

the maps of Kiska, 3000 of which had been distributed from Brigade Headquarters, and completed their plans for the assault (128). All day long flights of Liberators, Mitchells, Lightnings and Warhawks droned overhead on bombing missions to Kiska, emphasizing to all the realization of their presence in an actual theatre of war. It was on the evening of Friday, August 13th, that anchors were weighed and the long columns of ships steamed slowly out of Adak harbour into the fog.

AUTHORITY TO PROCEED

107. NDHQ authority for Greenlight to proceed to its final destination came at the last moment. On 11 Aug Maj-Gen Murchie had reported from Adv HQ at Adak to CGS that the Canadian training, morale, and equipment was satisfactory, and had recommended that authority to proceed be granted (129). On the following evening Gen Pearkes wired that the time of the Force's departure from Adak had been set for the morning of 13 Aug, and that unless he heard to the contrary he would assume that the recommendations of the VCGS had been approved (130). Late that same night (12 Aug), Pacific Command received the awaited approval from NDHQ (131), relaying it to Adak shortly before midnight (132). The authority, which took the form of a Ministerial Direction issued under the provisions of Order in Council PC 5011, permitted the despatch of the NRMA personnel of Greenlight to any part of the Aleutians or adjacent US islands (133).

THROUGH THE FOG TO KISKA

108. The convoy, consisting of the four Canadian transports and the US SS "BELL" bearing Northern Sector HQ, moved slowly through poor visibility along the northern side of the Andreanof and Rat Islands to the vicinity of Kiska. On Saturday the Canadians had their first submarine alert, and all hands stood to their boat stations in lifebelts until the "all-clear" was sounded (134). Early on Sunday morning, D-day, the sound of gunfire was heard as the US Navy began to pound Gertrude Cove. Simulating an attack at Tom Thumb Cove, on the south side of the island, fast assault boats roared in through the fog, their rails lined with dummy soldiers (135). But no answering fire came from the shore. Intercepted radio messages from the Southern Sector revealed that American troops were landing at Quisling Cove and meeting no opposition (136). Did that mean that the Japanese had withdrawn to the Northern part of the Island? Darkness fell on the tense troops, and shortly after midnight the ships of the Canadian convoy hove to in Bamboo Bay, on the northwest side of the island, opposite Beach 14, where tomorrow's attack was to be launched.

109. The lifting of the fog found thousands of curious eyes straining to catch their initial glimpse of enemy-occupied soil. To the left of the Canadian ships the cone of Kiska Volcano rose in perfect symmetry for four thousand feet, marking the northern extremity of the island. Below the mountain lay the flat surface of Kiska Lake still and silent in the moonlight, and to the south the rocky promontory of Witchcraft Point marked the right boundary of the Canadian beach.

XIII

THE PLAN OF ATTACK

ATF 9 Order - 13 Cdn Bde Group Order - Administrative Instructions.

ATF 9 ORDER

110. To the extent that achievement of military objective is in general dependent upon initial planning, the success of the Kiska operation was assured well in advance. It is doubtful whether the operation orders issued for the assault on the island could have been more complete in their scope or more specific in their detail. US Field Order No 1 issued on 1 Aug by command of Gen Corlett for Landing Force 16.8 (137) (the Army component of ATF 9), was an exhaustive document consisting of some eighty pages with attachments, charts and maps, giving in considerable detail the operation order and the administrative instructions for the engagement (138).

111. Amphibious Training Force No 9 was supported by all US Army, Navy and Air Force units in the Western Aleutians Area, as an actual and potential reserve. Landing Force 16.8, embarking at various planned staging areas in the Aleutian Chain, was to move under Navy control to specified transport areas off the coasts of Kiska, disembark and land on the island at designated beaches, move rapidly inland to carefully defined objectives, reorganize and prepare to launch a co-ordinated attack for the complete destruction of the enemy on Kiska Island. Prior to landings the plan called for a naval demonstration and diversion on the south side of the island with a simulated landing at Gertrude Cove and Vega Bay. Naval combat ships were to place harassing fire on enemy installations in Gertrude Cove and on the island of Little Kiska. The supporting Air Force (Task Group 16.2) was given the task prior to D-day of systematically destroying all vital enemy installations on the island. Beginning on the actual day of attack the Air Force, in close liaison with its ground observers, was to prevent the movement of enemy reserves, promptly report all changes in enemy positions, and closely support the defence of our ground force (139).

112. Land Force 16.8, commanded by Gen Corlett, was to attack in two sectors, the southern under the command of Col EM Southerland, and the northern under Brig-Gen Joseph L Ready. Operating in each sector command was one regiment of the Special Service Force based on Amchitka Island, whose task it was to precede the main bodies, land in rubber boats and move rapidly inland to neutralize enemy installations and give cover to landings of the Force (140). The 3 Regt Special Service Force, remaining in Force Reserve at Amchitka, was to be prepared to land on Little Kiska, either by rubber boat or parachute, and to destroy enemy resistance there (141).

113. The dividing boundary between the north and south sector areas was a line from Swallow Rocks in Beach Cove, on the north side of the island, through Middle Pass to a point about a mile south of Trout Lagoon on Kiska Harbour. Landings in the southern sector (Task Groups 87 and 17) were to be made at Beach 9 and Beach 10 (Quisling Cove and the mouth of Lilly Creek), commencing at H hour on D day (0620 hours, 15 Aug). Their objective was the hilly area of Leather Hill and Lawson Hill overlooking the enemy positions around Gertrude Cove (142).

114. On D plus 1 day the northern sector force, comprising US Tactical Group 184 and the Canadian Brigade Group (TG 13), was to land on Beach 14, immediately to the north of Witchcraft Point, and to advance and seize the high ground, Ranger Hill - Riot Hill - Rex Hill, Morgan Hill preparatory to continuing the attack south into the Kiska Harbour area (143).

13 CDN BDE GROUP ORDER

115. The Canadian order, Operation Order No 1, dated 9 Aug and issued by the Chief of Staff, 13 Cdn Bde, was closely based on the US Field Order, republishing from it instructions pertinent to the Canadian force (144). Information regarding the enemy as supplied by US Intelligence and overprinted upon the operations map estimated the strength of the Japanese garrison at 11,925 all ranks, a total that included 4400 infantry, 2970 artillery, and 1150 labour troops. The main concentrations were believed to be in the Kiska Harbour and Gertrude Cove areas (145).

116. Of the landing facilities in the northern sector it was reported that the usable portion of Beach 14 between Witchcraft Point and Lake Christine offered excellent landing and exit possibilities. There was believed to be over a mile of gravel beach averaging 100 yards in depth, offering ample dispersal areas for two BLGs landing abreast. Depths off shore were considered ample, with the three-foot line estimated about twenty-five feet from the waterline. Three exits from the beach permitted access to the high ground 4000 yds southeast, which commanded the enemy installations in the north and in their main camp area. How accurate were these reports of enemy strength and beach facilities later events were to determine.

117. To the Third Regiment, First Special Service Force, fell the honour of raising the curtain on operations in the Northern Sector. Moving by LST from Amchitka to a point offshore northwest of West Kiska Lake, the regiment was detailed to embark under cover of darkness in rubber boats and reach the bar between the lake and the Bering Sea not later than K - 300 on D plus 1 day. They would carry their boats over the bar and proceed in them across West Kiska Lake, landing at a point near the mouth of Robin Creek. Advancing inland by the best available routes they would seize and hold the Riot Hill - Ranger Hill ridge, organizing to cover landings of the main force on Beach 14 (146).

118. To the left of the Canadian landing beach, Beach 14 Green, the three BLGs of Tactical Group 184 were to land led by BLG 87-1 on Red Beach at K hour, and followed forty minutes later by BLGs 184-2 and 184-3 on Purple and Red Beaches respectively. Their objective was the north and east spans of the high ground Ranger Hill some 4000 yards inland, and they were responsible for ejecting the enemy from Witchcraft Point and for covering the landing of the first of the Canadian BLGs.

119. BLG 13-14, No. 14 Combat Team of the 13 Brigade Group, disembarking from the "SACAJAWEA" in landing barges of various types (147), was scheduled to land on Green Beach at K plus 210 mins and to advance inland to relieve BLG 87-1 on Ranger Hill. From that objective vigorous patrolling would be conducted to the south east in the direction of Model Hill and Kiska Harbour. No 14 Combat Team would be followed 65 minutes later by BLG 13-15 (Winnipeg Grenadiers), who would swing to the south and take up a position on the right of the Canadian Fusiliers, pushing out reconnaissance and fighting patrols towards the southern sector. BLG 13-16, the Rocky Mountain Rangers Combat Team, was to land on Green Beach at K plus 360, follow the route of the preceding teams,

and take up a position on the right flank of the Canadian Group in the Rooster Hills - Robert Ridge area.

120. Following the principle that all combat teams would cease to exist as such once the first objectives had been reached, the operation order called for withdrawal from their respective teams of all field and anti-aircraft artillery on the completion of the initial phase. Artillery batteries would then be massed by the northern sector Artillery Commander, Maj John T Ollinger, US Army, while anti-aircraft artillery would pass from BCTs to the control of US Army Lt-Col Lesikar, who would co-ordinate AA defence arrangements for the entire northern part of the island.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

121. Explicit Administrative Instructions were issued in conjunction with Operation Order No 1, and an appendix to these Instructions detailed the duties of the beach parties. Under the command of Lt-Col Menard, OC Le Regt de Hull, personnel in the units and detachments of the BCTs would have as their principal tasks the clearing of the beach and the construction of roads, the unloading of cargo and the establishing of separate dumps of the various types of stores, and the protection of the beach area against enemy attack.

122. Since every officer and man on landing would carry a one-day "K" ration and a one-day "D" ration, with canteen filled and a supply of halazone tablets, there was a period of 48 hours in which to establish messing facilities. Arrangements were made however for all unit kitchens in the beach area to operate on a 24-hour schedule to serve hot coffee to all personnel regardless of unit.

123. Operation orders and administrative instructions had been carefully studied and their contents thoroughly absorbed between the time of embarkation at Adak and the arrival at Kiska. Combat team commanders had prepared their landing plans and issued their own operation orders to their component units and detachments (148). Officers, NCOs and men were systematically briefed as to the part they were to play. As far as planning could go, Greenlight was ready to attack.

XIV

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

THE OCCUPATION - FORWARD COMBAT TEAMS.

16 Aug 43 - The Landings - Objectives reached -

17 Aug 43 - Fatigues Begin.

16 AUG 43

124A. It was "D plus 1" day, Monday, 16 Aug 43, and reveille on the crowded transports came at 0200 hrs. The convoy circled and drifted from two to three miles off shore until 0620 hrs (K hour), when the first barges pushed towards land with the forward elements of Tactical Group 184 (149). Shortly afterward loud explosions from the shore marked the progress of the US engineers in detecting and destroying Japanese land mines on the beaches. To the waiting men on the boats however the heavy detonations meant an opposed landing, and there was no hint of "make believe" in the determination with which they sprung to action when their turn for debarkation arrived (150).

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THE LANDINGS

124B. Forward companies of the Canadian Fusiliers in the first Canadian group, CT 14, their faces smeared with camouflage paint, started down the landing nets of the "SACAJAWEA" shortly after 0800 hours, and were on the beach by 0910 hours (149). Moving across the narrow strip of sand on which stores and supplies were soon to pile up in huge dumps, they halted in a forming-up area behind the first low rise to await the disembarkation of the second and third waves of their forward combat team. Then they started to advance up the deep valley of Rainbow Creek (151).

125. Throughout the morning the remaining transports were discharging their Canadian troops as fast as landing craft became available. Officers in charge of unloading found themselves compelled to make many last-minute changes in boat assignments as barges appeared without any apparent regard to prearranged debarkation tables (152). The Winnipeg Grenadiers (15 CT) landed at 1100 hours (149), followed by the Rocky Mountain Rangers (16 CT) shortly before noon (153). By mid-afternoon Forward Bde HQ had followed the other landings (149) and was receiving reports of the steady progress of the forward combat teams, as one by one checked in on their reporting lines, - Apple, Berry, Citron and Damson (154).

OBJECTIVES REACHED

126. By 1800 hours all objectives had been occupied without encountering any enemy resistance. Reports from two days' operations in the Southern Sector had shown that area to be free of Japanese, and it appeared probable that if any opposition were to be encountered, it would be from small bodies of soldiers lurking in fox holes and underground caves for a last ditch suicidal stand. That night the forward teams dug in to hold their positions against possible surprise, with a stand-to ordered for 0530 hrs next morning (149).

127. 14 Combat Team was bivouacked on Rex Hill, having sent patrols right down into Kiska Village during the night (155). 15 Combat Team having reached as far forward as Mandarin Hill, took up a position on Morgan Hill (150), while on their right 16 Combat Team dug in on the high ground of Rooster Hill overlooking Behring Sea (153). Forward Brigade HQ spent the night on the northern slope of Morgan Hill behind the Winnipeg Grenadiers (149).

128. At midnight Brig Foster called his "O" group together from the surrounding hills and passed on to BLG Commanders the plan for next day's operations based on instructions received from North Sector. Headquarters consisted of a single pup tent and into its shielded light the Brigadier took a CO, one at a time, to study the situation map for the day's moves (149). The plan called for the seizure of the high ground north of Middle Pass, the encirclement of the main Japanese camp and a push through to the shores of Kiska Harbour.

17 AUG 43

129. Early on the 17th the forward units resumed their advance, 14 CT in the centre, flanked on left and right by 15 CT and 16 CT respectively (154). As leading patrols moved down towards the harbour they found every hill and ridge thickly sown with Japanese foxholes, dummy emplacements and skillfully concealed gun positions, all carefully sited to command strategic approaches to

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the Main Camp (156). Caches of small arms and artillery ammunition, grenades and land mines, conveniently hidden close to gun pits bore striking evidence of the warmth of the reception that might have awaited the invaders (157). Over on the Canadian left members of US 184-3 BLG were busily engaged in blowing in dugouts that seemed too heavily mined to be worth while disarming, and the sound of exploding grenades continued throughout the day.

130. It was during the movement of 16 Combat Team down the coastal area during the morning that Greenlight sustained its first fatal casualty. Lieut S Vessey of "D" Coy, 1 Bn Rocky Mountain Rangers, while investigating one of the dugouts that commanded Barley Cove, stepped on a hidden land mine and was blown up. He died in about 20 minutes and was buried on the spot (158).

131. Lieut Vessey's death was the second Canadian casualty sustained during the operations on Kiska. On the day of the landing a member of 14 Combat Team, Fus DY Mills, was severely wounded when shot through the spine by unidentified machine gun fire in the thick fog on Rex Hill (159). The almost total lack of visibility on some of the fog-covered ridges during the first evening made it impossible to distinguish friend from foe at a time when none knew at what moment a Japanese-held position might be encountered, and several instances occurred of men firing upon moving figures suspected to be enemies. But there were other examples of "trigger-happiness" that were less excusable. On more than one occasion during the first twenty-four hours following the landing, BLG 184-3 and Canadian troops found that a brisk return of machine gun fire was the most effective method of reminding the Special Service Force that the impromptu field firing exercises by which the latter were lightening their ammunition load added nothing to the safety of the main body of the force (157).

132. By late afternoon all objectives for the second day had been reached (154). Setting out forward patrols the combat teams prepared for another night in the open on the high ground that rimmed the deserted Japanese camp. To the west the Rocky Mountain Rangers and their accompanying troops occupied Lady Hill and Monument Hill on the lip of Middle Pass; on the left, across the valley from the airfield, 15 Combat Team, with Brigade HQ behind them, dug in on the south slopes of Manoeuvre Hills, while in the centre the Canadian Fusilier Group took up its position a thousand yards north of Trout Lagoon. To the east of the Canadian bivouac area, on the crest above Salmon Lagoon, were the US troops of BLG 184-3, placed under the command of Brig Foster from 1200 hours on the 17th (157). The proximity of numerous Japanese caves and dugouts, with caches full of food, blankets and clothing provided Canadians and Americans alike with the wherewithal to add in some small measure to their physical comfort during the wet nights that followed (160).

FATIGUES BEGIN

133. Force Reserve transports moved down from the north west of the island on the next afternoon (18 Aug) and detachments of the 13 Bde Group covered their landing in Kiska Harbour (154). Two days later, a decision having been reached to halt unloading stores at Green Beach, the large freighters steamed around into the Harbour, and the job of discharging their cargoes began anew (161). Heavy demands for fatigue parties were made by Northern Sector HQ, each combat team supplying 400 men to work on the beach in six hour shifts (154).

134. On 22 Aug the three BLGs were disbanded, the various detachments recentralizing as complete units, - the infantry battalions returning to their normal organization (162). The time spent together had been a profitable one and each of the various arms had learnt much about the other fellow's job. A brigade campsite was selected in the valley through Manoeuvre Hills, about a mile and a half north west of Kiska Harbour, and on 24 Aug units moved into the new area, to settle down for the weeks ahead, and to begin the battle of pyramidal tents versus Kiska weather (163).

XV

THE OCCUPATION - BEACH COMBAT TEAMS

The Role of the Beach Party - Unloading Operations -
The Work of the Engineers - Unloading Stopped - The
Stay at Green Beach

THE ROLE OF THE BEACH PARTY

135. While the forward combat teams were rapidly advancing towards their objectives, to the beach teams, landing during the afternoon of "D plus one" day, fell the tremendous task of developing the supply lines and handling the hundreds of tons of stores that poured in from the transport ships during the next few days (164). Operating in the face of adverse conditions of disorganized unloading schedules, overcrowded beaches (165), and a high running sea that made landings difficult and treacherous, the combined beach party, under the unflagging leadership of Lt-Col Dollard Menard, did a job deserving of the highest commendation.

136. As a result of the redistribution of personnel in the Brigade Headquarters Group strengths of the three beach combat teams had been increased from 370 each to 506, 534 and 556 respectively (166). Organizing each team into a Headquarters and four sections (beach, defence, supply and medical), with further subdivision into parties responsible for communications, shore and sea labour, engineer duties, dump operations, records, evacuation, and traffic control, the Beach Commander had under his orders a complex but well co-ordinated group that functioned in general with an efficiency that amazed US observers on the ships and on the shore (167).

137. There was one factor of the landing that tended to alleviate the difficulties faced by the Beach Commander. The decision to operate over a single beach made it possible for many like detachments of the three teams to be reunited, and the resulting centralization did much to ease the burden of administration and intercommunication. The fact, too, that no enemy opposition was encountered reduced to a minimum the need for beach security, but the original plan of dividing all available personnel into three shifts, - labour, guard, and rest, - was adhered to, and each man took his eight-hour tour of duty daily, patrolling the heights above the beach (167).

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UNLOADING OPERATIONS

138. The increased allotment of workers was still barely adequate to cope with the precipitous speed with which the landing barges began to pile stores ashore. The discovery that Red and Purple Beaches, northwards towards Kiska Lakes, were strewn with massive boulders instead of the fine gravel that aerial reconnaissance had reported, had resulted in US Tactical Group 184 moving in over the left half of Green Beach, causing further restriction in the narrow shoreline on which Canadian stores were now being landed (168). Boat-loads of American and Canadian stores came in together, eight to ten at a time, to be offloaded with the greatest rapidity and moved to their allotted dumps on the rise of ground 200 yards back from the water line. That the stretch of sand on the Canadian part of Green Beach was kept at all times cleared of stores points to the despatch with which the labour parties carried out their duties.

139. The work of the men of Le Regiment de Hull was magnificent. On the first afternoon, before the tractors were unloaded, all material had to be manhandled across the beach regardless of its size. Bulky cases of stores of all kinds, heavy boxes of ammunition, sacks of coal, barrels of petrol and oil, 5-gallon containers filled with water, - all were carried, dragged, rolled or passed from hand to hand up to the dumps. Morale was high, and no job was too tough for the troops to tackle. Men stripped to the skin to wade through icy water to unload landing craft that had grounded out of reach of the shore (169).

140. Supplies and stores were piled into eight separate and individually marked dumps:- ammunition, rations, oil and petrol, water, medical stores, coal, vehicles and miscellaneous stores (170). At each post officers or NCOs assigned from the appropriate services kept a record of all incoming items and outgoing issues, so that at any time a correct situation report could be made available to the Brigade Commander. Here again could be seen the good fortune that led to the establishment of one set of dumps instead of three, as the small Army Service Corps and Ordnance detachments found their hands full with the responsibility that the care of such great quantities of stores entailed (171).

THE WORK OF THE ENGINEERS

141. Although no enemy remained to man the machine gun nests and artillery positions commanding the bay and to sweep Green Beach with Japanese bullets and shells, the danger from land mines in the shore area early became apparent, when an American snow-jeep moving off the beach was blown into the air by a concealed explosive. To remove this threat to landing operations a detachment from the Beach Party, consisting of RCE personnel and men from Le Regiment de Hull conducted a methodical search throughout the whole beach area. Slowly advancing, at arm's length apart, step by step, they prodded the ground ahead of them with fixed bayonets and the pitchfork mine detectors, discovering in this way some eighty mines, which the engineers promptly rendered harmless (165). In general the Japanese landmines and booby-traps were poorly concealed and of crude construction. Pathways through the sand often led the searchers directly to one of the destructive packages, which usually consisted of a flat canister containing about three pounds of picric acid, perhaps hidden under a board that would produce detonation when stepped on with a pressure of thirty pounds or more (172).

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142. By the second morning vehicles and engineering equipment had all been unloaded, and caterpillar tractors, D-4's and D-6's were in operation, dragging loaded sleds from the landing craft, and pulling Athey trailers, piled high with material, up the slope to the dump area (173). Bulldozers started their attack upon Kiska's contour lines, and a strong working party from the beach was assigned to assist the engineers in pushing a road inland over which supply might advance to forward teams. On the high ground a volcanic shale formation provided a useful road bed, but in cutting through the muskeg of the lower slopes it was necessary to pour sled-load and trailer-load of rock and gravel into the apparently bottomless mass of shaking quagmire (174). While snowjeeps laden with rations were able to struggle through to the forward teams (175), it was not until two weeks later that RCE personnel with heavy US bulldozer equipment arrived overland from Kiska Harbour, and working advantageously from the top of the hill down towards the beach completed a road over which tractor-drawn trailer-loads could be moved (176).

UNLOADING STOPPED

143. For three days the unloading at Green Beach continued. Although by the second day it had been established beyond reasonable doubt that no Japanese remained alive, on the island, it was not until 18 Aug that the US Navy complied with a written request from the ATF 9 Commander, Gen Corlett, to cease piling stores ashore (177). The dumps had grown to huge proportions, and now arose the problem of their further disposition. Sorting of the miscellaneous dump and segregation of unit stores began. Since 18 Aug rations had been moving up on snow-jeeps to a forward dump at the junction of the new Green Beach Road and the Japanese-built Race Road, as had also a quantity of such essential engineer stores as cookstoves and heaters. While Athey trailers could come overland from the Canadian camp above Kiska Harbour to the high ground above Green Beach, it was still impossible for tractors to climb the first steep slope from where the dumps were situated without undergoing a slow and laborious process of winching (178). When an urgent call came through for the personal rucksacks and barrack bags of the forward combat teams, who had been living for more than a week in the limited clothing and equipment with which they landed, there was only one way to get the sorely needed baggage up to the road above. On their backs, making from four to six exhausting trips a day, labour parties of the Hulls packed one hundred and fifty tons of "B" bags and rucksacks up the spongy side of the hill to where the vehicles were waiting 300 feet above (179).

THE STAY AT GREEN BEACH

144. For nearly a month Canadians and Americans camped at Green Beach. It was indeed a "bivouac" camp. Except for the 6th US Field Hospital whose pyramidal tents were set up on the American end of the foreshore, all troops gained what protection they could from the adverse weather by erecting their pup tents under the protection of the hillside, or putting up makeshift shelters of tarpaulin barricaded with disused sleds and boxes. The main bivouac area, that occupied by Le Regiment de Hull, was among the tundra covered sand dunes back of Witchcraft Point on the south end of the beach. Bofors guns of the 46 Lt AA Battery strategically placed along the shore, and six-pounder anti-tank guns pointing out over Bamboo Bay, gave protection to the camp against sudden attack from sky or sea (169). The health of the troops was excellent as the rigorous programme of conditioning that they had undergone and the lessons in self care that they had learned bore fruits as they faced the physical attacks of fatigue and weather.

145. Two unsuccessful attempts were made to transport stores from Green Beach by water. Twice the labour parties moved tons of material from the dumps down to the tide mark, and each time a rising sea prevented the huge LST from effecting a landing. The third attempt succeeded, and the stores remaining in the dumps were put aboard for transshipment to Kiska Harbour (180). Rear parties of the combat teams had already left the area to join their units in the new camp, and advance parties of Le Regiment de Hull had begun work on the site allotted to the French Canadian battalion. With the removal of the last stores the main body vacated the beach for their new area, and on 11 Sep Lt-Col Menard and his rear party moved out, leaving Green Beach empty and silent for the first time since D-day (181).

XVI

COMMUNICATIONS

Brigade Difficulties with Communications - Organization -
Equipment - Training - Codes - The Operation - Recommendations.

BRIGADE DIFFICULTIES WITH COMMUNICATIONS

146. The preliminary report on the Kiska operation submitted on 3 Sep 43 by the Brigade Commander had the following to say about communications (22):-

"Throughout the operation one of the major problems faced by Comd and staff was that of communications. The difficulties experienced were due to several factors. These were:-

(a) New type equipment, issued at the last minute and without sufficient time or opportunity being allowed to permit personnel to become familiar with it.

(b) An organization put together, based on theory, and without full appreciation of the problems involved.

(c) Provision of personnel basically trained but who had never trained in an operational role.

(d) An elaborate system of codes and restrictions imposed for security measures but which tended to confuse personnel and slow up transmission."

From a consideration of each of these factors, dealing first with organization, and an examination of the actual operation, some recommendations for the organization of communications in any future force on a similar mission may be reached.

ORGANIZATION

147. The communications system for a tactical group employed in amphibious operations (182) provided in the initial phase for an advanced Brigade CP on shore to be in radio contact (using SCR 284s) with its rear HQ on board ship, as well as being connected (by 511 sets) with the forward combat teams moving inland (183). At the same time beach teams would be in communication on 284s with their respective transport ships and would keep touch with their

forward teams by means of the lighter 511 sets. As the situation developed the forward teams, moving up their heavy 284 sets and laying light combat wire along their advance, would keep in touch with their beaches by both R/T and L/T, while Brigade Signals, having established a command net (284s), became responsible for pushing forward heavy cable, No 110, to connect the forward teams with the Group Command Post, and thus supplement, and eventually replace, the brigade radio net. Communication between the Brigade CP and the beach was maintained by L/T.

148. To conform with this organization of communications it was decided to pool the RC Signals personnel of the Brigade and Field Regt HQ Sections, together with the signals platoon of the beach infantry battalion, and to reallocate them as detachment detailed to each of the forward and beach combat teams. This redistribution resulted in 7 officers and 110 other ranks becoming available from the following sources:- 13 Cdn Inf Bde Sec RC Signals, 2 and 36; 24 Fd Regt Sec RC Sigs, 4 and 39; Regt de Hull Sig Pl, 1 and 35. (49 RC Sigs personnel on the establishment of Bde HQ Signals Section remained with Headquarters throughout) (184).

149. The signals pool thus gathered was divided equally into three sections to serve the three BLGs. From each section detachments were allotted to operate the wireless sets on the beach net, one moving ahead with the forward combat team and the other staying on the transport ship. The remaining personnel were used to establish a beach message centre, and to assist the Bde HQ linesmen in maintaining the beach lines forward.

EQUIPMENT

150. In accordance with the general policy adopted by Greenlight planners of making use of American supply wherever feasible, all signal equipment carried by the force was of US issue. Not the least important factor in reaching this decision was the recognition of the necessity of having all equipment man portable. Canadian signal apparatus, the development of much of which had been largely based upon vehicular operations, had perforce to be rejected in favour of the American man-packed instruments (185).

151. The radio sets provided were the SCR 536, "Handy Talky", used by platoon and troop commanders on company or battery nets; the SCR 511, "Walky Talky", with a range of five miles, for employment by forward team commanders down to their subformations; and the large SCR 284, a three-man load, hand-generated set with a range of 20 miles R/T (or 30 miles C/W), utilized in the brigade command net and in the beach nets. It was with these 284 sets that the Canadians on the transport vessels "listened in" to the show in the Southern Sector on the day preceding the Green Beach landing (135).

152. Once they were in operation neither the 536 nor the 511 sets required adjusting as to frequency, the former being pre-set on one of six available wave lengths distributed through all companies, and the latter, with a variable band of six frequencies, being kept tuned to the particular channel allotted each combat team. While this arrangement undoubtedly contributed to ease of operation of the sets, the volume of signals traffic passing through the limited number of frequencies often caused overlapping that resulted in confusion and delay. Mechanically the US radio sets generally gave highly satisfactory service.

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153. The US Field Telephone, Type EE 8, with magneto ringing, replaced the D Mk V instrument, and proved to be more compact and rugged than the Canadian equivalent (186). The exchanges used, BD 71 and BD 72, six and twelve-line magneto drops type, were of an excessive weight as compared to the Canadian UC five and ten-line exchanges, the latter pattern being considered preferable if conditions of supply allowed their provision.

154. The light assault cable, W-130, provided by the American Signal Corps, weighing only 32 lbs per mile, was found excellent for initial communications (one man could carry two miles of wire) but had to be replaced at an early stage by the more rugged W-110 twisted field wire (130 lbs per mile), as the insulation on the lighter cable was quickly destroyed by the crossing of vehicles or the movement of troops (187).

155. To the group of signals personnel with varying amounts of training and experience gathered from all parts of Canada, time permitted only a demonstration of two types of American radio sets prior to embarkation at Nanaimo. Among the stores that continued to reach the point of embarkation right up to the last minute was the majority of the US provided signals equipment (188), and ordnance personnel could only make a very perfunctory check while spraying on camouflage paint before assigning it to the combat loads of the transport ships (59).

TRAINING

156. Collective training as a Brigade Signals Section cannot be said to have started to any definite extent until Adak was reached. Two exercises were held here, in addition to the Great Sitkin scheme, but for the majority of the time at this Aleutian training island all signals personnel were employed on internal communications or in the unpacking and repacking of equipment (115). As was the case with other units and detachments of the 13 TG, valuable lessons were learned from the Great Sitkin exercise, - experience of which pressure of time later unfortunately did not allow the fullest use being made. The unfamiliarity of signals personnel with their new equipment may have accounted in some measure for the tendency of signals officers to concern themselves too much with the technical and physical side of communications, instead of exploring the tactical situation with a view to ensuring the most efficient employment of their detachment. Best communications during the operation appear to have been maintained in those cases where the formation commander kept his signals officer completely in the picture. As one report puts it, "For two weeks the Combat Team commander lived with his signals officer in his pocket" (189).

CODES

157. The Signal Annex to Field Order No 1 of Landing Force 16.8 contained a series of schedules of codes and call signs for radio and telephone communication that to the Canadian signallers was staggering in its complexity (190). Code names were supplied for formation headquarters, combat teams, transport vessels, batteries, and staff officers of the entire Landing Force, the designations in the first three named categories changing daily. Thus No 14 Forward Combat Team became on successive days 8A3, 94T, 2D8, 13N, etc, while the Brigade Commander and the members of his staff became in order Limestone, Leopard, Legend, Layette and Lather, - their formation code name changing from day to day.

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158. A far greater obstacle in the path of the unfortunate Canadian signallers was the task of memorizing and applying in actual message the radio authenticator tables, and employing the telephone authentication system, a device intended to be used whenever any doubt existed as to the authenticity of either the sending or receiving party. Considerable adroitness would be required to put into operation either of these methods of authentication without causing delay in the transmission of urgent messages (191).

159. All this and similar material to be mastered was unloaded upon the Canadian signals at a four hour conference conducted at Adak under the US Force Chief Signals Officer. Col AR. St Louis, CSO Pacific Command, attended this meeting, and suggested that actually only three points were of importance:-

(a) That wave lengths should be allotted carefully to prevent jamming.

(b) That all should know each other's call letters.

(c) That they should "put elaborately prepared code books in their pockets and forget about them."

This was satisfactory to the US Command, who agreed to dispense with authentication in the case of Canadian messages.

THE OPERATION

160. To all the above factors that may have tended to mitigate against the efficient functioning of the communications system during the actual operations there must be added the unexpected feature of the rapidity of the Canadian advance. Heavily burdened linesmen laboured desperately up the steep hills, the weight upon their backs forcing their feet deep into the treacherous tundra, struggling to keep up with a command post that moved forward at a disheartening rate of speed (192).

161. The original plan of line communication called for eight pairs of heavy wire to be laid by Brigade Signals up the axis of advance to Random Creek, to connect with lines to the forward combat teams, but it was not until late in the afternoon of 17 Aug with the aid of a borrowed snow-jeep that a brigade line caught up with the forward position. During the first two days all telephone communications from the forward combat teams went back over their own beach lines to reach Rear HQ (193).

162. The Brigade Command Radio Net did not function according to plan due to shortages in the amount of signals equipment landed. Group HQ found itself without 284 sets with which to reach combat teams, but successful contact was maintained by using 511 sets tuned to the forward teams' allotted frequencies (184).

163. An American signal section of one officer and fifteen other ranks had been attached to 13 Brigade Signals just before the operation, its job being to maintain rear link wireless communication to Sector and Force HQ. Unfortunately the bulky 193 sets that it proposed to operate remained packed on a snow-jeep somewhere in the hold of a transport vessel. It was not until the evening of the second day that the US detachment having recovered its missing equipment caught up with Brigade HQ and relieved the Canadian signals of the communications work they had been carrying on for the American party on the Northern Sector net.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

164. From the experience gained with the Greenlight Force important recommendations have been submitted by the CSO, Pacific Command, and reference should be made to this appreciation (185). Among the more pertinent suggestions is the emphasis placed upon the need for a "capable Group Signals Officer, trained in combined operations, to serve on the operational staff of the Group Commander. He must be thoroughly in the operational picture at all times, capable of advising the Tactical Group Commander as to the limitations of time, range and vulnerability of the methods available to be employed in any proposed situation". In the suggested organization Tactical Group HQ would be served by a Signals Section (operating a Message Centre and Signal Office), and a Signal Supply Group established in close liaison with Ordnance and Supply troops. Forward and Beach Signals Section would comprise a number of well trained signal teams of 3, 5 or 8 men. In all some 34 teams would be available from the 364 other ranks on the present war establishment of an Amphibious Training Group. It is considered that the employment of such teams would give the flexibility desired to meet any situation that might arise.

XVII

MEDICAL SERVICES

Organization - Medical Supply - Lessons from Kiska - Plasma Equipment.

ORGANIZATION

165. In order to conform to the tactical organization of the 13 Cdn Inf Bde Gp it was necessary to reorganize the Medical Services and to build them around combat groups (194). The aim at all times was to make each combat team medically self-sufficient and self-sustained. To accomplish this personnel of the 25 Field Ambulance together with unit medical personnel were reorganized into three sections, in American terminology, the Battalion Medical Section, the Field Medical Section, and the Shore Medical Section. Their composition and functions were as follows:

166. The Battalion Medical Section was composed of:

Company Aid Men (Infantry Battalion - 10	
Battery RCA	- 2) ..12
Battalion Stretcher Bearers	12
Battalion Aid Station	8
Battalion Medical Officers	2

167. Company Aid Men supplied from infantry battalions and field batteries were thoroughly trained in Battle First Aid and carried with them well-equipped first aid kits. In the plan of evacuation of casualties (195) battalion stretcher bearers were responsible for collecting the wounded after preliminary treatment by the company aid men and carrying them to the Battalion Aid Station. This station, corresponding to a RAP, would be situated well forward provided with such shelter, tents, tarpaulins, caves or natural hollows as might be practicable. The Regimental Medical Officer with a second MO specially attached to the battalion, together with nursing orderlies and a cook, were assigned to the Battalion Aid Station for the care of casualties.

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168. The Field Medical Station consisted of the following:

Liaison agent.....	1
Field Stretcher Bearers.....	28
Field Aid Station	
Treatment.....	7
Supply.....	3 ...10
Field Medical Officer.....	1

169. Field Stretcher Bearers, armed with carbines and provided with first aid kits which would serve as a source of forward supply to the Battalion Aid Station, were responsible for movement of casualties from the advanced stations to the Shore Aid Station. At the Field Aid Station was the Field Medical Officer, who was senior medical officer of the Combat Medical Team. His chief tasks were the evacuation of casualties to the Shore Medical installations and the maintenance of supply to the Battalion Aid Stations. A liaison agent was attached to the Battalion Aid Station to keep the Field Medical Officer informed regarding its site and the state of its supplies.

170. The Shore Medical Section was made up of the following:-

Shore Administrative Group

Shore Dental Officer.....	1
Shore Medical Officer.....	1
Shore Supply Section.....	6
Clerk.....	1
Cook.....	1
Stretcher bearers.....	11
Dental assistants.....	2

Shore Aid Station

Medical Officer.....	1
Nursing Orderlies.....	8
Cook.....	1

171. The Shore Aid Station was to function from the time of landing until replaced by a platoon from the 6 US Field Hospital. It would then move forward either in support of the Field Aid Station or form a Field Clearing Station at the head of a road in conjunction with one or more Shore Aid Stations from other combat teams in the same area. The Administrative Group of the Shore Medical Section contained personnel and equipment to consolidate all medical returns for the BCT and to handle medical supplies as they are landed. It also provided stretcher bearers (who were drawn from the Regiment de Hull) to assist in the evacuation of casualties from the shore medical installations to high-water mark on the beach, where they become the responsibility of naval medical services. The Shore Medical Officer assisted by the Shore Dental Officer was responsible for liaison with the Naval Medical Officer regarding evacuation of casualties, the consolidation of medical returns for the Battalion Combat Team, the maintenance of supply forward from the beach, and the supervision of sanitation in the shore area. The administration of all medical supplies, equipment and personnel was carried out by the Brigade Surgeon (Lt-Col TM Brown, OC 25 Field Ambulance RCAMC) assisted by his 2 i/c and the Field Medical Officer of each battalion combat team.

MEDICAL SUPPLY

172. Medical supply personnel were distributed in the Brigade Group as follows:

Battalion Medical Section	1
Field Medical Section	3

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Shore Medical Section 6
HQ Field Ambulance Group.....10

173. It was not anticipated that tracked vehicles could be used for the movement of medical supplies in the early stages of operations. Equipment was therefore divided into three categories:

- 1) Man-carried
- 2) Priority loaded equipment
- 3) Non-priority loaded equipment

1) Man-carried supply, which included enough medical supplies and ordnance equipment to allow for the care of casualties for at least 36 hours, was packed in loads of not more than fifty pounds, and distributed so that loss of any one load would not seriously handicap the functioning of the respective installations. Such equipment was carried by stretcher, rucksacks, and pack boards, field bags, or barrack bags.

2) Priority loaded equipment consisted of: (a) essential medical supplies too heavy to be man-carried, (b) essential equipment to shelter, feed and care for casualties and (c) initial medical replenishments. The movement of such supply when tracked vehicles became available would be a matter of liaison between the Shore Administrative Medical Officer and the Shore Supply Officer of Le Regiment de Hull.

3) Non-priority loads contained the bulk of medical supplies, barrack equipment and all other extra equipment.

174. Evacuation of casualties beyond the beach was to be carried out by the US Navy in conjunction with Alaska Defence Command. All cases except those requiring a long period of recovery were to be held in US hospitals in Alaska and returned to their units there. Other cases would be transported by sea or air, depending upon the nature of the casualty, to Canadian or US hospitals on the mainland. Based on previous operations it was tentatively estimated that total Canadian casualties might amount to 1800, of which some 1300 would require evacuation to stationary hospitals, with some 350 to 400 of those serious enough to be sent to the mainland (196). For such a number adequate hospital accommodation was available in Alaska and in Pacific Command (197).

LESSONS FROM KISKA

175. Although the unexpected turn of events at Kiska gave the medical service virtually no opportunity to put its plan of casualty evacuation to a practical test, it is the consensus of considered opinion that the changed organization of the Field Ambulance was entirely sound (198). As had been anticipated, all carrying had to be done by hand over the most difficult kind of terrain, and the task of keeping the Battalion Medical Section well forward with the rapidly advancing combat teams tested to the limit the physical stamina of the bearers. The difficult and lengthy process of moving a loaded stretcher long distances over the uncertain footing provided by tundra and down steep hills where skilled use of ropes and pulleys was often needed, emphasized the need for stretcher bearers trained to the peak of physical strength and fitness. It was the opinion of the Brigade Surgeon that had the number of casualties reached the expected estimate, the number of stretcher bearers in the various medical sections would have been inadequate, and it would have been necessary to demand auxiliary bearers from other sources.

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176. The difficulty of maintaining communications between the forward Battalion Medical Section and the Shore Medical Section suggested that for future operations of a similar nature the Brigade Surgeon should move with Advanced Brigade HQ to correlate the medical plans to the tactical situation. For the same reason the senior medical officer of the battalion combat team could function to better advantage if he were a Field Ambulance Officer attached to the battalion to be part of the team commander's recce and order groups (199). The major objection to such a disposition of control would seem to be the desirability of keeping the forward operational headquarters, both brigade and battalion, as compact and mobile as possible, and free of attachments from the administrative services.

PLASMA EQUIPMENT

177. All Canadian plasma transfusion equipment was replaced in Adak by American issue (200). It appeared that the Canadian equipment as supplied was best suited for use under regular hospital conditions, requiring as it did the mixing of plasma with water by openly pouring from one flask to another regardless of sterile conditions. An additional defect was the comparatively painfully large 16-gauge needle employed. The American equipment was so designed that mixing of the plasma was effected without exposure to the air, while the injection needle was only 18-gauge. The relative advantages of the US and Canadian plasma units are discussed in an appendix to this section (201).

XVIII

SETTLING DOWN

Accommodation - Supply - Daily Occupations - Morale -
Casualties - Postal Services - Pay - Honors and Awards

ACCOMMODATION

178. General Order No 1, issued on 24 Aug 43 by Gen Corlett to ATF 9, commending all officers and men for the part they had played in the occupation of Kiska, concluded with these words:

"It remains for us to establish ourselves here, secure against the enemy and in comfort. This will require hard work for all of us. The results of these efforts can be definitely foreseen. We will all have comfortable, heated huts or tents to live in, good water, baths, good roads, theatres, and recreation halls. All of these things are in prospect but through efficient planning and hard work we must make them come true." (202)

179. Observation of the astounding accomplishments of the US Engineer and Quartermaster Corps in establishing the various military installations on similar islands up and down the Aleutian Chain leads one to believe that the General was not promising the impossible. Nor were the Canadians afraid of the hard work that was indicated. For the next two months all units became labour detachments, paradoxically digging in for the Kiska Christmas that they hoped never to see.

180. The work of erecting tents and "winterizing" them claimed priority over all other tasks. As it was expected that Quanset or Pacific Huts would be issued at a later date, all excavations

for tents were made large enough to accommodate a 36-foot hut. In these dugouts, protected from 80-mile-an-hour "Williwaws" by 5-foot revetments, the American pyramidal tents were set up, - usually in pairs. Lightproof, and as waterproof as any protection made of canvas can be in the blast-driven rain of the Aleutians, these tents with their straight sides making for ease of extensibility are considered better in such conditions than the Canadian bell or marquee. When properly sited only the pyramidal top appears above the protecting revetment, but unfortunately even this limited amount of resistance proves sufficient target to the Kiska winds, and an early November gale that was estimated to run to gusts of 110 miles per hour, flattened close to thirty tents in the lines of one exposed unit at the top of Salmon Pass (203). The one Pacific Hut issued per unit was definitely earmarked for orderly room or re-creation room, so that all ranks were apparently destined to continue to sleep in tents during their stay on Kiska.

181. While a small coal heater in each tent provided cheerful warmth, lighting facilities were in the main restricted to a limited supply of candles. Some units were fortunate enough to resurrect old Japanese generators, whose fitful current supplied a rather wavering but definitely appreciated illumination (204), but an impending famine in light bulbs, which had a high rate of mortality in the storm-battered tents, threatened an enforced return to the universal dimness of candlelight.

SUPPLY

182. After existing for more than a week on K, D, and C rations, all units of the Canadian Force were glad to be placed on a daily schedule of B-ration issue from RCASC (205). Early in September a US Field Bakery commenced supplying bread to the force (206). Supply dumps were built up in the Canadian Brigade area to provide a 30-day stock (207). Distribution of coal, wood, POL, and rations was soon a matter of daily routine, as units hauled their supplies back to their lines on Athey trailers. Water, diverted from a stream above the camp and carried through Japanese pipes to a storage tank, was hauled in US 5-gallon cans, individually on a pack board, or collectively by tractor and trailer.

183. The task of the small RCASC detachment throughout the preliminary moves and the final operation was most exacting. Badly understaffed, and from the nature of its duties frequently forced to operate on a 24-hour basis, handicapped by complete lack of transport, and faced at times with forward supply lines that grew far more rapidly than did the ration dumps on the beach stunted as they were by faulty offloading of transport ships, the detachment of thirty odd men and their officers performed a job that reflected the highest credit upon them. Should a Canadian force be called upon again to serve in a similar capacity to Greenlight, undoubtedly a careful review will be made of the establishment allowed the RCASC detachment, with a view to a more equitable allotment of personnel to the tasks assigned (208).

DAILY OCCUPATIONS

184. Three major occupations employed the working hours of the Canadian troops on Kiska during September, October and November, - labour, defence and training. In addition to the task of providing themselves with habitable living quarters and wrestling with road building in the tenacious mud that immediately appears whenever surface tundra is worn down or removed, each unit supplied large fatigue quotas to attack the freight-laden beach below Kiska Village (209), or to assist the 24 Fd Coy RCE in its heavy assignment of completing the two-berth, 90-ft wide, No 1 Pier in

Kiska Harbour (210).

185. The defence role assigned to the 13 Brigade Group found the 24 Fd Regt RCA manning all its guns in twenty-four gun pits strategically placed throughout the Northern Sector, while the 46 Light AA Battery had thirteen Bofors in action, forming an important part of the anti-aircraft defence scheme of the whole island (211). The month of September found sections of "C" Coy, Saint John Fusiliers busily engaged in digging positions for their machine guns on Lady Hill and Rose Hill, sites that covered the west shore of the island north to Witchcraft Point and the northern boundary from West Kiska Lake to Soldier Bay (212). US artillery officers made no secret of their admiration for the skillful way in which the Canadian gunsites and A/A posts were located, protected and camouflaged.

186. Infantry battalions sent daily patrols around the Northern Sector's perimeter, and supplied outpost details for a month at a time. With their tents well dug in at lonely but strategic points along the island shores these coast watchers, usually at section or platoon strength, would keep in hourly contact with their unit headquarters by radio or telephone (213).

187. While at first sight there might appear to be something anti-climactical about going into training in a place of so obvious an operational nature as Kiska, brigade and unit authority wisely decided that both necessity and opportunity pointed the way towards progress in the training programme that embarkation at Nanaimo had interrupted. By the end of October all infantry units in the Canadian camp had participated in valuable field firing exercises on the Maple Hill and Moron Lake ranges, with 6-pdr shoots being held at Rainbow Creek (214), while the 46 Light AA Bty (215) and the 24 Fd Regt RCA (216) had also had opportunities of testing their weapons. As far as the Engineers, Ordnance and Army Service personnel were concerned, their daily duties in construction, maintenance and supply not only fully occupied their time but gave them practical experience of the most useful kind.

MORALE

188. What of the morale of the troops on Kiska? If one of the NRMA personnel there had been asked to compile a list of all his grievances, he might have supplied a catalogue something like this:- the unfairness of the Government in sending him to the Aleutians when he had believed that he could not be used outside of Canada; his failure to get embarkation leave, a grievance intensified by the CB imposed upon the Nanaimo camp prior to sailing: the "let-down" after being keyed for action at Green Beach; the possibility that the "promise" to get him home for Christmas might not be kept (217); the weather, with its depressing fog, its discomforting rain, and the savage wind that if it does not wreck his tent will madden him with an all night buffeting that makes sleep impossible (218); the mud in which he wades ankle-to knee-deep while wondering if his sodden garments will dry out before morning; the lack of mail, particularly the time when none was delivered to the Canadians between 8 Aug and 31 Aug (couldn't the Government afford a plane or boat to bring it over from Adak?) (219); no huts, and no lights but strictly rationed candles; the belief that the Americans on Kiska were getting better and more supplies than were the Canadians (220), the lack of entertainment (he hears that on the other islands the Americans have USO shows, with girl entertainers, - here he just gets one picture show a week in the mess tent); the absence of a wet canteen.

189. Having delivered himself of so prolonged a "grouch" our subject would probably feel better, and be in a more receptive mood to listen to an enumeration of the credit entries on the balance sheet of his morale. An unbiased appraisal of the situation would bring out the following factors of his environment, - all positive builders of morale.

190. Health was good, the splendid physical condition of the men having provided them with apparent immunity against the attacks of the dampness and cold in their surroundings. Early in September a surgery was set up by the 25 Field Ambulance to handle minor surgery cases (221). By the middle of the month ^{the} clinic of the 14 Dental Det CDC was ready for use, and morning parades ministered to the dental needs of the different units, who supplied patients on a limited quota basis until the first heavy demand for professional attention had been met (222). Full dental treatment was given, including the provision of artificial dentures until the lab's supply of teeth ran out in early October (223).

191. Rations were plentiful and generally popular in their quality and variety. (Although a steady course of "Spam" (224) and "Corned Beef Hash" might produce an intense craving for fresh meat and vegetables, there were compensations in the provision of generous allowances of such attractive dietary additions as mixed pickles, canned fruit salad, and real peanut butter.) The periodic issue of the rum ration, distributed first to counteract the exactions of fatigue and exposure at Green Beach, and later generally on a Saturday night, when reminiscences of distant week-end leaves were most likely to be undermining the morale, proved a great booster to the spirits of the Canadians, and made them the object of intense envy on the part of their less favoured American neighbours (225).

192. Under the direction of the S-1 (Maj TA McWaters), with unit arrangements being supervised by regimental officers and the chaplains, all possible entertainment facilities were utilized for the welfare of the men. "A" and "B" Kits of recreational supplies were provided by the US Special Service Division (comparable to Canadian Auxiliary Services) and distributed on a pro-rata basis. Seven "A" Kits were received, each packed in an adequately strong box, with the following welcome contents (226):-

1 Baseball outfit complete	1 Set of Horseshoes
3 Volley Ball Games complete	2 Sets of Table Tennis
3 Footballs	1 Dart Game
3 Rugby Footballs	1 Bingo Game
2 Sets of Boxing Gloves	Gards, Poker Chips, etc.

The "B" Kits, thirty of which were received for distribution, each contained:-

1 Radio Battery or Electric	1 Gramophone, with 20 Records
100 Penguin Library Books	6 Song Books

193. In late September a moving picture projector with a limited supply of films was made available to the Canadian camp (227), and all ranks looked forward eagerly to the weekly showing of a Hollywood drama, viewed in two or three sittings per unit in the crowded confines of mess tent or recreation hut. While musically inclined members of Greenlight were not encouraged to bring their instruments with them (one shudders to contemplate the probable fate of a Spanish guitar in the process of off-loading from ship to shore), ingenuity and determination conquers all obstacles, and the majority of units found little difficulty in organizing a weekly or fortnightly concert from the talent that so often lay innate in its nominal roll (228).

194. But probably the factor that did most to keep up the military self respect of the Canadian soldier on Kiska was the wise retention of a daily routine of parades, training and interior economy throughout the entire camp. From Brigade Headquarters down, units formed up smartly for inspection each morning on such limited parade grounds as Kiska's rolling topography would grudgingly afford, while from Reveille to Last Post the familiar calls rang out across the bleak Aleutian hills, boldly sounded by Canadian bugles (229). The tidiness of the Canadian lines, with tent revetments neatly sandbagged, and in some cases skillfully banked with stone from the hill-sides, drew the unsolicited admiration of American service visitors to the area (230). Church services were held each Sunday, with many units attending as a body. The practice of at least one battalion in assigning a portion of the censorship duties to the regimental chaplain gave that padre the means of keeping his finger on the pulse of the unit morale, and, as a result, the weekly sermon reached far into the hearts of the men as it analyzed their grievances and did much to resolve their problems (231).

195. Actions speak more loudly than words. The average soldier on Kiska might not hesitate to exercise his traditional right of grumbling (and he had not far to look for subject matter) but seriously disgruntled troops of low morale could hardly be expected to give a very active support to their Government's Victory Loan appeal. When the Fifth Victory Loan campaign came to Kiska, Canadian troops quickly over-subscribed their quota, finally reaching a total of a quarter of a million dollars! (232)

CASUALTIES

196. To the end of October Canadian casualties sustained at Kiska amounted to four killed and some thirty wounded, sick and injured (233). Of the fatalities two were killed by enemy action (Lieut. S. Vessey RMR, and Pte. Poshtar P. Wpg Gren) while two were listed as accidentally killed (Pte Boisclair G., and Pte Desjardins G., both of R de Hull). Pte Poshtar, a member of the Intelligence Section of his unit, met his death on 22 Aug at the entrance of a tunnel when he apparently kicked a trip-wire which detonated two Japanese anti-personnel mines (234). Pte Boisclair was killed at Mill Hill, on 29 Aug, by the explosion of a Japanese No 89 Mortar Grenade which he had found in an enemy ammunition dump (235). Le Regt de Hull's other fatality occurred on 28 Sep, when Pte Desjardins, on fatigue duty in the Sorting Yard area, was instantly killed by the explosion of a heavy calibre US naval shell which, it is thought, he must have banged on the nose with a shovel (236).

197. The bodies of the Canadian dead were first interred in various spots on the island, at or near the sites of their deaths. On 16 Oct they were moved to the US burial ground on the face of a hill overlooking Kiska Harbour (M3175), where the graves would always receive care and attention (237). Proper administrative arrangements were completed to ensure suitable marking of the Canadian plots.

POSTAL SERVICES

198. Among all the administrative arrangements for the welfare of the Canadian troops on Kiska, undoubtedly the one that came in for most criticism from officers and men was that concerning the arrival and departure of mail. Unit war diaries during August, September and October contain frequent references to

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the disappointment of all ranks at not receiving mail regularly, and such allusions are invariably accompanied by comments upon the resulting adverse effect upon morale (238). The longest wait came when no mail reached Canadian troops between the time of their embarking at Adak on 8 Aug, and the arrival at Kiska on 31 Aug of the rear party, including the Postal Detachment, who brought with them 150 bags of mail that had accumulated at Adak (239). Deliveries were made at the middle and the end of September, and with increasing frequency during October. Outgoing mail left the island only five times prior to 22 Oct (240), and incoming letters brought many inquiries regarding the irregularity of the service,

199. The delays were apparently occasioned by transportation difficulties between Adak and Kiska. (Once mail arrived on the island an energetic postal staff would work all night if necessary to ensure its early delivery to units next morning) (241). The large transport planes of the US Army Air Force, that made almost daily trips up and down the Aleutian Chain, carrying passengers, mail and freight could not land on the small Japanese-built airfield at Kiska, so that airborne matter consigned for Kiska had to be held at Adak for transshipment by water. The inauguration, late in October, of a twice weekly service of flights between Amchitka and Kiska by a small P-64 cabin plane promised to improve the situation, but unfavorable flying conditions wrecked the schedule, and Amchitka, with some 2000 lbs of mail for Kiska accumulating at the airport, was rapidly replacing Adak as a bottle neck to Canadian hopes (242).

200. US censorship regulations were appreciably relaxed for Canadians writing home from Kiska. In view of the fact that the names of Canadian units taking part in the Kiska operation were released by radio and press in the Dominion, HQ Alaska Defence Command was persuaded, after urgent representations on the part of the 13 Bde S-2 had been made to the US Censor Officer on the island (243), to permit correspondents to mention Kiska by name, describe the weather "in general terms" (such as "the wind blows a great deal"; "it rains a great deal"), and to mention life in tents ("no discussion of behaviour of tents under adverse weather conditions will be permitted") (244). As one diarist put it, easing of the censorship regulations removed a situation where "a man might quite conceivably receive a clipping from his home town paper of his photo with the caption, "Captures Kiska", and would have to write in reply, "Dear Maggie, I'm on an island somewhere, I can't say where'" (243).

PAY

201. With the breaking up of combat teams into their separate units, small orphaned detachments were re-attached to larger units for pay purposes, and semi-monthly pay parades were held as usual (245). Officers and men were quick to see possibilities connected with rates of exchange, and after every pay day the Army Post Office was besieged with applications for money order to Canada, purchased advantageously with US funds (246). By the same token a large part of the Victor, Loan bought by Canadian troops was paid for in cash, the exchange providing a useful discount.

202. Geographically minded officers of Greenlight were quick to discover that longitude 177 deg 30 min EAST passed through Witchcraft Point, and not less quick in appealing for a rebate of all income tax on the grounds of their location in the EASTERN Hemisphere (247). But they were doomed to disappointment (248). While administrative authorities at Pacific Command HQ

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pointed to the bend in the International Date Line that placed Kiska in the Western Hemisphere for purposes of Time, an NDHQ ruling through the PMG pointed out that

"the United States say the island is in the Western Hemisphere. There is no overriding authority to argue that it is not, therefore Kiska must of necessity be where its owners say it is - in the Western Hemisphere" (249).

Canadian officers on Kiska continued to pay income tax at one-half the Canadian rate, but the feeling remained that it was inequitable for personnel who had faced expected enemy opposition in so far-removed a theatre of war to receive less consideration than officers and men serving overseas in England (250).

HONORS AND AWARDS

203. The authority of US Commanding Generals to award decorations and confer promotions on the battlefield was not extended to the Canadian Commander of Greenlight (26). A ruling from NDHQ did however provide that "immediate awards made by the American Commander in consultation with the senior Canadian commander in the field, not below the rank of brigadier, shall be deemed to have been made with the concurrence of the Canadian Government" (251). While this emergency authority was not used, at the request of the Commanding General of the US Force the names of two Canadians, Lieut S Vessey, RM Rang and Fus DY Mills, Cdn Fus, were submitted for the award of the Order of the Purple Heart (158)(159).

204. At the conclusion of the operation in August, the Canadian Brigade Commander recommended for recognition in the New Year's Honours List some 25 officers and 20 other ranks "for their untiring devotion to duty under prolonged and exacting circumstances" (252). One officer (Lieut. John Corner RM Rang) and three other ranks were cited for specific acts of a courageous nature, performed in the operation and during the movement from Canada (253), a list that was later added to when on 28 Aug the presence of mind of a RM Rang private soldier in dealing with an exploding grenade saved three other ranks from serious injury or possible death (254).

205. US recognition of the service of the Greenlight Force in the defence of Alaska and the Aleutians, with special emphasis upon the part personally played by the GOC-in-C, Pacific Command, was fittingly shown, on 6 Nov 43, when Gen Pearkes was decorated by Gen Buckner, acting at the direction of President Roosevelt, with the Legion of Merit, for "exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service" (255). In making the presentation Gen Buckner voiced an opinion that is echoed wherever Canadians and Americans have served together: "A better acquaintance with the Canadians is one of the good results of this war". (256).

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XIX

ACCOUNTING FOR GREENLIGHT

The Original Arrangements - The Need for Revision -
Losses of Stores

THE ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS

206. Original plans for accounting for American supplies and stores issued to Greenlight had provided for settlement being made in three ways (257).

(1) US equipment and stores furnished the force in Canada and forming the combat and maintenance loads on the transport ships would be paid for by the Canadian Government on the basis of shipping tickets as delivered.

(2) Automatic supply of subsistence and fuel would be settled for on a per capita basis.

(3) Additional maintenance equipment and stores drawn on requisition by 13 Cdn Inf Bde Coy in the Aleutian area would be accounted for by supporting priced shipping tickets covering the US tally out charges (258).

207. The ultimate settlement for items (2) and (3) of the foregoing presented no serious problem other than the enormous amount of bookkeeping necessarily involved. Accurate strength returns provided the means of making use of a capitation basis. At a meeting held at Vancouver Barracks on 11 Oct 43, attended by administrative representatives of Pacific Command, the RCAF and US Army, daily rates in US currency were recommended as follows, (259)

For Class I Stores - Rations, 64.5 cents per capita per day.

For Class III Stores - Fuel (Including liquid and solid heating fuels, lubricants, gasoline, oil), 28.5 cents per capita per day.

While it was agreed that there would be a simplification of accounting were it possible to establish an overall capitation rate covering all classes of stores and supplies, the difficulties and complications in the way of determining such a rate on a sound basis appeared too formidable. It was considered that all such stores should be paid for at the actual costs shown on shipping tickets (259a)

THE NEED FOR REVISION

208. Settlement for the stores referred to in item 1 above, presented a more difficult problem. The 30- and 60-day maintenance supplies for the Canadian troops that had been charged to the account of the Canadian Government (the bill at the end of September was over one and a half million dollars) (260) and carried in the combat ships and on the freighter "BURKE", were not dealt with kindly by the US Navy in Bamboo Bay and Kiska Harbour. "Naval authorities insisted in piling thousands of tons of supplies on the shore, in whatever fashion they had managed to lift them from holds of the ships, regardless of loading plan or ownership" (261). There was inevitable loss from breakage, weather, tide, and pilfering (262).

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209. Salvaging of the mountains of stores on the narrow beach of Kiska Harbour became a US responsibility, and an agreement was reached between the DDOS, Pac Comd, and US Army officers representing Alaskan Defence Command, to recommend to WDC the cancellation of all US charges against the Canadian Government for all such 30- and 60-day maintenance supplies. Instead the assessment against the Dominion for maintenance subsequent to Greenlight's embarkation would consist of the daily capititation rate for subsistence and fuel, and the cost of stores or services actually delivered to the Force (262). It became the task of the Administrative Staff, Pacific Command, to sort out and tabulate the complete charges against the Dominion Government, having regard to (a) US stores delivered to the Greenlight Force prior to embarkation; (b) stores returned to Seattle unused; (c) stores taken by 13 Cdn Inf Bde to Adak and Kiska but subsequently returned to the Force pool at Kiska (263). Final figures were still lacking nearly a year after the brigades return to Canada.

LOSSES OF STORES

210. The loss of a certain amount of stores and equipment on charge to units and individuals was to a large extent unavoidable. Brigade Daily Orders during September carried inquiries regarding missing boxes marked with unit serial numbers (264), and numerous courts of inquiry were held to investigate the loss of personal equipment and the contents of rucksacks and "B-bags" (265). Reports of pilfering were common but hard to substantiate (266). While personnel of the US Navy and the SSF were prominently mentioned in this regard, war diaries contain allegations suggesting that the Canadians were not altogether blameless (266). Perhaps the matter can be summed up in the suggestion of the Brigade Commander, that troops coming upon broken boxes of stores decided to do their own salvaging from the possible damage of tide and weather (267).

XX

THE VALUE OF GREENLIGHT

The training value - Lessons learned from Greenlight -
Organization - Equipment and Supply - Landing Operations -
The Employment of NRMA Personnel - Japanese not Invincible

THE TRAINING VALUE

211. The Japanese Operation Order for the evacuation of Kiska was issued on 8 Jul 43 (268). Greenlight Force, after a month of mobilization, sailed from Canada on 12 Jul 43. To what extent the preparations for the Canadian move influenced the plans of the enemy will not be known until a post-war study of Japanese intelligence files may become possible. But even though the Canadian force was frustrated in its hopes of actual contact with the enemy, and although the 11th Air Force claimed that it was US air power that caused the Japanese to leave Kiska (269), the military value of Greenlight must not be underestimated.

212. American and Canadian officers agree that the training value of the Kiska operation was excellent (270). Nowhere in Canada could such exacting conditions of terrain and weather

have been simulated, and throughout the whole procedure up to the final occupation of the island the factor of realism, ever present, placed the training in the category of operations. There were various mistakes, particularly in the exercises held at Adak and Great Sitkin (271), but units and formations were quick to profit by the lessons that their errors taught them (272), and weaknesses that showed up in the final operation will presumably receive corrective attention in future training plans (273). The Pacific Command had been occupying a role of static defense for three and a half years, and the rapid organization and training of the Greenlight Force revealed the existence among operational units of many conditions that required remedial action (274).

LESSONS LEARNED FROM GREENLIGHT

213. In many respects Greenlight was an experiment, - not an experiment the uncertain outcome of which might be either success or failure (to US and Canadian planners there could only be one result), but an experiment to prove how efficiently Canadian troops could participate with US forces in an amphibious operation American transported and American supplied. Many lessons with regard to organization, administration and supply have been learned. Detailed reports making recommendations for the future have been submitted by Greenlight units (275), by the Brigade Comdr 13 Cdn Inf Bde (276) and by heads of services at HQ Pacific Command (277). These reports are receiving careful attention at NDHQ and at CMHQ (278).

ORGANIZATION

214. In the organization of the Canadian Brigade Tactical Group it was suggested (276) that an adequate HQ staff be established to make calls on unit regimental officers unnecessary. In the same way an increased establishment for BLG HQ staffs was recommended. While the composition of FCTs required no change, there appeared to be a definite case for enlarging the BCTs. Particular stress was laid upon the need for additional engineer personnel (279), increased RCASC (280) and ordnance stores detachments (59), and the provision of more RCAMC personnel as stretcher bearers (281). These are establishment problems that require careful consideration by future planners.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY

215. Much has been written in various reports about the comparative merits of US and Canadian pattern equipment and stores, with a view to making selections in future joint operations. To the DDOS Pacific Command there is only one question, - how can maintenance be secured? The logistical problems facing the Americans along the Aleutian Chain were gigantic, and they have been solved on a gigantic scale. Under US policy six months' bulk supply of all stores is maintained in huge dumps in every operational area, and a small army of Quartermaster Corps personnel is required to handle these ample reserves. Unless it is intended in future activities with US forces to establish all-Canadian supply lines with the provision of the necessary dispersal areas, storage houses, shipping facilities and manpower, it would appear that "while the original issue might be to a large extent Canadian, any future plans must contemplate almost complete replacement and all maintenance services beyond the first echelon being contributed from US sources" (277 ii).

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216. With the foregoing recommendation in mind it becomes a matter of satisfaction that the majority of US clothing, equipment and stores issued to the Canadians was reported on favourably by Greenlight personnel (277 iv). Preference was generally expressed however for Canadian pattern web equipment (282), Canadian pattern knives, forks and spoons (283), and Canadian battle dress (284). Such items of Canadian provision being used for the first time as the rubber shoe pack and the Yukon packboard were found highly satisfactory, and the newly adopted US pattern steel helmet with liner was "unanimously considered superior to the old British pattern both from the point of view of comfort and serviceability" (277 iv).

217. The question of how much clothing and equipment should be issued to the man and how much should remain in unit stores until needed came to the fore in the operation. Experience from Attu, where US troops had suffered acutely from exposure on snow covered hills, led to the decision to issue all ranks with an adequate supply of winter clothing. This not only added to the physical burdening of the man with heavy loaded rucksack and barrack bag, it added to his financial responsibility, - a responsibility that was difficult to safeguard when he was separated for days at a time, from the expensive equipment and clothing in his charge. It was the recommendation of the Greenlight commander that as much as possible of this heavy clothing should remain in unit or ordnance stores until climatic conditions warranted its issue (276).

LANDING OPERATIONS

218. Lessons learnt from the landing operations with regard to the need for correct combat loading, and the problem of offloading schedules have already been emphasized (285), and recommendations regarding communications (286) and medical services (287) were dealt with in their appropriate sections above. The report of the CEO Pacific Command (277 i) dealt with the adequacy of the engineer equipment on the beaches, and suggested the elimination of the D-4 type of bulldozer as being too light for operations of this kind. The steep banks above Green Beach were too much of an obstacle for tractors, and the provision of a heavy winch per combat team for moving freight and guns up the first sharp rise was recommended for future use, where similar topographical features are likely to be encountered. For early road building it was suggested that a number of 2½-ton dump trucks should accompany the landing party ashore. The snow jeep (cargo carrier light, T-15) proved its usefulness for the transportation of light loads over terrain that heavier tractors could not negotiate, and in the first week, before a road had been cut through from the beach, the demand for these vehicles far exceeded the supply. They were not meant for heavy loads, and the rocky surface of the upland ridges soon played havoc with their caterpillar treads and bogey wheels (288).

THE EMPLOYMENT OF NRMA PERSONNEL

219. The use in an active operational role of units largely composed of NRMA personnel conclusively proved two things. To the NRMA troops themselves it showed that they need labour no longer under the unwarranted delusion that they could not be employed beyond Canadian shores. To their comrades and their officers, it proved that these men could do as good a job as the next fellow when circumstances demanded it. There was little talk of "active" and "HD" personnel on Kiska. United action in the face of common difficulties and adversities welded together a group who would now be proud to call themselves soldiers (289).

JAPANESE NOT INVINCIBLE

220. Finally, the occupation of Kiska removed the Japanese threat against the North American continent. It marked too the first occasion on which Japanese had fled in the face of opposition. As Gen Pearkes put it, "The fable that all Japs will fight to the death has been debunked" (290). With the Aleutians freed from the enemy the way was paved for the next move on the road to Tokyo, whenever, it might come, and Greenlight personnel hoped that they would not have long to wait for that move.

XXI

WHERE WERE THE JAPANESE?

Intelligence Evaluation - Japanese Radio Reports - Conclusion

INTELLIGENCE EVALUATION

221. The discovery on 16 Aug that Kiska was entirely free from Japanese occupation raised the question as to the time and manner of their evacuation. If we except the explanations given by radio Tokyo probably the most accurate estimate produced so far is the evaluation made by the G-2, Adv CP, Alaska Department, following a careful analysis of all available information (291).

222. His report indicates that the main body of the enemy forces evacuated the island on 28 July (29 Jul, Japan time). This force, amounting to approximately 7800 men, left either by barges that took them to waiting ships of the Fifth Fleet, or by submarines. Their destination, referred to in operation orders as "X", is assumed to have been Paramushiru. It appears possible that a small garrison of fifty or sixty men remained on Kiska to give some semblance of continued action in order to cover the withdrawal of the main body. This residue was apparently removed during the second week in August, - probably by submarine.

223. While the final withdrawal of the main body was evidently completed at great speed (many indications in the abandoned camp pointing to a hasty departure), a captured document shows that a definite plan for an organized evacuation was made known to all the garrison as early as 8 Jul. Aerial photographs taken from 22 Jul on gave evidence of what might be preparations for evacuation. They showed some barracks in the Main Camp area being demolished, the removal of a few guns from North Head positions, and unusual activity of barges far out in Kiska Harbour.

224. On 28 Jul the Japanese radio on Kiska lapsed into a silence never subsequently broken. From then on bombing and reconnaissance missions returning to Amchitka reported only light small arms fire or no anti-aircraft fire at all. Twelve heavy naval bombardments during the first two weeks of August brought no response from enemy positions. While Air Force pilots from time to time reported such signs of continued occupation as freshly-dug trenches, with hillside emplacements manned by visible troops, the later discovery on Kiska of false emplacements where only the top sod had been removed, and rows of dummy figures made of piled rocks, indicated that aerial observers might well have been the victims of skillful Japanese deception (292).

JAPANESE RADIO REPORTS

225. The Tokyo radio, playing up for all it was worth the two weeks' shelling and bombing of a "ghost" island, and the frustrated vigilance of the US Navy, declared the evacuation of Kiska to have been part of the Japanese major strategy. The completion of the inner Empire defences at Paramushiro made it no longer necessary for the outpost defences in the Aleutians to be maintained. Hence the withdrawal. A Japanese reporter speaks of the Dunkerque-like providential protection of the weather that enabled the evacuation to be successfully completed. A thick curtain of fog shielded the relieving ships from American naval observation; the fog miraculously lifted to allow them to enter the Harbour; in a few hours embarkation was completed; and as the transports moved out the protecting weather closed in again to guard them from American interception (293).

CONCLUSION

226. The whole truth of how, when and why the Japanese left Kiska will not be known to the United Nations until after the War, Nor, as events turned out, are the answers to these questions of particular importance to us. The thing that tremendously matters is that they did leave Kiska, and by their withdrawal not only saved the Canadian and American components of ATF 9 an expensive casualty list (294), but reversed the whole situation in the North Pacific area. A year ago Japan threatened our northern flank; now we threaten hers (295).

(Note: The narrative thus far was completed 11 Dec 43)

XXII

THE RETURN TO CANADA

(This Section added 16 Oct 44).

Planning the Movement - The Evacuation - Special Leave.

PLANNING THE MOVEMENT

227. On a visit of inspection early in November 1943, the GOC-in-C, Maj-Gen GR Pearkes, brought to the 13 Cdn Inf Bde Gp preliminary plans for the withdrawal of the Canadians from Kiska. The welcome announcement revealed that 10 per cent of each unit would leave the island as an advance party before the end of the month, and that five subsequent sailings would complete the Canadian evacuation (296). The removal of the Greenlight force would be progressive, and it was expected that the major part of the brigade group would be back in Canada by the middle of January. As on the outward move to Kiska, transportation would be carried out in United States transports.

228. The advance party, 500 strong (297), sailed on the USSS "COLUMBIA", a comparatively small coastal passenger steamer temporarily converted to a troop transport. Leaving Kiska on 21 Nov the "COLUMBIA" reached Vancouver on 2 Dec, after a rough passage through the Alaskan Gulf. The party proceeded to Vernon, BC to prepare for the return of the main body to Canada.

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229. The planning of the schedule of sailings and the allocation of troops and equipment to the various transports was carried out by the Administrative Staff of HQ Pacific Command, in close liaison with the United States authorities. Administrative instructions for embarkation procedure were issued by HQ 13 Inf Bde (298). Contrary to the procedure followed in the outward voyage, when troops travelled grouped as Combat Teams, on the return journey units and sub-units were assigned intact to their respective boats. The bulk of the ammunition was carried in a freighter that bore no troops.

THE EVACUATION

230. Movement of the main party began on Christmas Eve, with the sailing of the USAT "DAVID W BRANCH", and the "COLUMBIA" on her second trip. In the familiar cabins and holds of the "BRANCH" were Bde HQ (less rear party), 13 Def Pl, Wpg Gren, "C" Coy St John Fus (MG), and the 19 Fd Security Sec, a total of 1153 Canadian troops (299). The smaller "COLUMBIA" could carry only 490 of the Canadian Fusiliers, and "A" Company with part of two other platoons had to wait for a later boat. Christmas Day and New Year's Day were spent at sea, and if the disturbing effects of rough water prevented a full attendance at the Christmas dinner, there was consolation in the thought that each turn of the propeller brought the ship a little closer home. After brief stops at Adak, Dutch Harbour, and Port Angeles, Wash, the "BRANCH" reached Victoria on 3 Jan. On disembarkation the Wpg Gren and St. John Fus went to Gordon Head Camp, and the 46 L A A Bty moved to Colwood Camp (300). The "COLUMBIA" having parted company with the bigger ship at Adak, came by way of Ketchikan and the Inner Passage to Vancouver, where the Canadian Fusiliers disembarked for Vernon on 4 Jan.

231. In the meantime the remaining units of the Canadian garrison experiencing some of the heaviest snowfalls of the winter (301), were preparing for the final move from the island. On the last day of 1943 the 24 Fd Regt RCA followed their guns and trailers aboard the USAT "WILLIAM L THOMPSON", and at anchor in Kiska Harbour saw the New Year in. Sailing on New Year's Day the "THOMPSON" made comparatively slow time on the eastward voyage, and it was 16 Jan when the artillery regiment disembarked at Vancouver, and immediately entrained for Vernon. Its landing in Canada was followed two days later by the arrival of the USSS "GEORGE FLAVELLE" carrying Le Regt de Hull, 24 Fd Coy RCE, and the balance of the Cdn Fus.

232. The last Canadian units to leave Kiska were the R M Rang, 24 Fd Amb, 13 Inf Bde Sigs, 13 Inf Bde Rear Party, and the CDC, RCASC, RCOO, C Pro C, CPC, and the RCAPC detachments. Their boat was the USAT "CHIRIKOFF", the same transport that had carried the 15 Combat Teams to Kiska. Accompanying the CHIRIKOFF was the US freighter "MEEK". The two boats tied up on opposite sides of the Canadian-built pier, and for six days fatigue parties worked on a 24-hour basis loading 3500 tons of Canadian ammunition aboard the "MEEK" (302). On 12 January, exactly six months after the departure from Vancouver Island, the last of the Greenlight Force sailed out of Kiska Harbour. Their arrival in Vancouver thirteen days later made possible the lifting of the security silence that had been imposed, and the announcement to the public that all Canadian troops had been safely evacuated from Kiska.

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