

# QUARTER-MILLION MEN SERVE IN CANADA AND AT OUTPOSTS

## Coastal Artillery and Aerodrome Defence Units Located in Strategic Places to Guard Against Possible Invasion

Ottawa, May 21.—(CP)—A new and more detailed picture of the role of the Canadian army in the defence of North Africa and its outposts is before the public as a result of Defence Minister Ralston's statement on the army in the House of Commons. While the composition and function of the army overseas has been described before, the minister in a statement spread over three days threw new light on the employment of the 250,000 men serving in Canada and the outposts of the Continent, such as Newfoundland, Labrador, Alaska and the West Indies.

### Increase of 140,000

The over-all strength of the army as of March 31 last was given by Col. Ralston as 440,000, of whom 190,000 are overseas. During the preceding 12 months the overseas army grew from 130,000 to 190,000 and the home army from 170,000 to 250,000 on the strength of enlistments of 125,000 and 60,000 drafted men who did not volunteer for service outside Canada. Thus the net increase in army strength in the last fiscal year was about 140,000 after an intake of new men amounting to 185,000.

The minister said the army requires about 100,000 men in the fiscal year 1943-44. If that number is obtained and discharged and casualties were on the same basis as last year it would mean the addition of some 66,000 men to the total strength and as the minister expects to decrease the home force by 15,000 an increase in the overseas army of about 80,000 would appear to be in contemplation.

Col. Ralston said the home force can be divided roughly into three equal parts of 80,000 each—operational troops; home war establishment and men in training stream.

### In Many Locations

Operational troops consist of (1) garrisons at ports, fortresses and vital areas in Canada and the outposts and (2) reserves at inland points ready for rapid movement to any area attacked. These reserves included the 6th and 7th divisions and the brigade groups of the 8th division.

Giving an idea of the extent of the garrison duty undertaken by the army he said coastal artillery are stationed in six east coast areas, four areas in Newfoundland, one subdivided area in Labrador.

Operational troops are located in 19 areas in the Pacific command, 17 areas in the Atlantic command, 10 inland areas and four areas outside Canada.

For the first time the minister lifted the curtain of secrecy on the aerodrome defence units of the army which has been in process of development since Pearl Harbour brought the threat of air attack closer to Canada. He said they are strung from Alaska to Sydney, N.S., and from Yukon to Labrador.

### With Special Weapons

"These consist of aerodrome defence companies equipped with special weapons and carriers and infantry components," he said.

Installation of anti-aircraft defences in different parts of Canada had required a sizeable number of troops.

The department, said the minister, hopes to be able to reduce the home war establishment during the present year. This consists of (1) administrative and training staffs at 87 training centres and schools; (2) staffs of defence headquarters and headquarters of 12 military districts and two commands; (3) units of signals, engineers, ordnance, medicals, provost corps, serving troops in

Canada and, to some extent, the army overseas.

The school and training centre staffs actually number more than 32,000 and it takes two men in training and administration duties for every five being trained. The number of troops in training at the moment is in excess of 80,000.

### Adequate Reserves

In discussing the overseas army Col. Ralston said the number of troops required for corps and army purposes, in addition to the five divisions, had been larger than was expected. More than 170 ancillary and supplementary units had been organized in Canada and overseas for the two corps and army.

The understanding has been that the forces of reinforcements from Canada overseas during the years the Canadian army has not been in action has gone into the staffing of these corps and army units and thus the need for reinforcements in sizeable numbers had never lessened.

The minister declined to give the percentage of trained reinforcements available overseas to meet battle losses, but said there are adequate trained reserves "to meet contemplated operations." These reserves, he added, will be augmented by early dispatch of more troops and behind them in Canada there is a backlog of more than 185,000 men enlisted for general service.

Not all these would be fit or available for overseas, but there are 100,000 of them in a suitable medical category. In addition there are 50,000 home defence troops, brought in under the Mobilization act, who could be made available for service anywhere by order-in-council.

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