

During the past year reorganizations in the Army overseas were effected in order to obtain a greater degree of conformity to British Army organization, and thus facilitate employment of the Canadian Army, in whole or in part, with British formations.

One of the most important of these organizational changes was the formation of the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME), which has taken over from the RCOC all its engineering and maintenance functions, the latter Corps retaining responsibility for provision. RCEME has also assumed certain engineering and maintenance functions formerly exercised by the Artillery, Engineers and Signals Corps.

The organization of the Army in Canada has also undergone changes during the past year, as a result both of the considerable improvement in the general strategic situation and of the completion of capital requirements for the Army overseas. These two factors have permitted substantial reductions in the forces maintained for the defence of Canada and in training establishments. The result of the reduction of operational troops in Canada was the despatch of additional units overseas and the release into the reinforcement stream of considerable numbers of General Service personnel.

In the reorganization of centres for the training of reinforcement personnel, certain basic training centres have been designated for recruits for armoured, infantry and medical corps. Such centres are specifically associated with, or linked to, the advanced or corps training centres of the arm of the service concerned. In the case of the artillery, engineers, signals, ordnance, army service and provost corps, it has been found possible to link both basic and advanced training at the same corps training centre.

Officer requirements now are principally to replace casualties and wastage. Curtailment in officer-training facilities has accordingly been effected by the closing of the Officers' Training Centre at Gordon Head, B.C. It proved possible during the year for the Canadian Army to lend to the British Army several hundred infantry reinforcement officers.

Figures at May, 1944, showed the strength of the Active Army to be in excess of 480,000 men. Of this number, over 407,000 had enlisted for General Service. The Canadian Women's Army Corps, whose members are releasing men for service in active theatres of war, numbered at May, 1944, over 13,000.

The Reserve Army, with a strength at May, 1944, of over 104,000 (including the COTC and Pacific Coast Militia Rangers), continued its role at home and added reconnaissance and anti-aircraft training to its program.

The Air Force.—By the spring of 1944, the Royal Canadian Air Force had reached the peak of its plans for expansion in training but not anywhere near the peak of its plans for aggressive action. Thousands of Canadian airmen had seen service overseas and many more thousands were waiting, trained and eager, to take their places in air combat.

From three Canadian squadrons which went overseas as units in 1940, the R.C.A.F. in early 1944 had 42 squadrons on actual operations overseas—bomber, fighter, reconnaissance, coastal command, night fighter and intruder squadrons—and provision was made to bring overseas establishment up to 44 squadrons. Several squadrons, notably those flying Mosquitoes and Lancasters, were equipped with aircraft made in Canada.