service. Its founding may have rekindled some anti-overseas service sentiments that were present in units such as Le Régiment de Québec.³²²

Other French-speaking officers were more encouraging. Dollard Ménard, who had commanded the FMRs during the Dieppe raid in August 1942, spoke widely through the fall, stating that more French-speaking officers and other ranks were needed in the French-speaking regiments on reserve.³²³ The Dieppe raid gained wide coverage in the French language press, highlighting the involvement of the FMRs. The editors of *Le Devoir* recognised the devastating failure of the raid, comparing it to the losses of Hong Kong, but they acknowledged the heroic efforts made by the FMRs.³²⁴ Other newspapers such as *La Liberté et le Patriote* gave similar praise to the unit, but ignored the raid's failure and high casualties.³²⁵ The casualties were likely the reason why Ménard was calling for more French-speaking troops as his unit lost 29 officers and 484 other ranks. Only five officers and 120 other ranks returned to England.³²⁶

French-speaking home defence units were also obtaining large numbers during the spring, summer, and fall of 1942. Four of these units were the regiments of Québec, St. Hyacinthe, Châteauguay, and Montmagny. They had between 300 to almost 1,000 men on their

³²² Paul André Comeau, *Le Bloc Populaire, 1942-1948* (Montréal: Québec/ Amérique, 1982), 96-97.

³²³ Pierre Vennat, *Général Dollard Ménard, de Dieppe au référendum* (Montréal: Art Global, 2004), 132-133.

³²⁴ "Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal ont joué un rôle de premier plan," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 21 August 1942.

³²⁵ "Exploits des Fusiliers Mont-Royal à la bataille de Dieppe," *La Liberté et le Patriote* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 26 August 1942.

³²⁶ *Cent ans d'Histoire d'un Régiment Canadien-Français: Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal, 1869-1969* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1971), 147.

establishments.³²⁷ Another four were a service corps and engineer company, one service corps platoon, and an artillery battery that had between 100 to over 400 men.³²⁸

By 1943, at least one French-speaking officer was pleased with the army's efforts to better represent French-Canadians. Colonel Maurice Hallé, who commanded a French-speaking battery in the 1st Division, optimistically claimed in February 1943 that all problems French-Canadians faced in the military were now resolved. He especially noted the many French-speaking units and camps that had been opened.³²⁹

The editors of *La Voix d'Évangeline* did not agree as they tried again in February 1943 to call for an Acadian unit. The editors were pleased that more French-speaking units were being mobilised, but thought that the Maritimes were being ignored.³³⁰ One officer complained in February that the lack of bilingual officers in Military District No. 7 in New Brunswick, left some Acadians without French-speaking superiors.³³¹ It is unclear if this issue was addressed. While Francophone army representation was steadily increasing in Quebec, the Maritimes were still facing problems.

Even so, the army had taken serious steps towards, if not a bilingual institution, at least one that would be more attractive to a growing number of Francophones. Stacey noted generally

³²⁷ The war diaries do not always specify which recruits are conscripts, General Service, or reserves. LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15189, File 1065. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Québec, 18 June 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15173, File 1071. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Châteauguay, 30 June 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15188, File 1064. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Montmagny, 7 August 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15191, File 1046. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de St. Hyacinthe, June 1942.

³²⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15576, File 1058. War Diary Summary of Events, 4th Canadian Medium Regiment Platoon, 26 June 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14741, File 817. War Diary Summary of Events, 15th Field Company, 31 July 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14515, File 883. War Diary Summary of Events, 12th Anti-Aircraft Battery, 31 October 1942; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15468, File 196. War Diary Summary of Events, No. 4 Company, 31 August 1942.

³²⁹ "Le Canada en Guerre: Unités canadiennes-françaises," *Le Journal de Waterloo* (Waterloo, Quebec), 12 February 1943.

³³⁰ Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1996), 74-75.

³³¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13304. Trip to M.D. 4 and M. D. 7, 26 February 1943.

that French-speaking staff at Quebec training camps was brought up to 80 percent of the total number of instructors in 1942. Between 1942 and 1943, 125 French-speaking officers were graduating per month from Brockville.³³² As the number of French-speaking officers was increasing, senior officers began to streamline officer training. As of 16 July, French-Canadians looking to become officers would continue to pass through St. Jérôme. However, they would not become a cadet until they had passed through Brockville's Officer Selection and Appraisal Centre.³³³ Officer training was reduced dramatically in August 1943. Shortly afterwards, the No. 44 camp in St. Jérôme closed as an officer training facility in August as a result of the March policy and because there was no longer a shortage of officers. The other OTCs at Gordon Head, BC and Trois-Rivières, Quebec would also close shortly after to concentrate training at Brockville. Until St. Jérôme's closure, 1,940 French-speaking cadets had passed through the camp. They would now have to spend five months training at Brockville, two of which as an NCO instructor. This initiative brought French-speaking officer procurement in line with the rest of the army.³³⁴

With the number of officers (including French-speaking ones) at a satisfactory level, French-speaking home defence units filled their ranks in 1943. By February, the 2^e Battalion of Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent claimed 22 officers and 1001 other ranks on establishment while the 3^e Battalion had 18 officers and 1604 other ranks.³³⁵ The entire regiment, according to Stacey,

³³² C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 422.

³³³ J. C. Newlands, "The Policy Governing the Finding and Selecting of Officers for the CASF," AHQ Report 37, 28 June 1950, 13-16. There was also a slight increase of high-ranking French-speaking officers during the summer of 1943. See Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 115.

³³⁴ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37526, File 112.3S2.009 (D36). French-Canadian Representation in the Army; J. C. Newlands, "The Policy Governing the Finding and Selecting of Officers for the CASF," AHQ Report 37, 28 June 1950, 16.

³³⁵ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 341.

was the largest in the army.³³⁶ Other regiments such as Hull, Lévis, and the Voltigeurs received between 700 to over 800 men.³³⁷ Four French-speaking anti-aircraft batteries received between 100 to nearly 400 men.³³⁸ Two miscellaneous units and one engineer company had nearly 300 to 500 men.³³⁹ French-Canadians continued to enlist or be willingly drafted by the NRMA throughout 1943. Many of these were artillery units. The army's bilingual instruction policy at advanced training centres continued to bring results to ensure that Francophones were not confined to the infantry.³⁴⁰

Efforts to help French-speaking officer candidates reach their full potential continued to the end of the war. A Fieldcraft School was created at St. Jérôme on 15 March 1945 where a maximum of 100 French-speaking officer candidates could take a ten-week pre-officer's training course to better prepare. The program ended on 25 May with 21 out of 64 candidates successfully enrolled at the OTC in Brockville. A second pre-officer's training course offered at a Field School began on 1 June 1945 where 200 potential candidates could train for eight weeks.³⁴¹ No additional information is available in the war diaries about these camps, but despite their small numbers, they still produced results.

³³⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 177.

³³⁷ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14165, File 1030. War Diary Summary of Events, 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 31 October 1943; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15185, File 325 and 1078. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Lévis, 28 September 1943; Jacques Castonguay, *C'était la guerre à Québec* (Montréal: Art Global, 2003), 111-112.

³³⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14488, File 1128. War Diary Summary of Events, 60th Anti-Aircraft Battery, 31 March 1943; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14582, File 1338. War Diary Summary of Events, 63rd Anti-Aircraft Battery, 1 September 1943; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14517, File 882. War Diary Summary of Events, 17th Anti-Aircraft Battery, 30 September 1943; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14578, File 779. War Diary Summary of Events, 41st Anti-Aircraft Battery, 30 November 1943.

³³⁹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15324, File 1328. War Diary Summary of Events, No. 8 Special Employment Company, 30 June 1943; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15228, File 323. War Diary Summary of Events, Quebec Arsenal Protective Company, 31 March 1943; RG24-C-3, Vol. 14903, File 1356. War Diary Summary of Events, 22nd General Pioneers Company, 30 April 1943.

³⁴⁰ Nine French-speaking units were mobilised from January to December 1943. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁴¹ LAC, R112, RG24-G-3-1-a, Vol. 37271, File 110.013 (D10). Progress Reports of Canadian Army Programme No. 187-190.

In 1942, there was clear indication that suggestions from the Goforth Report to increase Francophone army representation were being implemented. French language trades training represented a small proportion within the army, but it increased significantly during the winter of 1942, giving French speakers additional opportunities to train in their language. Civilian committees helped to recruit more French-speaking officer candidates for the officer training facility at St. Jérôme before sending them to Brockville's French wing. More officer training for French-speaking candidates meant that more French-speaking other ranks would be commanded in their own language.

The plebiscite which resulted in the government being relieved of the promise of no conscription for overseas service renewed calls for more representation in the army from Francophone MPs. These calls prompted yet another response from the government, affirming the formation of more French-speaking units, the commissioning of more French-speaking officers, and the publication of additional French language manuals. Many of these initiatives originated from the Goforth Report. As the training of French-speaking officers continued, more French-speaking units were raised in 1942, the most seen compared to any other year. The vast majority were for home defence as they corresponded with the mobilisation of the home defence Divisions that same year. More French-speaking units continued to be raised in 1943.

As French-Canadian MPs continued to oppose conscription for overseas service, some wanted to show that French Canada was contributing to the war effort by highlighting the fact that French-Canadians were enlisting in the overseas English-speaking units or in their districts. Many of the French-speaking home defence units through 1942-1943 also had plenty of recruits to fill their ranks, demonstrating that there was never a shortage of French-speaking conscripts to defend Canada's coasts. During a time when home defence seemed an even greater priority on

Canada's east and west coasts, it seemed obvious that Francophone soldiers were doing their share. But, as the war's course continued to shift, it remained to be seen whether those who filled the ranks of home defence units would be willing to volunteer for the General Service overseas. These recruits would become vitally important once the reinforcement crisis began in the spring of 1944.

Chapter 4: The Reinforcement Crisis, 1944-1945

By 1943, Canada's overseas army had grown to include three infantry divisions and two armoured divisions. Three infantry divisions (two Pacific and one Atlantic) had also been mobilised for home defence. With Canadians fighting in Italy after July 1943 and the Allies preparing for an invasion of Western Europe, the need for men was crucial. By March 1944, the army was facing a reinforcement crisis. With Prime Minister King now freed from his promise of no conscription for overseas service, tensions would mount again over the possibility of NRMA troops being sent overseas.

Many MPs from French Canada were bitter once conscription was imposed for overseas service in November 1944. Their comments in the House reflected their longtime opposition to conscription, as well as their ignorance of what the army had done through 1944 to avoid it. Liberal MP Maurice Lalonde for Labelle, Quebec claimed that Defence Minister Colonel J. L. Ralston did nothing to promote voluntary enlistments for French-speaking units.³⁴² Liberal MP Joseph Lafontaine for Mégantic-Frontenac, Quebec quoted an article from *Le Droit* claiming that overseas conscription resulted from a faulty voluntary system and poor distribution of manpower.³⁴³ These claims could not be further from the truth as high-ranking Canadian officers did a great deal to avoid conscription for overseas service.

This chapter explores the efforts between March and November 1944 to find sufficient numbers of reinforcements for the four French-speaking infantry battalions then fighting overseas: the Royal 22^e, FMRs, Chaudières, and Maisonneuves. These measures failed, but they

³⁴² Maurice Lalonde, 4 December 1944, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol VI*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 6788-6789.

³⁴³ Joseph Lafontaine, 7 December 1944, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol VI*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 6908-6909.

show how the army tried to reconcile principles of French-Canadian representation with a growing shortage of men.

Few historians have explored this topic. J. Hitsman offered a brief overview of the measures implemented to persuade conscripts to volunteer for the General Service in the Army Headquarters reports.³⁴⁴ C. P. Stacey discusses the crisis more broadly, covering 48 pages of *Arms, Men, and Governments*, but he only briefly mentions how the four French-speaking battalions were amongst the hardest hit by the crisis.³⁴⁵ Caroline D'Amours provides some numbers for French-Canadian reinforcements sent overseas and argues that contrary to popular belief, reinforcements in 1944 prior to the decision to send conscripts overseas, were well trained.³⁴⁶ This chapter will build on their work by painting a more complete picture of the solutions implemented to resolve the crisis within the French-speaking battalions.

As the army reinforcement crisis grew through the year, the army's leadership tried a range of initiatives to reinforce the army overseas. These included sustained campaigns in the spring to convince NRMA troops in 13 Infantry Brigade to volunteer for the active force. These efforts largely failed across the brigade, with officials finding the troops of Le Régiment de Hull especially reluctant to volunteer. As the options narrowed, General Crerar remained adamant that French-Canadian troops be led by French-Canadian officers. That was a principle that needed to be honoured, but it grew increasingly hard to sustain throughout the year. A series of increasingly desperate initiatives continued into the summer. Re-mustering troops from other arms helped, while a poster campaign to convince French-Canadian families to send their sons to

³⁴⁴ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 195.

³⁴⁵ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 436.

³⁴⁶ Caroline D'Amours, "Reassessment of a Crisis: Canadian Infantry Reinforcements during the Second World War," *The Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 14, no 2 (2012), 73-74.

save France proved of limited use. Into the fall, plans to create depot battalions, and to give reinforcements their choice of unit, met with some success, but not enough. In the end, these measures failed. Conscription was imposed, but, despite the angry pronouncements of some politicians, the army did a great deal to try to convince Canadians (both English and French) to volunteer for active service.

The changing strategic situation in 1943 had lessened the threat to Canada on both coasts, prompting a reorganization of the home defence establishments. A plan approved in May 1943 disbanded part of the 6th Infantry Division and all of 7th and 8th Infantry Divisions. Coast and anti-aircraft defences would also be reduced by 1 September 1943. Conscripts, including French-speaking soldiers, were transferred to other units in Canada, thus releasing General Service personnel in those units for overseas service.³⁴⁷ A total of nine French-speaking units (one for overseas and eight for home defence) were disbanded between June and November 1943.³⁴⁸

Among the formations disbanded was the French-speaking 21st Infantry Brigade. Mobilised for home defence in January 1943, it was part of the 8th Division on the west coast. Along with the 15th Infantry Brigade, it was one of two French-speaking brigades mobilised for home defence.³⁴⁹ It was composed of the 27th Field Regiment, RCA, 28th Field Company, RCE, 3rd Battalion, FMRs, 3rd Battalion, the Maisonneuves, Le Régiment de Lévis, the 24th Stewardship Company, and the 19th Field Ambulance. All units except the 19th Field Ambulance

³⁴⁷ C. P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain, and the Pacific* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1957), 184-185.

³⁴⁸ Despite many French-speaking units being disbanded, the 26th Anti-Aircraft Battery was converted to French-speaking in December 1943. See LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14625, File 1344. War Diary Summary of Events, 4th Anti-Aircraft Gun Operating Room, 4 December 1943; LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁴⁹ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 157.

and possibly the 24th Stewardship Company were disbanded along with the brigade.³⁵⁰ The officers of Le Régiment de Lévis were disappointed but grateful for their experience. The men were sent to fill other units such as Le Régiment de Québec. Out of 646 men, 416 were sent to the bilingual Valcartier training camp while the rest were sent to various District Depots and the Ordnance Corps. Only eight went as reinforcements overseas since they were General Service soldiers. The rest were conscripts.³⁵¹

Another disbanded unit was Les Voltigeurs de Québec. Once a home defence tank battalion, then a reconnaissance unit, it became a home defence infantry regiment on 16 January 1943 and was part of the 7th Division on the east coast. The Voltigeurs was first mobilised in late August 1939 in Quebec to defend vulnerable points in the Valcartier region.³⁵² An Army Headquarters report noted that in late 1943, the French-speaking overseas battalions were 2,282 short on reinforcements, over half strength. The Voltigeurs was originally to be part of First Canadian Army's order of battle, but it disbanded on 1 November after reaching England to help reduce the shortage of reinforcements by half. Most men were transferred to the Royal 22^e, who had suffered heavy casualties in Italy and the Chaudières, who needed men for the upcoming invasion of Normandy. Other men were sent in lesser numbers to the Maisonneuves and the FMRs, both of 2nd Division.³⁵³ The first battalion of the Voltigeurs consisted entirely of

³⁵⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15185, File 325 and 1078. Fête d'Adieu de la 21^{ième} Brigade d'Infanterie à Valcartier, 6 October 1943; The French-speaking 53rd Anti-Aircraft Battery was also disbanded earlier in June; its men were sent to the French-speaking 17th Anti-Aircraft Battery. See LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14581, File 792. War Diary Summary of Events, 53rd Anti-Aircraft Battery, 16 June 1943.

³⁵¹ G. E. Marquis, *Le Régiment de Lévis: Historique et Album* (Lévis, 1952), 198-199; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15185, File 325 and 1078. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Lévis, 14-15 October 1943; The French-speaking 28th Field Company was also disbanded on the 15th. See LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14753, File 1618. War Diary Summary of Events, 28th Field Company, 15 October 1943.

³⁵² An additional reserve battalion was also raised in 1942. See Jacques Castonguay, *Les Voltigeurs de Québec: Premier Régiment Canadien-Français* (Québec: Voltigeurs de Québec, 1987), 301; *Ibid.*, 340-345.

³⁵³ Jacques Castonguay, *Les Voltigeurs de Québec: Premier Régiment Canadien-Français* (Québec: Voltigeurs de Québec, 1987), 369; J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 109.

volunteers who had been waiting to go overseas for over two years.³⁵⁴ These were among the last French-speaking General Service volunteers to arrive in the UK.

The reinforcement situation seemed well in hand at the beginning of 1944. Brigadier A. W. Beament, Chief of Canadian Section Headquarters, 1st Echelon, 15th Army Group in Italy, initially warned in December 1943 that infantry casualties were higher than the estimates, but his warnings received little action from CMHQ.³⁵⁵ There seemed to be some reason for optimism early in the year. French-speaking recruitment and efforts to increase Francophone representation in the commissioned ranks looked promising. By February, there were 4,090 Francophone officers with 1,339 serving overseas and 84 working at NDHQ. Among them were five French-speaking major-generals, nine brigadiers, and nine colonels, most of whom were First World War veterans.³⁵⁶ *Le Devoir* boasted in February that Quebec's enlistment numbers were equal to those of other provinces.³⁵⁷ By 1944, there were also 18 French-speaking units and two bilingual armoured units overseas.³⁵⁸

By 29 February 1944, each overseas French-speaking infantry battalion, except for the Royal 22^e, was also nearly up to strength. But the situation was extremely fluid. By March, senior officers were concerned about the lack of French-speaking infantry reinforcements. Figures from April 1944 showed there were enough officers, but just 348 French-speaking other

³⁵⁴ Jacques Castonguay, *Les Voltigeurs de Québec: Premier Régiment Canadien-Français* (Québec: Voltigeurs de Québec, 1987), 359.

³⁵⁵ Geoffrey Hayes, *Crerar's Lieutenants: Inventing the Canadian Junior Army Officer, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 137.

³⁵⁶ Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 115.

³⁵⁷ "L'enrôlement dans le Québec de pair avec celui du reste du Canada," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 18 February 1944.

³⁵⁸ LAC, RG24-G-3-1-a. Vol. 18713, File 133.065 (D331). List of Units within the Canadian Army Overseas Classified as French-Speaking, 14 April 1944.

ranks available as reinforcements when 1,563 were needed.³⁵⁹ As the senior French-speaking unit and the only one engaged in battle, the Royal 22^e received six officers and 124 other ranks. But the shortages continued. The Chaudières, then in the UK preparing for the cross-channel assault, were then short some 11 officers and 327 other ranks. Together those shortages exceeded the numbers of French-speaking reinforcements available.³⁶⁰

With battle looming, senior officers debated a narrowing set of solutions. A plan had been forwarded in March by the adjutant-general, Major-General Harry Letson, who recommended dispatching overseas complete NRMA units, but only if their ranks agreed to switch to General Service. Letson advised these units would be informed of their eventual dissolution to feed reinforcements to front-line units, but platoons would be kept together. Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, who was now Chief of Staff of CMHQ in England, received a telegram (unclear from who) suggesting that battalions of the 13th Infantry Brigade, that included Le Régiment de Hull, might volunteer as they had experience in Kiska during Operation Cottage in August 1943.³⁶¹ Sending conscripts with combat experience seemed ideal, but the army would have to first convince them to volunteer for overseas duty.

In a meeting in Ottawa on 16 April General Stuart heard concerns that sending complete units overseas made it difficult to obtain individual volunteers. However, French-speaking generals such as Major-General Pierre Edouard Leclerc, then commander of military forces in Newfoundland, Major-General Ernest James Renaud, District Commanding Officer of the 4th

³⁵⁹ Caroline D'Amours, "Reassessment of a Crisis: Canadian Infantry Reinforcements during the Second World War," *The Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 14, no 2 (2012), 73-74; LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 13 April 1944.

³⁶⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 13-14 April 1944.

³⁶¹ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 131-132.

Military District in Montreal, and Brigadier Edmond A. Blais, District Commanding Officer of the 5th Military District in Quebec City, were confident that keeping French-speaking volunteers in their units was the best way to obtain reinforcements. On 18 April Brigadier M. H. S. Penhale, Deputy CGS, endorsed the idea of sending complete units overseas, but believed that they should be broken up once in England. Penhale wanted French-speaking units to obtain reinforcements as soon as possible and hoped that French-speaking home defence units would be despatched in late May if they volunteered.³⁶²

Despite the confidence shown by senior French-speaking officers at home, those commanding French-speaking home defence units had trouble convincing their men to volunteer. Le Régiment de Hull, then in British Columbia (BC) proved very resistant. Major Paul Triquet, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his heroic efforts in Italy, was asked by Major-General Pearkes, GOC, Pacific Command, to speak to the regiment's conscripts on 11 April.³⁶³ Triquet was opposed to overseas conscription, so his talk had some effect. Some 46 men likely volunteered for General Service after hearing Triquet's pleas. However, a noticeable lack of leadership amongst NRMA NCOs hindered progress and some were relieved of their duties as a result.³⁶⁴ The Commanding Chaplain (Roman Catholic) of the 13th Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Schimowski, stressed that resistance amongst the men was strong and that he had reduced some to tears trying to persuade them to volunteer. Other chaplains also struggled to obtain volunteers.³⁶⁵

³⁶² Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," 132.

³⁶³ John Macfarlane *Triquet's Cross: A Study of Military Heroism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 96.

³⁶⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14166, File 1030. War Diary Summary of Events, 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 11 April 1944; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15183, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, 11 April 1944.

³⁶⁵ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 146.

A report in early May by Brigadier W. H. S. Macklin, commander of the 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, concluded that only 150 soldiers (less than 20 percent) from the regiment had volunteered. The reasons varied. Macklin noted that French-Canadians preferred to stay with their units, did not like signing papers, and that all soldiers, whether French or English-speaking, refused to volunteer because they did not have their parent's or wife's permission or could not choose their Arm of Service. Macklin also mentioned how the Hull's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel E. J. St. Laurent, claimed that it would be a long process to obtain more volunteers due to their resistance.³⁶⁶ Other reasons drew heavily upon traditional Anglophone stereotypes of French Canada. Lieutenant-Colonel St. Laurent said the men were never taught to think for themselves and were "passionately and strongly attached to women's apron strings with a childish simplicity. Their mothers, wives or sweethearts have warned them that to sign active ... would break their hearts."³⁶⁷ The total number of active service men in the regiment by 20 April 1944 was 295.³⁶⁸ More men needed to volunteer if the regiment was to proceed overseas.

Macklin also accused "certain societies" in Montreal of convincing men not to go overseas. The Saint Viateur Brotherhood, a religious organisation for youth education founded in France in 1831, and the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, founded in 1834 to protect Francophone interests, were known culprits whose members campaigned for soldiers to remain on home defence while providing shelter for deserters. Officials considered Roger Nadeau from another society, the Cercles d'Études Quid Novi, to be the most dangerous influence. He was compared to Montreal mayor Camillien Houde who was interned in 1940 for trying to convince French-

³⁶⁶ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14166, File 1030. War Diary Summary of Events, 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 28-29 April 1944.

³⁶⁷ Lt.-Col L. J. St. Laurent, May 1944, cited in J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 90.

³⁶⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 593.

Canadians to ignore the NRMA. One officer, Lieutenant H. P. Prefontaine of the 13th Infantry Brigade, who managed to infiltrate Quid Novi, recommended dissolving the organisation immediately. Out of the three societies, Quid Novi posed the greatest threat according to Macklin. His frustration showed when he exclaimed in his war diary that an “extermination campaign” should be made to deal with them.³⁶⁹ Overall, Macklin found NRMA men to be good soldiers, but it took strong leadership to maintain their interest as they did not like the army. He thought they lacked discipline but had good morale, unless they were asked to volunteer for General Service.³⁷⁰

Officers of the 13th Brigade were clearly frustrated with the recruitment campaign as Le Régiment de Hull put forth a stubborn resistance. Despite these difficulties, the officers of the regiment received orders that its reduced rank of General Service volunteers were to sail on 5 May with 473 other ranks. The regiment’s officers were happy to hear the news.³⁷¹ Macklin did not specify how an additional 178 volunteers were acquired in two weeks after repeated failed attempts, but they likely came from within 13th Brigade.

Another French-speaking home defence unit, Le Régiment de Montmagny, received volunteers from another unit, Le Régiment de Joliette, whose recruitment campaign also failed. The unit proceeded overseas on 20 July with 484 men in its ranks.³⁷² Le Régiment de Joliette needed 500 to go overseas as a unit but struggled to obtain volunteers in May. The unit’s officers

³⁶⁹ Quid Novi is the name of the McGill University law student newspaper, but there is no indication that it is connected to the Quid Novi society. See LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14166, File 1030. War Diary Summary of Events, 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 28-29 April 1944.

³⁷⁰ 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1 May 1944.

³⁷¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15183, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, 5 May 1944; C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 594.

³⁷² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15189, File 1064. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Montmagny, 20 July 1944; J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 149.

wanted to serve overseas, but many conscripts promised their parents that they would not volunteer for overseas service. They believed that if the war needed them, the government would force them overseas. These men were labelled as “slackers” by officers who visited the regiment to find out why the recruitment campaign was going so poorly.³⁷³ Those from Le Régiment de Joliette who did not volunteer were forced to pick tobacco in Simcoe, Ontario.³⁷⁴ Le Régiment de Montmagny, Hull, and the Voltigeurs were the only French-speaking regiments who had acquired enough volunteers for overseas service. Senior officers would have to come up with other solutions to induce men into the General Service as volunteers were still needed.

The options were closing. Brigadier Penhale said to General Stuart, that there was no other choice but to send them English-speaking reinforcements.³⁷⁵ General Harry Crerar, commander of First Canadian Army, disagreed with Penhale’s solution. In a short discussion with Major-General Percival John Montague, head of CMHQ, Crerar insisted that dispatching English-speaking soldiers to French-speaking units would be “fatal.” He did not elaborate, but Crerar, ever the political general, was concerned with the optics of dispatching English-speaking men to reinforce French-speaking units. Too much effort had gone into the principle that French-speaking officers would lead French-speaking troops.³⁷⁶

Crerar was certainly sensitive to the feelings of French-Canadians and their desire for representation in the army. In May, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, commander of 21st Army Group that included the Canadians then preparing for Normandy, met with Prime Minister

³⁷³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15184, File 1045. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Joliette, 10-31 May 1944; J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 149-150.

³⁷⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15184, File 1045. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Joliette, 13 August 1944.

³⁷⁵ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 14 April 1944.

³⁷⁶ Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 17 April 1944.

King. Montgomery faced shortages in Second British Army, and wanted French-speaking units to be disbanded to help solve the reinforcement crisis. Montgomery believed French-Canadians would rather be commanded by English-speaking officers with more experience, improving their chances of survival as a result. Crerar disagreed. A day before Montgomery's meeting with King, Crerar spoke to Prime Minister King about the need to obtain French-speaking reinforcements for First Canadian Army. Crerar argued that these reinforcements would help to avoid conscription and prevent the disbandment of the French-speaking units. He was aware that this plan might result in more casualties, but as historian Paul Dickson highlighted, Crerar (according to Prime Minister King) said it "would save feelings...in the minds of French-Canadians."³⁷⁷

On 6 May 1944, one month before the Normandy invasion, Brigadier A. W. Beament, now with the adjutant-general's staff at 21st Army Group noted the difficulties with reinforcing the four French-speaking battalions. The dwindling pool of French-speaking reinforcements were slated to go to the Royal 22^e and the Chaudières, but this left the other two French-speaking battalions without any reserves. More would be needed. Beament made three suggestions to fill the ranks of these battalions. These were: absorb one of the units in the UK into the other two; extend the re-mustering policy, where those in noncombat roles would become infantrymen; or use English-speaking reinforcements. Beament was aware that these solutions came with political implications, but he realised that if no French-speaking reinforcements were available, he would have to send English-speaking men. He personally thought that sending English-speaking reinforcements would not produce a satisfactory result.³⁷⁸ Beament did not elaborate,

³⁷⁷ General Harry Crerar to Mackenzie King, 17 May 1944, cited in Paul Dickson, *A Thoroughly Canadian General: A Biography of General H. D. G. Crerar* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 252.

³⁷⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 6-15 May 1944.

but likely he was aware of Crerar's strong opposition to this solution and the potential backlash from French Canada. French-speaking reinforcements would continue to be taken where available and posted to the four battalions.

Later in May, General Crerar ordered French-speaking men serving in the English-speaking units of the 2nd Infantry Division and 4th Armoured Division, which would not go to Normandy until some weeks after the initial invasion, to be transferred to the Chaudières, Maisonneuves, and FMRs. These reinforcements helped with immediate needs for the summer of 1944, but it was not enough to fill the ranks. The French-speaking men transferred from the 2nd and 4th Divisions along with recent arrivals from Canada gave the three French-speaking battalions within 21st Army Group 1,221 reinforcements, enough for an estimated 60-day wastage. But the Royal 22^e, then still fighting in Italy, had no reserves in the UK.³⁷⁹ By 1 June the four battalions needed 46 officers and 872 other ranks. Luckily there were 46 officers and 776 other ranks available or soon to be available from Le Régiment de Hull and other places. However, as the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy, English-speaking reinforcements were sent to the French-speaking units. These reinforcements were meant to be only temporary until more French-speaking men could be acquired.³⁸⁰

The Normandy landings received a great deal of attention in the English and French language press. *Le Devoir* published an interview by war correspondent Maurice Desjardins with a French-Canadian officer heading to Normandy. The officer said it was necessary to liberate

³⁷⁹ Caroline D'Amours, "Reassessment of a Crisis: Canadian Infantry Reinforcements during the Second World War," *The Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 14, no 2 (2012), 74; J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 196-198.

³⁸⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 1 June, and 28 October 1944.

France to ensure the safety of Britain and Canada.³⁸¹ Such comments were consistent with the advertising that ran through the French-speaking press that summer. But they would have little impact on those reluctant to become General Service volunteers.

The summer 1944 recruitment campaign targeted French-Canadians who were already conscripted into the army for home defence. They still drew upon themes present in a 1941 recruitment campaign that stressed bravery, patriotism, and manhood which had little effect on convincing Francophones to volunteer for General Service. A total of 13 different advertisements were published. One example (figure 4) shows a soldier pointing towards the General Service patch with the title “Voici l’insigne d’honneur du Canada.” It then explained how volunteers were courageous and that wearing the patch was a privilege. With no small irony, the advertisement also mentions the amount of vacation time allowed by the army.³⁸² Jeff Keshen points out how young Canadian men feared being labelled as slackers, cowards, or zombies when drafted and would often switch to General Service if conscripted. Civilians learned to distinguish an NRMA uniform from a General Service uniform. Those wearing the former, might have faced discrimination.³⁸³



Figure 4: 1944 Francophone GS Recruitment Advertisement

Some targeted the men’s parents since French-Canadian family members were known to convince their sons to stay home (see chapter five). One titled, “Voilà un bon Canadien qui n’a pas froid aux yeux!” shows two parents holding a picture of their son in uniform. The caption

³⁸¹ “Les Canadiens français ont hâte de libérer la France,” *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 7 June 1944.

³⁸² “Portez-le à votre bras!,” *Le Petit Courrier* (Pubnico, Nova Scotia), 15 June 1944.

³⁸³ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 23.

mentions how the parents used to be opposed to their son joining the army, but they understand that he is determined to do his duty to fight for a better world. To encourage enlistment further, the advertisement mentioned that French-Canadians would be able to join French-speaking units.³⁸⁴ The option to train in French and join a French-speaking unit was only mentioned in four of the 13 advertisements. None mentioned that all the country's French language training camps were located only in Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick and that the French-speaking units were located only in Quebec. French-Canadians living outside of these provinces would be less likely to train in French or join a French-speaking unit as a result.

As with advertisements of the First World War, these 1944 advertisements emphasised the pride of French Canada and their connections with France. One advertisement carrying the title, "Pourrez-vous dire après la guerre: 'moi aussi, j'ai aidé à libérer la France,'" stressed how France was being ruined under Nazi occupation. It then asked rhetorically if French-Canadians would be willing to help liberate the country that had gifted French-Canadians their traditions.³⁸⁵ Making connections to France did not convince French-Canadians to enlist as was the case during the First World War. Unlike English-Canadians, French-Canadians felt little connection to their ancestral country.³⁸⁶ Quebec nationalists were especially resistant as they considered themselves Americans because of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, severing their ties to France. This form of reasoning legitimised their decision not to support the war effort.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ "Voilà un bon Canadien qui n'a pas froid aux yeux!," *La Survivance* (Edmonton, Alberta), 28 June 1944.

³⁸⁵ "Pourrez-vous dire après la guerre: 'moi aussi, j'ai aidé à libérer la France,'" *L'Ami du Peuple* (Sudbury, Ontario), 27 July 1944.

³⁸⁶ Brian Cameron, "The Bonne Entente Movement, 1916-1917: From Cooperation to Conscription," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 13, no. 2 (1978): 44.

³⁸⁷ Olivier Courteaux, *Canada between Vichy and Free France 1940-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 19.



Figure 5: 1944 Anglophone GS Recruitment Advertisement

Advertisements for Anglophones were less aggressive and targeted compared to those for Francophones. They contained generic advertising which could apply to any demographic. One example (figure 5) referenced D-Day by exclaiming “You’re on the wrong beach fella!” It told Anglophones that they should be on the beaches of Europe fighting for freedom instead of vacationing at home.³⁸⁸ Despite being milder in comparison, they still appealed to a man’s honour, family, sense of pride and sense of shame. They also reflected the army’s desperate need for men.

Advertisements for Francophones and Anglophones used some of the same appeals to patriotism and manhood as seen in 1941. They also had a harder edge by trying to shame them into joining the fight by pointing out their relative comfort at home. Unlike those in 1941, Francophone advertisements spoke to French-Canadian parents who were hesitant to send their sons overseas. Others spoke directly to French-Canadian men by mentioning how they could liberate France, train in French, and join French-speaking units. These advertisements had little effect as some relied on making outdated connections to France while many Francophone parents remained strongly opposed to conscription for overseas service and general participation in the war.

The reluctance to volunteer for overseas service is unsurprising. A September 1944 survey on attitudes towards overseas service asked soldiers if they were looking forward to going overseas. The survey showed that only 40 percent of French-speaking General Service soldiers

³⁸⁸ “You’re on the wrong beach fella!,” *The Calgary Herald* (Calgary, Alberta), 4 July 1944.

were looking forward to going overseas compared to 65 percent amongst English speakers. In the NRMA, only four percent of English-speaking troops and no French speakers wanted to go overseas.³⁸⁹ The army's leadership needed other solutions to obtain more volunteers for overseas service as convincing men to switch to General Service brought few results.

Senior officers continued to try and acquire reinforcements within the NRMA and the General Service through re-mustering troops from other arms. Personnel selection officers at CMHQ reported in late April 1944 that 3,601 French-speaking personnel (2,653 general duty and 948 drivers) serving in English-speaking units overseas could be re-mustered to infantry. However, many of the soldiers serving as drivers did not meet the requirements to become infantrymen. Some 800 of the 3,601 were French-speaking infantrymen in English-speaking units, but these personnel selection officers were aware that these soldiers might be unwilling to leave their units. If these 800 men were to be transferred to French-speaking units, special care would be taken to ensure they understood that leaving their units was their duty and for the good of the Canadian Army as a whole.³⁹⁰

Senior officers approved the re-mustering of men on 22 May. On the 24th, Lieutenant-General Stuart said only General Service personnel would be selected, and no more than five percent of French-speaking soldiers would be taken from an English-speaking unit. If there was an increase of French-speaking men in a unit, they too would be re-mustered, but not considered part of the five percent. Stuart also said that all French-speaking units other than the infantry battalions would from now on only receive English-speaking reinforcements if no Francophone

³⁸⁹ "Department of National Defence: Subject Files: C-5290," *Canadiana Héritage*, accessed 22 November 2022, images 4614-4615. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c5290/4614.

³⁹⁰ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 196-197; LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 21 April 1944.

soldiers possessing the right trades were available. As a result, all French-speaking units overseas except for the four infantry battalions could become English-speaking.³⁹¹ The fact that these units were at risk of losing their linguistic identities demonstrates the seriousness of the reinforcement crisis.

After the Normandy invasion, Brigadier William Bostock, then with the Adjutant General's branch in England, requested a list of French-speaking men from Canadian units within the 21st Army Group, except for those in the 3rd Division and 2nd Armoured Brigade who were not tradesmen or specialists. Bostock sought French-speaking units such as the 4th Canadian Medium Regiment which was examined first since they were classified as French-speaking. Four days later, a list was provided.³⁹² So began the process of re-mustering five percent of French-speaking personnel from each unit.

On 30 June, Major A. N. Kearns of CMHQ reported that 489 French-speaking soldiers were re-mustered to become infantry, 233 were re-mustered from English-speaking units within the First Canadian Army while 256 came from Canadian reinforcement units.³⁹³ According to an appreciation dated 19 July, 750 French-speaking soldiers would be sent overseas between 30 July and 5 October while another 174 were potentially available through re-mustering.³⁹⁴

By August, senior officers had tried a variety of options from transferring French-speaking men from English-speaking units, sending two French-speaking home defence active service regiments overseas, and re-mustering soldiers. On 30 July, General Stuart claimed he was satisfied with the reinforcement situation in general but was worried about the lack of

³⁹¹ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 22-30 May 1944.

³⁹² Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 8-12 June 1944.

³⁹³ Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 30 June 1944.

³⁹⁴ Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 19 July 1944.

reinforcements for the French-speaking battalions. He said to the Canadian Cabinet that French-speaking soldiers would have to continue to be transferred from English-speaking units. If there were not enough, Stuart noted that more home defence French-speaking units would have to be disbanded.³⁹⁵ He wrote to the CGS on 2 August claiming that the reinforcement situation was satisfactory as a reinforcement pool overseas had a strength more than required for three months worth of intense combat. He estimated that by the end of 1944, the reinforcement pool would be around 25,000. On the 3rd, he attended a War Cabinet Committee meeting where he stated that there was plenty of reserves. Stuart also believed (or hoped) the war would be over before anymore men would be needed. He requested that more men be sent to Italy which he claimed, would not cause any need for more reinforcements. The issue with Stuart's report was that the reinforcements he calculated were for all arms and services, not just the infantry. He never mentioned anything about the infantry needing reinforcements aside from the four French-speaking battalions.³⁹⁶

Stuart had reason to be concerned with the three French-speaking battalions in Northwest Europe who had suffered significant casualties helping to liberate the city of Caen, France, and the surrounding areas in July and early August. The Chaudières, who had already lost 105 men on D-Day, lost another 100 while fighting in Colombelles, Giberville, and Mondeville.³⁹⁷ The

³⁹⁵ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 177; With the talk of disbanding units, four French-speaking units were mobilised from April to October 1944. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁹⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 435-436.

³⁹⁷ Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983), 251; *Ibid.*, 275-276.

FMRs while fighting near Beauvoir and Troteval Farm, lost 128 men.³⁹⁸ The Maisonneuves who fought in Fleury-sur-Orne and Saint-André-sur-Orne lost a total of 293 men.³⁹⁹

Despite the losses faced by these three battalions, a telegram despatched by Brigadier Beament on 4 August to General Montague showed that English-speaking units accounted for the majority of deficiencies considering they made up the majority of units fighting. At that time the Black Watch had a deficiency of 370, the highest out of all units fighting in Northwest Europe. The Essex Scots had a deficiency of 171 while the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders had 100. Six other English-speaking units had deficiencies just below one hundred. Among the Francophone battalions, the greatest deficiency was in the Maisonneuves (245), followed by the FMRs (139). The Chaudières had a deficiency of only 47. By 15 August, the total deficiencies of general duty infantrymen in the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions and the 4th Armoured Division was 2,644. This severe shortage of personnel had developed despite the best efforts of the reinforcement units. On 5 August, General Montague had reported that 15 officers and 656 other ranks had been sent to Northwest Europe to be followed by another 260 officers and 3,420 other ranks on the 10th and 2,500 all ranks on the 19th. Another 2,000 infantrymen, which included 450 French speakers were also said by Montague to be ready for despatch by the end of the month. In the event, with the persistently intense combat in Normandy, these substantial numbers of personnel were not sufficient to keep up with losses. On 26 August General Stuart in London

³⁹⁸ *Cent ans d'Histoire d'un Régiment Canadien-Français: Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal, 1869-1969* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1971), 207.

³⁹⁹ Jacques Gouin et al, *Bon cœur et bon bras: Histoire du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1880-1980* (Montréal: Cercles de officiers du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1980), 101; *Ibid.*, 108.

wired to Ottawa that the 21 Infantry battalions in the First Canadian Army were deficient by 3,000 infantry personnel.⁴⁰⁰

The shortage of reinforcements persisted as the Canadians entered Dieppe on 1 September. On 23 September, CMHQ noted that the Chaudières were short by two officers and 86 other ranks. They were the least affected of the four battalions as they had been on patrols since 5 September to gather intelligence on German defence positions in the Pas-de-Calais region. The Chaudières then took part in Operation Wellhit, the Canadian Army's assault on Boulogne-sur-mer, which the Germans had turned into a strongly held fortress, from the 17th to the 22nd. In Italy, the Royal 22^e was still short by two officers and 102 other ranks, but officials believed there were 21 officers and 270 other ranks in reserve. Brigadier Bostock wanted the Royal 22^e to have priority for reinforcements, but General Stuart wanted to send more French-speaking troops to Northwest Europe as the Maisonneuves needed one officer and 276 other ranks while the FMRs, who helped liberate Dieppe, a satisfying task after the heavy losses the unit had suffered in the disastrous raid on that port in August 1942, needed 333 other ranks. Both units had never been at full strength since the day they went into action on 12 July. However, they received some reinforcements as these deficits decreased to 148 other ranks for the former on 27 September and 202 other ranks for the latter on 8 October.⁴⁰¹

With French-speaking reinforcements still needed, the army looked to the units that had proceeded overseas as volunteers. While Brigadier Bostock hoped to receive men from Le Régiment de Hull and the French-speaking 6th Infantry Reinforcement Unit, Le Régiment de

⁴⁰⁰ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 181-184.

⁴⁰¹ Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983), 288; J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 199.

Montmagny was disbanded for reinforcements on 15 September 1944.⁴⁰² Some of these men were sent to English-speaking units. On 10 October, a draft of 100 men from Le Régiment de Montmagny reported to the Black Watch and Royal Winnipeg Rifles.⁴⁰³ Brigadier Beament mentioned how a Corporal Robinson of Le Régiment de Montmagny was demoted after being sent to the Canadian Scottish Regiment because he could not speak English. No mistake was made, but Beament pleaded to make sure these men were sent to French-speaking units especially because men from Le Régiment de Hull were promised they would be. Given the surname “Robinson,” it is understandable why officers organising reinforcements assumed he spoke English. Most of the 100 men were reposted to the FMRs and the Maisonneuves on 28 October. These reinforcements would have been a relief to the Maisonneuves who, like the Black Watch, were short by over 200 men.⁴⁰⁴

As senior officers struggled to fill the ranks in Northwest Europe, an article published in the press would rekindle tensions over conscription. On 18 September, Major Conn Smythe, while recovering from a wound received in France, gave an alarming statement to the press regarding the quality of reinforcements. Smythe argued that the “better” trained conscripts should be sent overseas because current infantry reinforcements were poorly trained, resulting in many casualties.⁴⁰⁵ Because Smythe’s statement suggested sending conscripts overseas, it naturally gained a lot of attention, particularly from the French language press. The editors of *Le Bloc* in Montreal disagreed with Smythe, arguing that sending conscripts overseas because

⁴⁰² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15189, File 1064. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Montmagny, 15 September 1944.

⁴⁰³ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 10-28 October 1944.

⁴⁰⁴ Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 10-28 October 1944; C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 437.

⁴⁰⁵ Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments*, 440.

reinforcements were poorly trained was strange and dangerous reasoning. They concluded by stating that the English language press, who first covered Smythe's statement, wanted to send conscripts overseas.⁴⁰⁶ Tensions between English and French-Canadians were increasing as a result of Smythe's suggestion to send conscripts overseas. These tensions, unsurprisingly, would also be present in Parliament.

The full extent of the reinforcement shortage became apparent at a meeting of the Cabinet War Committee on 19 October 1944. Stuart's review of casualty figures concluded that infantry losses made up 75 percent of total casualties instead of the estimated 45 percent that had been anticipated.⁴⁰⁷ On 24 October, the Cabinet heard Minister Ralston's report that infantry casualties between 1 July and 30 September were thus 17,941 instead of 10,967, the number estimated had infantry casualties been 45 percent of the total casualties. With another 22,207 infantry casualties anticipated through the rest of 1944, Ralston concluded that by January 1945, only 2,000 infantry reinforcements would be available overseas. As a result, J. L. Ralston stated that "there is no alternative but for me to recommend the extension of service of NRMA personnel to overseas."⁴⁰⁸

It would be an understatement to say that such figures caused Mackenzie King and his Cabinet great concern. King's search for alternatives reflected visceral alarm about the reaction of French Canada. The Prime Minister raised the prospect of financial incentives to acquire more volunteers. He also wanted Georges Vanier, now serving as Canada's representative to France, to approach Charles De Gaulle with the idea of letting one or two Free French units fight with one

⁴⁰⁶ "Le Canada et la guerre du Pacifique," *Le Bloc* (Montréal, Québec), 7 October 1944.

⁴⁰⁷ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 444.

⁴⁰⁸ J. L. Ralston, 24 October 1944, cited in Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments*, 445-446.

of Canada's French-speaking units.⁴⁰⁹ It is unclear what reaction such a suggestion would receive in French Canada, but King was desperate.

Until the government released conscripts for overseas service, the army continued to search for more French-speaking reinforcements. Le Régiment de Châteauguay, stationed in Sydney, Nova Scotia in October 1944, organised a recruitment campaign to try and convince NRMA soldiers to volunteer for the General Service. Colonel J. P. Godreau stated that the recruitment campaign succeeded beyond expectations as No. 4 company volunteered on the condition that the men go overseas together, but more were needed. Officers believed rather optimistically that they would be able to recruit 300 NRMA soldiers if the regiment could go overseas as a whole. Many did volunteer, but there is no indication in the war diary that 300 men were acquired.⁴¹⁰ Because only 967 conscripts volunteered for the General Service within the NRMA in October 1944, the unit likely did not acquire those 300 volunteers.⁴¹¹

Officials desperately tried to estimate the number of French-speaking reinforcements available. On 20 October, one estimate claimed that after 3 November there would be 70 officers and 377 other ranks available from infantry reinforcements for the French-speaking battalions. There would also be an additional 178 other ranks arriving from Canada by 10 December.⁴¹² Though three days later, another estimate claimed 70 officers and 495 other ranks would be available from infantry reinforcements and from Canada by the end of November. These

⁴⁰⁹ Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments*, 447.

⁴¹⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15176, File 1071. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Châteauguay, 5-31 October 1944.

⁴¹¹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 601.

⁴¹² LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 20 October 1944.

numbers would be sufficient as the three French-speaking infantry battalions in Northwest Europe, between 23 July and 20 October, had a total deficiency of 340 all ranks.⁴¹³

However, some thought these reinforcements were not enough resulting in English-speaking reinforcements being recommended for the French-speaking battalions. On 23 October, the acting commander of First Canadian Army, Lieutenant-General Guy Granville Simonds, estimated that the current deficiency of 340 French-speaking men could increase to 605 by 1 December due to sickness from inclement weather. He made three suggestions, two of which had been proposed by Brigadier Beament back in May. These were: making more French-speaking men available as reinforcements, absorb one of the battalions and use the surplus as reinforcements, or attach English-speaking rifle companies to the units. Brigadier Macklin and Lieutenant-General Simonds both recommended the third option. Simonds recognised sending English-speaking companies was not ideal, but to subject the other units, who were English-speaking, to more fighting because the three French-speaking infantry units were deficient, would cause resentment and prejudice.⁴¹⁴

As the crisis continued, Prime Minister King forced Defence Minister Ralston to resign in November because of his pro-conscription stance. French language newspapers such as *L'Avenir du Nord* celebrated Ralston's resignation. Editor Lionel Bertrand mentioned how Ralston's ouster was a "victory" because it meant no conscription for overseas service.⁴¹⁵ General A. G. L. McNaughton, Ralston's successor, supported a volunteer army, and could presumably show

⁴¹³ Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 23 October 1944.

⁴¹⁴ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 200-201.

⁴¹⁵ "M. King et le volontariat," *L'Avenir du Nord* (St. Jérôme, Québec), 10 November 1944.

Quebec that the government was committed to a volunteer-based army. He launched a three-week campaign to obtain more volunteers for the General Service.⁴¹⁶

McNaughton then forced General Stuart to resign as Chief of Staff at CMHQ England because of his support for conscription. He was replaced by Major-General Price Montague. Crerar, who resumed command of the First Canadian Army, informed Montague that Simonds' suggestion of sending English-speaking companies was necessary, despite his initial opposition. Crerar urged that sending these companies was a "matter of national importance and...the decision must be made at National Defence Headquarters after the fullest investigation and discussion of the problem and treated as a matter of urgency."⁴¹⁷ The fact Crerar changed his mind demonstrates that senior officers were running out of ideas and were desperate to send more troops overseas. However, none dared propose conscription for overseas service.

On 3 November, Cabinet secretary, Arnold Heeney, suggested that King form a recruiting committee with General McNaughton as chair. The committee consisted of Liberal MPs such as Ian Mackenzie, James Gardiner, William Mulock, Colin Gibson, Major-General Laflèche, who was then an MP for Outremont, Quebec, and Brooke Claxton. The committee met for the first time on 6 November where it approved a report based on conferences held by General McNaughton with officers and officials. The report concluded that out of 60,000 NRMA men in Canada, 42,000 were suitable for the infantry and 37 percent (about 15,500) were French-speaking. The report noted that many conscripts did not want to serve overseas, still, the committee was going to try and convince these men to volunteer for the General Service. The

⁴¹⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 549.

⁴¹⁷ General Harry Crerar, 23 October 1944, cited in J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 201.

report stated that, when conducting the recruitment campaign, there should be no sense of alarm to maintain the public's cooperation. It would be communicated that there was a need for men overseas and that home defence units were no longer necessary.⁴¹⁸

Prime Minister King made a public broadcast on 8 November to acquire volunteers for the General Service. He stressed that "The voluntary system has not broken down. At the moment, it is subject to an added strain which calls for an intensified effort at home, in the period immediately ahead, particularly to provide personnel in an advanced stage of training." King also appealed to conscripts directly as they had the training required to serve overseas.⁴¹⁹

Fighting in Northwest Europe continued to result in major casualties. The Battle of the Scheldt from 7 October to 10 November cost the First Canadian Army a total of 703 officers and 12,170 other ranks.⁴²⁰ Out of the three French-speaking battalions, the Chaudières lost 129 men and the FMRs 96. The Maisonneuves, however, only lost six men.⁴²¹ On 12 November, the three French-speaking battalions in Northwest Europe were deficient by 254 men with just 194 French-speaking reinforcements available.⁴²² Within the English-speaking units, those in the 7th Infantry Brigade of 3rd Division lost 533 men in the first seven days of combat. The Regina Rifles and a company of the Royal Montreal Regiment made up more than half of the total losses. The Royal Winnipeg Rifles and Canadian Scottish Regiment lost over a hundred men

⁴¹⁸ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 460-461.

⁴¹⁹ Mackenzie King, 8 November 1944, cited in C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 462-463.

⁴²⁰ C. P. Stacey, *The Victory Campaign: The Operations in North-West Europe, 1944-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1960), 424.

⁴²¹ Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983), 313; *Cent ans d'Histoire d'un Régiment Canadien-Français: Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal, 1869-1969* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1971), 242; Jacques Gouin et al, *Bon cœur et bon bras: Histoire du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1880-1980* (Montréal: Cercles de officiers du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1980), 136.

⁴²² LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 12 November 1944.

each.⁴²³ There was clearly no end in sight to the reinforcement crisis. More solutions would be proposed by the army's leadership to obtain more volunteers.

Some officials thought that a nod to regimental identity offered one solution to the growing deficits. On 13 November, Major-General Laflèche claimed that officers from the 3rd Battalions of the FMRs and the Maisonneuves as well as Le Régiment de Châteauguay and Le Régiment de Joliette, would supply recruits for the French-speaking units overseas. Laflèche's claim came after a proposed plan to let NRMA men choose their unit if they volunteered for overseas service.⁴²⁴ On 18 November, a meeting in Montreal gathered French-speaking officers to discuss how to obtain more French-speaking recruits.⁴²⁵ It likely resulted in depot battalions which were formed on 21 November for the French-speaking units overseas as well as one each for the Châteauguay and Joliette regiments.⁴²⁶ Depot battalions were meant to recruit men for infantry battalions to reinforce units already overseas.⁴²⁷ They had been formed in Canada during the First World War in 1917-1918 to assemble and train conscripts, personnel transferred from other parts of the military, together with new recruits after recruiting alone failed to bring in enough volunteers to reinforce infantry battalions at the front. Similarly in 1944-1945 battalions were raised in Canada to assemble all available personnel and prepare them for dispatch to the

⁴²³ Terry Copp, *Cinderella Army: The Canadians in Northwest Europe, 1944-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 102.

⁴²⁴ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 227.

⁴²⁵ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13938, File 2924. War Diary Summary of Events, 4th Military District, 18 November 1944.

⁴²⁶ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 228.

⁴²⁷ There is little information on Second World War depot battalions. They are only briefly covered in Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983), 402.

reserve battalions in England that fed reinforcements to the units at the front.⁴²⁸ This solution was the final attempt to obtain reinforcements via volunteers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lapointe, the son of the late Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe and a veteran of D-Day, would command the Chaudière's depot battalion. Recruitment was difficult because senior officers yet again had to appeal to conscripts who had no desire to serve overseas. Captain Louis Rousseau, who served with the Chaudières overseas, was asked to help recruit for the regiment's depot battalion. The reception he received from the conscripts was cold and sometimes hostile.⁴²⁹ At a press conference held at the Citadelle of Quebec, Brigadier Edmond A. Blais, Colonels G. E. A. Dupuis and Redmond Roche, and Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Pinault claimed that the best solution to solve the reinforcement crisis would be to return all French-speaking soldiers on home defence to Quebec.⁴³⁰ They likely suggested this idea to take stock of available French-speaking troops before trying to convince them to join one of the depot battalions, but this never happened.

Major-General Laflèche also tried to obtain volunteers for the depot battalions. Just before conscription was announced, he addressed 2,000 French-speaking soldiers at Petawawa, encouraging them to sign on for General Service to reinforce the four French-speaking battalions. According to *Le Devoir*, the general turned MP explained that if 4,000 could be obtained, he said "la situation sera changée."⁴³¹ What Laflèche meant was unclear, but four thousand troops could effectively replace the four French-speaking battalions, and end the

⁴²⁸ "Guide to Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force: Depot Battalions," *lac.gc.ca*, accessed 2 June 2023. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Documents/depot%20battalions.pdf>.

⁴²⁹ Jacques Castonguay and Armand Ross, *Le Régiment de la Chaudière* (Lévis: Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 1983), 403-405.

⁴³⁰ "La campagne de recrutement de renforts," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 22 November 1944.

⁴³¹ "La campagne de recrutement de renforts," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 22 November 1944.

reinforcement shortages for French-speaking units. Newspapers such as *La Liberté et le Patriote* covered Laflèche's speech, but the editors did not elaborate.⁴³² Perhaps such as request seemed too large, and too late in coming.

All of these attempts to obtain volunteers for the General Service could not fill the ranks of the depleted French-speaking overseas infantry battalions. As a result, conscription was implemented for overseas service by Prime Minister King on 22 November 1944. Aside from numbers shown throughout this chapter of men volunteering for the General Service in the war diaries of the French-speaking home defence units, no such numbers exist for the total of men who volunteered during the conscription crisis. What is clear is that efforts were made to keep the linguistic identities of the French-speaking units intact. English-speaking reinforcements could have been sent, but General Crerar worked to ensure that this would not happen until there was no other choice. The problem remained that most conscripted soldiers, regardless of their background, were reluctant to join the General Service.

The reaction among Quebec Liberal MPs was predictable. On 23 November, MP Jean-François Pouliot left the Liberal Party stating, "I regret very much that now it is impossible for me to agree with the policies [conscription] of the government." He returned the following day to try and explain his reasons for leaving but other MPs shouted "order" and he was silenced by the Speaker. Pouliot later questioned Defence Minister McNaughton's earlier statement that men would not be sacrificed. He also questioned what was meant by national unity as the whole reason why conscription was not enacted was to maintain that unity. McNaughton's response was that men had to be conscripted since there were not enough volunteers from the NRMA.

⁴³² "Triquet reviendra dans le Québec," *La Liberté et le Patriote* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 24 November 1944.

Other French-Canadian MPs from Quebec left the Liberal Party over the government's decision. They were Wilfrid Lacroix, Charles Parent, and Maurice Bourget. They (including Pouliot) joined a group known as "Le groupement des indépendants" led by Frédéric Dorion, another independent politician. C. G. Power also resigned as Minister of National Defence for Air and became an Independent Liberal.⁴³³

The decision to send NRMA troops to Europe was received poorly amongst French-Canadians. On 23 November, up to 700 youth protested in Quebec City and Montreal. Those in Quebec City stormed a recruiting office but were dispersed by police. In Ottawa, 100 NRMA soldiers attempted to march towards Parliament Hill but were dispersed by General Service soldiers, sailors, and airmen. There was another violent outbreak in Fort Frances, Ontario where soldiers on home leave and veterans squared off for six hours against 100 French-speaking NRMA troops. Six were injured.⁴³⁴

On 24 November, another more serious disruption (described by some as a mutiny) erupted at a military camp in Terrace, BC which lasted until the 29th.⁴³⁵ It started with the news that 16,000 conscripts were to be sent overseas. Stacey notes that 1,600 armed soldiers from Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent, PEI Highlanders, Prince Albert Volunteers, and 19th Field Ambulance participated.⁴³⁶ The war diaries of the French-speaking units offer some insight. The 15th Infantry Brigade reported that some of the soldiers from Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent refused to go on

⁴³³ Jean-François Pouliot, 23 November 1944, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol VI*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 6562-6568.

⁴³⁴ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 237-238.

⁴³⁵ Peter Russell, "BC's 1944 'Zombie' Protest Against Overseas Conscription," *BC Studies* no. 122 (1999): 49; Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 233.

⁴³⁶ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 476.

parade and marched to headquarters carrying banners reading “Down with conscription” and “The Zombies strike back.” The conscripts then marched through Terrace, intimidating men to join them.⁴³⁷ The war diary of the 19th Field Ambulance recorded that the strikers were going from one hut to another threatening men to join them. They also made NCOs remove their stripes and threatened them if they refused. These threats proved successful.⁴³⁸

Despite all the commotion, there was little violence or damage. One senior officer said that when his wife went to the markets, soldiers protected her with an armed escort. Major-General Georges Pearkes, GOC, Pacific Command, said that the protesters were well organised.⁴³⁹ General Pearkes investigated the incidents reported at Terrace, and found that while soldiers were indeed armed, reports of conscripts mounting anti-aircraft and machine guns around the Terrace camp were rumours. Instead, many of the men at the camp, contrary to popular belief, continued to carry out their duties.⁴⁴⁰ On the 29th, the protests gradually faded and the next day, the men went back to their regular routines and returned almost all the ammunition and weapons.⁴⁴¹ While these protests were milder than what was initially believed, it makes sense to call the Terrace incident a mutiny as soldiers armed themselves and disobeyed orders. When disciplinary action was taken against those who participated, the Judge Advocate General (JAG) said there was “a clear prima facie case of mutiny.”⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14172, File 1039. War Diary Summary of Events, 15th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 25 November 1944.

⁴³⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15888, File 1466. War Diary Summary of Events, 19th Field Ambulance, 25-26 November 1944.

⁴³⁹ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 476.

⁴⁴⁰ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 233-234.

⁴⁴¹ Byers, *Zombie Army*, 234.

⁴⁴² Adjutant General, 14 December 1944, cited in C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 478.

There were also protests in Nanaimo, BC where Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke were stationed, but they did not participate.⁴⁴³ Soldiers also protested in Vernon, Courtenay, Chilliwack, and Port Alberni.⁴⁴⁴ Despite the fact that French-speaking men took part in the mutiny, Stacey concluded that they were not the cause of it. According to Stacey's evidence, men of Central European and German origin were the main instigators.⁴⁴⁵ In the end, 12,908 conscripts were sent overseas, 2,463 of which were absorbed into field units before the war ended.⁴⁴⁶

As some troops protested conscription, others decided to volunteer for the General Service. On 27 November, Major-General Laflèche noted that "substantial numbers" of French-Canadians were volunteering in Quebec. He maintained that they felt that the reputation of their province was at stake.⁴⁴⁷ Another source says that on 25 November, Major-General Laflèche claimed 250 French-speaking soldiers at camp Petawawa and another 171 at the St. Jérôme camp volunteered. On 30 November, 275 more men volunteered at Petawawa followed by over 100 more at St. Jérôme. On 1 December, Laflèche said in nine days, 2,928 men switched to General Service, at least half of whom were French-speaking.⁴⁴⁸ If these numbers were correct, Laflèche obtained at least half of his desired 4,000 French-speaking volunteers, but only after conscripts

⁴⁴³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14169, File 1038. War Diary Summary of Events, 14th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 27 November 1944.

⁴⁴⁴ Daniel Byers, *Zombie Army: The Canadian Army and Conscription in the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 235.

⁴⁴⁵ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 476.

⁴⁴⁶ Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments*, 479.

⁴⁴⁷ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13828, File 2915/ GS OP. War Diary Summary of Events, Pacific Command, 27 November 1944.

⁴⁴⁸ Pierre Vennat, *Les héros oubliés: L'histoire inédite des militaires canadien-français de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale Tome III* (Montréal: Éditions du Méridien, 1998), 246.

were to be sent overseas. These volunteers would have helped to ease the crisis within the French-speaking battalions in addition to the conscripts sent overseas.

In French Canada, there was little reaction to the events in Terrace. In Ontario, *Le Droit* sided with those refusing to go overseas, but other Francophone newspapers remained silent.⁴⁴⁹ In Quebec, the editors of *Le Devoir* were more concerned with conscription itself as they discussed the *Bloc Populaire*'s and *La Ligue pour la défense du Canada*'s response to it. At an assembly at the Marché Saint-Jacques in Montreal, Quebec on 29 November, André Laurendeau said: "La réponse à la conscription, c'est l'indépendance du Canada." Laurendeau wanted Parliament to convene to hear Quebec's position on conscription and to condemn Prime Minister King.⁴⁵⁰ Nothing of the sort occurred, and Parliament did not react to Laurendeau's demand. Canadians would be conscripted for overseas service.

In Parliament, Quebec MPs continued to oppose conscription by criticizing Canada's war effort while being completely ignorant of the situation overseas. Liberal MP Vincent Dupuis for Chambly-Rouville on 6 December said that he did not believe the Canadian military would be left without support if it did not send 16,000 men overseas. He argued that if a position on the front lines was left undefended in Western Europe, "the chief of staff behind the lines" (presumably the senior Allied commander in the area) would surely send reinforcements from what he had available. He also argued that Canada's population was too small to be taking on a large fighting task overseas and that one should not forget about the contributions being made by the air force and navy. Dupuis also said that the government should not scare the mothers, families, and wives of those overseas by giving them the impression that their loved ones were

⁴⁴⁹ Peter Russell, "BC's 1944 'Zombie' Protest Against Overseas Conscription," *BC Studies* no. 122 (1999): 54-55.

⁴⁵⁰ "La réponse à la conscription, c'est l'indépendance," *Le Devoir* (Montréal, Québec), 30 November 1944.

being left without support. He also believed the militaries of Poland or Belgium could help provide reinforcements.⁴⁵¹

Liberal MP Joseph Lafontaine for Mégantic-Frontenac also voiced his criticism on 7 December by questioning why the army simply did not pull its men temporarily from the front lines to reequip, rest, and strengthen their units. This plan, Lafontaine argued, would allow the Minister of National Defence to make good use of the voluntary system to ensure its success. Lafontaine further stated that officers in various camps did not like the voluntary system and would discourage soldiers from volunteering. He gave an example of two French-speaking officers who were banned from entering a camp in BC to recruit French-speaking volunteers.⁴⁵² Lafontaine had no evidence aside from this anecdote.

In fact, as this study has shown, the Canadian Army had done a great deal to include French-Canadians. Senior officers did a great deal to encourage French-speaking conscripts to volunteer. They had also been working since the creation of the Goforth Report in 1941 to obtain French-speaking recruits. But by 1944, conscripts, put up a stubborn resistance against recruiters. Few wanted to switch to General Service. Nevertheless, the mutiny, protests, and persistently strong reactions from Quebec demonstrate that conscription continued to be a contentious issue for French-Canadians throughout the war.

Towards the end of 1944, French-speaking home defence units would be disbanded to be used as reinforcements. Le Régiment de Hull, which had been in England since May with a total

⁴⁵¹ Vincent Dupuis, 6 December 1944, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol VI*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 6849.

⁴⁵² Joseph Lafontaine, 7 December 1944, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fifth Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol VI*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1945), 6908-6909.

of 38 officers and 436 other ranks, was disbanded in November 1944.⁴⁵³ In December, incentives to switch to General Service remained in place as men of the 20th Field Regiment were told by their officers that they could choose to enlist in one of the four French-speaking infantry battalions. On 12 December, some of the men were transferred to Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent while the NCOs were sent for infantry training at A13 camp in Valcartier. The unit was then disbanded at the end of the month.⁴⁵⁴ The French-speaking No. 8 Special Employment Company did not go overseas but was disbanded on 15 December to serve as reinforcements for Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent or to be sent to Military District No. 5.⁴⁵⁵ A total of 17 French-speaking units were disbanded in 1944, eight of them after conscripts were ordered to go overseas.⁴⁵⁶

Another seven French-speaking home defence units sent overseas on 10 January 1945 were to be gradually disbanded over the course of the month to reinforce front-line units.⁴⁵⁷ The disbanding of these units was a result of conscription. Attempts to acquire enough French-speaking volunteers from these units for General Service had failed. The men of these units were not informed of their unit's dissolution prior to being sent overseas. The adjutant-general claimed in March 1944 that they would be informed; however, the Army Historical Section later maintained that it was a ploy to convince men to switch to General Service.⁴⁵⁸ Because many of these men did not switch to the General Service, senior officers evidently felt no obligation to

⁴⁵³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 1 June 1944; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15183, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, November 1944.

⁴⁵⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14533, File 811. War Diary Summary of Events, 20th Field Regiment, 5-31 December 1944.

⁴⁵⁵ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15324, File 1328. War Diary Summary of Events, No. 8 Special Employment Company, 15 December 1944.

⁴⁵⁶ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

⁴⁵⁷ These were the 19th Field Ambulance, 15th Field Company, 24th Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent, Le Régiment de Châteauguay, Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, and Le Régiment de Joliette. See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

⁴⁵⁸ K. H. Barry Gallant, "The Development of the Canadian Army as a Unilingual Institution in a Bilingual State," (MA thesis., McGill University, 1968), 73.

keep their promise. However, there is still reason to believe that this incentive was a ploy because units who did have enough volunteers such as the regiments of Hull and Montmagny were also disbanded. With many French-speaking units being sent overseas and disbanded to supply reinforcements in 1944-1945, Inspector-General Sansom reported on 27 January 1945 that the three French-speaking infantry battalions in Northwest Europe were finally up to strength. However, there were only 34 officers and 57 other ranks available as reinforcements.⁴⁵⁹ This report led him to conclude that the reinforcements crisis was not resolved until the army despatched conscripts overseas in January 1945.⁴⁶⁰

Although disbanding units made major contributions to filling the ranks, the army kept its promise to let conscripts choose their unit. Nevertheless, a communication issue put the plan in jeopardy. The plan was not discussed with CMHQ, which had serious objections to it.⁴⁶¹ The officers of CMHQ only heard of the plan through a conversation with Brigadier DeLalanne, assistant deputy adjutant-general, in January 1945. Lieutenant-General Montague was shocked and said in a telegram dated 24 January that the men responsible were unqualified to make such decisions. In another telegram dated 2 February, Crerar said to Montague that he could not guarantee French-speaking soldiers would be sent to the unit of their choice. He could “reasonably ensure,” however, that they would be placed in one of the French-speaking battalions. Despite this communication mishap, the adjutant-general, Major-General A. C. Spencer, would make sure that none of the platoons were broken up.⁴⁶² As for the depot

⁴⁵⁹ J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 276.

⁴⁶⁰ C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1970), 481.

⁴⁶¹ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 27 January 1945.

⁴⁶² J. Mackay Hitsman, “Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War,” AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 228.

battalions, they merely served to organise the men into platoons of men who wished to choose their battalion.⁴⁶³

After much confusion and uncertainty, NDHQ authorised French-speaking soldiers to choose their unit on 19 February. Major-General E. G. Weeks, who was part of the administration at CMHQ, said that French-speaking soldiers sent to the depot battalions would be placed in a platoon with men wanting to serve in the same battalion. The platoon would retain its French identity during training and then be despatched under the command of its own officers. The platoon would then join one of the four battalions of their choice.⁴⁶⁴ It is unknown how many of these platoons were formed for each of the French-speaking battalions.

Finally on 9 April 1945, after a year of senior officers trying to find solutions, the reinforcement crisis was resolved. A survey compiled at CMHQ reported that all field units were up to strength. The same survey estimated that 2,124 French-speaking infantrymen would be available in April along with 870 in May, 1,441 in June, and 974 in July.⁴⁶⁵ Some of these reinforcements would have come from the disbandment of other smaller French-speaking units stationed on the east coast in Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. A total of 11 French-speaking units among the greatly reduced home defence forces were disbanded in 1945 prior to the war's end to be used as reinforcements. However, three French-speaking units were mobilised from August to September 1945. Two were support battalions for the Royal 22^e and the Chaudières, the other was an army service unit.⁴⁶⁶ These were likely to be used in the Pacific

⁴⁶³ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 2 February 1945.

⁴⁶⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3. Vol. 12794, File 44/R SPKG/1. Reinforcements – French-speaking Infantry Units, 19 February 1945.

⁴⁶⁵ J. Mackay Hitsman, "Manpower Problems of the Canadian Army in the Second World War," AHQ Report No. 63, 17 August 1953, 268-269.

⁴⁶⁶ See LAC, RG24, War Diaries, Department of National Defence fonds.

campaign, which ended once the United States dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These three French-speaking units along with the depot battalions shows that senior officers were committed to French-Canadian representation until the very end of the war.

The year 1944 introduced new problems for the Canadian Army. March marked the beginning of a reinforcement crisis as senior officers realised there was going to be a shortage of trained replacements in the infantry. It is generally understood that conscripts were sent overseas because of this crisis, but it is less well known that senior officers proposed a range of solutions to fix the problem before resorting to conscription. The first three solutions proposed included sending English-speaking soldiers to the four overseas French-speaking battalions, transferring French-speaking soldiers from English-speaking units, and re-mustering troops. These solutions saw some success and surely helped prevent the crisis from worsening, but the army still needed men. The last two solutions were set against the option of reinforcing French-speaking units with English-speaking reinforcements. Perhaps that may have stemmed from the reinforcement shortages, but they would have been seen as a threat to the identity of French Canada in the wartime army. Eventually however, English-speaking reinforcements were sent to the French-speaking battalions as there was no other choice.

A summer recruitment campaign which relied on themes of patriotism, bravery, manhood, outdated connections to France, and convincing stubborn parents to let their sons enlist did little to help the crisis. Letting complete French-speaking units proceed overseas if enough volunteered for overseas service and giving conscripts the option to enlist in one of the overseas French-speaking depot battalions of their choice, helped to provide more reinforcements. But it was still not enough. Because French-speaking conscripts had little to no desire to serve overseas, these solutions ultimately failed. Canada no longer needed a home

defence army, and the majority of the French-speaking home defence units were disbanded, and their personnel assigned to reinforcement depots. This decision allowed three of the French-speaking infantry battalions overseas to reach their full strength in late January 1945 and ending the crisis by April. Senior officers, both English and French-speaking, did everything they could up until the last possible moment to prevent conscripts from being sent overseas while being mindful of French-Canadian representation in the army.

Chapter 5: French-Canadian Military Justice

This chapter will examine a sample of courts martial records to better understand the French-Canadian experience within the army's disciplinary process. It draws upon a comparative sample of English and French-speaking Canadians who faced courts martial between 1939 and 1947.⁴⁶⁷ The sample will address whether French-Canadians face harsher treatment in the army's court martial process than their English-Canadian counterparts? And if so, why?

Of all the charges tried before a court martial, the most common was Absence Without Leave (AWL). The term refers to a soldier who is away without permission but has the intention of returning. Desertion is a far more serious offence as it refers to a soldier who leaves the military without permission with no intention of returning.⁴⁶⁸

The Directorate of Special Services (DSS) was created in May 1942 in response to widespread morale problems in the Canadian Army. In January 1943, it received monthly morale reports from 168 units (20 French-speaking, 78 English-speaking, and 70 unidentified comprising 142,500 personnel). Out of the 168 units whose overall AWL average was 48.5 per thousand men, those in Military Districts No. 4 and 5 in Quebec had the highest rate of AWL incidents per thousand personnel. The 4th Military District in Montreal had an average of 84.4 per thousand personnel while the 5th Military District in Quebec City had an average of 67.3 per

⁴⁶⁷ These cases span 11 (15545 to 15556) microfilm reels that are reproduced on Canadiana Online (canadiana.ca). The sample sought to identify those with French or English surnames. These were recorded along with their unit, the crime(s) they committed, their reasons for committing their crime(s), whether they were found guilty, the harshness of their sentence(s), and all relevant dates. The majority of the sample consists of General Service soldiers in Canada training and/ or in the process of mobilising for overseas service. The sample totals 373 English-Canadians (342 in Canada and 31 overseas) and 451 French-Canadians (379 in Canada and 72 overseas) who were brought before a courts martial from 1939 to 1947. Out of the 342 English-Canadians in Canada, 39 were conscripts. For the 379 French-Canadians in Canada, 90 were conscripts.

⁴⁶⁸ Burrell Singer and R. Langford, *Handbook of Canadian Military Law* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Limited, 1941), 198-199.

thousand.⁴⁶⁹ Another morale report in November 1942 showed that the ten units with the most AWL incidents had 4.7 percent more French-Canadians compared to the ten units with the least amount of AWL incidents. William Pratt claims the high AWL rate was because the transition from civilian to military life for French-Canadians was much more difficult.⁴⁷⁰ In June 1942, a survey on morale also acknowledged the high AWL rate amongst Francophones, claiming difficulties adapting to army life, a lack of confidence in their officers, and being conscious of discrimination by the public as reasons for their departure.⁴⁷¹

Historian Robert Tooley noted that men of the Royal 22^e had higher crime rates in Italy in 1944. He observed that Quebec soldiers, who made up most of the unit, had lower PULHEMS scores in 1944. The army used these PULHEMS tests to grade a soldier's physical and mental fitness. Tooley speculated that these low scores may have been a reason for their higher crime rates as they implied that French-Canadians were less likely to obey commands. However, he also admitted that these scores may have belonged to men who did not fight with the unit as they had failed their training.⁴⁷² C. P. Stacey, using evidence from the Canadian press, claimed that the discipline of French-speaking units in the UK was less satisfactory compared to the entire Canadian Forces as problems erupted between them and the British public.⁴⁷³ Of course, it is

⁴⁶⁹ R. H. Roy, "Morale in the Canadian Army during the Second World War," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 16, (1986): 40; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13304. Directorate of Special Services, Lecture on Morale, 26-31 March 1943.

⁴⁷⁰ William John Pratt, "Medicine and Obedience: Canadian Army Morale, Discipline and Surveillance in the Second World War, 1939-1945," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2015), 46-47.

⁴⁷¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 62. Survey Report on Opinions, Beliefs, and Habits of Men in the Canadian Army with Special Reference to the Problem of Morale, June 1942, 18.

⁴⁷² The acronym "PULHEMS" refers to testing soldier's physique, upper limbs, lower limbs, hearing, eyesight, mental function, and stability (emotional). Robert Tooley, "Appearance or Reality? Variations in Infantry Courts Martial 1st Canadian Division: 1940-1945 Part 2," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (1992): 42.

⁴⁷³ C. P. Stacey, "Canadian Relations with the People of the UK and General Problems with Morale, 1939-1944," CMHQ Report No. 119, June 30th, 1944, 14-19.

unclear if these tests and observations simply affirmed certain physical and psychological biases about French-speaking soldiers.

A random sample of courts martials of both French and English-speaking soldiers offers some tentative observations. The sample suggests some remarkable similarities between the two language groups. The most common crimes they were tried and convicted of were AWL and desertion, though Francophones faced harsher punishments as they were charged and convicted slightly more often and spent more time incarcerated for these crimes. The numbers and court transcripts also reveal some significant differences in how they explained their offence. French-Canadians in the sample were twice as likely to defend their actions based on sickness, medical and family issues than were the sampled English-Canadians. The latter reason is consistent with an army morale survey in 1942. Reports of soldiers going home to help with the harvest, or with ailing family members were well known, and may have lessened sentences in some cases. Even as the army provided more access to French language officials and translation services, some French-Canadians on trial remained disadvantaged because of the army's dependence on English.

Canadian military law largely reflected that of the British during the Second World War. Before the National Defence Act in 1950, the Canadian Army would refer to the Army Act of the UK. Still, in the Second World War for the first time, Canada took complete control over the administration and supervision of its own army, air force, and naval law. Legal establishments were created for Canadian forces while Canadian legal officers handled matters relating to courts martial, revision of regulations and manuals, and atrocities committed against Canadians in war. As Canada's military expanded, so did its disciplinary structure. The military tried to adapt its peacetime disciplinary structure to the war, but as courts martial and other legal activities

increased in 1940, changes were needed. For example, assistant JAGs, who were usually older civilian lawyers, were appointed to some Military Districts to ensure that court martial tribunals followed legalities.⁴⁷⁴

Which crimes were English and French-Canadians charged with the most? The two most common crimes were AWL and desertion. The sample suggests that French-Canadians went AWL more often than they deserted while for English-Canadians the figures for the two crimes were identical.⁴⁷⁵

Table 1: Total charged with AWL and Desertion

French-Canadians	Charged	Guilty	Not Guilty	Guilty AWL	Unknown
AWL	190	187	1	0	2
Desertion	167	75	2	89	1

English-Canadians	Charged	Guilty	Not Guilty	Guilty AWL	Unknown
AWL	125	120	5	0	0
Desertion	125	60	2	63	0

⁴⁷⁴ Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law From Confederation to Somalia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 76-77; W. G. Lawson, "Canadian Military Law," *The Canadian Bar Review* 29, no. 8 (1951): 247.

⁴⁷⁵ Some were charged and convicted of AWL or desertion more than once. They were counted as one case. 12 French-Canadians in the sample were charged more than once with desertion and were convicted at least once or more of both desertion and AWL, or only AWL. 17 others were charged with both AWL and desertion. Eight out of the 17 were convicted of both charges. Eight out of the 17 were convicted only of AWL. One out of the 17 was guilty of desertion on one charge and not guilty of AWL on the other. These 29 cases were excluded from the table to simplify the data. 12 English-Canadians in the sample were charged more than once with desertion and were convicted at least once or more of both desertion and AWL, or only AWL. One was found not guilty of one of their desertion charges. 34 were charged with both AWL and desertion. 15 out of the 34 were convicted of both charges at least once or more. 18 of the 34 were found guilty only of AWL. One out of the 34 were found not guilty of AWL, only desertion. These 47 cases were excluded from the table to simplify the data.

This sample data suggests that French-Canadians were more likely to leave their duties and be found guilty compared to Anglophones, suggesting that French-Canadians faced greater discipline.

Aside from AWL and desertion, English and French-Canadians both had conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline as the third most frequently charged crime. This crime and other variations such as an act, disorder, or neglect to the prejudice were used to punish soldiers for a wide variety of crimes that do not fall under the more substantive crimes of the Army Act.⁴⁷⁶ Stealing was the fourth most common charge for French-Canadians while disobeying orders was the fourth most common for English-Canadians. Stealing, however, was the fifth for English-Canadians while for French-Canadians it was disobeying orders.⁴⁷⁷ The sixth most common crime charged to French-Canadians was drunkenness, followed by fraudulent enlistment. For English-Canadians, however, the sixth most common was striking a soldier, followed by neglect to the prejudice and escaping.⁴⁷⁸ The table below suggests that English-Canadians in the sample were charged with slightly more crimes outside of AWL and desertion. These results suggest that Francophones faced less discipline when it came to crimes other than AWL and desertion.⁴⁷⁹

Table 2: Other Frequently Committed Crimes

French-Canadians	Charged	Guilty	Not Guilty	Unknown
Conduct to the Prejudice	29	19	9	1

⁴⁷⁶ Burrell Singer and R. Langford, *Handbook of Canadian Military Law* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Limited, 1941), 207-209.

⁴⁷⁷ I used the term “disobeying orders” as a catch all for crimes such as “disobeying command,” “neglecting orders,” and “leaving post without orders.”

⁴⁷⁸ Many of the crimes in the table were sometimes committed by the same soldier.

⁴⁷⁹ There was one French-Canadian and one English-Canadian with more than one charge of conduct to the prejudice where one was found not guilty. Two English-Canadians had more than one charge of disobeying orders where one was found not guilty. These four cases were excluded from the table to simplify the data.

French-Canadians	Charged	Guilty	Not Guilty	Unknown
Stealing	17	12	5	0
Disobeying Orders	14	12	2	0
Drunkenness	10	9	1	0
Striking a Soldier	5	4	1	0
Neglect to the Prejudice	5	1	3	1
Act to the Prejudice	5	3	2	0
Willful Injury	2	1	1	0
Fraudulent Enlistment	8	7	0	1
Escaping Custody	6	6	0	0

English-Canadians	Charged	Guilty	Not Guilty	Unknown
Conduct to the Prejudice	43	34	9	0
Stealing	17	15	2	0
Disobeying Orders	19	17	2	0
Drunkenness	5	4	1	0
Striking a Soldier	14	10	4	0
Neglect to the Prejudice	9	5	4	0
Act to the Prejudice	6	4	2	0
Willful Injury	7	3	4	0
Fraudulent Enlistment	3	3	0	0
Escaping Custody	9	9	0	0

Why did English and French-Canadian soldiers go AWL or desert? Both groups had sickness/ medical issues as their most common reason, but sampled French-Canadians were twice as likely to defend their decision to go AWL or desert due to medical reasons. Others left the army because their family members were sick as well. For example, Francophone Private Joseph Alarie of the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC), was charged with desertion and losing by neglect. He left the army on 9 February 1944 because he claimed his wife was having a baby and that his mother was sick. He claimed that no one was there to take care of them and the house as his father was overseas. Alarie stayed beyond his 48-hour pass as a result. He was arrested on 16 March 1944, and his trial took place in Ottawa where he pleaded not guilty to both charges. He was found guilty of AWL and given a 30-day sentence and pay stoppages of \$14.59.⁴⁸⁰

Table 3: Total of AWLs and Desertions for Sickness/ Medical Issues

French-Canadians	English-Canadians
122	60

The second most common reason why English and French-Canadians went AWL or deserted was to support their families. As with sickness/ medical issues, French-Canadians in the sample were twice as likely to defend their decision to go AWL or desert because their families needed their support. This was the case for Private Jean Jacques Aubuchon of the RCASC. He went AWL on 8 June 1942 because he claimed his father was sick and because his family needed help finding a place to stay. He was arrested on 8 February 1943 and pleaded guilty during his

⁴⁸⁰ Losing by neglect refers to lost or intentionally ditched uniforms and/ or equipment; “Joseph Alarie, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15547,” *Canadiana Héritage*, images 1598, 1602, and 1609. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15547/1598.

trial at Camp Borden. Aubuchon said once he found a home for his family, he placed his father in a hospital and worked to support his family until he was arrested. He also had three brothers, but Aubuchon said one was in the hospital and the others were too young to help. He had evidence to support these claims, but was given a 150-day detention sentence and pay stoppages of \$28.22.⁴⁸¹

Soldiers going AWL or deserting to help their families is unsurprising. The June 1942 morale survey shows that out of 5,914 men, 78.2 percent of French-Canadian reserve recruits surveyed worried “very frequently” about their families compared to 40.4 percent amongst English-Canadian reserves. Amongst active French-Canadian recruits, nearly half (47.5 percent) were “very frequently” worried about their families compared to 20.9 of active English-Canadians.⁴⁸² It is remarkable that the sample data reflects this trend as twice as many more Francophones than Anglophones justified their actions to deal with family.

Table 4: Total of AWLs and Desertions for Family Support

French-Canadians	English-Canadians
59	30

Interviews conducted by the DSS in Military Districts No. 4 and 5 in January 1943 also reveal that going AWL or deserting to support their families was a major issue.⁴⁸³ These interviews were supervised by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Samuel Bois, a psychologist who

⁴⁸¹ “Jean Jacques Aubuchon, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15546,” *Canadiana Héritage*, images 1220, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1258, and 1266. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15546/1220.

⁴⁸² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 62. Survey Report on Opinions, Beliefs, and Habits of Men in the Canadian Army with Special Reference to the Problem of Morale, June 1942, 87.

⁴⁸³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13304. “Memorandum: Investigation of Personal Problems,” 23 January 1943.

eventually headed the army's Directorate of Research and Information.⁴⁸⁴ The interviews reveal that when men left for the service, the wife would sometimes be unable to manage alone, especially if a child was involved or if the family experienced financial issues. Other factors included old, sick parents.⁴⁸⁵ Their families were clearly a cause for concern and stress amongst the men. These interviews help to explain why so many went AWL or deserted because their family needed their support. It was a common issue in Military Districts No. 4 and 5, where a majority of French-Canadians lived. However, as shown in the table above, English-Canadians in the sample also had the same issue, but not nearly in the same proportion.

The third most common reason English and French-Canadians went AWL or deserted was to do farm work. French-Canadians were almost twice as likely to leave their duties for this reason. Soldiers before a court martial often complained that they overstayed their allotted time because they could not get farm leave. Fusilier Charles Auguste Arcand of Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent was charged with desertion and losing by neglect because he left the army to work on his father's farm on 24 March 1942. He was arrested over a year later, on 10 April 1943, and his trial took place in Mulgrave, New Brunswick where he pleaded not guilty of desertion but guilty of losing by neglect. Arcand said he had a four-day pass, but had applied for six month's farm leave which would have begun on the day he left. Arcand overstayed his four-day pass because he was the family's only support and his father was sick. Arcand claimed he was approved for farm leave, but did not know when it began. He was found guilty of AWL and given a 156-day

⁴⁸⁴ Robert Wanderer, "J. Samuel Bois--an Appreciation," *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 26, no. 4 (1969): 392.

⁴⁸⁵ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13304. "Memorandum: Investigation of Personal Problems," 23 January 1943.

detention sentence and pay stoppages of \$91.50.⁴⁸⁶ In the circumstances, the tribunal seemed remarkably charitable to a soldier who had left the army for over a year.

Table 5: Total of AWLs and Desertions for Farm Work

French-Canadians	English-Canadians
32	17

It may be that the tribunals understood that obtaining farm leave was a highly politicised issue. Members of Parliament took notice. Minister of Agriculture James Gardiner defended the exemption process in March 1941, but opposition members attacked it as unfair and too slow. Conservative MP Mark Senn sympathised with farmers who struggled to find labour. Senn said there were long wait times at the Toronto board to hear cases, resulting in lost time on the farm. He wanted all men from farming backgrounds to be exempt for farm labour.⁴⁸⁷ The government extended the exemption period before the harvest of 1941, favouring those on active service.⁴⁸⁸

But criticisms only increased as the growing needs of the army and the farm collided. When Laval-Two Mountains Liberal MP Liguori Lacombe argued against conscription on 19 February 1942, he claimed that fathers and sons had abandoned or sold their farms because they had to go to training. Lacombe argued that agriculture was Canada's first line of defence since it helped feed the country and military. He also argued that conscripting young men would further

⁴⁸⁶ "Charles August Arcand, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15546," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 1967, 1971, 1977, 1978, and 1976. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15546/1967.

⁴⁸⁷ James Gardiner and Mark Senn, 14 March 1941, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Second Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 1549-1550.

⁴⁸⁸ "Harvest Leave for Soldiers," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), 16 July 1941.

weaken the industry.⁴⁸⁹ The MP was right as on 25 August 1942, *The Hamilton Spectator* published figures from the Federal Government showing that male farm aid from 1 January 1940 to 15 March 1942, had declined by 13.2 percent. Males hired had also declined from 247,800 on 15 January 1940, to 148,900 on 15 January 1942. The newspaper also said that men were still leaving to join the army despite measures to keep them on the farm.⁴⁹⁰

The soldiers themselves had a chance to give their views in the June 1942 survey on morale. It asked what could be done to reduce soldiers' anxiety about their families, thus reducing the number of desertion and AWL cases. The responses were predictable. Men should have more and longer leaves and be given them when promised. Leave dates should also be given further in advance so that men could inform their families, and NCOs should not be allowed to cancel leaves. Other suggestions were to increase family allowance payments, and to station men closer to their homes.⁴⁹¹ Interviews conducted by DSS in Military Districts No. 4 and 5 in January 1943 confirmed that many men went AWL or deserted because of farm work and the difficulties applying for farm leave.⁴⁹² These studies help to explain why so many went AWL or deserted for farm work in Military Districts No. 4 and 5. However, as shown in the table above, English-Canadians in the sample also faced the same issue but to a lesser degree.

Difficulties with English marked the fourth most common reason for AWL and desertion among French-Canadians. In 1941, Liberal MPs Pouliot and Hervé-Edgar Brunelle complained

⁴⁸⁹ Liguori Lacombe, 19 February 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 721.

⁴⁹⁰ "Farm Labour Drops Steadily, Further Depletion Expected," *The Hamilton Spectator* (Hamilton, Ontario), 25 August 1942.

⁴⁹¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 62. Survey Report on Opinions, Beliefs, and Habits of Men in the Canadian Army with Special Reference to the Problem of Morale, June 1942, 90-91.

⁴⁹² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13304. Investigation on Personal Problems, 23 January 1943.

about French-Canadians feeling lonely surrounded by English-Canadians.⁴⁹³ The courts martial records support these observations. Private Patrick Arseneault of the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps went AWL on 12 October 1941 and was arrested on 9 September 1942. He pleaded guilty to going AWL and for losing by neglect during his trial in Barriefield, Ontario. He explained that when he arrived in Barriefield to take a mechanics course, there were no French-Canadian instructors. Because he did not speak English, Arseneault was put on kitchen and then bathroom duty. He wanted to transfer to a French-speaking unit but could not explain his case. When he obtained a pass, he decided to stay home. He was given a 120-day prison sentence and pay stoppages of \$4.60.⁴⁹⁴ It is unclear from the sample whether the army's attempts to improve access to French language manuals, training and officers helped lessen the numbers of those who felt isolated.

Table 6: Total of AWLs and Desertions for Difficulties with English

French-Canadians	English-Canadians
19	0

Certainly Francophones claimed that they faced discrimination for not speaking English. MP J. F. Pouliot highlighted an incident where a French-Canadian approached an army train in Quebec City and asked a question in French. The English-speaking officer said “Well, I speak no

⁴⁹³ Jean-François Pouliot, 12 November 1941, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Second Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 4344; Hervé-Edgar Brunelle, 27 January 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 95.

⁴⁹⁴ “Patrick Arseneault, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15545,” *Canadiana Héritage*, images 4003, 4026, and 4031. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15545/4003.

foreign language. Speak English, or otherwise you are not entitled to an answer.”⁴⁹⁵ Liberal MP Joseph Miville Dechêne for Athabasca, Ontario claimed that a French-Canadian was mocked by men in his battalion because he could not understand the orders.⁴⁹⁶ In New Brunswick, soldier Joseph Bouthillier, who was in a veteran’s hospital in Lancaster, had a nurse tell him and other veterans that “We don’t want to hear any French here. You have to speak English.”⁴⁹⁷

There were plenty of anecdotes about bigoted Anglophones who did not like or trust French-Canadians. When Le Régiment de Hull was stationed on the Aleutian Islands, English-speaking officer Captain Edgar of the 24th Field Regiment allegedly ordered his men not to take orders from French-speaking officers unless he was present. The officer writing Le Régiment de Hull’s war diary claimed that men from the field regiment would have been killed by the Japanese if they refused to take orders from anyone except their own unit.⁴⁹⁸ In Italy, Maurice Juteau of the Royal 22^e, claimed that he was initially ignored when trying to tell a captain of an English-speaking company that he should not advance. The captain allegedly replied, “You French-Canadian Bastards, if you cannot do your job, we’ll do it.”⁴⁹⁹ These examples reflect some of the prejudicial issues towards French speakers in the army that surely would have caused some to leave their duties.

Courts martials were held in French as early as 1940, but most French-Canadians in the sample faced trials in English. This was the case for 251 trials of Francophone soldiers, while

⁴⁹⁵ Jean-François Pouliot, 5 May 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol II*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 2160.

⁴⁹⁶ Joseph Dechêne, 15 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3338-3339.

⁴⁹⁷ Ronald Cormier, *Les Acadiens et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (Moncton : Les Éditions d’Acadie, 1996), 77.

⁴⁹⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15183, File 1036. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Hull, 4-5 September 1943.

⁴⁹⁹ Maurice Juteau, *Ma drôle de guerre* (Farnham: Formulaires Ducharme Inc., 1980), 26-27.

only 130 were in French. Sixty-seven trials in the sample were bilingual as some witnesses were questioned in English while others in French. After a French-Canadian was tried in English in 1941, the defending officer complained that the defendant could not understand the witness interviews. Legal staff then began in August 1941 to translate the Army Act and the caution used before interviews.⁵⁰⁰ Those in a French-speaking unit would most likely be tried in French, as could those French speakers in an English-speaking unit. But finding French speakers could still be a problem in English-speaking Canada. Gaston Allaire was charged and convicted in August 1943 in Kingston of AWL. His defending officer explained to the court how not knowing English made it difficult for him to explain his case.⁵⁰¹ The army sought to make courts martials available in French, but soldiers clearly struggled in a dominantly Anglophone institution.

The fifth and final most common reason sampled for why English and French-Canadians went AWL or deserted was because of family influence. A memorandum from 5 January 1943 noted that French-Canadian women had a lot of influence over men when deciding whether to serve.⁵⁰² Yves Tremblay mentioned how 13 French-Canadians he interviewed faced opposition from their families before enlisting.⁵⁰³ The army's leadership was also aware of Francophone family influence as part of the 1944 recruitment campaign (see chapter four) aimed at convincing the parents to let their sons enlist.

One of the striking cases in the courts martial records sampled was that of Sapper Gabriel Arcand of the 27th Field Company who deserted on 29 November 1942 and was arrested on 11 January 1943. His trial took place at Camp Debert in Nova Scotia. Arcand had a letter written by

⁵⁰⁰ Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law From Confederation to Somalia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 82.

⁵⁰¹ "Gaston Allaire, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15546," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 3466 and 3475. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15546/3466.

⁵⁰² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 65, File 650-99-28. Memorandum: Canadian Women and Morale, 5 January 1943.

⁵⁰³ Yves Tremblay, *Volontaires : Des Québécois en guerre, 1939-1945* (Montréal : Athéna, 2006), 27.

his father stating that he and his mother both did not want him to serve overseas as he had mutilated fingers and depression from a dynamite explosion. They listed other health problems such as liver trouble, pleurisy, and lung inflammation. The letter concluded by arguing that sending Arcand overseas would kill his mother who had heart disease. Arcand was found guilty of desertion and losing by neglect and given nine-month's detention and pay stoppages of \$71.38.⁵⁰⁴ A total of 18 French-Canadians in the sample mention family influences in their decision to go AWL or desert. Seven of the 18 claimed they went AWL or deserted because of their mother's influence, three were influenced by their wives, and four by their fathers. Three of the 18 left the army because of both their parents and only one deserted because he was convinced by his brother.⁵⁰⁵

By contrast, there was only one English-Canadian in the sample who was convinced to stay home by his wife. Fusilier Chesley Barrett of the Saint John Fusiliers was charged with desertion and losing by neglect on 28 December 1941. He was arrested on 10 February 1942 and his trial was in Saint John, New Brunswick where he pleaded not guilty. Barrett said his wife threatened to leave him if he went into the service. Given that she was also suffering from a nervous condition, he decided to stay. However, Barrett eventually did return to the army without his wife's knowledge. He was found guilty of AWL and given 60 days detention and pay stoppages of \$39.72.⁵⁰⁶ But Barrett was an exception. On the basis of the sample, French-Canadian women and family members were cited far more often as an influence over their sons, husbands, and siblings to leave the army.

⁵⁰⁴ "Gabriel Arcand, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15546," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 261 and 264. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15546/261.

⁵⁰⁵ "Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15545 to 15556," *Canadiana Héritage*, https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_140678.

⁵⁰⁶ "Chesley Barrett, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15554," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 3765, 3772, 3773, and 3801. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15554/3765.

Table 7: Total of AWLs and Desertions for Family Influence

French-Canadians	English-Canadians
18	1

Who among the two language groups spent more time incarcerated for AWL and desertion? The sample suggests that French-Canadians spent more time in detention (temporary holding) when charged and convicted of AWL. However, English-Canadians faced tougher sentences of forfeit of pay (FOP) and spent the same amount of time in prison (long term incarceration) as French-Canadians. English and French-Canadians also received pay stoppages with their sentences, but these averages are not possible to calculate because some amounts do not appear in the documents.⁵⁰⁷

Table 8: Average Sentence Lengths for AWL and AWL with Forfeiture of Pay (FOP)

Average Detention Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
AWL	163 Days	126 Days

Average Prison Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
AWL	404 Days	404 Days

⁵⁰⁷ These results were obtained by calculating the average of total time spent in detention, prison, and penal detention for both French-Canadians and English-Canadians. If a soldier was charged with another crime, he was still included in the tables. Sentences have been rounded off to the nearest day. Those given one sentence for desertion and AWL (seven French-Canadians and 12 English-Canadians) were excluded to simplify the data. One English-Canadian and two French-Canadians were reduced to the ranks in addition to their detention sentences. Five English-Canadians and four French-Canadians were discharged in addition to their prison sentences. One French-Canadian was also dismissed from the military, one was reprimanded, and another was reduced to the ranks and reprimanded.

Average FOP	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
AWL	40 Days	75 Days

The average sentence lengths in the sample for those charged and convicted of desertion as well as for those charged with desertion but convicted of AWL, show that French-Canadians spent more time in detention and prison. English-Canadians spent more time in penal detention when convicted of desertion, but none (English-Canadians) were given a sentence with FOP. French-Canadians on average were also given bigger pay stoppages than English-Canadians when convicted of desertion.⁵⁰⁸ Overall, French-Canadians on average spent more time incarcerated than English-Canadians when charged with desertion.⁵⁰⁹

Table 9: Average Sentence Lengths for Desertion and Amounts for Pay Stoppages

Average Detention Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Desertion	281 Days	253 Days
Guilty of AWL	161 Days	146 Days

Average Prison Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Desertion	537 Days	369 Days

⁵⁰⁸ These results were obtained by calculating the average of total time spent in detention, prison, and penal detention for both English and French-Canadians. The same method was used for those who received pay stoppages.

⁵⁰⁹ If a soldier was charged with another crime, he was still included in the four tables. Sentences have been rounded off to the nearest day. Two English-Canadians and two French-Canadians were reduced to the ranks in addition to their detention sentences. There was only one French-Canadian who was found guilty of AWL and sent to prison for 365 days. Four English-Canadians and one French-Canadian were discharged in addition to their prison sentences. There was only one French-Canadian who was found guilty of AWL and sent to penal detention for 1095 days. One English-Canadian and one French-Canadian were discharged in addition to their penal detention sentences. Pay stoppages have been rounded off to the nearest dollar. Those given one sentencing for deserting and going AWL (seven French-Canadians and 12 English-Canadians) were excluded to simplify the data.

Average Prison Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Guilty of AWL	365 Days	298 Days

Average Penal Detention Sentence	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Desertion	1095 Days	1356 Days
Guilty of AWL	1095 Days	0 Days

Average Pay Stoppages	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Desertion	\$37.00	\$28.00
Guilty of AWL	\$31.00	\$32.00

French-Canadians overall spent more time incarcerated than English-Canadians for both AWL and desertion. Why this was the case is difficult to assess because punishments were very inconsistent as they depended on the attitudes of the commanding officers (see appendix C).⁵¹⁰ There could have been factors such as prejudice or a need for greater discipline amongst men in certain units such as the Royal 22^e, who had high crime rates in 1944.⁵¹¹ Such was the case during the First World War. The respected Commanding Officer of the Royal 22^e, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas-Louis Tremblay, demanded an increase of executions of deserters in his unit upon his return from medical treatment in England after his temporary replacement, Major

⁵¹⁰ Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law From Confederation to Somalia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 84.

⁵¹¹ Robert Tooley, "Appearance or Reality? Variations in Infantry Courts Martial 1st Canadian Division: 1940-1945 Part 2," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (1992): 42.

Arthur-Édouard Dubuc, failed to give proper discipline.⁵¹² Without a proper understanding of the rationale behind these sentences, it is difficult to provide a definitive reason for why Francophones received harsher punishments.

Were French-Canadian trials fair? The courts martial followed a very carefully prepared script. The defendant was questioned by both the prosecuting and defending officers and given the opportunity to speak and call witnesses. Private Fernand Aubin of the Chaudières was charged and convicted in July 1944 in Quebec of using threatening language towards a superior officer, disobeying orders, and desertion. He was questioned in French by the defending officer and was asked if he wanted to call a witness or give any evidence but refused.⁵¹³ Conscript Private Gilbert Arseneau who was charged with AWL was given the opportunity to give a statement to mitigate punishment, to give evidence, or to call a witness despite pleading guilty. He refused, but the defending officer spoke for him to explain that he went AWL because he overstayed his farm leave.⁵¹⁴ Conscript Fusilier Bernard Aubry of Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke who went AWL also refused to give evidence, or call a witness. He did, however, want to make a statement to mitigate his punishment. Aubry said that because his father was expected to die, he felt the need to support his mother, father, and wife by working since the army did not pay him enough. His plea may have been effective as he received 90-days' detention, a moderate sentence for his absence of approximately eight months.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹² Teresa Iacobelli, *Death or Deliverance: Canadian Courts Martial in the Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 54-55.

⁵¹³ "Fernand Aubin, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15545," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 257, 279, 282, 296, and 301. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15545/257.

⁵¹⁴ "Gilbert Arseneau, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15549," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 1564, 1565, and 1576. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15549/1564.

⁵¹⁵ "Bernard Aubry, Canadian Army Court Martial Documents: T – 15549," *Canadiana Héritage*, images 2552, 2553, and 2565. https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t15549/2552.

The courts were firm as most soldiers in the sample were punished. Madsen explains how during military operations, maintaining discipline meant giving harsh sentences. While the military had a better understanding of battle exhaustion compared to the First World War, the courts still gave harsh sentences, especially to those who deserted or were accused of cowardice.⁵¹⁶ Out of the sample, only a minority of English and French-Canadians were found not guilty of all their charges, most of whom were English-Canadians (shown below). These numbers suggest that soldiers, regardless of their backgrounds and reasons for committing their crimes, were more likely to be found guilty of their crimes than not. There was some leniency towards soldiers who were charged with desertion as over half were instead convicted of the less serious crime of AWL. This leniency was shown if a soldier could demonstrate that he had a legitimate reason for leaving his duties such as helping his family on the farm. The soldier would still be punished, but considerably less so if he was convicted of AWL.

Soldiers could have their sentences “revoked” or cancelled, or quashed. The revocation of a sentence could sometimes be due to faulty evidence. The accused’s good behaviour could also be a reason for cancelling a sentence which is referred to as “remitted.” Sentences could also be “commuted” or reduced. When it came to soldiers having a change in their sentence(s), these numbers suggests that they stood a higher chance of having their sentence(s) remitted if found guilty.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁶ Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law From Confederation to Somalia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 84.

⁵¹⁷ Some had more than one of their sentences quashed, commuted, etc. All of which were recorded in the table. One French-Canadian had his sentence quashed and remitted on two separate charges. One French-Canadian had his sentence commuted and remitted. Four English-Canadians had their sentences quashed and remitted. One English-Canadian had his remitted and varied. These seven cases were excluded from the table to simplify the data.

Table 10: Total of Changed Sentences

	French-Canadians	English-Canadians
Not Guilty	13	16
Remitted	128	116
Quashed	5	12
Commuted	0	2

This random sample of courts martials of both French and English-speaking soldiers shows that the most common crimes they were tried and convicted of were AWL and desertion. Francophones faced heavier discipline in the sample as they were charged and convicted slightly more often of AWL and desertion and spent more time incarcerated. There is too much inconsistency in the sentences to assess fully why soldiers received the sentences they did, but prejudice or a need for greater discipline amongst certain units as seen in the Royal 22^e during the First World War could have been factors. In short, a definitive answer is difficult to provide.

When it came to the reasons why English and French-Canadians in the sample went AWL or deserted, French-Canadians were twice as likely to defend their actions based on sickness, medical and family issues. The last reason reflects the 1942 army morale survey which suggest that needing to support their families was a common defence used by Francophones. Other reasons such as soldiers going home to do farm work or because of ailing family members may have lessened sentences in some cases due to farm labour shortages and/ or a sympathetic tribunal. While French-Canadians did have access to French language officials and translation services, some on trial remained disadvantaged because of the army's dependence on English.

Chapter 6: The Role of Religion

This chapter seeks to address the role that Catholicism played in the lives of French-speaking soldiers during the Second World War. It also seeks to determine how French-Canadians received proper religious representation. It argues that the Catholic faith both sustained and undermined French Canada's relationship with the army. A separate Catholic chaplaincy along with bilingual masses allowed French-Canadians to practice their religion. For some soldiers and units, Catholicism bridged their religious exceptionalism within the wider cause of the war. It helped boost morale through religious holidays, and the personality of their chaplains. For others, Catholicism stood as a bulwark against enlistment as some clergy and the French language press used it to discourage French-Canadians from enlisting.

During the First World War, the chaplaincy united all religious denominations under the same corps, causing divisions between Catholics and Protestants. To avoid these conflicts during the Second World War, two separate chaplaincy services were created, Protestant and Catholic, the latter for both Roman and Orthodox Catholics. This denominational organisation was unique to Allied forces. Their responsibilities were extensive. They tended the wounded, offered religious instruction, maintained morale, censored letters, and participated in mess duties.⁵¹⁸

The wartime army faced a chronic lack of chaplains. The Department of National Defence anticipated one chaplain for every 500 soldiers. They were to be less than 50 years old and preferably under 40. Many would also not be able to march into battle and had to grant general absolution because there was not enough time to hear individual confessions.⁵¹⁹ Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan, who became Principal Chaplain (Roman Catholic) of the army in 1939,

⁵¹⁸ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, "Faith on the Battlefield: Canada's Catholic Chaplaincy Service During the Second World War," *Historical Studies* 69, (2003).

⁵¹⁹ Pelletier, "Faith on the Battlefield."

originally accepted First World War veterans under the age of 65, but after his visit overseas in 1941, he returned chaplains older than 60 to Canada because of the physically demanding work. The adjutant-general later forced into retirement all officers over 60, including chaplains. The army's expansion made it harder for the Catholic chaplaincy to have one chaplain per 500 soldiers. The navy and air force were also having their religious needs met before the army.⁵²⁰ All these issues exacerbated challenges for the army's chaplaincy.

Some of the French-speaking units acutely felt the shortage of chaplains. On 19 August 1942, the overseas 4th Canadian Medium Regiment did not have a chaplain despite being entirely Catholic.⁵²¹ In March 1943 news of the lack of chaplains for both Catholics and Protestants reached the press, with claims that each Catholic chaplain was responsible for 1,000 men, twice the number originally sought. Bishop Nelligan gave up a priest from his own diocese in Pembroke, Ontario to help ease shortages.⁵²²

Bilingual masses and speeches conducted by the chaplaincy also demonstrated how chaplains were mindful of representation. On Christmas Eve 1941, greetings in English and French were given by Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton Gault during a midnight mass. On 7 January 1942, English and French masses were held in Farnborough and Crookham, England.⁵²³ On 1 May 1944, masses held at the churches in Hythe and Folkestone, England were preached in English and French. A bilingual mass attended by 2,500 men marked a thanksgiving service on

⁵²⁰ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, "Fighting for the Chaplains: Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan and the Creation of the Canadian Chaplain Service (Roman Catholic), 1939-1945," *Historical Studies* 72, (2006).

⁵²¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, File CMHQ. War Diary Summary of Events, Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 19 August 1942.

⁵²² Yves Yvon J. Pelletier "Fighting for the Chaplains: Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan and the Creation of the Canadian Chaplain Service (Roman Catholic), 1939-1945," *Historical Studies* 72, (2006).

⁵²³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15629, File CMHQ. War Diary Summary of Events, Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 24 December 1941 and 7 January 1942.

13 May 1945 at the St. Peters church in Ghent, Belgium.⁵²⁴ These bilingual masses would have helped to mitigate the shortage of chaplains. In formations such as the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade which contained the Royal 22^e and the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade, where the Chaudières were present, both Catholic and Protestant church parades were common.⁵²⁵

Despite the mindfulness of the Roman Catholic chaplaincy, some aspects of representation were overlooked. On 2 March 1943, once the French-speaking No. 6 Canadian Reinforcement Unit was formed, No. 1, 2, 3, and 4 units became entirely English-speaking and the No. 5 and 7 mostly English-speaking. The chaplains of these English-speaking units were French-speaking making it impossible for them to give religious instruction.⁵²⁶ However, these issues appeared to be few and far between.

Overall, 293 Catholic chaplains served during the Second World War, 166 of whom served overseas. Quebec supplied a total of 68 Catholic chaplains for the war effort, representing 31.1 percent of all diocesan based military chaplains. Those 68 roughly matched the French-speaking population of the province. The Archdiocese of Montreal had the highest number (17) of Catholic chaplains serving. The Archdiocese of Quebec City had the second largest number (14). These numbers are not surprising as Quebec City's Archbishop, Cardinal Villeneuve, was a strong supporter of the war effort. He even travelled to Europe to show his personal support. The Archbishop of Montreal, Joseph Charbonneau also supported the war effort but was much more

⁵²⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15630, File CMHQ. War Diary Summary of Events, Principal Chaplain Overseas (RC), 1 May 1944; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15631, File CMHQ. War Diary Summary of Events, Deputy Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), 13 May 1945.

⁵²⁵ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14083, File 40. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade, 21 December 1941; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14135, File 4017. War Diary Summary of Events, 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 25 October 1942.

⁵²⁶ Assistant Principal Chaplain (RC), March 2nd, 1943.

moderate in his actions compared to Villeneuve.⁵²⁷ It is unclear if Bishop Nelligan's efforts to increase the number of Catholic chaplains in the army succeeded, but he made considerable efforts to do so.

The Bishop's efforts to build more army chapels met with some success. He tackled this issue by asking the adjutant-general to include chapels on bases in Canada and overseas. Bishop George Wells, the principal Protestant chaplain with an honorary rank of lieutenant-colonel, did not share Nelligan's concern as he believed chaplains should adapt by carrying their duties under war-like conditions. In a memorandum signed by all high-ranking members of the Canadian clergy, Nelligan argued that chaplains would be disheartened if more chapels were not built and that in the absence of chapels, chaplains were only 50 percent effective. After submitting the memorandum to Defence Minister J. L. Ralston in 1942, the War Committee of Cabinet gave \$10,000 per chapel for both Catholics and non-Catholics. By February 1943, many army chapels were under construction.⁵²⁸

It is possible that French-Canadian soldiers were more religious because of the Roman Catholic chaplaincy.⁵²⁹ John Maker makes this claim but does not go into detail; however, the personnel files do support his assertion. French-Canadians were often found carrying with them a Bible, or other religious tokens such as crucifixes, rosaries, prayer books, religious cards, and in one case, a Baptismal certificate. When a civilian asked Stevens LeBlanc, who fought with the Royal 22^e in Italy, why he wore a uniform, he said he was fighting for his religion. LeBlanc also wore a medal of the Virgin Mary when in battle.⁵³⁰ However, soldiers such as LeBlanc were a

⁵²⁷ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier "Fighting for the Chaplains: Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan and the Creation of the Canadian Chaplain Service (Roman Catholic), 1939-1945," *Historical Studies* 72, (2006).

⁵²⁸ Pelletier "Fighting for the Chaplains."

⁵²⁹ John Maker, "Home Away from Home: Citizenship and National Identity in the Canadian Army Overseas, 1939-1943," (PhD diss., University of New Brunswick, 2018), 300.

⁵³⁰ Stevens LeBlanc, *Mon plus beau souhait: Revenir sur les îles de mon enfance* (Québec: 2003), 163-164.

minority. As shown in chapter two, French-Canadians often enlisted for reasons besides religion. The army's benefits, trades, and seeking adventure were more compelling than religion. But religion remained an important part of army life for many.

While few French-Canadians likely joined the army to protect their religion, the government tried to bolster their support by reporting the purge of Catholicism in Europe. French-Canadians were aware of the Nazi's religious purge thanks to the French language press (see chapter one), but in 1942, a Bureau of Public Information pamphlet described the anti-Christian indoctrination of German youth and labelled Hitler as the anti-Christ. Government propaganda in mid September 1942 explained how Germany's new Bible taught its citizens to hate Christianity. Prior to his death, Justice Minister Lapointe explained that the Germans would not respect their religious rights if Canada were to be invaded.⁵³¹ What kind of impact this propaganda had is unclear, but it signifies the government's awareness of the importance of religion to French-Canadians.

French-Canadians also recognised religion as an important aspect of army life. In the 15th Canadian Infantry Brigade that included Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, Le Régiment de Montmagny, and Le Régiment de Québec, religion was a key factor in boosting morale. Officers were instructed to tell their soldiers that the army and the nation valued religion, that religious instruction should be a part of a soldier's training, and linked to the army's daily tasks.⁵³² At a church parade in Chilliwack, BC on 19 December 1943, Father Hanley started his sermon by

⁵³¹ William Young, "Making the Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government's Home Front Information Structure and Programmes during World War II," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1978), 130.

⁵³² LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14170, File 1039. War Diary Summary of Events, 15th Canadian Infantry Brigade, appendix D.

commending a French-speaking unit (15th Field Company) for reminding Catholics of their duty to attend church on Sundays.⁵³³

French-Canadians also demonstrated their faith by celebrating religious holidays. Saint

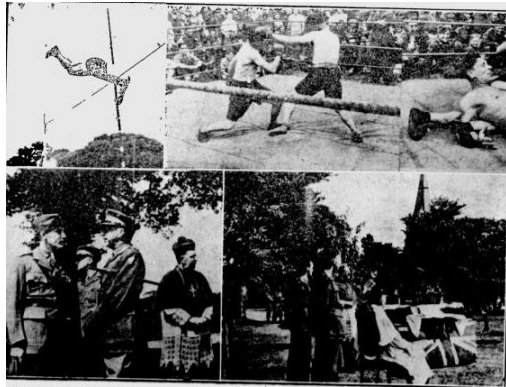


Figure 6: Soldiers celebrating Saint Jean Baptiste Day

Jean Baptiste Day celebrated on 24 June, was originally a celebration for the birth of John the Baptist. The holiday began in France and carried to New France during the colonial period before becoming a public holiday in Quebec in 1925. The Royal 22^e sent out invitations to soldiers and civilians while stationed in Angmering, England in June 1942. One officer, Major

P. M. Millette, secured food, drinks, and other supplies for the celebration. The war diary stated that “it is going to be the biggest affair yet staged in this area.”⁵³⁴ The French language newspaper, *Le Bien Public* (figure 6), published photos of the Royal 22^e celebrating the holiday through sports, military demonstrations, and religious ceremonies.⁵³⁵ In Canada, the Gaspé Defences celebrated the holiday a month before on 24 May 1943 with free beer, a smoker in the gunner’s canteen, and prizes to lucky winners.⁵³⁶ The 3rd Engineer Battalion went as far as to cancel their training that day to celebrate the holiday and played softball.⁵³⁷

Another religious holiday celebrated by French-speaking units was Immaculée Conception for the conception of the Virgin Mary. The 19th Field Ambulance celebrated it on 8

⁵³³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14741, File 817. War Diary Summary of Events, 15th Field Company, 19 December 1943.

⁵³⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15237, File 1951. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Royal 22^e Régiment, 19-22 June 1942.

⁵³⁵ *Le Bien Public* (Trois-Rivières, Québec), 30 July 1942.

⁵³⁶ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 13857, File 874. War Diary Summary of Events, Gaspé Defences, 24 May 1943

⁵³⁷ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14824, File 984. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 24 June 1943.

December 1943 by attending mass and taking the day off.⁵³⁸ In French-speaking units, these holidays were almost always celebrated. It gave the soldiers the opportunity to relax and forget about the war. These holidays could also distinguish them from an overwhelmingly Anglo-Protestant Army.

French-Canadian soldiers appreciated their chaplains and recognised their importance. French-Canadian Chaplain Alphonse-Claude Laboissière of the Royal 22^e, who kept a diary of his time in the Canadian Army in North Africa and Italy, mentions how he brought sacraments to soldiers who could not leave their posts during an attack on German positions in Italy in March 1944. One of the soldiers was quoted saying “Icitte, me dit l’un deux, on dit le gros chapelet.” Laboissière typically had help from officers in his unit such as Captain Marcotte when conducting the mass.⁵³⁹ Laboissière was also thanked personally by a Francophone soldier for making him a better soldier. The unnamed soldier was previously court martialed in Canada and wanted to take revenge against his officers. However, Laboissière consoled him and convinced a colonel named Smith to place him under a new command. Ten months later, the soldier was now a sergeant and enjoyed his time in the army.⁵⁴⁰

In the 4th Medium Regiment, a chaplain received the *Croix de Guerre* for bravery. The troops admired the chaplain who took the time to bury the dead while under shellfire.⁵⁴¹ The Maisonneuves, while in Northwest Europe, had an officer express his gratitude to their chaplain by saying: “Le ‘padre’ Marchand est toujours là pour donner les derniers sacrements. Sa présence est toujours un réconfort, car il sait constamment nous faire voir le bon côté des

⁵³⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15887, File 1466. War Diary Summary of Events, 19th Field Ambulance, 8 December 1943.

⁵³⁹ Alphonse-Claude Laboissière, *Journal d’un aumônier militaire, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Éditions françaises, 1948), 227.

⁵⁴⁰ Laboissière, *Journal d’un aumônier militaire*, 44-45.

⁵⁴¹ Jacques Gouin, *Lettres de Guerre d’un Québécois, 1942-1945* (Québec: Éditions du Jour, 1975), 292.

choses.”⁵⁴² An article in Le Régiment de Hull’s newspaper called the “Bull’s Eye,” celebrated chaplain Honorary Captain Tessier who helped maintain the unit’s spiritual well-being and morale.⁵⁴³

Some chaplains would go beyond their duties to bond with their men. In the Royal 22^e, chaplain Maurice L. Roy kept soldiers occupied in England by organising social events such as dances, movies, and concerts. Roy took this time to bond with his fellow soldiers by inviting them to speak with him. He became senior chaplain (Roman Catholic) in the 1st Infantry Division on 21 May 1941. On 9 October 1943, chaplain Laboissière joined the Royal 22^e reinforcement units in Algeria where soldiers endured extreme heat, lack of supplies, food, and equipment. Laboissière organised a routine with the men which consisted of training during the week with confession and a mass on Sundays. He also organised sporting events and discussion groups.⁵⁴⁴

As a testament to the faith of French-Canadians in the army, *The Maple Leaf*, the



unilingual newspaper of the Canadian Army Overseas, mentioned how the Royal 22^e (figure 7) visited Pope Pius XII on 3 July 1944, nearly a month after Rome had been liberated.⁵⁴⁵ The regiment’s war diary noted that they entered the Clementine Hall in the Vatican City where each soldier received a medal and an image of Pope Pius XII. Once the Pope entered the hall, they kneeled in silence. The Pope stated how he was pleased to welcome a

Figure 7: Royal 22e visiting the Pope

⁵⁴² Jacques Gouin et al, *Bon cœur et bon bras: Histoire du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1880-1980* (Montréal: Cercles de officiers du Régiment de Maisonneuve, 1980), 100.

⁵⁴³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15182, File 1036. Bull’s Eye, Le Régiment de Hull, No Date.

⁵⁴⁴ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, “Faith on the Battlefield: Canada’s Catholic Chaplaincy Service During the Second World War,” *Historical Studies* 69, (2003); Alphonse-Claude Laboissière, *Journal d’un aumônier militaire, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Éditions françaises, 1948), 189-193.

⁵⁴⁵ “Our Heart With You.” Pope Tells the Van Doos,” *The Maple Leaf* (Ottawa, Ontario), 4 July 1944.

Canadian unit that was entirely French-Canadian and Catholic. The regiment then received the pontifical blessing, attended a low mass, then toured the Vatican City.⁵⁴⁶

Given the growing difficulties finding French-Canadian recruits for overseas service, the visit brought a great deal of attention to a French Catholic infantry battalion. This event was covered by other French language newspapers as well as the Canadian Army Newsreels. Editors of *La Liberté et le Patriote* mentioned how one of two Manitobans in the unit, Lieutenant Jules Comeault, said: “qu’il valait la peine de franchir la ligne hitlérienne pour être témoin de semblables choses.”⁵⁴⁷ Editors of *Le Devoir* mentioned how it was the first time a foreign media company (Radio-Canada) entered the Vatican, and that Canadian diplomat Brigadier Georges Vanier was present for the occasion.⁵⁴⁸ The French language press was proud to have its most well-known regiment visit the Vatican, but it is not clear if the visit brought out any more recruits back in Canada.

While religion most certainly had an important role for French-Canadian soldiers, there were some within French-Canadian communities who used religion to hinder the war effort. Bishop François-Xavier Ross from Gaspé wrote to Bishop Nelligan in October 1939 stating that none of his chaplains were interested in going overseas. He also noted that his diocese was already lacking priests. Ross did have Father Georges Bouillon in his diocese, a First World War chaplain, but he told Nelligan that he would never send him to Europe. Bishop Ross was the only

⁵⁴⁶ LAC, R112-6878-2-E, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15239, File 41. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Royal 22^e Régiment, 3 June 1944.

⁵⁴⁷ “Audience de S.S. Pie XII à un bataillon du 22^e,” *La Liberté et le Patriote*, 7 July 1944.

⁵⁴⁸ “L’allocution de Pie XII au “22ième” régiment,” *Le Devoir*, 12 July 1944; Soldiers of Le Régiment de Québec even received praise for their singing in church from the English language press in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. See LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15190, File 1065. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Québec, 28 May 1944.

bishop without a single priest in the military. He also forbade his priests from reading victory bond announcements.⁵⁴⁹

The shortages of Catholic clergy for military service brought familiar charges from segments of English-speaking Canada. In Parliament, Liberal MP Harry Fleming for Humboldt, Saskatchewan claimed that during the First World War, Conservatives sent Protestant ministers to Quebec to convince French-Canadians to enlist because the Catholic clergy was not doing its part. Fleming believed this was also happening in 1939.⁵⁵⁰ French-Canadian MPs did not believe the Catholic clergy was having a negative impact on enlistments. In June 1942, Independent Liberal MP Lacombe wanted evidence to substantiate a prejudicial claim that the province brought soldiers from elsewhere due to the clergy's opposition to enlistment. He received no further information as the Speaker called for order and wanted the question placed on the order paper.⁵⁵¹ A week later, Liberal MP Adelard Fontaine for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot said attacks on French-Canadians and Catholics posed a threat to national unity. He quoted a speech given in Toronto and Ottawa by Protestant League president T. T. Shields claiming that the Catholic church's opposition to conscription was a threat to the war effort.⁵⁵² Anglophone MPs and religious leaders had a right to be concerned as the Saint Viateur Brotherhood (see chapter four) encouraged men to remain on home defence and provided shelter for deserters.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁹ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier "Fighting for the Chaplains: Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan and the Creation of the Canadian Chaplain Service (Roman Catholic), 1939-1945," *Historical Studies* 72, (2006).

⁵⁵⁰ Harry Fleming, 9 February 1939, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Fourth Session-Eighteenth Parliament Vol I*, ed. J. O. Patenaude (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1939), 787.

⁵⁵¹ Liguori Lacombe, 15 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3323.

⁵⁵² Adélard Fontaine, 22 June 1942, *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons Third Session-Nineteenth Parliament Vol IV*, ed. Edmond Cloutier (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1942), 3546.

⁵⁵³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14166, File 1030. War Diary Summary of Events, 13th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 28-29 April 1944.

However, one French-Canadian clergyman from Sherbrooke, Quebec, R. P. Conrad Morin, who worked as a professor in Rome, risked his life to aid the war effort. Morin received an award from the British government for providing shelter for Allied soldiers who escaped from prisoner of war camps. Once Rome was liberated, he helped return these men to their units.⁵⁵⁴ It is unclear at what rate the Quebec clergy were preventing potential volunteers from enlisting, but these examples show that French-Canadian clergymen took a strong stance regardless of whether they were for or against participating in the war effort.

Issues of the “immorality of training camps” also caused problems. An article in *Le Progrès du Saguenay* on 5 September 1940 stated that these camps could force good Catholic sons into immorality. The author claimed that strict discipline, boredom, and being in the cold made alcohol tempting for soldiers. He hoped that army officers and the local police would make sure that the young men behaved and that their mothers, sisters, and fiancés would pray for them.⁵⁵⁵

Other French language newspapers were less optimistic. An article from *L’Action Catholique* published on 17 November 1942, discussed a claim made by Dieppe veteran Major Abbe Sabourin that French-Canadian mothers were not as patriotic as those from France and England. The article clarified his position to say French and English mothers were more patriotic because their countries were facing an immediate threat. He further excused the behaviour of French-Canadian mothers because of the “demoralising influence of camp life.” He claimed the camps were not suitable for a Christian country such as Canada and for a Catholic province such as Quebec. He argued that soldiers in camp had easy access to alcohol, that swearing was

⁵⁵⁴ Alphonse-Claude Laboissière, *Journal d’un aumônier militaire, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Éditions françaises, 1948), 318-319.

⁵⁵⁵ “La mobilisation des jeunes gens,” *Le Progrès du Saguenay* (Chicoutimi, Québec), 5 September 1940.

tolerated, and that there was “harmful propaganda” such as “commercialized vice and contraceptive methods.”⁵⁵⁶

The opposition to contraception was widespread amongst Catholics, especially from within the Roman Catholic chaplaincy. Bishop Nelligan received a complaint from Archbishop Peter Monahan from Regina, Saskatchewan that money was available for recreational activities (including condoms) but not for chapels and sacraments. Lieutenant-Colonel Henri DesRosiers suggested to Nelligan that each condom come with an article authored by American boxer and navy reserves commander Gene Tunney on resisting temptation. This request was rejected by Nelligan. Catholic chaplains also wanted pamphlets and movies to highlight the risk of venereal disease. The church organised a Padre’s Hour (occurring once a week) that allowed chaplains to answer questions about the church, family responsibilities, and life after the war. These actions were not enough to stop the rise of venereal disease. In October 1943 Cardinal Villeneuve urged Prime Minister King on behalf of the Canadian episcopate to stop the distribution of condoms. Nothing happened.⁵⁵⁷

Senior officers were concerned about *L’Action Catholique*’s article as they feared it would affect civilian and soldier’s morale. An army memorandum dated 2 March 1943 claimed that soldiers had better access to a priest compared to civilians as they were always near soldiers and were always at their disposal to help influence positive behaviour. Soldiers were also compelled to attend services on Sunday where they had to remain at attention. Drinking in the camps was not as frequent as one might think and that those in civilian life were likely to drink more. Lastly, the memorandum argued that swearing was not as common as it might be in

⁵⁵⁶ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 65, File 650-99-28. The Patriotism of our Mothers, 17 November 1942.

⁵⁵⁷ Yves Yvon J. Pelletier “Fighting for the Chaplains: Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan and the Creation of the Canadian Chaplain Service (Roman Catholic), 1939-1945,” *Historical Studies* 72, (2006).

civilian environments due to the presence of priests. The memorandum concluded by stating that training camps were not exclusively interested in teaching Christian morale as their primary goal was to turn men into fighters. However, they were places where men were protected from becoming “immoral” much more effectively than in civilian life.⁵⁵⁸

The war diaries of some French-speaking units confirm some of these arguments. Officers of the 3rd Engineer Battalion traveling to Petawawa for training, insisted that no soldier should possess alcohol. The unit also tried to ban illegal cigarette sales. On the ship to England, no soldier was permitted to bring alcohol and gambling was also banned.⁵⁵⁹ Alcohol and gambling were also illegal in the military camps and Church parades were mandatory.⁵⁶⁰

Chaplains also worked to give soldiers good guidance so that they would not become “immoral.” During Christmas on 21 December 1942, the 3rd Engineer Battalion took part in a radio broadcast where chaplain Captain Marcoux discussed how important chaplains were for morale, humour, comradeship, and removing prejudices. Marcoux also addressed the parents to ease their worries about their sons potentially becoming immoral. He said that the army facilitated the completion of their religious studies, that they are doing their monthly communion, and that he could hear the men sing “Ave Maria” at night.⁵⁶¹

Public rituals sought to affirm the influence of Catholic teachings in the army. Bishop Nelligan held a bilingual mass in Aboyne, Scotland on 14 June 1942 where he encouraged the

⁵⁵⁸ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 65, File 650-99-28. Canadian Women and Army Morale, 2 March 1943.

⁵⁵⁹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14823, File 984. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 24 August 1941, 17 July 1942, 14 May 1942, and 17 May 1942.

⁵⁶⁰ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14825, File 984. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 29 March 1944; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14826, File 984. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 29 March 1944.

⁵⁶¹ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 14823, File 984. War Diary Summary of Events, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 21 December 1942.

400 men attending to practice their religion to become “true soldiers.”⁵⁶² Also, during a church parade within the 59th Heavy Battery on 22 June 1941, the chaplain of the unit, Captain Vital Labrie, spoke about the importance of distinguishing oneself through honorable conduct.⁵⁶³ The Chaudières went as far as to have a sermon on blasphemy while Le Régiment de Québec had one to teach them how to be responsible and proud of their religion and identity.⁵⁶⁴

Separate Protestant and Catholic chaplaincies helped the Canadian Army to better tend to the religious needs of their men. Bilingual masses helped lessen the impact of a chronic lack of chaplains. Within the French-speaking units, officers recognised the importance of religion in their training while religious holidays allowed the men to take time off and recall their Catholic identity. Catholic chaplains helped maintain morale as some helped encourage recruitment at home, and helped organise social events and risked their lives to perform their religious duties overseas. The Royal 22^e visit to the Vatican in July 1944 helped demonstrate how loyal French-Canadians soldiers were to their faith, and may have helped address the recruitment problems of 1944 in French Canada.

But the Catholic Church could also act as a barrier to recruitment. At least one Quebec bishop refused to promote the war effort or send any of his priests overseas. The army’s leadership understood that some Quebec clergy discouraged enlistment partly on the grounds that military service would expose young men to immorality. Catholic chaplains even tried to ban the use of contraceptives. Thus the army worked to dispel the belief that good Catholics would come under pressure in military camps to drink, gamble, and pursue sexual encounters. It remains

⁵⁶² Alphonse-Claude Laboissière, *Journal d’un aumônier militaire, 1939-1945* (Montréal: Éditions franaisines, 1948), 128.

⁵⁶³ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 17516, File 322. War Diary Summary of Events, 59th Heavy Battery, 22 June 1941.

⁵⁶⁴ LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15178, File 743. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de la Chaudière, 24 November 1940; LAC, RG24-C-3, Vol. 15189, File 1065. War Diary Summary of Events, Le Régiment de Québec, 30 August 1942.

unclear if efforts were successful to convince French Canada that training camps were suitable places for their youth. The war diaries, however, demonstrate that officers tried to enforce strict discipline and foster religious teachings. Army training camps were not entered for debauchery, but rather, to become disciplined fighting men of strong moral fibre. Catholicism acted as both a support and a barrier to the French-speaking soldier.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored how the Canadian Army's leadership made large efforts to encourage French speakers to enlist during the Second World War. The wartime army remained largely an English-speaking institution. But, faced with a recruitment shortage for the expanding army in 1941, and the legacy of conscription from the First World War, politicians and the army's leadership worked to include French-Canadians within its commissioned and other ranks. Their motivation was to avoid another conscription crisis. In 1939, French Canada had little representation in the army in comparison with the country's large Francophone population, but in the spring of 1941 a study by Major W. W. Goforth, a member of the army staff in Ottawa, gave a clear plan for action. The army moved quickly, and there were notable results as the service underwent further expansion in 1942-1943, with French language manuals, training camps, advanced courses, and officer development programs.

Once army priorities shifted to fighting overseas in 1944 amidst a reinforcement crisis, senior officers exhausted efforts to convince French-Canadian conscripts on home defence to volunteer for overseas service and to maintain Francophone representation within the four French-speaking infantry battalions. The solutions proposed helped ease the crisis, but more volunteers were needed, both English and French. As a result, the government finally allowed the despatch of conscripts overseas but on a limited basis: trained personnel from home defence units that were no longer needed with the greatly reduced danger of an enemy attack against the Canadian homeland. Thus French-speaking home defence units were sent overseas and disbanded to provide reinforcements that brought the four French-speaking battalions in the front lines to full strength. Nevertheless, French-Canadian army contribution was satisfactory as they filled the ranks of the French-speaking units, both new and old, and were led by French-speaking

officers. Many others, unbeknownst to the Anglophone population at the time, enlisted in one of the two bilingual armoured units or in one of the many English-speaking units.

The House of Commons debates, and the French language press show that Francophone political opinion was not entirely opposed to Canada's participation in another global conflict. As war approached, French-Canadian MPs and the French language press highlighted a variety of views prior to and after Canada declared war. Most Francophone MPs saw little change in their stance from the First World War. They recognised the importance of defending the country and stressed loyalty to Canada, but they did not want to fight another "foreign war" and opposed conscription. They argued that Canada had the right to remain neutral and that the country's economy and people should come first to avoid the casualties and debt of the First World War. The exceptions were Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe (though he opposed conscription) and Social Credit MP René-Antoine Pelletier who argued that staying neutral meant siding with Hitler. By insisting that there would be no conscription for overseas service, Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe kept the Quebec Liberal caucus in check, ensuring that the country would be relatively united as it went to war in the fall of 1939.

The French language press across the country varied in their thoughts on Canada's participation considerably more compared to Francophone MPs. Most saw the Axis as a threat but informed their readers that there would be no conscription. Some did not give their opinion on Canada's potential involvement until after Canada declared war. It was only *Le Devoir* that aggressively opposed participation from the beginning, using the same arguments of the French-Canadian MPs. After Canada declared war, the Maritime French language newspapers supported Canada's participation, but *La Patriote de l'Ouest* in Saskatchewan along with *Le Droit* in Ontario opposed it. The others from the Prairies simply described events in Europe while *La*

Liberté published opinions on both sides of the debate. Still, it is fair to say that the Francophone press throughout the country had a clear understanding of the events leading up to the war.

Despite the isolationist talk in the House of Commons and the press, French-Canadian formations mobilised for war. The Royal 22^e Régiment went overseas in the fall of 1939, while Le Régiment de Maisonneuve was one of the first units to mobilize to full strength. Germany's dominance over Western Europe in 1940 placed enormous pressures on the army's leadership to expand their numbers beyond any expectation. Such expansion exposed the problems of French-Canadian enlistment. Army manuals were just beginning to be translated in the summer of 1940. Immediate organisational requirements scuttled a French-speaking brigade in the fall. There was also a lack of French-speaking units and officers. But in early 1941, officials realised that French-Canadian participation was crucial to avoid the political divisions of conscription. The incorporation of NPAM training centres into the Active Army, some of which offering French language training, helped to balance the need for home defence forces made up largely of those conscripted under the National Resources Mobilization Act with an expeditionary force composed of volunteers. Training opportunities for Francophones eventually totalled one third of the spots available in the army, which was reflective of Canada's Francophone population at the time. By that measure, the army tried to represent French Canada.

The Goforth Report of May 1941 followed by Justice Minister Lapointe's public announcement of such measures in the summer of 1941, certainly speeded the army's efforts to represent French Canada. The report highlighted the lack of officers, units, manuals, and trades which discouraged Francophones from enlisting. Once Defence Minister J. L. Ralston approved many of the report's suggestions to increase representation, more units and instructors became available to French-Canadians. Recruitment in Quebec also increased, more French-speaking

officers were appointed to senior positions, and monthly intakes of French-speaking officer candidates increased. While there was some pressure from the French language press to increase the number of French-speaking officers, increased representation stemmed mostly from senior officers wanting to increase recruitment for the army's expansion. They recognised that one third of Canada's population needed to be encouraged to enlist to meet their recruitment goals for the expanding Canadian Army and to avoid conscription for overseas service.

The initiatives drawn from the Goforth Report to increase French-Canadian representation in the army became more prominent in 1942-1943 as the war in the Pacific sparked a need for a larger home defence army and more recruits. French language trades training was still lacking despite having increased during the winter of 1942. But the number of French-speaking officers who took a commission grew considerably as did the number of French-speaking units, having reached their peak in 1942. Many manuals had also been translated by the end of the war, providing Francophones with additional training opportunities outside of the infantry. Because of the war in the Pacific and U-boats on Canada's shores in the Atlantic, most of the units raised were for home defence. These units, in addition to some of the overseas English-speaking units as highlighted by MP Jean-François Pouliot and others, had plenty of French-speaking recruits to fill their ranks, demonstrating that Francophones participation in the war effort was considerable.

As the reinforcement crisis began in 1944, senior officers were faced with yet another task to recruit more Francophones to reinforce the four infantry battalions. Although some Francophone politicians accused the army of doing little to recruit French-Canadian soldiers, the army in fact tried a series of initiatives to obtain French-speaking volunteers before resorting to conscription for overseas service. Indeed, the army's senior staff tried to remain true to the idea

that French-speaking soldiers should be led by French-speaking officers. As such they sought after the spring of 1944 to avoid reinforcing French-speaking units with English-speaking reinforcements. But due to an increasing need of reinforcements, English speakers eventually found themselves in one of the four French-speaking battalions. Senior officers also pushed in April 1944 to convince the soldiers of 13th Infantry Brigade, most of whom were NRMA conscripts, to go active. That campaign resulted in less than 2,000 soldiers, almost 500 of whom were from Le Régiment de Hull.

A summer recruitment campaign in 1944 highlighted references to liberating France to inspire French-Canadians to enlist. Other posters tried convincing Francophone parents to let their sons join while others shamed young men for not volunteering. All of these initiatives proved ineffective, for as so many courts martial hearings demonstrated, French-Canadian families were not eager to send their sons to war. A final attempt in the fall of 1944 to raise depot battalions to let French-speaking volunteers choose their unit met with limited success. These solutions surely eased the crisis, but more men were needed. The significance here is that General Harry Crerar and other high-ranking Canadian officers exhausted every effort possible to maintain Francophone army representation when English-speaking reinforcements could have been sent at the onset of the crisis. Avoiding conscription was also paramount, but this was the only means by which overseas units, both English and French-speaking, could fill their depleted ranks. Despite conscripts being forced to serve overseas, senior officers at NDHQ still allowed French-speaking volunteers to enlist in the depot battalion of their choice, thus showing commitment to Francophone army representation until the end of the war.

Courts martial records and religion also shed light on the French-Canadian army experience. Offered here is a glimpse into the English and French-Canadian disciplinary

experience. The random sample of courts martials of both French and English-speaking soldiers presented in this dissertation shows that the most common crimes committed were AWL and desertion, but Francophones were charged and convicted slightly more often and spent more time incarcerated for both crimes. Because the reasons why one soldier received a greater punishment than another was not always consistent, a definitive answer is difficult to provide for why Francophones received harsher sentences. This sample of records, however, are consistent with previous studies which suggests that Francophones were more likely to go AWL than Anglophones.

French-Canadians in the sample were twice as likely to defend their reasons for going AWL or deserting because of sickness, medical and family issues. The last reason closely mirrored the results of the army's 1942 morale survey. Soldiers going home to do farm work or because of dying family members may have garnered sympathy from the tribunal or Canada's agricultural needs thus lessening their sentences in some cases. French-Canadians also had access to French language officials and translation services, but others remained disadvantaged because of the army's dependence on English. More could have been done to ensure that Francophones were better represented during their trials.

As for religion, the creation of separate Protestant and Catholic chaplaincies in the army helped to meet the religious needs of French-Canadians. French-Canadians also carried religious paraphernalia to battle while the officers of French-speaking units recognised the importance of religion in their training. Religious holidays allowed the men to take time off and forget about the war. Examples such as these demonstrate the French-Canadian faith to their religion. Catholic chaplains were also crucial to maintaining morale as they helped organise social events and risked their lives to perform religious duties. The Royal 22^e visiting the Pope at the Vatican

was the truest mark of their devotion as they could demonstrate their faith within the most holy city of Europe.

However, some French-Canadian clergy discouraged prospective recruits from enlisting. The Francophone religious community claimed that training camps would become sites of immorality due to alcohol, gambling, and sexual encounters. Senior officers worked to dispel these claims while Catholic chaplains tried, but failed to ban the use of contraceptives. It is unclear whether senior officers convinced French Canada that training camps were suitable environments for their youth, but the war diaries make it clear that efforts were made to foster religious teachings. Examples such as these demonstrate that claims surrounding the belief that training camps made young men immoral were unfounded.

The significance of this dissertation is that it highlights motivating factors for why a country's military may decide to become more representative. Institutions may seek to increase representation out of a desire to be more inclusive, garner broader support, or because of changing demographics. In the Canadian Army during the Second World War, however, the military leadership realised it had no choice. Increasing French-Canadian representation in the army during the Second World War was a practical way for the army to meet its manpower needs in face of the government's resistance to compulsory military service overseas.

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Appendix A: List of French-Speaking Units

Home Defence Units:

Royal Canadian Artillery:

- 12th Anti-Aircraft Battery (March 1942-June 1944)
- 17th Anti-Aircraft Battery (January 1942-April 1945)
- 41st Anti-Aircraft Battery (April 1942-July 1944)
- 52nd Anti-Aircraft Battery (November 1943-June 1945)
- 53rd Anti-Aircraft Battery (June 1942-June 1943)
- 60th Anti-Aircraft Battery (February 1943-April 1945)
- 61st Anti-Aircraft Battery (January 1943-October 1944)
- 63rd Anti-Aircraft Battery (September 1943-June 1944)
- 24th Anti-Aircraft Regiment (January 1942-January 1945)
- 26th Anti-Aircraft Regiment (October 1942-August 1945)
- 3rd Anti-Aircraft Gun Operating Room (June 16th, 1943-June 30th, 1943)
- 4th Anti-Aircraft Gun Operating Room (December 1943-April 1945)
- 29th Anti-Aircraft Troop (Type LS) (November 1943-October 1944)
- 59th Coastal Battery (August 1939-February 1945)
- 105th Coastal Battery (March 1941-October 1944)
- 20th Field Regiment (March 1942-December 1944)
- 27th Field Regiment (May 1942-October 1943)

Royal Canadian Engineers:

- 15th Field Company (August 1941-January 1945)
- 28th Field Company (May 1942-October 1943)
- 22nd General Pioneers Company (August 1942-October 1944)

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps:

- Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke (March 1942-January 1945)
- Les Fusiliers du St. Laurent (July 1940-January 1945)
- Le Régiment de Hull (August 1941-November 1944)
- Le Régiment de Joliette (January 1942-January 1945)
- Le Régiment de Montmagny (May 1942-September 1944)

Le Régiment de Québec (May 1942-December 1945)

Le Régiment de St. Hyacinthe (January 1942-December 1945)

Le Regiment de Châteauguay (March 1942-January 1945)

B Company, Saint John's Fusiliers

Le Régiment de Gaspé-Bonaventure (October 1944-May 1946)

Le Régiment de Lévis (December 1940-October 1943)

Le Regiment de Saguenay (April 1944-May 1945)

Les Voltigeurs de Québec (August 1939-September 1943)

2^e Battalion, Le Royal 22^e Régiment (August 1945-June 1946)

2^e Battalion, Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal (January-December 1942)

3^e Battalion, Les Fusiliers de Mont-Royal (June 1942-October 1943)

2^e Battalion, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve

3^e Battalion, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve (July 1942-September 1943)

2nd Battalion, Le Régiment de la Chaudière (August 1940-October 1943 and February 1945-May 1946)

3^e Battalion, Le Régiment de la Chaudière (June 1945-April 1946)

Royal Canadian Army Service Corps:

No. 1 Bakery Section (September 1945)

No. 5 Company (September 1939-October 1945)

Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps:

19th Field Ambulance (April 1942-February 1945)

No. 5 District Company (November 1939-May 1944)

Canadian Provost Corps:

No. 36 Provost Company (March 1942-June 1946)

No. 46 Provost Company (November 1942-April 1946)

Miscellaneous:

No. 5 District Depot (December 1939-June 1946)

No. 25 Company Canadian Dental Corps (September 1939-April 1946)

No. 5 Ordnance Depot (September 1939-June 1946)

No. 8 Special Employment Company (July 1942-December 1944)

Quebec Arsenal Protective Company (August 1939-December 1944)

No. 5 District Recruiting Company (May 1942-August 1945)

No. 66 Military Detention Barracks (May 1941-March 1946)

Quebec Military Hospital (November 1941-June 1946)

Valcartier Military Hospital (November 1940-June 1946)

24th Stewardship Company

Canadian Women's Army Corps:

Corps Réserve National Féminin

Réserve Canadienne Féminin

No. 105 Depot Company (February 1943-January 1946)

No. 9 Company (October 1942-February 1944)

Overseas Units:

Royal Canadian Artillery:

57th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (June 1941-August 1941)

62nd Anti-Tank Battery (June 1941?)

82nd Anti-Tank Battery (July 1940-September 1941)

4th Canadian Medium Regiment (February 1942-September 1945)

Royal Canadian Engineers:

3rd Engineer Battalion (Originally 19th Canadian Field Company) (August 1941-January 1946)

Royal Canadian Corps of Signals:

4th Medium Regiment Signal Section (August 1944-May 1945)

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps:

1^e Battalion, Les Fusiliers Mont Royal (September 1939-September 1945)

1^e, Battalion, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve (August 1939-November 1945)

Le Royal 22^e Régiment (September 1939-September 1945)

1^e, Battalion, Le Régiment de la Chaudière (September 1939-September 1945)

2^e Battalion, Le Régiment de la Chaudière (July 1945-May 1946)

No. 6 Infantry Reinforcement Unit (June 1943-October 1944)

Bilingual Armoured Units:

Le Régiment Blindé du Canada (September 1939-September 1945)

Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment (August 1940-November 1945)

Royal Canadian Army Service Corps:

No. 4 Company, RCASC (April 1941-October 1945)

4th Canadian Medium Regiment Platoon (February 1942-September 1944)

4th Canadian Infantry Brigade Ground Defence Platoon (May 1944-September 1945)

Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps:

No. 1 Convalescent Depot (December 1939-May 1945)

No. 6 Field Dressing Station (September 1941-May 1946)

18th Field Ambulance (September 1939-October 1945)

No. 5 Field Hygiene Section (November 1941-November 1945)

No. 17 General Hospital (July 1942-December 1945)

Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps:

No. 104 Light Aid Detachment (September 1942-August 1943)

Canadian Provost Corps:

No. 9 Provost Company (September 1941-June 1946)

Appendix B: List of French Language Training Camps

New Brunswick:

No. 71 CABTC – Edmundston (Bilingual)

Ontario:

-No. 22 CAEBTC – North Bay (Bilingual)

-No. 31 CABTC – Cornwall (Bilingual)

Quebec:

No. 44/ S18 CABTC/ Canadian Officer Cadet and Basic Training Centre – St Jérôme (French)

No. 41 CABTC – Huntingdon (Bilingual, English in April 1941)

No. 42 CAEBTC – Joliette (French)

No. 43 CABTC – Sherbrooke (Bilingual, French in April 1941)

No. 45 CABTC – Sorel (French)

No. 47 CABTC – Valleyfield (French)

No. 51 CABTC – Chicoutimi (French)

No. 53 CABTC – Lauzon (French, Bilingual in April 1941)

No. 54 CABTC – Montmagny (French)

No. 55 CABTC – Rimouski (Bilingual)

Infantry Training Centres:

A12 CITC – Camp Farnham (English, Bilingual in April 1941)

A13 CITC – Camp Valcartier (Bilingual)

Junior Leaders School:

No. 52/ S6 Canadian Army Junior Leaders School – Mégantic (Bilingual, French in August 1942)

Vocational Schools:

No. 4 Vocational Training School – Montreal

No. 5 Vocational Training School – Quebec City

Trade Schools:

Technical School, Quebec City, QC

Technical School, Lauzon, QC

Trade School, Lauzon, QC

École Brillant, Rimouski, QC

Commercial Academy, Quebec City, QC

Trade Courses:

Citadel, QC

International Harvester, QC⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶⁵ DHH, File 112.1, D16, "CDN ARMY ORG-Survey as of Sep 41," George H. Cassels, Brigadier, D.A.G.(M), for B.W. Browne, Major-General, Adjutant-General, to All District Officers Commanding, 16 September 1940; LAC, RG 24, File HQ 1161-1-18, Vol. 1, H. DesRosiers, Acting Deputy Minister (Army), to J.R. Hurtibise, Esq., Sudbury, Ontario, 16 July 1941; Jean Pariseau and Serge Bernier, *French-Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces Volume I 1763-1969: the Fear of a Parallel Army* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1986), 125-126; *Ibid.*, 327-328.

Appendix C: Abbreviations and Limitations of Courts Martial Records

Abbreviations:

Absence Without Leave (AWL)

Forfeit of Pay (FOP)

Limitations:

The way in which the courts martial records on *Canadians* have been digitised are completely random. They are not organised by date, unit, or location. Anyone who wishes to conduct a study based on these records will have to go through each case individually and record relevant cases manually. Because these records were digitised randomly, it could be the reason why there were more French-Canadians in the sample and thus be the reason why they had more cases of AWL and desertion. It could also be the reason why there were more court martials in Canada compared to overseas.

Whether soldiers received harsher punishments depending on their reasoning or because of the war's circumstances would be difficult to calculate because punishments were very inconsistent. Each case has its own unique set of circumstances, and some have committed more than one crime over the course of the war which would have influenced their sentences. Madsen explains how the harshness of sentences often depended on the situation and the attitude of each commanding officer. The number and frequency of courts martials varied for each regiment.⁵⁶⁶ These variations make it difficult to compare similar cases because even if one were to, the reasoning for a French-Canadian receiving a harsher sentence compared to an English-Canadian or vice versa would not have to do with things such as prejudice, but what the judge felt was

⁵⁶⁶ Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law From Confederation to Somalia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 84.

appropriate at the time. These variations also make it difficult to determine whether conscripts were treated harsher than General Service recruits.

Calculating whether soldiers leaving for farm work spent more time away from the army compared to other reasons would also be difficult. Leaving for farm work suggests that men were more likely to be away for over six months to a year as one would need more time to work and travel due to living in a rural region. However, a soldier's return depended on his outcome. Whether a soldier was arrested before returning was determined by chance or the soldier's willingness to return on his own. The location of their homes are also not present making travel times unknown. Calculating the average time that soldiers had left their duties depending on their reasons would also not tell us much for similar reasons. It was a matter of luck or personal determination/ willingness for how long they chose to leave their army duties.