

THE CANADIAN ARMY

Address by LT.-GEN. CHARLES FOULKES, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., Chief of the General Staff in Canada, at the Annual Vimy Dinner held under the auspices of The Alberta United Services Institute at the Palliser Hotel on April 8, 1949.

IN many communities from coast to coast, Canadians will be gathered together, as we are here tonight, to commemorate this great day in the history of our country. No citizen can look with more justifiable pride, than you in Calgary, on the word "Vimy" emblazoned on the regimental colours of your units. Appreciating, as I do, the magnitude of your contribution to the Allied success of 1917, I feel no greater honour could be accorded an infantryman than the privilege of being your guest speaker on this occasion.



LT.-GEN. CHARLES FOULKES


In this year, and before an audience such as this, there is no need for me to dwell at length on the many gallant and courageous deeds of our soldiers in the assault at Vimy in April, 1917. In speaking of Vimy it is impossible for me to refer to this great soldiers' battle without eulogizing the infantry corps, and wondering whether these great battles of blood, sweat and sacrifice are still necessary in modern war.

Calgary regiments today perpetuate units that played a prominent part in both the initial and final phases of the capture of Vimy Ridge. For the King's Own Calgary Regiment and the Calgary Highlanders, this commemoration has a special meaning and significance. For the Highlanders, the 10th Battalion C.E.F. has been immortalized by their superb showing at St. Julien. That action of the 10th brought the Battalion special recognition by Field Marshal Foch. This distinction is inclined to overshadow this Battalion's part with the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division in the initial phase of the operation for the capture of Vimy Ridge. For the Calgary Tanks the part of the 50th Battalion in the capture of the Vimy Ridge featuring "The Pimple" contributed in no small way to the success of the C.E.F. The men of Calgary, with the C.E.F. at Vimy in 1917, experienced a hell on earth the

like of which we, of World War Two can claim no knowledge. "Blood, sweat and tears" was the daily diet of the soldiery of the 1914-18 War and the infantry was truly the queen of the battlefield—a bloody queen. The price paid for victory and success in battle in the 1914-18 struggle was extremely high. The extent of the sacrifice at Vimy was considerable and can be appreciated when one realizes that one man in every nine in the C.E.F. was a casualty as a result of the fighting during the week of the Vimy battle in 1917.

● **Vimy Typical of Big Battles of First Great War**

The sacrifices of Vimy, shocking though they seem to many of us gathered here today, were quite typical of the big battles in World War One. After such experiences in war mankind was naturally most receptive to any theory that claimed to remove the necessity for blood and sweat battles. Into this favourable atmosphere the exponents of mechanization and air power expounded their claims that their new developments would make war less costly, not only in lives but in material. The same exponents had us believe that the lightning thrusts that shattered Europe in World War Two, were attributable alone to the German application of mechanization and air power. We were given to believe that the number of tanks employed by the Hun in the overrunning of France and the low countries was three times the number that actually took part in the operations. As a result of this influence we tended to create unbalanced forces for World War Two so that we always had too much armour, enough artillery to blow everything to hell, but never enough of the fighting soldiers, the infantry. Nor can it be claimed that the new weapons introduced in the 1939-45 war eliminated casualties even though these weapons performed much more efficiently than their exponents ever predicted. True enough the battlefield became more mobile and the casualty

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rates were appreciably alleviated but the battles remained soldiers' battles and were far from painless, as those of you in the Scheldt will remember.

As in the 1914-18 struggle, whenever and wherever there was tough fighting in World War Two you could count on the Canadians being there and invariably men of Calgary were in the front line of the battle. The Calgary Tanks were the first Canadian Armoured Corps unit to see action. At Dieppe, this unit gave ample evidence of its sterling fighting qualities and its reputation was further enhanced by its many successes throughout the Italian campaign and North-west Europe. A detachment of the Calgary Highlanders was also at Dieppe, but their real chance to display their prowess as a fighting unit came, I believe, while I was in command of 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. There were no tougher battles than those around Caen and Falaise, and I can state, without fear of contradiction, that the fighting reputation of 2nd Division was immeasurably enhanced by the magnificent showing of the Highlanders in their many battles in this area. Fortunately, the total Canadian sacrifices in these battles did not compare with those of Vimy, but those the Highlanders suffered around Caen were regrettably quite comparable to those of the 10th Battalion at Vimy. It is my honest opinion that no battalion could possibly receive more punishment than the Highlanders and still remain a fighting unit. I could go on and speak in further glowing terms of the Highlanders' outstanding performance in the clearing of the Scheldt Estuary. It was here that 2nd and 3rd Divisions as part of 2nd Corps played the part described by Eisenhower as "our greatest contribution to the Allied victory." These victories, like all our victories in World War Two, were not achieved without blood, sweat and tears, and not without the indomitable spirit and good humour of the infantry (story of tin of HOT jam). It is my contention that war will always entail human sacrifice and so long as man dwells on the surface of the earth the struggle must eventually resolve itself around a piece of ground. As General Fuller has so aptly described it, "war is more complex, there are more pieces to play with, but the game is still played on the same old board; for, in spite of aircraft, decision is still gained on the surface of the earth."

● Natural Law of Warfare Unlikely to Change

Some people say such thinking is out of date but can we conceive of any change in the natural law of warfare which will obviate the necessity for soldiers' battles? The self-styled military experts, encouraged by the present-day insatiable appetite of our reading public, would have us believe that times have changed. They have conjured up a radical "new look" for the war of tomorrow and it is regrettable that these crystal gazers, perhaps unwittingly, are making realistic defence planning much more difficult by professing to have what General Bradley has referred to as "some supersonic salvation to the human sacrifice that war will always

entail." Certainly any statements by General Eisenhower are most careful not to imply that within the foreseeable future we may dispense with the need for infantry. Typical of General Eisenhower's statements is that as contained in his final report dated the 7th of February, 1948:

"The army phases of a balanced air/sea/ground organization require special stress at a time when many voice the opinion that land forces have been made obsolete by the development of rockets, and the atomic bomb The introduction of the plane and the atomic bomb has no more eliminated the need for them (foot soldiers) than did the first use of cavalry or the discovery of gun-powder."

I must add that there is the greatest divergence of opinion expressed today concerning the form war will take. One popular conception portrays the armies as the "keepers" of airfields, and the "cleaners up" of devastated areas. I had hoped that the scientist would have developed some easier and quicker way of winning the next war and some way of avoiding the blood, sweat and tears of Vimy, Falaise and Caen. This hope I am afraid is still far from realization.

Dr. Bush, as Chairman of the United States Research Board has stated:

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THE CANADIAN ARMY—(Continued from Page 28)

"There is talk of a push-button war, and only too much of an inclination to regard such a war as one in which we alone would be pushing buttons. There is sometimes even a tendency to believe that the advances of science and their applications to war have decreased the need for men. It is highly important that these fallacies should not be allowed to interfere with realistic thinking on the subject in these days of tension. If we were to enter a war tomorrow it would be a tough slugging match, much the same sort of tough slugging match from which we recently emerged, with some improvement of weapons in various categories it is true, and with new features, but nevertheless a rigorous trial of strength that would test the staying power and fighting ability of this country to the utmost in every department of its activity. It would be a war in which we would need to gird ourselves by all means for sustained, rigorous effort. It would be a war in which we would need men and armies as well as implements with which they could fight."

● **No Easy Way of Winning Wars Has Yet Been Found**

So like it or not, there appears to be no easy way of winning wars. Let us consider if there is a way of avoiding such a national calamity. In these realistic times when so much emphasis is placed on the material, the possibility of war can only be precluded by a preponderance of force on the side of Democracy. I have hopes that with the coming of the Atlantic Pact there may be an opportunity of avoiding war. If the Democratic nations are able and willing to provide the preponderance of force required to convince any aggressor that war does not pay, war is not inevitable. No nation will start a war unless firmly convinced it will win and win quickly.

What are we doing about developing our share of this "Preponderance of Force"? Here I think it is important to remember that:

"No nation on earth possesses such limitless resources that it can maintain itself in a state of perfect readiness to engage in war immediately and decisively and win a total

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victory soon after the outbreak without destroying its own economy, pauperizing its own people, and promoting interior disorder."

This is the case in Canada, therefore, in setting up the Canadian Army we had to take first things first.

Before setting up the army in 1946 I studied the shortcomings of 1939 in order to assess what were the most urgent things to get on with. These shortcomings were:

- (a) No trained commanders and staffs.
- (b) Training so incomplete everyone needed retraining.
- (c) Relatively no equipment available for either training or operations.

As a result of these shortcomings it took us four years to get ready to fight. This was an end result which I could not accept in case of future difficulties. With this in mind the following decisions were taken:

- (a) Long term commitments to be taken first, leaving shorter term training too close to D Day.
- (b) Whatever training was done—must be done to field standard to avoid repetition in war.
- (c) All officers and men to be physically fit.
- (d) Commanders and staffs to be trained and exercised in peace—Commands to be organized as divisional staffs and trained as divisional staffs.

● **Proper System for Officer Production Essential**

In the creation of a new Canadian Army the first problem which I considered merited consideration was the setting up of a proper system for officer production. In keeping with the present-day technical advancements it appeared paramount for us to ensure that our future candidates for commissions must have good academic

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standing. With this in mind the Canadian Officers' Training Corps scheme was enlarged and their programme and requirement for qualification was appreciably revised.

The present-day C.O.T.C. will provide us with an excellent source of well qualified officers at a rate which is estimated to be approximately 600 to 800 a year.

In addition to the problem of officer production our attention was focussed on the problem of adequately training the non-commissioned officers. This is being accomplished by refresher and qualification courses for N.C.O.'s on week-ends and evenings. Considerable progress has been made and our N.C.O. picture now appears to be quite good.

Our present problem is concerned with the setting up of the system for the training of tradesmen, and last week Cadet Trades Training Officers attended a conference at Army Headquarters at Ottawa to finalize our plans for a Dominion-wide scheme for qualification of army cadets in trades training courses. Our success in an experimental and pilot model camp at Ipperwash, Ontario, last year proved to us the practicability of this scheme.

I would like to emphasize that Army and Command Headquarters are responsible for the training of commanders and staffs, qualification of officers and N.C.O.'s, and training of tradesmen. With these in hand the unit commanding officer can then ensure that he has a good working team and nucleus from which to expand. As you will realize the emphasis has been on organization and officer training but it is essential that each unit should have the necessary men to provide the required training for the young officers and as a source for selection of the proper N.C.O.'s.

● Good Progress Made in First Stage of Preparedness

We are being careful not to endeavour to implement plans which envisage the training of large numbers of men until the first state of officer, N.C.O. and tradesmen training has been accomplished. Good progress has been made in this first stage in our programme towards the creation of a new Canadian Army.

In some quarters we soldiers are often accused of planning to fight the next war along the same lines and with the same equipment as the last. This criticism is perhaps true of the last war when twenty years intervened and the funds that were voted for defence in Democratic countries were so low that enterprise, research and development and even intelligence was starved. This situation does not apply today.

The tendency now is for the pendulum to swing the other way where there is a military expert behind every tree ready to convince you that he can win the next war with atomic bombs,

guided missiles, rampant bugs and supersonic armadas of the Buck Rogers variety. There is no doubt that there will be very startling innovations, but it is considered unsafe to plan our defence on the use of weapons which do not exist.

We must be realistic—our problem at the moment is to be ready in case of an accidental war tomorrow, or a superblitz type of war which may come ten or fifteen years from now. Therefore, our planning must be based on what we have or can readily acquire.

This does not mean that our planning and thinking should be static. It must be flexible and we must always be ready to seek and adopt new weapons and new methods whenever and wherever they appear.

● **Research, Development Linked with Strategy, Tactics, Organization**

Research and development must go hand in hand with strategy, tactics and organization for defence. That is the reason why the chiefs of staff are members of the Defence Research Board and also why the chairman of the Defence Research Board is a member of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, where strategy and defence organization are planned. In this way it is hoped that the evolution of service organization and planning for war will be progressive and on sound lines.

A further step in the evolution of modern defence planning is the inclusion of industry in the form of the Industrial Defence Board. By and through this board industrial war planning may be developed to keep step with the evolution of defence organization and equipment. We also hope to achieve an economic allotment between the Services and industry of their requirements in labor, especially skilled, and material.

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The industrial problem in war is greatly increasing as every new development brings new industrial complications, i.e., the V.T. fuse requires a miniature radio in the nose of every shell; intricate hydraulic equipment for stabilization devices in tanks; special homing devices; gyroscopic compasses for guided missiles; modern communication equipment which requires automatic, intricate and electronic mechanisms. It is evident that all these new equipments now considered so essential for modern war necessitate enormous increases in our requirement for skilled manpower. The manpower implications are far reaching, as this problem is applicable not only to manufacturing and operation but to the maintenance and repair in the field of these intricate mechanisms. It is abundantly clear that in a war of the future the services and industry are bound to be in competition for skilled labour. This competition can only be obviated by the implementation of a carefully planned programme agreed to prior to the emergency.


● **Balance Must be Maintained Between Industry and Services**

It is quite apparent that a very careful balance must be maintained if we are to meet the requirements of industry and the Services for trained technicians. The Army's requirements for tradesmen in the first year of any war, under present conditions, will be in the order of tens of thousands. We can further expect that there will be an increase in this requirement for trained technicians which will be in direct proportion to any increase in the complexity of war weapons. Our Army Cadets Trades Training programme is one contribution being made by the Army for the provision of the tradesmen and technicians required by the Armed Forces and industry in any future emergency. These are problems which will most likely effect you and are problems which need and are getting careful attention of both the soldier and civilian through the Industrial Defence Board.

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As emphasized by General Eisenhower there is no easy way to win wars in the foreseeable future. Or as General Bradley has so aptly put it, there appears to be no supersonic salvation to human sacrifice which war entails. I firmly believe that with the coming of the Atlantic Pact there is a hopeful prospect of avoiding a war provided we can establish the required "preponderance of force on the side of Democracy." The coming of the Atlantic Pact must not serve as an excuse for any easing up, or slowing down, of our defence preparations. If we are to have the "preponderance of force on the side of Democracy" to convince any aggressor that he cannot win a war, then it will mean that we will have to demonstrate that we not only have the will but the means of doing our share in providing this "Preponderance of Force." As the plans develop for the Army it will mean more emphasis on troops in being and not so much on formations in nucleus. This is coming at a most opportune time for the Army, in that the Reserve Force, which is our main striking force, is now well organized, well equipped and well officered. With an additional reinforcement of 800 well trained junior officers a year, we are now in a position to start and fill up the ranks of the Reserve Force. This will be your big opportunity to help us to demonstrate that we are really in earnest to do our share to avoid the next war. If, unfortunately, war is inevitable then we can be assured that the Canadian Army will be trained and prepared to play its important part in the shortening of this national calamity.

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